
HOWQUA UNITED/GREAT RAND MINE SITE

Location

HOWQUA HILLS TRACK HOWQUA, MANSFIELD SHIRE

Municipality

MANSFIELD SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8123-0019

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO35

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 7, 2005

What is significant?

The Howqua United Gold Treatment Works consists of the remains of pyritic roasting furnace with an intact brick chimney stack. Near the roasting furnace is a battery site which was powered by a waterwheel (which, at 63ft diameter, was reputedly the third-largest ever to operate in Victoria. A 1.0km long inclined tramway connects the battery site to the mine workings (a small glory hole or open stope).

How is it significant?

The Howqua United Gold Treatment Works is of historical, scientific and archaeological importance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Howqua United Gold Treatment Works is historically and scientifically important as a characteristic and well preserved example of an important form of gold mining. When the greater part of the gold in some ores is contained in its pyritical contents, the gold is very difficult to extract. From the nineteenth century miners experimented with various metallurgical (or heat treatment) processes to unlock gold from heavily mineralised ore. Evidence of these metallurgical processes, such as the one carried out by the Howqua United Company during the late 1890s, are extremely rare in the State of Victoria.

The Howqua United Gold Treatment Works is archaeologically important for its potential to yield artefacts and evidence which will be able to provide significant information about the technological history of gold mining.

[Source: Victorian Heritage Register]

Hermes Number 10816

Property Number

History

Heritage Inventory History of Site:

The Howqua United GMC was formed in 1883 to work a lease lower down the ridge than the Mountain Chief. Driving the 20-head Howqua United battery was a waterwheel - christened the Hanney - which at 63 ft diameter was reputedly the largest in the southern hemisphere at that time and the third-largest ever to operate in Victoria. The water for the wheel was supplied by a race passing through Tunnel Spur to a supply point about 5 km upstream from the battery, which was situated on the flat below the Howqua United mine. Trial crushings produced poor yields, and the mine closed down within a year. The Howqua Hills GMC reworked the Howqua United mine from 1886 until the early 1890s, for only small returns. The remaining portion (most of the 20 heads had been removed - perhaps five remained?) of the Howqua United battery was reconditioned and re-utilised when the Mountain Chief mine was reworked for a short time from 1892. Additional plant was constructed at this time, in the form of a substantial furnace and tall brick chimney stack, on Fry's Flat. The Mountain Chief and Howqua United leases were taken up by the Great Rand Proprietary GMC in 1902. Commencing with £32,000 capital, the company erected a 30-head battery on the site of the old Howqua United battery, once again employing the old Hanney waterwheel. The high-level water race which fed the wheel was reopened and extended, but gave insufficient water to successfully run the battery. A hopper, Krupp ball mill, classifier and concentrating tables were installed and operated in conjunction with the ore furnace and stack of the early 1890s. As before, the mine gave inconsistent yields and operations ceased in 1903. The Hanney waterwheel was dismantled and removed in 1916.

References:

Christie, pp. 34, 46

Wylie (1987), pp. 45-6

Wylie (1988), p. 5

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>