

BRIGHT CHINESE CAMP SITE



towards nth east corner
2017.jpg



looking south 2017.jpg



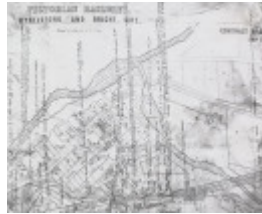
Bright Chinese Camp
1890.jpg



Joss House c1900s (SLV).jpg



looking towards nth east
corner 2017.jpg



Pre 1890 Victorian Railways
plan.gif



Bright Chinese Camp early
1900s.jpg



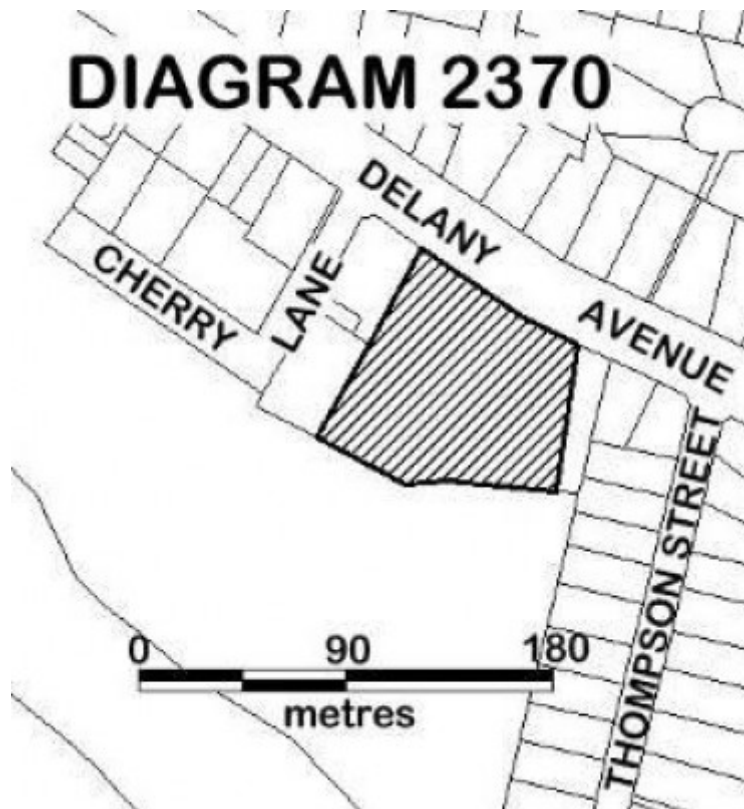
Chinese Joss House 1878
(Illustrated News).jpg



Joss House, undated
(Harrietville Historical
Society).gif



Quan Kee Hotel and Store
c1970s.jpg



Bright Chinese Camp Extent Diagram 2370.jpg

Location

14-20 DELANY AVENUE BRIGHT, ALPINE SHIRE

Municipality

ALPINE SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2370

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO105

VHR Registration

June 8, 2017

Heritage Listing

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 7, 2021

What is significant?

The Bright Chinese Camp including archaeological features, deposits and relics.

History Summary

Gold was discovered in the new Colony of Victoria in 1851 and by the end of 1854, some 200,000 immigrants had arrived, mainly from Britain, but also from China. This was one of the first mass emigrations from China and resulted in more than 45,000 Chinese, almost all of whom were male, arriving in Victoria in the 1850s. For a time, they were the second largest immigrant group on the goldfields. The Chinese miners congregated primarily where there were shallow alluvial deposits, such as Ararat, Ballarat, Bendigo and Castlemaine in Central Victoria, and Beechworth and Bright in north east Victoria. During the late 1850s, the Buckland Mining Division, where Bright is now located, had one of the highest Chinese populations in the Colony, outnumbering Europeans by five to one. This stimulated an anti-Chinese sentiment which led to violence, including the Buckland riot in 1857 and the Morses Creek (now Bright) riot in 1859. In response, the Victorian Government established segregated Chinese camps including the Bright Chinese Camp which was laid out in July 1859. The Camp was to eventually comprise stores, a Joss House, hotel, cook shops, gambling dens, lottery houses, a boot maker, opium dens, a Presbyterian church, and even a Chinese circus. In the late nineteenth century, the camp fell into decline and by the early twentieth century, there was only one descendant living at the camp. The Joss House was demolished c. 1915 and in 1982, all the remaining buildings were demolished.

Description Summary

The Bright Chinese Camp is located in the centre of Bright, fronting Delany Avenue. It comprises an open, level area of grassed land, with trees and bushes of varying maturity around the boundaries. There are undulations and depressions in the earth across the site, which may indicate the locations of former streets and buildings.

There is presently no Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the area in which the Bright Chinese Camp is located. The Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (TCAC) are currently negotiating a recognition and settlement agreement for this area under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*.

How is it significant?

The Bright Chinese camp is of historical and archaeological significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion B

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria cultural history.

Why is it significant?

The Bright Chinese Camp is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The Bright Chinese Camp is historically significant for its association with the development of Victoria through the discovery of gold. The Chinese immigrants who arrived in the goldfields during the 1850s and 1860s were part of the first mass emigration from China. By 1859, there were 46,000 Chinese immigrants in Victoria, making up nine per cent of Victoria's entire population and as the second largest immigrant group on the goldfields, they played a significant role in the history of gold mining in Victoria. As one of the camps created as part of a system of Chinese protectorates and segregated Chinese camps, the establishment of the Bright Chinese Camp in 1859 also demonstrates the Victorian Government's response to the hostility and violence directed towards the Chinese during the 1850s and 1860s. Once established, the Bright Chinese Camp continued to flourish, with statistics indicating that the Bright area had the highest Chinese population of any of the mining places in Victoria during the 1860s. [Criterion A]

The Bright Chinese Camp is a rare example of a nineteenth century Chinese camp where there is a very high likelihood that the sub-surface archaeological record has survived undisturbed. There are few, if any, Chinese related archaeological sites of comparable condition, size and significance in Victoria. Most, if not all other Chinese camps in Victoria have been substantially disturbed through ongoing mining activity, excavation or development. [Criterion B]

The Bright Chinese Camp is of archaeological significance and has the potential to be most intact archaeological place of its kind in Victoria. The Bright Chinese Camp was one of the largest and most important Chinese camps in Victoria, comparable to those at Bendigo, Ballarat, Castlemaine and Beechworth, all of which have been subjected to redevelopment. There is a very high likelihood that the Bright Chinese Camp contains archaeological material that will provide information about the construction, use and abandonment of the place by the Chinese during the latter half of the nineteenth century, thereby shedding new light on the development of segregated Chinese camps across Victoria. [Criterion C]

Permit Exemptions

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42(4) of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.66 of the Heritage Act)

General Condition 1

All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.

General Condition 2

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

General Condition 3

All ground disturbing works should be informed by an Archaeological Management Plan prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Archaeological Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Archaeological Management Plan.

General Condition 4

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

General Condition 5

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

Specific Permit Exemptions

The following works may be undertaken provided they do not involve the disturbance, removal or destruction of any above-ground landscape or archaeological features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts, features or deposits.

- . Landscape maintenance works.
- . Fire suppression and fire-fighting duties.
- . Weed and vermin control activities
- . Removal of plants listed as noxious weeds in the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.
- . Installation and removal of safety signage of a modest size.

Theme

2. Peopling Victoria's places and landscapes 4. Transforming and managing the land

Construction dates 1859,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place, Registered archaeological place,

Hermes Number 200291

Property Number

History

Nineteenth Century Gold Rushes

In 1851, the new Colony of Victoria became one of a number of places throughout the world where gold was discovered. Gold rushes took place in America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and caused a major shift in the balance of European and Chinese populations in the Pacific and Indian Ocean rim regions. Unlike previous mining events which were controlled, funded and managed by private companies, gold rushes were created by tens of thousands of individuals, all following the promise of gold.

In the initial years, only simple but labour-intensive processes and technologies were necessary to mine for gold. Any able individual or cooperative party could participate and the gold discovered could be directly converted to cash. These factors made the nineteenth century gold rushes huge mass immigration events, involving all classes of society enticed by the apparent economic and social advantages.

The world's two first gold rushes, in California (1848-53) and Victoria (1851-1855), made gold a powerful force in world affairs. These two goldfields significantly increased the world's annual gold output with Australia producing 38 per cent and America 41 per cent of the world's gold during the rush period.

The early goldfields of Ballarat, Castlemaine, Bendigo and Beechworth in particular were extremely rich and proved to be very influential in terms of production and immigration. Before the gold rush, Victoria had a population of approximately 75,000. By 1860, it had more than 520,000 people, making up nearly half of Australia's population.

Chinese gold seekers

The first immigrant gold miners arrived in Victoria in 1851, mainly from the United Kingdom. From 1853 immigrants also began arriving from China. By 1859 more than 45,000 (almost all male) Chinese had arrived, making them the second largest majority on the goldfields, and accounting for around 20 per cent of the adult male population of Victoria. They arrived mainly from the Guangdong province in southern China and were motivated to leave their home country by severe conditions of poverty due to civil war.

Chinese immigration came at a period when the populations on the established Victorian goldfields were large but returns were declining as the shallow diggings became less profitable. European miners objected to this new competition and called for controlling measures. Many also reacted violently and attempts were made to forcibly expel the Chinese from the fields. To maintain their safety the Chinese not only travelled in large groups, but also lived in unofficial segregated camps.

The Victorian government was also concerned about the increasing numbers of Chinese arrivals and introduced the Immigration Restriction Act in 1855 which imposed a £10 head tax on Chinese immigrants arriving at Victorian ports. To avoid this (and to continue to profit from the influx of Chinese) ships sailed to Robe in South Australia instead, from where many thousands of Chinese travelled on foot to the Victorian goldfields. In the same year, the government also established a Chinese Protectorate system. A pilot protectorate and the formalisation of seven Chinese villages was introduced at Bendigo in May, and in October the system was expanded, with protectors appointed at Ballarat, Avoca and Castlemaine. In response to the Buckland Riot of 1857, the system became even more formalised.

Gold rushes to north east Victoria - the Ovens Goldfield

Gold rushes to north east Victoria (known as the Ovens Goldfield) commenced in 1852 with the first rush occurring at Beechworth. Mining in this area relied on water, and long water races and deep tailraces were constructed in all parts of the goldfield.

In the mid 1850s, Beechworth had a small population of about sixty Chinese. By 1857, the wider Ovens Goldfield (including Bright) had a Chinese population of approximately 7,000, with the largest encampment at Beechworth.

By 1868 this number had reduced to approximately 3,000 to 4,000 Chinese, many working for themselves and some employed on European claims. Others were employed in harvesting and sheep shearing and as market gardeners, while others worked in businesses and trades. By the late 1870s, there were few Chinese working on the Ovens gold fields with most working seasonally on tobacco plantations and hop farms in the Ovens and Buffalo valleys.

Bright Chinese Camp

Gold mining began in the area of Bright (known as the Upper Ovens mining region) when miners rushed the Buckland River in 1853-4. This was followed by discoveries of gold nearby, including Morses Creek (Bright) and Growler's Creek (Wandiligong).

In 1857, the Buckland River was the scene of a notorious anti-Chinese riot, said to be the 'most disgraceful of the Victorian riots'. Several Chinese were murdered and the riot displaced Chinese miners who took refuge in other camps.

As Bright rapidly expanded, the Chinese were again subjected to violence, and on April 29 1859 they were driven from their claims. One Chinese was bludgeoned to death, and another severely injured, in what became known as the Morses Creek Affray. Following this, Warden Dowling was instructed to lay out a camp for the Chinese Miners at Bright, which he did in July 1859. Men in the camp were put under the protection of Mr Drummond, the local Chinese Protector.

The Bright Chinese Camp was home to most of the 1,200 to 1,400 Chinese men on the Upper Ovens River at the time. Over the years, the camp supported stores, a Chinese temple or Joss House, hotel, cook shops, gambling dens and lottery houses, boot maker, opium dens, a Presbyterian church, and even a Chinese circus in the early 1860s.

The Bright Chinese Camp flourished during the 1860s, when statistics indicated that the Bright area had the highest Chinese population of any of the mining places in Victoria. The camp slowly deteriorated during the late nineteenth century, and in 1910, the licence on Quan Kee's Chinese Hotel, the last operational business at the Camp, was surrendered. This license had been held by Hung Fee who had initially applied for it in 1892. However on rejection of his application for naturalisation, the license was transferred to his wife, Elizabeth. Elizabeth died in 1893 and it is likely that the license was then transferred to her husband. The Hung Fees had five children, and the last resident of the camp was one of their daughters, Miss Humphries, who had anglicised her name. Very little is known about her, but she is thought to have died in the 1970s, at which time the hotel was demolished. All other structures were demolished in 1982 and the land has remained vacant since that time.

Key references

Rob Kaufman & Andrew Swift (2005) *The Chinese Camp, Bright*

LRGM Services (2004) *Thematic Environmental History of the Alpine Shire*

Macgregor, Paul (2012) "Lowe Kong Meng and Chinese Engagement in the International Trade of Colonial Victoria " *Provenance 11* (<http://prov.vic.gov.au/publications/provenance/lowe-kong-meng>)

Macgregor, Paul "A Trade in Chinese Men and Supplies: Lowe Kong Meng and the organisation of the Chinese gold rush in Otago", in Lloyd Carpenter and Lyndon Fraser (eds), *Rushing for Gold: Life and Commerce on the Goldfields of New Zealand and Australia*, Otago University Press, Dunedin, NZ, 2016.

Diann Talbot (2016) *Who is she?* Layout Speciality Press

Plaque Citation

The Bright Chinese Camp was established on this site in 1859 by the Victorian Government to protect the residents from anti-Chinese violence. It included stores, a Joss House, gambling and opium dens, boot maker, Presbyterian church, and a Chinese circus.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion

The Bright Chinese Camp is historically significant for its association with the development of Victoria through the discovery of gold. The Chinese immigrants who arrived in the goldfields during the 1850s and 1860s were part of the first mass emigration from China. By 1859, there were 46,000 Chinese immigrants in Victoria, making up nine per cent of Victoria's entire population and as the second largest immigrant group on the goldfields, they played a significant role in the history of gold mining in Victoria. As one of the camps created as part of a system of Chinese protectorates and segregated Chinese camps, the establishment of the Bright Chinese Camp in 1859 also demonstrates the Victorian Government's response to the hostility and violence directed towards the Chinese during the 1850s and 1860s. Once established, the Bright Chinese Camp continued to flourish, with statistics indicating that the Bright area had the highest Chinese population of any of the mining places in Victoria during the 1860s. [

Criterion A]

The Bright Chinese Camp is a rare example of a nineteenth century Chinese camp where there is a very high likelihood that the sub-surface archaeological record has survived undisturbed. There are few, if any, Chinese related archaeological sites of comparable condition, size and significance in Victoria. Most, if not all other Chinese camps in Victoria have been substantially disturbed through ongoing mining activity, excavation or development. [

Criterion B]

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Criterion C]

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the following places in the Heritage Register:

Number: H2370
Category: Heritage Place; Archaeological Place
Place: Bright Chinese Camp
Location: 14 Delany Avenue, Bright
Alpine Shire

All of the place shown hatched in Diagram 2370 encompassing all of Consolidation Plan 153590.

Dated 8 June 2017
TIM SMITH Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 23 8 June 2017 p.1096]

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/>