
DOOKIE QUARRY CRUSHING PLANT SITE

Location

RAILWAY RESERVE BALDOCK STREET CROSSING DOOKIE, GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY

Municipality

GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8025-0009

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 12, 2021

What is significant?

The Dookie crushing plant was established in 1915 as a joint initiative of two adjoining local Shires to service the need for road base material as the regional road network area expanded with the advent of the motor car. The crushing plant was built at the railway siding, where raw material was crushed on site and loaded directly into rail carriages for transportation via rail, prior to the existence of truck transportation. The surviving foundations allow for interpretation of the former location and operation of the crushing plant within the Dookie township.

How is it significant?

The surviving physical fabric of the Dookie crushing plant is of historical and scientific (archaeological) significance to regional Victoria and the local community, addressing Criterion C & D for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Inventory (Heritage Council of Victoria).

Criterion C – Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria’s regional cultural history.

Criterion D – Importance in demonstrating the principle characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects.

Why is it significant?

The Dookie Crushing plant is significant as it is a largely undocumented and unknown remnant of an early 20th Century industry developed to meet the need for an expanding road network in regional Victoria, in response to the advent of motor vehicles, effectively connecting communities by roads in the 20th Century. It also highlights the importance of the stone resources and the processing of these raw materials within the Dookie district, and the role this played in development of the region, being the only suitable resource of this kind within the Shepparton and Rodney Shires. The crushing plant was also responsible for employing many people over the years of its operation so contributed significantly to the regional economy and the local township of Dookie.

Whilst remnant crushing plants in association with railways do exist in other areas of the State, this is the only crushing plant foundation within the entire Rodney and Shepparton Shire due to the rarity of suitable stone in this region. The crushing plant existed at this location because of the proximity to these stone resources and the existing railway system. The technological development represented at this industrial site is of significance as it demonstrates the principle characteristics of this class of cultural place. The largely intact and buried foundations have historical (archaeological) significance due to the high likelihood they have to contribute more information to the understanding of this early technology and the operation of this crushing plant, which played such an important role in the development of this regional area.

Interpretation of Site

The site operated for a period of 22 years. The site consisted of a large wooden hopper, which spanned a former section of railway so that train carriages could be pulled directly under the hopper for loading. The location of the hopper is consistent with the rowed square grid of concrete foundations, which would have supported the timber uprights that held the hopper (as seen in Image 1). From the square gridded foundations, the dimensions of the hopper can be determined to be approximately 6.5 metres long by 4.9 metres wide. Although the off-shoot of the main railway line that run underneath the hopper (Image 3) is no longer present, the location of this is consistent with the gap between the first (northern, closest to railway), and the other two rows of square foundations (see Attachment 2). The crusher was constructed at a time before gravel trucks came into existence, so gravel could be loaded in this way and transported by the railway network for road building. Gravel was then loaded from the rail carriages into drays to be carted by horses as needed for road construction (see Image 4). Each concrete square has an internal square where the upright posts would have been situated. The concrete used to form the hopper foundations is a coarse mix, consistent with the local blue stone from the quarry that was supplying the crusher (see Image 6). The site also had a crusher on site and an elevator that fed the crushed material from the crusher at ground level to the top of the hopper. From here the gravel dropped into a rotating perforated cylinder to grade the stone into coarse and finer material (which is visible in Image 1). A rectangular concrete foundation located 3.6 metres directly to the south of the crusher foundations (Image 7), is consistent with the location of the crusher and base of elevator as seen in Image 1 and Image 3. The bricks/ broken brick pieces and heavy metal bar in proximity to the rectangular foundation are most probably associated with this former structure. There is a large quantity of scattered gravel in the area around the crushing plant foundations and the nearby rectangular foundation (see Attachment 2), which is consistent with the location of the crushing plant and the hopper loading the train carriages. The metal plate and bar embedded in the ground approximately south of the crusher foundations are in proximity to the steam traction engine shown in Image 3 and may be associated with the operation of that equipment. A second foundation (Image 9) is located 13 metres west of the hopper foundations. This rectangular foundation is also mostly obscured by soil mixed with building rubble. This foundation is consistent with the location of the shed visible to the west of the crusher in Image 1 and 2. The buried foundations are likely to reveal additional information about the operation of the crushing plant. The crusher plant was fed by a small railway line that carried large metal rail trolleys downhill from the quarry approximately 600 metres to the south of the crushing plant. An elevated platform (mounded dirt) is visible in the paddock to the south of the crusher which would be consistent with the location of this feeder railway. This mound is visible in the top left corner of Image 7. The site today forms part of the rail reserve and is easily accessible from the Baldock Street railway crossing.

Hermes
Number 208299

Property
Number

History

The Dookie Crushing plant was constructed in 1915 on the Railway line at Baldock Street as an operational component of the Municipal Quarry located at the southern end of Baldock Street, Dookie. The quarry operation was a joint initiative between the Shires of Shepparton and Rodney to supply road metal (gravel) for roadworks in the two Shires (Benalla Standard 1915). The crushed rock was loaded directly into railway carriages (as illustrated in Image 1) to be carted across the municipality, with approximately 6 medium sized carriages filled per day (Dookie & Katamatite Recorder 1917). Although the crushing plant was located on the Crown Land of the Railway Reserve (Lot 3 TP706876), historical sources from 1922 (Victorian Railways [Accessed online]), indicate the crusher was a private siding owned jointly by the Shepparton and Rodney Shires. Image 2, taken in 1927 provides photographic evidence of the built infrastructure at the site.

The quarry was closed in 1934 due to increasing costs and operational difficulties experienced at the plant (Dookie the Year to 1988 Committee 1988 , p. 129). The crusher was leased for another 3 years by a private contractor (Ormond) who had opened another pit further to the south of the township (Shepparton Advertiser 1934). This operation ceased in 1937 and the crusher was shut down and sold for removal (Dookie the Years to 1988 Committee 1988, p. 129).

The footprint of the crushing plant can still be seen in 1941 aerial imagery (DELWP [Accessed online]).

The site also had a crusher on site and an elevator that fed the crushed material from the crusher at ground level to the top of the hopper. From here the gravel dropped into a rotating perforated cylinder to grade the stone into coarse and finer material (which is visible in Image 1). A rectangular concrete foundation located 3.6 metres directly to the south of the crusher foundations (Image 7), is consistent with the location of the crusher and base of elevator as seen in Image 1 and Image 3. The bricks/ broken brick pieces and heavy metal bar in proximity to the rectangular foundation are most probably associated with this former structure. There is a large quantity of scattered gravel in the area around the crushing plant foundations and the nearby rectangular foundation (see Attachment 2), which is consistent with the location of the crushing plant and the hopper loading the train carriages. The metal plate and bar embedded in the ground approximately south of the crusher foundations are in proximity to the steam traction engine shown in Image 3 and may be associated with the operation of that equipment. A second foundation (Image 9) is located 13 metres west of the hopper foundations. This rectangular foundation is also mostly obscured by soil mixed with building rubble. This foundation is consistent with the location of the shed visible to the west of the crusher in Image 1 and 2. The buried foundations are likely to reveal additional information about the operation of the crushing plant. The crusher plant was fed by a small railway line that carried large metal rail trolleys running downhill from the quarry approximately 600 metres to the south of the crushing plant. An elevated platform (mounded dirt) is visible in the paddock to the south of the crusher which would be consistent with the location of this feeder railway. This mound is visible in the top left corner of Image 7. The site today forms part of the rail reserve and is easily accessible from the Baldock Street railway crossing.

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/>