
HO41 - Aitken's Gap Pine Avenue



Pine Avenue

Location

Calder Freeway DIGGERS REST, Melton Shire

Municipality

MELTON CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO41

Heritage Listing

Melton City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The plantation of mature Monterey Pines (*Pinus radiata*) is significant as the most substantial evidence of the existence of the Gap township, which originated as a wayside service centre for gold-rush traffic on the Mt Alexander Road. Recent upgrading of the Calder highway into a freeway has removed most of the south-western side of the avenue, and considerably diminished the aesthetic significance of the plantation. The avenue is likely to have been planted by the Shire of Melton, but may also have associations with the Country Roads Board.

The avenue is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A.4). It is the most substantial remaining evidence of the former gold-rush wayside settlement of The Gap, which declined dramatically after the internationally significant rush to Mount Alexander subsided, and after the opening of the railway (1859/1862). It is also one of a distinguished series of old conifer plantings on this route, since renamed the Calder Highway, most of which have now been bypassed. It is also the most prominent remaining example of a type of street planting associated with the Shire of Melton.

The avenue is also scientifically (horticulturally) significant at the LOCAL level on account of the age of the trees, which would appear to have been planted sometime in the early twentieth century. It is representative of conifer street plantings which were popular in the 1860-80s, but of which there are now very few examples remaining in Victoria (AHC B.2). If it dates back to the nineteenth century, it would be one of the oldest remaining avenues of this species.

Overall, the remnant Monterey Pine avenue at the Gap is of LOCAL significance.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Melton - Shire of Melton Heritage Study phase 2, David Maloney, David Rowe, Pamela Jellie, Sera Jane Peters, 2007;
Construction dates	1900,
Other Names	Calder Freeway, Diggers Rest., Pine Avenue, The Gap,
Hermes Number	30016
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Physical Description -

The trees are the remnant of a mature avenue of Monterey Pine, *Pinus radiata*, on the Calder Freeway at Diggers Rest. On the south-western (Shire of Melton) side the avenue comprises approximately three trees. There are also approximately eight in the median strip, the remains of a very old, substantial and partly intact double row. This total number has been reduced by half in recent years and it is likely that more will be lost during the current severe drought.

The upgrade of the Calder Highway to the Calder Freeway in recent years created a new Melbourne bound lane on the north-east side of the avenue, and what was formerly the north-east side of the plantation is now in the median strip. Most of the south-western side of the avenue was destroyed in these works, and remaining trees are mostly damaged or stunted. However this south-western side of the road is an integral part of a much larger avenue (c.800 metres in length) and necessary to preserve the original purpose of the remnant plantings as an avenue. Overall the trees are considered to be generally in fair to good condition, although some are poor.[1]

The context of the area is the Calder Freeway, Gap Road, and the former settlement of Aitken's Gap township, with its residential streets, and a few buildings remaining on allotments to the east side of the road. The plantation is the main evidence of the existence of this historically important settlement; it comprises an interesting landscape feature in the district and on the Freeway.

The extent of heritage area is the remnant Monterey Pine plantings at the former Gap township, and the roadways along which they are planted.

[1]Hawker, J, "Report: The Gap, Monterey Pine Avenue", Calder Highway (23 June 1994).

Historical Australian Themes

Melton Historical Themes: Community: Towns and People. Transport

Integrity

Integrity - Damaged/Disturbed

Physical Conditions

Physical Condition - Fair

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/>