
United Brothers Battery Site



B5280 United Brothers
Battery Site

Location

GLEN VALLEY VIC 3898 - Property No B5280

Municipality

EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE

Level of significance

Local

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 18, 2005

Statement of Significance: At the time of its erection (late 1894/early 1895) the installation was regarded as a model gold processing plant. It was only the second plant in Victoria to use the newly imported Luhrig vanners for the treatment of heavily mineralised ore and its operation was described several times in the Australian Mining Standard. After the original company ceased operations in 1904 the plant was taken over by local miners and became the centre of a four year struggle to ensure the survival of the community in this remote and rather harsh corner of the state. The site is also of interest because its location was the result of a set of decisions that made the plant unworkable. It was neither close enough to the mine to ensure an adequate supply of stone in winter (when the tramway froze and was buried in snow) but where there was insufficient water, nor near enough to a plentiful supply of water throughout the year, to reach which would have entailed an extensive haulage system. History: Gold was discovered in an exposed quartz reef on what became known as United Creek by a syndicate of four prospectors. A 30-acre lease (no.1862) one mile north of Cooper Bros. store was applied for on 27 March 1893 and the reef was worked both north and south from the creek on two drives at No. 1 level until April 1894

when the property was sold to a Melbourne company. A 20 head Austral Otis battery and concentrating plant were bought in September 1894, site work commenced the following month and the battery was completed and in operation by June 1895. It was an impressive sight, particularly at night when it was lit by electric lamps supplied from its own generating plant. The battery was then almost continually in operation until about 1902. During this time some 30,000 tons of stone were crushed for an official return of about 20,000 ounces; although local sources suggest a figure closer to 50,000 ounces.

The property was sold to a local syndicate in November 1904 and thereafter began a desperate struggle to pump out the shaft and to ensure the survival of the nearby mining community at Sunnyside.

The attempt failed despite several reconstructions of the company and the use of several kinds of pumping machinery. All the machinery was confiscated and disposed of by 1914. Parts of the battery itself have been found at other sites in the area.

Condition: Except for six foundation bolts the battery site is now completely devoid of machinery. Although there has been some regrowth and some disturbance due to the laying of telephone cables across the site at battery level, all the features are clearly visible and it would not require much effort to interpret it for the hardier travellers who use that section of the Omeo Highway or the Alpine Walking Track nearby.

Classified: 23/11/1982

Hermes Number 68003

Property Number

Physical Conditions

Description: The most readily visible parts of the company's property consist of a series of levels cut into the hillside on the west side of the Omeo Highway at the point where it crosses United Creek (Drawing 1 and Photograph 1). The battery level is clearly visible (Level 5) as are several of the lower levels where the vanners and slime tables were located (Levels 1 through 4). Above the battery level are the sites for the ore bin (Level 9) and the terminus of the self-acting tram (Level 10), which connected the battery to the mine, some 350 feet higher up the slope. To the south of the main site the positions of at least one outbuilding (Level 6) and the mine manager's house (Level 7) have also been determined. All these features are contained within the boundaries of the former machine site lease (No 2095 issued on 25 February 1895), a portion of which is shown in the sketch plan of Figure 1.

The mine had several entrances within the boundaries of the original lease No 1862 and the adjoining lease No 1858 that was acquired subsequently. The main entrance to the mine was at No 2 adit into the No 2 level (Figure 2). This entrance is still visible along with extensive piles of worked over mullock dumps in the gully below (55HEV435238). The lower levels were originally worked from a blind shaft that was taken through to the surface in 1912. None of the winding and pumping machinery has survived. The relationship between the mine and the battery site are shown in Figure 3.

Function: The battery was used to process stone trucked down from the mine on the slope.

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/>