
Scent Farm

Location

Scent Farm Road, DUNOLLY VIC 3472 - Property No G13071

Municipality

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE

Level of significance

Regional

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 2, 2004

EXTENT OF CLASSIFICATION

Original 20 acre site.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Scent Farm, Dunolly, established in 1891, operational until 1899 and then abandoned, is of Regional significance:

- as an innovative example of a novel industry, supported by government and intended to diversify and complement more conventional local farming activities; the failure of the scheme notwithstanding, it reflects the imagination of some locals and the willingness of government officials to experiment with new products;
- for the remnant plantings still located on the original site;
- for its retention of an open site with possible archaeological evidence of demolished buildings and other site works;
- for its aesthetic qualities, derived from the combination of open farmland with scattered Eucalypts.

ANALYSIS

Distillation of essential oils (especially Eucalyptus) was pioneered in Victoria by chemist, Joseph Bosisto and

government botanist, Ferdinand Mueller. The production of essential oils and perfumes was examined at length in the late 1880s by the Royal Commission on Vegetable Products. Bosisto had distilled eucalyptus oil as early as 1853 and according to his biographer was 'probably first to make it commercially [in Australia]'.(7)

Bosisto gave evidence to the Royal Commission and by the publication of his, and the evidence of others, the Commission attempted to disseminate information about this novel industry.

In fact, during the 1890s farmers were encouraged to experiment with such plants as detailed in the Royal Commission handbook:

The Bonus Regulations at present in force in the colony, among other things, set forth that those persons who, between May 1890 and June 1895, shall take in hand the cultivation of drug or scent plants, will be entitled to a share in the sum of £25,000, appropriated by Parliament to promote various agricultural industries.(8)

In Sydney, the distillation of essential oils was taken up enthusiastically by Richard Thomas Baker, appointed in 1888 as Assistant Curator to J H Maiden at the Technological Museum, Sydney.(9)

The Scent Farm was an innovative attempt to diversify the

products of local and Victorian farms. The failure of the scheme notwithstanding, it reflects the imagination of some locals and the willingness of government officials to experiment with new products.(10)

REFERENCES

(1) Chris McConville & Associates, Shire of Bet Bet Conservation Study, 1987, Vol.2, Part 1, p.115.

(2) [John J Shillinglaw), Royal Commission on Vegetable Products. No.2. Perfume Plants and Essential Oils. Facts from the Evidence taken by the Commission. Compiled and Edited by the Secretary, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1890, pp.3-4.

(3) *ibid.*, p.4.

(4) McConville, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, pp.63-65.

(5) A E Bennett, 'Prize Essays', Melbourne, 1894.

(6) McConville, op.cit., Vol.1, p.65.

(7) Australian Dictionary of Biography, 1851-1890, Vol.3,
pp.197-199.

(8) Shillinglaw, op.cit., p.5.

(9) ADB, 1891-1939, Vol.7, pp.154-155.

(10) McConville, op.cit., Vol.2, Part 1, p.115. EXISTING DESIGNATIONS

National Trust of Australia (Victoria):

Scent Farm - classified 10/6/92

Hermes Number 70202

Property Number

Physical Description 1

DESCRIPTION

Very little now remains on the original Scent Farm site. It is now open farmland with no machinery or building remnants visible. Occasionally remnants of the plantings flower by the roadside. The area does have some signs of layout of beds even though built remnants have gone.

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/>