
ROWVILLE MILITARY CAMP

Location

STUD ROAD AND WELLINGTON ROAD ROWVILLE, KNOX CITY

Municipality

KNOX CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7922-0208

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site

The camp was sited on a 109 hectare area north of the present Timbertop Drive (Victorian Heritage Database Entry for Rowville Military Camp). This site card is to extend the registration of H7922-0208 (Rowville Military Camp) to include those features identified and recorded within Starlight Reserve.

A further eight features associated with the Rowville Military Camp were identified and recorded during Aboriginal Cultural Heritage monitoring for the installation of a new walking track within Starlight Reserve. Features 01, 03 and 04 were discovered during works. These features were reburied under the new track to protect the features from future wear and damage.

Within the boundary of Starlight Reserve, there are a total of eight features (6 concrete and 2 excavated features). The majority of these features are associated with drainage for the Rowville Military Camp. However, Feature 05 is a concrete slab for a building. There are two earthen drains (D01 and D02) associated with Feature 06 (a concrete Culvert).

The features within Starlight Reserve, have been assessed as having low sub-surface archaeological significance. These are surface features, with little evidence of ground surface disturbance surrounding these features.

Archaeological
Significance

There is a moderate to low possibility that rubbish pits are located within the reserve. The majority of the Rowville Military Camp remains are within the Rowville Terminal Station managed by SPI Powernet Pty Ltd. It is more likely for sub-surface deposits to be within this location.

Historical
Significance

Low regional historical significance.

Hermes Number 10402

Property Number

History

Rowville Military Camp / POW Camp was built in 1942 and was decommissioned in 1945. Australian troops of the 3rd Motor Brigade moved into the Rowville Military Camp on 18 May 1942. The camp was sited on a 109 hectare area north of the present Timbertop Drive. The troops were to be used as a strategic reserve in the event of a Japanese invasion in the Westernport region. When the likelihood of such an event passed, the soldiers were moved out in September 1942 and they were replaced by American troops.

When the Americans went off to the Pacific war zones their places in the camp were taken in late 1944 by Italian Prisoners of War who had been captured in North Africa. By June 1945, the number of prisoners had grown to about three hundred and the role of the camp was changing to that of a staging camp. This meant that all Italian prisoners being moved from camp to camp or onto farms as labourers were processed here in Rowville. A total of two thousand six hundred prisoners passed through the Rowville camp before the last of the prisoners were repatriated to Italy in 1946.

A motorcycle circuit around the Military/POW Camp was used directly after the end of the war when still full of POW huts.

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/>