
Hard Hill Mining Site, Garden Gully Road, GREAT WESTERN



GW 07 - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, 2004

Location

Garden Gully Road GREAT WESTERN, NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Municipality

NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1044

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO7

Heritage Listing

Northern Grampians Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 30, 2004

The Heritage Victoria Citation reads:

The first gold was found at Hard Hill in January 1856 and it continued to be the site of alluvial mining until the 1870's. The area includes an almost intact example of an earthen water race system and associated mining evidence, including domestic and other complexes.

Hard Hill is important for its cultural and social associations with the the beginning of gold mining in Victoria, and in particular the Ararat gold field, which experienced possibly the largest rush in the State.

The Chinese Camp is an extraordinary example of a small isolated Chinese mining community forcibly dispossessed from more profitable Ararat gold field, which experienced possibly the largest rush in the State.

Hard Hill represents modest mid-nineteenth century alluvial mining and the transient nature of domestic occupation associated with such sites. Hard Hill 3 demonstrates the changing pattern of occupancy to the more permanent settlement and exploitation of the region.

The earth and stone water race, extending for over one kilometre around the flank of the hill, the large earthen dam and sluicing demonstrate considerable ingenuity and engineering ability, constructed as they were using only local resources and without the benefit of sophisticated technology.

The site is a representative example of a once common small-scale mid-nineteenth century shallow lead alluvial mining landscape. The cement workings in the same area are quite rare and are also essentially intact. The other archaeological features at Hard Hill, comprising habitation sites and refuse deposits associated with the mining, rarely display such integrity.

Hard Hill demonstrates a variety of mining techniques including cement shallow alluvial sinkings and ground sluicing.

Hard Hill, through both the archaeological and mining remains, demonstrates an association with the Chinese miners who played an important role in the history of the Victorian gold rushes. Hard Hill 4 in particular may have significant archaeological potential to further reveal the daily activities of a cultural minority about whom little was recorded.

The discovery of gold at Hard Hill in 1856, one of the earliest on the Ararat gold field, means that the site dates from the earliest period of gold mining in Victoria.

Overall, Hard Hill Mining Site is of **STATE** significance.

Heritage Study/Consultant Northern Grampians - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, Wendy Jacobs, Vicki Johnson, David Rowe, Phil Taylor, 2004;

Hermes Number 105057

Property Number

Physical Description 1

The four sites comprise a large and almost intact alluvial goldmining complex. Beginning at the southern end of the recorded area, a levee approximately four metres high and five thick extended across a creek bottom, forming a dam (Hard Hill 1) which supplied an extensive sluicing race system. The race (Hard Hill 2) ran northwest towards Hard Hill, dividing in tow so that one branch ran to the east, one to the west of the hill's crown. The race was traced to the northern side of the Hard Hill, where both race branches led into a gully sloping downhill to the north. A modern reservoir has been built between Garden Gully Road to the north of the area, and this presumably marks the ultimate destination of the race systems.

Throughout the race's length, subsidiary channels are cut at intervals. These served the many small mines which cover the area. Shafts, tailings and near the crown of the hill, where the overburden becomes shallower, adits, are particularly dense to the east of Hard Hill, where the ground is still barren and exposed.

Along the east side of the area, bordered by Garden Gully Road, is the area known traditionally in the region as the "Chinese Camp" (Hard Hill 4) and traces of structures and a road. The archaeological evidence for occupation by the Chinese is at present slight. This area is comprised of a series of depressions and mounds, not apparently the result of mining. It is possible these represent water storage devises or relate to dwellings such as tents. To the south of this is an artefact scatter and a bed of exotic plants.

A faintly visible road leads from the south, from Garden Gully Road, northwards, curving around this last feature and concluding at a large clearing immediately to the east of the barren mined east flank of Hard Hill. It seems clear that the road and square feature are associated and date from the mining period. To the south of these are the ruins of a small dwelling.

A domestic complex, Hard Hill 3, comprising the ruins of a hut with a well-built stone chimney with mud bonding stands to a height of two metres, a range of surface artefacts, a timber enclosure, a number of briar rose bushes is situated to the west of the main dam (Hard Hill 1). The timber enclosure is partially built across a collapsed mine shaft and so at least a portion of the complex is later than the beginning of mining in the area.

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/>