
CHINESE PIG OVEN

Location

RJ SPUR TRACK JERICHO, BAW BAW SHIRE

Municipality

BAW BAW SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8122-0087

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 10792

Property Number

History

Heritage Inventory History of Site: In 1864 (three years after the Jordan goldfield was rushed) the population of Jericho was 400 Europeans and 95 Chinese. Eight years later, the European population of the district was on the decline: they were 'gradually making way for the Chinese' who were, at that time, occupying most of the old creek claims on the Jordan. 'The ground that was considered worked out by the lucky ones ten years ago,' wrote the mining registrar, 'will continue to pay a low rate of wages for re-working, by the more industrious though less fortunate miners, for many years to come.' The only sizeable Chinese settlement on the Jordan goldfield, of about 200 people, was located on the Jordan River between Red Jacket and Jericho. A joss house was established and several unmarked graves of Chinese are said to exist in the cemeteries at Jericho and Red Jacket. The ovens were used by the Chinese to roast entire pigs on feast days. A fire would be lit in the base of the oven and fed from the opening at the base, then large stones would be lowered and allowed to become red hot. A whole pig would be lowered onto the stones and a brass or metal covered placed over the opening until the meat was

thoroughly cooked. Two ovens originally existed and were unearthed during sluicing operations in the late 1940s. Tins full of Chinese coins were found buried near one of the ovens. One of the ovens has since been destroyed by roadworks. The other was again hidden by undergrowth until its rediscovery in the 1970s. Officers from the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works reported that the site had deteriorated by the late 1980s. Chinese pig ovens have been recorded on goldfields in Tasmania, north Queensland and the Northern Territory, but this is the only site of its type identified in Victoria. References: Mining Surveyors' Reports (Jericho Division), June & September 1872, June 1873 Steenhuis Supplement, M21 Tomlin, Bosa & Chamberlain, pp. 99-100

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/>