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# PRINCE OF WALES CO. NO. 3

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## Location

MILES STREET SEBASTOPOL, BALLARAT CITY

## Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7622-0216

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 15, 2023

## What is significant?

The Prince of Wales No. 3 shaft is an example of mid to late 19th century gold mining.

## How is it significant?

The Prince of Wales No. 3 is of local historical significance.

## Why is it significant?

The Prince of Wales No. 3 site is of historical significance for its association with mid to late 19th century gold mining waste management process.

The Prince of Wales Company was a major mining operation at Sebastopol, employing hundreds of workers and generating more than 168,000 ounces of gold in its initial phase of operation. The mine site was an intensive industrial complex that included, at its height of operation, six steam engines, nine boilers, nine puddling machines and batteries driving 56 stamp heads. The No.3 shaft was a component of the wider industrial complex. While none of these items are preserved, there still remains the possibility that traces of mining activities to be preserved subsurface; however, the archaeological potential is likely low due to the disturbances of the gravel quarry and the development of the site.

Interpretation of Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to 1857, no recorded European history</li> <li>• 1857- Ground is proved and identified as having gold mining potential</li> <li>• 1859- Prince of Wales Gold Mining Company is registered</li> <li>• 1859-1862- Machinery is installed for alluvial and deep lead gold extraction at the No. 1 shaft location</li> <li>• 1863-1864- Additional shafts sunk o No. 2 to the south east of No.1 o No. 3 to the north west of No.1, north of Miles Street</li> <li>• 1864-1869- Mine became more mechanized</li> <li>• 1904- Mine ceased operations</li> <li>• 1907- Prince of Wales machinery sold to the Mariner' Reef mine in Maryborough</li> <li>• Mid 20th century- o No.3 shaft location site used as a gravel quarry</li> <li>• 1990-2010- location of the site developed</li> <li>• Currently- o Land at No.3 shaft location remains developed. The Prince of Wales gold mine was one of the largest and richest mines in Sebastopol. Based on the background history and historical mapping, the No.1 shaft, south of Miles Street was the locus of the intensive mining activity and the No.3 shaft was a component of the gold mine north of Miles Street. The site inspection confirmed that the intensive mechanised gold mining operation, associated with the No.1 shaft, was located in the DEECA property, south of Miles Street. As per common practice in the Victorian gold fields, the machinery was sold once operations ceased, to recoup losses. In the mid-20th century, the site was used as a gravel quarry and the site was later developed. Traces of the mining operations may still be present subsurface, however.</li> </ul>
Other Names	NO.3 CAMP GM CO,
Hermes Number	11860
Property Number	

## History

Most of the following background history is drawn from the land use history developed for the 15-39 Prince Street Historical Heritage Assessment (Geiberras 2023) prepared for Prince Street Property Development Pty Ltd. Additional historical information derives from William Baragwanath (1923) and Robert Brough Smyth (1980). Sebastopol lies within the southern part of the Ballarat goldfield complex. The Prince of Wales Co., United Miners Co., and the Bonshaw Freehold Co. "dominated" the goldfields in the Sebastopol area up until the 1870s (Supple 1999, p.12). In the 1860s approximately 20 deep lead mining companies were operating within the district; however only half operated for more than 5 years and only the companies that were large enough to access leads under the basalt tableland operated for more than 10 years (Supple 1999, p.12). In Sebastopol, deep lead mining was utilised from the mid-19th to late-19th century, with the largest mines increasing in size and mechanization as more gold was discovered (Supple 1999, p. 15). The Prince of Wales mine was one of these mines, and the company utilised both alluvial and deep lead methods to extract gold from the quartz reefs (Supple 1999, p.15). The Prince of Wales company of 64 shareholders registered for a frontage claim on Cobbler's lead in February 1857. Boring was carried out to locate and prove the ground, and the site for the No. 1 shaft was selected in October 1859 (Baragwanath 1923, pp. 92-93). Gold was not found, however, until three years later (The Ballarat Star 1857, p. 3 and Supple 1999, p. 11). The Prince of Wales mine extracted gold from the Cobbler's Lead and the mine grew and developed as it accumulated wealth (Smyth 1980, pp. 501-504; Figure 3 and Figure 4). The Prince of Wales mine was one of the largest and richest mines in Sebastopol, the southern end of the Ballarat goldfields (Supple 1999, pp. 11-12). Gold yields from 1862 to 1875, the primary years of

production, totaled 168,723 ounces (Baragwanath 1923, p. 94). The initial infrastructure included a vertical steam pump engine with overhead crank, a large cradle, and two 14 ft (4.2 m) in diameter wooden puddling machines (Supple 1999, p. 11). When the mine reached 343 ft (104 m) depth in 1861 the mine flooded and an additional steam engine and two boilers were purchased to replace the lower horsepower vertical engine (Supple 1999, p. 11). By 1862 a plunger and draw lift had been purchased as well as an additional puddling machine, and two 12 head stamp batteries were purchased (Supple 1999, p. 11). A lithograph produced in 1862 demonstrates the names of the shareholders, a 16 head stamp battery, three mechanized puddling machines, and a sectional view of the underground workings (Figure 5). There was also a smelting-house with three furnaces for refining gold, with the company burning 14,500 cubic meters of firewood per year in its operations (Smyth 1980, pp. 502-504). Between 1863 and 1864, additional shafts were sunk to access the lower quartz reefs, as the alluvial mining became less productive (Supple 1999, pp. 11). By 1865, the mine had grown substantially and employed more than 300 workers (Baragwanath 1923, p. 93). There were three major shafts along the lead, with each shaft having a large, dedicated amount of infrastructure to access the deeper quartz reef. By 1869, the machinery at the Prince of Wales mine was valued at £30,000, accounting for inflation, this is equivalent to \$9,063,114 AUD (Supple 1999, pp. 11 and CPI Inflation Calculator; Smyth 1980, p. 504). In total the No. 3 shaft comprised:

- A three compartment shaft, two for winding, one for pumps and cage
- A horizontal steam engine with plunger and draw lift
- Eight iron and cast iron puddling machines, two sludge machines, and an amalgamating barrel
- A centrifugal pump for lifting surface water to storage tanks for the puddling machines
- A drawing lift for raising water into the main dam
- A steam engine for sending timber and men down the shaft
- Double cylinder steam winding engine
- Double-decked cages with over winding safety bell
- Two Corish flue boilers

The intensification of the mechanization at the Prince of Wales mine is also demonstrated in a lithograph produced in 1866, along with an early 1865 photograph of the engine house and an 1866 photograph of the mine site (Figure 6 and Figure 7). The 1870 Nivens Mining map and 1872 Sebastopol Parish map demonstrate the locations of the No. 1 shaft and the No. 2 shaft (initially named "New Prince of Wales" (Figure 8 and Figure 9). 1868 was a tumultuous year for the Prince of Wales mine. The Prince of Wales Gold Mining Company was taken to the supreme court by the Bonshaw Mining Company, to the south, with the latter accusing the Prince of Wales mine of willfully destroying the plaintiff's land by allowing sludge to run over their property (The Ballarat Star 1868, p. 2). The Prince of Wales mine was also embroiled in legal matters with the Working Miners mine, to the north (The Ballarat Star 1868, p.2). The dispute with the Working Miners was over reef ownership, resulting in a riot (Prince of Wales Mine 2023). This dispute between the Prince of Wales and the Working Miners led to a physical underground battle in 1874, with workers building barricades underground (Prince of Wales Mine 2023). Despite being caught up in legal battles, the Prince of Wales mine continued to do well, taking 2oz of gold per ton (The Ballarat Star 1869, p.3). In 1871, the Prince of Wales gold mine was colloquially referred to as, "The Old Prince of Wales mine" (The Ballarat Star 1871, p.2). At this time, the mine was described as having a revival, with strong dividends being paid and good demand in the market (The Ballarat Star 1871, p.2). Drainage was always a major problem for mining companies in the area, and when the neighboring Bonshaw Company closed in 1874, the Prince of Wales had to build dams in the main reef-drives to prevent flooding. A dam failed, however, and water flooded quartz workings at the 400 ft level. The alluvial workings were abandoned soon after and the mine was closed in 1875 (Baragwanath 1923, p. 94). The Prince of Wales and Bonshaw Company was formed in 1885 to continue the works of the earlier Prince of Wales Company. In 1894, the age of equipment at the Prince of Wales mine began to show. A breakage occurred with the pumping engine, and as a result 40 men were unable to work while the repairs were underway (The Ballarat Star 1894, p.2). Between 1894 and 1899, gold extraction was low. It was reported that the stone was only carrying small amounts of gold; however, there was hope that the alluvial would be able to see the mine through (The Ballarat Star 1899, p.4). In an effort increase the efficiency of the aging puddling machines, the Prince of Wales mine tried to plug the cracks in the machinery with rubbish (The Ballarat Star 1899, p.4). The exact date of when the Prince of Wales ceased operations is not clear, although Baragwanath (1923, p. 145) states that the mine closed in 1904. In 1901, an article described quartz lode formations at a depth of 600 ft (183 m) at the Old Prince of Wales mine, with hopes that works at shallower depths could become profitable (The Ballarat Star 1901, p.6). Hopes to access the reef appear to have been short lived; however, as is documented in 1907, a tender was accepted for the sale and relocation of the machinery to Mariner' Reef in Maryborough (The Ballarat Star 1907, p.1). The last notable mention of the Prince of Wales Gold Mine is in reference to the machinery sold to the Mariner' Reef mine. The use of the older equipment resulted in a major accident, resulting in the winding gear snapping and dropping 2 ½ tons of ore to the bottom of the shaft (The Ballarat Star 1908, p.6). The machinery was described as, "hopelessly smashed", and the wreckage and debris collided with the walls of the mine with explosive force, causing the cistern to bulge and the water to rapidly rise (The Ballarat Star 1908, p.6). The Inspector of Mines was called to assess the machinery; however, no verdict or conclusions was chronicled (The Ballarat Star 1908, p.6). In the mid-20th century, the location of the No.3 mine shaft appears to have been used as a gravel reserve. (Figure 10). Based on the 1968 Sebastopol Town Map, the location was gazetted as "Mother Superior St. Joseph's Home"; however, it was revoked. Additionally, an annotation on the map demonstrates that the gravel reserve was revoked in 1985. The 1975

aerial image demonstrates that some activity has taken place at the No.3 shaft location; however, no clear indications of mining are depicted (Figure 11). Between 1990 and 2010, the land at the location of the No. 3 shaft was developed (Figure 12). The VHI site, Prince of Wales G.M. Co. No. 3 G.M. Co. Camp (H7622-0216), is currently mapped within the VHI as being located within the DEECA owned property boundary south of Miles Street. The site was recorded by David Bannear in 1999. The site was recorded by David Bannear in 1999. A history of the No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 shafts is presented in the site card (Bannear 1999 (e), pp- 5-10). The history is presented as a timeline of events and details the gold discovery, the installation of machinery, and some expenditures and dividends (Bannear 1999 (e), pp- 5-10). Bannear described the site as being very disturbed and stated that the gravel, sand, and mullock had nearly been completely removed (Bannear 1999 (e), p. 2). Bannear also states that two mullock heaps are present at the site and that the area between the mullock heaps “is a jumble” (Bannear 1999 (e), p. 2). Bannear describes the site as being in poor condition and that it is of local significance (Bannear 1999 (e), p. 1).

*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.*

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