
MONMOUTH CO.

Location

BOUNDARY ROAD NORTH ENFIELD, GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Municipality

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7622-0222

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 16, 2021

This site provides a representative sample of the nature, characteristics and extent of mining activities within the Monmouth Gully (referred to in historical records as the 'Monmouth Lead'). It exhibits features representative of the complete mining process, from prospecting activities right through to the processing of excavated materials by way of puddling and sluicing, the final retrieval of gold, and the release of sludge that has covered extensive portions of the wider landscape. The site also provides an excellent example of the effect early mining activities had on the landscape during the gold rush years.

This site is significant for its association with Theme 4 of Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes, 'Transforming and Managing Land and Natural Resources'. This site provides an understanding of how occupation and use of the land and the exploitation of its natural resources have changed Victoria's natural landscape, and how occupation and the use of the land contributed to the development of Mining and Mineral processing industries. Specifically, this site can be directly associated with Sub-Theme 4.5 'Gold Mining', which considers mining for gold, alluvial, deal lead and quartz, and includes mining sites and machinery, gold mining technology, and the loss of topsoil and vegetation in mining areas; all of which are represented at this site. Consequently, this site is also significant for its association with Sub-Theme 4.5 'Gold Mining' as it is an important example of early mining activities and its effect on Victoria's natural landscape and early mining technology.

Interpretation of Site

Updated 27/05/2021 Historical records indicate that mining activities had commenced within the Monmouth Gully by at least 1858 and as such, it can be assumed that the study area was being exploited by this time. Archaeological features and deposits including horse puddlers, mining shafts, prospecting holes, large piles of quartz, raised mullock platforms, artificial ditches and sludge deposits signify that the entire gully landform area was once a thriving gold mining lead where sub-surface material was not only mined, but also processed on site by way of sluicing and puddling. Sources indicate that horse puddling machines were pioneered in the Victorian Goldfields and as such, the presence of two horse puddlers indicates that this pioneering technology was used at this site (Goldfields Guide 2018). Characteristics of the recorded mining shafts and prospecting trenches differ. Some prospecting trenches are well defined rectangular shapes, whilst others are larger circular or ovoid in shape. According to McGowan (2003), methodology of trench digging differed between Chinese and European miners in the Victorian Goldfields, and it is likely that the round/ovoid shaped features are associated with Chinese miners, whereas the rectangular shaped trenches can be associated with European miners. As both trench types have been observed in this area, it can be assumed that both European and Chinese miners conducted mining activities within the Monmouth Gully. It can be concluded that this site, and the wider Monmouth Gully landscape was a part of the Monmouth Lead and was heavily utilised since at least 1858 for the purpose of gold mining. Pioneering technology developed in the Victorian goldfields was used on this site by way of horse puddlers, and material was not only mined, but processed on site by both European and Chinese miners.

Hermes
Number

11866

Property
Number

History

Contextual History:History of Place:

Heritage Inventory History of Site:

The Ballarat Star mentions the opening of a lead called the Monmouth in 1858.

MONMOUTH CO.

1898:recorded production of 150 ozs from 200 tons of ore (or 4.666 kg).

Updated 27/05/2021

Very few records specific to the site itself are available, however; an article in the Ballarat Star dated 22 March 1858 indicates that by this time, a 'Monmouth Lead' had been established two and a half miles south of South Durham (Figure 1). It is probable that this article refers to a new mining lead within the Monmouth Gully, the landform in which the site is located. As such, it is highly likely that all features identified during the survey are directly associated with the Monmouth Lead.

Despite the dearth of information available on the place, an extensive amount of information is available on the wider landscape. 1856 gold was discovered in hills surrounding the Enfield district and a small village was subsequently established. The villages within the Enfield Parish were known by their gold mining names, including Little Hard Hills approximately 5km southwest of the current study area (now known as Enfield State Park). By 1859 Little Hard Hills had acquired a school however, by 1864 a Wesleyan church and school had been established at the location that would become the town of Enfield. A Parish map dated 1866 indicates that at this time, the area

immediately surrounding the study area was characterised by 'Stringy Bark Forest' and did not form part of a village or settlement (Figure 2). An updated Parish map of the same area dated 1874 shows more detail and significantly more settlements, including within the area previously described as stringy bark forest (Figure 3). As mining activities progressed in the goldfields and the Victorian gold rush reached its peak, extensive alluvial diggings were established in the wider Ballarat area, including in the Enfield locality. Little Hard Hills and the diggings immediately surrounding the study area fell within No. 5 Division of the Ballarat Mining District (Figure 4)

and incorporated a vast network of leads, mine shafts and associated infrastructure. It can therefore be assumed that the archaeological features within the extent of H7622-0222 (Monmouth Co.), and those identified during the survey are directly associated with the No. 5 Division of the Ballarat Mining District.

Extensive mining activities since circa 1850 has caused significant modification to the land in the wider Goldfields region. One result of this land modification has materialised as what is known as 'sludge', or 'faff', comprised of the sands, silt and gravel extracted from the mines during sub-surface mining operations. This sludge has covered an extensive portion of the landscape, particularly around the floodplains of rivers and creeks. The sludge layer has been documented to be up to several metres deep, in some areas covering vineyards and filling reservoirs. During the survey a clearly defined layer of 'sludge' was observed. This sludge is particularly obvious in areas where

sub-surface stratigraphy is visible, such as exposed mining shafts. This layer of sludge can clearly be seen in Red arrows indicating sludge layer overlying natural ground surface.

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/>