
FORMER PORT FAIRY SLAUGHTERHOUSE AND BOILING DOWN WORKS

Location

GRIFFITHS STREET PORT FAIRY, MOYNE SHIRE

Municipality

MOYNE SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7321-0051

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site

The site, which would include such features as the chimney, buildings, pits/vats and fences, appears to have been largely dismantled. It is unclear as to the exact location and extent of this complex. It is thought to be more likely to be on the higher ground to the west of the located basalt rubble, from the edge of the terrace (or lower dune) where the ground is more hummocky and the growth denser. The map overlays place the chimney of the slaughterhouse in the vicinity of the current road. The road has been built up as a causeway, up to 1.5 to 2 metres high. The remains of the chimney could be buried under the road. To the north of the road where the airstrip is located, and structural remains of the complex would have been removed. To the south of the road, thick grasses (Marin grass) and encroaching dunes may cover the remains of footings, ground level and evidence of sub-surface features, such as pits.

Archaeological Significance	<p>The site has the potential to contain features related to the practice of slaughtering animals for meat as well as rendering their carcasses for a range of products from that of fertilizer to tallow. The arrangements of the site - the holding pens, the killing floors, pits, furnace area, refuse pits and administrative buildings would provide an indication of the efficiency and scale of the operation over time. Of particular interest would be any faunal contents in the refuse pits which would provide an insight into processing, butchery/reduction techniques. The butchery is likely to be rough but would provide a dataset of patterns exhibited on fauna utilised for specific function other than general meat removal. Boiling down was a huge enterprise in the 1840s, adapted from Russian techniques and introduced to Victoria and NSW in mid 1840s as a result of the depression. This site could have research potential for how the process was adopted, altered, modified, developed in Australia. The archaeological remains of few boiling down works have been identified in Victoria and NSW and so most information on techniques employed and scale comes from documentary sources.</p>
Historical Significance	<p>The site is associated with pastoral industry which was the earliest major commercial activity in the region. It represents a link in the chain in the production of meat and other animal based products from the farm to the wharf in Port Fairy. Boiling down works such as this was a primary factor in saving the pastoral industry during the 1840s where the depression meant a crash in meat and wool markets</p>
Hermes Number	146497
Property Number	

History

One of the earliest boiling down works in Port Fairy was established by James (Jimmy) Dawson in 1844 on two lots owned by James Atkinson comprising 50 acres on the northern shore of Port Fairy Bay, between Belfast Lough and East Beach.

Dawson was a pastoralist who had migrated to Port Phillip with his wife in 1840, purchasing a small property on the Yarra River. Prosperity and an expanding dairy cattle herd caused him to move to Victoria's Western District shortly after, taking up a cattle run. Dawson's business soon suffered due to the depression of the 1840s. In an attempt to overcome the situation, Dawson established a boiling down works.

The chimney of the boiling down works was a substantial structure and was marked on maritime navigation charts as a landmark. By early 1845 the boiling down works were operating successfully. In 1849, the lease of the property was transferred to a partnership of Henry Phillip, John Cullen and Thomas Edols. It was sold again to William Henry Barnes in 1858, with ten years to run. The site was described as containing a "good house, stockyards, cultivated and grass paddocks and 50 acres"

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/>