
Black Hill Heritage Precinct



BLACK HILL HERITAGE PRECINCT

Municipality

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO174

Heritage Listing

Ballarat City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The Black Hill Precinct is **historically** and **scientifically** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criterion A, C.2 and H.1).

(a) the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history;

(a3) importance in exhibiting unusual richness or diversity of built landscapes and cultural features

(a4) & (h1) importance for association with events, developments, cultural phases and individuals which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the region.

(c) its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history;

The Precinct is particularly significant as a cultural landscape that possesses mining sites which reflect the whole period of gold mining activity that characterized the Ballarat goldfields, including three different mining operations, alluvial mining between 1851-52, followed by deep alluvial lead mining from 1853-75 and the development of quartz reef mining from 1854-1918. In this regard the Precinct is significant as one of the few sites left in Ballarat with such visible evidence of gold mining operations, and one which has been largely

untouched by later residential infill development.

The Precinct is associated with the auriferous quartz ranges that spawned a number of important gold leads in Ballarat's mining history which played a pivotal role since 1851 in the economic and social development of Ballarat, as well as the rest of Victoria.

The hill itself is of significance as it provides key examples of early open-cut quartz gold mining, ranging from an immense cutting, a deep gorge created by the open cut mining that was blasted out of the sides of the hill, to remnant tunnels and shafts, and foundations. The Precinct is also important for its association with various gold mining companies, particularly the Black Hill Quartz Mining Company, which later became the Black Hill Mining Company and was integrated into the Victoria United Mining Company that operated on Black Hill between c.1854 and c.1915.

The Precinct is of archaeological importance for its potential to yield artefacts and technology evidence associated with quartz mining, and later for its association with a Brickworks industry that operated on or near the site of the former Black Hill Quartz Mining Company crushing battery.

The Black Hill Precinct is **aesthetically and socially** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criteria D.2, E.1 G.1).

(d) its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's Cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's cultural environments (including way of life, custom, process, land-use, function, design or technique);

(e) its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.

(g) the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

The Black Hill Precinct is a place of strong aesthetic value and is a significant foci of the Ballarat area. The attributes include the undeveloped park-like character of the hill itself, in such close proximity to the centre of Ballarat, the very visible south face of the hill with its dramatic appearance brought about by years of open-cut mining, and dark patches of *Pinus radiata*, re-forestation. The man-made cultural landscape visually defines the limits of 19th century urban growth of Ballarat in this area. The Black Hill Reserve also provides a unique vantage point, a popular lookout spot providing panoramic across the city of Ballarat and the surrounding districts to Mount Warrenheip and distant countryside views.

The Precinct is highly valued for recreational purposes by the local community. The area was reserved as early as 1907 as a public recreation area by the East Ballarat Council who wanted to ensure the land remained free from urban development. Various community groups in particular the Black Hill Progress Association. Black Hill, a community based voluntary association, with the aim of 'beautification of the locality' began re-forestation of parts of Black Hill, using predominantly *Pinus radiata*, not long afterwards. In 1917 in collaboration with local schools, they planted over 1000 pines in avenues and in 1940 a tourist road was constructed to the Black Hill lookout.

Hermes Number 156832

Property Number

Physical Description 1

The Black Hill Precinct is especially characterised by the Black Hill Public Park Reserve, by adjacent open and treed Crown Land to the south and east of the Reserve, and by a small number of cottages adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the Reserve.

The Precinct centres around land surrounding the Black Hill Reserve. The northern boundary follows the rear of properties fronting Chisholm Street. The southern boundary generally follows Clissold Street. The East and west boundaries follow the parkland.

The Black Hill precinct includes the Black Hill public reserve and some privately owned land in Clissold and Chisholm Streets. Black Hill was originally known as 'Bowdun' by the Watha Wurrung people and was described as "Black Hill" by William Urquart the government surveyor who surveyed the region in 1851.

Black Hill forms part of the auriferous quartz ranges in the Ballarat region. The post contact history of Black Hill was characterised by gold mining over three different eras. Shallow alluvial mining occurred in 1851 - 1852, followed by the working of deep alluvial lead from 1853 - 1875 and finally the development and working of quartz reefs in the underlying bedrock in 1854-1918.

Black Hill was a difficult area to mine, as the area had no water supply to wash dirt and remove the gold. Miners had to bag the dirt, roll the bags down the hill and wash it in the Yarrowee Creek. By 1853/54 a windmill was erected to supply power to drive a four-head battery. In 1855 the battery was relocated to the Historical Overview bottom of the hill and converted to run on steam power. It is thought that this battery was the first to be erected in Australia. Changes in technology also wrought changes to the landscape. From the late 1850's to early 1900's the landscape was pitted with shafts, mullock heaps, debris, tramway trestle bridges over the Yarrowee Creek and almost bare of vegetation. South of the Yarrowee Creek contained water reservoirs and mullock heaps on land now bounded by Princes, Morris and Newman Streets. Six companies were working the area by 1860.

Open cut mining commenced in earnest in the late 1850's by the Black Hill Quartz Crushing Company, later became the Black Hill Company Limited. Open cut mining became the sole method of mining until 1864. In 1861, a new sixty-head battery was installed and the Black Hill Company was processing 100 tons of quartz per week. The company purchased the surrounding claims and held about 40 acres, encompassing much of the hill and land to the south of Yarrowee Creek.

Open cut mining continued with tunnels extended more than half a mile long and the distinctive cliff began appearing from about 1863. Between 1862 and 1870, the company produced 1019 kg of gold, the processing site included a large steam driven battery which would have been located opposite the present Newman Street footbridge, a transport railway and foundry. By 1907 mining operations decreased and the area became popular as a public recreation facility. Reservation of land to form the reserve began in 1907 and the last reservation occurred in 1983. A brickworks and the Davey's Paint Factory also co-located on the Hill and as the ceased operations, became incorporated into the public reserve.

Revegetation activities occurred at various sites in the reserve. On Arbor Day in 1913, boys from state schools planted trees to make the hill "a more sheltered and attractive lookout". The Black Hill Progress Association was formed in 1917 with the aim of the beautification of the locality. On Arbor Day 1917, boys from Humffray Street, Black Hill and Queen Street State Schools planted over 1,000 pines in avenues. A lookout was also erected and paths formed from the streets to the reserve and lookout.

Further tree planting occurred to the 1980's by various community groups and the Council. The reserve also benefited from sustenance and relief work between 1927 and 1932, constructing pathways, planting trees and fencing. The tourist roadway was constructed in 1940 to provide a scenic look to the Reserve.

Key remnants of mining activity remains including the visible scarring and debris from the open cut era, vertical and horizontal shafts, foundations that may be attributed to the crushing battery, two concrete structures possibly used to house explosives and brick kerbing. A few residential buildings are located in the south east of the precinct and are Victorian vernacular in style. It is possible that one or two may date as early from the 1860's.

The Black Hill precinct is important as one of the few visible and generally untouched mining sites left in Ballarat. The site is pivotal in its role in the economic and social development of Ballarat from 1851 and for the remaining artifacts that can contribute to a better understanding of the place and the technology used. The site is important for the views from the precinct to Ballarat and as a significant landmark. Afforestation. The precinct is also important as a location for public recreation and culturally important for its association with community groups.

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/>