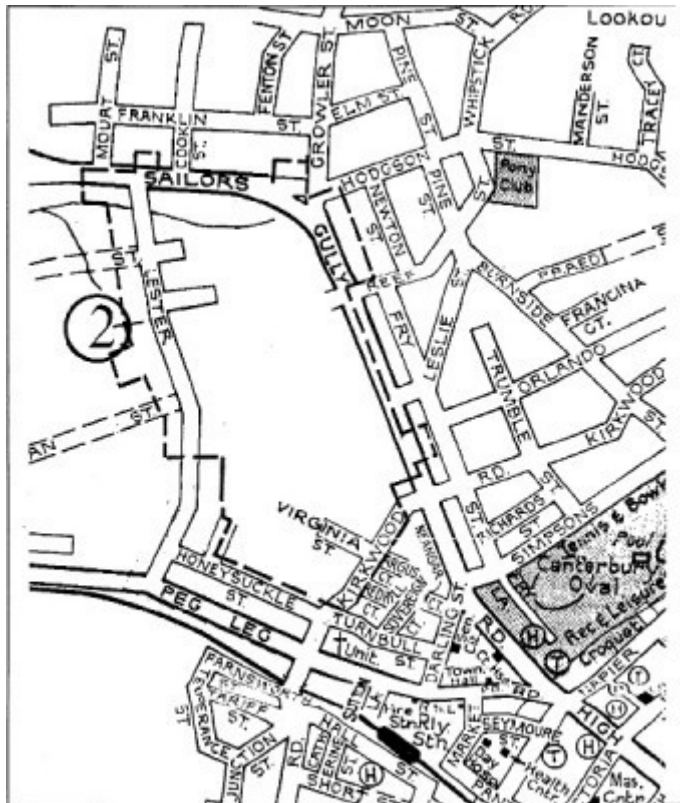


Specimen Hill Precinct



Sailors Gully Hotel, 104 Sailors Gully Road, although rebuilt the site has long associations with social life on an important gold field.



Specimen Hill Precinct

Location

LESTER STREET, EAGLEHAWK, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Municipality

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO22

Heritage Listing

Greater Bendigo City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 9, 2023

What is significant?

How is it significant?

Why is it significant?

Specimen Hill includes some remnants of walling, houses and commercial and community buildings as well as evidence of distinct phases in mining operations. It is a valuable reminder of the broad complex of houses, industrial and communal structures which typified the mining districts of Bendigo and Eaglehawk. Although it now longer has that more dense urban character which was once a part of the townscape, the scattered surviving landforms and buildings are sufficiently close together and retain visual links which give a strong representation of the character of the is part of the field in the most active years of mining.

Mining Significance:

The economic significance of the Virginia Hill mine is summarized in another paper. The surviving buildings are the most important physical evidence of this activity, enhanced by the sand dumps and mining remnants to the west of Sailors Gully Road and forming a picturesque backdrop to the houses here and along Reef Street, Mount Street and elsewhere. Their humble character, surviving stone walls and gardens (8 Reef Street), demonstrate a working class life style now long gone, but one which was the basis for Eaglehawk's existence and which survives more dramatically here than anywhere else in the Borough.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Greater Bendigo - Eaglehawk & Bendigo Heritage Study, Graeme Butler & Associates, 1993;
Other Names	Specimen Hill Mining and Residential,
Hermes Number	161931
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Mining Elements

(also see Mining Areas, Vol 3)

Virginia Hill mining features include:

1. Virginia Hill shaft site at the southern end of the area with the remains of the brick winding engine foundations in the vicinity.
2. Specimen Hill United shaft site in the centre of the area on the eastern side, with the remains of the brick winding engine foundations in the vicinity.
3. New Argus shaft site at the northern end of the area on the eastern side, with the remains of the brick winding engine foundations and an essentially intact mullock dump in the vicinity.
4. Two sets of cyanide vats, more or less midway between the Virginia Hill and Specimen Hill shaft sites. The first group, with an approximately east-west orientation, consists of nine vats, seven of which have brick-lined cores and all have cemented outer linings. The second group, further to the south and with an approximately north-west south-east orientation, consists of five corrugated iron vats.
5. An extensive area of relatively undisturbed battery and covering the south-western corner of the area in the vicinity of the Virginia Hill shaft site.
6. An extensive area of partially excavated battery sand covering the south-eastern corner of the site and up to and beyond the site of the Specimen Hill shaft. This sand is banked up behind a rubble stone wall along the western side of Sailors Gully Road.
7. A length of more or less continuous open stope workings is along the line of the West Specimen Hill Reef.

These workings appear to be partially filled in and at the southern end are completely buried beneath the battern sands covering this part of the area.

8. Beyond the northern end of the open stope workings there is a line of four moderately sized mullock dumps, at more or less regular intervals, each surrounding a partially filled shaft.

In 1923, at the end of more than 70 years of continuous mining activity in the Bendigo/Eaglehawk area, the Bendigo office of the Mines Department prepared a geological map of the Bendigo Gold Field. This was based on survey work undertaken by H S Whitelaw. This map contains about 500 surface mining features, including: 300 named shafts, 57 sand/mullock/pyrites dumps, 36 named alluvial gullies, 34 open reef workings, 20 + machinery sites and 6 tunnels. A rapid survey of 320 of these sites (including nearly all of those which were economically significant), in order to provide the preliminary basis for that aspect of the Bendigo heritage study and this report, indicates that at only 102 of them are there any traces of past mining activity. Of these, very provisionally, only about 40 sites are significant. That is about 13 percent of all sites visited (or 8 per cent of the total identified in 1923) have so far been Judged to possess sufficient significance to warrant at least some form of protection. The surface mining remnants which have been identified so far in the Bendigo/Eaglehawk area consist of: 1 chimney, 3 sets of cyanide vats, 1 area of hydraulic sluicing, 6 sets of machinery, 45 machinery foundations, 17 mining dams, 48 mullock dumps, 5 open stopes, 11 poppet heads, 1 pyrites dump, 1 quartz outcrop, 1 sand dam, 133 sand dumps, 15 shaft sites, 2 areas of shallow alluvial working, 1 area of surface sluicing and 1 tramway foundation.

The Virginia Hill area contains:

1. the largest collection of cyanide vats. There are smaller sets at the Prince of Wales and Stanfield sites (4 and 3 respectively);
2. three of the 45 sets of machinery foundations. The New Argus foundations are the best of the three sets, with respect both to the condition of the brickwork and its setting. There are other sites, such as the Central Nell Gwynne and Deborah, which contain foundations for other than just the winding engines, but no other brick foundations appear to be in such good condition as those at the New Argus site;
3. an almost intact and sizable mullock dump. The majority of the 48 extant mullock dumps have been disturbed

at some time or another. There are probably better large dumps at the Pearl, Pearl East, Pearl South, Stanfield and Suffolk United sites, but none is so readily accessible and as visibly dominant as the New Argus mullock dump; 4. one of the few relatively intact open stope workings outside of the Victoria Hill area. There are other open stope workings at Acadia, Danger Hill, Great Southern Extended and New Prince of Wales No.1, but all these other workings appear to have been disturbed in one way or another recently. In addition, at the northern end of the open stope workings on Virginia Hill, there is a line of 4 shafts and associated mullock dumps which continue this line of working underground and appear to be related to the original claims/leases held on this ground; each shaft being associated with the operations of a particular party/company. This appears evident from the 1871 lease plan. It has not been possible as yet to locate the earlier lease plans prepared in 1859/60 for this area, but it seems that this line of workings provides some of the very best extant evidence within the Bendigo/Eaglehawk area of the earliest form of reef workings; and

5. an almost intact and sizable sand dump in the south-western corner of the area. With the exceptions of the Central Nell Gwynne dump and this dump, all the other sand dumps have been substantially disturbed by recent sand treatment operations.

Although the evidence of past mining activities presented within the Virginia Hill area is not quite so diverse as that provided within the Victoria Hill area, the area contains a number of intact and significant sites; it provides a background and a context for a number of significant sites in Sailors Gully Road and its vicinity, and the south-eastern corner was formerly occupied by the Eagle Company, which was one of the earliest and also one of the foremost mining companies in the Eaglehawk division. Virginia Hill was originally known as Specimen Hill.

Physical Description 2

Contributory Streets:

Lester, mid-Victorian era

Sailors Gully Road, mid-Victorian era, brick, timber walls

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/>