
FORMER DURHAM CHINESE CAMP

Location

CHILTERN-RUTHERGLEN ROAD CORNISHTOWN, INDIGO SHIRE

Municipality

INDIGO SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8225-0142

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site Despite the lack of evidence of surface features, ceramic remnants and brick have been collected from the area and the site has further archaeological potential.

The location of Durham is of significance as one of a series of short lived mining towns settled during the 19th century by both Europeans and Chinese, and appears to have enough integrity and potential for further sub-surface features; including structures and portable material.

Archaeological Significance Further assessment of Durham, comprising historical research, archaeological survey and excavation of the less disturbed areas on private land has the potential to contribute to the corpus information regarding Chinese settlement in the north east in particular, as well as more broadly. Chinese settlement at the All Saint Winery at Wahgunyah, for example is well known and comparison to this, and other Chinese settlements in nearby mining areas, may allow a more thorough understanding of the changes the ethnic group experienced after the goldrush of the late 1850s.

Historical Significance The site is significant through its association with 19th century mining in the north-east and more broadly with the history of non-European groups in Australia.

Hermes Number 162345

Property
Number

History

As part of the Indigo Mining Division, encompassing Chiltern, Indigo and Rutherglen, settlement west of Chiltern did not commence until the gold rush finally reached the north-east part of Victoria. Here Woolshed diggings were worked first, as early as 1853. As the first easy alluvial diggings were exhausted, new fields were opened up at Indigo at Chiltern in 1858; followed by the rush to Rutherglen in 1860.

By the end of the year 1860, seven deep leads and seven reefs were being worked. Thomas Thornely reported that the population of the Indigo Mining Division in December 1860 was 12,905, including 1925 Chinese (Lloyd and Kennedy 2007: 28 and 29). Parish and geological plans of the period (i. e. Everett 1868) refer to mining settlements such as Durham, Indigo, Cornishtown, each separated by 12 kilometres or so. However, mining on the Indigo was mostly shallow alluvial mining and/or search for gold found in deep leads that was easily exhausted. Places such as Durham quickly declined after the 1860s and the Chinese men who stayed in the region, diversified to work in the winery and other local industries (Lloyd and Kennedy 2007:155).

There is little direct documented evidence of the site, but oral history provides good supporting sources for its existence.

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/>