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# Ironbark Hill - Roeder Street Precinct

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## Location

Arms, Bell, Bennett, Casley, Curtis, Duncan, Hayes, Jebb, Prout, Quick, Rae, Roeder, Thomas, Truscott & Victoria Streets, and Havilah Road IRONBARK and LONG GULLY, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO844

## Heritage Listing

Greater Bendigo City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 24, 2024

### What is significant?

The Long Gully Ironbark area had the largest concentration of deep shafts mines anywhere in the world during the late 19th century, and the Ironbark Hill/Roeder Street heritage precinct, represents one of the earliest mining settlements of the area. These mines were the wealthiest in Bendigo, operated by the largest company mines, owned by the richest mining magnates in Victoria, such as J.B. Watson, Joseph Bell and George Lansell as well as Carl Roeder. The large company mines dominated the development of the area. They were a major employer in the area and also contributed to the highest incidence of unemployment in Bendigo, when they ceased operating. In addition the area was home to some of the successful mine managers such as Jewell and Truscott. The mines spearheaded the quartz mining boom of the late 1860s and early 1870s that transformed the image of Bendigo. The Long Gully Ironbark area is associated with mining on the Garden Gully line of reef, the Victoria & Pandora Shaft, the Victory and Pandora Amalgamated mines, Victory Shaft, Bells, Old Carlisle, North Garden Gully United, Pass-by, Unity mines, Garden Gully United mine.[1] Other mines included Golden Fleece, Central Garden Gully/North/Kent, and Watson's Kentish/Carlisle United.

The collection of 1860s to 1870s miners' cottages in the vicinity of Roeder, Prout, Thomas, Casley, Curtis, Bell, Duncan, Jebb, Quick, Truscott, Victoria and Hayes Streets as well as later 19th century cottages form part of the historic mining landscape associated with Ironbark Hill. The area was worked from the earliest alluvial and quartz period of gold mining in 1852 to the 1950s and is associated with highly specialized copper and tin miners from

Cornwall and silver miners from the Harz mining region of Germany. The distinctive characteristic of the precinct is the diverse collection of miners' cottages that are clustered around the upper slopes of the hill and spill down the hill towards Ironbark Gully to the south and Long Gully to the north. These cottages represent some of the earliest cottages in the area, sited in apparent haphazard fashion along the routes the miners took to walk to work. The short irregular pathways provide the street pattern in the area, each of which is named after a local miner, who lived in the area such as Roeder, Prout, Casley, Prout, Thomas, Truscott, Bell among others.

The most significant element within the precinct are the small single gable or double gable roof, weatherboard and sometime brick or stone cottages, which were built in irregular fashion on leased Crown land, Miners Residency Areas. The range of different designs within this building typology is high and includes some of the earliest basic two room miners' cottages as well as more elaborate mine manager's dwellings and examples of speculative late 1890s housing development by Truscott, a successful local miner. It also shows examples of quality 1920s bungalows and good individually designed late 1930/40s homes that are associated with revival of the area following government reclamation of contaminated mine wastelands.

Some pockets of settlement within the precinct have been remarkably stable over a 150 year period. These factors have ensured the survival of many very small, flimsily built timber cottages. The buildings exhibit continuous use, small scale alterations and changes that are typical of a working class area. Within the vicinity of these small cottages are examples of elaborate mine manager's villas and substantial homes of local businessmen. The hilly topography of the area is marked by the picturesque mature gardens, large trees and street trees of local Ironbark, which have grown well in the comparatively watered slopes of Ironbark hill.

Much of the former mine land to the south and east of the area now remains reserved as open space and collectively forms one of the most comprehensive collections of mining artefacts which spans the entire period of mining in Bendigo from the earliest reef workings from 1853 through to the 1950s. The physical framework of these early settlements also remains largely intact. Only the original quarter acre blocks, the Miners Residency Area, have most often been subsequently subdivided and developed with in-fill housing of the 1950s/60s, with some recent development.

#### **How is it significant?**

The Ironbark Hill has historic, architectural, aesthetic, scientific and social significance at a local level to the City of Bendigo. **(Criteria A, B, C, D, E and H)**

#### **Why is it significant?**

##### **Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.**

- 1) The Ironbark Hill/Roeder Street heritage precinct is historically significant as a good representative example of an early working class miner's settlement dating from the mid 1860s located amongst some of the wealthiest deep quartz mines of Bendigo and Eastern Australia. The collection of early cottages and later Victorian villas clearly demonstrates the way in which the design, fabric and decorative embellishments reflected the evolving status of the owners. It provides an important insight into the domestic lives and typical home of mainly Cornish miners and related trades such as blacksmiths and engine drivers of Ironbark and Long Gully area.
- 2) The Ironbark Hill/Roeder Street heritage precinct is historically significant as an unregulated mining settlement that developed on Crown Land and Miners Residency Areas along unsurveyed roads between the mining shafts, battery and engine houses, chimneys, tailing dams, holding dams, and other debris associated with deep quartz gold mining. The groups of miners' cottages are representative of the diverse range of miner's cottage typology that includes examples of the Cornish vernacular 'long house' built by early emigrant Cornish miners, who formed a significant ethnic group in the area.
- 3) The arrival of Cornish and German miners to the area, often via South Australia, America and New Zealand are associated with one of the great migration streams of the nineteenth century - the movement of British and German metal miners to the mineral fields of the New World, the United States, South America, Australia, and in the late nineteenth century South Africa. This historical process relates Ironbark and Long Gully area and Victoria in an international context. It had its beginning with the collapse in the summer of 1866 of the Cornish copper mining industry. And resulted in the massive exodus of Cornish miners and their families, who introduced their mining labour practices, the tributing system, technology and culture into the area. Many of the German quartz reefers came from the German mines of the Harz region, often via California.

##### **Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.**

- 4) The miner's cottages of Ironbark Hill/Roeder Street heritage precinct are associated with one of the unique features of the Victorian goldfields- the Miners Residency Area, which allowed the development of working class

suburbs on Crown land amongst mining sites. Many cottages are still intact, and provide a rare record of the home occupiers in the Ironbark Hill area during the period, 1866-1882, listing their occupations as miners or associated jobs such as carter, engine driver, blacksmith and mine manager.

5) The miners' cottages form an important visual element in the cultural landscape of Ironbark Hill, which collectively retained a high degree of integrity and authenticity. Despite the fact that many original allotments have been subdivided with later infill development, the sporadic and scattered incidence of very small miners' cottages, which were erected prior to the establishment of formal roads, coupled with the hilly terrain and nearby mining archaeological wastelands, clearly tells the story of the early alluvial and quartz reef mining boom in Bendigo from the 1850s through to the major mining boom of the late 1860s and early 1870s. The physical fabric of the area traces the story when advances in technology allowed the formation of huge mining companies, the employment of waged miners, who continued to work in the area through periods of revitalisation during the 1890s, 1930s and 1950s.

6) The collection of miner's cottages, in authentic but scattered locations provides a rare opportunity to analyse the spatial relationship of each cottage to one another and juxtaposition of sites to former mines. The clusters of cottages reflect internal grouping of mutually supporting families and illustrates how they survived during times of hardship. The abrupt transition between tiny cottages and large Inter War bungalows reflects the longevity of original occupation and traditions, and the uneven play of fate in the lives of the miners. They represent homes of an expanding mine labour force during periods of boom during the late 19th and 20th century or demonstrate different economic circumstances of families in a very hierarchical structured mining industry. A mine manager's house stands out in contrast to an engine driver and mine engineer's cottage, which is itself more spacious than a waged or tribute miner's cottage. Other outstanding examples are the speculative purchase and development of land by local miners, who made it rich. The 20th century designs favoured by descendants of original miners illustrate intergenerational identity formation. It shows how the first settlers' relationship to the area changed from transitional and temporary to a permanent place of home.

**Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.**

7) The miners cottages and villas of Ironbark Hill/Roeder Street heritage precinct are associated with extensive archival materials, including but not restricted to the Quarterly Reports of the Mining Surveyors and Registrars, 1863-91, detailed social demographic information since 1861 particularly in Bendigo and Ballarat goldfields, scholarly research and publications as well as contemporary journals and diaries.

**Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or environments.**

**Criterion E: importance in exhibiting aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.**

8) The miners' cottages of Ironbark Hill/Roeder Street heritage precinct are an excellent representative example of the miner's cottage, particularly associated with German and Cornish settlement of Ironbark Hill.

9) The Ironbark Hill/Roeder Street heritage precinct has aesthetic significance as a cultural landscape that illustrates the rich diversity of a working class miner's settlement, a key feature of the Victorian 19th century goldfields. The size, shape and design of miners' cottages found in Ironbark Hill provides a historical and architectural record of a vernacular class of buildings that developed from the prefabricated timber frame tent and was influenced by traditional building technologies from Europe. Within the landscape are outstanding internal historic views of examples of more elaborate 19th century Victorian villas, fine Federation, as well as early 1920s and 1950s bungalows that were built in a hilly terrain. The unusual integration of undulating topography marked out by narrow short streets, picturesque mature gardens, former Mining Residency Areas, large dominating Ironbark trees and other eucalyptus street trees, which have grown tall in the well watered slopes of Ironbark Hill, all create a cultural landscape of high aesthetic quality.

**Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.**

10) The miners' cottages of Ironbark Hill/Roeder Street heritage precinct are particularly associated with the migration of German miners and their families to the Bendigo goldfields. Ironbark Hill was home to a number of very successful German quartz reefers, one of which was Carl Roeder, who had settled in the area in 1862. In 1871 he became the mine manager of one of the Victorian quartz reef mines. Roeder Street was named after him, and his house still remains in Prout Street nearby. Carl Roeder was one of a group of experienced miners trained at the School of Mines at Clausthal, in the Harz Mountain region of north Germany, and became an important local identity, mining investor, Chair of the Board into ventilation in mines and elected to the Bendigo City Council in the 1890s. Many of the early German miners, established early mining claims in the Ironbark area

are associated with Ironbark Hill settlement such as Carl Roeder (Harz miner), Carl Schier (Harz miner), Carl Weber, H. Waswo and others like Christopher Ballerstedt mined nearby on Victoria Hill. Unlike the Cornish miners in the area, the majority of the German miners left as soon as they could and established businesses elsewhere.

[1] Tony Dingle, *Miners and their Cottages*, presented at 'Bendigo: Nothing But Gold' conference, October 2001, and Charles Fahey, Senior Lecturer in History, La Trobe University Bendigo, unpublished material.

Heritage Study/Consultant Greater Bendigo - Ironbark Heritage Study, City of Greater Bendigo, 2010;

Hermes Number 194519

Property Number

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*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/>*