
FORMER SANDHURST CEMETERY

Location

PARK ROAD BENDIGO, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7724-0626

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The archaeological significance is high, as the site contains the intact burials of Bendigo's pioneers.

The site is the original cemetery of Bendigo, with evidence showing that a majority of the interments still remain in situ today. As the site contains the remains of Bendigo's first non-indigenous settlers who came to the area during the first gold rush, the site is considered to be of high historic value.

Although the cemetery now lies under metres of earthen fill, it is clear from the documentary evidence that the fill was placed directly over the graves. There is evidence that the majority of the interments were never re-interred at another cemetery. Therefore the remaining graves now lie intact at the base of the earthen fill, in the position they were originally interred.

The surface of the site is in poor condition, with the entire original surface features destroyed. However subsurface it appears to be in good condition, with the earthen fill placed over the top in effect protecting the intact graves below.

The site comprises a former early settler cemetery with interments still in place, all surface evidence of the cemetery having been destroyed and the majority of the former cemetery now lying under metres of fill under a carpark. This is a rare occurrence in Victoria, with only a handful of similar sites known, the most notable being the Old Melbourne Cemetery underneath the Queen Victoria Market carpark. Therefore the overall scientific significance rating is high.

The site is considered to have high social values, as it is consecrated ground containing the remains of the earliest settlers of Bendigo. It also represents the optimism and hardship of the early days of Bendigo, the names of those interred revealing a broad segment of society who lived and died during the short time the cemetery was in operation.

A Government Camp was marked out on Camp Hill (now Rosalind Park) in Bendigo, by surveyor George Urquhart in 1852. The new camp contained the headquarters of government officials and police who were to oversee the Bendigo Gold fields. The former Sandhurst Cemetery was located on the eastern side of the government camp.

On the 23 March 1854, a new act was passed that required cemeteries to be positioned one mile outside of a township. Therefore burials at Sandhurst cemetery ceased, and Back Creek and White Hills cemeteries were established. During the operation of the Old Sandhurst cemetery, there were a total of 209 registered burials.

The condition of the Cemetery started to deteriorate. A number of complaints were put forward about the state of the cemetery. Several beautification projects were planned, but none were enacted.

Historical
Significance

In November 1872, the Bendigo Council carried a motion to begin necessary steps to remove the bodies from the old cemetery and reinter them at other cemeteries in the area. The applications were approved; however there is no evidence that a reinternment project ever occurred.

The cemetery reserve became part of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society grounds in the late 19th century. A large amount of fill was placed over the old cemetery. By 1929 the Agricultural Show had grown to take up the whole reserve, and constructed a number of structures on top of the old cemetery. The last Agricultural show held at the grounds was in 1967. Since then the structures on top of the old cemetery were demolished.

A carpark that services the Tom Flood Sports center was constructed over a portion of the old cemetery; while the northern extent is located under a grassy clearing.

Other Names SANDHURST BURIAL GROUND,

Hermes
Number 196132

Property
Number

History

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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/>