
FORMER DEEP CREEK SETTLEMENT

Location

OFF EASTERN HILL ROAD BLAMPIED, HEPBURN SHIRE

Municipality

HEPBURN SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7723-1249

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 7, 2019

What is significant?

The Deep Creek Settlement and its mining area is significant in relation to the initial alluvial phase of the Victorian goldrush. It is thought that the site was occupied between 1850s and 1860s.

Deep Creek Settlement consists of the remains of a single stone hut (intact but highly degraded) and four stone chimney features (also highly degraded). Adjacent to the settlement is the mining area that includes land which has been modified for ground sluicing. The mining area consists of worked (mined) land, area left in preparation for ground sluicing, an L-shaped banked dam and at least 4 water races leading to and out of the dam.

How is it Significant?

The site is of archaeological and historical significance due to it being a rare example of an intact alluvial mining site with an attached settlement.

Why is it significant?

The Deep Creek Settlement is of significance as a residential space for the miners that worked the adjacent mining area. An L-shaped dam was constructed immediately between the settlement and the mining area. Two water

races leading out from Mclachlans Creek to the south of the dam are thought to have provided the dam with water. These races are in the land between the settlement and to the east of McLachlans Creek. The dam also had a seasonal water source from the creek located between the settlement and dam feature. Two other water races leading out of the dam head north towards the worked and prepared ground sluicing area. The proximity of the mining area to the residential area, and the interconnected water races are a clear indication that the settlement and mining area were linked to each other.

The site is also significant as it informs how miners adapted to, organised space and modified the rural landscape surrounding them to suite their needs. The site has scientific archaeological value for further research and possible excavations.

Historical Significance The site associated with the mid nineteenth century alluvial mining and deep lead mining around the Daylesford area. The new site extent comprises a single stone hut, four chimney foundations and associated ground sluicing modifications. This site is a rare local example of an intact alluvial mining site with an associated settlement showing scientific archaeological value. The site can inform on how miners adapted to, organised space and modified the rural landscape to suit their needs.

Archaeological Significance The Deep Creek Settlement was occupied during the alluvial phase the Victorian gold rush between c.1850s-c.1860s. The settlement remnants were initially associated with the Deep Creek Mining Village (H7723-0682). The current site contains fragmentary stone remains, man-made water races, mining infrastructure and has no identified historical artefacts. This site demonstrates that there is significant potential for historical archaeological features, deposits or artefacts.

Hermes Number 202764

Property Number

History

Deep Creek was a prominent location for alluvial mining and deep lead mining even though its popularity declined after the 1870s and 1880s as quartz crushing increased around Daylesford. Deep Creek's population decline also mirrors the deterioration in alluvial working. In 1864 a total of 6,296 miners were recorded for the Hepburn region, of which 555 were based in Deep Creek (Reports of the Mining Surveyors and Registrars 1864). By 1874 Deep Creek's population had declined to 156 miners, and by 1884 was only 75, indicating that the gold was not abundant enough to be payable (Reports of the Mining Surveyors and Registrars 1874; 1884).

The Deep Creek landscape and Wombat Forest, in general, welcomed many people from different cultural backgrounds. Along with the Swiss and Italians, large numbers of Cornish, Scottish, English, Irish and Chinese miners, and small contingents of Greeks, Danes, French, Germans and Swedes arrived (Roxburgh 1931, p. 4).

Wombat Forrest and its status as a protected forest have given shelter to many features related to the gold rush period. Wombat Forest contains within it the remains of many miles of water races, most notably the Duff and Menadue water races. Along with water races, there are several remains of huts, mostly identifiable by the surviving chimney features, dams, sluiced gullies and pothole mines all over the forest. One of the huts is preserved well and has become a landmark in the forest named Le Frankie's hut. Specific to this listing is the remains of a boiler and associated furnace foundations found near other example of mining infrastructure.

David Bannear from the Federation University of Australia first explored the Deep Creek area in the 1990s and recorded it in the Victoria Heritage Inventory (VHI id: H7723-0682). Prior information on the site was limited and consisted of a rough sketch map marking the remaining features which primarily focused on the four chimney features, and an enclosed bluestone hut. Local historians have identified and recorded the location of the Sailor Prince Tunnel and the Ballarat Tunnel.

According to an 1893 geological survey map of the county of Talbot, the site is marked although untitled, and it refers to Sailor Prince tunnel which is located slightly south-east of the site. Deep Creek Settlement is located close to many recorded mining claims that include the Princess Alexandria Claim, Ballarat, Corinella and Iverson mining claims to be the most prominent.

Historical information about DCMV and the Deep Creek landscape was almost non-existent as records about the site were found to be lacking. According to the Heritage Victoria Database (HVD), DCMV and the landscape encompassing Deep Creek experienced shallow alluvial gold mining during the mid-1850s. It was initially thought that the Deep Creek Settlement (DCS) was, in fact, DCMV and that its location was incorrectly marked due to the limited availability of GPS devices at the time. It is now understood that DCMV and the DCS are separate settlements located within a couple of hundred metres of each other in the Deep Creek landscape. Deep Creek also supplied water for two primary water races constructed in 1865 and follows a route to Yandoit (Bannear 1999, p. 6). It was also noted that the primary period of sluicing near Daylesford lasted between the 1850s to 1880s and that by 1861 creek sluicing was exclusive to Chinese miners (Bannear 1999, p. 6).

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/>