
CHINESE HAND-PUDDLERS AND HUTS SITE

Location

LINCOLN GULLY ROAD CRESWICK, HEPBURN SHIRE

Municipality

HEPBURN SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7623-0344

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 6, 2021

No other records of hand-drawn mills are known in this area, but similar-sized mills are reputed to have been used in other gold-rush areas and countries, e.g. The Arastre mills used by Mexicans in California (Figs. 13 & 14). Thus the site is unique in this area, and with simple protection and interpretation, would contribute valuably early mining sites, techniques and cultural development of the Creswick goldfield – where gold extraction was very dependent on efficient water use and innovation. The connection of the site to the extensive ‘Creswick water race distribution system’ built in the 1850-1870s is important, and the dam to the west of the site, and various large and small water races could be presented as very visible as structures that were vital parts of mining settlement history (Davies et al 2014; Turnbull 2012). The differences between the more normal ‘horse drawn gold puddling mills’ and these ‘miniature’ hand drawn mills provide a stark example of the large differences in mining methods used by miners from different backgrounds on the Goldfields (see video by Henderson and Van Beverin 2018).

Interpretation
of Site

The human-powered mills were probably developed and used as small and inexpensive versions of the many hundreds of horse-powered puddling mills used in the Creswick area by mainly European miners in the later 1800s and early 1900s. These mills would require much less water than used by standard horse drawn mills. Currently the place has light road traffic on Lincoln Gully Road through the Creswick Regional Park, and is sometimes used by gold fossickers and walkers. The site is 100m south of the Creswick – Melbourne Rd, and 300 m from the old Koala Park /picnic area that lies north of that road. The Goldfields Walking Trail runs parallel to Creswick Creek and through the Koala Park. There was an area of land designated on maps as a 'Chinese Camp' on between Creswick Creek and Old Melbourne Road, northeast of this mill site, near Creswick Creek (Wettenhall 2016). This land set aside as a Chinese Camp may have been used by workers at the Puddling Site, but the camp was resumed by the Forestry agency in the early 1900s (Turnbull 2012).

Hermes
Number

207146

Property
Number

History

This small but unique site was occupied and used by Chinese miners at times between 1880 and 1910, when numerous larger 'horse drawn' puddlers were in use in the area. The mills developed by innovated Chinese who lacked land, water and grazing rights and capital for horses. It was first chanced upon after a fire in 2010. There were some 10 circular trenches visible at this puddling site, now reduced to 6 or 7 through damage from road works, piping (from Lincoln storage). The remnants of small two hut sites on the east side of the site are now piles of slat rubble. Larger materials such as bricks and quartz stones have been removed. The uniqueness of the site has attracted much interest from local Goldfields historians, and a video of the site and hand-puddling principle was produced in Creswick (Van Beeren and Henderon 2018).

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/>