
DOMESTIC REFUSE DUMP

Location

HUNTLY-FOSTERVILLE ROAD, FOSTERVILLE

Municipality

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7824-0107

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 6, 2023

What is significant?

The domestic refuse site has the potential to contain archaeological remains associated with the late 19th and early 20th century domestic occupation of the area by miners employed at the nearby gold mines.

How is it significant?

The domestic refuse site is of local historical significance.

Why is it significant?

The domestic refuse site is of historical significance for its association with late 19th century gold miners in regional Victoria. The site has the potential to yield information about the ethnicity, lifestyles and activities of the Fosterville goldminers.

Interpretation of Site

Early to mid 19th century land use of the area was predominantly pastoral. Following the discovery of gold in the 1850s private prospecting and alluvial mining commenced on a small scale. The land on which the site is situated was owned by M.A. Joachim, it is not known if Joachim resided on the land. Potential association of the site with 19th century pastoral occupation or small-scale mining cannot be discounted. In the late 19th century pastoral activities continued; however, industrial deep lead and open cut gold mining became prolific throughout the area. The site is in relatively close proximity to Hunt's Reef and is likely associated with the domestic occupation of miners. The presence of a boiler plate in the refuse dump is consistent with use by miners; however, it is possible the boiler plate was a later addition to the dump. In the early 20th century, the township of Fosterville declined as many of the larger mines closed; however, cyanide works continued to operate until 1939. Mid 20th century land use was predominantly agricultural. The water races and dams established for mining were reused for agricultural activities. In the late 20th century gold mining was reestablished in Fosterville resulting in extensive disturbance to the wider landscape. Several mining evaporation ponds are adjacent to the site to the northwest and roads have been established to the southeast and west of the site. The establishment of this infrastructure has likely caused disturbances to the site. Modern gold mining activities continue within the site to the present day. The site comprises a scattering of late 19th century surface artefacts indicative of mining activities and potentially a domestic residence in the area. Previous surveys indicate the site was a good example of a domestic refuse dump (Wright 1989). No specifically domestic artefacts were observed during the recent site inspection; however, surface visibility was poor, and the site has likely experienced disturbance from modern mining activities. The site has low-moderate potential for subsurface archaeological remains of a domestic refuse dump associated with residential occupation of the area by miners in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Other Names Site 47 - Domestic Refuse Dump,

Hermes Number 209461

Property Number

History

European settlement in the area began in the late 1830s with squatters breeding sheep for their hides, wool and meat (Marshall 1996, p.3). The main township of Fosterville (formerly Ellesmere) was situated to the north-west of the site (Figure 4). Gold was discovered in Fosterville in the early 1850s; from this period alluvial mining, including gold panning and shallow diggings took place however, land use remained predominantly pastoral until the 1890s (Marshall 1996, p.3). The site was within Allotment 29A of the township of Fosterville, which was purchased by M.A. Joachim by 1876 (Figure 4). By 1894 the township of Fosterville had been formalised, and the small alluvial mining operations had given way to deep lead and open cut industrial scale mining (Ballinger 2020, p.44). The site is situated to the east of Hunt's Reef between the former claims of Bloomfield and Party and O'Keefe (Figure 5). There were at least 300 residents in Fosterville by January 1896 (Snoek 1988, p.12). It is also noted that at this time structures were becoming more substantial, huts and tents were replaced by weatherboard or mudbrick cottages (Snoek 1988, p.12). The excavation of a 26-mile (41.8km) channel resolved water supply issues with at least eleven batteries operating by 1897 (Bannear and Watson 1994, p.38). Gold mining declined across Victoria in the early 20th century due to the price of gold, the intensive works required to obtain it and the onset of World War One (Ballinger 2020, p.45). The township of Fosterville began to decline in 1903 and mines began to close in 1906 (Snoek 1988, p.12). As the residents began to leave Fosterville, they are recorded to have taken the weatherboard structures with them (Snoek 1988, p.12). Snoek notes that this is reflected in the archaeological record in 1988, with the only remnant domestic structures being mudbrick, aside from footings (p.12). Mining in Fosterville had all but ceased in the early 20th century; however, cyanide works and ore treatment plants continued to operate until 1939 (Bannear n.d., p.197). The Domestic Refuse Site was first identified during a survey for a 1989 Supplementary Heritage Report (Wright), associated with the Environmental Effects Statement for the Fosterville Gold Mine (at the time Bendigo Gold Limited). Remnants of a former

residence (Site 46) were also identified, approximately 75m to the northwest of the site during the 1989 survey. Little detail is provided in the Supplementary Heritage Report for either site, the House site (Site 46) is described as deteriorated and associated with the domestic refuse dump, no details are provided as to the type of structure, footings or other features that demonstrated a house had been present at the site (1989, p.11). The domestic refuse dump is simply described as a “good example” (Wright 1989, p.11). The location of the former residence has experienced extensive disturbance since 1989 and is not considered to have any archaeological potential (Geiberras and Hocking 2022).

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/>