
CANVASTOWN

Location

SIPTHORPES TRACK, DART RIVER

Municipality

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8424-0029

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 10, 2023

What is significant?

The township extent including all features and archaeological deposits associated with the development and occupation of the township during the late 19th to early 20th century.

How is it significant?

The site is significant for its potential to contain archaeological deposits demonstrating habitation, commerce and industry on the remote Gibbo/Dart River goldfields during the late 19th to early 20th century. The site is also historically significant for its association with the establishment and occupation of the Dart River/Gibbo goldfields and mining industry.

Why is it significant?

Archaeological deposits will contribute to our understanding of life on in remote goldfields, settlement patterns in the Dart River and Gibbo Range area and mining settlement work life patterns, particularly in relation to the Dart River Battery site and more broadly the Gibbo goldfields from the late 1870s. Historically, the site contributes to our understanding of gold mining, settlement and industry of the Dart River area, and more broadly of the gold mining period in Victoria's history.

Interpretation of Site	Canvastown was founded along Little Dark Creek in response to the Gibbo goldrush, which began in 1877. It is unknown when the township was set up, however it was well established by 1883, supporting the surrounding goldfields. The township provided a variety of resources and accommodation to the surrounding mining industry and miners, including a hotel, store, blacksmith, providing a resting place on the Gibbo gold fields and home to prospectors and travellers. It was believed to have functioned as a township until the early 1920s. The site is currently located in the Alpine National Park.
Hermes Number	209635
Property Number	

History

Canvastown (also known as Wye's Camp and Little Dark Creek) was established as a town centre in 1877 along the Little Dark Creek. The site is south and east of Siphthorpe Track and is overgrown with shrubs and blackberries. The site contains a series of flat benches, marked with fireplace ruins. The Henry Barnes Hotel is situated at the centre of the site and comprises a stone fireplace and glass and ceramic artefact scatters. The remains of a blacksmith are also present to the east of the site. Canvastown functioned as a resting place on the Gibbo gold fields and was home to prospectors and travellers. It was believed to have functioned as a township until the early 1920s. The Gibbo Rush began in 1877, it is not yet known when Canvastown (also known as Wye's Camp) was established along Little Dark Creek. Canvastown was well established by 1883, when it was visited and described as; "A mile up the Little Dark River, and we reach Wye's Camp, or Canvas Town, as it is more popularly designated. I look for the "first-class accommodation " which the Wodonga people tell me I shall find, but I look in vain. Twenty tents comprise the camp, and all are occupied. Wandering among the canvas and bark habitations, I find a good Samaritan in Jack Sheehan, the representative of an Albury syndicate, and as I was a stranger [...] he took me in, or else I might have camped beside a log, as others have done, until now...." Monday 27 August 1883 The Australasian Sketcher with Pen and Pencil: "The Dark River Diggings" 27 Aug 1883 - THE DARK RIVER DIGGINGS. - Trove (nla.gov.au) "There are at present about 25 prospectors at Wye's camp, etc. (mostly young men), living in tents. The camp is well situated on a flat spur close to the junction of the two Dark Creeks. In this cold frosty weather tents without fireplaces are not very comfortable, but "the boys" seem jolly and lively, and kill time of the long nights by singing songs and choruses to the accompaniment of concertinas, and tin-whistles, etc. Provisions are reasonable and plentiful at present, being packed up the creek one and a half miles from Williamson's and Wallish's stores..." Wednesday 18 July 1883 – The Bendigo Advertiser "The Dark River Gold Field 18 Jul 1883 - THE DARK RIVER GOLDFELD. - Trove (nla.gov.au) "The surrounding hills are all exceedingly steep, and the township of Canvastown rests at the bottom of a deep, narrow, and V-shaped glen; The postal name of Canvastown is now changed to that of Dark River. The comfortable little hotel is kept by Mr Meurant, an old miner and resident in this part of the world. A good number of people appeared to reside here, and the place had a busy bustling air. The great feature of this locality is the Dark River Company's mine, which lies obliquely opposite, a little to the left, and the first interests of this goldfield are resting greatly upon the operations there going on. Previous on my arrival was not interested in this company, but was anxious to see what was being done, as the Dark River Extended Company, in which I am a shareholder, are their next-door Neighbors. The Dark River Company's mine is situated upon a gold-bearing reef which for the sake of argument, may be said to run north and south, and the line commences at the northern end with ..." 17 June 1884, Ovens and Murray Advertiser 17 Jun 1884 - THE DARK RIVER GOLD-BEARING REEFS. - Trove (nla.gov.au) The Glendart township was abandoned by 1895, it is believed that Canvas Town continued as a town centre until the early twentieth century.

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/>