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# DENICULL CREEK GOLD WORKINGS 2

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## Location

DENNICULL CREEK ROAD CATHCART, ARARAT RURAL CITY

## Municipality

ARARAT RURAL CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7423-0102

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 27, 2024

### What is significant?

The subject site is associated with the gold-rush within the greater Ararat region and the development of the small town of Cathcart. The site was recorded as being/ worked by Chinese miners and therefore could provide insight into the cultural history of the region. While gold-digging in this area is not uncommon or rare, the subject site was surveyed in 1911 and there is evidence to suggest that various groups were digging at the site at the same time. In addition to Moderate that, the inclusion of the Mechanics Institute at the site indicates that it may have been a community hub of sorts. As such, the site could provide insight into a community building in collaboration on the gold-fields. The subject site shows all the aspects of a classic alluvial gold mine, with hundreds of gold pits and potential shafts, drainage channel and spoil piles. Due to the intensity of the digging activities and lack of subsequent development, it does represent a fairly untouched and intact example of late 19th century gold mining.

### How is it significant?

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Interpretation of Site While documentary evidence does not state when gold mining commenced within the study area, it likely predated the formal ownership of FT Shields in 1911. The site has extensive evidence of gold mining diggings, spoil piles, drainage channels as well as at least one 19th century wine bottle discarded within the diggings. The site survey from 1911 clearly states mining diggings already present on the site at that time and that some of these were worked by Chinese miners. Unfortunately to date, it has not been possible to locate the original mining licence for the site. The first grantee for the title was a prominent local resident and office holder. The property ended up being part of Scherger's larger land holdings in the area and it is likely that the gold diggings were abandoned or ceased within the first half of the 20th century. It is difficult to determine when the gold diggings commenced at the site, however given Frederick Shield's early involvement with gold buying and his selection of this property, it is assumed the site was early in the history of diggings in the area, with gold first found in Cathcart in the 1850s. Due to the extensive gold-digging activity at the site as well as its terrain, it is likely this site has been kept isolated from the larger farming land it was once incorporated into. This property has a post-war home and several outbuildings to support the current farming use of the land within the larger holding. The SPI where the site is currently located is used as farming land with mature vegetation around the historical material. Land use, including agricultural grazing may have impacted historical archaeological deposits, if any.

Other Names INTENSIVE MINING SITE - SITE 7,

Hermes Number 212105

Property Number

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## **History**

On the 1st of September 1911, FT. Shields was granted title of SPI 13~12/PP2020 (see parish map attached) along with Allotment 2. It is worth noting that the property is now on the same title as allotments 12, 12A and 14, having subsequently been disconnected from Allotment 2. Frederick Shields obtained a survey of the site, and this shows that in 1911 at least, the site was being actively worked by miners, including Chinese, and there were several huts on the site both in use and abandoned. In addition to the gold diggings recorded within that 1911 survey, there is also a mechanics institute shown in the top corner of the lot, and this appears to have been the Cathcart Mechanics Institute where the Cathcart Recreation Reserve is now located. Frederick Shields was listed as one of 6 speakers at the institute in 1906. Shields was a licenced gold buyer from as early as 1903 and was at this time also a hotel and storekeeper in Moyston as well as a Deputy Electoral Registrar of the Legislative Assembly. In 1913, the site was transferred to the ownership of William Shields, who is likely the brother of Frederick. From the Shields family, the land was then transferred into the ownership of the Scherger family who

also were prominent landholders in the area. Since the gold mining diggings were abandoned, it is evident that the site has not been utilised for any specific purpose as the land had been so largely impacted that it would require significant works to remediate into farming land such as the adjoining lots. As Allotment 13 is part of a significantly larger parcel of land now, it is likely that the land has been utilised as a vegetation buffer to larger cropping and agricultural uses since the early 20th 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/>*