
BELL'S, UNITY AND CARLISLE MINE SITES

Location

414B~K/PP3473A NORTH OF VICTORIA STREET, WEST OF BENNETT STREET & EAST OF BELL STREET
IRONBARK, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7724-0648

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 10, 2024

What is significant?

The significance of the mining area can only be revealed through archaeological excavation of buried remains of three mines - Bells, Unity and Carlisle. The latter two were large scale mining operations with very deep shafts.

How is it significant?

The mining area would be significant if archaeological excavation found:

Key aspects of large scale quartz mining – timber, stone or brick foundations machinery platforms, mullock heap and tailings/cyanide vats

That the mining relics unearthed demonstrated the basic outlay of a large scale gold mine - in respect to both mining and ore processing.

That in situ fabric was in a condition that can be understood and interpreted.

Why is it significant?

The mining area is associated with Joseph Bell who was viewed by his contemporaries as one of the main pioneers of the incredibly rich Garden Gully Reef. It is also associated with one of Bendigo's richest mines, the Unity.

Interpretation of Site	Historical mapping shows that there were three mines located on the land parcel. These were Bell & Watson, Unity and Carlisle. No surface evidence survives. Two of the mine sites - Bell's and Unity - are covered by a thick deposits of tailings (also called battery sands, slimes or sludge) and cosses of pepper trees. The mine sites are located on public land and any buried archaeological features or artefacts are protected from disturbance by a covering of tailings.
Hermes Number	212418
Property Number	

History

SiteCard data copied on 10/09/2024: Land parcel 414BK takes in one of the richest sections of the Garden Gully Line of reef. It contains three mines – Bell's (Bells and Watson), Unity and Carlisle. Quartz mining on this part of the reef was pioneered by Bell & Watson in the late 1850s. Other claims were taken out to the south and north of their claim. By 1866 Bell and Watson's main shaft was down 112 feet and ore rich in gold was being recovered. By the early 1870s, the richness of their claim was legendary. In 1871, various mining companies formed to work the line of reef. These companies were formed through the amalgamation of adjoining claims. The Unity Mining Company was formed through the amalgamation of five claims, including Bells and Watson's. By September 1871, this company were erecting a 25h.p. engine to haul ore to the surface and to pump, if necessary to 1,000 feet. By November 1871, the Unity's main shaft as down 140 feet. Three claims next (north) of the Unity also amalgamated – Carlisle, North Garden Gully and Passby. The main shaft of this company was the North Garden Gully which had 18 to 20 inch winding and pumping cylinder engine. Both the Unity and Carlisle/North Garden Gully/Passby mines were linked and worked cooperatively, e.g., they shared a crushing battery which was located between the Unity and Carlise mines . When Joseph Bell died in 1889, he had large shareholdings in both mines. At an extraordinary meeting (21 January 1883) of the Carlisle, North Garden Gully and Passbye United Company the directors were given power to 'erect a crushing plant, in conjunction with the Unity Company'. The Bendigo Advertiser (16/10/1883, p.3) provides a description of the starting of this battery. It consisted of 30 revolving stampers of five heads in each box. The battery was driven by an engine having a cylinder of 22 inches in diameter. There were two 61/2ft diameter boilers that were 28ft long. The two boilers were supplied by water by a Wilson's (of London) steam donkey pump. The whole of the machinery was enclosed and covered with a galvanised corrugated iron building, and the floor laid with sawn bluestone flagging. The chimney stack was 125 ft high. In 1899, the Unity Company erected a new winding plant/high pressure-boiler and additions were made to the battery, with an addition of two extra battery boxes. By this time, the shaft was down over 2,258ft. The issue of tailings (battery sands) draining into creeks was reported in local newspapers. An article in the Bendigo Advertiser (18/11/1905, p.11) shows that the Carlisle and Unity mines were doing their best to keep the slimes (tailings) confined to their property. For many years they had been able to send thousands of tons of slimes down the shaft to fill stopes. However, by 1902 stopes were being filled with mullock so the slimes had to be stacked above ground. There were three sludge draining channels leading from the Unity mine to a nearby creek (a sloping grade of at least 1:10) There was also a large settling trough at the Garden Gully United mine which sometimes also discharged sludge into the creek. In 1907 (9/10/1907, p.7) the Unity's engine house was destroyed by a great fire and the machinery plant (winding engines, air compressor and pumps) were damaged. Besides the engine house the storeroom and portion of the blacksmith shop were destroyed. By the 1920s, the Carlisle/Unity mine was mainly involved with prospecting for new gold reserves. The addressing the risk from mine shafts and sand dumps in Bendigo commenced during the 1930s. In 1960-61 the Reclamation Committee directed its dump removal program to reclaiming the Unity Dump.

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/>