

STRINGERS KNOB FIRE SPOTTING TOWER



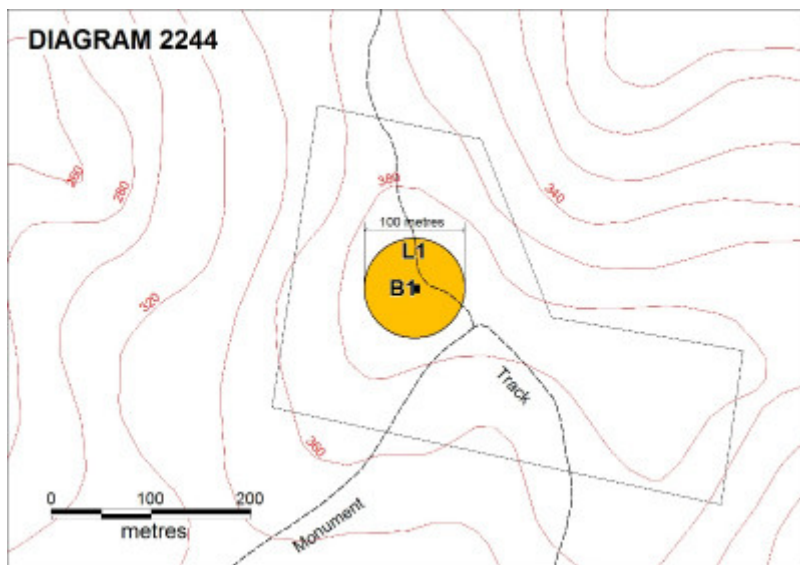
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stringers plan.jpg

Location

MONUMENT TRACK BETE BOLONG NORTH, EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE

Municipality

EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2244

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO364

VHR Registration

July 8, 2010

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 12, 2020

Please note, this place was impacted by the 2019/20 bushfires.

What is significant?

Stringers Knob Fire Spotting Tower is an experimental single-pole fire detecting tower erected in 1941.

Following the devastating 'Black Friday' fires which swept across large areas of Victoria in 1939, a state-wide search for improved fire detection measures was begun. The Forests Commission, given sole control over fire protection and prevention on public land in Victoria, installed a network fire spotting towers and phone lines across Gippsland. Stringer's Knob Fire tower was an experimental design commissioned by the Inspector of Forests in East Gippsland and built by Clem Heather. The height and location of the tower enabled unrestricted views of the surrounding forest as far as Marlo, over 40 kilometres away. The fire spotters were required to spend the week at the tower alone, sleeping in a tin shed at the foot of the tower, and spending the rest of the time in the small wooden cabin atop the pole. Spotters radioed through sightings of suspect smoke. Stringers Knob Fire Spotting Tower was in use until the 1960s.

Stringers Knob Fire Spotting Tower is constructed of two poles of yellow stringybark and red ironbark bolted together. The wooden observation cabin, measuring 2.5 metres square, is enclosed on all sides, but the top third comprises windows, enabling a 360 degree view of the State Forest. Access to the cabin was via steel bars on the 28m high pole, and entered through a hole in the cabin floor. Two resting platforms were situated on the pole and the tower is anchored by six cable guys set in concrete bases.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Gunaikurnai people.

How is it significant?

Stringers Knob Fire Spotting Tower is of historic and scientific (technical) significance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Stringers Knob Fire Spotting Tower is of historical significance for its association with the aftermath of the 1939 bushfires, demonstrating the efforts of the Forests Commission to improve fire safety in Victoria. Its unusual design is of historical importance in the development of safety measures for Victorians.

Stringers Knob Fire Spotting Tower is of scientific (technical) significance for its experimental design and unusual construction technique.

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below.

Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted. Vegetation clearance and management is permit exempt.

Fuel reduction programs and fire suppression activities which do not impact on the significant structure are permit exempt.

Construction dates	1941,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	FIRE TOWER,
Hermes Number	4932
Property Number	

History

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Following the devastating fires which swept across Victoria in 1939, a state-wide search for improved fire detection measures was begun. Seven major recommendations were made by Judge Stretton at the Royal Commission into the fires, including better cooperation between competing government departments, and more flexible and comprehensible laws of protection and prevention. The Forests Act 1939, which enabled the Forests Commission to take complete control of fire suppression and prevention on public land in Victoria, where previously the responsibility had been shared with the Board of Works. The Country Fire Authority was formed in 1944 to manage fire on private land outside greater Melbourne. Controlled burning of forests during spring and autumn also became an official fire management practice in Victoria.

The Forests Commission installed a network fire spotting towers and phone lines across Gippsland.

HISTORY OF PLACE

Stringer's Knob Fire tower was an experimental design commissioned by the Inspector of Forests in East Gippsland and built by Clem Heather. With the two trees bolted together, the pole was pulled upright by means of a 35 HP tractor and an elaborate block and tackle system. The height and location of the tower enabled unrestricted views of the surrounding forest as far as Marlo, over 40 kilometres away. The fire spotters were required to spend the week at the tower alone, sleeping in a tin shed at the foot of the tower, and spending the rest of the time in the small wooden cabin atop the pole. Spotters radioed through sightings of suspect smoke. The job of fire spotting did not appeal to everyone. An undated letter (from DSE Orbost), withdraws an application on the ground "After studying your specification for the position, I find I am no longer interested. My commitments compel me to be home each night"

Stringers Knob Fire Spotting Tower was in use until the 1960s. It was noted in 1967 that 'it is unlikely that any more single pole towers will be built as even the Forests Commission has accepted steel as a substitute for wood in the field of tower construction.

Plaque Citation

This experimental single pole fire spotting tower was erected in 1941, as the Forests Commission sought to improve fire detection following the devastating 1939 'Black Friday' fires. Fire spotters had unrestricted views of the surrounding forest from the cabin.

Extent of Registration

1. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 2244 held by the Executive Director, part of Crown Reserve P340833 Bete Bolong North, being all the land within a radius of 50 metres of the fire spotting tower.
2. All the structure B1 on Diagram 2244 held by the Executive Director.

B1 Fire Spotting Tower

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/>