
SPRING HILL AND CENTRAL LEADS MINE

Location

95 CENTRAL LEADS ROAD LAWRENCE, HEPBURN SHIRE

Municipality

HEPBURN SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7623-0013

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 7064

Property Number

History

Heritage Inventory History of Site: The following history was extracted from The Berry Deep Leads: an historical assessment, CF&L, October 1986, Charles Fahey. This company was registered in 1881, when the Berry Deep Leads were beginning to yield large quantities of gold which provided handsome dividends. Unfortunately the shareholders of the Spring Hill and Central lead mine did not share in the prosperity of the early 1880s. Instead calls on the shareholders were the order of the day: by January 1887, ,000 had been called up. The larger part of this sum was spent on putting the claim and plant in order and prospecting. The boring continued for almost five years. It was not until August 1895 that shaft sinking operations commenced. The company's problems sprang from the existence of 'hydrothermals' - geological subsidences which had been filled with water - in their lease. To cope with the water problem, a pumping and winding plant was installed which consisted of a 300hp engine and two lifts of 18 inch and 20 inch was installed. Other plant included two 20 inch cylinder winding engines, a steam capstan, four puddling machines and engine, and five

pressure steam boilers. The total cost of the plant was £21,724. By 1897 the main shaft had been sunk to 525 feet. The company found they had a much reduced body to work with. They were forced to conclude that the underground subsidences had dropped the auriferous wash to unworkable depths. All the company had to work on where the undisturbed sections of the lead. The first gold was not obtained until 1897, by which time calls were £44,874. In the following decade gold returns increased, but the 29,265 ounces recovered were not sufficient to defray costs. By July 1901 gold returns had contributed £122,000 and shareholders had paid out £115,000. By this time the company had expended £240,141. The company was wound up in 1902. Machinery Information taken from The Significance of some Mining Machinery Sites in the Creswick Division 1859-1927, Technology Report TR-88/1, P. Milner, March 1988- 9 January 1897 - One of the finest winding and pumping plants in the colony erected during the past year. - 1901 - 11.5 inch by 16 inch by 30 inch by 60 inch triple expansion horizontal condensing steam pumping engine. - 3 Cornish boilers, 26ft x 6½ft, 140 pounds per square inch working pressure 2 x 18 inch pumps to 500 feet. Significance The Spring Hill and Central Lead gold mine was only the 15th gold producer on the Berry Deep leads. Although it failed to pay, the geological problems it encountered illustrate most graphically the problems faced by companies on the northern end of the leads. That shareholders were prepared to invest over £100,000 without any returns demonstrates how strongly some investors held onto the hope of another Madame Berry.

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.

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