
ROSE THISTLE AND SHAMROCK WORKINGS: BATTERY SITE

Location

CEMETERY LANE HARRIETVILLE, ALPINE SHIRE

Municipality

ALPINE SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8324-0017

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO18

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 18, 2005

What is significant?

The Rose Thistle & Shamrock mine was the largest recorded gold-producer and had the deepest workings in the Upper Ovens gold field. The mine was worked almost constantly from 1860 until 1934. One of the mine's most productive periods was during the 1920s when 46,000 ounces of gold were obtained from 49,000 tons of quartz ore. The precinct contains a wealth of archaeological evidence of the evolution of quartz mining and mineral processing technologies

How is it significant?

The Rose Thistle & Shamrock Quartz Gold Mine Precinct is of historical, archaeological and scientific importance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Rose Thistle & Shamrock Quartz Gold Mine Precinct is historically and scientifically important as a characteristic example of an important form of gold mining. Gold mining sites are of crucial importance for the pivotal role they have played since 1851 in the development of Victoria. As well as being a significant producer of Victoria's nineteenth century wealth, quartz mining, with its intensive use of machinery, played an important role in the development of Victorian manufacturing industry. The Rose Thistle & Shamrock precinct is quite different from other Alpine mining sites in presenting an easily interpreted sequence with each mining period surviving as a virtual time-capsule with its own mine workings, machinery relics, and engineering works. The educational value of the precinct is enhanced by its proximity to a major highway, ease of access, and natural setting in the rugged foothills of the Australian Alps.

The Rose Thistle & Shamrock Quartz Gold Mine Precinct contains a wealth of archaeological evidence crucial to an understanding of the development of mining and ore treatment technologies between 1860 and 1934.

[Source: Victorian Heritage Register]

Hermes Number 11017

Property Number

History

Heritage Inventory History of Site:

The Rose Thistle & Shamrock mine was the largest recorded gold-producer and had the deepest workings in the Upper Ovens district. It was worked almost constantly from 1860 until 1934.

Crushing on the Rose Thistle & Shamrock Reef commenced in 1861, and soon emerged as one of the district's premier reefs. In 1866, the Rose Thistle and Shamrock mine was called, by the mining registrar, 'the most valuable mining property in the Division'. It ceased work at the end of 1868, when it was down 600 ft and employing 25 men. A new reef was tried within three metres of the old one in 1877 and an 8-head (existing?) battery was used to test it, but the find appears to have come to nothing.

In 1880, a new run of gold was struck by the Shamrock QMC (a Wallace-owned company in the supposedly 'worked out' Rose Thistle & Shamrock shaft, at a depth of 650 ft. Before long, the pumps proved inadequate for draining the mine, and 'very powerful machinery' was installed in 1882, comprising a 15-hp stationary engine for pumping and one of 8-hp for winding, and a 10-hp portable engine to run their existing 8-head battery (2 x 4 stamps). The whole plant was valued at £6,000. Less than two years later, after attaining a depth of 850 ft, the Shamrock Co. ceased work, 'after employing constantly, for many years, a number of men'. Nothing more was heard of the mine until 1888, when the Shamrock Reef Co. installed four Wheeler's pans and an 8-hp stationary engine, 'for the purpose of treating a twenty-years' accumulation of sand'.

In 1906, the Rose Thistle & Shamrock Co. erected a 10-head steam-powered battery, adding a cyanide plant the following year. An air compressor was installed in 1918; two Pelton wheels were added in 1921, to supplement steam power; a further boiler was added in 1925; and the air compressor was replaced by a larger one in 1926. The Rose Thistle & Shamrock was the main producer on the field in the 1920s. Between 1920-34 it produced 46,000 oz from 49,000 tons. The company even paid a £17,000 dividend in 1929, one of only two mines in Victoria to pay a dividend that year. Operations ceased in 1934 and the plant was sold.

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/>