
MAGENTA MINE SITE

Location

BATTERY HILL ROAD AND OFF CHILTERN-BARNAWARTHA ROAD CHILTERN, INDIGO SHIRE

Municipality

INDIGO SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8225-0078

Heritage Overlay Numbers

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 24, 2005

Mining of the Magenta Reef commenced as an open cut operation in 1860. Earth, rock and quartz were excavated and carted out by horse and dray. As the open cut was extended, it was also widened. This brought lower yields, but increased production kept the mine profitable. The open cut was worked to a depth of 15 metres. (It was later partially filled with mullock).

The following is taken from one of the self-guided drives produced by the National Parks Service, Victoria.

Two shafts were later sunk to mine ore. You can see one of these if you walk up the eastern side of the open cut. This shaft was sunk to a depth of 90m, but like hundreds of other shafts in the forest it has since been filled and sealed for safety reasons.

Follow the gravel track around the northern end of the open cut to the fenced open stope. The enlarged tunnel or drive was worked at a depth of 30m. The gold-bearing ore was removed by excavating the roof of the drive and mining upwards.

Walk along the track to the site of the mine's quartz crusher or stamping battery. You may see part of the concrete foundations.

About 50m further south is the site of place's quartz crusher - the timber foundations can still be seen. This crusher operated independently of the Magenta Mine.

The magenta mine closed some time after 1910, but there was a minor revival during the depression years. According to published figures, a total of 21,665 tons of material was crushed, which yielded 9,900 ounces of gold. However the records are incomplete and it is thought that a yield of 13,000 ounces of gold is more accurate.

In its heyday, Magenta was a significant residential area, and in late 1860 people thought it was only a matter of time before trams ran between Magenta and New Ballarat (now Chiltern).

The name "Magenta" may have come from the purplish colour of the rock, or from the battle of Magenta in Italy in 1859.

[Source: National Parks Service brochure.]

Interpretation of Site Heritage Inventory Interpretation:

Hermes Number 11616

Property Number

History

Contextual History:History of Place:

Heritage Inventory History of Site:

The Magenta mine was among the earliest quartz mines on the Chiltern field, and was worked uninterruptedly from its discovery in 1858 until 1901. In 1860, the first battery was installed on the reef, but was removed within months. A new battery was erected in 1861, and the Magenta was in that year the principal reef on the goldfield. The Magenta Co.'s mine, worked by open cutting, was one of the few Chiltern quartz mines to continue active into the 1870s; its battery was the only one on the field in 1872. The company commenced re-treating its accumulated tailings in 1885, using 'an improved process', probably roasting and chlorination. During the mine's heyday a residential area, known as Magenta, was situated nearby; as late as 1907, an unbroken chain of miners' dwellings extended from Chiltern to Magenta, via the Suffolk Lead.

The Magenta mine finally shut down in 1901. Eight years later, a new Magenta Co. took up the lease, sinking a main shaft east of the old open cut and installing a steam winch. In 1912, tailings cyanidation commenced. Mining at the Magenta ceased in the mid-1920s, but was revived in a minor way during the Depression years.

Published figures state that mine yielded a total of 9,900 oz of gold, at an average of just under 10 dwt to the ton, but the actual yield is thought to have been closer to 13,000 oz.

Mining operations from 1909 onwards were centred on the shaft, east of the eastern portion of the open cut, large quantities of mullock being tipped into the open cut. When Baragwanath visited the mine in 1921, the western portion of the open cut measured 15 m deep x 4.5 m long x 18 m wide, and an open stope on the western side was 6 m wide x 38 m long x more than 30.5 m deep. According to a local authority, [the late?] Clarrie Moon, all that remains of the 20th-century mining operations at Magenta is a small heap of white quartz and blue slate alongside a cement-sealed shaft, over which stood the poppethead with engine house, with winding gear some metres north and blacksmith's forge a few metres to the east.

Place's crushing mill, which forms part of the Magenta mine site today, is said (by Moon) to have originated on the Indigo quartz rush, c.1860.

In 1968, the Mines Department released the Magenta mine site to the Shire of Chiltern for development as a tourism venue, and a safety fence was erected around the site. CNR now manages the site and has installed a carpark, walking track and interpretive materials. The Magenta mine site forms part of CNR's Chiltern Historic Drive.

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/>