
GOLDEN POINT GOLD MINING AREA, BLACKWOOD-GOLDEN POINT

Location

ELGIN STREET AND CLARENDON STREET BLACKWOOD, MOORABOOL SHIRE

Municipality

MOORABOOL SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7723-1230

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Archaeological Significance

The site has high archaeological significance. The area may contain subsurface archaeological deposits relating to structures and occupation deposits from gold mining companies and independent miners such as foundations or diffuse lost and discarded personal items

Interpretation of Site

The site is likely to date to between 1855-1880, representing gold mining activities including sluicing of excavated material via water races, with the race at Golden point road representing a tailing race, taking the water from the mine site to the Lerderderg River below. Races are surrounded by water worn stone and tailings, and some of the races show signs of being lined with stone. Pits within the southern section of the site may represent the remains of shallow shafts.

The site is located in proximity to a VicMine site comprising unnamed alluvial workings, possibly utilising the location of a natural drainage line that was later modified as a water race for sluicing activities. Miners Byers and Burgess constructed a series of water races through Golden Point for sluicing activities, extending from the south east, north west to the Lerderderg River

Hermes Number 165681

Property Number

History

The initial discovery of gold in Blackwood occurred in 1851 , and by December of that year the Blackwood diggings were yielding pounds weight of gold. However, this was short lived and it was not until the rediscovery of gold in January 1855 by Edward Hill that the diggers returned to Blackwood (Flett 1979: 386). Following this discovery, most of the alluvial diggings on the field and tributaries of the Lerderderg River were opened during the remainder of 1855. Hill himself opened Red Hill, with other areas such as Golden Point, Nuggetty Gully, Yankee Gully and Balian Flat also being worked (Flett 1979: 395).

By the May of 1855 there were 8,000 diggers and storemen on the field , which increased to 13,000 at its height in September 1855 (Flett 1979: 395). At this point, the township was in two encampments, one at Red Hill, the other at Golden Point, with Golden Point being officially surveyed at this time (Flett 1979: 395). Madame Pauline Bonfond, a French national, reputedly dug many of the Blackwood water races, particularly those on the hills on the opposite side of the gully from Golden Point (Buckingham & Hitchcock 1979: 15). According to Buckingham (1970) Miners banded together and expended an incredible amount of labour cutting races and making dams to turn [divert] the creeks, but in every instance the races were not one-tenth large enough to carry flood waters and the many races and dams were totally wrecked. Blackwood was not economical to mine in the winter and by 1857 the population had fallen to under 1000 (1970:15). Creek workings were abandoned in favour of sluicing in the flats, river banks and hill-sildes. Along gullies, very long races were cut and sluicing proved profitable. There was over 80 miles of races (one of the highest race milages in the State after Beechworth and Ballarat) (1970:16).

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/>