
Pierce's eucalyptus distillery



The Pierce eucalyptus distillery, viewed from Pierces Road.



Section of the timber retaining wall.



Brick vats adjacent to the stack.

Location

257 Pierce's Road, SEBASTIAN VIC 3556 - Property No 199630

Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO658

Heritage Listing

Greater Bendigo City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

Pierce's eucalyptus distillery ceased operations in the 1990s. Extant elements include the square brick stack, dam, circular brick-lined vats, brick water race, and some pipework. The site is located to the north of Pierce's

Road, approximately 2km from the Bendigo-Pyramid Road to the west.

How is it significant?

The Pierce eucalyptus distillery is of local historical and technological significance.

Why is it significant?

The Pierce eucalyptus distillery, on Pierce's Road east of Sebastian, is of local historical and technological significance. It is historically significant (Criterion A) for its capacity to recall aspects of an industry that played a significant role in the economy of the Whipstick and broader areas of regional Victoria, from the 1890s to the late twentieth century. John Wiseman Pierce established the distillery in 1911, and passed it to his two sons who operated the plant until the late-1990s. The harvesting and distilling of eucalyptus was an important source of employment for workers in the goldfields following the decline of mining and became particularly important during the Depression of the 1930s, when there were an estimated 50 distilleries in the Whipstick. Today, only five survive, with varying levels of intactness (Criterion B). The Whipstick was the epicentre of eucalyptus distilling in Victoria, where the industry has only recently died out. As with the earlier years of gold mining, small-scale operators with limited capital were able to exploit a naturally occurring resource in the area. Technologically (Criterion F), the Pierce eucalyptus distillery, although depleted by the removal of machinery and equipment, is significant for its capacity to demonstrate aspects of a distilling operation that ran from 1911 to the 1990s. Elements which remain on site include the brick chimney stack, dam, circular brick-lined vats, and some pipework (Criterion D). The site, with its remnant elements, remains within the environs of the Whipstick which in turn evokes the original natural and isolated setting of the distilling operation.

Theme

4. Transforming and managing the land 5. Building Victoria's industries and workforce

Heritage Study/Consultant Greater Bendigo - Heritage Policy Citations Review, Lovell Chen P/L, 2011;

Construction dates 1911,

Hermes Number 184952

Property Number

Physical Description 1

Pierce's eucalyptus distillery is located to the north of Pierce's Road, approximately 2km from the Bendigo-Pyramid Road to the west. Operations at the distillery ceased in the early 2000s. At that time, the site included the following machinery and equipment:

- . A Cornish boiler in brick housing, including pressure gauges - the boiler had been relocated from the Nell Gwynne mine;
- . Brick stack;
- . Two brick lined vats with concrete covers;
- . A derrick crane with winch and engine;
- . Pipework to condensing dam and glazed terra cotta collection point for eucalyptus oil to the west of the dam;
- . Four pumps for raising water from the dam to boiler. The manufacturers' details were: Miller and Co. Machinery Pty. Ltd, South Melbourne and Bendigo; Blakes Patent No.4, Boston and New York; Geo. F. Blake Manufacturing

Co, New York and Boston; and the Austral Otis Engineering Coy. Ltd., Melbourne;

. An ash dump; and

. Hut of corrugated galvanised sheeting.¹⁸

The present owners, the Lands, have removed much of the above. Today, all that survives is the stack, the dam, the circular brick-lined vats, brick water race, some pipework, the ash dump and the corrugated iron hut.

The brick stack, square in plan and tapering in four stages, is unusually tall, and includes a fire hole to the north. The stack is adjacent to the two brick vats (the tops of which are visible on the ground), one of which is filled with debris; the other retains its concrete lid, inscribed with the date 15 September 1971. A timber retaining wall is located beneath the vats and stack, and forms the north bank of the condensing dam. A brick water race and some pipework also survive. North of the dam and stacks and the ash dump, whose extent is demonstrated by the absence of any natural growth, a result of the acidity of the burned eucalyptus leaves. The corrugated iron hut is extant and was not inspected internally.

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/>