
VORTEX FLOUR MILL

Location

28 FLOUR MILL LANE RIDDELLS CREEK, MACEDON RANGES SHIRE

Municipality

MACEDON RANGES SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7823-0089

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 3, 2024

What is significant?

Located the end of Flour Mill Lane, Riddells Creek, the Vortex Flour Mill comprises the foundations and partly standing masonry walls of the former Riddles Creek 'Vortex' Water millmill, set in the south bank of Riddles Creek. The mill was erected in 1864. The former water race is no longer visible.

How is it significant?

The Vortex Mill site is of historical and archaeological significance at the local level.

Why is it significant?

The Vortex Mill site is of historical significance as evidence of the introduction of novel technologies into Australia from Britain, and the continuation of water-power for manufacture. This site is of archaeological significance for its potential to reveal information on the design and operation of a rare form of structure.

Interpretation of Site	Footings and floor areas of the mill indicate structure over an area of about 20 by 20 metres partly cut into the slope of the valley. The turbine installation is marked by a deep stone lined pit, and the milling floor can be surmised from the position of the turbine. Numbers of small artefacts including domestic glass and ceramics, metal structural and machinery components and other material have been uncovered by the owners.
Other Names	James McKenzie Milling Company; Riddells Creek Flour Mill,
Hermes Number	212170
Property Number	

History

SiteCard data copied on 03/12/2024: The James McKenzie Milling Company was formed in 1866 by a group of local investors to erect a mill on Riddells Creek at the end of Flour Mill Lane Riddells Creek. The mill was of three storeys built in bluestone with a water race cut into the steep slope of the hillside for about 700 metres to a weir on Riddells Creek. This provided a fall of 30 feet for the turbine plant. This was perhaps the ultimate development of water mill technology in the nineteenth century, employing James Thompson's Patent Vortex Turbine of 20 horsepower, which was said to be capable of operating all year. The patent dates from 1852, and so was cutting edge technology at the time. However, an auxiliary "Allen" horizontal steam engine with 8 inch cylinder and 24 inch stroke was also provided. H Glendining appears to have been a silent partner while McKenzie was the head miller. The mill produced both wheat flour and oatmeal. The mill fell into disuse when the Lancefield Railway diverted local grain to other mills. A fire in 1874 gutted the mill. George Miller was owner and was forced insolvency as a result and the mill was sold. Robert Gerrand was also associated with the mill, possibly as its designer. He was born in 1830 at Kirkcudbright, Scotland, migrated to Australia with his parents who settled in Smeaton and Rushworth. Gerrand died in 1920 at Kerang. William Corrie purchased the mill and rebuilt it as a flock mill, producing stuffing from old rags. Corrie installed a dynamo driven off an auxiliary shaft from the turbine to provide electric light. Corrie relocated his business to Melbourne in 1882, with the mill passing to the Northern Freehold Investment Company. It was then purchased by Otto Julius Mueller in 1899 who repaired and refitted the mill under the new name 'Mount Macedon Mills'. A flood in 1909 damaged the weir but Mueller continued operations until 1918, when the mill was sold again it was demolished around 1923 and the stone was used to rebuild Catherine Maslin's house 'Prez' (now named Bundaleer) at Gisborne.

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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