

Heritage Overlay No.: 041
Citation No.: 065
Place: Aitken's Gap Pine Avenue, Calder Freeway

Other Names of Place: Pine Avenue, The Gap
Location: Calder Freeway, Diggers Rest.
Critical Dates: Early twentieth century.
Existing Heritage Listings: none
Recommended Level of Significance: LOCAL



Statement of Significance:

The plantation of mature Monterey Pines (*Pinus radiata*) is significant as the most substantial evidence of the existence of the Gap township, which originated as a wayside service centre for gold-rush traffic on the Mt Alexander Road. Recent upgrading of the Calder highway into a freeway has removed most of the south-western side of the avenue, and considerably diminished the aesthetic significance of the plantation. The avenue is likely to have been planted by the Shire of Melton, but may also have associations with the Country Roads Board.

The avenue is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A.4). It is the most substantial remaining evidence of the former gold-rush wayside settlement of The Gap, which declined dramatically after the internationally significant rush to Mount Alexander subsided, and after the opening of the railway (1859/1862). It is also one of a distinguished series of old conifer plantings on this route, since renamed the Calder Highway, most of which have now

been bypassed. It is also the most prominent remaining example of a type of street planting associated with the Shire of Melton.

The avenue is also scientifically (horticulturally) significant at the LOCAL level on account of the age of the trees, which would appear to have been planted sometime in the early twentieth century. It is representative of conifer street plantings which were popular in the 1860-80s, but of which there are now very few examples remaining in Victoria (AHC B.2). If it dates back to the nineteenth century, it would be one of the oldest remaining avenues of this species.

Overall, the remnant Monterey Pine avenue at the Gap is of LOCAL significance.