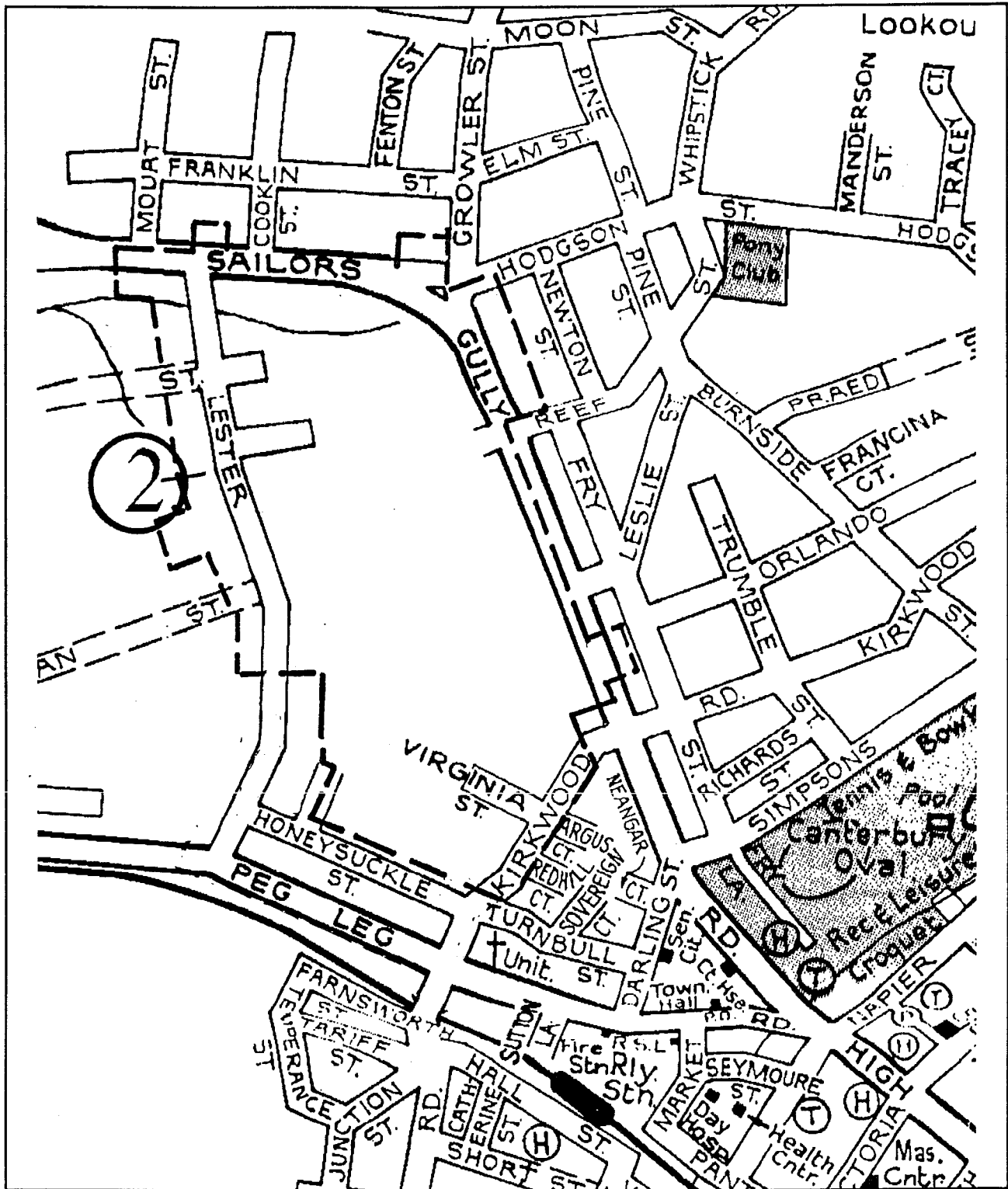
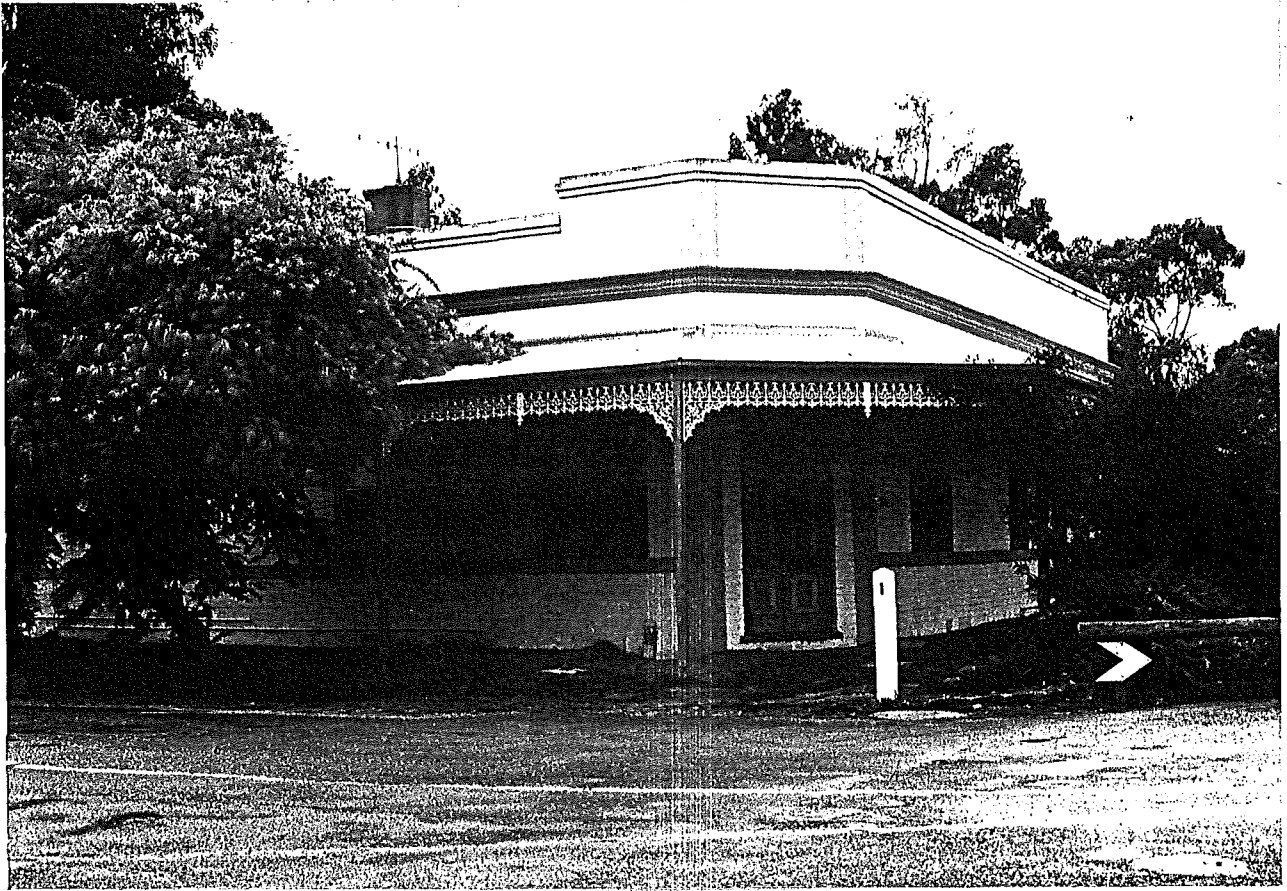


PRECINCT: 2.0
SPECIMEN HILL MINING & RESIDENTIAL



**PRECINCT: 2.00
SPECIMEN HILL MINING & RESIDENTIAL**



3-2

Sailors Gully Hotel, 104 Sailors Gully Road, although rebuilt the site has long associations with social life on an important gold field.

LGA: EAGLEHAWK BOROUGH MAP: 5.11

Contributory Streets:

Lester, mid-Victorian era
Sailors Gully Road, mid-Victorian era, brick, timber walls

History

(Refer Mining Section)

This precinct revolves around the rich mining area of Specimen Hill.

Arthur Palmer in his 'The Gold Mines of Bendigo' (1976) notes that the 'Specimen Hill' mine operated over the period 1860-1920 and that the 'New Argus' was working in 1875. The 'Virginia and Specimen Hill' was operating during the 1880s and the 'Virginia' from 1878-1922. Whilst those years saw the development of reef mining in the locality, Cusack in 'Bendigo A History' (quoting from the 'Argus') notes that Sailors Gully was a field where its surface riches had been fully exploited by 1852.¹

The buildings which were along the streets encircling the Virginia Hill area were founded on the wealth and continuity in employment created by the reef mines. They constitute a major focus for settlement within the

¹ Taken from Report by Andrew Ward, Bendigo Heritage Advisory Service, July, 1991

Borough and by 1889 (refer map) Sailors Gully Road, Lester Street and Peg Leg Road were almost fully built up with houses, hotels, shops and the offices of the gold mining companies.

This development remained substantially the same in 1908/9 (Sands & McDougall Directory), and included the following hotels:

- * 'Star Reef;'
- * 'Franklin,' with its own music hall; * 'Clarence Reef;'
- * 'Sailors Gully' (extant); * 'Pavilion' (extant); and * 'Pioneer' (extant).

Other hotels known to have existed at Sailors Gully included:

- * 'Babbage's;'
- * 'Bachelor's Arms;'
- * 'Hibernia;'
- * 'Lancashire Arms;'
- * 'Lyceum;'
- * 'Mansion House;'
- * 'Moon Reef,' (Figure 3); and * 'Sons of Erin.'

The Federal Foundry was situated midway between Leslie and Reef Streets in Sailors Gully Road and the shops, stores and hotels extending from High Street almost continuously to Kirkwood Street were scattered also from this point north to the 'Sailors Gully' hotel and west to Lester Street.

As the mines closed, the buildings were demolished or carted away, leaving what might be described today as a somewhat untidy environment, mixing surviving old buildings with later houses...

The buildings which remain include three hotels, possibly a store and blacksmiths' shops and several stone, brick and timber houses. Dry stone walls form interesting streetscape elements along Sailors Gully Road and at the Reef Street/Lester Street intersection where the engine beds of the 'Neangar' Mine remain in an open field.²

Today, the surviving non-residential buildings are especially significant reminders of past activity, still standing in a way not unlike those of the settlements at Ironbark, Long Gully, California Gully and Jobs Gully on the Bendigo Eaglehawk Road.

Here, they survive in close visual association with the sand heaps and workings of the mines which gave them life.³

Sites

Some of the specific site details include the miner-storekeeper, Joseph Harris's house (Virginia), at 57 Sailors Gully Road (c1868) later became the Virginia Gold Mine Co. manager's residence, James Patterson being one of the managers.⁴

Another is the greengrocer, William Jane's house and former shop at 85 Sailors Gully Road (c1873). Among the extant early hotels is the Steward Brothers' Sailors Gully Hotel at 102 Sailors Gully Road (commenced c1866, rebuilt 1908) which replaced a timber shop on the site after its acquisition by William Abernathy.⁵

1 ibid.
2 ibid.
3 ibid.
4 see Vol. 4, Significant Sites
5 ibid.

Mining Elements

(see also Mining Areas, Vol.3)

Virginia Hill mining features include: ¹

1. Virginia Hill shaft site at the southern end of the area with the remains of the brick winding engine foundations in the vicinity.
2. Specimen Hill United shaft site in the centre of the area on the eastern side, with the remains of the brick winding engine foundations in the vicinity.
3. New Argus shaft site at the northern end of the area on the eastern side, with the remains of the brick winding engine foundations and an essentially intact mullock dump in the vicinity.
4. Two sets of cyanide vats, more or less midway between the Virginia Hill and Specimen Hill shaft sites. The first group, with an approximately east-west orientation, consists of nine vats, seven of which have brick-lined cores and all have cement outer linings. The second group, further to the south and with an approximately north-west south-east orientation, consists of five corrugated iron vats.
5. An extensive area of relatively undisturbed battery and covering the south-western corner of the area in the vicinity of the Virginia Hill shaft site.
6. An extensive area of partially excavated battery sand covering the south-eastern corner of the site and up to and beyond the site of the Specimen Hill shaft. This sand is banked up behind a rubble stone wall along the western side of Sailors Gully Road.
7. A length of more or less continuous open stope workings is along the line of the West Specimen Hill Reef. These workings appear to be partially filled in and at the southern end are completely buried beneath the battern sands covering this part of the area.
8. Beyond the northern end of the open stope workings there is a line of four moderately sized mullock dumps, at more or less regular intervals, each surrounding a partially filled shaft.

In 1923, at the end of more than 70 years of continuous mining activity in the Bendigo/Eaglehawk area, the Bendigo office of the

Mines Department prepared a geological map of the Bendigo Gold Field. This was based on survey work undertaken by H S Whitelaw. This map contains about 500 surface mining features, including: 300 named shafts, 57 sand/mullock/pyrites dumps, 36 named alluvial gullies, 34 open reef workings, 20+ machinery sites and 6 tunnels. A rapid survey of 320 of these sites (including nearly all of those which were economically significant), in order to provide the preliminary basis for that aspect of the Bendigo heritage study and this report, indicates that at only 102 of them are there any traces of past mining activity. Of these, very provisionally, only about 40 sites are significant. That is about 13 per cent of all sites visited (or 8 per cent of the total identified in 1923) have so far been judged to possess sufficient significance to warrant at least some form of protection.²

The surface mining remnants which have been identified so far in the Bendigo/Eaglehawk area consist of: 1 chimney, 3 sets of cyanide vats, 1 area of hydraulic sluicing, 6 sets of machinery, 45 machinery foundations, 17 mining dams, 48 mullock dumps, 5 open stopes, 11 poppet heads, 1 pyrites dump, 1 quartz outcrop, 1 sand dam, 13 sand dumps, 15 shaft sites, 2 areas of shallow alluvial working, 1 area of surface sluicing and 1 tramway foundation.³

The Virginia Hill area contains:

1. the largest collection of cyanide vats. There are smaller sets at the Prince of Wales and Stanfield sites (4 and 3 respectively);
2. three of the 45 sets of machinery foundations. The New Argus foundations are the best of the three sets, with respect both to the condition of the brickwork and its setting. There are other sites, such as the Central Nell Gwynne and Deborah, which contain foundations for other than just the winding engines, but no other brick foundations appear to be in such good condition as those at the New Argus site;
3. an almost intact and sizable mullock dump. The majority of the 48 extant mullock dumps have been disturbed at some time or another. There are probably better large dumps at the Pearl, Pearl East, Pearl South, Stanfield and Suffolk United sites, but none is so readily accessible and as visibly dominant as the New Argus mullock dump;
4. one of the few relatively intact open stope workings outside of the Victoria Hill area. There are other open stope workings at Acadia, Danger Hill, Great Southern Extended and New Prince of Wales No. 1, but all these other workings appear to have been disturbed in one way or another recently. In addition, at the northern end of the open stope workings on Virginia Hill, there is a line of 4 shafts and associated mullock dumps which continue this line of working underground and appear to be related to the original claims/leases held on this ground; each shaft

¹ Taken from Dr. Peter Milner's Report. 1991 see also Mining Section, this volume

² Taken from Dr. Peter Milner's Report

³ Taken from Dr. Peter Milner's Report

being associated with the operations of a particular party/company. This appears evident from the 1871 lease plan. It has not been possible as yet to locate the earlier lease plans prepared in 1859/60 for this area, but it seems that this line of workings provides some of the very best extant evidence within the Bendigo/Eaglehawk area of the earliest form of reef workings; and

5. an almost intact and sizable sand dump in the south-western

corner of the area. With the exceptions of the Central Nell Gwynne dump and this dump, all the other sand dumps have been substantially disturbed by recent sand treatment operations.

Although the evidence of past mining activities presented within the Virginia Hill area is not quite so diverse as that provided within the Victoria Hill area, the area contains a number of intact and significant sites; it provides a background and a context for a number of significant sites in Sailors Gully Road and its vicinity, and the south-eastern corner was formerly occupied by the Eagle Company, which was one of the earliest and also one of the foremost mining companies in the Eaglehawk division. Virginia Hill was originally known as Specimen Hill.¹

Mining Significance

The economic significance of the Virginia Hill mine is summarized in another paper. The surviving buildings are the most important physical evidence of this activity, enhanced by the sand dumps and mining remnants to the west of Sailors Gully Road and forming a picturesque backdrop to the houses here and along Reef Street, Mount Street and elsewhere. Their humble character, surviving stone walls and gardens (8 Reef Street), demonstrate a working class life style now long gone, but one which was the basis for Eaglehawk's existence and which survives more dramatically here than anywhere else in the Borough.²

Overall Significance

Specimen Hill includes some remnants of walling, houses and commercial and community buildings as well as evidence of distinct phases in mining operations. It is a valuable reminder of the broad complex of houses, industrial and communal structures which typified the mining districts of Bendigo and Eaglehawk. Although it now longer has that more dense urban character which was once a part of the townscape, the scattered surviving landforms and buildings are sufficiently close together and retain visual links which give a strong representation of the character of the is part of the field in the most active years of mining.

¹ Taken from Dr. Peter Milner's Report
² Taken from Report by Andrew Ward, Bendigo Heritage Advisory Service, July, 1991