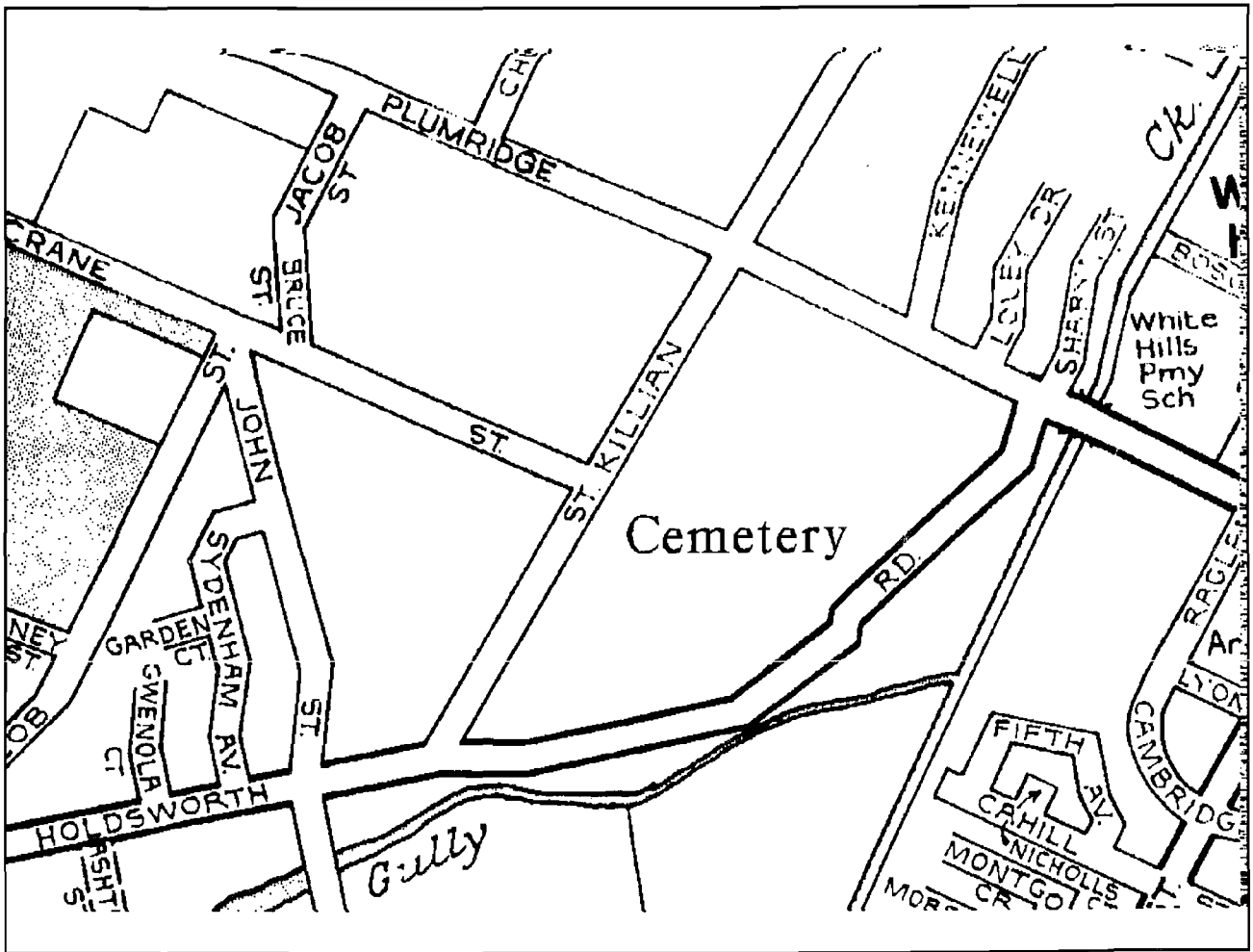


White Hills Cemetery



3-57
(Derived from 'Bendigo & District Street & Tourist Map' (UBD, 4th edit.)

White Hills Cemetery

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

City of Bendigo

LOCATION/ADDRESS

Holdsworth Road, White Hills

CADASTRAL INFORMATION

Crown Reserve Rs 7271, Parish of Sandhurst, County of Bendigo

[No old file located]

TYPE of PLACE

Cemetery/Institutional Garden

SIGNIFICANCE

White Hills Cemetery, set aside in 1860-70s¹ and continuously developed and still in use as a cemetery is of regional significance:

- * as a reserve for significant exotic species, particularly those listed on the National Trust Register of Significant Trees;
- * for its collection of trees and plants; these are typical of nineteenth century cemeteries in Victoria and demonstrate strong associational links with their cemetery setting;
- * for its collection of buildings and structures; these include representative examples of typical features such as entrance gates, fencing, a rotunda and headstones;
- * for its considerable aesthetic appeal derived from mature trees and shrubs, undulating site, sense of enclosure and vistas both within the site, views out of the site and from the exterior into the site;
- * for its strong historical and social links with the City of Bendigo, exemplified by its long continuity of use for its original purpose, its links with early development of the town and its prominence within the life and society of Bendigo.¹

HISTORY

Chronology:

1853 Cemetery established²

1854 Shown on government plan 'Hamlet of White Hills..'

1856 James Lee Foo buried, 1st of Chinese section³

1857 Extension (apprx. 5 acres) to original 10 acres shown on government plan⁴. Approved by the Governor-in-Council with provision for further expansion of 4 and 17 acres⁵.

1860-1 Central Board of Health reports, noting ornamental layout and good order, also improvements⁶

1862 Central Board of Health reports, noting gravelled paths and associated new planting, new planting area in triangle near entrance gate⁷.

Chinese Burning Tower reputedly built in or soon after this year as a result of formerly open burning of incense and crackers, causing a fire which fatally burnt the sexton's daughter. Towers were built to prevent this occurring again⁸

1870 Mueller supplies 60 plants from the Botanic Gardens⁹

1 AHC Criteria A3, A4, B2, C2, D2, E1, G1
2 1927 deputation notes in Health Dept. file on cemetery, NTA file
3 sign at cemetery
4 CPO Cem.365
5 CPO parish plan 57/482
6 NTA Central Board of Health Annual Reports, file copy
7 *ibid.*
8 Friends of the Cemetery group, pers.com.
9 S Maroske & A.May 'Horticultural embellishments: Public conferment from the Melbourne Botanic Gardens 1870' in *Australian Garden History* IV 4 1993 p.10

06.05.1873 Letter from B & S Johnston, nurserymen, Preston, informing council they have forwarded the order for elms and cypress for the White Hills Cemetery [BCC, Box 11, Item 4].

01.08.1873 Letter from B & S Johnston, nurserymen, Preston, informing council they have forwarded that day the order for 18 cypress for the White Hills Cemetery [BCC, Box 12, Item 11].

1874 44 acres temporarily reserved¹

1881 William Vahland called tenders for 'wing walled fences' at the entry (gates founded by P.M.Brown)

1927 Deputation to the Health Ministry seeks to stop closure of cemetery, after financial difficulties of previous trustees

1928 Bendigo Council become the managers of the cemetery

05.01.1973 A letter from Michael Hymes, Sorrento, commenting on the deplorable state of the burial ground of many of the state's pioneers

1987 Letters and press cuttings about Council's proposal to level many of the Chinese graves and mounds between the headstones. It was believed that the site would be more attractive to tourists if 'tidied up'.

Remains from the old Sandhurst cemetery (once on the edge of Rosalind Park) are thought to have been buried at White Hills in a mass grave (after acquisition of the land by the agricultural society) but no evidence exists other than the memorial on one grave noting that the body once was buried at the old cemetery.

Many of the area's important figures were buried here including Morris Collman (8 hour movement, mine manager) members of the Cohn, O'Keefe and Goyne families while the work of the renowned William Beebe (as Beebe & Son) is evident on the Roeder grave. The Celtic cross group in the Catholic section near the entry is also thought to be of some importance². The sexton's lodge has long since gone, reputedly having matched the lodge(s) at Bendigo cemetery³.

DESCRIPTION

The roughly triangular, undulating site is bounded by Holdsworth Road, St Kilian Street and Plumridge Street and slopes from the high point on St Kilian Street down to lower land along Holdsworth Road.

The main entrance is from Holdsworth Road where an impressive set of gates are in poor repair. To the immediate interior are a pair of very large *Ficus macrophylla* and next to these a pair of Carob trees (*Ceratonia siliqua*). The wrought iron fence extends a short distance along the street.

A sinuous path system with individual loops is similar to the Back Creek Cemetery, whereby the paths determine the denominational boundaries of the cemetery. A central path bisects the site extending from an entrance at the corner of St Kilian Street and Holdsworth Road towards the north east corner almost but not quite intersecting the centre of Plumridge Street.

The mature planting is a dominant element of the site in particular the various pines such as *Pinus halepensis*, *P. pinea* and *P. canariensis* and *Schinus molle* var. *areira*. The only structure in the cemetery is an octagonal rotunda in very poor condition. This is located on the path system to the north west of the main entrance; again in a location not unlike the very similar rotunda at the Back Creek Cemetery. The grounds contain a significant section of Chinese burials and headstones.

OWNERSHIP

Borough of Eaglehawk

EXISTING DESIGNATIONS

Peter Watts Gardens study - not listed.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Register of Significant Trees: two listed including *Pinus canariensis*, *Pinus roxburghii*.

1 VGG 20.3.74
2 ibid.
3 NTA file