

City of Greater Bendigo: Marong Heritage Study Mining Sites

IRON'S DAM

Other Names

Location Parcel No. P123410, Water Reserve, south side of Scotts Road, Neilborough

Map Reference Summerfield 1:25,000 - 540.476

Victorian Heritage Register No

National Estate Register No

Planning Scheme No



Description About 10 metres south of Scotts Road is a dam, still holding water. Between the road and dam, there is a weathered outline of a puddling machine, with a possible second puddling machine to the east.

History Period of activity: 1858-1998+

Thematic Context Mining

Comparative Examples Within the study area there are at least seventeen dams constructed to provide water for mining purposes. These are: Peter the Great Dam (right hand branch)(1856), Wallace Reef (1856), Flagstaff Hill (by 1857), Iron's Dam (1858), Old Tom Reef (1860), No.7 Reservoir (1861), Frederick the Great (1865), Raywood Reservoir (1865), Frühling Reef (1871), Liddell's (probably 1876), at least one at Fiddler's Green (by 1879), Elliott's Reef (by 1887), Christoff Reef (1895), Wilson's Hill (by 1896), Lightning Hill (by 1903), on the ridge above the Lancashire Reef workings (by1908) and New Moon Consolidated (by 1910). Several of these dams are still serviceable and at least three are still in use. These three are Flagstaff Hill (by 1857), Iron's Dam (1858) and No.7 Reservoir (by 1861). Iron's Dam is the oldest within the study area which is still in use. Within the study area at least sixteen puddling machine sites have been identified. These are: Peter the Great Gully (right hand branch)(by 1856?), Iron's Dam (2)(1858), Fiddlers Green (by 1879), Marong Deep Lead (1905), Jib Horse Gully (22 feet)(after 1930?), Old Tom Reef (20 feet)(after 1930), Phillips Gully (2)(after 1930?), Peter the Great Gully (left hand branch)(4)(after 1930?), Splitter's Gully (2)(22 feet)(after 1930?) and White Jacket Gully. Nineteenth century puddling machines are extremely rare and their provenance cannot usually be confirmed from such documentary evidence as has normally survived about mining in Victoria. The only site within the study area where this has been possible is at this site, but then only by a process of elimination. That is, from documentary evidence, it is known that there were two puddling machines in the vicinity of the dam in 1858. The remains of two, and only two, puddling machines were identified at the site in 1992, so these must be the original ones..Whilst there are puddling machines at other sites (for example, Peter the Great (by 1856), Old Tom Reef (by 1857) and Splitter's Gully (by 1865) these are either associated with later phases of mining (reef workings or hydraulic sluicing) and/or do not exhibit extensive weathering and therefore, on these grounds, they cannot be regarded unequivocally as nineteenth century artefacts.

Statement of Significance It is extremely rare to find a puddling machine for which there is documentary evidence which can confirm its provenance. This appears to be the case for both puddling machines at this site (criterion A). Puddling machine technology, whilst initially imported, was developed further in Victoria and was particularly important for the early development of alluvial mining in this state (criterion A) The ability to be able to construct a dateable sequence of puddling machines is particularly important for the purpose of dating other sites for which there is little or no documentary evidence (criterion C).

Level of Significance State

Recommendation The site should be protected by inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme, by registration with both the Victorian Heritage Council and the Australian Heritage Council, and in accordance with the general principles of the conservation policy for mining sites. In particular, access to the dam (whether by vehicle or on foot) should be restricted so that further damage to the two puddling machine sites is prevented.

Heritage Boundaries The site is bounded by Scotts Road on the north and by a line 30 metres beyond the normal high-water level in the dam.

- References**
1. "Mining intelligence. Elysian Flat." From a Correspondent, The Bendigo Advertiser, Monday, 19 April 1858.
 2. "Bendigo mining intelligence. Elysian Flat." From a Correspondent, 29 June 1858; The Bendigo Advertiser, Friday, 2 July 1858.
 3. "Bendigo mining intelligence. Elysian Flat." The Bendigo Advertiser, 26 July 1858.
 4. "Bendigo mining intelligence. Elysian Flat." The Bendigo Advertiser, Thursday, 29 July 1858.
 5. W. H. Cundy, "Second report of Elysian Flat goldfield." Progress Report, Geological Survey of Victoria, no.10, 1899, 27-29, map.

Notes

Assessed by David Bannear in February 1992 and reviewed by Peter Milner in June 1998

Chronology 19.04.1858 □ Already the miners in this locality are beginning to feel the want of water. ...
Mr Iron, of the Black Swan, has at present ten or a dozen men employed making a large dam, which I imagine will, when finished, hold an amount of water sufficient to keep at least a portion of the population employed for some time. ... At any rate, one thing is certain, unless we get water, and a permanent supply of it too shortly, Elysian Flat will once more be deserted, and the population now residing here will have to seek a home for themselves elsewhere. Let those who will be more immediately the sufferers from the depopulation of Elysian Flat, the storekeepers and merchants, look to it. ... By-the-bye there is a great talk of the Ovens just now about here, and several friends of mine have already lefty for those diggings. [139]
□ 02.07.1858 □ Mr James Iron, that well known practical and enterprising gentleman, has, I understand, completed the erection of a second puddling machine, on ground selected by him for that purpose, at a convenient distance from the shallow sinkings, and is now in a position to puddle at the moderate rate of 2dwt per load, any washing stuff that may be entrusted to him by the diggers for that purpose. [163]
□ 26.07.1858 □ We understand that the dam formed by Mr Iron at Elysian Flat has been filled by the recent rains. Mr Iron estimates the supply is sufficient for four months, and as a great many of the diggers have their stuff washed at his puddling machine, this fact is of some importance to the district. [167]
□ 29.07.1858 □ By favour of Mr Iron, who returned from these diggings at a late hour last night, we understand that things are going favourably in this locality. A

good supply of water has been secured in the different dams. One of the dams broke away above Mr Irons dam, and occasioned some inconvenience, but was eventually secured. [170]