

City of Greater Bendigo: Marong Heritage Study Mining Sites

LIGHTNING HILL MINES, DAMS AND ALLUVIAL WORKINGS

Other Names White Horse Hill

Location Parcel No. P127989, State Forest, east of Whipstick Road, Hustler's/Lightning Hill, Eaglehawk

Map Reference Campaspe 2.3 1:10,000 - 548.346 (mine site) and Eaglehawk 1:10,000 - 548.344 (open cut)

Victorian Heritage Register No

National Estate Register No

Planning Scheme No



Description Lightning Hill Company

On flat ground at the northern end of Lightning Hill there are two pairs of winding engine foundations. One pair is of hand-made bricks in concrete mortar, each foundation measuring 14 by 4 feet and 6 feet high, and modified or repaired with concrete. 1¼ inch mounting bolts protrude from the upper face of this foundation. Between the two foundations, at their southern end, is a small concrete foundation, measuring 5 by 2½ feet and 6 feet high. It has ¾-inch mounting bolts. The other pair of foundations run parallel to the brick pair, but are constructed of concrete. Each measures 3¼ feet wide and 7 feet high, but the two differ in length. One is 28 feet long, the other 21 feet. At the north end of the concrete foundations are the remains of a concrete boiler setting. 23 metres north of the machinery site is a filled shaft surrounded by three 4 foot-square concrete poppet-leg pads, 39 feet apart. Associated with the pads is a U-shaped concrete stand, with walls 5½ feet high and 1½ feet thick. There is a dry dam 30 metres south of the machinery site, with two others to the north. The mullock has been removed from the site.

Surface workings

Running north and south from the crown of Lightning Hill and generally on the eastern slopes, is a line of open-cuts, mullock heaps and shafts, partially filled with mullock. These workings extend northwards almost as far as the Lightning Hill Company's machinery site and southwards at least as far as Hodgson Street. Just north of this street there is a large mullock heap 8-10 metres high. The northern end of the hill appears to have been hydraulically sluiced.

History Period of activity: Lightning Hill - surface reef prospecting by 1860, leading to the first phase of reef working by (from south to north) the Rifle Company (1865), Excelsior Company (1865) at the summit and the Lightning Reef Company (1865-1876). Successful production from Hustler's Reef to the south led to the formation of the Prince Albert Hustler's Company (1871-1873) south of the Lightning Reef Company. None of these companies were particularly successful. The second phase of reef working, and the most profitable, commenced in 1876 with the discovery of a rich run of stone by Steer/Stear and Company in the east-west summit tunnel of the old Excelsior Company. The companies formed at this time were (from south to north) the Belvidere (1876), Hummel and Company (1876), Stear and Company (1876) at the summit, Bogel and Company (1876-1878), subsequently the Central Lightning Reef Company (1878-1881), Simmond's Lightning Reef Company (1876-1877) and Pascoe and Simmonds (1876-1879), subsequently the Pascoe and Simmonds' Tribute Company (1880-1882) and the General Gordon (1885-1896). Of these the most

successful was Pascoe and Simmonds. The third phase began with the establishment of the Lightning Hill Company (1903-1907), followed by these three other companies (from south to north) South Lightning Hill Company (1905-1916), Central Lightning Hill (1905-1906) at the summit and adjoining the Lightning Hill Company on the south, and the North Lightning Hill Company (1905-1906) adjoining the Lightning Hill Company on the north.

Line of reef: Lightning

Maximum recorded annual production: unknown

Total production: 3171ozs obtained from 5807 tons (Lightning Hill) between 1903 and 1906 [70]

Deepest working level: 980 feet (South Lightning Hill)

Deepest shaft: 300 feet (North Lightning Hill), 326 feet (Central Lightning Hill), 777 feet (Lightning Hill) and 1160 feet (South Lightning Hill) (below water level)

Thematic Context Mining

Comparative Examples The site is one of a number of representative medium-level low-production mine sites in the study area, namely: Black Forest (1858-1907), Old Tom Reef (1857-1898), Frühling Reef (1860-1931), Lancashire Reef (1890-1908) and King of Prussia (1871-1885). This site probably contains evidence of the longest sequence of such activities of any of these other sites.

Statement of Significance The site is representative of a sequence of uses or functions over time from the very earliest to the last period of mining: from shallow open cutting to medium-level shaft mining and eventually hydraulic sluicing, and is part of a group or network of sites, the totality of which is considered to be significant (criterion D).

Level of Significance Regional

Recommendation The site should be protected under the heritage overlay of the Great Bendigo Planning Scheme, by registration with the Victorian Heritage Council, in accordance with the general principles of the conservation policy for mining sites, and should be included as a significant sub-area in the proposed Lightning Hill Mining Heritage Area. In particular, further historical research needs to be undertaken to determine in detail the sequence of successions between the various mining companies operating on Lightning Hill, to relate these activities more firmly to extant physical features and especially to determine the location of the east-west tunnel under the summit.

Heritage Boundaries The Lightning Hill Mining Heritage Area is bounded on the south by Hodgson Street, on the east by the Raywood Channel as far as the junction between Whipstick Road and Rifle Range Road, on the north-west by a line 150 metres west of Whipstick Road (between Rifle Range Road and Mill Street and excluding all private property) and on the west by a line joining a point at the junction of Whipstick Road and the western access track to Lightning Hill and a point at the junction of Hodgson Street and the southern access street to Lightning Hill.

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Notes Although sluicing began on Bendigo in 1874, when a secure supply of water became available from the Coliban system, it is quite unlikely that such operations began in this area before the construction of the Eaglehawk syphon and Blue Jacket Reservoir in 1885/1886. As there is little re-growth over the sluiced area, however, it seems more likely that the sluicing was undertaken in the period 1931-1936, when there were over a thousand alluvial miners reported to be at work in the Bendigo district, and there were reports of fossickers in the area.

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

Chronology