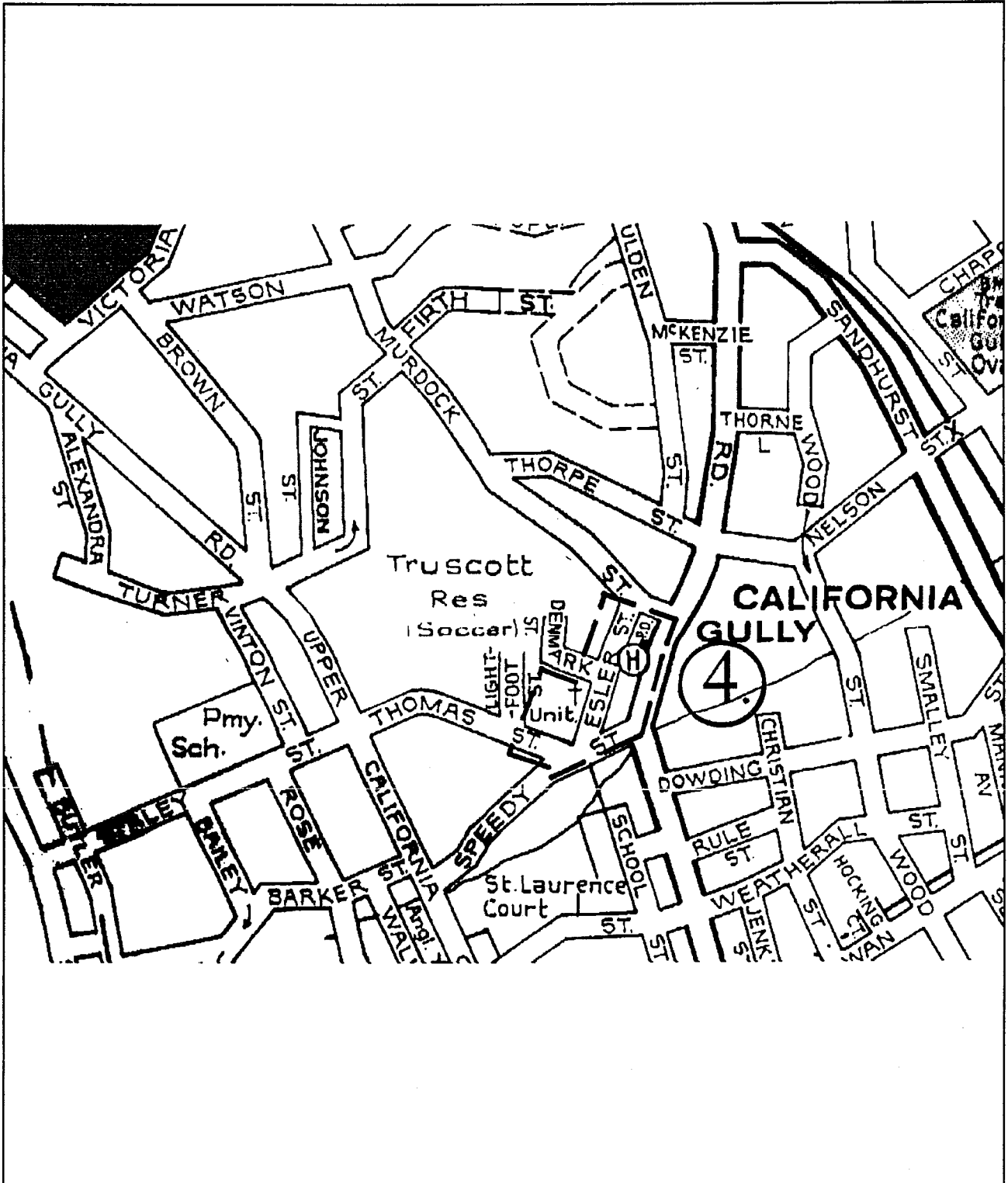


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3-8

Public and private buildings along Eaglehawk Road, California Gully.

LGA: EAGLEHAWK BOROUGH MAP: 6.10

Contributory Streets:

Eaglehawk Road
Esler Street

History

April 1852, a member of Joseph Crook's party found a nugget in California Gully, with many gold finds to follow.¹ This old alluvial gully still meanders east-west, crossing the Eaglehawk Road (former Mt. Korong Road) on the south side of Speedy Street (Brotherhood of St. Lawrence) to a former mining dam site south of Barker Street.² The gully's name arose from an influx (18,000) of miners from the Californian gold rush during the period 1851-6; other names were American Gully.

One of the earliest signs of urban consolidation was the opening of California Hill National School in 1862, at School Street (q.v.). The present Belltopper Hill or California Gully government school opened in 1883.

¹ Mining Chronology Vol.3
² Sandhurst Parish, Sheet 8
³ V & R, vol.2, p.433

One of the closest mines to the precinct was the Johnson group (Number One, North Johnson's) on the Garden Gully line of reef. Its main production period (1861-1920) yielded over 320,000 oz. of gold and £334,020 dividends, after commencing in 1853.¹ Further south, below Taylor Street, was the Windmill Hill mine group. Over an operating period of 1874-1920 it produced dividends of over £49,000.² The core of this urban precinct dates from the main gold producing era.

Set apart from the shops and hotels of Eaglehawk Road, the former California Hill Methodist Church (1875) is a reflection of the religious enthusiasm of the predominantly Cornish miners of the area, particularly its star-spangled interior. Rising above the rooflines of nearby buildings, its size was only equaled by the nearby mullock heaps of the North Johnson mine.³ The church had risen from a modest slab hut to the north, where Methodist miners first met during the 1850s.⁴ Other contrasting but contributory elements include the White Horse Hotel, which was run by the Sullivan family (Arthur) for so long (c1920s-50s) and, prior to that, Matthew Gambetta, who may have rebuilt it c1890.⁵

Another is the post office which also acted as a Red Cross Depot in the 1920s⁶ and an early shop in the 1860s, then owned and occupied by James Pascoe, a miner.⁷ It was also owned briefly by the Pabst family around c1903-10,⁸ who erected the nearby arcaded shop and residence at 301-303 Eaglehawk Road c1893-5.⁹ This building elegantly terminates a line of early commercial buildings which still comprises the core of California Gully.

Description

Roof Forms: Parapeted, gabled. Scale: One-storey.

Wall Materials: Brick, stucco.

Roof Materials: Corrugated iron.

Siting: Attached Buildings.

Period: Mid-late Victorian era.

An old commercial streetscape is the focus of this precinct,

being 301-311 Eaglehawk Road. This includes the post office, the White Horse Hotel and the notable 301-3 Eaglehawk Road. Visible behind this commercial strip is the individually notable former California Hill Methodist Church which is typical of the Goldfields Wesleyan architecture, being dichrome brick Gothic revival. Behind it again, are two old houses, one possessing an unusual tracery frieze, and another cottage (lot 91C) which links this group with the former gold field rising behind. This house turns away from the road and hence illustrates the landscape which existed prior to the surrounding subdivision.

Key Sites

Pascoe's California Gully Post Office, 307 Eaglehawk Road, 1865c

Pabst, Joseph Hanover, former 301-303 Eaglehawk Road, 1893-5

California Hill Methodist Church, former 2 Esler Street, 1875-

Wesleyan School No. 156, former, Esler Street, 1869

Carson's white Horse Hotel, 305 Eaglehawk Road, 1870c

Significance

This group represents the major components of gold-era town life at California Gully; an area renowned at first for its alluvial gold finds but later a rich quartz field. Apart from the fair integrity of its commercial components, there is the church, at once a monument to the devotion of the local Cornish and Methodist communities and an architectural marvel for its interior decoration scheme.

As with Long Gully and perhaps with an even greater sense of cohesion, the California Gully Precinct demonstrates the village characteristics identified with nineteenth century mining. In the case of California Gully the landscape is more comprehensively revealing since there are landform remnants from mining as a backdrop to a group of buildings which includes cottages, shops and Methodist chapel. The siting of the commercial strip along the roadway into Bendigo further illustrates the significance of traffic between Eaglehawk and Bendigo itself. California Gully is an important precinct since its range of buildings, street alignment and character and as well its surrounding landforms reflect the integrated local life of mining on the nineteenth century goldfield.

1 Mining Chronology Vol.3
2 ibid.
3 See Hopkins. p.54
4 ibid.
5 Butcher & Flanders. p.112, D1905-62
6 D1905-62
7 RB1865-1019
8 RB1910-11, 935
9 Butcher & Flanders. pp.112-113