



Victorian Heritage Database Report

Cave Hill- Limestone Works and Quarry, Tramway and Water Race and WWII Memorial Gates

Statement of Significance:

The Cave Hill Limestone Works, with its associated quarry, tramway water race and other features, has potential state significance as an outstanding exemplar of the development of the lime industry in Victoria, from the nineteenth through the twentieth century, with the surviving bank of kilns probably being the best extant examples in the State. Further comparative investigation is warranted.

Within its local and Shire context, this place is significant as an important district industrial enterprise, which operated over a long period from 1878 until the present time. The Cave Hill complex has significance as a major district landmark and for its associations with David Mitchell, building contractor and businessman. The remains of the Cave Hill tramway and water race are also of significance as examples of the engineering heritage of the Lilydale area.

Description

The Cave Hill complex comprises a number of elements, some located within the property owned by David Mitchell Ltd, some within the Lilydale Lake reserve, and others near Olinda Creek (possibly within a public land reserve).

The David Mitchell Ltd property contains the quarry and lime works, the former Cave Hill Butter; Cheese & Bacon Curing Factory (Place No. 571), and a milking shed and cheese room. Timber was supplied to the quarry via a tramway along Olinda Creek, and water was supplied via an aqueduct also from Olinda Creek.

The lime works at Cave Hill represent the second stage in the development of the lime industry in Victoria, the first being the single or paired early kilns built on the Peninsula, Geelong and Portland from the late 1830s, and the second being the larger scale works that started to be established from the 1870s. Like the David Mitchell Ltd works, these 1870s/80s works often used the new railway network as the means of getting their products to market. By the late nineteenth century, many of the kilns were designed to operate continuously, with fuel and limestone being recharged from the top after some of the burnt lime has been drawn down out of the kiln. There were a number of different types of continuous kilns: vertical kilns with mixed or separate feed and ring or chamber kilns, including the Hoffman type and rotary kilns. (Johnston 1986)

The David Mitchell Ltd lime works contains a group of lime kilns either side of an enclosed "tunnel". Brief inspection of these kilns indicates that they are brick structures, with large arched entries to the draw hole area. The shafts appear to have been encased within concrete and reinforcing beams have been added. They appear typical of the nineteenth century vertical shaft kilns design seen through-out Victoria, although no other example of such a large and intact set of kilns is known to the author. The southern entry to the "tunnel" consists of a large vaulted space, also brick lined. The "tunnel" is closest to the quarry and demonstrates part of the past flow of the quarried limestone into the kilns. There is also a large shaft kiln located nearby. The date of construction and method of operation of these kilns requires further research.

Also in the upper area of the site closest to the quarry are a number of timber-framed buildings that appear to date from the mid twentieth century or earlier. These include the Belt Repair shop, Fitters Workshop, Store, and Electrical Workshop. To the north of the Tunnel and shaft kiln is an area planned for redevelopment.

The Memorial Gates mark the entrance to the David Mitchell Ltd property. The gate pillars are stone-clad, each with plaques. The letters DME are set into the wrought iron gates. The plaques contain an honour roll of locals who served in the 1939-1945 war, and it includes around 70 names.

To the east of the works site and the former Cave Hill Butter; Cheese & Bacon Curing Factory (Place No. 571) is a timber milking shed and concrete building that is thought to have been a cheese room. These buildings are worthy of further investigation.

Remains of old trams are thought to survive on the property next to the quarry site, with some buried in a substantial state of decay. (Brad Martin, 1998)

Sections of the tramway that ran between the Cascades on Olinda Creek and the Cave Hill quarry survive. Within the Lillydale Lake parklands, a raised section of the tramway alignment is clearly visible on the west side of the Lake and have been designated as part of a future walking track system. (Brad Martin, 1998) Other features through the Swinburne University property included further sections of the tramway and a substantial rock faced cutting. These features have apparently been buried by new landscape works at the Swinburne site. (Brad Martin, 1998) Sections of the tramway alignment may also survive along other parts of this route (for example parallel to Tramway Road, Mt Evelyn).

An aqueduct serving the quarry ran parallel to the tramway, and a long section survives within Lillydale Lake parklands. It was hand dug to follow the contours from the weir on Olinda Creek to the quarry. The surviving sections are contained in the buffer planting between Swinburne campus and the Lake, and these have been fenced for protection. (Brad Martin, 1998)

Approximately 300 metres south of Lillydale Lake parklands is a bluestone weir on the Olinda Creek. The bluestone structure has been substantially damaged, but can still be recognised. (Brad Martin, 1998) A section of a brick-lined water-race on the west side of the creek is also said to survive. (Karen Phillips, pers. comm.)

Another feature that survives is a section of the drainage system, built of hand-made bricks, and extending from the Hutchinson Street entry to the Swinburne University and the running west behind the Eastern Energy service years to the David Mitchell property. (Brad Martin, 1998)

Not all of the area that potentially contains features associated within this works has been able to be examined in detail, and recommendations are made about further field and archaeological assessment. In addition, there are some areas of housing adjoining Cave Hill quarry (Cave Hill Road and adjoining streets) which are of potential heritage significance and should be further investigated in a later stage of the study.

Varies

Evidence of stages

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| Heritage Study / Consultant | Yarra Ranges - Shire of Yarra Ranges Heritage Study, Context Pty Ltd, 2000 |
| Construction Date Range | |
| Architect / Designer | |
| Municipality | YARRA RANGES SHIRE |
| Other names | |
| Hermes number | 115201 |
| Property number | 4886/7/ |

This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online