



Victorian Heritage Database Report  
**Russell's Mill**

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**Location:**

Ash Landing Road, Gembrook VIC 3783

**Heritage Status / Level of Significance:**

Included in Heritage Overlay

**Heritage Inventory (HI) Number:** H7922-0180, H7922-0181, H7922-0182

**Listing Authority:** HI

**Heritage Overlay Number:** HO149

**Statement of Significance:**

This mill has national significance as the terminus of a tramway route which changed timber transport patterns in the region. This tramway was one of only five in the state to use articulated steam power. While little of the tramway remains, such as the pigsty bridge, the main mill which it was built to serve demonstrates its size and layout from its remains. The mill belonged to the most important sawmilling company in the Black Snake Creek, and the tramway provided valuable traffic for the Ferntree Gully to Gembrook narrow-gauge railway, without which the latter line may well have closed much earlier than it did. (Evans, 1993: 77-78) The dugout at Russell's mill is one of the most intact and historically significant due to its physical construction, of all dugouts in the Central Highlands of Victoria. (Evans, 1993b: 67-68)

**Description**

This mill is located on the Back (or Black Snake) Creek in a relatively clear, flat area beside Ash Landing Road which follows the old tramway route in parts. The site occupies a radius of 100m around the mill shed and is located in State Forest.

The mill building is delineated by remnant uprights and portions of uprights. The sawdust trench is deep and walls well defined. The sawdust heap is located unusually far away (south) from the trench. There are several timbers still in situ which once formed the foundation for the saw benches over the sawdust trench. As well as these, several other foundations, iron spikes and bolts help to define the layout of the mill. South of the mill is a bolted framework of timbers on the ground surface. This may have been part of the foundations for a logging

winch but appears to be too light for this purpose.

The dugout is 40m NE of the mill shed. While the roof has collapsed there is evidence of the structural form of the interior, and the entrance to the dugout is in excellent condition. It is dry-stone walled, roofed with sheet iron covered with earth, and framed by sections of steel rail and channel iron.

Most of the outlet tramway along the Black Snake Creek has been converted into a road, and only isolated cuttings beside the road, the occasional dogspike in the road surface, and telephone insulators on old trees beside the road remain to reflect its original purpose. The logging tramway now forms Ash Landing road, but not far north of the mill are the impressive remains of a large pig-sty bridge where the road has diverted from the tramway formation in a gully. Apart from a short section of tramway formation north of this bridge and leading to the No.2 mill, little else remains. (Evans, 1993a: 77)

Not known

Altered

|                             |                                                                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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               | 115757                                                                     |
| Property number             |                                                                            |

*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*