

Place name Grant Historic Area	Survey Date: 31/03/1999
Other name Mount Pleasant, Crooked River Settlement, Grant Township, Dargo-Crook	Id: 468
Street Dargo High Plains Road, McMillans Track	Last Update
Locality Dargo	Postcode
Official Locality	Property No
Local Government Area Wellington Shire	Property Info
Precinct: Not in precinct	
Easting 513600	Northing 5866800
Map Dargo 8323	
Workshop number Primary - C2/06a: Other - B	Workshop votes 17
Field survey number	Community priority
Designer	Builder
Ownership Public	Built Date Change Date

Description Old gold mining settlement. Cemetery, mines, spoiling sites. (Churchill Workshop) Includes Grant, Talbotville, Crooked River, Bulltown and Hogtown. (Bruthen Workshop) Cemetery maintained by community groups in the region. It is like a large paddock (undulating terrain) surrounded by forest and remains of gold mining equipment. About 3 street signs have been preserved, presumably to remind people that a town was there from about 1860 to about 1915. You can still see where the police paddock and house were. One mine is open for inspection. (Sale Workshop) Mines, shafts, water races, old chimneys, cemeteries, mining equipment, bridle trails, hotel sites, stone walls. (Dargo Workshop)

The site of Grant is a large clearing with minor remnants of buildings. The clearing is surrounded with evidence of mining, eg. shafts, adits, mullock heaps and one dry stone/mud mortar chimney at Jolly Sailor. The Crooked River Township is characterised by remnant chimneys, alluvial workings, water races and broken glass/china scatterings [Data from North East Victorian Forest Region - Community Heritage Workshops]

The sites of the Grant Historic Area have been recorded in detail by Bannear (1998). His records are summarised briefly below.

- Grant Township. Located at Mount Grant. The main features remaining from this once extensive town are the exotic trees (eg. pears, elderberries), remnants of the street lay-out, and some minor remnants of house/building sites (eg. fireplace remnants, benched sites, building stumps, artefact scatters). (Place No. 821)
- Grant Cemetery. Located at Mount Grant near the Grant township site. Bannear was able to locate two standing headstones (with dates of burial of 1870, 1890, 1902, and 1912), 25+ distinct grave mounds, and a fenced grave site. (Place No. 821)
- Bulltown and Hogtown. Located on the Crooked River. Largely overgrown, but with some stone fireplaces visible, and a well-preserved bakers oven at Hogtown. Patches of alluvial mining and water races are located nearby. (Place Nos. 832, 833)
- Talbotville. Located on the Crooked River. Large cleared river flat, now used for camping. Features include: exotic trees (eg. cherry plum, fig, walnut, poplar, pear, pines), rubble mounds indicating hut sites, and a cemetery with two headstones, grave mounds, and pine trees. (Place No. 834)
- Old Good Hope Mine. Located at the head of Good Hope Creek. Features recorded by Bannear include mine workings on four levels (adits, mullock heaps, shafts, ore trucks, trolley wheels, iron rails); an intact but overgrown battery (including a Cornish boiler, horizontal steam engine and stampers, water supply dam, and remnants of at least 3 hut sites. (Place No. 818)
- Good Hope Consolidated Mine. Located on a spur near the Crooked River. Features recorded by Bannear include a well-preserved portable engine, battery, No. 5 adit and associated mullock heap, mine workings, and two ore trucks. (Place No. 819)
- Dredging workings at Stonewall (Place No. 835), Hogtown (Place No. 836, 427) and Talbotville (Place No. 438). Located on the Crooked River (east and west sides), and at its junction with Good Luck Creek. Features recorded by Bannear include: large dredge holes at each site, pebble dumps and tail races. A bakers oven was recorded at Stonewall.

- Captain Cook Reef: Located on a branch of Bakers Creek. Features recorded by Bannear include a large open cut/stope. (Place No. 820)
- Lone Hand Battery and Cyanide Works: Located on Jolly Sailor Reef. Features recorded by Bannear include a 13-foot high chimney stack, benched platform (battery site), benched track, and 3 galvanised iron cyanide vats. (Place No. 822)
- Mountaineer Mine Site: Located on the Good Luck Creek, near the junction with Bottleneck Creek. Features recorded by Bannear include: a 10-head battery, tramway incline and two trolley trucks, quartz workings (adit and tailings heap), alluvial workings and a water race. (Place No. 823)
- Red Rose Battery: Located at the base of Red Rose spur. Features of the site have been difficult to identify because of extensive blackberry growth over the site. Remains of a waterwheel, 10-head stampers and adits have been observed here in the past. (Place No. 824)
- Jungle Creek Falls Diversion Sluice: Located at Jungle Creek Falls. Features recorded by Bannear include a 100-foot long cutting, 6-8 feet deep, which now runs as the main course of the creek. Below the cutting is a waterfall and walking track. Overgrown alluvial workings were also recorded. (Place No. 769)
- Jungle Creek Battery (Place No. 826) and Quartz Mine Site (Place No. 827): Located on Upper Jungle Creek. Features recorded by Bannear include: fragments of a battery and boiler, a line of reef workings (open shafts, mullock paddocks, stone fireplace, open adit, blacksmith forge, large stope), and a benched track.

The Grant Historic Area is registered on the Register of the National Estate for its historic values. Bannear (1998) has assessed the significance of the Grant Historic Area to be above threshold for the Register of the National Estate on historical and archaeological grounds. He has also assessed the individual sites within the Historic Area as regionally significant, with the exception of the Old Good Hope Mine, Good Hope Consolidated Mine and Jungle Creek Falls Diversion Sluice, which were assessed as being of State significance.: Locality - Crooked River, Dargo: Area - 7,300 ha: Condition and Integrity - This place is a complex cultural landscape, extensively modified by gold mining and associated activities, and now covered in regrowth forest. Picnic and camping facilities (including toilets) are provided at a number of locations for visitors. Many of the sites within the Historic Area are not easily accessible by conventional vehicles, and the area is a popular one for recreational 4-wheel drivers. The condition of this place has been assessed by Bannear (1998). It is managed by Natural Resources and Environment as a Historic Area Reserve for conservation of historic values, and a number of other uses are permitted, including timber harvesting, mineral exploration, grazing and fossicking. Remnant structures and artefacts are protected. There is evidence of disturbance to the historic sites by bottle hunters and fossickers, and this ongoing activity has the potential to reduce the integrity and historical significance of this place. Maintenance of the natural and scenic values of the Historic Area, together with the remote and relatively inaccessible location are important to the conservation of its social value.

The condition and integrity of the individual features of the Historic Area were assessed by Bannear (1998) as follows:

- Grant township and cemetery - Much of this site has been reclaimed by forest. A very good historical photograph record exists which could be used to enhance the interpretation of the site. The site contains relatively few remnants of this once extensive township. There is evidence of extensive looting by bottle/treasure hunters.
- Hogtown, Bulltown and Talbotville. These sites are now principally landscape features with occasional historic remnants. They are overgrown and have been looted by bottle collectors.
- Old Good Hope Mine - site is overgrown but intact and very significant.
- Good Hope Consolidated Mine - the battery and portable engines are in excellent condition.
- Dredging workings at Stonewall, Hogtown and Talbotville: well preserved examples.
- Captain Cook Reef: good condition.
- Lone Hand Battery and Cyanide Works: The chimney stack is in good condition.
- Mountaineer Mine Site: Battery collapsed.
- Red Rose Battery: in a state of collapse.
- Jungle Creek Falls Diversion Sluice: Diversion sluice and cutting is in good condition. The alluvial workings upstream are very overgrown.
- Jungle Creek Battery and Quartz Mine Site: not assessed by Bannear

Condition

Integrity

History

Major gold mining area. Angus McMillan. (Churchill Workshop) Street names still in place. (Bruthen Workshop) Talbotville was a gold mining town that lasted ninety years. 1939 bush fires removed the last dwellings. (Heyfield Workshop) Buildings and mining equipment were removed as mines ran out. In its heyday, over 2000 people lived in Grant, which had no natural water. See Stratford Historical Society, 'Gippsland Heritage Journal', and books on gold mining towns by Rob Christie. (Sale Workshop) See 'Victoria's Forgotten Goldfield'. Rich in its day - helped open up Gippsland. (Dargo Workshop)

The Grant Historic Area covers the former Crooked River goldfield. The Crooked River is a tributary of the Wongungarra River. Gold was discovered by a party led by Alfred Howitt in 1860. Alluvial gold was mined there from 1860, and a quartz reef discovery by Alexander Beecher (a member of Angus McMillan's trace cutting party) sparked a further rush in 1864. According to Bannear (1998), this was "a reefing spree without parallel in Victoria

The gold mining history of this goldfield has been documented in detail by Bannear (1998). More than 200 gold-bearing quartz reefs were discovered, but many were abandoned within a year because they were too small to be economically viable. The most successful and long lasting mine was the Good Hope, which was worked almost continuously until 1915. Its best years were 1865-1870. Bannear (1998) has recorded and researched the history of this mine, and also the Good Hope Consolidated Mine (1906-1915), the dredging works at Stonewall, Hogtown and Talbotville (1906-1912), the Lone Hand Battery and Cyanide Works (possibly dating from the 1860s, and used to the 1880s, and then in the early 1900s), Mountaineer Mine Site (c1864-c1880s), Red Rose Battery (unknown date), Jungle Creek Falls Diversion Sluice (c1860s or c1870s), and the Jungle Creek Battery and Quartz Mine Site (c1860s).

A number of sizeable townships were established on the goldfields - Grant was the most substantial, but smaller settlements were also established (eg. Talbotville, Hog Town, Bull Town, Howittville). The main settlement sites on the Crooked River goldfield have been recorded and researched in detail by Bannear (1998). After the initial rush in 1861, Hogtown was the most populous town - it was named after a resident, Mr Hogg. The only licensed hotel was at Bulltown, which also had a post office and public hall. The first place that beef was killed in the area was at Bulltown. All the settlements had stores and grog shanties. The field supported a total population of between 200 and 700 during the alluvial mining phase from 1861 to 1864.

When quartz reef mining began, new settlements were created, including Talbotville (originally named Ram Town Howittville, Winchester (also known as Little London and Rathmines), Stonewall, and Grant (Mount Pleasant). According to Bannear (1998), by 1865, Talbotville had a butcher's shop, bakery, blacksmiths, three stores, doctor, chemist, newsagency, library, brewery, post office, racecourse, and three licensed hotels. While smaller, the other river settlements also had a range of 'town' facilities. Most of these settlements were very short-lived, with reef mining in steep decline by 1866-1867. By 1868, Hogtown, Stonewall, Winchester and Howittville were abandoned, and Bulltown was all but abandoned in the early 1880s. Only Talbotville survived into the twentieth century, as it was not wholly dependent on mining and had river flat land suitable for crops. Albert and Martha Stout continued to live at Talbotville until 1948 when they moved to Dargo.

Grant was the main township on the Crooked River goldfield. It was established during the quartz reef mining rush in 1864. It was the only settlement located away from the river, located on the hilltop known as Mount Pleasant. The town was initially known as Mount Pleasant or Skye, but was surveyed in 1865 and called Grant. At its peak in 1865, Grant had a population of 2000 people, and town allotments were sold in that year. Visitors to Grant in 1865 found a substantial and flourishing town. According to Bannear (1998), a directory entry for Grant at this time lists 18 hotels, 4 banks, 23 stores, 2 cordial makers, 3 wine and spirit dealers, 2 chemists, several barristers and solicitors, post office, many restaurants, a school, church, court house, mining exchange, newspaper office, and government camp. By 1867, the Crooked River goldfield was in decline. By 1867, only one of the four banks at Grant was still operating and many businesses had closed. Grant was handicapped by the unsuitability of the surrounding land for crops, and the high price of transporting goods from Sale or Bairnsdale. Only the Good Hope Mine continued to produce good returns through the 1870s. By 1875, only 18 diggers remained at Grant, and the township was looking deserted. The school continued at Grant until 1890, and Harrison's Store and two of the hotel continued past this time. The last residents left Grant in 1916, and many of the buildings were removed. Bushfires took their toll on the remaining structures of the town. A visitor to Grant in 1931 could find only the cemetery.

The historical importance of the Crooked River goldfield is summarised by Christie (1997):

"Despite the fact that the field did not live up to its early expectations, the rush to the Crooked River in the 1860s played an important part in the history of Gippsland. For a short period the field was the major goldfield in Gippsland and Grant was one of the largest towns in eastern Victoria. The rush also led to the opening up of new areas of country and while the gold yield was not high in comparison with such fields as Walhalla, the Dargo-Crooked River field made an important contribution to the gold production in the 1860s and the development of Sale and Bairnsdale."

This summary was derived from Bannear 1998; Christie and May 1996; Christie 1997; Fletcher 1988.

Heritage Protections Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
Historic Places Branch Database	HPB7107		Listed
Planning Scheme	HO107		Listed
Register of the National Estate	004714		Listed

National Estate Code	Assessment Detail
G	<p>G.1 Importance as a place highly valued by a community for reasons of religious, spiritual, symbolic, cultural, educational or social associations: Value - This place was identified and assessed for social value (Criterion G1) through an analysis of data collected through a community workshop process and is considered to meet the National Estate threshold for social value.</p> <p>The Grant Historic Area is widely known and highly valued by communities in throughout northeastern Victoria. It was identified by eight groups at five workshops (Churchill, Heyfield, Dargo, Bruthen and Sale) and at one of the similar workshops conducted for Community Heritage Assessment of the North East Victoria forest region - Bright (Context 1997). The social value of this place was confirmed during the social value research phase for the present study. Although relatively little remains of the former settlements and mining operations, the Crooked River goldfield area a strong symbol of the mining history which is an important component of the region's industry. The social value of this place is based on the influence of gold rushes on the development of the landscape and community identity of the region, and is of particular importance to the Dargo community. The remote and rugged character of this place, and its ability to reflect on the transience of once populous settlements are important contributors to the social value of this place.</p>

Research Required

Recommendations Heritage Status - Register of the National Estate - Registered. RNE Database No. 004714RNE Status from RFA - Registered

Fieldwork priority?

Stage 1 Ranking Assessed & protected **Stage 2 priority** No Action: Already include

Final Ranking Regional significance **Final Recommendation** Amendment C26

Statement of significance The Grant Historic Area is of social significance because it is a strong symbol of the mining history which is an important component of the region's identity. It is a very widely known and highly valued place for communities throughout the North East and northern Gippsland forest regions of Victoria, and is a significant for the Dargo community. (Criterion G1)

Extent of designation Entire Historic Area. The AM

Informant Phil Whiteman, Peter Calvert, Brendan Lee, Ant Mair, Jim Harrap, John Jago, Graham Watt Potential informants - Grant Historical Society; Robert Christie, Briagolong; Linda Barraclough, Rostrevor Street, Briagolong. / Historic Places Section (NRE, Dargo); Rob Christie (Dargo)

Notes

Follow up

Bibliography Context Pty Ltd. 1999. Identification and Assessment of community and heritage values in the Gippsland Forest Region. Report to Environment Australia and Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria as part of the Comprehensive Regional Assessment: National Estate Gippsland Regional Forest Agreement.

R. Christie, 1997 Dargo, Crooked River: A Pictorial History. 2nd Edition. High Country Publishing, Dargo.

R. W. Christie and G. D. Gray, 1996 Victoria's Forgotten Goldfield: A history of the Dargo, Crooked River Goldfield. 2nd Edition. High Country Publishing, Dargo.

M. Fletcher, 1988 Avon to the Alps: History of the Avon Shire.

D. Bannear, 1998 Historic Gold Mining Sites in the Gippsland Mining District. Report on Cultural Heritage. Victorian Goldfields Project. Historic Places Section, Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

Dargo and District Community Group Inc. (nd) Grant Information Sheet.

Context Pty Ltd (Ed), 1997 Inventory of Cultural Heritage Places in the North East Forest Region, Victoria. Prepared for Environment Australia and Natural Resources and Environment Victoria as part of the Comprehensive Regional Assessment: North East Regional Forest Agreement.

Context Pty Ltd: C. Johnston, K. Buckley, Name of Recorder
R Crocker, M Sandford, Name of Recorder