

REPORT ON

A SITE INSPECTION OF HISTORIC MINING SITES

IN THE LEFROY AREA

WITH AN EMPHASIS ON

THE VOLUNTEER MINES

AND

THE MINING TOWNSHIP OF NINE MILE SPRINGS

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INTRODUCTION

A survey of parts of the Lefroy goldfields was undertaken to assess the possible impacts of mineral exploration upon the heritage values of the area. The inspection was made by Denise Gaughwin, Senior Archaeologist (Forest Practices Unit), Greg Dickens and David Gatehouse (Mineral Resources, Tasmania).

PURPOSE OF INSPECTION:

Two separate mineral leases have been applied for the above locations. An exploration lease for a large area covering much of the historic Lefroy gold fields has been granted. The exploitation programme will include some drilling.

A separate application has been received to remove the mullock heap from the Volunteer Mine for processing to recover any gold remaining.

RESULTS OF INSPECTION

Nine Mile Springs

The area known as Nine Mile Springs was the original mining township associated with the Lefroy area. Located north of the Bridport Road the historic township has little remaining above the ground. Numerous remains of the 1869 township can however be seen including foundations and chimneys of a number of houses and hotels. The original layout of the town is still visible by way of the roads and drainage lines. A cistern, remains of a blacksmiths forge, many ceramic and glass artefacts and a number of shafts, trenches and mullock heaps which encircle the town are visible.

The significance of this site is extremely high on the basis of rarity and historic criterion. The town was occupied for a short time only from 1869 to 1872. For these few short years there was a great deal of enthusiasm for the prospects of the mines and a substantial town was built with government support. The government added a post office and a gold office to the industrial buildings of the mine, the miners cottages and public houses. The town therefore provides a sealed capsule of information from the period as no further rehabilitation of the site has been attempted. Sealed deposits of this type are very rare as later habitation and further mining have altered or removed the evidence of the earlier occupation

Volunteer Area

This area saw a number of historic mines from the late nineteenth century through to the first few decades of this century. The landscape today shows the remains of these mines through a number of remains associated with the mines including the West Volunteer, the East Volunteer and the Volunteer. The most important of these mines was the Volunteer as there was more working at this mine, it operated longer and there was more development in terms of mining apparatus.

The most obvious of these remains are the mullock heaps, the tailings dam, the system of tracks and the deep shafts. Less obvious are the remains of the machinery mounts, remains of boiler houses that are associated with the winches, batteries and other gear that was required in the process of extracting and processing the mineral bearing ores. Even less obvious are the footings of hut sites above the Volunteer workings and the

allied scatters of broken ceramics and glass which indicate where the miners lived (see Fig 1.) for a detailed site diagram.

The significance of this site is the high. The area is considered to form a cultural landscape which illustrates many aspects of gold mining in the Lefroy area. There is a high degree of integrity of the site in that many components of the original mine are still *in situ*. This level of integrity is unusual in this area. The amount of material remaining at the site means that it can provide information that will contribute to our understanding of the nature of historic mining in Tasmania.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

An application has been made to remove the mullock heap from the Volunteer mine to process and extract any remaining gold. This would entail the removal of the major focus of the site as well as put at risk a number of features of significance. The mullock heap is a significant feature of the site in that it by its size it dominates the precinct. The approximate measurements of the heap are 80 x 30 x 10 m. The size of the heap illustrates the level of activity that was conducted underground and immediately informs that this is an important mining site. As part of the mullock has already been removed leaving a steep eroding face the original size must have been even more impressive.

The mullock heap abuts a natural slope upon which the main shaft and machinery remains are located. It is not possible from the surface today to identify where the mullock heap actually meets the natural ground surface. Any extraction of material from the heap must take account of the significance of these other features which should not be impacted upon. It is difficult to provide a system whereby the mullock heap could be removed and the overall significance of the site be retained.

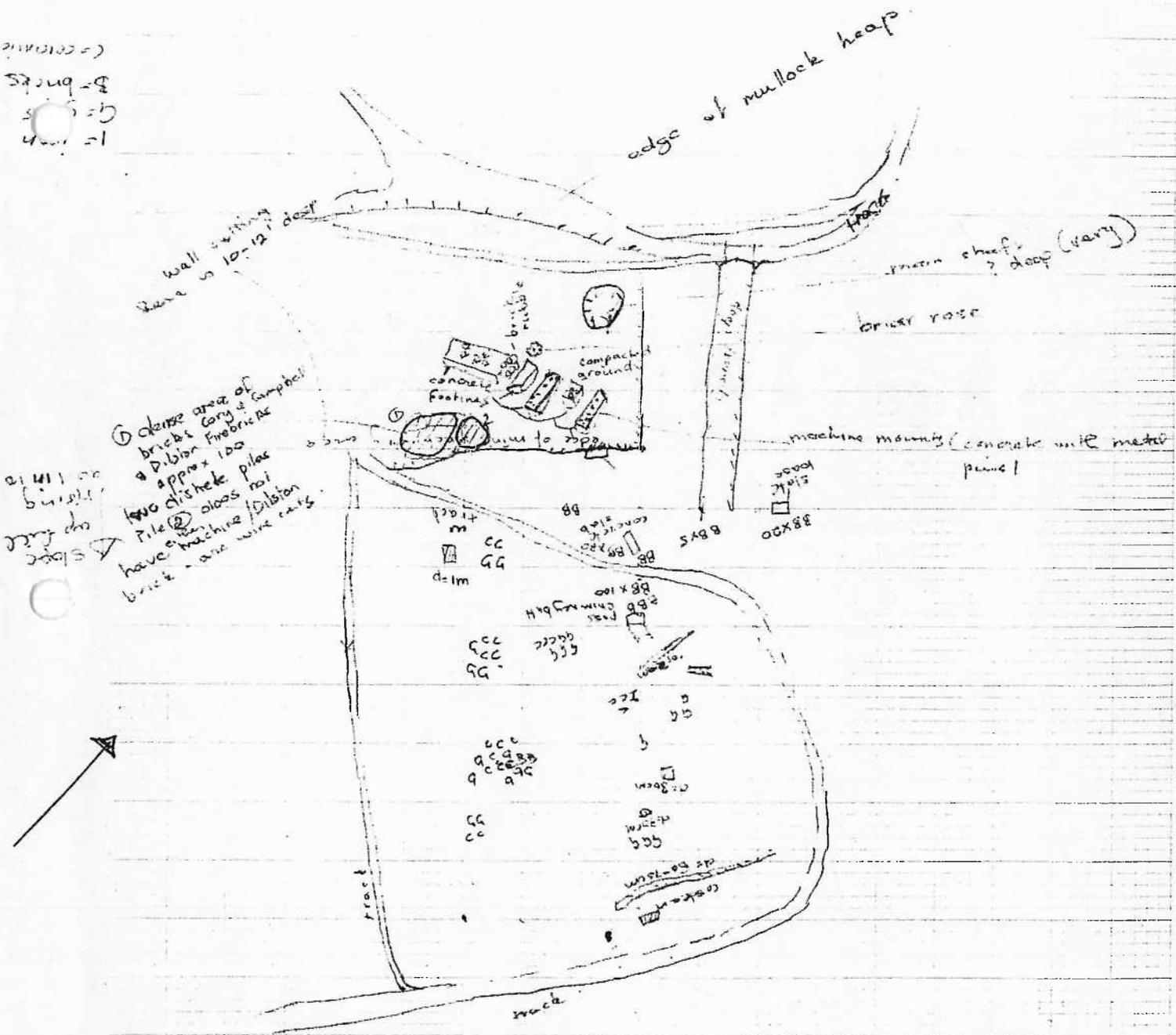
RECOMMENDATION

For the reasons outlined above it is recommended that the mullock heap at the Volunteer mine not be removed.

No ground disturbance should occur on the site known as Nile Mile Springs township.

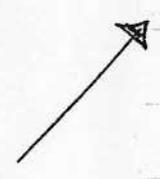
Douise Taughmon

1cm = 10 m



1 = inch
 G = 5
 B = bricks
 (= concrete

① dense area of bricks long & Campbell
 a Dillion Firebrick
 approx 100
 two dishevel piles
 pile ② also
 have machine / Dillion
 brick - and wire cage



West Volunteer Gold Mine 6/12/93 with Leanne McIntosh.