



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

The wording of this document has been adapted from 'King Battery Conservation Plan', prepared by Gerry MacGill for the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society and the Heritage Council of WA in July 2001, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.4.3 Mining
- 3.16 Struggling with remoteness, hardships and failure

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 110 Resource exploitation and depletion
- 303 Mining (including mineral processing)

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The tailings wheel pillars, are a prominent feature on account of their monumental quality, displaying high quality stonework, arches and brick quoining. (Criterion 1.3)

King Battery contributes to its picturesque natural setting in a lake embayment, particularly through its use of locally quarried stone that compliments the natural features. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

King Battery is the surviving core element of a private treatment plant for processing ores established during the early development of the Eastern Goldfields region. (Criterion 2.1)

King Battery was a major entrepreneurial venture which, although it failed, foreshadowed the centralised processing from multiple sources that characterises mining in the modern era. (Criterion 2.2)

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

King Battery was established by Hampton Plains Estates Ltd in an attempt by the company to establish itself as a gold producer of note. Although the Hampton Plains mines had limited success, the company was a significant land-owner in the goldfields and its successors have remained influential in the mining industry to the present day. (Criterion 2.3)

King Battery is closely associated with the distinguished English mining engineer, Ernest Lidgey, sometime President of the Australasian Institute of Mining Engineers, who developed the concept of the centralised mill, designed the battery and cyanide plant layout and supervised their construction, and managed the associated mines. Lidgey went on to pioneer an early, if not the earliest, application of geophysical mineral prospecting in Australia. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

King Battery contains evidence of the complete process of gold ore treatment and has significance as a research site to improve understanding of treatment methods in use at the beginning of the twentieth century. (Criteria 3.1 & 3.2)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

King Battery is valued by the regional community as a popular recreational area and historic monument, as evidenced by its inclusion in the Eastern Goldfields Heritage Trail. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

The tailings wheel pillars represent the State's only surviving evidence of a type of bulk material handling once fairly common on Western Australia's goldfields. (Criterion 6.1)

King Battery is unusual as a stand-alone private processing plant built to serve several mines in the area rather than being connected with a specific mine site. (Criterion 6.1)

King Battery is a rare example of a traditional stamp battery, a type of processing plant that has virtually disappeared from mining sites; and includes a cyanide plant more sophisticated than those commonly built at the State batteries. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

King Battery is representative of the complete process of gold ore treatment as it was practiced in the early 1900s, although the specific layout of the plant is unusual. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

King Battery is essentially stable and, with the exception of some details of the chimney stack base and the tailings wheel pillars, in very good condition for a site of its type.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

King Battery exhibits a high level of integrity in that its original purpose is clearly apparent and there are no conflicting current uses. The identified cultural heritage values are sustainable in the medium to long term with appropriate management to control recreational uses, and in the indefinite long term with a modest level of preservation work.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The level of authenticity of the extant fabric is moderate to high in that what survives is, apart from some natural deterioration and the loss of the tailings wheel through vandalism in the 1950s, in the state in which it was left following the abandonment of the site and the removal of its equipment sometime after 1904. By the criterion of survival of the whole of the fabric in its original state, the authenticity is low, but this is more often than not the case with historic mine sites.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Supporting evidence has been taken from 'King Battery Conservation Plan', prepared by Gerry MacGill for the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society and the Heritage Council of WA in July 2001.

Key sections used: Part One: Evidence (pp.3-36)

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the documentary evidence, refer to 'King Battery Conservation Plan', prepared by Gerry MacGill for the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society and the Heritage Council of WA in July 2001.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

For a discussion of the physical evidence, refer to 'King Battery Conservation Plan', prepared by Gerry MacGill for the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society and the Heritage Council of WA in July 2001.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

For a discussion of the comparative information, refer to 'King Battery Conservation Plan', prepared by Gerry MacGill for the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society and the Heritage Council of WA in July 2001.

Between 1899 and 1958, the Colonial and then State Government opened 73 batteries across Western Australia. The majority of these treated gold, although a small number were also used for lead, copper, tin or tantalum bearing ores. A site survey in 1999 concluded that the infrastructure at a majority of these batteries had either been removed or was in various stages of decay. Only six were considered to have infrastructure preserved to a degree that retained their heritage value. Eight of the batteries were occupied in 1999, and nine had been rehabilitated. Tailings and accumulated rubbish were common on most of the sites. Approximately half were considered dangerous on account of abandoned underground workings associated with them. ¹

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

'King Battery Conservation Plan', prepared by Gerry MacGill for the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society and the Heritage Council of WA in July 2001.

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

¹ Adamides, N.G. 'Inventory of State Battery Sites in Western Australia', prepared for Geological Survey of Western Australia, 2000.