

Steiglitz

Early gold rush years

Located just out of Geelong, Steiglitz took its name from early district pioneers the von Stieglitz family (original spelling). The Steiglitz goldfield sat within a property of 9,712ha taken up in 1842 called "Durdidwarrah". With its rising and falling fortunes, Steiglitz, one of the richest quartz goldfields in Australia almost became a ghost town.

The first traces of gold were found in the Anakie Hills in September 1851 and in the Sutherlands Creek at Steiglitz in May 1853. While alluvial gold in the Creek attracted some miners the first substantial rush to Steiglitz was in late 1855 when Davis and Hooley opened up the first rich quartz reef at the foot of the main street.

By 1856 the Steiglitz Township was taking shape with four hotels, a State School and four denominational schools catering for 200 children and a population of around 1000. It was producing about 750 ozs a week through its seven quartz crushing machines. By January 1858, the first Court House was constructed on land at the rear of the existing Court House.

Amalgamation, mechanization and growth

By January 1859 the yield of gold was already falling, but the amalgamations of small separate mines, together with the acquisition of new machinery revitalized mining. By 1862 Steiglitz supported 15 gold crushing steam engines, and the quartz reefs were the richest in Australia.

In 1866 prosperity declined with many miners becoming destitute and large companies forced to sell their claims. In the 1890s despite the economic depression throughout Victoria, mining revived, reaching a peak in 1894. Meredith's population increased to 2000, with the twice daily train from Melbourne full of hopeful miners keen to try their luck in Steiglitz.

Gold's final years

In the late 1890s and early 1900s, gold mining declined again. Shops and houses closed and public buildings including the Government Battery, the Oddfellows' Hall and Roman Catholic Church were sold off and many re-erected nearby. Many mining shares were forfeited and by 1904 Steiglitz population had dwindled to 150.

The last nugget was found in 1935, the local store closed during the Second World War, and Mr. James Sugg, blacksmith, the last businessman, left in 1944. By 1951 firewood and grazing were the only industries left.

Recent history

In 1979 Steiglitz Historic Park, comprising 655 ha of Crown Land around the old historic gold township, was proclaimed. Today, unlike other old gold mining towns which have flourished, Steiglitz has just nine buildings and a very small population.

Although most of its buildings have gone, their remnants in tiny levelled sites, stone foundations, protruding wells and introduced planting, plus rows of fence lines and road outlines complete with their old gutters, speak louder than the buildings themselves.

Steiglitz without the compromise of contemporary structures is the finest remnant town of all of Victoria's early mining towns. The Shire of Golden Plains believes Steiglitz is of state significance and has applied to Heritage Victoria, the State Government's heritage conservation body to have it recognised.

How to use this guide

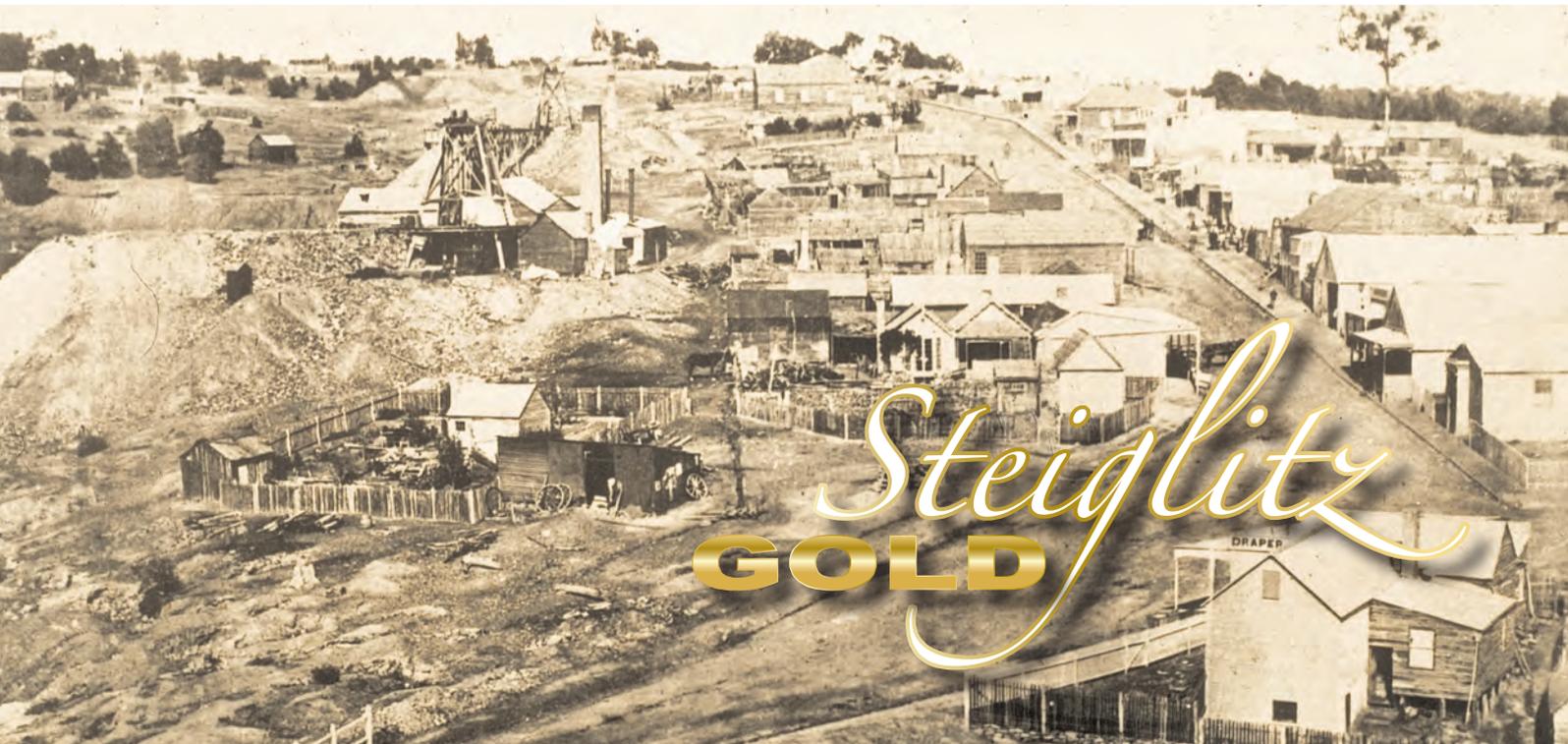
Having read a little of the history of Steiglitz, a 30 minute walk around the township will enable you to picture the sites and imagine the activities that took place in Steiglitz during its heyday. While none of the sites are numbered they are easy to find with the aid of this map. It highlights the main sites of interest, superimposed over a former map which outlines the town's earlier elaborate street pattern and subdivision layout. Most sites mentioned here have small identification plaques in front of them, while larger interpretive signs describe some of the former buildings in the town and activities which took place there.

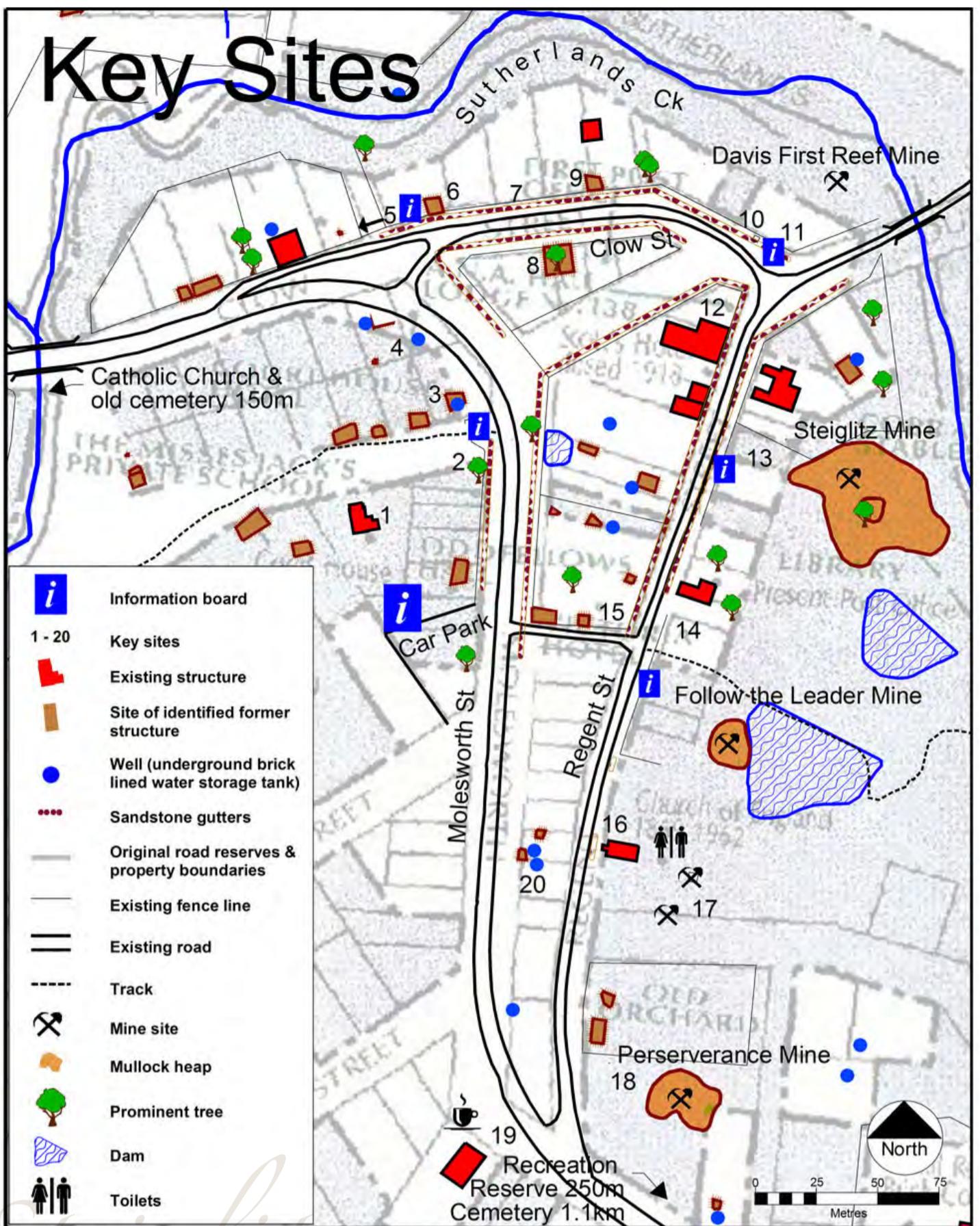


Acknowledgements
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Rubbish
There are no rubbish collections in the town so please take out whatever you bring in.
Toilets
Toilets are located behind the Church of England and at the Recreation Reserve at the southern end of the town.
Court House
For Hours of Operation contact the Parks Victoria information line on 13 19 63.

Private Property
Much of Steiglitz is privately owned so permission is required to enter any fenced areas or buildings.
Respect Steiglitz Heritage
The numerous building and mining fragments around the town, from crumbling brick & stone foundations to mining relics, are all historic objects which contribute to the town's heritage. They should be respected and not damaged or removed.
Mine Shafts
If you are walking beyond the town area beware of mine shafts which are sometimes difficult to spot.





Sites of interest

1. The Courthouse, is the most recognised structure in Steiglitz. Designed by the Public Work Department under William Wardell, it opened in 1875 and is managed by Parks Victoria.

2. Misses Jack's Private School including a tennis court stood under these trees by the roadside while the Steiglitz State School, No 558 at the top of the hill to the north at New Chum, still had students until 1960.

3. Hood's Bakery's level foundation site and brick well, with its domed cover, can be seen adjacent to the school site. It operated here from 1859 till the 1920s.

4. Court House Hotel site, is similarly marked by just its foundation site and remaining well. The Court House Hotel was the last licenced hotel in the town.

5. A former General store occupied this stone and brick building which is now a private residence. It is also known as Minogue's Store. Beyond are the stone remains and the site of Wellington's Undertakers.

6. The 1893 Steiglitz Miner Newspaper offices stood on this raised site. The newspaper operated here between 1892 and 1903 before being incorporated into the *Meredith Sentinel*.

7. Stone drains constructed from local stone run down both Molesworth Street and Regent Street continuing along both sides of Clow Street and down to the gold cairn.

8. Steiglitz first Post Office was located by the peppercorn tree, while the last post office which operated until 1966, was located around the corner in Regent Street.

9. Sugg's blacksmith's forge the last privately run business in Steiglitz (excluding the present café), operated here till 1944, occupying this flat site in front of Suggs' cottage, which is being restored by Parks Victoria.

10. The Stone Cairn was erected in 1951 to commemorate the Centenary of the discovery of gold in Victoria. The sign here shows photographs and names of many of the buildings in the main street, Regent Street.

11. Harris' Drapery Store and residence stood just to the right of the cairn, and is clearly visible (with its name), at the bottom of the photograph on the front of this brochure.

12. Scott's Hotel with its post supported veranda was built in the 1890s, on the site of an earlier hotel, the Steiglitz Inn. To its left is a long early stone wall, at one time used as Cobb & Co Stables and on the right stood the Alfred Hall the centre of social life in Steiglitz.

13. The Steiglitz Mine with its massive mullock heap (waste rock) was one of the largest in the town.

14. Ellis' Drapery Store, where a local doctor had his rooms at the rear, is now a private residence

15. The Victoria Hotel occupied this flat site and ceased operation in 1874. It reopened as the Victoria Coffee Palace in 1893, was burnt down by its proprietor Joseph Gill just two years later and is now a scatter of bricks.

16. St Pauls Church of England built in 1869, consecrated in 1871, illegally occupied this site until rectified in 1944 through the site's purchase for just two pounds. Behind is the town's only public toilet.

17. This fenced mine shaft is one of numerous early shafts sunk down to the water table, along the "Line of Reef". The adjacent steel grate covers a filled mine shaft which is now sinking

18. The Perseverance Mine Site. From the top of its mullock heap, you can look back along what was called the "Boxing Line of Reef", running North/South beside the main street

19. Peppercorn Café provides local information and refreshments.

20. Early brick wells and stone foundations are visible between Regent and Molesworth Streets as you meander back down the hill to the car park.