

SITE NO. & NAME:	NIMROD REEF SITES 5 'Welsh Village ' 6 Battery site
LOCATION:	Nimrod Reef, Golden & Donkey Gullies
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DIRECTIONS:	At the heads of Golden and Donkey Gully.
MAP/GRID REFERENCE:	Site 5: Chewton 1:25,000 - 566.952 Site 6: Chewton 1:25,000 - 568.949
PARCEL NUMBER:	P120329
MUNICIPALITY:	Metcalfe
LAND STATUS:	Site 5: Unreserved Crown Land and Freehold Land Site 6: Unreserved Crown Land
EXISTING HERITAGE CLASSIFICATION:	Registered as an archaeological site by the Victorian Archaeological Survey
PRESENT MANAGEMENT/USE:	LCC Rec - U1

HISTORY:

1850s: This line of reef, which consisted for the greater part of a number of spurs dipping in various directions, proved very rich in shallow workings during the time the alluvial deposits of Golden Gully and Forest Creek were being worked.¹

April 1857: Our party was about the first to prospect what is now called the Nimrod reef. We saw fine gold in the leaders while sinking two holes there, the deepest of which was 70 feet, but could not find what would be called payable stone at that time.²

24 April 1857: Nimrod - Palmer and King. New reef discovered on Good Friday 1857. At 2ft struck 16 in. wide quartz.³

1 Oct 1858: Averaging less than 1 oz per ton.⁴

17 June 1859: Seven steam engines.⁵

August 1859: 9 claims working, 49 miners, 5 good claims.⁶

Nov 1859: Referring to plan of Forest Creek produced by mining surveyor, T. L. Brown.] By the plan now sent, as also by the general plan of the division previously sent, the source of the alluvial deposits is easily traceable to the quartz reefs on the west of the main workings. The alluvial diggings begin at the Nimrod and Diamond Reefs, head of Golden Gully and the other gullies from the continuation of these reefs.⁷

1860's ?: Undated mining survey map shows a lease of 20 acres held by the Nimrod Reef Mining Co., whose northern boundary is centred on the head of Golden Gully and lease heads south towards Donkey Gully (centre grid reference 55HBU565951); adjoining the southern boundary, centred on the head of Donkey Gully, is another lease, Howell and Co. (centre grid reference 55HBU567947).⁸

May 1860: Parties reporting quartz yield: Edwards, Lewis.⁹

¹ Milner, P. 1989 Mining Sites in Specimen Hill Area, for Newmont, p26
² Gaulton, W. (24 June 1881) in Records of the Castlemaine Pioneers, Rigby Ltd., 1972, page 26
³ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
⁴ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
⁵ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
⁶ Mining Surveyors' monthly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
⁷ Mining Surveyors' monthly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
⁸ Mines Department map, ref. 1290/G/2: Mining Division of Castlemaine, T.L. Brown
⁹ Mining Surveyors' monthly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions

Dec 1860: Quartz Reefs actually proved to be auriferous: Nimrod, or Donkey Reef
 No. of claims: 8
 Extent of claim: 960 feet
 No. of men employed: 20
 Extent of Reef prospected: 1,200 feet ¹⁰

June 1861: The Nimrod Reef, Golden Point, which for the past two years has been very dull, has again given proof of its continued richness. This reef has yielded an immense amount of gold from its surface workings, but these being exhausted the reef was partially abandoned; one party however (Williams and Company) determined to prove the quartz in depth, and having sunk their shaft 150 feet were last week well rewarded for their perserverence, the first ten tons giving 43 oz. of gold, and this week a single ton has yielded the splendid quantity of 167 oz. of gold. ¹¹

23 Aug 1861: Williams and Co. - 16 ton yielded 96 oz. ¹²

August 1861: Monthly quartz returns list Williams, and Cook and Company as obtaining quartz from Nimrod Reef. ¹³

Sept 1861: Companies/parties crushing quartz and obtaining gold during past month: Williams - 12 ton yielded 6 oz 6 dwt. 16 gr. ¹⁴

Nov 1861 : Map shows the following: in Golden Gully - quartz machine 55HBU568953, quartz machine 55HBU571954, and steam puddling machine 55HBU573953; and in Donkey Gully - quartz machine 55HBU568949, quartz machine 55HBU569949, quartz machine 55HBU570948. ¹⁵

7 March 1862: Williams and Co. - 15 tons yielded 133 oz. ¹⁶

16 May 1862: Morris and Co. - 25 ton yielded 25 oz. ¹⁷

1 Aug 1862: Morris and Co. - 60 ton yielded 60 oz. ¹⁸

22 Aug 1862: Williams and Co. - 30 tons yielded 74 oz. ¹⁹

5 Oct 1862: Price and Co. - 1 oz to the ton. ²⁰

23 Oct 1862: Lewis and Co. - 24 ton yielded 25 oz; Morris and Co. - 24 ton yielded 25 oz.; Jones and Co. - 5 tons yielded average 5 dwt/ton. ²¹

24 Oct 1863: Jones and Co. (No. 1 claim), Powell and Co. (No. 2), Lewis and Co. (No. 4), Davis and Co. (No. 5), The Crown claim party (No. 3), Jones and Co. (No. 6), Bowen and Co. (No. 7), Morris and Co. (No. 8), Morgan and Co. (No. 9), Joseph and Co. (No. 10). ²²

4 Nov 1863: Sherry and Co., Powell and Co. ²³

¹⁰ Mining Surveyors' monthly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
¹¹ Mining Surveyors' monthly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
¹² Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
¹³ Mining Surveyors' monthly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
¹⁴ Mining Surveyors' monthly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
¹⁵ Nov. 1861 Mines Department map, ref. GF16
¹⁶ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
¹⁷ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
¹⁸ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
¹⁹ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
²⁰ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
²¹ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
²² Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
²³ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection

29 Jan 1864: B. Jones - 30 ton yielded 20 oz.; Lewis and Co. - commenced crushing and opening a cutting about 60 ft wide.²⁴

March 1864: In March, 1864, Williams and Company again met with rich stone, 18 tons returning 156 ozs. of gold, and the other parties treated larger quantities of stone for an average yield of over an ounce per ton, working from the surface to 160 ft in depth.²⁵

Sept 1864: Quartz Reefs, and no. of claims and men: Nimrod Reef: 9 claims, 42 men.²⁶

1865: Parties reporting yields from quartz crushings in 1865: Powell and Son, Lewis and Company, Jones and Company, Bowan, Evans and others.²⁷

March 1866: continuations of the Nimrod and Quartz hill reefs have been taken up for a long distance.²⁸

1866: Parties reporting yields from quartz crushings in 1866: Lewis and Company, Jones B., Powell, Jones D.W., Williams, Jones and Company, Davies, Price, Powell and Jones.²⁹

1867: Parties reporting yields from quartz crushings in 1867: Sherry, Bowan or Bowin, Jones, Lewis and Company, Sherry and Jones, Jones B. and Company.³⁰

June 1868: Upon the Nimrod Reef the returns are small, in consequence of most of the claims being worked to water-level, 112 feet. The claim holders are about to amalgamate and sink a shaft 300 feet upon which to place an engine to drain and wind from all claims interested. Rich deposits are proved to exist under the water-level, above which over 12,000 ozs. have been obtained, the average yield being 1 oz. to the ton.³¹

1868: Parties reporting yields from quartz crushings in 1868 - Lewis and 5 others, Jones and 7 others, Ten claims.³²

3 July 1871: Tributes: B. Jones and Co., Crown Nimrod Co. (will sink shaft in central part of claim).³³

7 July 1871: Crown Nimrod Co. - directors decide to sink new shaft to 140 ft.³⁴

14 Aug 1871: Paull and Co.³⁵

15 Aug 1871: Crown Nimrod, Lewis and Co.³⁶

28 Aug 1871: Jones and Co., Crown Nimrod - shaft down 60 ft.³⁷

18 Sept 1871: Nimrod Private Co.³⁸

Sept 1871: On the Post-office, Nimrod, Argus, Dead-cat, and Burns reef, shafts are being sunk to work the deeper leads.³⁹

²⁴ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
²⁵ Milner, P. 1989 Mining Sites in Specimen Hill Area, for Newmont, p26
²⁶ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
²⁷ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
²⁸ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
²⁹ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
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³¹ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
³² Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
³³ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
³⁴ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
³⁵ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
³⁶ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
³⁷ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
³⁸ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
³⁹ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions

Dec 1871: Nimrod Reef - The Crown Company are working full handed, sinking shaft to 150 feet; they have erected a whim, and determined to find continuations of some of the rich leads of former years. The North Nimrod have cleaned out a 90-foot shaft, and are sinking it deeper. Upon the miners' right claims very little is being done, nor can be until the amalgamate and sink deeper.⁴⁰

10 June 1872: New North Crown Nimrod - eastern shaft is down 70 ft.⁴¹

June 1872: On the Nimrod and Manchester Reefs new plants are being erected to work below water-level.⁴²

Sept 1872: On the Nimrod Reef the Crown Company find it necessary to increase their capital and erect proper steam machinery for draining the reef, which, above water-level, has averaged nearly 1 oz. to the ton.⁴³

29 Jan 1873: North Nimrod Co. - have suspended operations for six months.⁴⁴

Sept 1873: On the Nimrod Reef a 14 horse-power engine, with drainage machinery, is nearly completed. Its efficient working will enable all the mines of this rich line of reef to carry on operations below water-level upon golden quartz followed to that depth some years ago.⁴⁵

March 1874: The Crown Nimrod engine-shaft is down 180 feet, and has drained the reef above that level, having struck the reef.⁴⁶

March 1875: The late Crown Nimrod is being worked as a co-operative company.⁴⁷

Sept 1878: The Nimrod Reef Company have completed erection of machinery, and now have one 16-horse power engine for pumping and winding, and one 12-horse power to drive battery, and start with good prospects.⁴⁸

March 1880: On the Crown Nimrod, a reef underlying west (situate west of all previous workings which underlayed east, and apparently forming the west leg of a saddle-reef) has been found in a fine slate country; a trial crushing yielded 18 oz. 8 dwts. from 16 tons taken from a large body of stone.⁴⁹

Sept 1881: On the Nimrod Reef, Lewis and Co. have just discovered, east of their old workings, a new make of quartz, which shows gold freely.⁵⁰

Sept 1884: ..the Crown Nimrod Company have sold out to a party of practical men.⁵¹

Dec 1884: The Crown Nimrod, having effected necessary repairs and improvements to machinery and mine, have commenced driving for the several gold-bearing lodes known to exist.⁵²

Sept 1887: The Crown Nimrod mine has been purchased by a Melbourne syndicate.⁵³

March 1888: The Nimrod Reef upon which the deepest shaft is 180 feet, and from which 22,325 tons yielded 16,670oz. of gold, remained for years past unworked, and unproven below water level. The Crown claim has changed hands at a nominal price and is to be worked.⁵⁴

⁴⁰ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
⁴¹ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
⁴² Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
⁴³ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
⁴⁴ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection
⁴⁵ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
⁴⁶ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
⁴⁷ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
⁴⁸ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
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⁵³ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions
⁵⁴ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions

June 1888: Two other new companies have been registered during the quarter, viz., The White Horse Gold Mining Company, who have added a 10-head battery and extensive housing to their mining plant, and The Crown Nimrod Quartz Mining Company, who are sinking their engine shaft... This latter company have bought out all the claimholder, who for many years have "shepherded" this reef.⁵⁵

19 April 1899: The Nimrod Reef is now about to lose its ancient cognomen for the still more ancient and probably more apropos title of the Mount Alexander Reef. Mr John Cooper, in our issue of to-day, advertises application for lease of this historical mining ground, on behalf of the Anglo Mount Alexander Company. Of all the large yields of gold from old Forest Creek, none have excelled those from Nimrod - or Donkey Reef, as it was first known by. The four claims within the present Company's area, viz., Powell's, Lewis's, Jones's, and Bowen's, returned over 150,000 oz of gold from the surface to 95 ft in depth. There is a well-defined lava dyke lode, with numerous spur leads, also strongly formed indicator, running almost parallel (strike 344) from which yields as high as 300 oz to the ton were crushed in the palmy days of Donkey Reef quartz mining. It is not at all creditable to our local mining enterprise to be informed that the greatest depth to which this future great mine has been worked is 110 ft. The line of reef is one of the best defined in the district, and has been traced for about 10 miles, where it commences its course south of the White Horse Reef in the Fryers district and butts against the granite of the Mount Alexander range, north of the old Specimen Gully mine... the late Mr T.L. Brown, mining surveyor, who was on the field in the early fifties, computed that in the two short gullies - Donkey and Golden - running eastwards into the source of Forest Creek at Golden Point - over 21/4 tons of gold were won in a few months' time.⁵⁶

28 April 1900: Some of the richest surface finds, both quartz and alluvial, obtained in the early days, came from the property now held under lease by the Capper's Reef Gold Mining Company. The lease, which comprises about 41 acres, lies immediately south of the Specimen Reef mine at Barker's Creek, and although the line of reef has not been positively identified, it is generally believed to be the favourably known Nimrod line.⁵⁷

19 June 1900: The Golden Point Mine - it is a new line, about 300 feet east of the Nimrod line.⁵⁸

17 Feb 1937: Prospectus of Nimrod Developments, No Liability. ... The Nimrod Mine is situated on the fourth line of reef east of the Wattle Gully line about 2 miles north from Chewton. The reef was first worked prior to 1859, and in that year it was considered exhausted. Re-opened in 1861, it had produced by the end of 1886 13,321 tons of ore which yielded 11,040 ozs. of gold, from workings extending less than 150 feet from surface. The claims working on this reef were amalgamated into the Crown Company in 1871, and a main shaft was sunk to a depth of 180 feet. This shaft is considered to have been placed too far west to locate the downward trend of the auriferous formations. It was deepened to 260 feet in 1888 by a subsequent company, but due to the apparent lack of interest in the field at the time little development was carried out and the mine was closed down.

The total recorded production from the Nimrod workings was 22,325 tons of ore which yielded 16,670 ozs. of gold...

The Nimrod Reef. The reef has been extensively worked between Donkey Gully on the south and Golden Gully on the north, an apparently continuous distance of 20 chains. North of Golden Gully no gold has been found. The north end of the reef has been worked from a number of rather closely spaced, small vertical shafts, which do not seem to be deeper than about 109 feet. From the heads of the north-south gully which lies on the east side of the workings and junctions with Golden Gully, a tunnel, giving very limited backs, has been driven about 250 feet, commencing on a bearing of 225 degrees and turning to 270 degrees. Connection has been made to surface, and at 230 feet from the mouth a shallow winze has been sunk. In the tunnel a reef, apparently up to 5 feet wide and dipping east at a very flat angle, has been stoped.

The middle section of the reef has been worked by an open cut about 500 feet long, 60 feet wide and 50 feet high on the western side, from which a large tonnage has been won. Winzes have been sunk below the floor of the cut for an unknown depth. These workings have an easterly dip, and on the western side, dipping west, is a reef which may be the western leg of a saddle.

Between the open cut and Donkey Gully are shafts, and small open cuts. On the northern side of the gully a main shaft, now collapsed at the collar, has been sunk to a depth of 260 feet. An anticlinal fold is reported to be exposed in the south end of the workings...

Detail in the [Bulletin No. 2 issued by the Department of Mines] respecting the "Burns-Nimrod" line of reef discloses that from the small amount of effectual development on this line the following results were obtained.

Burns Claim	2890 tons for 2402 ozs
Little Burns Claim	65 tons for 322 ozs.
Blarney Claim	1261 tons for 1111 ozs.
Nimrod Claim	22325 tons for 16670 ozs.
Specimen Gully	7093 tons for 2929 ozs.
Total	33734 tons for 23434 ozs.

⁵⁵ Mining Surveyors quarterly reports, Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek Divisions

⁵⁶ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection

⁵⁷ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection

⁵⁸ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection

The 'Nimrod' claim was worked through the open cut to a depth of approximately 140 feet. No deeper development work has been carried out on this section of the lease...

The following reports on the property are submitted for subscribers' information:...

Dear Sir,

The open cut on the Nimrod mine is the largest in the Castlemaine district....

W. Baragwanath

Director of Geological Survey

WATER: This is an essential item and the leases are particularly fortunate in having a plentiful supply of water carried by a race which runs within 500 feet of the proposed position of the plant.⁵⁹

March 1937: Chewton Mining Boom

Rush Days Recalled

Due largely to the remarkable success of the Wattle Gully Mine, which is paying shareholders large sums in dividends and bonuses, the Chewton field now presents a scene of activity reminiscent of the "gold rush" days. Central Wattle Gully, which was floated on Wednesday, had all its 60,000 shares taken up on the day of flotation. Miners believe that there are large bodies of payable ore in the district which have never been properly investigated. Twenty companies have now taken up leases, and eight of them have begun their prospecting work. Wattle Gully is the only company passed the prospecting stage.

The companies which have begun shaft sinking are:- South Wattle Gully, North Chewton, Golden Wattle, Upper Barkly, Post Office Hill, North Wattle Gully, Chewton, and Wattle Gully Extended. Other companies which have not yet begun operations are :- Chewton Prospecting Syndicate, Eureka Vineyard, Hog's Reef, New Garfield Gold, Nimrod Development, Central Wattle Gully, Chapman Gold mines, Mimisa United, Argus Hill, and also Juniper and Maddigan's sluicing party working alluvial ground on Chewtons G.M. area. Almost all these companies have been launched since Wattle Gully struck its payable reef.⁶⁰

1946: At the Chewton mine no active operations were carried on, but work was commenced by the company on the Nimrod lease where a shaft was sunk to 168 feet..⁶¹

June 1947: Chewton. Mine Manager, J. Barsby. Only water bailing operations were continued at the main shaft of this mine, and work at the Nimrod lease ceased at the beginning of June.⁶²

1990: Welsh Village - top of Golden Gully. Major Mitchell is supposed to have come through Golden Gully. Ruins of at least five house sites and several outbuildings, mine workings and sections of roads. The Victorian Archaeological Survey has examined the ruins.

North of the Welsh Village, on both sides of a feeder gully, are about 25 well-formed mounds of rock. This area was once part of the Faraday Common. Some locals view the mounds as graves.

Going south from the Welsh Village, along the line of the Nimrod workings, is the site of the Nimrod mine; the East Nimrod was further down in the gully [all that remains of the East Nimrod are shafts and mullock].

Nimrod mine - On the top of the ridge separating the two gullies is a large open-cut belonging to an early phase on mining here... partly filled by mullock from later re-workings. In the open-cut is a tunnel - probably a haulage tunnel - called Jones' Adit. Jones and Lewis dug the tunnel and filled in the open-cut with the mullock. The Nimrod mine was re-worked in the 1930s. Jim Lindsay worked here then. Above the open-cut are large slate quarries, worked in the 1950s. At that time, the tunnel described above was utilized as a powder magazine.⁶³

DESCRIPTION

In regards to quartz mining, Golden and Donkey Gully are inextricably linked. Through the heads of both these gullies ran the Nimrod or Donkey Reef. The quartz workings are the results of various mining ventures, dating from 1857 to late 1930s. The round chimney stack and flue probably represent the remains of one of the three quartz crushing machines, shown to exist in the gully during the late 1850s/early 1860s. The house sites most likely date to the quartz working years of c.1860+. The slate quarry was opened in the 1950s.

Site 5 - At the head of Golden Gully are the remains of several stone houses and out-buildings (locally known as the Welsh Village). On the ridge above, separating Golden Gully from Donkey Gully are some mine workings including shafts and a very large open-cut. The open cut has been partly filled by mullock from later phases of mining. In the open-cut is a tunnel (probably a haulage tunnel) which the locals refer to as Jones' adit. Above the open-cut is a modern slate quarry.

⁵⁹ Mount Alexander Mail, as summarized in Clive Willman collection

⁶⁰ Bendigo Advertiser, 1/1/1937

⁶¹ Annual Report, 1946. p10.

⁶² Mining and Geological Journal, June 1947, p36-40

⁶³ Doug Ralph/David Bannear March 1990 - Preliminary field notes

NE of the Welsh Village are about 25 well-formed mounds of rock.. This area was once part of the Faraday Common, and some locals believe that the mounds are graves. This site, and Site 6, have been extensively surveyed and recorded by the Victoria Archaeological Survey.

Site 6 - Near the head of Donkey Gully, on the N side, is small machinery site consisting of a round chimney stack, 1.5m diameter. The stack is constructed mainly of clay, with some stone. A flue leads downhill from the stack. To the E of the stack and flue is the site of the True Blue Britain Hotel and immediately opposite may be the site of the Nimrod Hotel.

PHOTOS: Black and White

ARTEFACTS: None visible

INTEGRITY/CONDITION: Good

THREATS:

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The site has:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Social Significance | - The remains of the house sites, and associated outbuildings (collectively known as the Welsh Village) hold considerable local significance, as reflected by the formation and activities of the Mt Alexander Diggings Development Association (MADDA) to defend the site from proposed mining exploration in 1988. |
| Cumulative Value | - The place has high scientific significance due to the survival of a broad range of historic mining relics. The place also has an ambience of isolation and abandonment. |

Significance ranking **National Estate**

CONSERVATION POLICY:

Significance of the place comes from the look and feel of the place, from the survival of several stone houses and outbuilding in a quartz mining landscape.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Site be protected. The Nimrod sites are at the moment not in the Castlemaine-Chewton Historic Area. Their inclusion would greatly add to the Historic Area's ability to display the various phases which underlay the mining tradition which developed in the district. These sites are contained within an area covering approximately 0.4km x 0.6km .

Assessor: David Bannear **Date: 1993**
