Cement Creek Plantation, Cement Creek Road, East Warburton Statement of Significance, October 2022

Heritage Place:	Cement Creek Plantation, Cement Creek Road, East Warburton	**PS Ref. no:**	HO353

What is significant?

The plantation at Cement Creek Road, East Warburton (otherwise known as Cement Creek Plantation), is locally significant to the Yarra Ranges Shire. Specifically, the arrangement, scale, pattern and extent of the mature 1929-34 and 1960s-70s plantings of Californian Redwood (Sequoia sempervirens), Douglas Fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii), Monterey Pine (Pinus radiata), Bishop Pine (Pinus muricata) and Western Red Cedar (Thuja plicata) are of local heritage significance.

Remnant paraphernalia associated with 1960s-1970s hydrological research, including collars and metal number tags on larger tree plantings are contributory features that inform the site's history.

The carpark, area of bushland between the carpark and Cement Creek Road, and understorey regrowth within the plantation is not significant.

The open area to the south of the main Californian Redwood plantation and next to the current car park is the site of the former Hansen's farmstead. The area shows signs of past occupation including significant exotic trees and shrubs, plus ground works such as concrete pads, bricks, gravel track and several man-made shallow depressions and embankments, however this sits outside of the HO353 study area.

How is it significant?

The Cement Creek Plantation is of local historical, aesthetic and technical significance to the Yarra Ranges Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Cement Creek Plantation is historically significant to the Yarra Ranges Shire as a plantation that demonstrates two stages of forestry experimentation and research conducted by the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) in the Upper Yarra Catchment area. The site was developed over two phases- the first being between 1929-34 during the MMBW's 1920s and 1930s re-vegetation program, and the second being during the 1960s and 1970s as part of the MMBW's post-war hydrological research. While the initial program was an outcome of interwar forest regeneration trials with non-native conifer plantings following clearing from fire and logging, the latter experimental phase, which sought to establish a relationship between vegetation type and water yield, was initiated in response to post-war policy debates over whether commercial forestry operations should be allowed on Melbourne's water-supply catchments. With this, the Cement Creek Plantation not only demonstrates scientific approaches to revegetation in the interwar period, but also forms a tangible link to key mid to late twentieth century debates between timber harvesting and water supply in the resource rich Yarra Ranges area. (Criterion A)

The Cement Creek Plantation is aesthetically significant to the Yarra Ranges Shire as a striking and imposing landscape of systematically arranged conifer plantings. Composed of substantial groupings of mature Californian Redwood (Sequoia sempervirens), Douglas Fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii), Monterey Pine (Pinus radiata), Bishop Pine (Pinus muricata) and Western Red Cedar (Thuja plicata) plantings organised in a discernible grid pattern, the plantation is not only impressive for the intactness and regularity of its arrangement, but also for the discernible contrasts in form, foliage and trunks between the various groups of conifer species. These features, along with its siting on gently sloping ground adjacent to the Yarra River combine to form a visually commanding and distinctive landscape feature within the municipality. (Criterion E)

The Cement Creek Plantation is of technical significance to the Yarra Ranges Shire for its demonstration of post-war hydrological research in the field of canopy interception. Its established plantings provided a means for the MMBW to acquire comparative data in the 1960s-70s for research into forested catchments that initially commenced in Coranderrk in 1954, an ongoing program that forms Australia's longest running paired catchment study. For a period of over seven years, throughfall and stemflow was measured at select plots in the plantation, a process that is reflected in remnant research paraphernalia on trees. (Criterion F)

Primary source:

Cement Creek Plantation, Cement Creek Road, East Warburton - Heritage Citation (Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, October 2022)