

South  
Australian  
Heritage  
Act  
1978-80

HERITAGE SURVEY  
ITEM IDENTIFICATION SHEET

HERITAGE SURVEY REGION 8

Item Ref. No. 2

ITEM NAME: Apoinga Smelter Site  
Former or other

Office Use  
ITEM No.  
DOCKET No.

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

These remains consist of slag heaps, piles of fire bricks, numerous depressions in the ground and what would appear to be the base of the fluming stack. These are the relics of a highly significant industry; the first smelting of copper ore in the Lower North. Burra ore was at first carted to Adelaide and thence to overseas smelters. Messrs. Penny and Owen decided to establish a South Australian smelter. They were attracted to Tothill's Scrub (Apoinga) because of the forest of gums available for fuel. In 1848 the smelter was built, valued at £10,000. In 1849 the first copper was produced (some months before Burra's smelter) and the newspapers hailed "a new era in metallurgy".

By 1851 fifty tons of high quality copper per week were being produced, with four furnaces in constant use. The works by then supported a population of about 100, living in Apoinga. The town included an hotel (see separate sheet), shops and about thirty houses. Most of the workers were wood-cutters. When South Australian mines were first deserted for the Victorian goldfields, the Apoinga works continued, as there was ore enough to smelt and the men were under contract. But the men dumped much of the good copper so that receipts dropped, the works closed and they were free to leave. The smelter was re-used only for a short period some years later, and Apoinga has been long deserted.

LOCATION  
Address

Town  
Postcode  
Section 1594  
Hundred Apoinga  
County  
L.G.A. Robertstown  
S.H.P. Region 8  
A.M.G. Ref. 6630-II  
54 30930 624010

SUBJECT

4.4

PERIOD  
State

Study Area  
1837-54

REFERENCES

Noye, "Dictionary of local history", p.4;  
Noye, "Apoinga - first smelter in the north", in "Chronicle of history", pp.13-15

Verbal  
Archival photographs

TYPE OF ITEM

LAND Natural feature   
Historical site   
Historical Gdn.

BUILDING   
STRUCTURE

PHYSICAL CONDITION

Archaeological site

PHOTOGRAPH

Film No. 291

Negative No. 15

Direction of view to E



STATUS

Reg. of State Her. Items  
Reg.  Interim L.   
Nominated   
National Estate  
Reg.  Proposed L.   
National Trust  
CL  RL  File   
Other

RECOMMENDATION

(A) State  (B) Local

PREPARED BY

HERITAGE INVESTIGATIONS

Date: 1982