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# NEWGROVE RUINS

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## Location

135-285 DONNYBROOK ROAD MICKLEHAM, HUME CITY

## Municipality

HUME CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-0976

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 1, 2010

Data has been updated as a result of the Outer Western Metro Project, Context, March 2010.

Archaeological Significance	This very large site retains considerable fabric of potential archaeological significance, and it would benefit from more intensive survey and archaeological investigation. It has a high potential for structural deposits which could reveal its origin and purpose.
Historical Significance	The site is of high significance for its rarity, and its probable origin as an ambitious attempt at cultivation launched during the colony's agricultural boom of the 1850s.

Interpretation of Site

The main feature on the site is the ruin of a very large structure of unknown purpose. Constructed in squared bluestone mortared blocks, which survive on its southern side to a height of 1.5 metres, this main structure is approximately 40m square. Its main entrance is on the eastern side and internal walls divide the building along its southern side and in its north eastern corner around a now infilled well. An outer wall creates a corridor approximately 10 metres in width around its northern and western sides. This is breached approximately halfway along its length by a drain feeding into a culvert or leat which zig-zags to the north west where a small dam appears to have been located. A slight platform which may have related to an extension of a separate building is defined by bluestone edging to the south of the entrance on the structure's eastern side.

Additional structures appear to have existed to the west, where large piles of rubble suggest the outline of what may have been a large barn, and to the east, where bluestone cobbling platforms may have supported a timber structure and there is the suggestion of a collapsed chimney stack.

The whole would seem to match an interpretation of the site as an agricultural complex, but there is a lack of artefactual material.

Hermes Number 31574

Property Number

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## History

The land in the area of the ruin was described by early surveyors as 'good sheep country', and was taken up under pastoral leases by the 'Messrs Brodie'. It was advertised for sale by auction in the Government Gazette of March 1851, but was not purchased until July 1852, by a Mr John Johnston. In 1854 Johnston was living on the land, as he was described as a 'farmer' of Mickleham. On the 25 March in that year he took out a mortgage on the land, taking out two more in September 1856 to different mortgagees. This mortgage claimed title, in the event of forfeiture, not only to the land but also to 'buildings now or to be erected', and the huge total of over £4000 loaned on the value of the site suggests that very substantial improvements had been undertaken. In the 1850s a John Johnston was the publican at the Red Jack's inn at Kalkallo, and this important stage was reputed to have bluestone stables capable of servicing 150 horses at a time.

In April 1859 George Brodie purchased Johnston's land, and over the next decade the land continued to be rented by farmers although the property's assessed rental valuation had declined dramatically by 1873 indicating its change of use from farming to grazing. By 1881 improvements to the property were described as a weatherboard hut and portions of fencing which suggest that the bluestone building was a ruin by this stage.

(Derived from Maloney & Johnson 1998)

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*