
RITCHIE'S RUIN

Location

285 LOEMANS ROAD BULLA, HUME CITY

Municipality

HUME CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-2289

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO209

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site The site comprises the ruins of a small vernacular early bluestone cottage, of rectangular plan, now overgrown with boxthorn.

Archaeological Significance	<p>The cottage is approximately 10.5 by 4.5 metres in size and its wall are now mainly less than 1 metre high. The bluestone blocks were cut to a standard sized, left undressed and laid in regular courses, with smaller blocks and chips used to fill gaps. The walls are double thickness and the mortar is a crude sandy mixture. The structure faces east, looking over Deep Creek, and there is evidence of a central doorway on this eastern facade, whilst two windows were probably once located symmetrically on either side. An in-filled well lies immediately to the north of the house. The well is also constructed of bluestone (Maloney & Johnson 1998) and has remnants of a mud-lime render on the walls.</p> <p>The area around the ruin is completely devoid of planting or other features and would therefore appear to have been graded in recent years, although a large scatter of artefacts survives. A track of likely modern construction runs to the south down the landform.</p> <p>The wider site has been disturbed but artefactual material survives on the site. The ruin itself, and the well, are likely to contain structural components and artefacts which provide information on the origin and date of the cottage.</p>
Historical Significance	<p>This ruin is of historical significance as a relic of one of a small number of such buildings which remain, in various states of repair, within the municipality, particularly overlooking its Deep Creek valleys. The site is of significance for its association with the 2 prominent graziers (Peter and the Ritchies).</p>
Hermes Number	124586
Property Number	

History

The ruin is located on what was once 300 acres of land comprising Allotment B of Section 12 in the Parish of Tullamarine. The land was first purchased from the Crown on 10 December 1850 by William Kaye, Robert Cay and Robert Chapman who were possibly speculators, selling the land on again in December 1852 to brothers John, James and Malcolm Ritchie - farmers of 'Merri Creek'. By the early 1860s the Ritchie brothers had also acquired further land in the Tullamarine district, and by 1883 they had some 1005 acres. Of the three Ritchie brothers, Malcolm was the most prominent, being a member of the Keilor Council for at least twenty-four years and twice acting as Chairman.

The ruinous bluestone building may have been built by the Ritchie brothers shortly after they purchased their first land in the area in 1852, or maybe later in the 1860s as they extended their holding to the east side of the Deep Creek. Given its prominent location overlooking Deep Creek, it is possible that it was the dwelling of a shepherd or caretaker employed to watch over the Ritchie's animals and property on the 'island'. It may also have been built by or for a tenant.

Malcolm Ritchie continued to own the land on which this ruin stands until just after the turn of the century after which it was owned by another prominent grazier in the area, William D. Peter.

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/>