HO13 – Devine House (ruins), 670 Windmill Road, Mambourin

Heritage Place: Devine House (ruins)	**HO Reference:** HO13 **Date updated:** 15 October 2026
Address: 670 Windmill Road, Mambourin	



Figure 1: Devine House (ruins), 670 Windmill Road, Mambourin. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.

Item Group: Residential buildings (private) **Item Type:** Homestead building	**Key Theme:** Claiming and occupying the land **Key Sub-theme:** Pastoral settlement
Designer: Unknown **Builder:** Unknown	**Construction:** c. 1872 **Style:** Victorian
Significance Level: Local	
Recommendation: Retain solar energy system controls. Update place address. Amend curtilage.	

Controls:	○	External paint controls	○	Internal alteration controls	○	Tree controls
	○	Included on Victorian Heritage Register	○	Incorporated Plans	○	Outbuildings and fence not exempt
	○	Prohibited uses may be permitted	○	Aboriginal Heritage Place	●	Solar energy system controls

Curtilage



Figure 2: Devine House (ruins), 670 Windmill Road, Mambourin. *Aerial Basemap source*: Nearmap. 2025. *Spatial data source*: VicMap & Department of Transport and Planning.

HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	*Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history*	Devine House (ruins) is of historical significance in demonstrating the growth and development of pastoralism in the nineteenth and twentieth century which was the main driver for the economic advancement of the region. Devine House (ruins) is also of significance for its association with the Devine family, a prominent local family in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century who were responsible for the construction of the bluestone dwelling ownership of the land into the twentieth century.
B	*Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history*	The place does not meet this criterion.
C	*Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history*	Devine House has the potential to yield further information about the early use of the land, particularly relating to early agricultural practices, though the presence of subsurface deposits. Of particular potential is the ruinous subterranean feature at the west extent of Devine House, which could potentially be a cellar. There may also be material culture relating to the Devine family.
D	*Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments*	Devine House is of representative significance as a typical homestead of the nineteenth century in the municipality, constructed of local bluestone with a simple design, with windows and chimneys. While ruinous, the overall design and layout remain evident and demonstrative of this typology.
E	*Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics*	The place does not meet this criterion.
F	*Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period*	The place does not meet this criterion.
G	*Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to*	The place does not meet this criterion.

	Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions	
H	*Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.*	The place does not meet this criterion.

Statement of Significance – Devine House (ruins), 670 Windmill Road, Mambourin

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Figure 3: Devine House (ruins), 670 Windmill Road, Mambourin. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.

What is significant?

Devine House (ruins), including the remaining foundations, walls and displaced bluestone that previously formed the dwelling, is of significance. The bluestone pathway evident to the south of the dwelling is also of significance. Vegetation and later tree plantings are not significant.

How is it significant?

Devine House (ruins) is of historical, archaeological and representative significance to the City of Wyndham.

Why is it significant?

Devine House (ruins) is of historical significance in demonstrating the growth and development of pastoralism in the nineteenth and twentieth century which was the main driver for the economic advancement of the region. (Criterion A)

Devine House (ruins) is also of significance for its association with the Devine family, a prominent local family in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century who were

responsible for the construction of the bluestone dwelling ownership of the land into the twentieth century. (Criterion A)

Devine House has the potential to yield further information about the early use of the land, particularly relating to early agricultural practices, though the presence of subsurface deposits. Of particular potential is the ruinous subterranean feature at the west extent of Devine House, which could potentially be a cellar. There may also be material culture relating to the Devine family. (Criterion C)

Devine House is of representative significance as a typical homestead of the nineteenth century in the municipality, constructed of local bluestone with a simple design, with windows and chimneys. While ruinous, the overall design and layout remain evident and demonstrative of this typology. (Criterion D)

Primary Source

Devine House (ruins) citation, Extent Heritage, 2026.

Description

Physical Analysis

The ruins of Devine House are located in a paddock with Bulban Road to the south and Edgars Road to the west. Live Bomb Range Road is to the east and Kirks Bridge Road to the north.

The ruins are constructed of bluestone and comprise an upright chimney and western wall (Figure 7) and the remains of two rooms with an upright section of the dividing wall. To the west of the ruins there appears to be a sunken component; likely a cellar (Figure 10). The south elevation had at least two windows, with bluestone sills still extant and a central doorway. The exterior of the dwelling had faced bluestone with a relatively flat profile.

Based on the ruins, the dwelling was constructed of block bluestone with an orange toned mortar. The dwelling had a gable end to the west elevation with a pitched roof. A chimney was located at the western end of the dwelling which was constructed of red brick internally (Figure 9).

The interior of the dwelling was plastered and painted with remnants of the plasterwork visible on the internal walls. The internal layout appears to have comprised a doorway with an embedded timber lintel above, providing access into the eastern room (Figure 8).

Surrounding the intact parts of the ruins are copious amounts of shaped bluestone which has collapsed into and around the remaining walls and foundations (Figure 11). There is no evidence of the roofing material or remains of any timber supporting beams or similar beyond the single embedded lintel.

To the south is a linear row of smaller bluestones indicating a pathway (Figure 13). The remains of a cypress tree? (species unable to be identified due to decomposed state), which has been uprooted. is located to the south of the ruins (Figure 12). Within the rooms of the ruins and their immediate context are African boxthorns (*Lycium ferocissimum*) and artichoke thistles (*Cynara cardunculus*).

Alterations and Additions

- The site has not been subject to development or alteration since its twentieth century occupation
- The dwelling has become ruinous.
- Vegetation has overgrown the ruins*

Devine House is in a poor condition and has low integrity due to its ruinous condition and the overgrowth of invasive species.

Denotes element that does not contribute to the cultural significance of the place.

History

Devine House (ruins) is located on the traditional and unceded lands of the Wadawurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of Country. Wadawurrung people are deeply connected to Dja (Country), including the lands, waters and skies, and to Yaluk (waterways), Murran (nature), Weeagoon (living things) and Wiyn (fire). Wadawurrung Country encompasses vast volcanic plains and mountains, Little River (Worrin-yaloke) to the west and the mighty Werribee River (Wirribi Yaluk) in the east, and abundant coastlines and wetlands, all of which hold the stories and memories of Wadawurrung ancestors.

Despite the impacts of colonisation, including dispossession of land and disruption to cultural practices, Wadawurrung people have maintained and continue to sustain their deep connection to Country, Land, Waters and Culture. The memories embedded in Country remain alive today, including intangible cultural heritage and song lines, reflecting the continuity of cultural knowledge, custodianship and resilience passed down through generations.

Upon the incursion of colonists into Port Phillip Bay from 1835, land north and west of the infant settlement of Melbourne was quickly usurped. Reports from early explorers highlighted the basalt plains as open, grassy and lightly vegetated, ideal conditions for overlanding stock (Vines 1993, 9; Broome 1984, 23). The Wyndham region was soon dominated by squatter pastoralists (James and Pritchard 2008, 4; Ecology and Partners 2015, 8). Centred around Mambourin were notable pastoralists George and Monckton Synnot, Simon Staughton, then later the Chirnsides.

Place History

In 1869, John and Margaret Devine first made an appearance within the Parish of Bulban rates records, where they were recorded as leasing pasture from the Crown (Shire of Wyndham 1869, no.230). A second portion of land was leased by the Devine family in 1870 (Shire of Wyndham 1870, no.294). As the net annual rated value of the Devine land holdings increased in 1872, and remained stable from that time onwards, it is assumed that the Devine House was constructed c.1872 (Shire of Wyndham 1872, no.316). In 1878, the Devine family purchased the land they had been leasing from the Crown (Shire of Wyndham 1878, no.371; The Bacchus Marsh Express 1878, 2).

Hugh Devine, the eldest son of John and Margaret Devine, went on to become a celebrated surgeon who conducted pioneering research and founded the Australian College of Surgeons (The Canberra Times 1959, 2). In 1936, Hugh Devine received a knighthood. Although he ceased to live in Little River when his education started, the influence of the family left an intangible mark upon the community of Little River (The Sun News Pictorial 1936, 2).

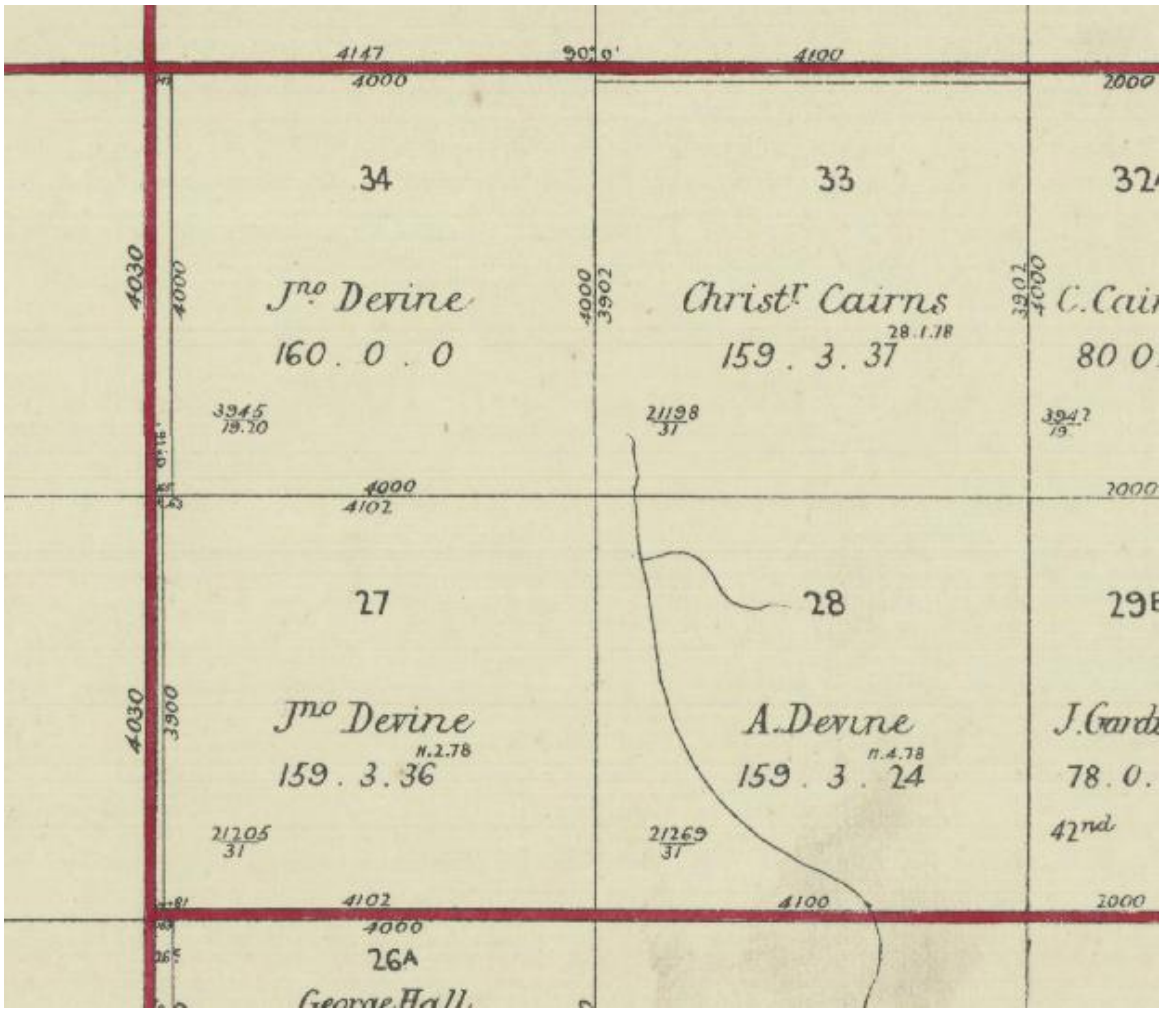


Figure 4. Bulban Parish Map, indicating the allotments purchased by the Devines in 1878. *Source:* J. Noone. 1879. 'Bulban County of Grant.' Map. Public Records Office Victoria. https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/8CBB6830-F843-11E9-AE98-354753980B58?image=1

In 1888 the Devine Family moved into a weatherboard home on Rothwell Road in the Little River Township, leaving the stone dwelling on Edgars Road vacant (Shire of Wyndham 1888, no.1116; LRHS Pers. Comms. 2025).

By 1891, the 480-acre farm was jointly owned by the Devine and the Gleeson families (Shire of Wyndham 1891, no.1548), however it returned to the exclusive ownership of the Devine's by the turn of the century (Shire of Wyndham 1899, no.3309).

By the early 1890s, the dwelling was already in a ruinous state, with the roof having been lost, potentially to a fire (Figure 5).



Figure 5. The Devine House, already in a ruinous state by 1894. *Source:* John Devine. 1894. 'Bulban Little River Vic.' Little River Historical Society.

In 1899, the Devine farm and the dwelling in the township were advertised for lease for a period of three years. The farm was described as follows:

> …good grazing land right to cultivate any quantity, well-watered and fenced, lightly timbered, three miles railway station, substantial bluestone house and outbuildings … (Geelong Advertiser 1899, 3).

The Devine family left Little River at the turn of the century, on account of John Devine's severe asthma. John died from asthma in 1903, having been prominent in the Little River community, serving as a councillor for Wyndham for many years (The Bacchus Marsh Express 1903, 3; Geelong Advertiser 1903, 1).

Both the rural and township properties owned by the Devine family were leased by Patrick Ryan from 1902 (Shire of Wyndham 1902, no.3307; Shire of Wyndham 1903, no.3417). Ryan continued to rent the Devine farm properties after the death of John Devine. Ryan held the lease of the Devine's 480 acre farm property from 1900 until 1914 (Shire of Werribee 1914, no.5542), and the Devine dwelling in the Little River township from 1900 until 1913 (Shire of Werribee 1913, no.5373). It is unlikely that the bluestone dwelling on the farm property was ever occupied by Ryan, therefore indicating that the dwelling has not been occupied since 1888.

From 1914, the lease of the Devine farm and homestead was taken over by Daniel and Alice Ryan (Shire of Werribee 1914, no.5542).

In 1920, the estate of John Devine was finally put to auction:

> Containing 500 acres of good grazing land, situated 4 miles north of Little River railway station, and 6 miles by a cleared road alongside the paddocks into Werribee. The property is well fenced and well watered by dams, and the improvements consist of a bluestone homestead.
>
> This property has been leased for the past 20 years to Mr. Patrick Ryan, Manor Farm, Werribee, and the lease expires on the 1st August 1921. (Melton Express 1920, 2).

The allotment was sold to the Ryan family. Upon the death of Patrick Ryan in 1923, ownership of the 480 acres was taken up by Joseph Ryan (Shire of Werribee 1924, no.4412).

The Devine property, now owned by Joseph Ryan, has remained relatively unchanged since the Devine family ceased living in the homestead in 1888. Aerial imagery shows the maintenance of the grazing land.

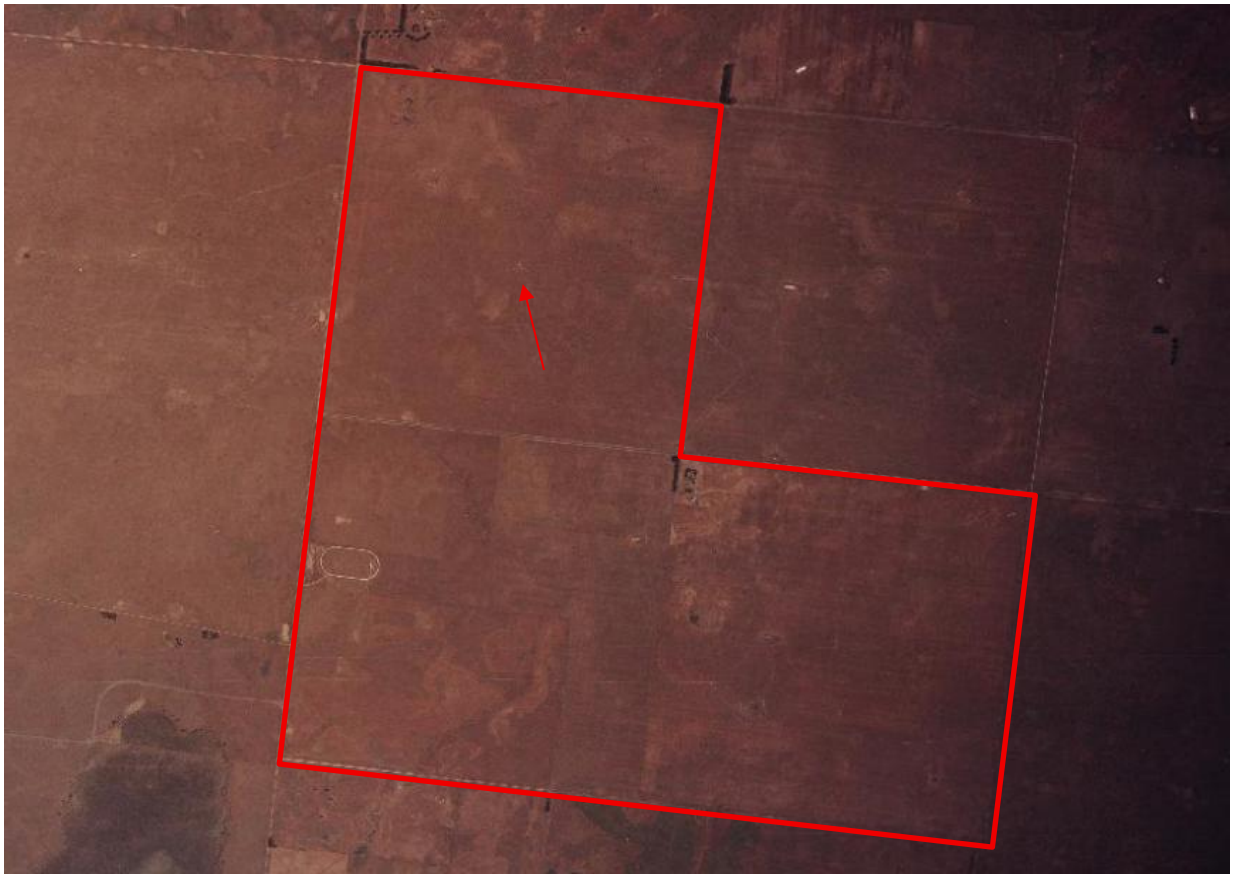


Figure 6. Aerial image taken in 1981, three original holdings outlined in red, with the location of the Devine House indicated by red arrow. *Source:* Unknown. 1981. 'Project Photography.' Digitised photograph. Geoscience Australia. https://aerialphotography.ga.gov.au/Scanned/CADC/CADC8898/Thumbnail/CADC8898_frame901_thumbnail.jpg

Comparative Analysis

The City of Wyndham has numerous examples of nineteenth century bluestone dwellings that have fallen into a ruinous state. Comparable examples to Devine House include:

Anderson Homestead (HO60)

Anderson Homestead is a now ruinous bluestone dwelling constructed as a homestead on a run of land and is, as with Devine House, demonstrative of the widespread farming and pastoralism in the district in the nineteenth century. While Anderson Homestead was established much earlier than Devine House, the Devine family had a long association with the property and it remains in a more intact condition when compared to the ruins of Anderson Homestead.

Missen House (site) (HO38)

Missen House is a former bluestone dwelling, now in a ruinous state, constructed in the second half of the nineteenth century which was part of a farmstead at the time of its construction. Missen House is demonstrative of the widespread farming and pastoralism in the district in the nineteenth century, which is comparable to Devine House.

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Images



Figure 7. View of the west elevation of Devine House. *Source*: Extent Heritage 2025.



Figure 8. Detail of the remaining in situ timber lintel in the internal doorway. *Source*: Extent Heritage 2025.



Figure 9. Detail of the remaining red brick chimney and internal plaster work. *Source*: Extent Heritage 2025.



Figure 10. Rubble surrounding a depression in the ground marking a possible cellar. *Source*: Extent Heritage 2025.



Figure 11. Bluestone rubble in proximity to Devine House. Source: Extent Heritage.



Figure 12. The remaining cypress tree that has been uprooted and since died. Source: Extent Heritage.



Figure 13. Evidence of the bluestone pathway edging. Source: Extent Heritage.