HO103 – Little House, 56-58 Wattle Avenue, 11A Bowery Court and part 11 Bowery Court, Werribee

Heritage Place: Little House	**HO Reference:** HO103 **Date updated:** 15 October 2026

Address: 56-58 Wattle Avenue, 11A Bowery Court and part 11 Bowery Court, Werribee



Figure 1. Photograph of Little House at 56-58 Wattle Avenue, 11A Bowery Court and part 11 Bowery Court, Werribee

Item Group: Residential buildings (private) **Item Type:** House	**Key Theme:** Living off the land and sea **Key Sub-theme:** Farming area
Designer: Unknown **Builder:** Unknown	**Construction:** c.1913 **Style:** Federation
Significance Level: Local	
Recommendation: Retain tree controls. Retain solar energy system controls. Amend curtilage. Update place address.	

Controls:	○	External paint controls	○	Internal alteration controls	●	Tree controls (peppercorn (*Schinus molle*) and river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*))
	○	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. Little House, 56-58 Wattle Avenue, Werribee. *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*	Little House is of historical significance as an example of an Edwardian farmhouse constructed on land that formed part of a later subdivision associated with the Werribee township. Little House is also a prominent example of an orchard established in the twentieth century, demonstrating an understanding of the development of produce growing within the region which led to the later establishment of market gardens. Little House is also significant for its associations with the Little family, a prominent local family in the area, with many of the children of David Little going on to be well renowned in their respective fields across multiple prominent industries in Werribee. The property is also significant for its retention of mature trees and larger allotment, which is unusual in Werribee, as larger allotments were frequently subdivided in the Post-war era.
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*	The place does not meet this criterion.
D	*Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments*	Little House is representative of the simple vernacular architecture of the Edwardian period that was used widely within Werribee and the broader municipality. This includes the steeply pitched roof, weatherboard construction, face red brick chimneys and asymmetrical arrangement of the facade with a projecting gable and bay window and adjoining verandah extending across the broader façade. The Edwardian style is further expressed through the simple barge boards, finial, vertical timber detailing and timber eave bracketing. While altered, the overall form and key elements remain identifiable in the built fabric.

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 Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions*	The place does not meet this criterion.
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 - Little House, 56-58 Wattle Avenue, 11A Bowery Court and part 11 Bowery Court, Werribee

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Figure 3. Little House at 56-58 Wattle Avenue, 11A Bowery Court and part 11 Bowery Court, Werribee.

What is significant?

Little House, including its overall form, hipped roof, chimneys and Federation detailing, is significant. The surrounding landscaping of mature trees including a peppercorn (*Schinus molle*) and river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), the driveway arrangement and the outbuilding to the rear are also significant.

The additions to the front east corner of the dwelling and enclosure of return verandah, alterations including new roof, guttering and new screening to front windows, outbuildings (excluding that to the rear of the dwelling), all fencing and the immature plantings are not significant.

How is it significant?

Little House is of historical and representative significance to the City of Wyndham.

Why is it significant?

Little House is of historical significance as an example of an Edwardian farmhouse constructed on land that formed part of a later subdivision associated with the Werribee

township. Little House is also a prominent example of an orchard established in the twentieth century, demonstrating an understanding of the development of produce growing within the region which led to the later establishment of market gardens. (Criterion A)

Little House is also significant for its associations with the Little family, a prominent local family in the area, with many of the children of David Little going on to be well renowned in their respective fields across multiple prominent industries in Werribee. (Criterion A)

The property is also significant for its retention of mature trees and larger allotment, which is unusual in Werribee, as larger allotments were frequently subdivided in the Post-war era. Criterion A)

Little House is representative of the simple vernacular architecture of the Edwardian period that was used widely within Werribee and the broader municipality. This includes the steeply pitched roof, weatherboard construction, face red brick chimneys and asymmetrical arrangement of the facade with a projecting gable and bay window and adjoining verandah extending across the broader façade. The Edwardian style is further expressed through the simple barge boards, finial, vertical timber detailing and timber eave bracketing. While altered, the overall form, including key elements, remain identifiable in the built fabric. (Criterion D)

Primary Source

Little House citation, Extent Heritage, 2026.

Description

Bunurong Country

Little House is situated on the lands of the Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of Country. Despite the effects of colonisation, including dispossession of land, the Traditional Custodians have maintained a continuing connection to land, waters and culture within the City of Wyndham.

Physical Analysis

Little House is a single storey dwelling constructed in the Federation style, set within a large residential block. The dwelling is sited centrally within the allotment, surrounded by grassed lawn and mature trees to the boundaries including peppercorns (*Schinus molle*) and river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*). The timber weatherboard dwelling includes Federation-style timber detailing, a large hipped roof clad in tiles with two substantial redbrick corbelled chimneys featuring terracotta pots. The front of the house addresses Wattle Avenue, set behind a contemporary timber picket fence painted to match the dwelling, with a gate located to the northern extent.

The façade of the dwelling has an asymmetrical arrangement with a projecting gable and bay window to the east and an adjoining verandah extending across the broader façade. The facade gable is expressed with simple barge boards, finial, vertical timber detailing and timber eave bracketing. Below the gable is a triplet faceted bay window with double hung sash windows with highlights. The bay is extended to the southeast corner; whilst also clad in weatherboard with tiled roofing, this small section is a later addition.

Adjoining the projecting bay and gable to the north-east is a verandah with simplistic vertical timber Federation style frieze panelling and brackets over painted concrete. Beneath the verandah is a central entrance with symmetrical double sidelights with half height glazing. Two multipaned windows are adjacent to the front door, covered with contemporary screening.

The south-east elevation has a projecting faceted bay and lean-to at the rear with varied fenestration across the elevation including larger sash windows and multi-paned windows. The north-west elevation is clad in timber weatherboards and appears to be a later alteration enclosing a return verandah. This elevation includes a contemporary door and windows. The rear elevation is not visible from the public domain however aerial imagery indicates a later rear addition to the southeastern corner.

The property's original driveway arrangement has been absorbed into the neighbouring Wattle Avenue Reserve, however two river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) and a peppercorn tree (*Schinus molle*) have been retained. To the rear of the property are two outbuildings, located to the south-east corner, and a contemporary tennis court to the opposite north-west corner.

- Later alterations to the dwelling include:
  - New roof tiles, guttering and pipes;
  - New paintworks;

- Contemporary screens to the windows below the verandah; * and
- Removal of original verandah flooring and replacement with concrete.

- Later additions include:
  - New addition to the southeast corner, adjoining the projecting bay and gable; *
  - Enclosure of the verandah to the north-west elevation; *
  - Rear addition, indicated by pitched roof in corrugated sheet metal; and
  - New shed to the rear
  - Tennis court
- Subdivision of the larger Allotment, including land to the west, south, and original driveway.*
- The lopping of original mature trees to the front setback. *

The building is in good condition and is generally of high integrity.

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

History

Little House is situated on the lands of the Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of Country. Despite the effects of colonisation, including dispossession of land, the Traditional Custodians have maintained a continuing connection to land, waters and culture within the City of Wyndham.

This place is located on Country that was once home to many magnificent, towering River red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), which grew on landforms close to water, such as the banks of Wirribi Yaluk (the Bunurong name for Werribee River). For Bunurong peoples, these trees are important representations of Country as it was before colonisation, a time when bark could be collected and used to make canoes and carriers for fishing and transport. Today, there are far fewer River red gums across this Country than in the past, and those that have survived are particularly significant as rare survivors of the damage caused to Country following colonisation. (BLCAC, 2026, 14).

The early township of Werribee was positioned in proximity to a ford over Werribee River, connecting the route between Melbourne and Geelong (Murray 1974, 11; Lovell Chen 2024, 51). As traffic grew along the Melbourne to Geelong route, the Werribee settlement expanded. In 1849, land was reserved for a township and was gazetted as 'Wyndham' in 1850, commencing sale of Crown Land shortly after (James and Pritchard 2008, 15; Hocking 2013, 177; Murray 1974, 14).

The arrival of the railway in 1857 firmly positioned the commercial centre on the east side of the river. A post office, churches, schools and additional inns soon followed (James and Pritchard 2008, 103). While the township itself changed little throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, the surrounding land prospered economically under sheep and cattle grazing (Werribee Shire Banner 29 July 1937, 3).

Closer Settlement of the 1890s through until the 1930s marked a turning point, where large estates were subdivided for cropping and other industries, driving an increase in population and transforming land use (Lovell Chen 2024, 15; James and Pritchard 2008, 49; Penrose 2001, 9).

Place History

At the time of the mid-nineteenth century survey of Wyndham, the property at 56-58 Wattle Avenue, Werribee, was located outside the township settlement, positioned on Allotments 34 and 39 in Section 15 of the Parish of Deutgam (Figure 4). Allotment 39 was first owned by W Fawcett, and Allotment 34 was first owned by T. Hamilton. The lots had been arranged in a gridded pattern on a north-south axis, which was in contrast to the angled village survey area which grew and developed around the river crossing and existing roadway (Figure 4).

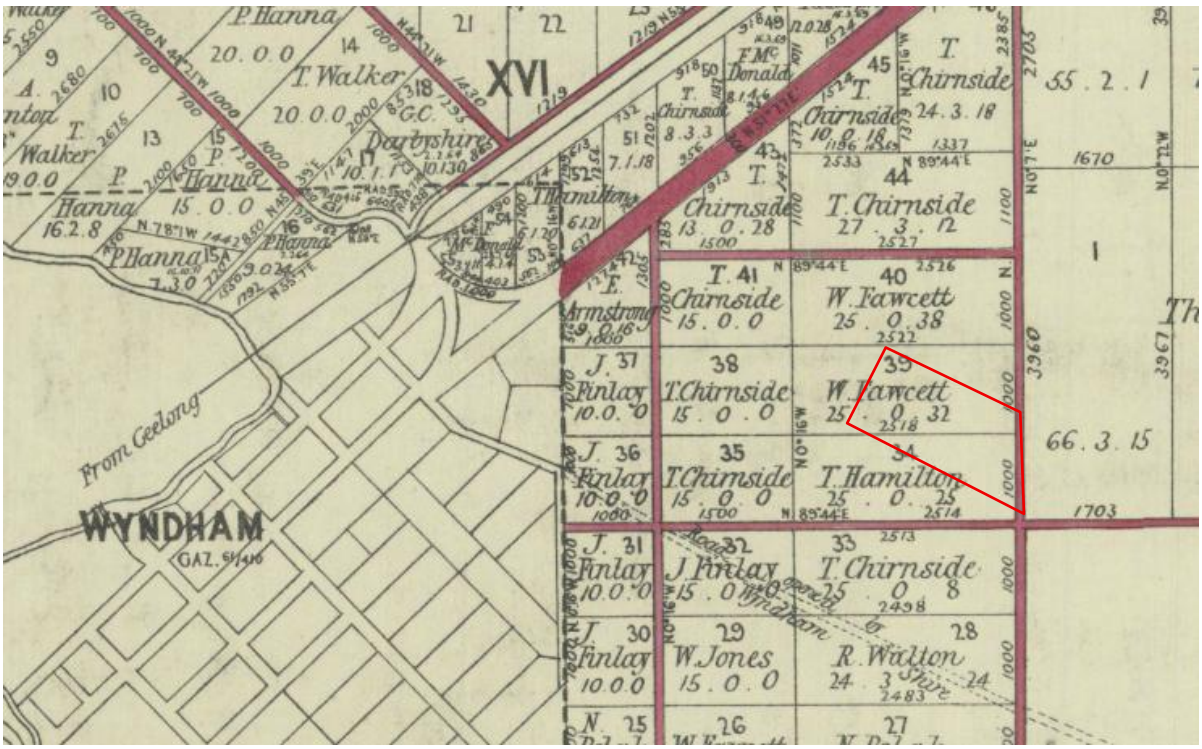


Figure 4. Extract from 1880 Parish Plan, showing the area outside of the Werribee township subdivided into large Allotments. The subject site is indicated in red. *Source*: Department of Crown Lands and Survey. 1880. 'Deutgam.' Public Record Office Victoria (Web-based archive). https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/A6EDA490-F843-11E9-AE98-13F3897B06A2/content?image=1

By 1924, the land above Duncans Road had been sold and subdivided into smaller plots. This new subdivision broke away from the north-south arrangement and aligned with the broader Werribee township survey area, with the property at 56-58 Wattle Street redefined as part of Allotment 8 of Section 14, owned by David Armstrong Little (Figure 5). David Little was a prominent figure within Melbourne as Secretary and Engineer to the Shire of Bacchus Marsh in the late 1800s, before being appointed the same positions at the Shire of Werribee (now City of Wyndham) in 1913, for which he held office for 16 years (Advocate 1926, 15). He purchased the property at 56-58 Wattle Street in the same year as his relocation to Werribee (Advocate 1926, 17), naming the farm "Leopold Orchard" (Werribee Shire Banner 1926, 2).

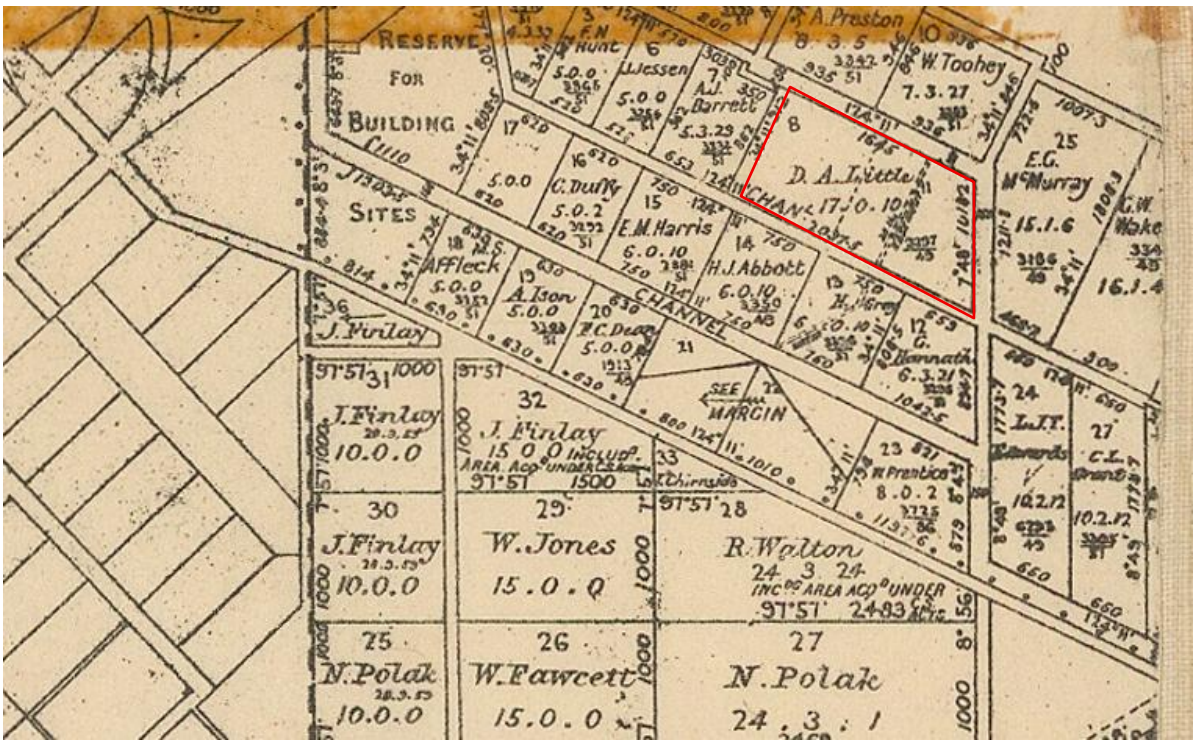


Figure 5. Extract from 1924 parish plan, showing the later subdivision of the eastern Deutgam with the subject site outlined in red. Source: Department of Lands and Survey 1924. 'Deutgam – County of Bourke.' State Library Victoria (Web-based archive). http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/156300

David Little's Leopold Orchard (the original farm associated with Little House)

An article in *The Australasian* newspaper in 1923 noted David Little's orchard for its productivity and uniqueness in the area, writing that Mr. Little was one of the few who had followed advice provided by Mr. J. Cronin, director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, who "expressed the belief that the Werribee district offered very considerable inducements to anyone desirous of engaging in the production of apricots and other fruits" (The Australasian 1923, 11). The article describes the farm as follows:

> "The greater portion of the orchard was planted in 1914. Now in its ninth year the property is one of the most attractive in the district…Facing the orchard a modern house, protected on three sides by ornamental trees, and with trim, well-kept gardens and asphalted paths, together with packing house and outbuildings screened off, the orchard home is a marvel of what has been accomplished during so short a period. The majority of the trees set out in the 15-acre orchard are now nine years of age, and although they consist of apples, apricots, and a few trees of plum and citrus varieties, all have made exceedingly uniform growth, whilst double rows of quince trees that divide the orchard into sections, and so provide further shelter from the wind, line the main irrigation channels." (The Australasian 1923, 11).

During this period, David Little's son J. Little, with the assistance of management by Mr. Mc. Dermott, ran the farm as a commercial venture (Werribee Shire Banner 1918, 2). The passing of D.A. Little in 1926 likely prompted the selling of the property, and whilst his intention was for the farm to be run by one of his sons, they all worked in other professional capacities in Melbourne at the time. Despite J. Little's involvement in farm operations, he was also employed

as a resident surgeon at St. Vincent's Hospital, G.T. Little worked as a Civil Engineer and Leo Little as a barrister (Advocate 1926, 15).

Broader Little family ties to Werribee

Gerald Thompson Little would become notable as a former civil engineer and surveyor for the Wyndham Shire Council. During the 1930-40s, he was a member of the Surveyors Board and in 1945 was appointed President of the Victorian Institute of Surveyors (Department of Crown Lands and Survey & Office of Titles 2020, 49). Gerald Little would have lived in the property during part of his childhood in the early 1900s.

Later ownership and subdivision

In 1926, an advertisement for sale in *The Sun News-Pictorial* noted a "seventeen acre orchard with an eight-roomed house" (The Sun News - Pictorial 1926, 8). Another sale article noted that "The Jonathan apples grown on this property rival any in the State…An up-to-date residence - one of the finest homes in the district – is included in the sale." (Werribee Shire Banner 1926, 2). The property was purchased for £5000 by John Smith (The Sun News-Pictorial 1926, 8), a well-known building contractor who had undertaken the construction of many large works within Werribee (Werribee Shire Banner 1949, 2).

Parish plans from 1924 detail a cutout to the neighbouring northwestern property at Allotment 7, providing extended driveway access to Leopold Orchard from Wattle Avenue (Figure 5). It is likely that this arrangement was to provide irrigation channel connection to the farm (Figure 5).

John Smith died in 1949, and the property appeared to continued operation into the 1950s (Figure 6). However, by 1968, the orchards had been removed with only the boundary windbreaks and homestead including its immediate surrounds and rear extent retained (Figure 7).



Figure 6. Extract from 1951 aerial photograph of Werribee, showing the Leopold Orchard property,outlined in red, and the original homestead, indicated with red arrow. *Source* Landata. 1951. Digitised Photograph. https://www.landata.vic.gov.au/tpc_from_landataonline.aspx



Figure 7. Extract from 1984 aerial photograph of Werribee, showing the property outlined in red, with the original side drivway arrangement. *Source:* Landata. 1984. Digitised Photograph. https://www.landata.vic.gov.au/tpc_from_landataonline.aspx

The increase in Werribee's population in the late twentieth century prompted further residential development in proximity to central Werribee and further subdivision of the land appears to have occurred in the 1990s. The olive trees on the opposite side of Wattle Avenue were planted sometime after 1984.

As it exists today, Little House has retained its original siting, with surrounding development being of low rise, contemporary housing. A reserve has been established to the northwestern boundary with an asphalted section of the former entrance, where it adjoins Wattle Avenue retained. The house remains in use as a private dwelling.



Figure 8. Photograph of Little House taken in 2008, looking southwest from Wattle Avenue. *Source:* Strong, Bill. 2008. *20080721_0455 the Little House - Werribee.* Photograph. Flickr. https://www.flickr.com/photos/87791108@N00/2693839295/in/dateposted/

Comparative Analysis

Little House is comparable to the following places:

Ryan House (HO14)

Ryan House is comparable to Little House, Werribee, as an example of a substantial Edwardian dwelling located on what was originally a much larger allotment. The house is comparable to Little House as an example of a relatively intact Edwardian dwelling, however Little House, while having undergone some alterations externally, remains in good condition and is comparable to for its intactness and similar style dwelling.

Braemor House (HO45)

Little House is comparable to Braemor House as an example of an Edwardian farmhouse. Of similar construction and era to Little House, Braemor House is highly comparable in terms of presentation; however, Little House has undergone a greater level of alteration to its form and materiality, although it remains clearly legible as an Edwardian dwelling.

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Images



Figure 9. Oblique overview of the house at 56-58 Wattle Avenue, Werribee, including façade and southeast elevation, looking west from Wattle Ave. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 10. Oblique overview of the house, including façade and northwest elevation, looking south from Wattle Avenue. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 11. Mature trees to the northwest boundary, looking west to Wattle Avenue Reserve. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 12. Mature trees to the eastern corner of the property, facing Wattle Avenue. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 13. The house and front picket fence, as viewed from Wattle Avenue, looking southwest. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 14. House and mature trees to the front northern corner of the property, looking west from Wattle Avenue. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.