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## HO28 - Ruin, 'McIntosh Cottage'



Ruin



Ruin



Ruin, McIntosh Cottage

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### Location

687-777 Gisborne-Melton Road, TOOLERN VALE, Melton Shire

### Municipality

MELTON CITY

### Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO28

### Heritage Listing

Melton City

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The McIntosh Ruin, 687-777 Gisborne Melton Road, Toolern Vale, is significant as a now scarce relic of the first farming period in the Shire, of the Scottish enclave in Toolern Vale in this period, and as the site of the first Presbyterian services in Toolern Vale. The ruin of the dwelling, built by the early 1860s, is a contributory part of an early and attractive cultural landscape of high significance in both the pastoral and farming histories of the Shire.

The McIntosh Ruin, 687-777 Gisborne Melton Road, Toolern Vale, is historically significant at the Local level (AHC A4, B2, D2). It is situated on the site of an important early 1840s outstation of the *Green Hills* pastoral station, at that time the largest and most developed sheep run in the Shire. The hills of this area, stretching to Gisborne and towards Sunbury, are also of wider significance in the history of Victoria's settlement, as the meeting place of the two streams of Port Phillip's European settlers, the 'overstraiters' from Tasmanian and the 'overlanders' from New South Wales. This upper Toolern Creek valley, between Bensons Road and Toolern Vale, subsequently became a rich part of the farming history of the Shire. The place is a contributory part of a cultural landscape that contains a concentration of early farm dwellings and structures (including dry stone walls), now mainly ruinous due to bushfires and the passage of time, and views from Gisborne-Melton Road over the rich farmlands and attractive valley to the ranges and plains beyond. The ruin is also a now-scarce relic of the 'first farming' period of the Shire: on farms purchased from the Crown in the 1850s, rather than the later the Selection Acts, or created in the break-up of the large pastoral estates in the early twentieth century. It also testifies to the prominence of Scottish settlers in the farming history of the Shire, particularly in early Toolern Vale.

The McIntosh cottage was a centre of this community, being the site of the first Presbyterian services in Toolern Vale, prior to the building of a church. The place is also significant for its association with the McIntoshs, a very old and large Melton family which still farms in the Shire. The abandoned dwelling, finally destroyed in the major 1952 Toolern bushfire, is also expressive of the major role of bushfires in the Shire of Melton. The domed underground tank, stripped of its concrete render to reveal the bricklaying construction technique, contributes to the significance of the place as an expression of an early method of water storage no longer practised.

The McIntosh Ruin, 687-777 Gisborne Melton Road, Toolern Vale, is scientifically significant at the Local level (AHC C2). The ruin is rare, perhaps unique, in the Shire for its primitive construction with the flat sedimentary rubble stone of its immediate locality. It is a quite finely crafted vernacular structure with the potential to provide further information about early construction techniques and lifestyles in the Shire of Melton.

Overall, the McIntosh Ruin, 687-777 Gisborne Melton Road, Toolern Vale, is of LOCAL significance.

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|---------------------------|--|
| Heritage Study/Consultant | Melton - Shire of Melton Heritage Study phase 2, David Maloney, David Rowe, Pamela Jellie, Sera Jane Peters, 2007; |
| Construction dates        | 1860,  |
| Other Names               | 687-777 Gisborne-Melton Road, Toolern Vale (Lot 1 TP 608391, (CA 47, Parish of Yangardook),                        |
| Hermes Number             | 29981  |
| Property Number           |  |

## Historical Australian Themes

*Melton Historical Themes:* 'Pastoral'; 'Farming'

## Physical Description 1

Physical Description -

The ruin at 687-777 Gisborne-Melton Road, Toolern Vale is situated on a knoll on the north-east corner of McPherson Road, with a beautiful view over the Toolern Creek valley to the east, and to the Black Hills beyond and to the north, and the Melton Plains to the south.

The place was a small dwelling, perhaps of four rooms. It now consists principally of a stone chimney base and hearth, and an adjacent domed underground water tank, and peppercorn trees.

The large stone chimney base - hearth is approximately 2.5 metres high. It is a finely constructed primitive structure of rubble stone. Its larger stones are used for the corners and the lower courses of the structure. It is unusual in the Shire of Melton in that it does not use quarried and roughly squared bluestone, but the flat schistose rock that is indigenous to the hills of the Toolern Vale / Djerriwarrh Creek area, in an unworked and undressed state. It uses smaller rocks to help flatten the base for the next course and plug gaps in the face. It is not clear what if any mortar has been used originally. There are only traces of mortar and render remaining between some of the larger stones, but extensive mortar binds the small stones at the higher part of the structure; this mortar is presumably harder than any originally used, and may have been added in the twentieth century.

There are mounds, and a considerable scatter, of bricks around this structure. They are hand made bricks, but very regular in size and finish, suggesting that they were professionally made rather than made on site. They probably come from the chimneys which appear to have collapsed, or been demolished, in the 1980s or 1990s, prior to which they were visible from the Gisborne - Melton Road. The site is now no longer readily visible from the road.

The lack of stone mounds or rubble around the structure confirms reports that the cottage was originally timber, stone and brick.

The adjacent underground tank is quite large, its brick dome approximately three metres in. diameter. The bricks are quite intact, although most of its concrete render has been lost. It has a concrete lined interior. It is likely to have been built at the same time as the house, although the dome may have been added later. Its high hemispherical dome, rather than a low segmental dome, is consistent with this assumption.

There are a few large, and a few younger, peppercorn trees, as were typically associated with rural cottages.

## **Integrity**

Integrity - Damaged/Disturbed

## **Physical Conditions**

Physical Condition - Ruinous

*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/>*