



BRONTE HOUSE

Plan of Management

CONTENTS

Introduction and Purpose	4
The Land	4
Classification	4
Cultural significance	6
Statement of significance	6
Ownership	8
Zoning and heritage	8
History	10
Purchase by Waverley Council	10
Previous Plan of Management	10
Previous lease arrangements	10
Present use and condition	11
Present use	11
Layout and condition	11
Future use and development	12
Management of the land	12
Appendices	15
Appendix A: General guidelines for the maintenance of historic houses.	16
Appendix B: The Land Deposited Plan 632454	17
Appendix C: Site maps of Bronte House and grounds	18
Appendix D: Condition and Dilapidation Report, Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd. 9 March 2015.	<i>Attached separately</i>
Appendix E: Aboriginal site survey study, prepared in December 2014 by Dominic Steele Consulting Archaeology.	<i>Attached separately</i>
Appendix F: Bronte House Conservation Management Plan, prepared by Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd. Adopted by Council in 2014.	<i>Attached separately</i>
Appendix G: Bronte House Garden Report and Landscape Plan, prepared by Place That Plant Pty Ltd 10 March 2015.	<i>Attached separately</i>

Program: Waverley Life
 Date created: August 2007
 Date revised: July 2015
 Date adopted by Council: 20 October 2015

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Bronte House is one of the oldest houses in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs, built between 1843 and 1845. Set amid two acres of rolling, park-like grounds and nestled into Bronte Gully, tenants enjoy a private and picturesque setting adjoining a beachfront reserve.

Bronte House and grounds was sold to Waverley Council in 1948 and the land was listed on the

Australian Heritage Commissions Register of the National Estate 1978, and the State Heritage Register in 1999.

The house underwent major refurbishment in 2014 and was restored to its full splendour. It consists of 3–4 bedrooms, a study, three bathrooms, a lounge, dining room, a separate kitchen and open verandas; the gardens are also

substantial and contain a wide variety of plants which provide a real showcase at different times of the year.

The purpose of this Plan of Management is to guide the management of the property, particularly with regard to Waverley Councils' lease arrangements and heritage requirements.

THE LAND

This Plan of Management applies to the property known as 'Bronte House' and located at 470 Bronte Road, Bronte ('the Land').

It is the whole of the land within Lot 1 of Deposited Plan 632454 (Appendix B).

The Bronte House Garden and Landscape Report (Appendix G) forms part of this Plan of Management.

CLASSIFICATION

The Land has been classified by Waverley Council ('Council'), as community land under the Local Government Act, 1993 ('the Act').

This means that Sections 35-54 of

the Act concerning the use and management of community land apply and this Plan of Management has been prepared in accordance with those sections, the Local

Government (General) Regulation 2005 and the guidelines provided by the Department of Local Government.



CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

By resolution on 25 July 2000, Council declared the Land to be an area of cultural significance.

Council has categorised the Land as being an area of cultural significance under Section 36D of the Act because Council considers that the dwelling known as 'Bronte House', together with the gardens within the curtilage of the dwelling, are of historical and cultural significance to the Waverley area.

The Bronte House Conservation Management Plan was adopted in September 2014 (Appendix F).

In addition, an Aboriginal study was prepared in December 2014 by Dominic Steele Consulting Archaeology (Appendix E).

This Aboriginal study was endorsed by Council in April 2015.

The Land was listed on the Australian Heritage Commission's Register of the National Estate in 1978, was made the subject of a Permanent Conservation Order under the Heritage Act 1977 in 1981, and was listed on the State Heritage Register under the Heritage Act 1977 in 1999. It was also listed as a local heritage item as part of the Waverley LEP 2012, Environmental Heritage.

The following Statement of Significance taken from the listing of the Land by the NSW Heritage Office:

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Aboriginal country at Bronte had undergone a dynamic environmental history for many tens of thousands of years before the land was alienated and built upon in the 1840s. In this context, Bronte as a 'place' has been situated within many different 'settings' in the past and Aboriginal people will have routinely used and probably helped shape the character of Bronte through traditional mosaic burning techniques to increase animal and plant abundance and long-term sustainability. At times, the 'place' was a sheltered coastal gully much like today, and at others it was a small inland valley within a broader coastal hinterland plain that extended across the now submerged continental shelf and was situated many kilometres from the 'old coast'. Aboriginal people lived continuously on this land and successfully adapted throughout the major climatic changes that took place during the last 30,000 years or more and within this scenario Bronte House was built very late in the sequence of environmental evolution and people's interaction with this changing landscape. The recognition of this prior ownership and the continuation of this unbroken Aboriginal connection to culture and country at places like Bronte are important to Aboriginal people today.

While no Aboriginal archaeological sites have been identified at Bronte House and garden, or in Bronte Gully itself, the house was built in an 'Aboriginal site favourable' location on top of an elevated topographic position useful for views and communication that overlooked a steep sided east-facing sandstone coastal valley that was drained by a freshwater creek. While organised 'gully hunting' of land animals can only be inferred to have possibly taken place at Bronte in the past, there is little doubt that the place will have contained numerous rock overhangs for shelter and for creating painted and stencilled before the sides of the gully were developed, extensive sandstone platforms for engraving, and the immediate proximity of sandy beaches and rocky shores for fishing and shell fish gathering will have provided a diversity of predictable resources. A relatively sparse white population up to the 1830s may have allowed Aboriginal people to continue visit and use Bronte and maintain access to both coast and woodland environments in close proximity and important traditional fishing spots and engraving sites in this part of eastern Sydney after 1788. Bronte House is an outstanding example of a Picturesque Gothic style colonial house retaining rare, early architectural features and is one of only a small group of exemplary Regency style villas constructed in the Australia colonies.

Located in a substantial remnant of the original inner garden with early and original landscape features, Bronte House is sited in a picturesque and sympathetic landscaped setting, which together with the house is highly valued for its aesthetic significance. The place is associated with a number of people of note including Robert Lowe, an influential member of the Colonial government and his wife Georgiana, who completed the house, established the estate lands and designed and laid out the garden. The place is also associated with Colonial Architect Mortimer Lewis, who is credited with the initial design of the house and it is therefore one of only a small group of houses designed by one of the most accomplished architects in Australia in the pre 1850s period.

Located on land that formed part of a larger estate that originally (1836) included the whole of Bronte Park and its immediate surrounds, Bronte House is historically

significant as one of the earliest land purchases and houses to be constructed in the Bronte area and evidence of the former estate lands remain visible in the broader landscape today.

Bronte House is of a style not commonly found in Australian Colonial architecture, with its superb siting and substantial garden it is a significant essay in the picturesque. The property has connections with colonial architect Mortimer Lewis and more importantly with Robert Lowe, later created Viscount Sherbrooke. It is especially notable stylistically as an individual mid-Victorian design reflecting a romantic and picturesque interpretation of the medieval past. It is substantially intact and retains its outstanding original setting. Bronte House is the oldest known residence in the Waverley Council area. Sources: Dowd, pp. 154-161. Kerr J, Broadbent J, Gothic Taste in the Colony of New South Wales, p. 107.

A historic, extremely rare, picturesque garden constructed in a naturally irregular site as a setting for an equally picturesque colonial house by one of the colony's rarest inhabitants - a cultivated lady. (James Broadbent for National Trust of Australia, 1981)

Bronte House is one of Australia's most picturesque surviving colonial residences and dates back to 1845. Built in the 'Gothic' taste so fashionable in the late 18th & early 19th centuries it is a perfect example of the cottage ornee, not a mansion but a romantic retreat from more formal city life. Its restored and adapted garden is now a small scale botanic garden, a repository for rare and beautiful plants, and one of Australia's best new private gardens. (Schofield, 2002)

OWNERSHIP

Waverley Council is the owner of the Land.

ZONING AND HERITAGE

The Waverley Local Environmental Plan 2012 ('the LEP') applies to the Land. The Land is zoned Low Density Residential.

Council may consent to a person carrying out development on the Land in accordance with the LEP (including the heritage considerations).

Bronte House and its grounds are both state heritage items under Schedule 5 of the LEP.

Clause 5.10 – Heritage Conservation – of the LEP applies to the Land. The objective of clause 5.10 is to ensure heritage items are conserved. Before granting any consent to carry out development on the Land

(unless exempted), Council must consider the effect of any proposed development on the heritage significance of the Land.



HISTORY

It is understood that the Waverley area was occupied by the Cadigal people, the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land.

Originally commenced by architect Mortimer Lewis in c.1843 and completed by Georgiana and Robert Lowe (later Viscount Sherbrooke), 'Bronte House' was built as a single residence and has been used for that purpose for most of its existence.

PURCHASE BY WAVERLEY COUNCIL

In 1948, Council acquired the Land to retain a significant local heritage building. Council owned and operated it in various uses for some years. It suffered from unsympathetic changes to the residence and inadequate maintenance.

The cost of maintaining this heritage property became prohibitive and beyond Council's financial resources.

It began to fall into disrepair, and by the late 1970s was in poor condition. In 1982, an out building for garaging and storage was constructed near the entrance gates at the western end of the site.

PREVIOUS PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

Until the adoption of this Plan of Management, the Land was subject to the Plan of Management adopted by Council in 2007.

PREVIOUS LEASE ARRANGEMENTS

In order to retain the Land in appropriate condition and in public ownership with public access, Council in 1983 entered into a 25 year repairing lease of the Land, including the residence and gardens, expiring in January 2008. In summary, rent was set at one dollar per annum, with all rates, taxes and maintenance to

be paid by the tenant. A minimum \$200,000 restoration program was to be undertaken, a considerable expenditure at the time. The house was to be open to the public a minimum of six times per annum.

The lease was assigned to a small number of tenants in its history with Council's consent. Leo Schofield, who occupied the Land from 1994 until 2004, notably undertook extensive restoration of the residence and, most significantly, completely overhauled the gardens to an outstanding condition.

Bronte House was substantially refurbished in 2014.

The Plan of Management authorises Council to request the exemption of the Land or of any lease, licence or other occupation of the Land from the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (or any other legislation that affects the leasing, licensing or other occupation of the Land) from time to time.

PRESENT USE AND CONDITION

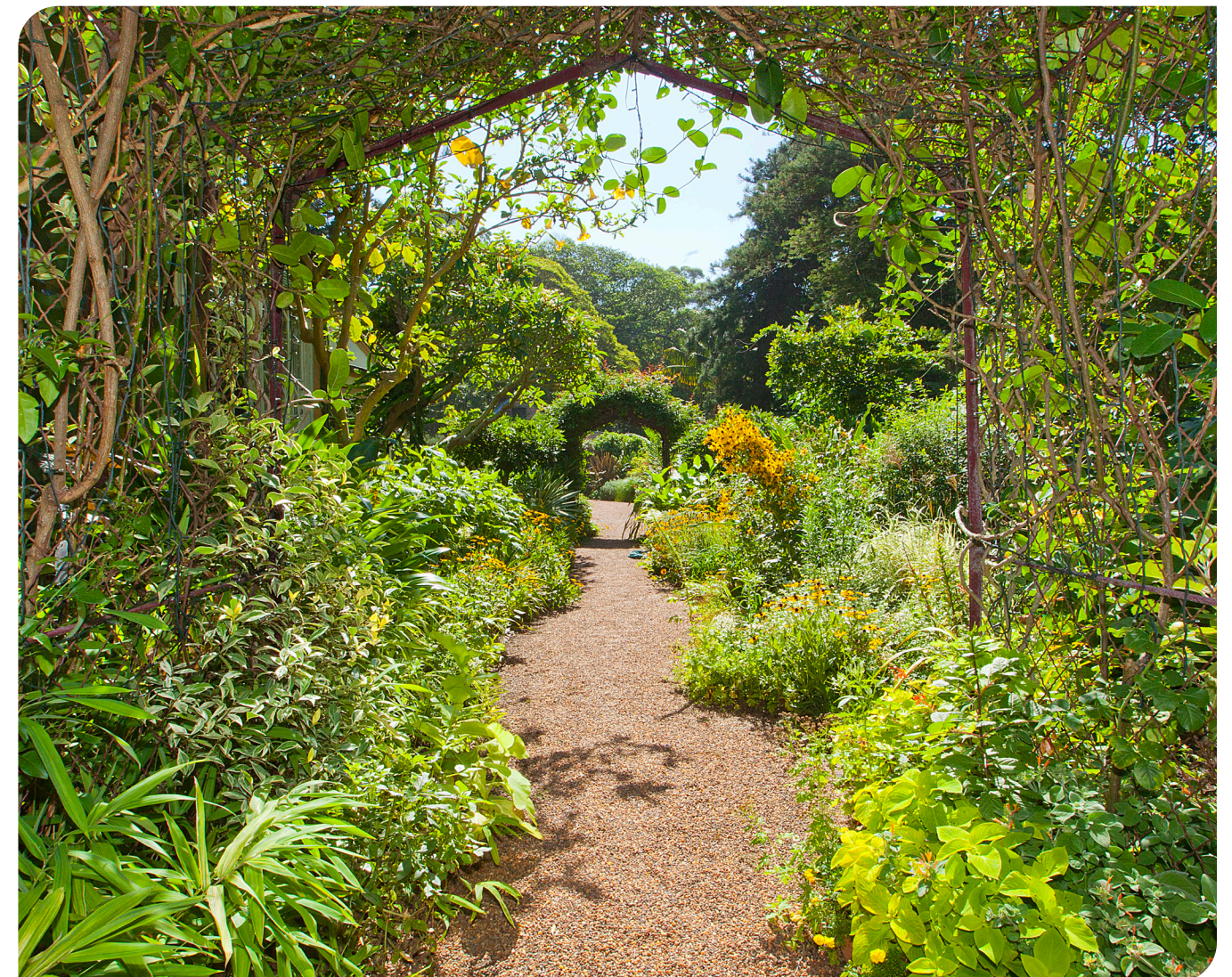
PRESENT USE

Following the refurbishment in 2014, Bronte House has been kept, and continues to be kept, in good condition. The present use of the land is for the entering into residential tenancies, other

leases, sub leases, or licences or sub-licences or for community use (including open days, functions and other activities). This is to remain the case until any future amendment to the Plan of Management.

LAYOUT AND CONDITION

As at the date of adoption of this plan, the layout and condition of the residence and gardens is described in Appendix D and Appendix G.



FUTURE USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The LEP acknowledges a number of possible uses.

The Land may be used:

- 1. as a private residence; and
- 2. subject to the provisions of any agreement allowing for the occupation of the Land or when the Land is vacant, by Council for its own use or for community use (including open days, functions or other activities), or by community organisations if so permitted by Council from time to time.

To facilitate this use, Council authorises the entering into agreements allowing for the occupation of the Land, leases,

sub leases, residential tenancies, licences or sub- licences
Under regulation 16 of the Residential Tenancies Regulation 2010, Bronte House is exempt from the operation of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010.
Leases, licences and other estates in community land are permitted under section 47 (terms over five years) or section 47A (terms of five years or less) of the Act.
Council will only permit further development that conserves and is sympathetic to the nature and scale of the existing residence and grounds, and is consistent with the Land’s heritage status and having regard to the cultural significance of

the Land. Such development may include alterations, refurbishments or renovations needed or required to enable the Land to be used for the purposes set out in Part 8 of this Plan of Management.
As at the date of this Plan of Management, and subject to being finalised and executed, Council has proposed a lease of the Land.

MANAGEMENT OF THE LAND

Section 36H (1) of the Act states:
The core objectives for management of community land categorised as an area of cultural significance are to retain and enhance the cultural significance of the area (namely its

Aboriginal, aesthetic, archaeological, historical, technical or research or social significance) for past, present or future generations by the active use of conservation methods.
To implement the core objectives,

and to promote the active use of conservation methods, the Land is managed according to the objectives, performance targets and other matters set out in the table on the following page:

Objectives and Performance Targets	Means to Achieve Objectives and Performance Targets	Manner of Assessing
Ensure the continuous protective care and maintenance of the residence and grounds	Establish maintenance and formal inspection programs generally in accordance with the guidelines in Appendix A.	Efficient maintenance and inspection programs is adopted, and the residence and grounds are adequately and regularly maintained.
Ensure effective communication between Council and the occupier of the Land	Establish and conduct a Bronte House Management Group as a contact forum for Council and the occupier.	Occupier and Council are able to deal effectively and cooperatively with the day to day management of the Land.
Provide public access	Arrange, and ensure that any agreement concerning the use of the Land as a private residence allows, open days to allow public access.	Public participates in open days.
Conserve Heritage Items	Require all works that may alter the exterior or interior of the residence or grounds to be the subject of specific approvals by Council. Establish with the occupier an agreed list of standard exemptions for maintenance and standard repair works.	All works undertaken are carried out with specific approvals, and in accordance with agreed conservation and maintenance requirements.
Maintain and improve appearance and performance consistent with existing character	Conserve the exterior of Bronte House while accepting some change in areas where change has occurred since c.1880.	All works undertaken serve to maintain or improve the Land.
Maintain and improve garden presentation consistent with existing character	Upgrade soil quality, improve nutrient supply to key plants and mulch ground, and implement disease control. Plant grounds in consultation with Council. Control tree growth and remove invasive species in accordance with the Tree Preservation Order. Document and apply management policies to key trees and shrubs, including appropriate pruning and (where old age dictates) replacement. Maintain planting and fencing to Bronte Road and Bronte Park to ensure an attractive boundary	Efficient garden maintenance and upgrading program is adopted, plants are kept in good health and plant diseases are well controlled. Grounds planted are consistent with the Landscape Plan and/or approval of Council. Tree growth and invasive species are controlled consistent with Council policies. Management and maintenance of key plantings is undertaken in accordance with documented policies. Hedging and screening is maintained in a form and style approved by Council.

The Land is managed in a way that is consistent with the Heritage Act 1977, the Heritage Regulation 2005 and the Local Government Heritage Guidelines.

APPENDIX

The following documents record characteristics and information relating to the condition of the premises as at the date of this Plan of Management.

Appendix A: General guidelines for the maintenance of historic houses

This Plan of Management acknowledges that Part 4 – Heritage provisions (Clauses 45–50) in the Waverley Local Environmental Plan, 1996 contains restrictions on development applications including public notification of proposals, and so this Plan of Management does not impose additional restrictions on the future use of the Land.

Appendix B: The Land Deposited Plan 632454

Appendix C: Site maps of Bronte House and grounds

Appendix D: Condition and Dilapidation Report, Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd 9 March 2015

The dilapidation and condition report documents the existing conditions of the exterior and interior of Bronte House following recent conservation works.

Attached separately

Appendix E: An Aboriginal site survey study, prepared in December 2014 by Dominic Steele Consulting Archaeology

Attached separately

Appendix F: Bronte House Conservation management Plan, prepared by Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd and adopted by Council in 2014

Attached separately

Appendix G: Bronte House Garden Report and Landscape Plan, Place That Plant Pty Ltd 10 March 2015

Attached separately



APPENDIX A:

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF HISTORIC HOUSES

The following is a guide only, for specific maintenance and a full understanding of the premises reference to the Conservation Management Plan should be made.

Good maintenance is the best method of preserving and protecting historic buildings. This requires some work and expenditure each year, based on an annual review as part of the overall strategy. Such a review is best undertaken by an architect well versed in heritage buildings: a concise schedule of work should be the result of such a review giving priorities for the immediate year, and into the future.

For a property such as Bronte House, a responsible cycle would be:

MONTHLY

- General garden maintenance and general housekeeping

BI-ANNUAL

- Thorough inspection of grounds and internal and external areas of the house.

EVERY YEAR

- Thorough cleaning out of gutters and stormwater system
- Checking of roof slating and minor repairs
- Termite inspection

EVERY FOUR YEARS

- Reapplication of tinted limewash to exposed portions of exterior walls. It is noted that protected areas may only require reapplication of limewash every 10 years. It is also noted that tinted limewash can enjoy a somewhat longer life by the introduction of a binding agent. In making this remark, the above time frame is still recommended.

EVERY SIX YEARS

- Preparation and repairing of all external joinery

EVERY TEN YEARS

- Structural review
- Examination of all electrical wiring and equipment

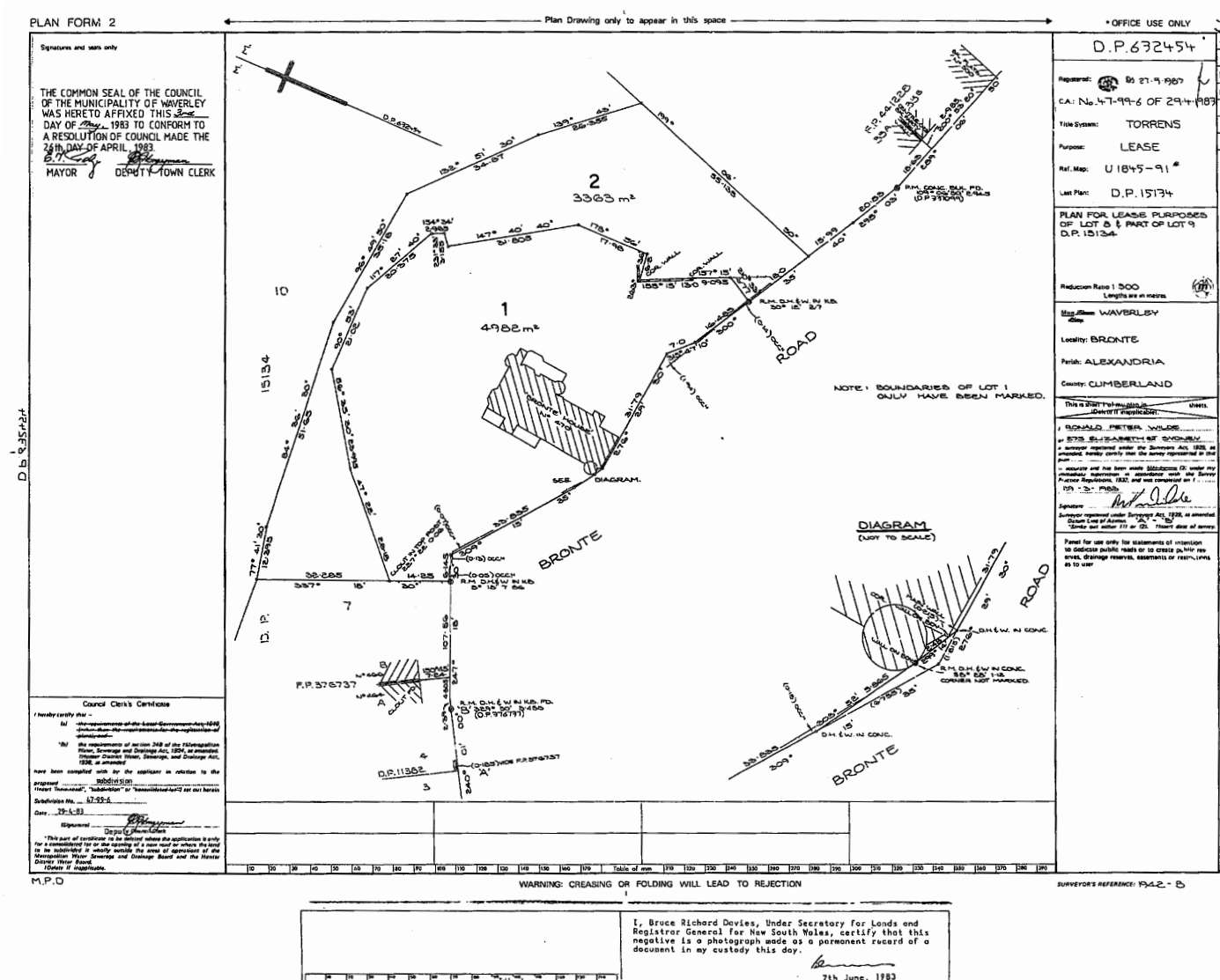
- Examination of plumbing systems and equipment
- Repair of any damaged joinery
- Review of internal finishes with view to scheduling repainting and redecoration

EVERY FIFTEEN YEARS

- Review of kitchen and bathrooms

EVERY THIRTY YEARS

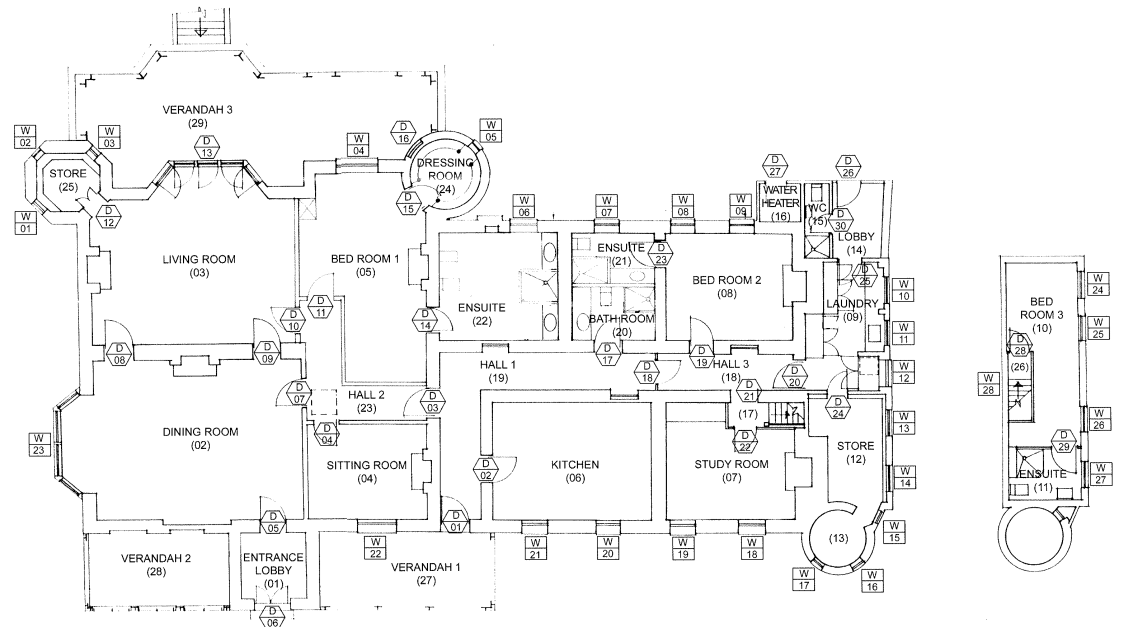
- Extensive reworking of kitchen and bathrooms
- Major review of general condition of buildings and landscaping



APPENDIX C:

SITE MAPS OF BRONTE HOUSE AND GROUNDS

FLOOR PLAN



PLAN TO ACCOMPANY CONDITION REPORT 2007
BRONTE HOUSE, BRONTE

TANNER ARCHITECTS

GARDEN

