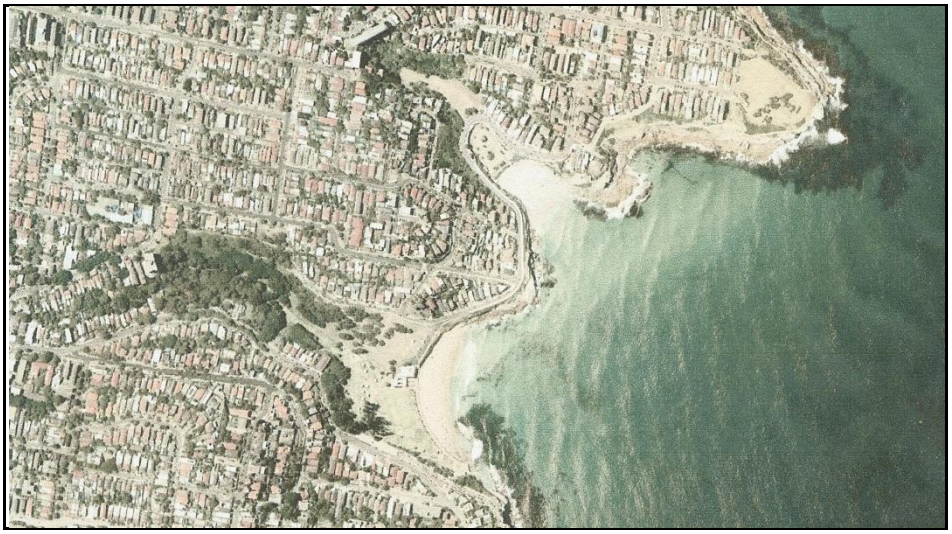
Aboriginal Heritage Assessment

Bronte House

470 Bronte Road, Bronte, New South Wales



Report to

Waverley Council

Dominic Steele Consulting Archaeology

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1.0 Background

1.1 Introduction

Waverley Council recently adopted a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Bronte House that is located in the eastern Sydney coastal suburb of Bronte. The 1840s building is the oldest known residence in the Waverley LGA and is to be an '*outstanding example*' of a mid-Victorian design colonial villa (Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd October 2014).[1] The house is listed on the *NSW State Heritage Register* (SHR 00055) for exclusively its European (non-Indigenous) heritage values.

Figure 1.1: Bronte House and setting as a 'place' including today's Bronte Gully and Beach (CLSP 2014: Figure 6.2)

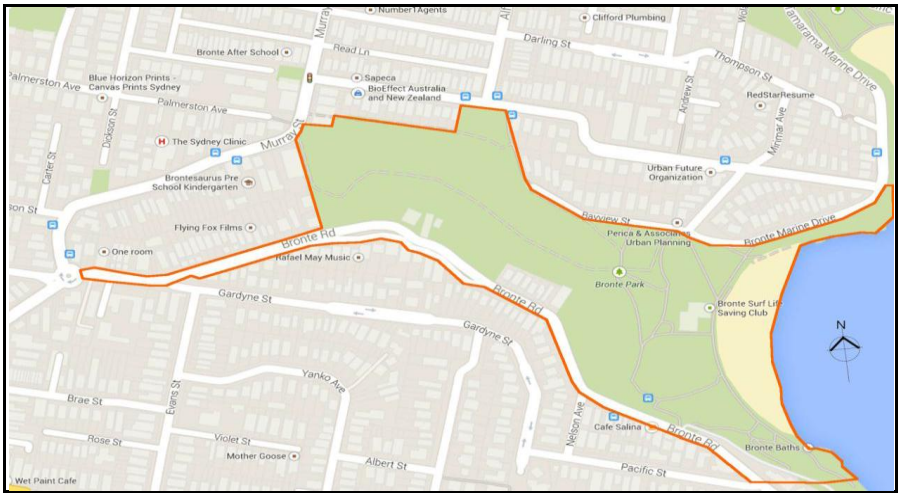


Figure 1.2: Bronte Gully & coastal margins of 'Nelson Bay' that have survived development (Waverley Council 2015)

[1] Hereafter referred to as CLSP 2014 or 2014 CMP.

The existing SHR significance statement for Bronte House has no recognition of potential Aboriginal cultural heritage values that help to express a sense of 'place' from an Aboriginal perspective, or at least reflect an essence of the nature of the '*dual occupation*'[2] of the country at Bronte after 1788 on which the house was subsequently built in the 1840s. There is also no mention of Aboriginal people or any notable Aboriginal historical events in the contextual social history of the place that supports the heritage listing. This is largely because it is precisely the house and its garden elements and setting themselves that embody the tangible expressions of the mid-Victorian heritage values that are sought to be conserved through the statutory listing.

The division of heritage management in NSW into Aboriginal and historical that has different legislation applying to each can also foster a unintentional tendency for the pre-1788 period of the State's history to be seen as *'belonging'* to Aboriginal heritage and the period after '*Contact'* as belonging to settler history and heritage (Byrne, Brayshaw & Ireland 2001:3-4). 'Historic-houses' almost always fall firmly under the egis of the latter legislation and its historical paradigm. However, in recent years there has been an increasing awareness that many 'built heritage' places can have important Aboriginal historical stories attached to them that are worth recording and retelling. A more sophisticated landscape-based understanding of Aboriginal heritage and its values is also developing through direct consultation with Aboriginal communities, and how these values are expressed in both intangible and tangible ways. This more inclusive cultural heritage landscape approach to looking at the past is slowly shifting a previous and often prevalent over emphasis of scientific (archaeological) Aboriginal values with a specific focus on prehistoric archaeological sites and objects that are often reduced to the status of 'dots on maps'. Nevertheless, archaeological values are still very important as Aboriginal sites and objects from the past when seen in the present context acknowledge and reinforce contemporary Aboriginal cultural identify and community connections with their old people and places.

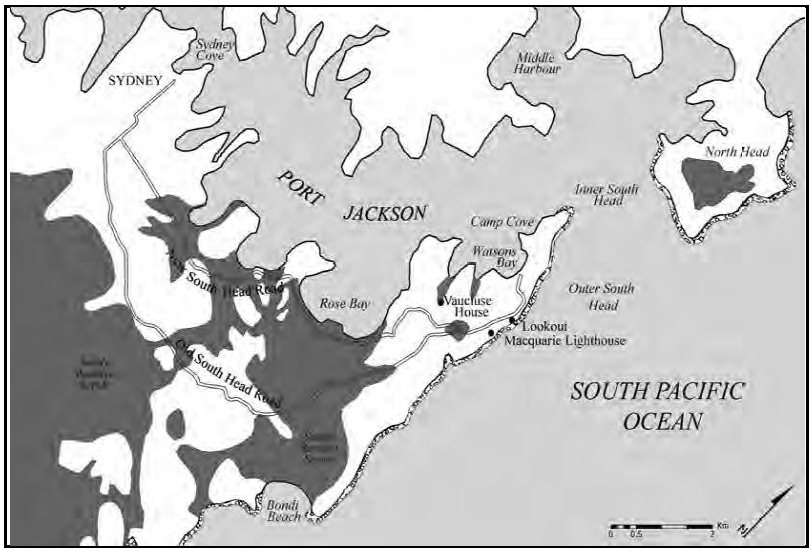
Within the existing SHR assessment framework, the history for Bronte House and its grounds 'begins' in the mid 1830s. This is approximately 50 years after the British first arrived at Botany Bay before the subsequent transfer shortly afterwards of this first wave of colonists to Sydney Cove. The movement of the First Fleet up the coast to Port Jackson coincided coincidentally with the arrival on the same day the French ships *Boussole* and *Astrolabe* at Botany Bay who stayed for six weeks.[3] Collins (1975:11) wrote '*their little fleet attracted the attention of several parties of the natives, as they proceeded along the coast'.* All of these people watching, and most of whom will not have probably been seen by the British as they passed by the various coves and inlets along the coast between Botany Bay and South Head

[2] Goodall 2008 'Invasion to Embassy' (2nd ed).

[3] The colony was desperate for the arrival of supplies from an expected second fleet that would be travelling to Botany Bay and who would not know of the relocation of the settlement to Port Jackson. Each week for the first eighteen months after landing at Sydney Cove a party of marines was sent overland to Botany Bay to see if any vessel had arrived.

before they entered the harbour, will have most likely been told the Aboriginal side of the story of Cook's arrival and landing at Botany Bay in 1770 that derived from eye witness accounts of a handful of Aboriginal people living at the place at the time, and this oral tradition is supported by independent corroborating historical evidence. The Aboriginal historical importance of these events linking Botany Bay and Sydney Cove underpins one of the reasons why this country continues to be important to Aboriginal people. The omission of this time period in the CMP also misses entirely the life history of perhaps two to three generations of Aboriginal people who were born into a white settler society where they were in the minority and were most likely on the 'fringe' in all social, economic and spiritual senses, but who are also very likely to have continued to live in eastern Sydney according to traditional social rules and customs (and customary Law) that had been adapted over two generations to suit this transplanted European new world.

Figure 1.3: Phillip had a flagpole erected at the Lookout in January 1790 to signal when approaching ships were sighted. The location had to be high enough to be seen from Sydney and as far east as possible to get maximum sight lines including past and over the point of Ben Buckler north of Bondi Beach (Derricourt 2011)



The State and local historical themes used to guide the heritage assessment process from which the Bronte House significance statement derives thereby starts with 'theme 3' (T3) and omits the preceding two that are of most relevance to Aboriginal people and their history and heritage. Central to the first theme is the natural evolution of the environment and people's interactions with it (T1), and the second relates more explicitly to '*Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures*' (T2). Both of these themes embody Aboriginal cultural values at a general level. Research into both may also reveal specific Aboriginal heritage connections that apply to Bronte House directly, but more certainly with the country and its coastal landforms at Bronte on which the house and estate was established. If Aboriginal values and associations are evident at Bronte they will contribute to 'balance' the existing significance

assessment of the place. Additionally, even should these values not be readily apparent their consideration will necessarily complete a more inclusive and 'shared' cultural heritage' significant assessment of the land to compliment the recently adopted Bronte House 2014 CMP.

In this context, the CMP was designed specifically to address only the European cultural significance of the house and its immediate grounds. It does however acknowledge that Aboriginal heritage values may be identified at Bronte, and by inference other comparable historic heritage places. The CMP also recognises that these values will often be reflected in different ways to those more commonly highlighted when using 'traditional' built-heritage assessment criteria (CLSP 2014:2).[4] In this respect, the house is central to a landscaped garden setting that overlooks a sheltered sandstone coastal gully with a freshwater creek running through Bronte Park that retains exceptional natural environmental and aesthetic values. The elevated position of the house would have had expansive ocean views and commanding 'sight lines' in the 1840s, as well as travel route options for communication and for the getting of resources and supples in a wider spectrum.[5] Each of these same landscape attributes that made the place attractive to Mortimer Lewis and later Robert and Georgina Lowe to build-on and inspiring to 'improve' from the 1830s clearly mirror many of the reasons why the place will have attracted continuous Aboriginal use and occupation in the past and in doing so broadly embody the types of intangible Aboriginal heritage values that are intrinsic to the coastal landscape setting of what was originally 'Aboriginal country' at Bronte.

The first settlers in eastern Sydney built their homes and arranged their gardens in many of the same places that Aboriginal people were using for repeated 'routine' daily camping and sometimes wider and longer-term social gatherings in 1788. Byrne & Nugent (2004:25) acknowledge settlers often paid attention, but not enough, to local Aboriginal environmental knowledge but they also copied trends that were in vogue in Europe at the time that saw homesteads often positioned on top of prominent hills and ridges overlooking the coast, rivers and lagoons. Many 'historic houses' in Sydney were probably built directly on top of probably important Aboriginal vantage points for travel and communication, for art, and for ceremonial and occupation sites.[6]

An example of where this has occurred is illustrated below. This figure shows an engraving of a fish that is preserved under the floor space of a suburban house at Point Piper and is one of a number of well known cases in the Sydney region where a house has been built directly on top of an Aboriginal site, but has not entirely destroyed it in the process which suggests innumerable rock engraving and other

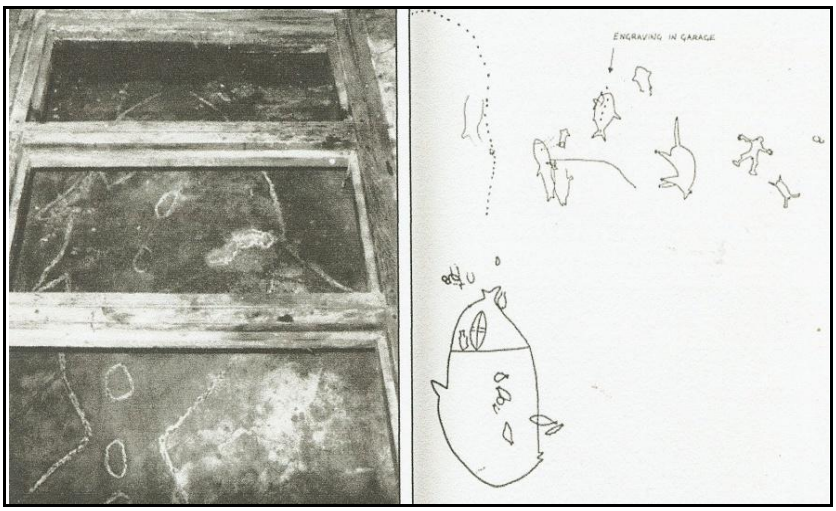
[4] The term 'place' is defined in the 2014 CMP as the present legal boundaries of the property (Lot 1 DP123571 and Lot 8 DP15134) which have been in place since the 1930s and contain most of the known surviving elements (house and inner garden) of the former Bronte estate.

[5] Bronte Road was originally the entry drive to the property and this view of the house has been available since c.1845 (CLSP 2014:135).

[6] There are at least two Aboriginal heritage sites at Vaucluse House and comprise a set of rock engravings and a rock shelter with possible art and PAD. The engravings are on a low sandstone ledge exposed behind the house and consist of a human figure, kangaroo and a whale.

heritage sites disappeared in the post War period before anyone saw them and made any record of their existence. However, the original recording of the engraving locality that was made by Campbell in the 1890s showed a more extensive set of engravings that were was once present and the comparative image shows what Campbell drew at the turn of the nineteenth century and illustrates where the engraved fish image originally 'fitted in' at this art site.[7]

Figure 1.4: Aboriginal rock engravings under a residential house at Point Piper (Irish and Ingrey 2015: Figure 3)



Prior (and unbroken) occupation of the country is an important Aboriginal heritage value because the landforms at Bronte have had a long and complex natural evolution of their own, and Aboriginal people will have probably lived continuously here throughout all of the major post-glacial environmental changes that occurred over the last 30,000 years or more that included dramatic sea level changes of over 100m at times before conditions stabilised around 6,000 to 7,000 years ago. All of the Sydney archaeological evidence formerly present on dry land at different times to the east of the coastal cliffs is now submerged below the ocean, but to get an essence of how this submarine Aboriginal landscape may have looked in the past, and how climatic changes may have unfolded over time, a brief overview of this natural environmental evolution is presented later sections using Bondi Beach as a familiar landmark to illustrate some important points. The NSW coast is a drowned embayed coastline where relief is controlled by geology, and as such, the current Sydney coastal zone has very similar characteristics those exhibited by the Blue Mountains, albeit on a smaller scale. In Sydney, these occur in the shape of high sandstone cliffs, deep coastal gullies and deeply eroded bays. Mindful that the distance and depth below water of the continental shelf bedrock topography (ocean basement) off Sydney varies, this submerged landscape has at least three distinct groups of terraces (inner, middle, and outer shelf zone) defined by abrupt changes in vertical topography akin to Sydney's coastal cliffs that may have created abrupt landscape barriers (coastlines) when sea levels were at their lowest. Each

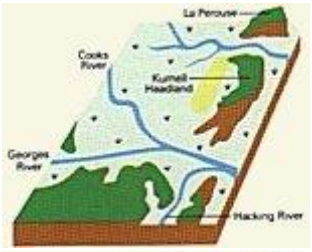
[7] Original sources: Stanbury & Clegg 1990:26 [left image] and 27 [right image, after Campbell 1899: Plate 2, Figure 12 and Plate 3, Figure 1]).

zone will also probably have had a similar mix of today's cliffs, gullies and beaches but most likely in different configurations, all above the lowest sea levels (of about 130m to 150m) during the time we know Aboriginal people were living in Sydney. Aboriginal people were also likely to have been using the country at Bronte when the submerged continental was exposed at the height of the Last Glacial Maximum about 18,000 years ago when it was colder, drier and windier than today (Attenbrow 2010, Stockton & Merriman 2009).

Figure 1.5: A changing Aboriginal landscape at Botany Bay (SSEC online website 2015 Towara Point Nature Reserve)

Botany Bay was created when a low-lying plain was submerged by rising seas around 20-30k BP. The bedrock channel of the former Cooks River is about 30m below sea level (bsl) near Kyeemagh and the channel of the former Georges River is at c.80m bsl at Taren Point. These old rivers joining together at about 90m bsl beneath the present Kurnell Peninsula, they were joined by the Hacking River (at 100m bsl) before proceeding to a depth of 120m at the former coastline which was about 6 km east of the present position.

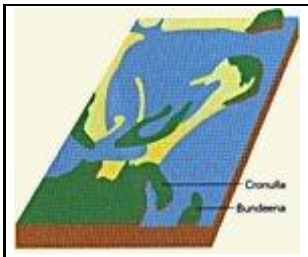
A lesser drainage system generated the present entrance of Botany Bay where sandstone bedrock is located about 110m bsl. This channel was separated from the Cooks/Georges Rivers by a bedrock ridge extending from beneath Sydney Airport to the northern extremity of the Kurnell Peninsula. The formation of the Peninsula tombolo led to the diversion of the Cooks/Georges River through the mouth of Botany Bay around 9,000 years B.P. when the sea level became less than 30m below present levels.



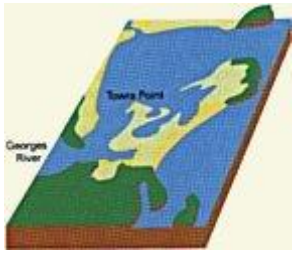
With the sea more than 20 metres below today's level. Botany Bay was a swampy plain, interrupted by occasional rocky outcrops. Many of the sediments were left over from the last period of high sea levels.

Seas rising to 9 metres below their present level moved a sand barrier onshore to enclose a shallow estuary; longshore drift swept sand north past the headland and around into the newly formed bay.

Seas reaching today's level pushed barrier sand shoreward to form beach ridges along Bate Bay. Wind-waves transported sand from the bed of Botany Bay north and west to the shores of the bay.



With the sea close to its present level, there were two phases of parabolic dune creation, and dune stabilisation by plants; a long period of coastal stability seems to have followed.



The tidal delta of the Georges River took shape, forming Towra Point from a complex of levees, spits and bars; renewed erosion of the barrier beach fed a dune sheet that continues to move today.

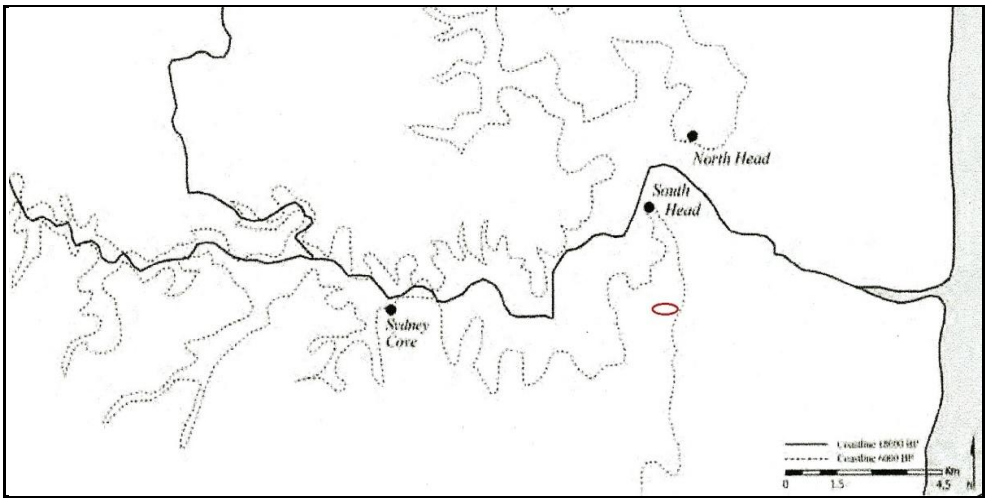
At this time Bronte formed part of a relatively small valley within a broader inland or coastal hinterland plain where today's dominant coastal cliffs of Sydney were an escarpment situated many kilometres from the coast.[8] Limited archaeological evidence of this antiquity (Pleistocene) on the coastal strip and immediate hinterland of Sydney is known, and most dated sites in the region were created in the last 5,000 years (mid Holocene), and the majority in the last 2,000 years. However, terminal Pleistocene and early Holocene archaeological sites for example at Randwick and Tempe, along with dated 'inland' archaeological sites in riverine environments on the Parramatta River at Parramatta and on the Hawkesbury River at Pitt Town, provide details on how Aboriginal people were living in Sydney during these earlier periods of environmental change.

Some researchers believe the Sydney archaeological record from around the mid Holocene shows social, economic and technological changes that may have marked an increase or greater Aboriginal population density (Kohen 1995:81-82) along with a greater specialisation in land and resource use (Attenbrow 2010:156-158). Notable in the archaeological record for sites on the coast for example suggest people were using bone and shell materials more than stone for making implements with an addition of fishing technology that occurred in the form of shell fish hooks in the last 700 years or so before white settlement. The visual example of an evolving Aboriginal landscape that is used above illustrates a probability that today's Sydney coastal and hinterland Aboriginal archaeological landscapes (sites and their landscape settings) may have been 'replicated' multiple times in the past before they were successively submerged by rising seas. In addition, while some of the old rivers and ridges no longer form part of today's above sea level Aboriginal geography, the fact that they existed in the past lends to the Aboriginal cultural heritage story that many of the older archaeological sites in the region were created when the land and probably some of its animals and vegetation were likely to be very different

[8] The surface of the NSW inner continental shelf is predominantly covered with sand but with considerable bedrock reef and ridge/top and valley topography in places (Roy 2001). The area of inner shelf covered by sand off the NSW coast is calculated in the order of 8,000 km2.

from today. In this 'long-view' temporal scenario, Bronte House was built very late in the sequence of environmental evolution and people's interaction with this changing landscape.

Figure 1.6: Bronte (circled) as an evolving natural landscape (from Derricourt 2001:9). Bronte House as a 'place' has been in a very real sense located within numerous different 'settings' over its long natural landscape history



Prehistoric archaeology may survive buried in places on the former Bronte estate lands (gully, beach and 'ridge top' areas) and these archaeological deposits and objects may document an equally long history of Aboriginal occupation of what has been at times a highly transformative landscape. Historic records may also increase our understanding of how Aboriginal people continued to maintain a direct physical connection to this country that had been occupied by their 'old people' for many thousands of years before them. It is this significant time span of physical and spiritual or existential attachment that forms an enduring bond between Aboriginal people and places such as Bronte.

This report uses three main lines of evidence (comprising environmental, archaeological and Aboriginal historical) to achieve three main objectives:

- To provide an Aboriginal archaeological and cultural heritage assessment of Bronte House and its garden surrounds in consultation with the local Aboriginal community. To facilitate this, the term 'place' is used in this report to convey a wider perception of the cultural heritage landscape setting as representing an Aboriginal 'site favourable' location with high 'amenity' values; situated in an elevated topographic position with expansive views overlooking the protected environs of a steep sided east-facing 'sea side' sandstone coastal valley drained by a freshwater creek. These intrinsic natural values will have continued to be important to Aboriginal people following settlement where a relatively sparse white population (whose 'disposition' towards Aboriginal people – whether friendly or otherwise - is usually unknown but can sometimes can be inferred) may have allowed people to continue to maintain access to

both coast and woodland environments in close proximity and possibly important traditional fishing spots and engraving sites within them.

- To present an Aboriginal heritage significance statement for the place to augment and balance the adopted 2014 CMP and update the site's existing SHR listing. The environmental, archaeological and Aboriginal historical themes and values that support this assessment are detailed in following sections of this report, and the Aboriginal cultural heritage significance for the place has been developed through Aboriginal community consultation (see below).
- The third and final objective of this report is to respond to a number of 'policies of note' that are recommended for future action in the 2014 CMP, and these include:

1. *'The setting of the place should include Bronte Park and Beach (Policy 2).* This is consistent with an Aboriginal heritage perspective of the place, and in turn, the bay itself is one of a series of east-facing coastal inlets that extend southward from Bondi Beach to Little Bay (La Perouse) that each have broadly similar gullies to Bronte that also extend as a westerly 'travel corridor' into hinterland.
2. *Fabric that should be removed includes planting in the eastern garden that block historic views from the house to the east to Bronte Beach, Nelson Bay and the ocean (Policy 10).* Future works in the garden to remove plantings along with other potential changes to the existing surfaces at the place have the potential to expose Aboriginal rock engravings and axe grinding grooves on currently obscured sandstone surfaces. This report provides advice and recommendations on how such future works should be managed.
3. *The place should be interpreted (Policy 13).* Aboriginal themes and 'story-lines' that add to our understanding of the story and significance of the place are explored in this report'.

1.2 Definitions – Aboriginal heritage places and values

A number of terms such as 'Aboriginal place', 'Aboriginal cultural landscape' and 'Aboriginal heritage value' that are used with frequency in this report will have different meanings and connotations to different people. Numerous State and Federal government policy standards and guidelines give definitions for these terms and the concepts they aim to convey. The *National Parks & Wildlife Service* (2005:4) for example describes that Aboriginal heritage is dynamic (evolving and not static) and includes tangible and intangible expressions of culture that link generations of Aboriginal people over time:

> *'For Aboriginal people, relationships with country, people, beliefs, knowledge, law language, symbols, ways of living, sea, land and objects all arise from their spiritual and cultural practices and associations....Aboriginal heritage includes landscapes and places that are important to Aboriginal people as part of their customary law, developing traditions, history and current*

practices.....Aboriginal people have occupied the NSW landscape for at least 50,000 years. The evidence and important cultural meanings relating to this occupation are present throughout the landscape, as well as in documents and in the memories, stories and associations of Aboriginal people. Therefore any activity which impacts on the landscape may impact on Aboriginal heritage'.

The types of ideas that are sought to be conveyed by the use of the terms 'place', 'setting' and 'value' in this report are encapsulated by the nationally applicable definitions that preface the Australian Heritage Commission's (2002) *Ask First – A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values:*

- ***'Indigenous heritage is dynamic**. It includes tangible and intangible expressions of culture that link generations of Indigenous people over time. Indigenous people express their cultural heritage through 'the person', their relationships with country, people, beliefs, knowledge, law, language, symbols, ways of living, sea, land and objects all of which arise from Indigenous spirituality.*
- ***Indigenous heritage places** are landscapes, sites and areas that are particularly important to Indigenous people as part of their customary law, developing traditions, history and current practices. All Indigenous heritage places have associated Indigenous heritage values.*
- ***Indigenous heritage values** include spirituality, law, knowledge, practices, traditional resources or other beliefs and attachments'.*

Additionally, the *NSW Department of Planning* (as part of the *Comprehensive Coastal Assessment*) have produced a document titled '*Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Landscape Mapping of Coastal New South Wales'* that uses existing UNESCO (1996) terminology to explain what are described as '*associative cultural landscapes*':[9]

'mark a significant move away from conventional heritage concepts rooted in physical resources. Cultural heritage has been dominated by objects and places, while natural heritage has celebrated pristine wilderness. Associative cultural landscapes accentuate the indivisibility of cultural and natural values' (CCA26 2006:18):

Importantly, this study underpins and reaffirms a basic but essential point that is returned to in a number of contexts in this report that 'associative cultural landscapes' are distinguished by their associations with the natural environment rather than by their material cultural evidences, which may be minimal, insignificant or entirely absent, and as such may be defined as:

'large or small contiguous or non-contiguous areas and itineraries, routes, or other linear landscapes - these may be physical entities or mental images embedded in a people's spirituality, cultural

[9] The report uses Uluru National Park as an example of an associative cultural landscape that is characterised by powerful Aboriginal religious, artistic and cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence.

tradition and practice. The attributes of associative cultural landscapes include the intangible, such as the acoustic, the kinetic and the olfactory, as well as the visual'.

By according heritage status to places with spiritual associations in the absence of material remains, the above definition acknowledges these types of values are crucial to the identities of these Aboriginal people because of a long and complex relationship with that land and in doing so captures the essence of Sydney's '*dual occupation'* after 1788 where the '*result has been not so much a layering of cultures and uses as a concurrence of cultures and uses, all of which are recognised to have validity*' (ibid:19).

1.3 Previous Aboriginal heritage studies

This report expands on some aspects of research previously presented in two documents prepared by DSCA for *Waverley Council*. In 2004 an Aboriginal heritage assessment informed an updated Plan of Management and Masterplan for Bronte Park. This included the 'setting' of Bronte House but not the immediate 'place' (the house and its garden) as it is defined in the 2014 CMP. The report noted a '*fire blackened roof of one shelter was assessed to possibly relate to past Aboriginal use*' at the beach, and parts of Bronte Gully were found to retain potential Aboriginal archaeological sensitivity, although a number of areas also had diminished archaeological research value due to high levels of post 1788 land disturbance.

An Aboriginal heritage study for the whole of the Waverley LGA was prepared in 2009. This provided an 'audit' of the Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and places previously reported in the LGA and presented an appraisal of the records that vary considerably in detail and accuracy. Bronte House and its setting ('place') including Bronte Park were not identified as being a formally registered Aboriginal archaeological site under the terms of the NPW Act (ie. through an AHIMS recording of the place as representing a likely area of PAD in the case of the former).[10] However, a '*Bronte Shelter*' (a sandstone overhang with art) was reported to have been seen in the early twentieth century in the vicinity of the western head of Bronte Gully by a local resident, but it is likely that it has been destroyed since that time by development. Each of these issues is revisited where appropriate in this report.

1.4 Research directions and objectives

Irish & Ingrey (June 2011) have investigated Aboriginal heritage connections at Vaucluse and Elizabeth Bay House's.[11] These studies have guided the way the current report has been approached. Examining ways to understand '*shared landscapes*' that underpin research by people such as Byrne and Nugent (2004), Harrison (2001) and Veale (2001) amongst others, who have examined different aspects of NSW's cross-cultural history, have also influenced the shape of this report. Themes that are explored in

[10] The term PAD refers to areas that are assessed as having the potential to contain Aboriginal objects. While not defined in the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, PADs are generally considered to retain Aboriginal objects and are therefore protected and managed in accordance with that Act.

[11] Michael Ingrey is a senior Dharawal man from the La Perouse Aboriginal community.

this report are encapsulated in some of the points adapted from the study by Irish and Ingrey, and are put into the current context below:

- Around Rose Bay for example, the presence of art sites and a historically reported ceremonial ground give a sense of the Aboriginal significance of the area and why it was frequently used for different reasons by Aboriginal in the past which continued long after the arrival of Europeans.[12] Art and burial sites for example are also important reminders of spiritual or ritual dimensions of Aboriginal life and useful to dispel a common assumption or misconception that '*Aboriginal movement around the landscape was a simple food quest*' (Irish 2011a:18).

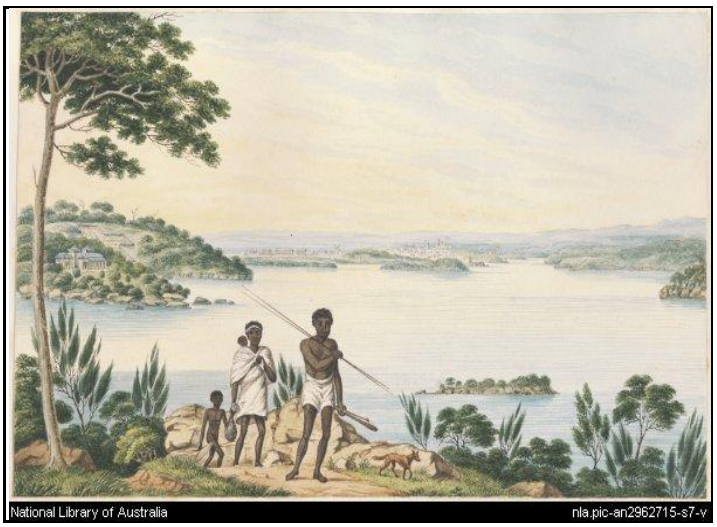
Figure 1.7: 'Native Village' at Rushcutters Bay (Cross 1826 in Irish and Ingrey 2011: Figure 28)

- Aboriginal use of sheltered coastal places like Bronte Gully and its adjoining hinterland was probably continuous and regular after the sea stabilised at the current shoreline several thousand years ago. It is possible that people's use of the place may have been more sporadic or targeted before that time when it was relatively distant from the coast. Fresh drinking water, rock overhangs for shelter and for creating painted and stencilled art, sandstone platforms for engraving, and the immediate proximity of sandy beaches and rocky shores for fishing and shell fish gathering suggests the area would have provided a variety of predictable resources in the most recent prehistoric past. However, much of this archaeological evidence has now either been destroyed or buried by the large scale historical impact to the landscape around Bronte. Almost all of the older Sydney Aboriginal archaeological evidence extending back from the LGM through to the '*Holocene highstand*' (Lewis et al 2013) when the sea rose to its present level is buried under the ocean. The physical evidence is likely to have long since been destroyed but this does not diminish this significant Aboriginal cultural heritage value.

[12] A range of places of cultural significance to Aboriginal people that are similar to the ceremonial combat ground at Rose Bay known as 'Pannerong' (Collins 1798[1975]:489-90) are not listed as Aboriginal sites or places on AHIMS.

- Aboriginal people continued to live in the eastern suburbs of Sydney after 1788 and throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century's, and continue to do so. Historically, this Aboriginal 'connection to country' physically occurred on lands that were subsequently granted to settlers by the Crown. Some of the wealthier colonists built homesteads and created their surrounding estate lands in the classic mould in a similar way to Bronte, and where space or lack of competition for resources permitted, or where Aboriginal people were not actively discouraged and/or directly driven off from the land, they continued to '*sit down*' (camp) on these estates. Aboriginal people also probably remained living in eastern Sydney in more 'autonomous' circumstances. Although this aspect of Sydney Aboriginal history is not very well understood because there are comparatively few historical records that tell us about where Aboriginal people were living and what they were doing, enough evidence exists from which 'settler period' Aboriginal landuse patterns can be inferred. It is probable that some 'autonomous camps' (Byrne & Nugent 2005) were most likely chosen by Aboriginal people in 'remote' and inaccessible country that could be accessed by the various coastal gullies similar to Bronte to the north and south that in combination created a coastal Aboriginal geography that linked or connected with the 'hinterland zones' situated away from the coast to the west and south. Preferable places will have been those that were away from or outside of direct settler surveillance or interference (see Byrne and Nugent 2004). Some of the harbour bays remained largely unaltered throughout much of the nineteenth century and in the mid to late 1800s there were a number of Aboriginal camps in the eastern suburbs area (particularly around Vaucluse, Rose Bay, Watsons Bay and Bondi) to the extent that the area will have continued to function as an Aboriginal landscape with meaning and connections to these people.

Figure 1.8: 'Distant view of Sydney and the harbour, Captain Piper's naval villa at Eliza Point Bronte' – Joseph Lycett ca 1817 (nla pic an2962715-s7)



1.5 Statutory heritage context and controls

The *Office of Environment and Heritage* (OEH) has the responsibility for the protection and management of Aboriginal sites, objects, places and cultural heritage values in NSW. These values are managed through the provisions of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act) which was amended through the *NPW Act Amendment Act 2010*. Key points of the amended Act are as follows:

- Part 6 of the NPW Act provides protection for Aboriginal objects and places by establishing offences of harm which is defined to mean destroying, defacing, damaging or moving an Aboriginal object. Aboriginal objects are defined by the NPW Act as '*any deposit, object or material evidence (not being a handicraft for sale) relating to Indigenous and non-European habitation of the area that comprises New South Wales, being habitation before or concurrent with (or both) the occupation of that area by persons of non-Aboriginal extraction, and includes Aboriginal remains*'.
- A declared Aboriginal Place this is of special significance to Aboriginal people and culture is a statutory concept (and may or may not contain Aboriginal objects as physical/tangible evidence) and protection provided to Aboriginal objects and places applies irrespective of the level of their significance or issues of land tenure.
- It is an offence (under Section 86) of the NPW Act to knowingly, or cause or permit harm to an Aboriginal object (or place) without prior written consent from the DG of the OEH. Defences and exemptions to the offence of harm under the NPW Act include that harm is carried out under the terms and conditions of an approved Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP).

1.6 Heritage assessment and reporting methods

The following heritage recording, assessment and reporting guidelines and standards have been considered in preparing this report:

- Australia ICOMOS. 2002 (Revised). The Burra Charter. The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance. Australia ICOMOS Inc.[13]
- Australian Heritage Commission. Ask First. A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values.
- NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water. 2010a (September). Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales. DECCW. Sydney.
- NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water. 2010b (September). Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales. DECCW. Sydney.
- NSW Heritage Office. 1996. NSW Heritage Manual. NSW Heritage Office and the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. Sydney (revised 2002).

[13] The Burra Charter establishes nationally accepted principles for the conservation of places of cultural significance.

- NSW Heritage Office. 2001. Assessing Heritage Significance. A NSW Heritage Manual Update. NSW Heritage Office. Sydney.
- NSW Heritage Council. 2008a. Levels of Heritage Significance. Assessing Heritage Significance Supplement. NSW Heritage Council. Sydney.
- NSW Heritage Council. 2008b. Levels of Heritage Significance. Assessing Heritage Significance Supplement. NSW Heritage Council. Sydney.
- NSW Heritage Office. 2009. Levels of Heritage Significance. NSW Heritage Office, NSW Department of Planning. Sydney.

In addition to a general literature review (primary and secondary historical and archaeological sources), research that has been undertaken for the current report has included online searches of the following sources and visits to the following libraries:

- NSW State Library (Mitchell Library and State Reference Library)
- Caroline Simpson Library (Sydney Living Museums)
- University of Sydney Fisher Library
- (OEH) Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (online)
- National Library of Australia (Trove online)
- State Heritage Inventory (online)
- State Heritage Register (online)

1.7 Aboriginal consultation

This report has been developed through consultation with the *La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council* and has been guided by discussions with senior LPLALC cultural heritage advisor Mr Dave Ingrey during an on-site meeting held at Bronte House on 13 March 2015. This final draft of the report has been further refined in response to generous advice that has been provided by (Councillor) Mr Dominic Wy Kanak.

1.8 Report outline and layout

This report presents the following:

- An introduction to the project (**Section 1.0**).
- An overview of what we know about the long environmental history of the land at Bronte (natural evolution) and how this evidence matches with what we understand about how, when and where Aboriginal people were using the country in prehistory (**Section 2.0**).
- A background (prehistoric) Aboriginal archaeological heritage context for the study area. This briefly explains where the main types of Aboriginal heritage sites have been found in the

Waverley LGA, what they consist of, and what they can tell us about how the Aboriginal people who created them lived. A select number of excavated archaeological sites in eastern Sydney are used here to create a basic conceptual link between tangible archaeological evidence and environmental data, and uses one of the most recognisable and 'iconic' type of Aboriginal flake stone artefact ('Bondi point') to illustrate where other intangible aspects of past Aboriginal social, ritual/ceremonial, economic and technological life can sometimes get overlooked when the focus for example may be on the more spectacular Aboriginal engraving site complexes that occur on the coastal cliffs at North Bondi (**Section 3.0**).

- A discussion of the known Aboriginal history of east Sydney using some of the Aboriginal people and places that are recognised for their Aboriginal historical significance in various entries in the *Dictionary of Sydney*. This section also summarises the results of the current Aboriginal historical research, and places this information within a broad research framework that is based on previous work by Byrne and Nugent (2004) that allows for comparison with other historical spaces and places in Sydney to see how Bronte compares (**Section 4.0**).
- A discussion of the key findings of this background research and the results of Aboriginal stakeholder consultation that has been undertaken for the project (**Section 5.0**).
- An Aboriginal archaeological and cultural heritage assessment and statement of significance for Bronte House and grounds (**Section 6.0**).
- Aboriginal archaeological and cultural heritage management recommendations (**Section 7.0**).
- References cited in this report (**Section 8.0**).
- Supporting documentation (**Appendices**).

1.9 Authorship & acknowledgements

This report has been written by Dominic Steele. The background historical information presented in this document has been adapted from the 2014 CMP, and the baseline archaeological and environmental discussions drawn from previous heritage assessments detailed in the bibliography have been updated to reflect the findings of heritage and environmental history research completed in recent years.

I would like to say thanks for the advice and assistance that have been provided by a number of people during the preparation of this report. Fleur Mellor and Dominic Wy Kanak (*Waverley Council*) have each helped focus the direction of this document, and David and Chris Ingrey (LPLALC) have been generous with their Aboriginal cultural heritage advice to provide an Aboriginal voice in shaping this report. Susan Whitby (DSCA Associates) has provided editorial comment on previous drafts of this report.

1.10 A cautionary note

Aboriginal people are advised that this report contains images of people who have died that may cause sadness. This is not intended. Rather, along similar lines to the *Barani* website (that provides histories of Aboriginal people, places and events in Sydney advises) its readers, the story of Aboriginal Sydney can't be told without recognising these people's achievements and the images that are used here aim to provide some Aboriginal faces to some of the Aboriginal voices that are reflected in the various historical records that are discussed in this report.

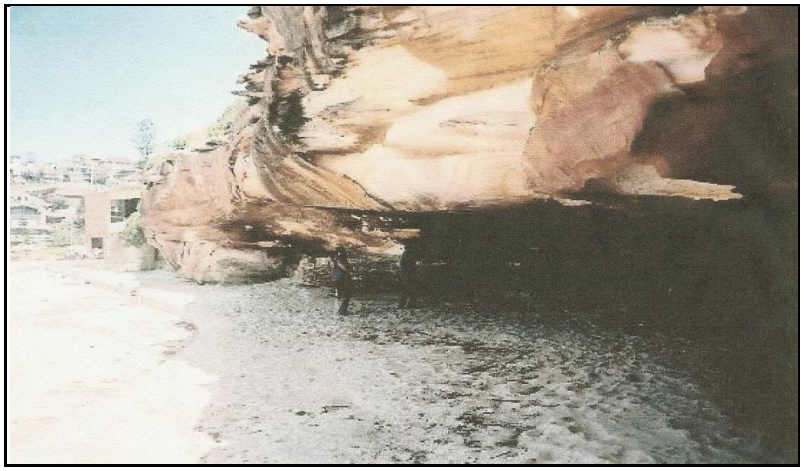
2.0 Environmental History

2.1 A sheltered coastal valley at Bronte

Bronte House was built on top of a series of flat and shelving sandstone platforms on the southern side of a broad and long coastal gully with moderately sloping sides originally bisected by a freshwater creek. The stream probably originally meandered in an easterly direction down from a waterfall at the head of the gully as it flowed along the gully bottom and across to the beach. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century photography shows the creek running possibly perpendicular to the beach and forming a large (and probably) tidal lagoon. The beach margins include eroded sandstone shelters of some size, and the creek drained past these and flowed into a bay which is generally characteristic (typical) in size and form of a number of other similar inlets and bays that extend south along the coast from Bondi that have broadly similar landscape attributes, aspects and topographies.

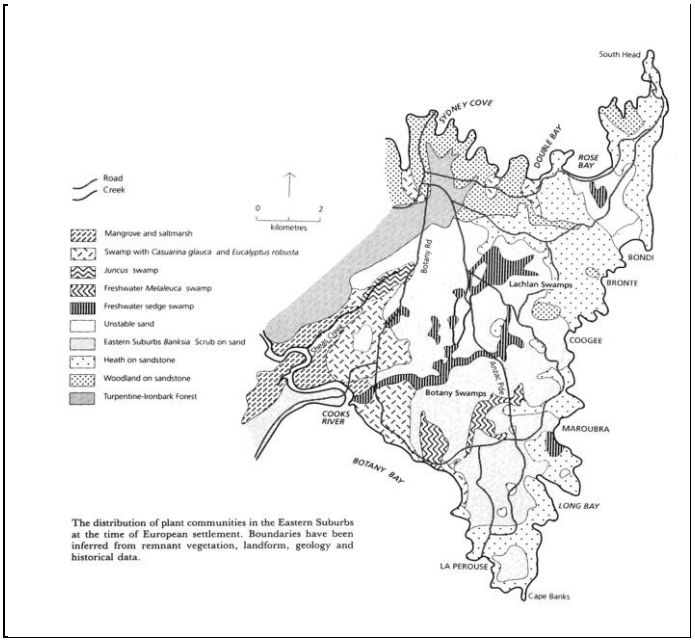
Figure 2.1: Sloping sides and (now filled) base of the sheltered sandstone gully in Bronte Park (DSCA 2004)

Figure 2.2: Sandstone overhangs (rock shelters) around the margins of Bronte Beach (DSCA 2004)



Inland from the east facing coastal gullies the country is more often sandy than rocky although the underlying bedrock geology of the eastern Sydney peninsula as a whole is Hawkesbury Sandstone. The landscape around today's Centennial Parklands formed part of a large complex of sand dunes and wetlands which extended north-south from Botany Bay between the coast and Shea's Creek to the west. Lachlan Swamps are one of the main wetlands in this larger system (Benson & Howell 1990:90-92) that from the 1820s provided Sydney's water supply. The wetlands and swamps were progressively dammed and embanked between 1860 and 1875 but '*remarkably little change has taken place in the configuration of these water bodies since that time*' (Benson & Howell 1990:92 in Attenbrow 2002:5). Originally they formed smaller, less permanent expanses of open water than today, with patches of tall emergent sedges, fringed with zones of shorter sedges and occasional shrubs. At Contact, the dominant vegetation of the coastal strip around Bronte is likely to have comprised low coastal heath and small leaved plant species adapted to the prevalent sandstone and sandy soils with 'rainforest' conditions possibly occurring in deep and sheltered gullies. Small patches of remnant vegetation that survive in the Waverley LGA suggest pockets of woodland in protected areas facing the coast occurred in locations such as at Bronte and Coogee.

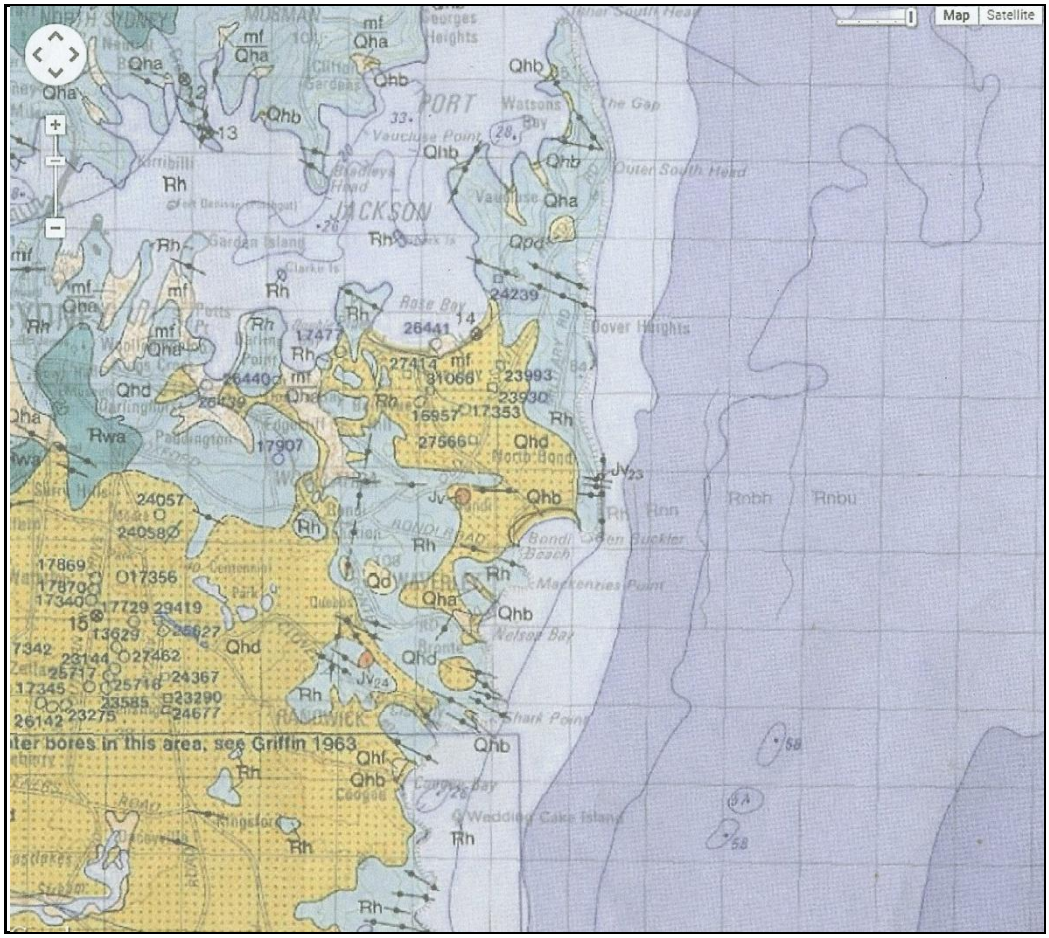
Figure 2.3: Likely vegetation communities in eastern Sydney in 1788 (Benson & Howell 1990)



Coastal gullies like Bronte with freshwater and lagoons (with fish, birds and eels etc) and easy access to intertidal rock platforms (with shell fish) and deeper water (for fishing and canoe travel) are likely to have been the focus of Aboriginal visitation when people were in the vicinity of the coast. People are also likely to have used the gullies as landscape travel 'corridors' when moving from the coastal strip

into the hinterland around the Centennial Parklands area, the 'Botany Swamps' and La Perouse to the south, and harbour foreshore areas around South Head and Rose Bay to the north.

Figure 2.4: Sydney 1:100 000 geological map. This shows the relationship of the rocky and sandy country, volcanic 'dyke's (Jv), and indications of the continental shelf to the east of the current coastline that formerly contained much of the oldest coastal Sydney's Aboriginal evidence before it was drowned

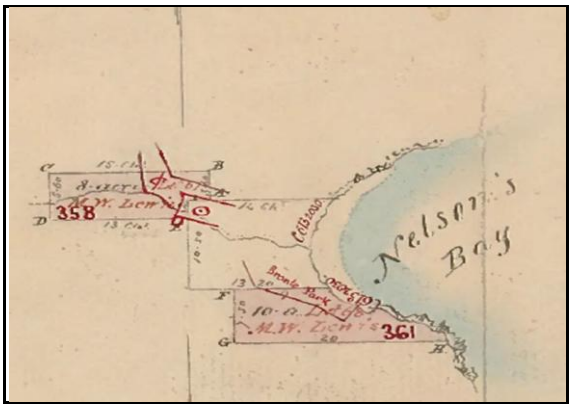


2.2 How the country at Bronte Park has changed since the 1830s

2.2.1 Early nineteenth century descriptions

Four land grants (42 acres total) fronting Nelson Bay (Bronte Beach) were made to Colonial Architect Mortimer Lewis between 1836 and 1838 that included the current curtilage of Bronte Park and House. The land was purchased by Robert Lowe (English barrister) in 1843 as a *'country residence'* and the existing house was constructed between 1844 and 1846. It is unknown when and to what extent the country was changed through timber felling or clearing during this period, but it is expected that initially this use and probably intermittent timber felling animal grazing for the 50 years prior to that will have left a light footprint before the house and estate were established and developed from the 1840s.

Figure 2.5: Land purchases by Mortimer Lewis to the north and south of the initial allotment. The northern allotment (8 acres) will eventually hold Bronte House and garden (CLSP 2014: Figure 2.2)



Georgina Lowe wrote of being on high ground near the sea with '*a waterfall of sixty feet, and this runs through a fine valley. It is a most romantic spot and just suits my tastes*' (Mayne-Wilson & Associates 2007:7). Two 1880s views of the waterfall at the western end of Bronte Gully below give an indication of the nature of the original sandstone topography and hydrology that formed an essential part of this Aboriginal coastal gully.

Figure 2.6: Bronte Gully, waterfall at the western end (Waverley Council File 001/001076)

Figure 2.7: Bronte Gully, waterfall at the western end (Waverley Council File 001/001075)

2.2.2 Later modifications

The landscape of Bronte Park was gradually transformed. During the 1870s the creek comprised a clear and fresh watercourse that was free-flowing. The northern side of the valley was recorded to have been '*steep and almost in its natural state, tolerably well timbered in places',* whilst the southern side was more gently sloping, largely cleared of scrub, and dotted with the occasional tree giving the place a 'park-like' appearance.

Figure 2.8: Georgiana Lowe sketch of Nelson Bay and Bronte House looking west – ML a931028h (Mayne-Wilson & Associates 2003:47)

Figure 2.9: Bronte House estate in 1872; Joseph B. Holdsworth (left) and family, looking east towards Bronte Beach. New garden planting visible in the background (Waverley Library File 001/000627)

Figure 2.10: Bronte Creek was still flowing in the 1870s and its probably altered flow by this time created a tidal lagoon running parallel with the beach. Bronte Park was gazetted in the 1890s (Waverley Council)

Figure 2.11: Postcard 'The Dell' at Bronte Park in c.1900 (Waverley Library File 001/000657)

Early illustrations of the beach area indicate it extended a considerable distance back towards the gully (and had a large lagoon at its back) than it does today, and that the creek formed a series of pools which are likely to have varied in size with ebb and flow of the tide. In the 1840s the creek had extended through the broad sandy beach area to the ocean, but from 1917 the creek and beach zone was progressively filled, levelled and grassed following the construction of the sea wall and changes in vegetation in the gully are evident in historical images.

Figure 2.12: Bronte Park in 1943 (Waverley Council)

It is difficult to quantify the impact of these changes to the landscape on Aboriginal heritage sites or places per se because most will not have created or left tangible traces and this illustrated by the concept of 'sight lines' below that in its essence encapsulates an important type of shared value that will also have been central in the daily lives of Aboriginal people in Sydney as elsewhere on the NSW coast. Maintaining contact with other groups in the numerous bays and gullies in eastern Sydney will have been difficult (the sandstone topography will have affected visibility) and monitoring of traditional fishing spots from elevated points for migratory or shoal fish and whales passing by or entering the various coves will have been an important part of traditional Aboriginal fishing culture

Figure 2.13: 'Lines of sight' (Derricourt 2011:40)

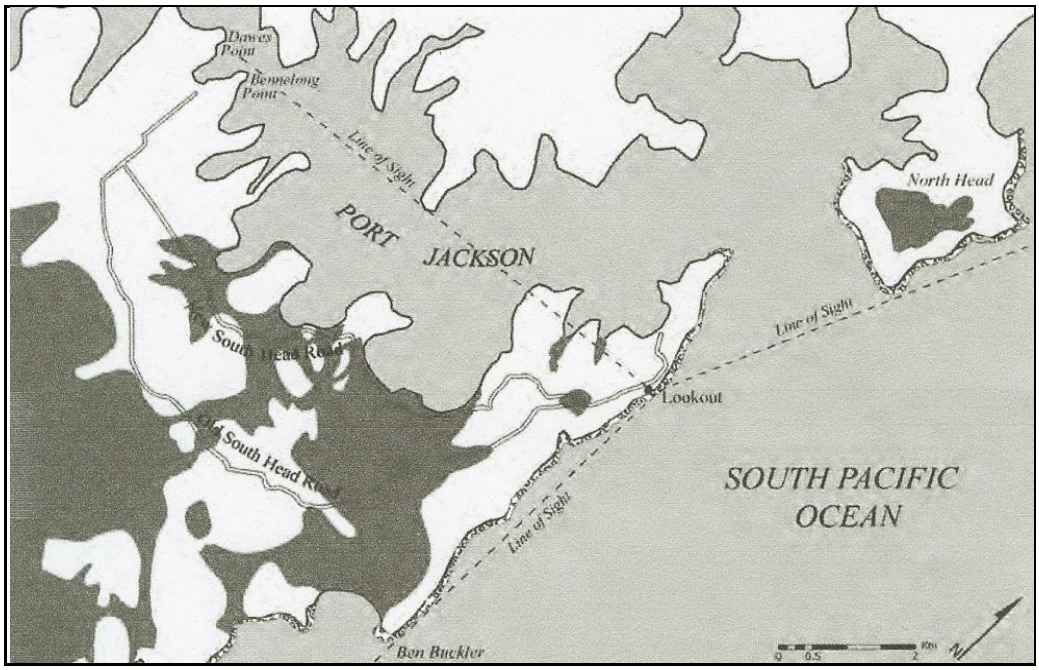
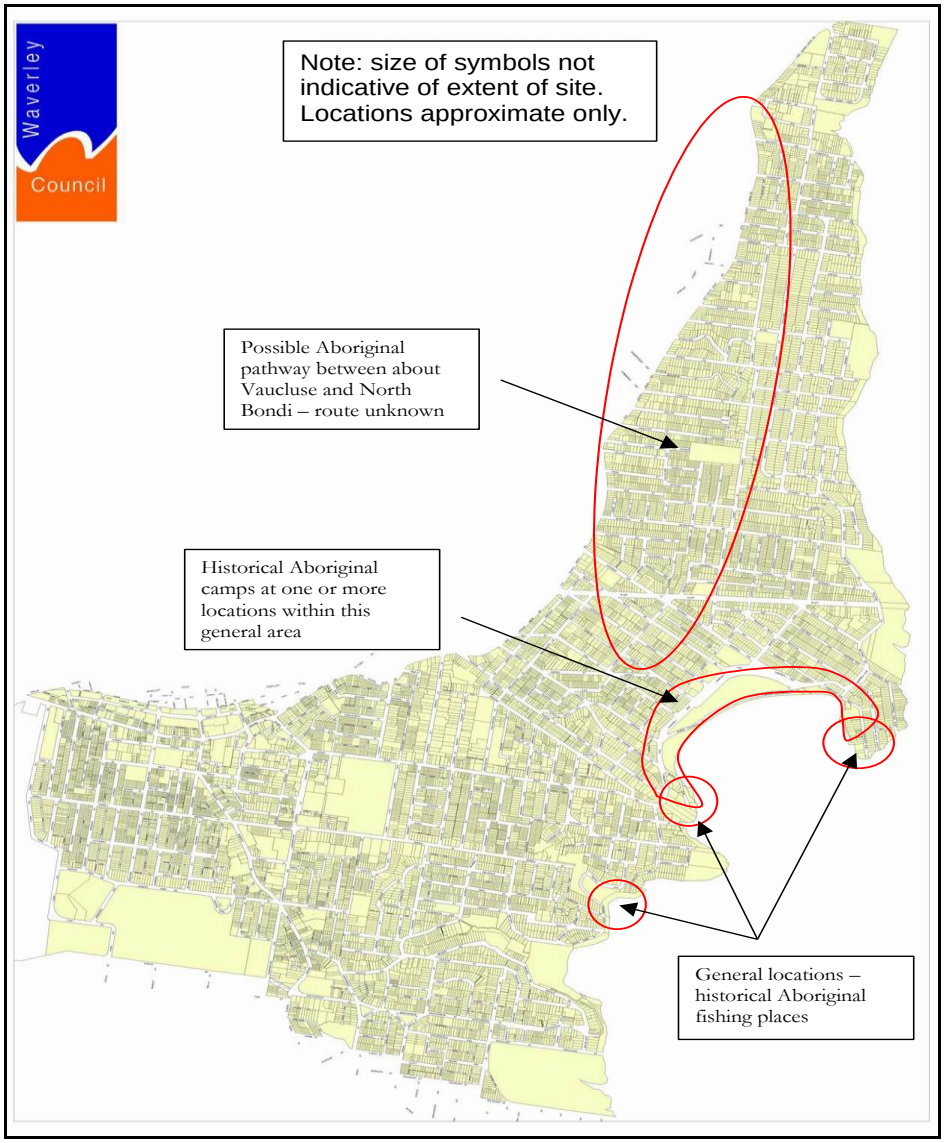


Figure 2.14: Areas of known and possible Aboriginal historical Associations (DSCA 2009)



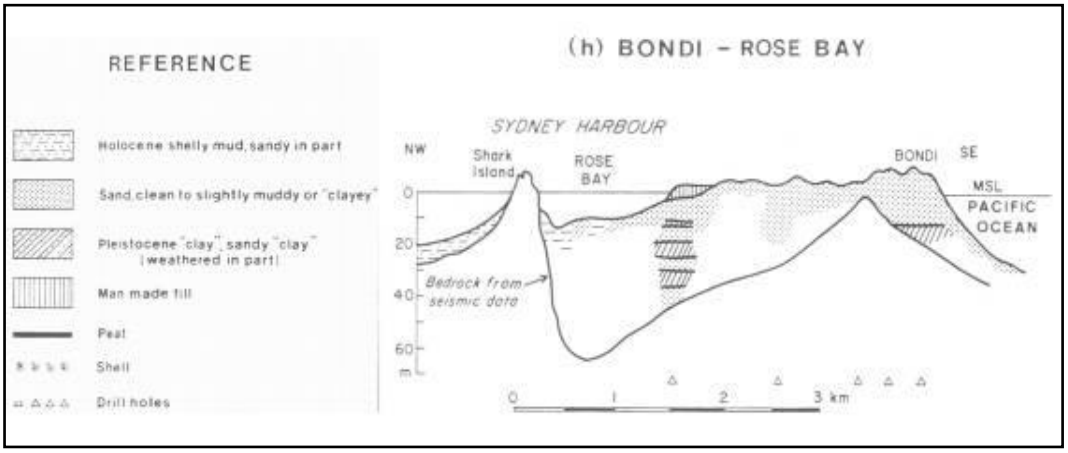
2.3 A complex east Sydney coastal Aboriginal environment at Bondi

2.3.1 Environmental history and archaeological evidence

Ultimately the whole of the Waverley LGA is underlain by Hawkesbury Sandstone that is most visually evident along the rugged coastal headlands and bluffs that fringe the coast. In areas this sandstone bedrock is further overlain by more recent sand deposits that comprise shelly marine sands along the beaches and marine derived fine to medium grained windblown sands that occur primarily in a roughly one kilometre wide strip situated between Bondi and Rose Bay. The latter deposits also occur around Queens Park and Bronte. Because of the seemingly continuous nature of the sand body that occurs between the ocean at Bondi and the harbour at Rose Bay, it was previously and popularly thought this

geological feature represented an old landscape 'outlet' to the harbour (Dowd 1959:47, Laseron 1972:104-5). However, more recent geological testing and analysis has revealed such a channel never existed and that the sand dunes although occurring as one mass at or near the current surface, are actually divided by a sandstone ridge located between Waverley and Dover Heights thereby forming essentially the same catchments as exist today (Roy 1983:76). Current evidence indicates this sand body is at least 25m deep above sandstone bedrock around Bondi, and up to 43m deep at Rose Bay (Roy 1983:75). The exact composition, nature and age of the sand is unknown but it would appear to broadly consist of an Pleistocene age substrate (potentially hundreds of thousands of years old) that is overlain by late/Pleistocene or early Holocene windblown sands seemingly derived from the Botany Bay dune field that is situated to the south (15-20m below current sea level) and is capped by more recent Holocene sands.

*Figure 2.15: Geological cross section of the Bondi-Rose Bay sand dunes (*Roy 1983:79)



Bondi Beach itself and its surrounds have been subject to a greater level of environmental and Aboriginal heritage research (since the 2000 Olympics) than most places in the Waverley LGA. This prominent coastal embayment has changed dramatically over time and can be used as landscape example to briefly sketch the likely environmental and ecological diversity of the country that existed in 1788 and in prehistory. Thousands of Aboriginal stone artefacts were exposed on the beach following a storm at the turn of the nineteenth century (see below) that included innumerable items made in a repeated style ('backed blades') and form that are now called 'Bondi points'. These distinctive objects can be used to create a general conceptual link between the Aboriginal people who made them, the artefacts as representing a recognisable and tangible Aboriginal 'tool type', and the types of past environmental contexts from which they derive at Bondi and elsewhere in the Waverley LGA. Additional insights into other aspects of Aboriginal life that we can also infer (with caution) for coastal bays such as Bronte in general at different times in the past also form part of the following discussion.

2.3.2 Bondi Beach

The last warmer (interglacial) period within a plausible time frame for human occupation of Australia that is broadly comparable with the current climatic period occurred between about 130,000 and 118,000 years ago. At that time sea levels was 4 to 6m higher than today. This was followed by an irregular transition into the last glacial period, popularly known as the 'Ice Age' that occurred during the last years of the Pleistocene and extended from about 110,000 to 115,000 years ago to about 10,000 to 12,000 years ago while the coldest periods were during the LGM the sea levels had been rapidly dropping from around 35,000 years ago where at times the Sydney coastline was located about 20km to the east of its present position at Broken Bay, approximately 15km at Port Jackson, and about 5km at Botany Bay before widening again to 15km at Stanwell Tops. Sea levels reached the base of the cliffs off the mouth of Port Jackson around 11,500 years ago and between this time and about 7,000 years ago the position of the coast doesn't appear to have changed much due to the high vertical coastal cliffs. However, the oceans continued to encroach up the harbour valleys and their rivers and formed in places to the north and south of Sydney significant Holocene period saltwater estuaries. However, the rate of sea level rise was not always consistent but an estimate of a landward migration of the shoreline on the gentle slopes of the continental shelf is about 2m a year during the post glacial period. In addition, the weather (temperature, rainfall, wind etc) was not always stable during this period of sea level 'stability', and the evidence suggest a slightly colder and drier period occurred between 4,000 and 1,500 years ago which may have affected how people lived on the coast during the period.

Bondi Bay is very wide coastal inlet in comparison with those situated nearby, and also faces south-east instead of due east like the majority. This aspect has helped it collect considerable quantities of sand transported up the coast by offshore ocean currents over time. An older Pleistocene sand deposit overlying sandstone bedrock occurs under this mostly Holocene sand. When Aboriginal people first arrived in the Sydney region possibly 30,000 years ago, but potentially considerably earlier in time, the sea levels were variable but were at times between 120m-150m lower than today and the cliffs at Bondi formed part of an abrupt escarpment looking out over a flat plain of possibly sandy scrub through which rivers and streams ran before draining into the coast (Derricourt 2011:9).[14]

The prevalent climatic conditions prior to the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM) around 30,000 BP were cool (about 6 degrees cooler than present) and moist with open forests and woodlands with cool/cold tolerant species but woody taxa declined and grasses increased as the LGM approached. During the LGM (24,000-17,000 BP) it was colder (8 degrees colder than present), drier and windy and precipitation was 50% lower than present. The vegetation was also different and in many locations comprised semi-arid grassland where shrubs and herbs were restricted and tree dominated vegetation was reduced to

[14] North and South Head's were once islands and now joined to the mainland by sand spits such as the low sandy area between Bondi and Rose Bay.

survival in refugia. (Stockton and Merriman 2009:28-29). It appears the 'late glacial' period (between approximately 17,000-11.5000 BP there was a relatively rapid recovery in temperature punctuated with especially dry conditions at 14,000 BP and this period as a whole included several other climatic swings. As conditions became more hospitable vegetation communities dominated by trees re-expanded.

Conditions during the early Holocene (c.11,000-6.5,000 BP) were warmer and wetter than compared to present and vegetation communities dominated by trees increased with the expansion of wet sclerophyll and rainforest communities also occurring during this period. The mid Holocene (6.5,000-5,000 BP) appears to have oscillated between wetter and drier periods, but vegetation became more open (less dominated by trees) and heath lands expanded over time. The evidence is equivocal whether Aboriginal landscape management regimes explain why firing becomes more of a feature in the landscape around this time. The El Nino-Southern Oscillation had reached modern periodicities and strength but remained variable during the late Holocene (last 5,000 BP) but the vegetation was probably similar to today (ibid:30). Stockton and Merriman (2009:30) provide a summary of this evolution which can be occasionally be matched with some archaeological evidence in eastern Sydney:

- Climatic conditions got increasingly drier and colder and culminated in the LGM but there is debate about when conditions deteriorated because there are a series of warmer and colder oscillations and cold periods evident in the Snowy Mountains centred on 32,000 BP, 19,100 BP and 16,800 BP. The records suggest the LGM in eastern Australia lasted about 10,000 BP with the worst conditions occurring between 17,000 BP and 18,000 BP, 21,000 BP to 24,000 BP, and another cold period centred on 30,000 BP.
- Climates were up to 8 degrees cooler, drier and windier than today, and lake levels suggest drier conditions prevailed between 24,000 BP and 12,000 BP where precipitation levels were probably half of todays. Other environmental changes included increased wind fields, reduced atmospheric CO_2 and sea levels lower by more than 130m. The increased size of Sahul (because the Australia mainland was joined to New Guinea and Tasmania) which was about 1/3 larger increased 'continentality' which is a feature of all glacial periods that allowed for more extreme weather climatic conditions to occur distant from the moderating effects of oceans.
- The lower sea levels of the LGM exposed the continental shelf where shrubs, heath and woodland communities dominated and sclerophyll forests contracted and the humid and tropical assemblages were reduced to refugia. Penrith lakes were an abandoned meander on the flood plain of the Nepean and pollen suggests shrub land was common on the flood plain and today's she-oaks and eucalypts were not well represented.
- Observations of sea-level change prior to about 20,000 years ago are sparse and contradictory and have not provided high enough resolution on the fluctuations evident in ice sheet volume prior to the LGM. This makes it difficult to establish when former 'land bridge' crossing scenarios were in existence in greater Sahul as a way to explain how Aboriginal people got here. However, the approximate position of

> sea-levels at the time of the LGM have been established at a number of sites in the Australian region at between 130m and 150 m below present levels, Nevertheless, because of the irregular shape of the Sydney coastline and elsewhere and the existence of shallow coastal shelves, and because the post-glacial marine transgression ('melt water') was regionally variable (and probably rapid), the precise location of sea level high stands at different times during the Holocene can only be inferred with relative accuracy and most of the evidence is generally at a depth that is beyond the reach of easy examination.

Around 7,500 to 8,000 years ago sea levels either fell smoothly from a +1m to 2m '*Holocene highstand*' or remained at these levels for a considerable period before falling or oscillating to its present position (Lewis et al 2013). It is unknown how these environmental oscillations affected local topographies and ecologies or how people lived on the coast at the time. As sea levels progressively rose as the water locked up in the world's ice sheets steadily melted after the LGM, sand on the continental shelf was blown and forced by ocean tides landward and ultimately filled up coastal indentations and in doing so formed Bondi Beach. Mayne-Wilson and Associates (2011:9-12) report that at least two freshwater creeks originally flowed down and to the east from the sandstone ridge along Old South Head Road and flowed into one or more coastal lagoons located some distance inland. The two creeks eventually drained out across Bondi Beach in a similar way to the creek at Bronte which is also likely to have lagoons at times in Bronte Gully.

Figure 2.16: Mobile sand dunes in the 1900s in the area of future Campbell Parade (MWA 2012: Figure 3)

Figure 2.17: 'A lagoon that appeared after heavy rain then disappeared into the sand' (MWA 2012: Figure 5)

The Bondi-Rose Bay dunes in 1788 were partly vegetated and contained a series of swamps or lagoons as early descriptions show:

> *'In my younger days Bondi was plentifully supplied with water in the form of lagoons which extended from the north of the sand dunes to well over to the Old South Head Road. I remember the largest of them, near Barracluff Park….They dried up somewhat in the summer, but in the winter, and after heavy rain, the country round about would be covered – the lagoons linking up with one another and forming one large sheet of water.*
>
> *I have rowed a canvas dinghy…over the present Murriverie Road and adjacent streets. We struck a submerged stump one day…it was retrieved when the lagoon dried up.*
>
> *Another lagoon was situated to the left of the sewer line, one edge of the water lapping the edge of the ever-encroaching sandhill, the other shore lost among the trunks of the big ti-trees and undergrowth…This lagoon was the first to dry up and disappear, the sewer track draining it and the sand gradually smothering the site.'* (Plugshell 1924a).[15]

While the historical location of some lagoons in the local landscape are known, it appears that many were most likely to have been seasonal/ephemeral in nature and therefore their locations and extent would have seemingly varied over time dependant on prevailing climatic conditions. Nevertheless, it would appear likely that lagoons may, at one time or another, have been present across most of the sand body within the Waverley LGA.

An analysis of the weather conditions at Sydney Cove for January 1788 to December 1791 using daily temperature and barometric pressure, recorded by Dawes in Sydney Cove, and temperature recorded by Bradley on board the *Sirius* anchored in Port Jackson in the early months of the First Fleet's arrival, is presented by Gergis et al (2009). Other primary sources and paleoclimate data was also used to check the records against current standards that appear to show they are broadly comparable. Namely, both modern and 1788 data display similar daily variability, a distinct seasonal cycle, and a considerable degree of inter-annual variability. Although the period spanning 1788 to 1791 experienced a marked La Niña to El Niño fluctuation according to paleoclimate data, the cool and warm intervals in Sydney over this period cannot be conclusively linked to El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions.[16]

2.3.2 An Aboriginal legend

The east coast of Australia may not have been as desirable a place to live during the Pleistocene as is it today. Lowered temperatures and increased aridity due to decreased effective precipitation may have

[15] 'Plugshell' was the pseudonym of early Bondi resident Major William Johnston.

[16] For two days running in December 1790 the temperature at Rose Hill (Parramatta) exceeded 40°C and the heat was increased by fires in the adjoining woods. Phillip estimated more than 20,000 flaying foxes that had died from the heat wave were within the space of one mile (original references cited Gergis et al 2009:95).

contributed to a more difficult environment for human occupation. Fluctuating sea levels may also have led to a less productive shoreline. Recent research (Bryant et al 2009, Clark et al 2011) adds further evidence that suggests the coastlines of south and central NSW were inundated repeatedly during the Holocene by large tsunamis that were up to 80m high ('mega-tsunamis'). The evidence for significant tsunamis during the period is not necessary in doubt, but there relative frequency is debatable, as is the effect of what we would call today these 'natural 'disasters'.

It is also argued (Bryant et al 2009) that the impact of the mega-tsunamis (and possibly their frequency) led to the abandonment of coastal camps by Aboriginal people and that the marine component of the diet of local groups changed at the time of the two most recent inferred mega-tsunamis at or about 500 or 1,500 years ago (Hutchinson and Attenbrow 2011). In this respect, Bryant et al (2009:209) declare:

> *'There is also clear evidence that Aborigines switched from collecting large molluscs to fishing about 500 – 700 years ago (Sullivan 1987). We attribute this response to the fact that any large tsunami would have wiped out shellfish populations along the rocky coast. Aborigines thus switched to fishing to survive. At Bass Point, which is dominated by mega-tsunami erosion and which is a headland conducive to the legend of the ocean falling from the sky, the change occurred around AD 1380 (Bowdler 1976). Finally, middens at various sites along the South Coast of New South Wales indicate that edible mussels originating from more protected tidal inlets began to replace gastropods originating from rock platforms concomitantly with the switch to shell fishhooks' (Sullivan 1987).*

Aboriginal legends about tsunami exist along the eastern NSW coast and one of these, the 'Burragorang legend' (which has several variants) is re-told by a number of researchers including Peck (1938), Parker (1978) and Willey (1979). The version below is from Peck (1938):

> *'It was a stifling hot day, and all the Burragorang people lay prostrate around their camp unable to eat. As night approached, no one could sleep because of the heat and the mosquitoes. The sunset blood red and the moon rose full in the east through the haze. With just a remnant of red in the western sky, the sky suddenly heaved, billowed, tumbled, and then tottered before crumbling. The moon rocked, the stars clattered, and the Milky Way split. Many of the stars- loosened from their places- began to fall flashing to the ground. Then a huge ball of burning blue fire shot through the sky at enormous speed. A hissing sound filled the air, and the whole sky lit like day. Then the star hit the Earth. The ground heaved and split open. Stones flew up accompanied by masses of earth followed by a deafening roar that echoed through the hills before filling the world with complete noise. A million pieces of molten fire showered the ground. Everyone was awestruck and frozen in fear. The sky was falling. Smaller stars continued to fall throughout the night with great clamouring and smoke. The next morning, when all was quiet again, only the bravest hunters explored beyond the campsite. Great holes were burnt into the ground. Wherever one of the larger molten pieces had*

hit, it had piled up large mounds of soil. Many of these holes were still burning with flames belching out. Down by the sea, they were amazed. Fresh caves lined the cliffs.

Soon stories reached them from neighbouring tribes that not only the sky fallen, but also the ocean. These neighbours began talking about a great ancestor who had left the Earth and gone into the sky, and who had travelled so fast that he had shot through the sky. The hole he had made had closed up. This ancestor had tried to get back through the sky by beating on top of it, but it had loosened and plummeted to the Earth, along with the ocean. Before anyone could discuss this story, it began to rain- rain unlike anything anyone had seen before. It rained all day and all night, and the rivers reached their banks and then crept out across the flood plains. Still the rain came down, and the people and all the animals fled into the hills. When the water rose into the hills, the people fled into to the highest peaks. Water covered the whole land from horizon to horizon unlike anything anyone had ever seen before. It took weeks for the water to go down, everyone got very hungry, and many people died. Nothing was the same after the night that the sky fell. Now, whenever the sea grows rough and the wind blows, people know that the ocean is angry and impatient because the ancestor still refuses to let it go back whence it came. When the storm waves break on the beach, people know that it is just the great ancestor beating the ocean down again'.

If the large object in the Burragorang legend had struck the ocean it would have generated a regionally devastating tsunami and the impact would have also injected billions of tonnes of water into the atmosphere as superheated vapour that would have fallen subsequently as torrential rain that would have exceeded historical levels and produced catastrophic flooding.

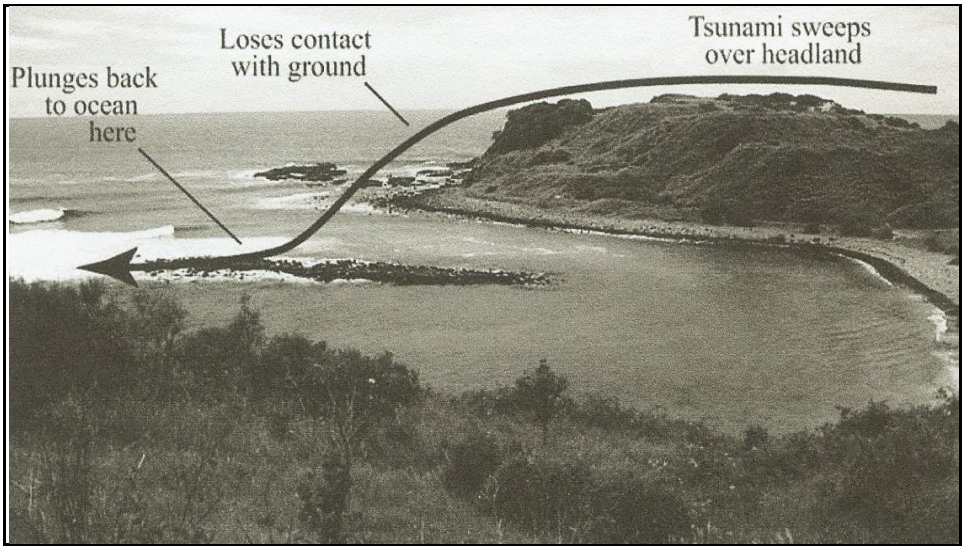
The location of one possible impact point that may have created a mega-tsunami is located on the continental shelf about 250km south of New Zealand. The crater is 20km in diameter. It could have been produced by a comet that measured up to one 1km in size and when it struck the ocean it would have generated an earthquake with an estimated magnitude of 8.2 on the Richter scale and Aboriginal people in Australia and Maori in New Zealand would have observed this comet's dying moments (Bryant et al 2009:205). The authors use geomorphological and archaeological evidence to infer repeated inundation of the east coast by mega-tsunamis in the late Holocene (ibid:205-206) and also make reference to the story of the eastern sky falling retold above and suggest it may be describing the way a mega-tsunami (or many) affected the coast.

An illustrative case is provided at Bombo Headland (70km south of Sydney) where an (undated) tsunami over-washed a 40m high headland and the wave separated from the headland and plunged back to the ocean surface 100m to 200m into a bay on the lee side. Considerable amounts of coarse sediment also dropped from the airborne flow into the bay under gravity, and this locality is used as an example to illustrate where the details in Aboriginal legend probably have their basis in fact.

With regard to the change in landuse and adaptation of the diet of coastal people that is postulated to have occurred as a result of these Holocene mega-tsunamis, Hutchinson and Attenbrow (2011) point out however that the stratigraphy of two well excavated and securely dated archaeological sites (at Pambula Lake and Bass Point) show no significant evidence that these camps were abandoned, or that the marine component of the diet (fish and shellfish proportions or species representation) changed at or about 500 BP or 1,500 BP which is the time of the two most recent (dated) inferred mega-tsunamis. In addition, there is no evidence to indicate that the sites were permanently abandoned in the aftermath of these inferred events. Moreover, changes in shellfish exploitation patterns and adoption of new fishing technologies by Aboriginal people on this part of the NSW coast do not appear to coincide with the times of inferred tsunamis and the archaeological evidence as a whole offers no support for the hypothesis that mega-tsunamis inundated this coastline in the late Holocene.

This scientific rebuttal of the evidence put forward by Bryant et al nevertheless doesn't diminish the 'validity' of the legend itself, or the way it may describe an actual event or 'conflate' a series of dramatic environmental changes that were experienced by Aboriginal people at some time in the past.

Figure 2.18: Theorized flow of tsunami over Bombo Headland, NSW. The headland is 40m asl on a tectonically stable coastline. The tsunami came in from the Southeast (right), overrode and then detached from the headland. The boulder pile in the small bay is where the wave reattached to the ocean. Similar embayments in the region were occupied by Aboriginal people and the scenario shown may be responsible for Aboriginal legends about the ocean falling from the sky (Bryant et al 2009: Figure 2)



2.4 A 'very remarkable discovery' - a major Aboriginal campsite at Bondi

A massive gale in 1900 blew huge quantities of sand behind the beach at Bondi at the time and exposed formerly buried land surfaces with vast quantities of Aboriginal stone artefacts. The *Geological Survey*

of NSW collected large numbers of these finds before subsequent wind and wave action buried the old campsites. The images below are likely to be of some of the stone artefacts collected, and some of the items shown relate to the production of backed blades including Bondi points whose distinctive shape and form are illustrated in the following images.

Figure 2.19: A stone axe collected from Bondi (DSCA 2009)

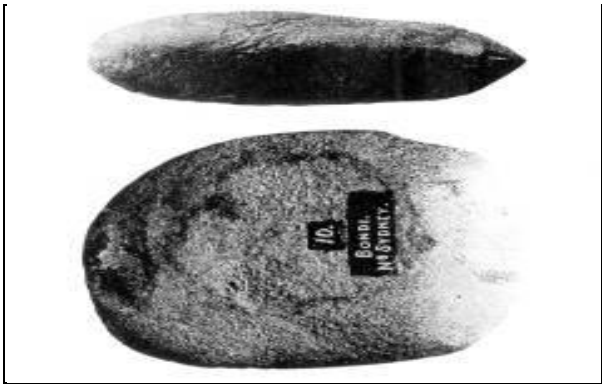


Figure 2.20: Stone artefacts with provenance to Bondi Beach (Flenniken and White 1985: 141)

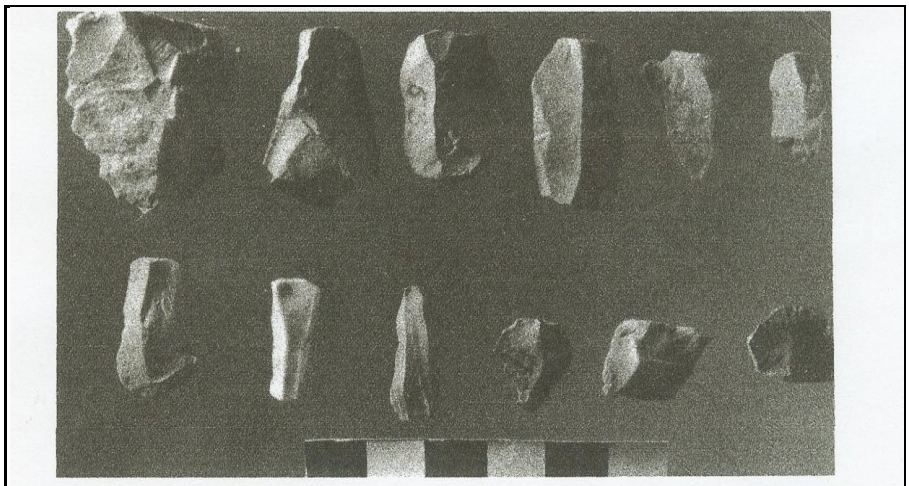


Fig. 16. Sequence of flakes and blades representing the Australian flaked stone tool reduction system. Bondi, NSW; L–R, Top: E11507, unnumbered, E16378/53, E16378/33, unm, unm; Base: unm, unm, unm, E16377/13, unm, unm.

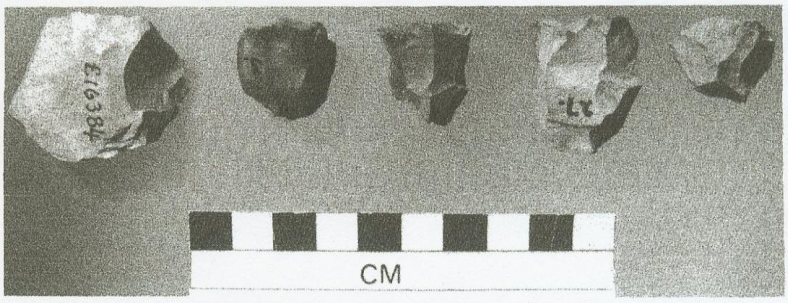


Fig. 17. Sequence of cores representing the Australian reduction system. Bondi, NSW; L–R: E16384/33, E16383/3, E9072, E16383/27, E16383/30.

The '*remarkable discovery*' was described by Etheridge & Whitelegge (1907:231-237) as '*one of the most important ethnological discoveries made in New South Wales for many years*' and the story is told evocatively with cultural respect. Now we know more about when and how Bondi changed in prehistory it is worth repeating (but abridging) the account of this story in part because it records how the old coastal landforms looked after exposure and how the 'layer' of Aboriginal history reflected by the archaeology was spatially arranged.

> *'A series of heavy gales displaced the sand hummocks at Bondi and Maroubra Bays...exposing what appeared to be an old land surface...* [of] *what we had never before imagined to exist, a series of aboriginal 'workshops' where for generations the blacks of the Port Jackson District must have manufactured chips, splinters and points for installation along the distal margins of their spears and for other purposes. The old land surface at Bondi...was covered with thousands of these chips, some of them exquisitely made...The lithological character of the material used was very varied, from pure white crystalline quartz, opaque amorphous quartz, every variety of chert and quartzite, to rocks of a metamorphic character. It is quite clear that the siliceous material was derived in a great measure from the surrounding Hawkesbury Sandstone, but the others were probably obtained from distant sources.*
>
> [At] *the northern end of the sand hills at Maroubra...the whole of the surface was studded with butts of Banksia trees two or three feet high, and one or two feet in diameter. The intervening spaces were covered with a scrubby growth, consisting of the stems and roots of various plants, many of which were standing Pandanus-like, having the roots covered with lime from a quarter to half-an-inch thick. Whilst the interiors of the lime tubes were lined with a thin cylinder of bark, in other parts, the bark cylinders were standing alone without the calcareous envelope. The whole area appeared like a miniature skeleton forest, of black and white stems and roots.....*
>
> *The ground between was strewn with thousands of stones that had been used by the Aborigines for some purpose or other, and had all been taken to the top of the sandhills, many of the stones being quite foreign to the district. Here would be found a patch of black flint chips about a yard in diameter, there another of red or yellow jasper, just as if the native artist in stone-working had only left the ground a few minutes before. In fact this was an aboriginal "workshop" from which the workers may have disappeared hundreds of years ago.....*
>
> *After a thorough survey of the ground all the smaller instruments available were carefully collected, the larger heavy instruments being gathered and duly interred to be attended to on some future occasion. The weapons collected were very valuable, including tomahawks, grinds tones, a nose ornament, knives, scrapers, gravers, drills, and spear points such as were used for fighting or "death" spears, and lastly a very peculiar lancet-like surgical knife or scarificator.....*

The "workshops" at Bondi were far more extensive than those at Maroubra, the whole length of the back of the beach was more or less covered with tons of stones, all of which had been taken there and put to some use. In the centre of the beach there was a kind of delta upon which the coarser materials were deposited, the sand having been washed away on this area; thousands of implements, which had evidently been used, were found, and chips or flakes were few and far between. For many months the original ground at Maroubra, and also the more extended area at Bondi, yielded an abundance of implements and at each visit we invariably returned with as much as we could carry. Unfortunately the new road across Bondi has now covered most of the sites that afforded the best ground for collecting....

There is ample evidence that many of the sand dunes were at one time much higher than they are now, and also that in some parts they had been covered with vegetation interspersed with native camping grounds, upon which vast quantities of shells were deposited; in course of time the vegetation was covered by sand drifts, other shell heaps formed at the summit, and the whole again buried. The period of time required for these various changes must have been very great, and it has required still greater lapse of time to produce the present condition'.[17]

The distinctive 'backed' flakes collected by Whitelegge and Etheridge have since become the type-name ('Bondi point') for a flaked stone artefact form that is frequently found in surface and excavated from sub-surface Aboriginal archaeological sites throughout south-eastern Australia from around approximately 6-7,000 years ago (or earlier) to around 1,800 BP. What they were used for is debated and interpretations range from them being hunting spears barbs, small cutting implements (perhaps hand-held), and/or hafted knives or awls (needles or points) used for working skins.

Figure 2.21: 'Bondi points' could be hand held tools, attached to spear shafts or gummed to handles (Australian Museum online website)

[17] Whitelegge told the NSW Naturalists Club in 1902 that the exposed Aboriginal 'workshops' covered an area of '*two acres*' and included stone materials that had been brought to Bondi from distances over sixty miles and worked 'leaving *circles, about a yard in diameter, many small chippings of stone*' that are likely to have reflected individual and accumulated stone knapping events (Northern Star [Lismore], 19 February 1902).

Etheridge and Whitelegge had postulated that backed blades such as Bondi points were used in the manufacture of 'death spears'. A rare archaeological find 10 years ago made near Narrabeen Lagoon provides the first archaeological evidence in Australia for both the death of an Aboriginal person by spearing, and for the use of 'backed' stone artefacts as spear armatures. Excavation for a bus shelter in 2005 uncovered an articulated skeletal of an adult man with an estimated age of between 30-40 years at death. He had been killed and then had been abandoned unburied in a coastal dune around 4,000 years ago (McDonald et al 2007). At the time of his death, his body would have lain for a time on an active dune crest and evidence on the bones is consistent with the body having been partially covered with burning branches after death. This indicates the fire had not been intense and was not an attempt at cremation. The associated stone artefacts (17 small backed items) included three fragments embedded within or between bones and use-wear on these is consistent with their being hafted armatures on weapons (spears and possibly knives). Anatomical, forensic and artefact analysis indicated death by spearing and parallels with ritual ('payback') punishment using barbed 'death-spears' as witnessed by Europeans at Contact in the Sydney region have been drawn. Further insights into the life and death of 'Narrabeen Man' are also reported:

> *'.....the points embedded in the spine indicates that a minimum of two spears were used, while the impact puncture on the skull suggests a third weapon – either a barbed spear or club. The unhealed cut mark on the top of the skull is consistent with a peri-mortem stone axe wound. The age determination of 3677 cal BP indicates that this individual died during a period of peak backed artefact production generally known as the Early Bondaian cultural phase. It is possible that territorial adjustments due to higher sea-level and other climatic changes may have resulted in increased territoriality and social conflict at this time. These are currently the oldest dated skeletal remains in the Sydney Basin and this is the only evidence for death by ritual spearing in Australia. By analogy with recent and ethnohistorical data, such killings may have been a consequence of dispute settlement, a ritual spearing, or it may represent violent group conflict. Australian Aboriginal skeletal remains have previously been identified as bearing witness to violent disputation, with depressed cranial fractures and shield fractures to the forearms, on both males and females, found in numerous burial contexts'.*

2.5 Aboriginal landscape and resource markers

Sydney Harbour is made up of mostly Triassic period (about 220 million years ago) sandstone and shale that subsequently experienced some '*minor igneous activity'* during the period through tectonic earth movements starting in the Jurassic period (200 million years ago). These created a network of cracks during through which molten lava rose up to form volcanic vents that then cooled and hardened to form diatremes or 'dykes' of basalt in the sandstone cracks that run in multiple directions and numerous

orientations. When the volcano's died, any remaining basalt hardened, forming diatremes. The result is a solid pillar of basalt the runs between the extinct volcano and the surface. These pipe-shaped structures that mark the ends of short-lived volcanoes ('maars') appear to be commoner in the eastern (coastal) Sydney basin although this might be a matter of better exposure on the coast than across the Cumberland Plain.

A number of geological formations that stand out in the landscape nearby to Bronte and include the basaltic dykes on the cliffs at North Bondi that are identifiable by their distinctive 'baked' columnar sandstone form (see below) created by heat, mindful that superheated groundwater can transmit heat some distance from the source as established at North Bondi (Rickwood et al 2011). The volcanic columns also heated surrounding rock and created a localised quartzite material which is known to have been utilised by Aboriginal people in the past for the manufacture of flaked and ground stone artefacts,[18] and basalt is a well known raw material favoured by Aboriginal people for the manufacture of axe/hatchet heads.

It appears that prismatic and hardened sandstones are accepted as almost conclusive evidence of proximity of basalt (or its decomposed clays). There is also down at the ocean level a flat rock shelf at the wave zone which is the remnants of the basalt originating from the lava flow. Other basaltic (and some dolerite) dykes are also exposed along the coastal cliffs predominantly trending in an east-south-east direction extending from Perouse to Port Kembla and further north, and some of these may have been exposed and accessible to people in the past during times of lower sea levels. Small dykes are also at Long Bay and Maroubra Bay, and at the head of a small bay (indentation on the coast) between these two bays and these dykes run into the sea.

O'Brien (1923) made the following observations about 'Merriverie' which is well known basalt formation (and also a notorious rock fishing spot) that is known as 'Murriverie Pass' on the cliffs to the North of Ben Buckler:

> *'I know of five Basalt formations commencing with this and ending at Port Hacking. But this is unique, for the reason that the weather has eaten into the centre of it. It is mostly a perpendicular cliff over one hundred feet deep and about a quarter of a mile long. 'Mud Island', a rock in the sea a few yards to the east of the main mass is basalt. Another most attractive feature of this formation* [are] *several columns of heat-hardened freestone several feet long, the outer ones of which you could remove from the mass.*
>
> *I found blackfellow's skulls and tomohawks there [Merriverie] and it seems to me 'Merriverie' is the only basalt formation showing the basalt that the tomohawks must have come from'.*

[18] High-quality quartzite also is known from a site between Long Bay and Maroubra Bay.

An earlier article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (26 May 1865) adds further details context to O'Brien's observations of these distinctive basaltic formations:

> *There is a mass of white rock seen from tho neighbourhood of Sydney, on the top of the cliffs beyond Bondi Bay, which offers one of the most striking examples. Again, near Botany North Head, on the cliff near the old station, there is another example. At Five Dock is a third, near Pyrmont there is a fourth, on Lane Cove a fifth, and at Waverley there are traces of a sixth. In all these places the sandstones have undergone a great change, and have become prismatised.*
>
> *In some spots no trace exists visibly of the existence of basalt or other trappean rock. But in others there is open to inspection a clear contact between them. Thus, below the cliff near Bondi, which is a little north of that: commonly known as 'Ben Buckler' (but which Mr. Hill tells mo is a corruption of a native word, 'Baalbuckalea'), viz., at Merriberi, a mass of basalt appears at the sea level and for a considerable height above ; so that it is an intrusive dyke which only forms a boss in that vicinity.*

The basalt O'Brien saw had almost been completely quarried but some of the exposed sandstone that survives is light coloured, tessellated and columnar in shape as a result of steam venting upwards which has cooked the sandstone. Dowd (1959:290) noted in the late 1950s that much of the basalt had been altered to form '*soapy clay*' known as '*Kaolin*'. The locality is now a protected geological site. Other important basalt dykes with un-decomposed stone in the region occur at Prospect, Pennant Hills, Rookwood and the 'Moorefield dyke' at Canterbury that may be a continuation of a dyke at Peakhurst. The dyke at Long Reef (between Narrabeen and Manly) is probably a continuation of the Bondi dyke. Examples of dykes of decomposed basalt have been seen in numerous Sydney railway cuttings (such as Beecroft, Petersham and Belmore), while columnar, hardened and prismatic sandstone in addition to those at Bondi and La Perouse include an occurrence to the south of Turramurra and Bronte, a cutting through Greenwich peninsula, near Cremorne, on a tributary of the Lane Cove River about three miles from Pymble and on the cliffs a little to the south of Manly Beach.

Figure 2.22: Columnar quartzite near volcanic neck at North Bondi (Google image online 'around some rocks' 2015)

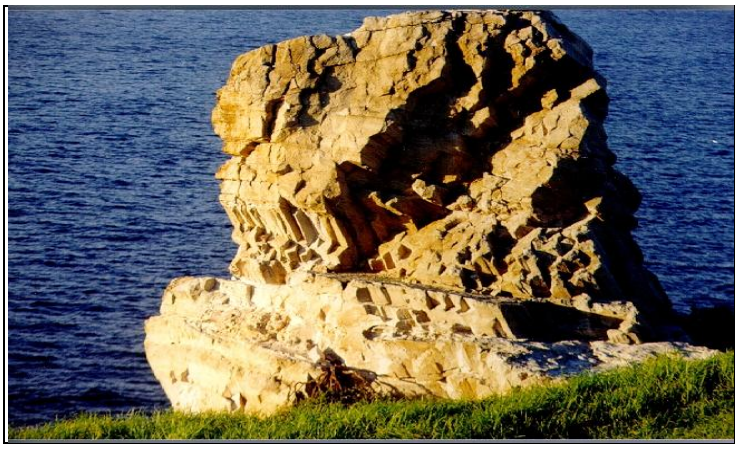


Figure 2.23: Sandstone quarry at Ben Buckler (Bondi): 1852-1870 (Image online - Sydney University 809-123)

Another description also suggests the likely importance of these geological formations to the traditional Aboriginal owners of Waverley (Milne Curran 1899 cited in Waugh 2001:82).

> *'Between Long Bay and Maroubra Bay, a dyke enters the sea. Here the sandstones have been altered into the most perfect examples of quartzite that are known about Sydney. The aboriginals were aware of the nature of this stone, and used it to make skinning-knives. This quartzite is, in places, stained by iron oxides to a rich chocolate brown, and on first sight resembles the iron-stained quartz of some auriferous quartz reefs. Even miners have been misled by this similarity, and worked here for some time sinking and driving. Their efforts were not rewarded with any success. In working they came onto the hard and undecomposed basalt. A considerable quantity of this rock is, at the time of writing, strewn about the old shaft, but will soon disappear before the demands of museums and private collectors.*
>
> *Between this point and the north head of Maroubra Bay seven dykes may be found, varying in thickness from one to five feet, all running east and west. The rocky headlands to the north and south of Maroubra are thus notable for the number of igneous dykes that intrude the sandstones'.*

There are only two temporally separate early colonial accounts that document where hatchet raw material was obtained. Both were near Richmond Hill on the Hawkesbury River Corkill (2005:42). The first occurred during Governor Phillip's first 1789 expedition into the Hawkesbury region that was undertaken by boat travelling the length of the river from Broken Bay to Richmond Hill. The second account was in April 1791 when a second government party accompanied by two coastal Aborigines (Colebee and Boladeree) who had set out from Rose Hill with the aim of reaching Richmond Hill and was exploring land in the same area. They met up with a group of *Buruberongal* people including *Gomebeere* and *Yallahmun-di* (Yellowmundi) and according to Phillip they had '*come this journey in order to procure stone hatchets, as the natives get the stones whereof they make their hatchets from that part of the river near Richmond-Hill*' (Phillip in Hunter 1793[1968]:513-525). However, it should be

noted that no actual observations of Aboriginal people collecting stone from this location or from others in the Sydney region appear to have been recorded.

Other resources potentially available in the vicinity of Bronte and possibly associated with volcanic dykes include ochre and particularly fine sources of clay. The *Wikipedia* entry for the Gweagal people around Botany Bay has them as having been the '*guardians of the sacred white clay pits in their territory*' where people travelled great distances to get the material that will have had value for many uses such as pigment for painted and stencilled art, for body painting and hair adornment, for staining and colouring skins (shields etc) and weapons, and for cooking bases for use in canoes. The precise basis for the claim is difficult to source in the references cited in the entry. However, allowing for the emotive language style of the entry, it is possibly accurate and likely derives from ongoing contemporary Tharawal (Dharawal) community research. Bursill et al (2001:20) affirm that Sydney Aboriginal women and men regularly used highly prized, local white clay for decoration or ceremonial purposes where Dharawal clan designs were mainly geometric with secret or symbolic function. The authors also state the clay was local (but not to where), was brown, grey/blue or white in colour, and that the white clay in particular was used to decorate their bodies for special occasions or ceremonies, and for painting and for stencils. '*It was a very valuable commodity so was traded across other language groups by the older women*'. It was also used as a great curative medicine and '*the grinding of this sacred ochre could only be carried out by an initiated Elder as this was 'the earth's blood''.* It is possible that high quality ochre-clay was obtained regularly from clay beds in the swamps and lagoons that abounded in the local Botany dune landscape, and also possibly in specific locations associated with the near-surface alignment of former dyke pipes and potentially large areas surrounding the immediate surface outcrop expressions of these volcanic vents.

Figure 2.24: Part of the map of igneous dykes by G.A. Waterhouse 1902 (Rickwood et al 2011: Figure 3)

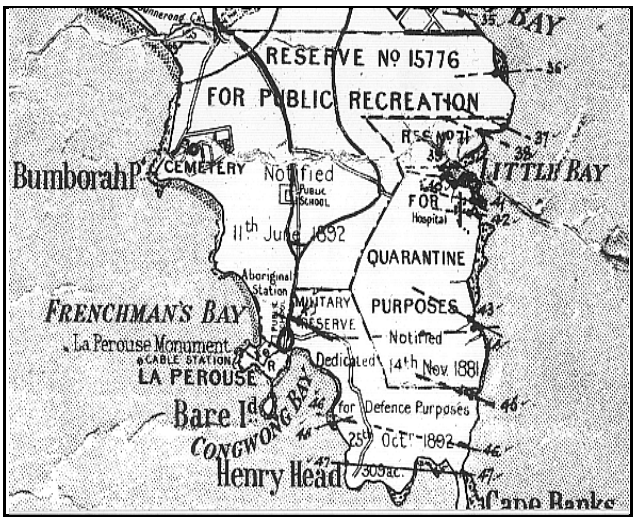
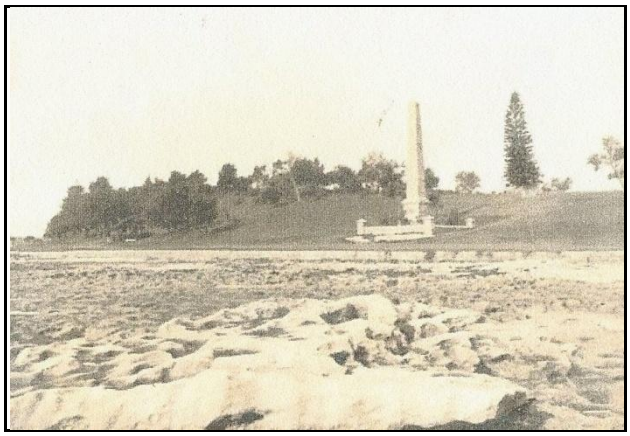


Figure 2.25: La Perouse monument in 1910. The columnar sandstone seen in 1788 was within the 'neighbourhood of La Perouse's monument' but may have been quarried in the 1860s (Botany Bay National Park)



Members of the French Lapérouse expedition saw columnar sandstone in 1788 at (in the vicinity of the La Perouse Monument at Frenchman's Bay in La Perouse) sometime between 26 January and 26 February 1788 after the '*Bussole* [sic] and *Astrolabe commanded by Mons de La Perouse*' moored at Botany Bay on 26 February, the day the First Fleet was completing its move from Botany Bay to Port Jackson. They subsequently showed it to Captain John Hunter who described it to have consisted of long narrow stones with three, four or five sides standing perpendicularly on end. This described columnar or prismatic sandstone caused by conducted heat and superheated steam when a volcanic intrusion occurs. By 10 March, the date of the departure of the French expedition, some of these blocks of columnar sandstone had been loaded onto the *Boussole.* Salvage of the wreck of the *Boussole* in the Solomon's Islands in the 1980s recovered blocks of columnar sandstone and tests in 2003 suggested they came from Botany Bay (the only location on the route Lapérouse took where this comparatively rare geological feature exists). Rickwood et al (2011:11) concluded it was probable the local Aboriginal community were aware of the columnar sandstone but seemingly did not relate it to new arrivals. The sighting by the French of the feature was a significant geological discovery and its description by Hunter was the first account of this material in the Sydney Basin, and almost certainly anywhere in Australia, from which volcanism can be inferred to have occurred.

There was no confirmed sighting of evidence for the dyke until 2010 when its underground course was intersected on Anzac Parade in La Perouse in a utility trench. The fissure in the sandstone seen would have initially been filled with basaltic magma injected under pressure which then cooled and solidified as basalt. As with most dykes in the Sydney Basin, this one had been altered by circulating groundwater that has left near the ground surface white clay and grey mottled to orange-brown coloured to the sides. The exposure was about 3m wide but it was not possible to give a reliable direction or orientation of the dyke. Approximately 30m from the predicted southern side of the dyke where sandstone been converted to columns, it was iron

stained purple-brown in colour and bleached suggesting groundwater had been superheated. This may have created further clay profiles of similar character nearby to the clay exposed in the excavation trench but away from the identified dyke exposure that were potentially accessible from the surface at times in the past and usable as 'ochre clay'.

The colour and texture of the white clay illustrated is reminiscent of 'kaolin (or pipe) clay' as it often appears in Sydney Sandstone and also shale-based soil landscape contexts. 'Ochre' as a generic term is found in a range of colours from yellow through to red and brown and often occurs as lenses and pockets within sandstone and shale beds. The term is also used to describe red and yellow nodules of shale material in St Mary's Formation geologies further west from the coast, while white and greyish clay occurs below lateritic deposits and in the banks of creeks flowing through Wianamatta Shales in places on the Cumberland Plain.

Figure 2.26: Aboriginal heritage sites at Little Bay that an include a nationally significant geological outcrop that has also been identified to potentially represent a culturally important Aboriginal 'ochre' source to Aboriginal people in the past that is valued highly by the contemporary community (Godden Mackay Logan 2008: Figure 1.5)

The Little Bay Geological Site (illustrated above) is of national significance and is the only place on the NSW coast known with Miocene age pest (22 million years BP). It includes paleobotanical evidence for past climatic conditions, vegetation regimes, and coastal landscape evolutionary change when sea levels were approximately 26m higher than today. It also shows that drowned river valley systems such as Port Jackson were initiated in the early Tertiary and prior to Miocene sea level rises. The site consists of a ravine carved out of sandstone which prevented scouring during periods of high sea level, and the peat and marine sand deposits have been dated by the presence of acacia pollen which is not found in sediments in Australia prior

to the early Miocene. The dominant pollen (that includes Wollemi Pine) is of a type of southern beech now only found growing in New Guinea and New Caledonia, and shows rainforest growing in a wet climate with no dry season.

A younger lateritic profile has developed on the clays overlying the peat and as the exposure appears now as illustrated in the images below, the site reflects an area that had an original drainage line associated with it that would have had some creek side vegetation and possibly areas of wetland in the past. The geological site occupies an area of approximately 6 hectares, and about 0.6 hectares of the currently exposed shale and clay deposits may have potentially have been a significant prehistoric Aboriginal ochre deposit that continues to be important to the contemporary La Perouse Aboriginal community for body painting for ceremonial activities and other purposes.

Figure 2.27: A potential Aboriginal ochre and clay resource site at Little Bay (Koolara Community Centre website)

Figure 2.28: A potential Aboriginal ochre and clay resource site at Little Bay (Koolara Community Centre website)

The ochre site is one of over twelve other Aboriginal archaeological sites in the immediate locality that are primarily located along the foreshore of Little Bay that consist of open and sheltered middens, grinding grooves, and rock engravings located upon flat and sloping sections of sandstone overlooking the freshwater creek that flows into Little Bay. The latter comprise engravings originally recorded in 1891 that included a human-like figure, a boomerang, a fish and an echidna (Little Bay 8), and a second (Little Bay 9) that was originally recorded in the 1960s to consist of a rock engraving depicting a mundoe (footprint). Historical documentation suggests a circular sandstone rock pool located on the southern side of Little Bay beach within the inter-tidal zone was created as a 'safe pool' for the purposes of nurses 'recreation' in c.1904. Consultation with the Aboriginal community suggests that this feature may also represent a former Aboriginal fish trap that has been modified during the post-Contact period of use of the place.

Published collections of traditional stories and recollections about the more recent Aboriginal history of La Perouse area (Broughton 1963, Betteridge 1988) mention the significance of Little Bay as a source of fish, muttonfish, blackfish, and sea mullet being the most plentiful when they were 'running', and also as a place with a plentiful supply of shells for food and later for shell-work. These stories indicate the significance of the abundant marine life in the waters, and would have seen the place regularly used by Aboriginal people for its abundant and reliable resources including the clay and ochre materials that are now exposed at the surface.

Ochre clay suitable for art and body decoration is sometimes overlooked in many archaeological heritage studies but will have been extensively used by all people in the past, and most likely not only for just ritual and ceremonial purposes, and will have been a personal and widely sought after raw material. We have little understanding how clan affiliation or individual identity may have been expressed through different body and face adornment styles and colour schemes in the past, or what the significance of different body scarification or the wearing of jewellery, belts and occasional headdress that are sometimes depicted in early historical images may have been. Nevertheless, some descriptions of Aboriginal ceremonial life in the wider Sydney region occasionally highlight how different groups or clans from different areas looked when they gathered such as the members of the 'Five Islands tribe' who had gathered at most likely at Blacktown in November 1821 to participate in a *'Corrobaraa'* that was attended by William Walker who was at the time the (Wesleyan) 'Missionary to the Aborigines in Parramatta' (and later was in charge of the Blacktown native Institute) when he wrote:[19]

> *'Many of the surrounding tribes were encamped in the woods. The Five Islands blacks', when darkness had shrouded them started to 'undress' and paint themselves with a white earth that resembled pipe clay. Longitudinal lines on the legs and arms, and curved lines from the breast to the*

[19] NSW SL (ML) - CY Reel 556 - B.T. 51 Frame 1-400: pp.583-952. Walker to Rev Watson – 26 November 1821.

arms, and a spheroidical figure. Some also had used 'iron ore' which made them red and around the eye they struck a circle with the pipe clay'.

'Ritual combat' was witnessed by French explorer Jules Dumont d'Urville in 1824: [20]

'on high ground about two miles from the sea' (between Sydney and Botany Bay, and where there) '*were the people from Parramatta, Kissing Point, Sydney, Liverpool, Windsor, Emu Plains, Broken Bay, Five Islands, Botany Bay, and even from the Hunter River etc. All were distinguished by the designs of their body painting'.*

Ochre is not commonly discussed in the Sydney archaeological literature probably because it is not a durable material and does not survive (or found) in most archaeological circumstances. This is also possibly exacerbated by the fact that few secure ochre/clay sources are known beyond broad identification of likely landforms and bedrock geologies. However, archaeological evidence from excavated Aboriginal sites in eastern Sydney (Woolloomooloo for example) demonstrates the movement of stone tools and their raw materials into Sydney coastal areas from a number of locations outside the region, and comparable to stone materials that were transported and traded from often long distances to places where resources were scarce or of poor quality,[21]

Complex and long distance trade and exchange networks can also be inferred to have existed in other raw materials and 'finished products' that have not survived in the archaeological record. Dawson (1830:115-116) described men in Port Stephens wearing possum skin belts who explained that '*opossums are more numerous inland than they are near the coast, and this is the reason why such an exchange took place'*. While records also exist for people making intricate kangaroo, wallaby and possum skin cloaks, with some recorded to have been created from up to 80 individual animal pelts that may have taken people over 12 months to acquire and fashion together. These cloaks, and other items such as intricate belts, waistbands, armbands and headbands, thereby involved not only a significant investment of people's time and expertise in customary methods of trapping, preparation and decoration, but they also played an important role in their distribution within complex reciprocal trade networks that linked different groups extending from NSW into Victoria and Queensland.[22]

It is possible that the distinctive columnar pillars of sandstone that were seen in La Perouse in 1788 and those that are still evident at Bondi, or the unusually light coloured and tessellated sandstone expression of former dykes (with 'pipe clay') such as the one illustrated below served as landscape markers identifying specific

[20] Cited in Attenbrow (2010:137).

[21] An edge ground axe head from Vaucluse (Milk Beach) has been sourced from the west of the Great Divide and transported over a distance of at least 180km (Bathurst) and probably via the Blue Mountains (Attenbrow et al 2102)

[22] These cloaks were highly valued by European's and continued to be collected where they were made by Aboriginal people into the second half of the nineteenth century. One (held in the Smithsonian Institute) collected in 1839 by American explorer Charles Wilkes during his meeting with Reverend Threlkeld and Biraban (M'Gill) at Lake Macquarie is one of only six other nineteenth century possum skin cloaks known to survive in museum or private collections.

locations on the land where potentially fine sources of clay and ochre, basalt and quantize raw materials could be variously found with some predictability.

Where clay was exposed and used by people over time or was diminished by natural erosion, the nature of its potential abundance in places is suggested by the fact that '*dyke clay'* becomes more robust at depth and alteration of igneous dykes producing the clay can extends to depths of many tens of metres in the Sydney Basin. (Rickwood et al 2011:11).

These types of raw materials of stone and ochre clay may also each have been useful in past trade and exchange networks although Aboriginal people in Sydney in general may also have relied on (or chose) some level of importation of stone for example from outside regions at times in the past which is suggested in the archaeology of east Sydney as was first suspected to be the case when the 'Bondi workshops' were exposed at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Figure 2.29: Tessellated and columnar sandstone at La Perouse (Rickwood et al 2011: Figure 2)

An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (26 May 1965) adds additional detail to the interconnectivity of these types of dykes, and also the connection of springs with transmuted rocks and lines of fissure where the reporter traced an alignment:

Figure 2.30: A weathered igneous dyke excavated in a trench in La Perouse in 2009 (Rickwood et al 2011: Figure 4)

'distinctly from the mouth of Lane Cove through the Greenwich isthmus on the one side, through the Ball s Head isthmus on the other side, and into a dyke of similar character at Point Piper and into the sea near to the occurrence of the Merriberi columnar sandstone and dyke of basalt, a distance of six geographical miles much of the clay around Merriberi takes on the character of bole[23] *which is often the clearest indication of the presence of a 'basaltic trap', and a bed of hard fractured (tessellated) sandstone pebbles'.*

[23] Bole is earthy clay, usually red, that is native to Armenia. Like some 'ochre' it's red due to the presence of iron oxide.

3.0 Aboriginal Archaeological Heritage Context

3.1 Regional overview

Archaeological excavation of a site ('RTA-G1') on the lower end of George Street in Parramatta in the early 2000s has shown Aboriginal occupation of this area on the river begun at least 9,000 years ago. Older dates have also been inferred from artefact attributes and depth-age curve reconstructions at this site and trends from other archaeological sites that have been salvaged through archaeology nearby on the 'Parramatta Sand Sheet' since that time. Charcoal at the 'RTA-G1' site was rare in the lower excavation levels and a small sample of dry sieved material was collected and has been dated to c.30,000 years BP (Wk-17435 – 30,735 +/- 407BP - JMCHM 2005:119). The stratigraphic associations between the lowest artefacts in the vicinity, the dated charcoal, and the surrounding sediments from which both have provenance are not sufficiently secure to assume Aboriginal occupation occurred at this early date. However, there is a reasonable probability that archaeological evidence of this antiquity (Pleistocene) will be identified in the future and securely dated.

More recent investigations on the Hawkesbury River at Pitt Town have reported Aboriginal occupation evidence dating to possibly 36,000 BP in a similar Pleistocene age geomorphological river terrace context to Parramatta which may be the earliest evidence of Aboriginal people in the Sydney Basin (AHMS Pty Ltd 2013). A site at Cranebrook Terrace on the Nepean River (Penrith/Emu Plains) has produced a date of c.41,000 BP (Nanson et al 1987), but the precise association of the deposits from which this date has been obtained and the Aboriginal artefacts identified is subject to some debate. Rock shelter sites with evidence Aboriginal occupation beginning over 22,000 BP have been excavated in the Blue Mountains and its foothills (Stockton & Holland 1974 and Kohen et al 1984), and two dates ranging from 10,000 to 12,000 BP have also been reported for an open campsite at Regentville (Penrith).

The earliest dated coastal sites are located to the south of Sydney at Burrill Lake that shows evidence for first occupation approximately 20,000 BP (see Lampert 1971), and at Bass Point which is dated to approximately 17,000 BP for first occupation (see Bowdler 1970). Both of these sites were amongst the first excavated Aboriginal heritage sites scientifically investigated on the NSW south coast, and advances in environmental and archaeological research since that time have confirmed that both sites would have been occupied at a time when the sea level was much lower and the present coastline would have been more distant when the country formed parts of inland environments drained by a series of rivers and streams. At the former site for example, when first used the Burrill Lake shelter was in an estuarine locality at the foot of wooded hills about one kilometre from the sea where the faunal remains from the site indicated a greater emphasis on the adjacent estuary and woodland than the sea but retaining links with the foreshore. There are no other coastal Aboriginal sites of comparable age known at present. A shell midden at Kurnell (Doughboy Head 1 – Smith et al 1990) has been dated to 12,000 BP (charcoal).

However, the early date has been questioned because of inadequate documentation of the stratigraphy and sample retrieval process, and the similarity of the artefact typology to other sites on the Peninsula that date to within the last 5,000 years (Dallas 1996:9).

Indications about how people may have lived around the time of sea level fluctuations and subsequent stabilisation along the eastern sea-board of New South Wales during this period are provided by an open occupation site with stone artefacts and a hearth that has been dated to approximately 9,300 BP to 10,000 BP at Discovery Point (close to Tempe House - McDonald CHM 2005:56) when this location will have been several kilometres inland and situated on a wind-blown dune. A second open campsite (containing a cooking hearth) identified at the Prince of Wales Hospital in Randwick has returned a dated to c.8,400 BP (Godden Mackay Logan 1997:25-26) from a hearth comprising a rough circle of 27 sandstone fragments on the western fringe of a huge sand-dune ridge that ran between Botany Bay. It is believed people used the seashore for marine resources on one side of the ridge and inland to exploit the swamps. Residue on the sandstone materials making up the hearth indicates it had been used to cook seafood. Traces of possibly a dozen or so other heavily eroded former 'fire places' were also recorded within the old and deep mobile sand dune. It is proposed (ibid: 40) that the site '*was formed under conditions of high* [residential] *mobility, perhaps the results of short-term forays, and represents a different settlement and subsistence pattern to that observed at contact and in the archaeological record during the last 3000 years*'. However, it is also possible that a pattern of gaining the dune and wetland resources during short-term visits on a daily basis could have continued throughout the Holocene, irrespective of the level of residential mobility at base camps along the ocean and estuarine shorelines (see Attenbrow 2002: 7-8). The age of the sand hills themselves was investigated through OSL dates obtained for two sediment samples from which it has been concluded that '*the entire sand body present at the POW site was created during the terminal Pleistocene, between 30,000 and 40,000 years ago*.' (ibid: 23–25).

Most Aboriginal archaeological sites in the region that have been dated are however within the last 2,500 to 3,000 years. Evidence suggests the initial occupation of the Sydney landscape was not intensive or included large groups of people, and that around 5,000-7,000 years ago (when the sea levels had stabilized at the present levels) more intensive use of the landscape by Aboriginal people subsequently began. Many open sites situated away from the coast appear likely to have been first occupied in the last 1,500 years before Contact.

Evidence excavated from the earliest of these archaeologists sites suggest a pattern of the exploitation of a wide range of terrestrial and aquatic food resources by possibly highly mobile groups of Aboriginal people (Attenbrow 2010:152-54). The late Pleistocene and early Holocene stone artefacts suggest a preference for silicified tuff that was probably sourced from secondary geological contexts such as from

the Hawkesbury/Nepean River gravels (McDonald 2008). However, there are also some indications of the opportunistic exploitation of other raw material types such as silcrete, quartzite and quartz. These early occupation sites have been largely found in stratified (layered) rock shelter deposits or within alluvial deposits, particularly on the margins of large river systems such as the Hawkesbury-Nepean and Parramatta Rivers. Some researchers (see McDonald 2007) have argued that early occupation of the Sydney Basin was focused on these primary river systems and was characterised by a high degree of 'residential mobility' (frequent movement between campsites).

The archaeological evidence for the mid to late Holocene Aboriginal occupation of the Sydney region is both more abundant and, in many ways, seemingly reflecting the development of more complex social and economic systems (see for example Attenbrow 2010, McDonald 2008). The available archaeological data suggest a marked increase in site usage and population density over time, as well as a growth in the size and complexity of social aggregation. Complex long-distance exchange networks are also suggested by the archaeological record, as are major developments in artistic and funerary activities. Developing economic specialisation is indicated by the emergence and subsequent proliferation of complex fishing and stone-working technologies (e.g. backed artefact manufacture), with changes in the composition of stone tool assemblages over time possibly being linked to the minimisation of subsistence risk (see Hiscock 1994, 2002). This in itself is no doubt closely associated with climatically-driven environmental changes (Attenbrow et al. 2009), and changing access to and/or availability of stone resources.

Over time the territory of occupation expanded and these mobile groups who carried silicified tuff from the Hawkesbury-Nepean River gravels and used the resource sparingly to produce relatively large cores and flake tools. When sea levels rose around 6,000 years BP, coastal groups that previously occupied the now drowned coastal strip most likely moved inland and the population possibly steadily increased to a point when around 4,000 years BP when many new sites were occupied. It is argued that this evidence suggests that for the first time people took up permanent and semi-permanent occupation in different areas of the region. Some groups probably lived full time on the Cumberland Plain while others occupied the surrounding sandstone country (see Kelleher Nightingale Consulting April 2008).

There also appears to have been an increase in rock shelter occupation at this time, along with major changes in stone tool technology, most notable of which is the use of locally available stone. The raw material that was most commonly used in the local landscape was silcrete and was used for a wide range of tasks. The majority of artefacts at most sites are often small (<5cm) and its probable people prepared stone at or close to stone source and transported materials back to residential camp sites.

During the last 1,000 years the use of ground stone appears to have increased although these artefacts are infrequently found in surface or excavated archaeological assemblages (fragmentary evidence often occurs at most sites). An increase in bipolar flaking at this time probably indicates further intensive use

of local resources, but backed artefact manufacture declines. This may be due to the fact that there was less need for these tools as result of either changing social networks or less priority being given to their bulky production.

In 1788, Sydney Aboriginal groups were living in defined territories and interaction between groups is evident in art sites, with changing frequencies of different raw materials also indicating more restricted social movement, and contact via exchange networks.

The most common and durable form of evidence that survives as a record of past Aboriginal occupation and use of Sydney are flaked and ground stone artefacts. Other items made from organic materials, the remains of discarded food refuse, and art have generally not survived over time. How we understand how and when Aboriginal people used the Sydney landscape in the past is largely based upon changes that are apparent in the composition of stone tool assemblages and use of certain stone raw materials from the analysis of excavated archaeological assemblages undertaken in recent decades. Terminology for the archaeological phases within what is known as the *Eastern Regional Sequence* (ERS) include the *Capertian* (or Pre-Bondaian), and the *Early*, *Middle* and Late *Bondaian*. This sequence is continuously being refined and clarified.

- The *Capertian* (*Pre-Bondaian*) stone tool phase appears to have been essentially composed of large and quite heavy stone artefacts fashioned from fine grained siliceous cherts and silcrete materials. Tool types included uni-face pebble tools, core tools, denticulate stone saws, scrapers, hammer-stones, some bipolar cores and flakes, and burins.

- The change from the *Capertian* to the *Bondaian* appears to have taken place sometime after 8,000 years before present, and is defined by a noticeable shift in stone tool size, raw material use, and in the range of raw materials utilised by people for subsequent tool production. Features of the *Capertian* phase appear to have continued in many areas on the east coast of Australia, but backed and edge ground implements appear to have been progressively introduced and widely used over this time period.

- The three phases which are recognised as belonging to the *Bondaian* sequence are largely based on the timing of the introduction, and subsequent decline, of backed stone implements, as well as the increased use of bi-polar flaking techniques. Other technological innovations which are evident during the *Bondaian* period include the introduction of ground edge implements (around 4,000 years before present), and the widespread use of shell fish hooks for fishing during the last 1,000 years. The three *Bondaian* phases are summarised below.

- The *Early Bondaian* phase (from approximately 8,000 to approximately 4,000 years ago) appears to have been dominated by the use of fine grained siliceous cherts and silcrete materials. While the use of the larger and heavier stone implements characterising the earlier *Capertian* period seems to have persisted,

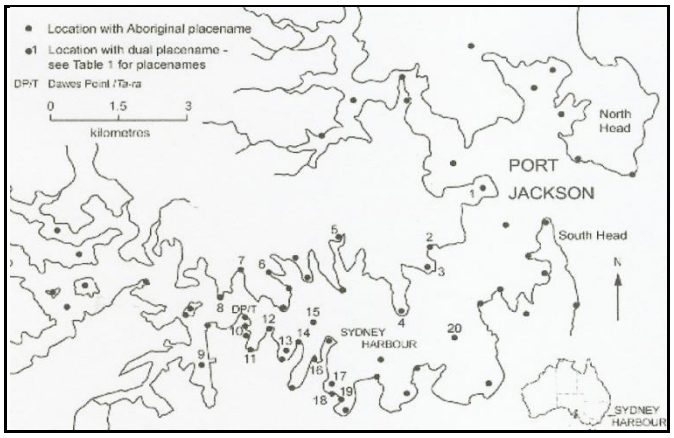
archaeological evidence suggests backed and edge ground implements were widely introduced and used over time.

- The *Middle Bondaian* phase (from approximately 4,000 years ago to approximately 1.000 y ears ago) appears to have been dominated by the use of fine grained siliceous cherts and silcrete materials and the manufacture and use of smaller backed implements. This phase is seemingly characterised by the increased manufacture of micro-blades such as Bondi Points and bi-polar artefacts, and the use of quartz as a ready source of a raw material for the production of flaked stone implements.
- The *Late Bondaian* phase (last 1,000 years) appears to have been dominated by the increased use of quartz (with the use of other raw materials of stone), common manufacture and use of edge ground implements, and the use of bone and shell implements (including shell fish-hooks) at some investigated Aboriginal archaeological sites.

3.2 Aboriginal heritage sites in the Waverley LGA

Aboriginal archaeological site types recorded in the Waverley LGA include rock engravings, axe grinding grooves, open and sheltered middens, shelters with art and archaeological deposit, open campsites and burials. The majority of sites are located along the immediate coastal strip and consist primarily of rock engravings and open and sheltered campsites that fringe the foreshore. Considerable concentrations of sites (rock engravings in particular) occur at Long Bay, Maroubra Bay, Coogee Bay and Bondi Beach and the retention of a surprisingly large number of Aboriginal place names that are still in use in this part of eastern Sydney pays testament to the traditional Aboriginal ownership of the country.

Figure 3.1: Aboriginal places names in and around Sydney harbour (Attenbrow 2006: Figure 1)



Few sites have been directly dated. The previously mentioned hearth at the Prince of Wales Hospital discovered in 1995 produced a thermo-luminescence date of 8,400 years before present and a second date of 7,860 BP derived from charcoal. Along with a small number of flaked stone artefacts, analysis of

residues present on the hearth cobbles indicates the feature was used in the past for cooking marine foods as a short term 'stop over' campsite.

A large west facing rock-shelter located high on an escarpment in Nielsen Park at Vaucluse has been excavated and produced a date of 1,200 BP for first occupation (Attenbrow 1995:51). At Contact the coastal reserve land was bisected by a stream called Shark Creek that led to a lagoon behind the beach. Excavation produced a variety of shellfish species (dominated by hairy mussel, black nerita and oyster), mammal and fish bones, along with a number of flaked stone artefacts predominantly made from quartz with forms characteristic of the late Bondaian period. Two bone point artefacts and six pieces of worked shell (scrapers) were found.

Analysis of the fish bones excavated from the site suggests fish may have been caught using traps such as stone tidal weirs as opposed to spearing or angling. The former method of fishing is recorded to have been used extensively on the north coast of New South Wales. However, no similar observations have been recorded for Port Jackson. It possible the use of traps and weirs formed a part of the Sydney Aboriginal coastal economy at Contact but that this was not observed by the British because it was an infrequently used method and/or because the traps/weirs were built in enclosed and less visible estuarine and bay settings where this type of fishing occurred on small beaches or at the tidal mouths of streams running into estuaries where dense tree canopies obscured this activity.

Figure 3.2: Sheas Creek in 1888 (City of Sydney Archives)

Away from the coast and in the hinterland, a rare and unusual find of dugong bones with cut marks that were exposed by canal works in 1897 suggest the animal was butchered and killed for food (Etheridge 1905:18, Etheridge et al 1896:170–74). The deposits excavated for the canal were several metres deep

and contained layers of shell, peat and old tree stumps and the dugong bones were amongst these layers. Since the discovery, dating of the environmental evidence suggests the climate was warmer and the sea levels were higher to allow the dugong to swim around what is now dry land. Two ground-edged hatchet heads were found in the buried swamp deposits at the same time as the discovery of the bones. Whether the axe heads and bones were dropped, lost or discarded at the same time is not precisely clear, but is inferred to be likely on the available evidence. The bones were dated in 2004 to around 5,500 years BP (Haworth et al 2004)[24]

In the historic period, with the site at Beaconsfield positioned on the south-western edge of the developing town limits up until c.1810s and beyond, it is possible that Aboriginal visitation to Long Cove Creek continued well into the 'historic' period where the land was possibly 'open space' used primarily for settler activities such as timber getting under 'absentee' ownership and accessible from the coastal gullies like at Bronte to the east.

Aboriginal archaeological salvage excavation on William Street in 2003 in advance of redevelopment revealed a large quantity of Aboriginal flaked stone artefacts that also tell us '*a story of Aboriginal connections* [at east Sydney] *with places from the Hunter River mouth to the Shoalhaven, and to the western Cumberland Plain crossing the boundaries between language groups'* (ERM 2006:37). Excavation revealed about 1,000 flaked stone artefacts of quartz, silcrete, tuff, indurated mudstone and petrified wood. The principal component consisted of a range of small quartz fragments (including bipolar knapping waste of small quartz pebbles), although a smaller number of formal tool types such as backed blades were also present. An absolute date for site occupation is unknown but is likely to represent the accumulated evidence of visitation and use of the locality since the sea levels stabilised and for the most part people relied on local stone material. However, 'c*onnection was not driven by necessity of scarcity of stone*' according to the authors. A social imperative was inferred where the exchange of goods formed part of a broader social interchanges of story, song and relationships across the social landscape. Large '*raw material package's*' came from the north in readily transportable large thick flakes. Silcrete from the south was probably brought into the area in the same way. Finished implements in the form of backed artefacts manufactured elsewhere (possibly on the hinterland of the western Cumberland Plain) were carried or traded into Woolloomooloo Creek area and finally discarded onto the site. The authors concluded that:

> *'Archaeological evidence at the William Street site points to wide ranging contacts between the Aboriginal people camping at the site and areas up to 200km away to the north west and south of*

[24] A conventional carbon date of 5,520±70 years BP was obtained for the bones, which is consistent with three older dates for a layer of buried trees that underlay much of the north Botany sediments below the bone-bearing layers.

Port Jackson. Stone artefacts were made from materials likely to have originated in the Hunter region, the western Cumberland Plain and the Shoalhaven area.

The discovery of the Aboriginal heritage material within the William Street site is indicative of the unrealised archaeological heritage remaining within the City of Sydney. The William Street site has provided valuable insights into the ''connectedness" of pre-contact Aboriginal society across the Sydney Basin. This finding provides a useful theme for future archaeological studies of pre-contact Aboriginal life in the greater Sydney area'.

The engraved figures at Bondi Golf Course/Williams Park are amongst the best known in Sydney and a brief description of these serve to characterise the nature and complexity of these types of Aboriginal heritage sites in Waverley LGA and surrounding areas of the harbour. The evidence at Bondi occurs in three groups and totals about 87 individual figures that were first recorded in the 1880s. The majority of the exposed figures are marine animals such as fish, sharks and a whale, whilst motifs now buried beneath turf were in the 1880s recorded as including a seal, fish (including snapper) and a boomerang. The Group 2 figures were re-grooved by Waverley Council in 1951 and 1964 respectively. The Group 3 engravings include depictions of the hulls of two small vessels and at the time of the original recordings appeared to have been made with a metal chisel and were observed to be not as weathered as the other engravings. The engravings at this site are typical of the coastal Sydney region in terms of subject and technique of creation and reflect the marine environment of the place. The 66 figures identified in Group 2 have been identified as follows (McCarthy 1983 as quoted in Attenbrow 2002:169).

'…space was valuable on this rock …with the result that many figures are engraved within the bigger ones and other ones overlap one another. There is a fishing composition of a man and women with two fish, another one with the sword club and pair of fish. On the western side of the whale, the majority of the figures are fish, including sharks and sunfish, and marine mammals such as the whale and dolphin seen swimming in the ocean from the cliff tops. The meaning of the tall man with a boy, or much smaller man overlapped by his right arm is not known but as he is 11' tall he is apparently a mythological figure; similarly, the significance of the two lines of oval mundoes is puzzling as they do not lead to this spirit being. The figures of the big sunfish, thresher shark, dolphin, gigantic lily flower, some of the fish and the spirit being are unique in some cases and are of outstanding artistic merit in others'.

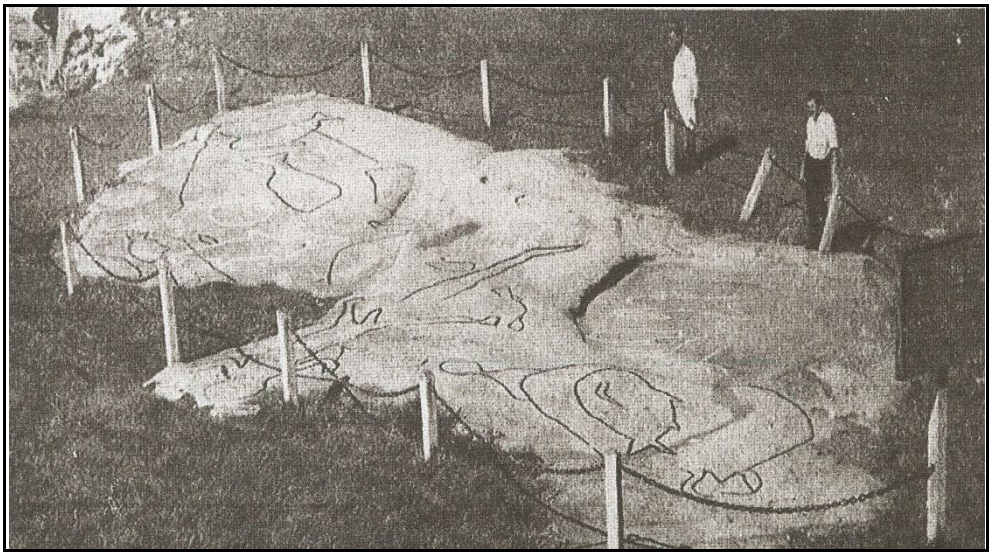
Dowd (1959:292-293) cites Raymond de Cusack who was engaged by Waverley Municipal Council in 1951 to retouch the engravings '*with a preservative against the weather*'. He also added that:

'This was the main Ceremonial Ground where the Biddigal tribe of Aborigines held their scared rituals and danced their corroborees until about the 1800s.....The persecution of the white man broke up the tribe and drove all but a few old men towards La Perouse, where the last free aborigine died in 1863.

Just a few yards east of the ritual ground, an aborigine has engraved on the rock not far from the cliff edge, one of the earliest sailing ships that passed along the coast'.

A commemorative plaque erected by Council in 1980 at Biddigal Reserve at North Bondi dedicates the reserve to the '*Biddigal tribe who first inhabited the foreshores of Bondi. By Robert Bellear first Aboriginal barrister in New South Wales*'.

Figure 3.3: 'The Ceremonial Rock of the Bondi Biddigal Aboriginal Tribe – Williams Park Golf Links' (Dowd 1959:292)



There is little doubt that the coastal cliffs and their Aboriginal engraving sites at Bondi were probably important places to countless generations of Aboriginal people prior to white settlement.[25] However, no reliable sources have been found for this study to support the claim that the place was used for '*corroborees until about the 1800s'.* In addition, while local Aboriginal people had commenced moving south to the Illawarra from the c.1830s and a number of these people and their descendants later moved back north to La Perouse, *'the last free aborigine'* didn't die in 1863. In addition, the claim that '*an aborigine has engraved....one of the earliest sailing ships that passed along the coast'* is unlikely to be correct, nor that the ship engraving was proof of aviation pioneer Lawrence Hargrave's theory that the Spanish had landed in eastern Australia in 1595. 'The Secret Visitors Project' (a '*sceptical look at beliefs in Australian history*') presents a well researched argument (see **Appendix 3**) to conclude that:

'there is second hand but reasonable evidence that the [ship] *engravings were done in about 1870, by known individuals. The condition of the engravings is consistent with a post European date, and*

[25] While excavating for a new tennis court in his yard at 'The Lawns' on Ramsgate-Avenue in North Bondi in 1929, '*Walter Weeks unearthed a skull and several smaller bones at a depth of about 5ft. The lower jaw was missing from the skull, and the bones were yellow with age. It is thought that they are the remains of some aborigine, as tribes were in the habit of burying bodies in the sand near the coast'.* The remains were suspected to have been about 70 years old (SMH, 31 August 1929). The SMH (13 May 1864) reported in 1864 that at the Australian Museum there were *'several very interesting skulls of aborigines, some of them are of very low formation—in particular an old one from Bondi, which approximates to the famous Neanderthal skull. The Trustees have given orders for casts to be made of this skull to be transmitted to the European museums*'.

certainly not in the order of four centuries. The differing engravings of the motifs suggests a number of hands, and it is reasonable to suppose they are a palimpsest made over time rather than representing, as Hargrave thought, a coherent group with a single meaning. Hargrave's interpretation of the meaning of the engravings cannot be supported in any way. It stretches the limited content to fit his desired theory of Lope de Vega's presence in Sydney. The reading is illogical and pushes credibility. In the face of alternate plausible explanations Hargrave's interpretation cannot be accepted as the explanation for the engravings'.[26]

There are no historical descriptions of Aboriginal people making rock engravings in Sydney, and we do not know who had made them or what they may have signified. However, they continued to be made in Sydney after 1788. Numerous images (engraved and painted) of European sailing ships, soldiers, guns, cattle, along with other European subjects and objects are recorded in the local landscape and on the Hawkesbury River.

Governor Phillip wrote in April of that year (quoted in Attenbrow 2002:345):

'In Botany Bay, Port Jackson and Broken Bay we frequently saw the figures of men, shields and fish roughly cut on the rocks; and on the top of a mountain I saw the figure of a man in the attitude they put themselves in when they are going to dance, which was much better done than I had seen before, and the figure of a large lizard was sufficiently well executed to satisfy every one what animal was meant.'

George Angas provides another description dating from the 1840s that indicates the continued survival of these types of sites a half century later:

'I refer to their carvings in outline, cut into the surface of flat rocks in the neighbourhood, and especially on the summits of the various promontories about the harbours of the coast. Although these carvings exist in considerable numbers, covering all the flat rocks upon many of the headlands overlooking the water.... After examining the flat rocks in every direction, we found sufficient examples of these singular outlines to confirm at once the opinion that they were executed by the aboriginal inhabitants; but at what period, is quite uncertain.'

In '*Rock Carvings and Paintings by the Australian Aborigines*' (1897), Mathews provides accounts from the early 1890s where he spoke to Aboriginal people about their art. In particular, he was interested to hear that some engravings at La Perouse for example predated the arrival of the Europeans and was curious about whether Aboriginal art-making in Sydney had continued into the post Contact period. His investigations revealed that in parts of the Sydney Basin rock art traditions had survived and were

[26] The earliest reference to O'Brien's Bondi Quarry operating is 1861 '*also allows for the possibility of quarry workman being implicated in their creation as well*'.

possibly continuing. Charley Clark for example, who lived at the Sackville Reach Aboriginal Reserve near Windsor, was introduced to him during this time as a maker of hand stencils near the Hawkesbury River (Thomas 2007).

Mathews (1897:97-98) also met a Darkinjung man at this time named Andy Barber who led him to a rock engraving that he remembered being made in the 1850s. Located in Wilberforce, it depicts a white settler wearing a cabbage-tree hat and carrying a metal axe. Barber recounted that the artist was a man known as 'Hiram'. Mathews reported that when Hiram depicted the foreigner 'striding' into his territory', he made the carving with a European axe instead of traditional implements:

> *'Whilst recently on an expedition amongst the Darkinjung tribe on the Hawkesbury River for the purposes of studying their customs, I met a native named "Andy" who showed me a carving on a rock which he had seen done a blackfellow when he himself was a lad of about fifteen years old. Some of the white people who had known Any from his boyhood told me that he was then (1896) about fifty-five years of age, so that it would be about forty years since the execution of the drawing, which would make the date about 1855.*
>
> *My informant stated that the blackfellow who carved the figure was known as "Hiram" by the white people amongst whom he occasionally worked. He was a middle-aged man at the time the drawing was done, and had been dead for a number of years'.*

This is one of very few cases where Sydney rock art can be attributed to an individual. We know little more about Hiram. Stanbury & Clegg (1990:3) illustrate how our understanding of what Sydney rock engravings are likely to have actually meant to the people who originally made them is at best limited:

> *'The only account we have of a Sydney Aborigine's comments on engravings is that of Queen Gooseberrys', widow of the chief of the Aboriginal tribe which lived in the area settled by the First Fleet. Some time before 1847 she was asked to show and explain local rock engravings to a group of Europeans. At first she was reluctant, saying such places were forbidden ground and that she must not visit them. Later she was persuaded to take the party to several sites on the north head of Sydney Harbour. Queen Gooseberry said she had been told by her father that "black fellow made them long ago" and that the tribes people kept away from the area except for special occasions, in which dances or ceremonies took place because "too much debble walk about there"'.*

3.3 Aboriginal heritage sites close to Bronte House

The nearest known Aboriginal heritage site to Bronte House is a rock shelter located on the northern side of Tamarama Beach beneath the Surf Life Saving Club stairs reported in 1990 to contain occupation remains of shell-food refuse (limpet, black nerita, Sydney turban and cartrut shell), animal bones and stone artefacts.

Figure 3.4: Nearest known Aboriginal heritage sites to Bronte House

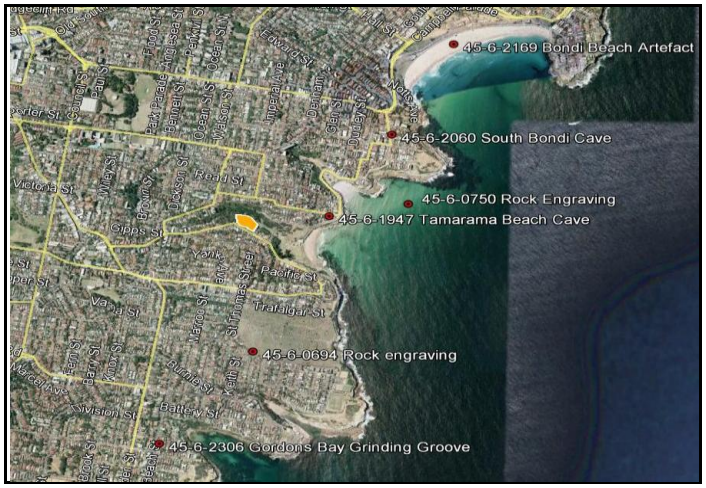


Figure 3.5: Aboriginal rock shelter at Tamarama Beach (AHIMS Site #45-6-1947)

The 1990 site card reports the cave was well protected from wind and a good quanity of shell deposit was seen in the centre, although disturbance was evident. A small stone flake (quartz) was also seen on the surface, and the excavation potential of the site was increased because *'beachside shelters with midden deposit are rare on the Tasman Sea coast'.*

4.0 An Aboriginal Historic Context

4.1 Background

Previous heritage studies of Bronte Park and Gully along with a wider assessment of the whole of the Waverley LGA (DSCA 2004, 2009) have detailed some of the historically recorded '*habits and customs*' of the coastal Sydney Aboriginal people the British first saw and interacted with in Port Jackson following settlement and details of these do not need to be repeated here. These reports also touch on aspects of the historical process of displacement of Aboriginal people from their traditional lands that have been explored elsewhere in greater detail in studies by Attenbrow (2010) and Smith (2011) amongst others and recent online histories and 'fact sheets' about Sydney's Aboriginal history.

In a very simplified way, this Aboriginal history may be seen to have developed as a series of overlapping patterns of land dispossession and exclusion, with periods of resistance and conflict in some places and times, followed by Aboriginal people progressively adapting at least some of their traditional social and economic behaviours to suit an increasingly settled landscape. Research into where, why and how Aboriginal people lived at the times they did in Sydney after 1788 illustrates these people's connections to places and their movements in the landscape were partly *'continuations of pre-contact social and cultural life and obligations'* and continued to be able to *'exert a degree of autonomy even during times of increasing government control and regulation'* (Irish and Ingrey 2005:75).

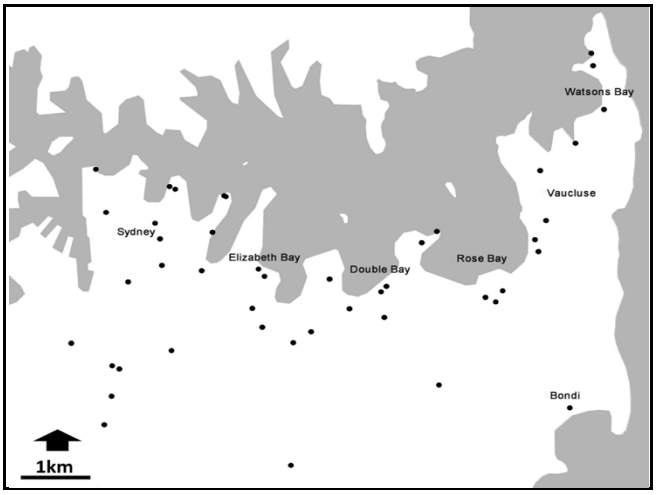
The discussion to follow presents a brief overview of what we know of the settlement period Aboriginal history of eastern Sydney by looking at a number of documented Aboriginal historic sites and places where the records vary considerably in detail and reliability.

Nevertheless, these places can be used to create a 'template' of sorts for understanding in what form continued Aboriginal occupation of the land and its surrounds at Bronte is likely to have taken prior to, and during, the occupation of Bronte House. This is because the land in the 1830s was relatively remote, was difficult terrain of rugged coastal sandstone gully topography, and because it was also sparsely populated with few white settlers around to record where Aboriginal people were and what they were doing at any given time. In this regard, the coastal strip south of Bondi down to Malabar is almost 'empty' on the Aboriginal historical map below, and there are very few specific references to Aboriginal people in the literature in this area that have been sourced for the current study.

4.2 White Settlement impact and Aboriginal adaptation

The arrival of the British in 1788 was disastrous for Sydney Aboriginal people. Many people died from the introduction of disease and the survivors were then subsequently marginalised by the increased competition for space and resources over time as more settlers arrived and settlement expanded in the early nineteenth century.

Figure 4.1: Historic Aboriginal places in the eastern suburbs of Sydney (Irish and Ingrey 20013: Figure 1)



Governor Phillip believed there couldn't be less than 1,500 Aboriginal '*in Botany Bay, Port Jackson, and Broken Bay, including the intermediate coast*'.[27] While modern estimates of the Aboriginal population in 1788 vary considerably, Phillip's estimations was probably far too low. The only specific reference to Aboriginal people that can be directly associated with Bronte, and only *possibly,* during the earliest period following landing at Sydney Cove occurred on a return journey Phillip took to Botany Bay and then back up the coast (Phillip [1789] 1970:62-63 cited in Derricourt 2011):

> *'Governor Phillip had now determined to return to Port Jackson; but as he went, keeping for some time near the sea coast, he discovered a great number of the natives, apparently more than could belong to that district, assembled at the mouth of a cave. …. In less than three minutes the English party found itself surrounded by two hundred and twelve men … Here was seen the finest stream of water that had hitherto been discovered in the country, but the cove into which it runs lies very open to the sea. When the natives saw that the English were going forward towards the next cove, one of them, an old man, made signs that he might be allowed to go first. He did so, and as soon as he had ascended the hill, called out, holding up both his hands… to signify to the natives in the next cove that they who were advancing were friends. The Governor's party did not, however, descend to that cove, but saw about forty men, so that, unless they had assembled themselves on some particular occasion, they must be more numerous in that part than had been before imagined'*

However, despite high death rates and extensive cultural dislocation, Aboriginal groups remained in Sydney, and although by the early 1820s the local population around Botany Bay for example had been significantly reduced from Tench's '*tolerably numerous*' to '*not numerous,*'[28] some local (possibly born

[27] Governor Phillip to Lord Sydney, 9 July 1788. HRNSW, Volume 1, Part 2:153.

[28] Wesleyan missionary William Walker writing to Rev. Richard Watson in 1821 – quoted in Lawrence 2001: 5.

and bred) and visiting Aboriginal people continued to live in the east Sydney area and insights into some aspects of their life in the 1810s and 1820s are recorded in the recollections of Obed West:

> *'Some of the Sydney blacks used to fish along the coast, and decoyed the fish by procuring crabs from the rocks. They always struck the fish on the head stunning them. Their canoes, which were made of bark, served them for fishing, and he had often seen them out near the island at Coogee Bay (Wedding Cake island) in these frail vessels. They would carry their canoes on their heads to Coogee, Bondi and Maroubra, embarking at a convenient place' (*Morrison 1888:416-417).

Traditional ceremonial activity also continued in the eastern Sydney area and Woolloomooloo in particular was a favoured place for corroborees in the 1810s and 1820s:

> *'Woolloomooloo was long a gathering place of the Blacks. I can recollect on their festive occasions seeing 200 or 300 of the original owners of the soil camped about the bay. The sight – a strange contrast to the present day - was a happy one, for then the civilisation of the white men had not thinned the ranks of our sable brethren'* (West 1988:32).

The Sydney Herald (14 November 1831) later reported:

> *'A "corrobbora" of the aborigines took place at Woolloomooloo on Monday night. Young Bungaree did the honors of the ceromonies. Before the party broke up, his sable Majesty became done up with bull and in consequence of some pranks played by him he was floored by a waddie, on which a regular melee ensued, the company espousing different sides of the question; and after a hard fought battle they parted good friends, some of the cobberas having sustained considerable damage'.*

By the 1830s, many of the local Aborigines who had survived disease and conflict with white settlers had commenced moving south to the Illawarra, and to other regions less impacted by white land alienation and settlement activity. A number of these people and their descendants later moved back north to La Perouse, and an Aboriginal settlement established in 1878 and gazetted as a reserve in 1895 (see Curby 1996:6 and McKenzie and Stephen 1987). Aboriginal people who stayed in the eastern Sydney area in the mid 1800s on the fringes of white society became more dependent on welfare as time went on and government allocations of blankets and slop clothing, and the bartering of fish and game for sugar, flour and alcohol reflected significant negative changes in Aboriginal culture and lifestyle, which were replicated throughout greater Sydney (DSCA 2009).

'*Mahroot*' (Boatswain) was one of a number of people described as the '*last of the Botany Bay Tribe'* who in the 1850s lived at least in the later part of his life on the northern shore of Botany Bay where he had a camp in the gardens of the Banks Hotel (Mundy 1971[1851]:31). Mahroot had witnessed significant Aboriginal social and population change during his life and told a Colonial Government

investigation into the '*condition of Aborigines'* in 1845 that '*well mister… all blackfella gone! All this my country! Pretty place Botany! Little Pickaninny, I run about here. Plenty blackfellow then: corrobory; great fight; all canoe about. Only me left now…*'.[29]

People like Mahroot attracted attention due to their perceived rarity and curiosity value along with other well known Sydney Aboriginal men. John Waterman in his *Recollections of Sydney* wrote:

> *'I lived in Sydney twelve years, from 1841 to 1853. During this period I often saw the remnant of the Sydney Tribe of Aborigines. There were, say, in 1846, about eight of them, men and gins. King Bungarabee was the chief, and two others, Jacky Jacky and Rickety Dick…*
>
> *These darkies roamed around the city during the day and camped in the southeast corner of the Domain, near Centipede Rock, south western side of Wallah-Mullah Bay [Woolloomoolloo] at night' (*Waterman in RAHS J 1922: Vol 23:359).

Rickety Dick lived in the eastern suburbs between approximately c.1840 and 1863 and his death in 1863 was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (16 June 1863) as follows:

> *'It appeared from the evidence of a man named George Rawlinson, who had known the deceased upwards of twenty years, the aboriginal in question was between sixty and seventy years of age; that his mother had belonged to the Botany Bay tribe of blacks, and that his father belonged to the Five Islands Tribe [Wollongong]. The real name of this noted Aboriginal was William Warral, the sobriquet of Rickety Dick having been given him some fourteen years ago, when his lower extremities became paralysed. Soon after the misfortune referred to befell him, he took up his abode in a rude gunyah, near the South Head Road, just beyond Rose Bay, and there he remained – always to be seen sitting by the roadside – til his death, which took place on Thursday last'*.

Figure 4.2: Rickety Dick by Charles Rodius, c.1844 (SLNSW PXA 1005)

[29] Mahroot's evidence to the *NSW Legislative Council's Select Committee on Aborigines, 1845* –in Waugh 2001: 32-40.

Figure 4.3: Bill Worrall, Five Islands Tribe, 1836 by William Fernyhough (National Portrait Gallery, Canberra)

Ellmoos (2015) provides the following (abridged) biography of Ricketty Dick (c.1795-1863) who was also known as Warrah Warrah or William (Bill) Warrah, Worell or Worrall who was a familiar and well liked personality around Sydney in the nineteenth century:

> *'He lived at a range of Aboriginal camps in Sydney, including those at The Domain, Rose Bay and Woolloomooloo. As one of the elders in these camps, Ricketty Dick was sometimes described as the 'King of Woolloomooloo Tribe' and the 'Chief of the Rose Bay Tribe'. He was given the name Ricketty Dick 'in consequence of the way he walked'. Other commentators recorded that he was a 'cripple' and that he had some form of paralysis that affected his legs. He was born in Sydney in c.1795. His father was from Five Islands near Wollongong and his mother was from the Botany Bay area. He was related to Cora Gooseberry, Bungaree's wife. In 1854, Ricketty Dick was noted as a 'denizen of Sydney'. By this time, he had taken up occupation of a 'gunyah' at Rose Bay. He camped on the side of the Old South Head Road and was 'daily seen by the visitors to South Head'. One source records that he lived here with his wife, referred to as 'Mrs Snowball'. Another source records that he was addicted to alcohol and that he begged money from passes by. Ricketty Dick had camped at this spot on Old South Head Road from at least 1852. The exact location of this camping spot is unclear but it was probably at the headwaters of Rose Bay which was then swamps. Although the exact location has not been pinpointed, Ricketty Dick's camping spot was on part of Daniel Cooper's Point Piper Estate. In 1910 the site of the 'gunyah' was recorded as being 'about where the golf links are now'. George Rawlington was a 'contractor, in charge of Sir Daniel Cooper's proper, known as the Point Piper Estate. W.C. Wentworth, who lived nearby at Vaucluse House until 1854, paid George*

Rawlington a weekly wage to look after Ricketty Dick. It appears that Ricketty Dick earlier spent time at the Benevolent Asylum. At the inquest into Ricketty Dick's death in 1863, Rawlington deposed that he had built the hut of gunyah that Ricketty Dick lived in (In other words, the gunyah was built by Rawlington, it was paid for by Wentworth but located on Copper's land). Moreover, Rawlington claimed that he had known Ricketty Dick for 36 years. This suggests that Ricketty Dick may have lived in the Rose Bay area from at least 1827. Bill Worrell was recorded on the 1857 Blanket list for Sydney. A year later, George Thornton in a letter to the Colonial Secretary declared that there were only to Sydney Aboriginal people left, so all of the blankets were not needed. He wrote 'I can assure you that the number of blacks now belonging to the Sydney district are reduced to two – vis 'Wingle' and Bill Worrell'. Ricketty Dick spent his final days around Rose Bay and died in the winter of 1863'.

In addition to the drawings by Rodius and Fernyhough, Ricketty Dick's memory is also commemorated in a finely modelled silver, gold and ebonised wood based statuette of him that was made in Sydney in about 1855 which is one of the earliest known examples of metal sculpture known to have been made in Australia and was displayed in the 1855 Paris Universal Exhibition.

Figure 4.4: 1873 Ricketty Dick statuette c.1855 (Powerhouse Museum Collection Search 2.53 online).

In 1867 an inkstand was on display in a George Street jeweller's shop window made of silver and gold that was designed as to represent Ricketty Dick, '*an old aboriginal, and the last of his tribe, sitting in the hollow of an old tree stump, as was his custom when alive near Rose Bay*'. No image of this object has been sourced but Ricketty Dick is described to have had his tomahawk, boomerang, and apparatus for fishing and was flanked by a figure of a kangaroo on his right and emu on the left. The tree stump, in the hollow of which he sat, contained the ink and there were two dead branches of silver on which the pens were placed (Tumet and Adelong Times, 20 June 1867).

Figure 4.5: 1873 Rickety Dick medal ('in bronze') struck at the NSW Intercolonial Exhibition c.1872 (Noble Numismatics Pty Ltd website online)

Medals such as this were struck at a variety of Exhibitions around NSW, Queensland and Victoria in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. The names of the person depicted changed but the portrait of Ricketty Dick on this example was cut in 1872 and such items were sold as mementos at the exhibition (Museum Victoria website online). The *Maitland Mercury* (24 May, 1873) reported that a '*distance a 'Ricketty Dick' does somewhat resemble a sovereign, but it would not be mistaken for one upon close examination*' after one was passed on a as legitimate coin in Bathurst, and similar complaints were also filed in Goulburn and Sydney after a 'Ricketty Dick's' were palmed off as sovereigns by persons just returned from Sydney after having visited the exhibition in 1873 that were purchased for sixpence from a man who was engaged making them with a die (Freeman's Journal, 10 May 1873).

There is little documentary information about people or Aboriginal activity or occupation in the immediate Bronte area during the mid nineteenth century at a time when Bronte House was built and Bronte had no particular name '*being marked as an outlying part of Waverley*' (SMH, 15 November 1924). However, one historical recollection in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (15 November 1924) recounts the following story to explain the four turrets that were an architectural feature of the homestead that had been so configured to defend against the '*lawless*' which is likely to have been meant to include escaped convicts, bushrangers and possible Aboriginal people:

> *'The house was so designed that in the case of attack by the "lawless characters who sometimes took to the bush" the occupants would be in a position to stand a siege if attacked,*

so the story goes, the defenders could retreat to the upper storeys of the towers. Three of the towers are still standing with their barred loopholes high up on the wall. The present occupants of Bronte House doubt the truth of the story'.

Mary Salmon (Sunday Times, 1 September 1907) expands on this theme:

'Some people imagine that the turrets at each end of the house were only put round the edifice for purposes of decoration, but the truth was that cannons were mounted there and in the early days there was a sort of draw bridge to the front door, so that communications from outside could be entirely shut off. They were dangerous times to be in a lonely situation without protection...'.

Whether these stories are based on any truth is unclear. However, the homestead was located in a relatively isolated place some distance from the greater Sydney settlement area at that time (1840s), and the owners of the house may have believed that they required some physical protection from the likes of bushrangers and possibly 'displaced' Aboriginal people.

4.3 Nineteenth century Aboriginal places and spaces

4.3.1 A network of connected coastal bays

Aboriginal people were still living in virtually every bay of the eastern suburbs of Sydney in the mid nineteenth century (Irish and Ingrey 2011:21), and the movement of Aboriginal people between different places at different times illustrates a recognisable Aboriginal geography that was created in this part of Sydney. A later 1930 recollection of the suburbs in the 1870s captures the essence of some of the ways Aboriginal spaces and places that are referred to in following sections were used:

'Sixty years ago the city did not extend beyond the top of William Street, and an aboriginal camp was pitched in West's Bush, which began at the intersection of Brougham Street and Victoria Road. From the intersection of Edgecliff Road, Ocean Street and South Head Road, settlement was very scattered, and there were not more than two dozen residences between there and Bellevue Hill....[and] *sixty year ago....there were but two homes in what was then a forest of giant gum trees and scrub. From South Head Road to the hill overlooking Waverley and Bondi, aboriginals roamed in supreme contentment....*

The aboriginals had two distinct camps in Bellevue Hill bush one on the side overlooking Edgecliff and Double Bay tennis courts, and the other at the intersection of South Head Road and Victoria Street....

This latter camp became a great source of annoyance. Residents found it Impossible to retain their female servants, who were terrified to return home after dark, as the only public conveyance that travelled along that road was the Royal mall coach....Female servants were, therefore, compelled to

return home in daylight or undertake the dreaded lonely walk with the ever present fear of meeting aboriginals....

Captain Towns, who resided at Cranbrook, was the owner of a fleet of schooners which traded to the South Sea Islands in search of Indentured kanaka labourers to work on Queensland sugar plantations. On reaching Sydney his cargo of "blackbirds" was transhipped to vessels going north. Sometimes his living freight had to wait weeks for a ship. They were then placed in camps in Cranbrook grounds at the corner of Victoria Street and South Head Road. This spot was almost directly opposite the aboriginals' camp in Bellevue Hill bush. The natives bitterly resented the intrusion of the kanakas, and many racial battles took place. In those days Cranbrook grounds partly scrub, and surrounded by a dilapidated paling fence. Look at Bellevue Hill today and try to vision a typical Australian bush that sheltered a small tribe of aboriginals, who were its only inhabitants, and absolutely loyal to their king, Pankey, and his queen, Rachael. And here was a sanctuary for every coastal song bird of the Australian bush – and only sixty years ago! It's an amazing transformation....

It would perhaps be asking too much from the occupiers of those beautiful homes that now adorn Point Piper and its vicinity to believe that rabbits and wallabies frequented the dense bush and those rocky slopes sixty years ago in sufficient numbers to afford good shooting to visitors at Woollahra House. And possums and bandicoots did tremendous destruction in the extensive orchard and vegetable garden. The blacks supplied the "house" with fresh fish and oysters, which were then found in abundance along the foreshore. The aboriginals were amazingly expert spearmen. Standing on rocks above the water, and with spear poised to strike, they seldom failed in their unerring aim. I have never seen a blackfellow use the same kind of spear since then. It was about ten feet long, and had three prongs made of umbrella wires, barbed at the points, and tightly bound to the end of the spear.

Many of the rock carvings on Point Piper that have often been the subject of Press correspondence were the work of the aboriginals of 60 years ago, and most of them were carved by Pankey's son "Freddy." (East 1930:13)

4.3.2 Rushcutters Bay

Obed West recalled the land running down to Rushcutters Bay (Barcom Glen) was always a '*great camping place for the blacks,*' and particularly the slope on the Darlinghurst side where he watched Aboriginal people in their canoes in the bay with women fishing with lines while men used their spears to get the fish that swam beneath them (SMH, 12 October 1882). He made the important connection that '*even to a very recent period the blacks had a lingering fondness for the old camping ground*'. In the 1830 and 1840s Rushcutters Creek was a freshwater stream that flowed through Lacrozia Valley from about Victoria Street through Barcom Glen (where West lived) and over present day New South Head

Road into the bay. Arthur Dowling later recalled that West's property was at the time covered with bush and large gum trees and this was the resort of semi-civilised aboriginals, 'chiefly half-caste', where they had formed a large camp that was a nuisance to the neighbourhood (Dowling 1924).

4.3.3 Double Bay

In 1845 a party of French Catholic missionaries (Marists) including Leopold Verguet arrived in Sydney and stayed for five months in Woolloomooloo while they arranged shipping to take them on to New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Verguet wrote of his travels and described his observations and conversations he had with Sydney Aboriginal people during his visit. Laracy (1980:179) has translated these extracts which have value because of the '*extreme paucity of firsthand accounts of Aborigines in the Sydney area in the 1840s'*. Verguet wrote it was '*not rare to see near the entrance to Port Jackson gatherings of natives'* in 1845 and some of the key points of his accounts of those Aboriginal people he in Sydney in general and Double Bay in particular are summarised below as adapted from Laracy (1980:179-180):

- *'In the early days of colonisation they came to town in their bush clothes* (naked). The men Verguet saw wore trousers and jackets, and the women, long aprons and white smocks, and both sexes wore scarves and hats (if they had them).
- They gathered gum from trees and brought into town from the bush and it was normally sold by the women to the English who bought it at about £4 a hundredweight.
- The sheltered coastal sandstone overhangs were used by Aboriginal people as overnight camps in bad weather and '*in good weather the first place they come to will do*'. They often camped in a forest beside Verguet's house overnight before setting out for Sydney each morning.
- The '*tribe of Tamara*' Verguet met at Double Bay numbered about twenty people who were at that time living in a spot sheltered by a hill slope and vegetation with sandstone overhangs available. In general terms, these people always camped in the woods on the edge of the town where the need to seek shelter from the prevailing wind of the day (or night) saw them '*camp sometimes in one place and sometimes in another*'.
- The people '*who decided to remain among the Europeans have become quite inoffensive people, but retain the distinctive characteristic of Australian natives. They are easy to approach*'. At Double Bay they shared what they smoked with each other, drank bull, and ate food not to Verguet's taste often swaddled in blankets around a continual fire.
- He drew portraits of several of Tamara's people which he sent to Europe including that of Bele. *He found Tamara and his wife peacefully smoking a pipe when he asked Tamara's permission to draw his portrait. Tamara offered to come and pose at Verguet's house but 'remembering how much Bele....had become bored the previous day sitting one hour in front of me on a chair, I preferred to run back to the house by*

myself and return to the rock with my paper and crayons'. He made portraits of Tamara, of a woman and of a child.

- Verguet questioned Tamara about his religious beliefs. Tamara explained his beliefs with good sense and in a kind of '*English jargon which the natives learn easily*'. Verguet and his companions also spent all morning talking to Tamara's people and '*teaching them the catechism'* but while they did not seem to be as '*deprived of intelligence as I had expected from reading the accounts of certain travellers'* they still got bored and gradually drifted away back to the fire.
- *'These people love dogs very much and have a great number of them, with whom they share their food and their shelter. Moreover, when the native sleeps the dogs lie around him, and even on him, both to give and to receive warmth'.*
- One individual had several wooden spears, several metres long and with three points at one end. Tamara hastened to tell Verguet they were to harpoon fish ('*in fact, another native soon appeared with a fish in his hand'*).

Tamara probably came from the south coast of NSW. In 1827 he was registered in Sydney as Thomas Tamara, father of Gertude Tamara whose mother was Narney or Nanny Nelolla. A statement of '*slop clothing rugs issued'* to Aboriginal people in the Illawarra between December 1827 and 1828 records Thomas Tomara (Chief), and in 1829 Thomas Tomara (Botany Bay) was listed to receive blankets with 5 men and 3 women. It was noted '*the under mentioned Blacks are now here and say they do not belong to the Sydney Tribe*' (Organ 1993). In May 1830, Lt George Sleeman (commander of the 39th Regiment) wrote that the thirty rugs he was allocated for distribution from Sydney had arrived but that the rugs and six blankets for Thomas Tomara and Charcoal Will (Native Chiefs) had only recently reached the Illawarra (Wollongong):

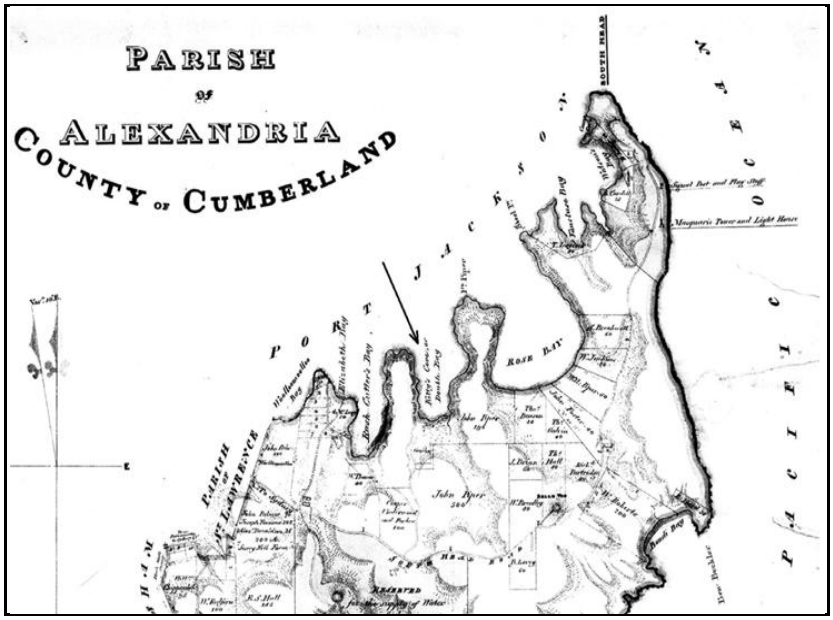
> *'The Natives have been assembled in this neighbourhood in great numbers* [about one hundred and fifty men, women and children] *from very distant parts for some weeks past expecting the arrival of these articles from Sydney, and I beg to report for the information of His Excellency....I yesterday distributed the thirty rugs amongst the most useful and deserving of these individuals, distinguishing as much as my means would allow me those who appear to possess influence amongst them. As there were several elderly persons almost in a state of nudity who appeared greatly distressed and disappointed at not receiving anything, I was induced to issue six blankets from the stores here, to them, which I hope will meet the approval of His Excellency the Governor. I beg to enclose a Return of their number, together with a nominal list of the men, and to state that as neither Thomas Tomara or Charcoal Will was present yesterday, the six blankets intended for them will be given to them when they arrive'* (Col. Sec. Correspondence 4/2045).

In response to Sleeman's question as to whether the issuance of additional rugs and blankets was to be approved, Bourke advised, no. It was never intended to supply the whole black population and Sleeman should not have given the blankets to those who did not arrive in time. Bourke thought one rug or blanket for each of the Chiefs would have been sufficient (Organ 1993). The evidence suggests some Aboriginal people regularly travelled to visit different distribution points to get 'additional slops' such that they were. They will have reconnected with people and caught up with the news at these times. Tamara for example collected blankets in Sydney in 1835 saying he came from Bulli and in 1836 as 'Tomorrah' he was at Parramatta, claiming to live at Botany and the same year he was also recorded as 'Tomarra' at Wollongong, picking up blankets with the 'Five Islands' and 'Kiama tribe'.

Other references to Aboriginal people at Double Bay include Old Wingle from Port Stephens and his wife Kitty who camped on a knoll above Double Bay (around Ascham School) and sometimes demonstrated boomerang throwing for copper coins (Jervis 1967:44). Referring to an occasion before about 1850, a diarist writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (27 May, 1890) made reference to seeing a 'Wingal' who may be the same man along with '*Terrigal Bob and with a few other blacks of the old Broken Bay tribe'* at Curl Curl on the northern beaches where they '*were then located*'. Wingle died of consumption at Botany in 1868 (SMH, 18 July 1858). Kitty died in 1859 when she was about 26 from a *'chronic disease of the chest*' in the couples bush camp near the Bayswater Hotel. Kitty came from Broken Bay and had previously worked as a servant in Newcastle and spoke English well (SMH, 19 September 1859). Irish and Ingrey (2011:81) suggest the link between Aboriginal woman Kitty to the Double Bay area was recognised as far back as 1841 with a parish plan naming 'Kitty's Cove or Double Bay' (as arrowed).

Figure 4.6: Extract of Alexandria Parish Map of 1841 showing 'Kitty's Cove' (arrow)

(State Library of NSW #M2 811.181/1841/1)Irish and Ingrey 2011: Figure 4)



4.3.4 Rose Bay Camp

As previously noted, William Worrall/Ricketty Dick lived for many years in a hut in front of Daniel Cooper's 'The Cottage' at Rose Bay where he levied a toll on travellers using the South Head Road. Cooper's seemingly benevolent or accommodating nature that allowed Aboriginal use of his land may have been a plus to Aboriginal people over time. The late Sir Daniel Cooper was before his death one of the largest landlords in Sydney, owning extensive properties in George, Market. And Pitt Street., a large part of Surry Hills, Redfern, and Waterloo, as well many country estates in addition to Rose Bay and Woollahra (Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate**,** 7 June 1902). In a letter to the SMH (27 May 1890) Phillip Cohen referred to a period *'more than forty years ago*' (about 1850) when *'the black's camp … was at the time situated at Rose Bay*'. The camp was close to the grave of the Broken Bay leader Bungaree, who was buried in 1830 near the present Rose Bay Police station that was built as the gatehouse for Daniel Cooper's mansion Woollahra House. Dowling (1925:53), another early resident of the area provides some environmental information to this Aboriginal presence at Rose Bay:

> *'about the centre of Rose Bay, and within sight of the main road, was a large dwelling house, "Rose Bay Lodge," occupied by the Cooper family before they moved their residence to "Woollahra House," Point Piper....The land from there to the east end of the bay was a vacant swamp, or marsh, covered with bush extending past where "Ricketty Dick" had his camp.....*
>
> *Before the low-lying land to the south of Rose Bay was drained and built upon, it was, in the main, a large morass, the soil being of a rich peaty nature, covered with dense ti-tree scrub. This ti-tree was in considerable demand by the owners of properties in and about the neighbourhood for thatching their garden bush-houses, as also was the soil for enriching their gardens. A notable crippled and irritable old aboriginal, "Ricketty Dick"—a terror to the children in the neighbourhood and others—had his permanent camp on a dry patch of land at the eastern end of this morass, close to the main road, and opposite the Georgian dwelling-house, overlooking the bay...'."*

4.3.5 Elizabeth Bay

Colonial authorities had being encouraging Aboriginal people to 'settle' and adopt a sedentary white way of life before Parramatta was chosen as the site for the Native Institute in 1814 from which time onwards the annual feasts took place in the market place next door and continued into the 1830s before they were stopped for a time by Governor Bourke along with the distribution of blankets and rugs. Other Macquarie period 'initiatives' included a farm for several families (including Bungaree) at Georges Head in 1815 and the first land grant to Aboriginal people made in 1816 (30 acres to Colebee and Nurragingy on Richmond Road in Blacktown. Later in 1821, William Walker wrote to Revered Watson to advise that Reverend Cartwright had told Walker he should convince the Sydney and other tribes to

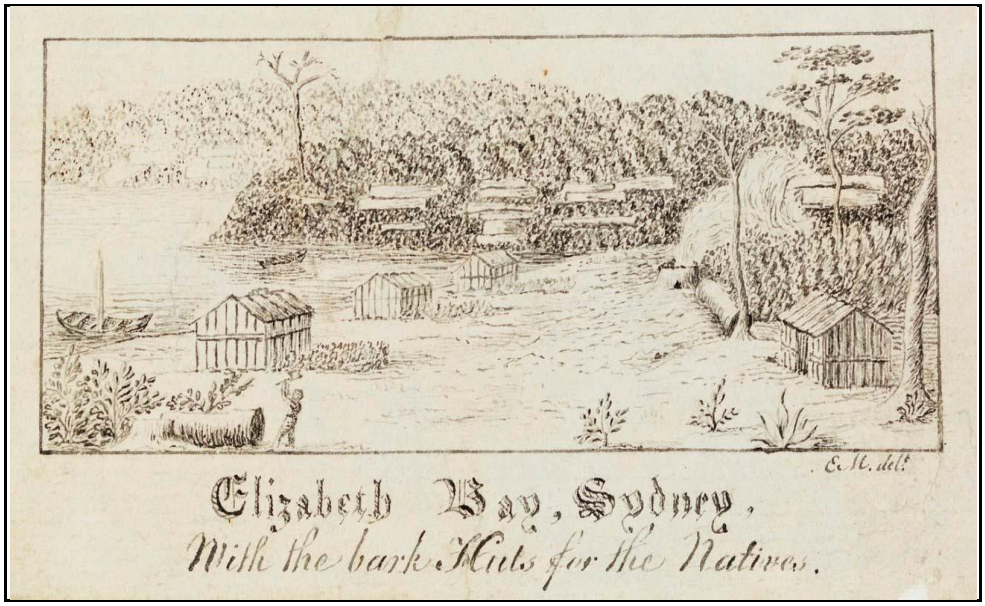
settle at South Creek as it was a '*proper distance from the theatre of temptation, and not too great a distance from the source of supplies*'. This was obviously never going to work out.

In 1820 Macquarie chose '*Gurrajin'* as a settlement for the '*Sydney tribe'* (Smith 1992). It was called 'Elizabeth Town' (or colloquially Henrietta Town) but it is unknown why Elizabeth Bay was chosen beyond the logical probability that Aboriginal people were living there and/or always visiting the place. The settlement was probably located behind the sandy beach below Elizabeth Bay House in and around Beare Park where the historic settlement is commemorated. Hall (1828:596-597) reported the bay was *'a place much frequented and delighted in by the Sydney blacks, to a family of whom indeed it belonged*' and that Aboriginal people lived there in great numbers but other details of the story are scarce.

Old Bundle along with Tomara was on the list that was compiled in Wollongong by George Sleeman when the blankets ran out in 1830. In 1838 the murder of Old Bundle was reported in the *Sydney Gazette* (11 September 1838) to have occurred at Elizabeth Bay in the following way

> *'An aboriginal named 'Old Bundle', well known about Sydney for several years past, was killed last week under the following circumstances. In the early part of the week two tribes assembled at Elizabeth Bay, the tribe of Shoalhaven and that of Wollongong. On Monday evening while the greater part of them were in a state of intoxication a quarrel ensued, in the course of which, Old Bundle who belonged to the Wollongong tribe was struck on the head with a nulla nulla by one of the other party. The blow was so severe as to cause a considerable fracture of the skull. The native who struck the blow immediately disappeared.*

Figure 4.7: According to Smith (1992:18) this is only known image of Elizabeth Town from the early 1820s. The fishing boats are of note and Darling Point is in the background (ML SLNSW Mason 1821-23: Image 42)



Macquarie himself visited Elizabeth Town on at least two occasions in 1822, and there are several descriptions of life at the place although it is not clear whether Elizabeth Town or the Georges Head 'Aboriginal settlement' was being described. Oldfield describes how Bungaree was given a boat by Macquarie:

> *'which was infinitely more congenial to him and his "vagrant train." In this they frequently make excursions, and row into the open sea; employing themselves in catching fish, which they cook over a fire that is carried in the boat, and as they often catch more than they want, the surplus is brought to town for barter. A sailor's life would suit these blacks more than any other, except a gentleman's'* (Oldfield 1828:104-5).

By around 1824 visitors had noted the abandonment of the village, but the reasons for the 'failure' of the town remains unclear. Oldfield (ibid) reported that:

> *'the scheme proved abortive. The materials of the huts, in a short time were used for fuel: the sheets of bark, were taken to Sydney to be exchanged for bread and drink ; the gardener's sinecure was abolished, and nothing remains of what was called Elizabeth Town, but the local denomination. This place is now granted to Mr. McLeay, who has converted it into an excellent garden, with a prospect of erecting a Grecian villa contiguous'.*

Another visitor's account stated that '*Mrs Macquarie a few years ago built sundry cottages, to induce natives to settle with their families in them. There yet remain traces of garden and orchard grounds, overrun with weeds and bushes, but not the wreck of a dwelling'* (Tyerman & Bennett 1840:190). Hall (1828:597-8) describes that Aboriginal people '*gradually disappeared from Elizabeth Bay, after the departure of their Patron Governor Macquarie*'.

4.4 Modelling historic Aboriginal spaces and places in a settler landscape

4.4.1: Sites 'types' and their 'place' in the settler landscape

Most of the first and larger settler land grants made by the Crown were to usually the wealthy and these 'estates' included places that were initially 'outside' of the types of land of first European interest for building and 'improvement'. Discrete environments such as isolated/distant coastal gullies, elevated or inaccessible sandstone topography, swamps and wetlands, and high or long dune systems situated away from settler homesteads are likely to have been places that Aboriginal people were able to use and move through during the first periods of European settlement that constituted gaps in the 'grid' of settler landholding. Byrne and Nugent (2004) have used an Aboriginal historical approach to looking at how Biripi on the Manning River may have adapted to a colonial-settler society from the 1830s. It presents a framework that may be broadly applicable to Bronte, or conversely it may not apply at all. It does however offer a way to examine and test what historical and archaeological correlates may be

associated with the types of early to mid nineteenth century Sydney Aboriginal landuse history that is suggested by the previous overview. Two hypothetical landscape occupation examples (pre-Contact and historic) below derive from conjectured 'inland' pastoral scenarios rather than coastal 'urban' settler circumstances, but are a useful visual illustration for how an Aboriginal historic social landscape layers were probably 'overprinted' across the settler spaces of east Sydney.

Figure 4.8: A hypothetical pre-Contact Aboriginal settlement pattern (Source: DEC 2006).

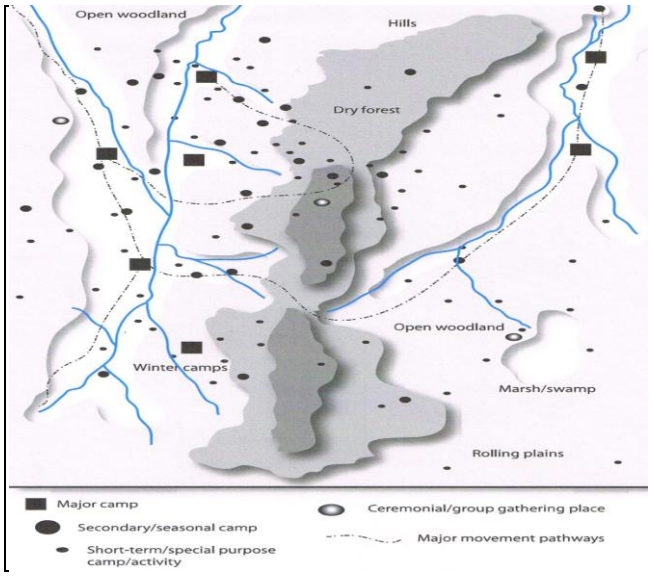
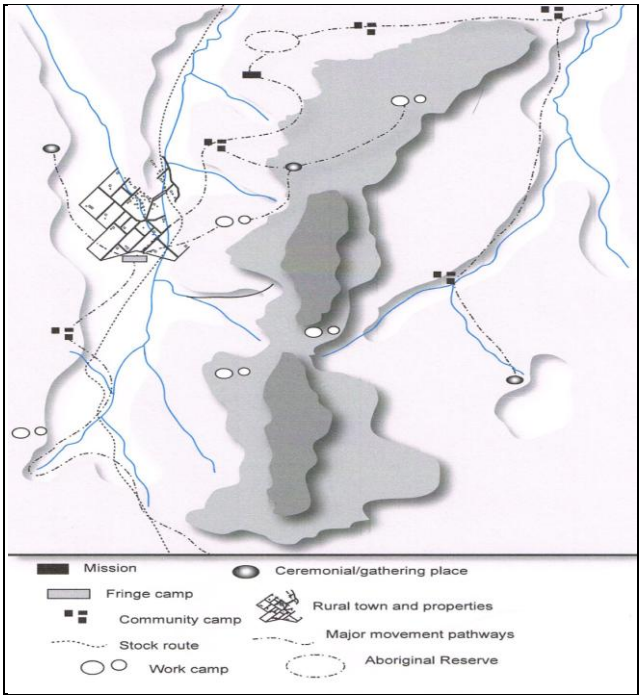


Figure 4.9: A hypothetical settlement pattern of an Aboriginal historic landscape (Source: DEC 2006)



4.4.2 Autonomous Camps

Byrne and Nugent (2004) suggest these types of locations would have been chosen by Aboriginal people for possibly occasional or cyclical use, and may have been remote from white settlement. As such, these camps will have been chosen at least partly in order to get away from white 'interference and surveillance' and will have been located in the same sort of places Aboriginal people had always favoured rather than being located in relation to white settlement.

It is highly probable that Aboriginal people were regularly using Bronte Gully and its coastline before the first settlers who arrived with an intention to stay increased in number from the 1830s. However, no direct historical evidence for that use has been sourced for this study.

4.4.3: Farm Camps

Aboriginal camps located on or adjacent to estate farms (and pastoral stations) would potentially reflect interdependence between Aboriginal and white people. It is probable that during the first years of occupation of Bronte House there was sufficient space for Aboriginal to continue to use both the gully for camping and travel and the coastal strip was still open country. Aboriginal people were attracted by some European foods and in some cases white settlers frequently used Aboriginal labour in certain agricultural/pastoral activities such as seasonal cropping. There is no historical evidence to indicate that Aboriginal people had established a relationship in this regard with the Lowe's at Bronte in the short time they were living there before they left in 1850.

However, new 'alliances' for a want of a better word between local Aboriginal communities and some of the wealthier and influential land owners were developing in eastern Sydney around this time such as with the Wentworth's at Vaucluse. The developments of some cross-cultural relationships was only possible however with certain land holders because some settlers did not like Aboriginal people or welcome them on to their land after it was granted and were to be avoided.

Robert Lowe appears to have been a progressive man. In 1844 he unsuccessfully defended a murderer who was subsequently hung. He afterwards adopted the children of the murdered woman suggesting he also had compassion. Because Aboriginal people continued to 'live' on and/or nearby their traditional lands where they could, and wished be buried on or near their land when they could, 'benevolent' land owners will have provided a way in which some people could have maintained a direct connection to country.

4.4.4 Pocket Camps

These camps would be independent of specific white farms or stations, with their locations being determined by the availability of 'pockets' of vacant land existing within the mosaic of white settlement. Examples Byrne and Nugent (2004) provide include town/village commons, travelling stock routes, and

reserves for roads not yet constructed or in use. In the late nineteenth century in parts of Sydney some of these types of lands were designated as Aboriginal Reserves, acknowledging their existing use by Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal people were moving (and returning) to the Eastern suburbs and particularly the La Perouse area from around the 1870s and people originally from the South Coast for example moved from the defunct Circular Quay camp and established an '*illegal camp'* at La Perouse. In 1894, Methodists established an Aboriginal mission house at La Perouse and in the following year the illegal camp was granted official status as an Aboriginal Reserve at Frenchman's Bay (McKenzie & Stephen 1987:177). The people who lived on the reserve engaged in a number of commercial activities that largely negated the need for government handouts and the Aborigines Protection Board (APB) reported in 1892 that '*those at La Perouse are generally employed fishing, some also make native weapons and gather wild honey for sale. The women and children make shell ornaments and gather and sell wild flowers*'.[30] The reserve grew until 1931 when the APB revoked the site and the new reserve was pushed back from the sea and a '*recreation reserve'* took the place of the old reserve. The new recreation reserve known locally as 'Frog Hollow' was however one of a number of depression camps established in the area used by both Aborigines and displaced Europeans (McKenzie & Stephen 1987: 182).

4.4.5 Fringe Camps

The term 'fringe' is commonly used in relation to Aboriginal camps that were historically located on the edges of towns and sometimes also 'inside' townships but usually on the edges and/or in places out of sight of the main (white) town centres. These places may also have been located on land reserved for other purposes. Byrne and Nugent (2004) note that in parts of NSW (including Sydney and towns in the Hunter), fringe camps were established from the beginning when towns and villages came into being and some existed into the 1950s and 1960s at which point Aboriginal housing cooperatives and the State Housing Commission began providing houses for Aboriginal people in most of the larger towns.

Bronte was very much on the fringe of Sydney in the late 1830s when Lewis arrived, and continued to be comparatively isolated for much of the nineteenth century and there were no houses on the south side of the bay until the turn of the twentieth century (SMH, 24 March 1936). In this regard, any Aboriginal visitation and use of what was a sparsely settled and occasionally rugged coastal foreshore zone with access hinterland areas and people to the west and south via coastal gullies such as Bronte will have been on the 'fringe' under this definition.[31]

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[30] Aborigines Protection Board Annual Report, NSW legislative Assembly Votes & Proceedings 1892 – quoted in McKenzie & Stephen 1987.
[31] In the 1930s 'Struggle Town' was on the north side of the bay '*but with the waterfall and the last of the native plants at the head of the ravine, would always be a source of delight for visitors to Bronte'* (SMH, 24 March 1936).

5.0 Aboriginal Community Consultation

5.1: Site inspection and recording

The area marked on the aerial view of the house and grounds below was looked at during a 'walk and talk' that was convened on 13 March 2015with the LPLALC and represented by David Ingrey. Attendees were Fleur Mellor (Waverley Council) and Dominic Steele and David Burke (DSCA). Excluding a brief look to reengage with the context and relationship of the house above with the gully below, Bronte Gully itself was not inspected given it has not changed appreciably since 2009. To this end, the archaeological assessment of areas such as 'Superman Hill' that comprises an elevated landform that overlooks the former watercourse and has commanding views of the ocean...which indicated that this portion of the park was likely to have represented a favourable camping location to Aboriginal people in the past remains unchanged.

Figure 5.1: Area inspected and recorded

The main focus of the physical inspection of the grounds was the landscaped garden areas overlooking the gully that still retain in places aspects of their original form as either remnant unmodified sandstone platforms and shelves or significantly cut down and quarried former rock overhangs that may have been of sufficient size to provide shelter before they were used for the construction of the house and destroyed by the terracing of the garden and creation of the existing paths. The way the construction of Bronte House may have physically taken place that will have destroyed (or buried) any pre-existing engravings that may have present is likely to have been much same as at Elizabeth Bay House that was also built in the 1830s:

'My father has been levelling ground and blowing up rocks (by deputy of course) at Elizabeth Bay in order to gain a lawn for out new residence – the foundation for which must soon be laid' (Macleay 1832:495) and later '*the men have commenced to cut away rock, in order to make a place for the site of the house, but this will occupy many months I expect, as the mass of rock upon the selected spot is of great height and hardness'* (Macleay 1833:512).

Because the garden is over grown, and large area retain grass (and probably fill) that appear to occur directly over bedrock, it is possible that sandstone surfaces that have not been modified (cut away or cut flat) may survive buried in the garden especially. The chances that these potential surfaces contain engravings or grinding grooves would at best be remote, but the house occupies a type of coastal landscape setting that rock engravings are known to occur elsewhere in eastern Sydney.

No such evidence were located during the inspection, but the images below suggest that some potential archaeological material may remain protected beneath or to the rear of a number of former sandstone overhang elements that occur along the edge of the lower garden terraces.

Figure 5.2: Waterfall at the western head of Bronte Gully. It is probably Aboriginal people used the cascading and pooling water flow in the past to sharpen axe and hatchet heads and process foods or medicines that required water leaching. Grinding grooves may survive under vegetation in this locality.

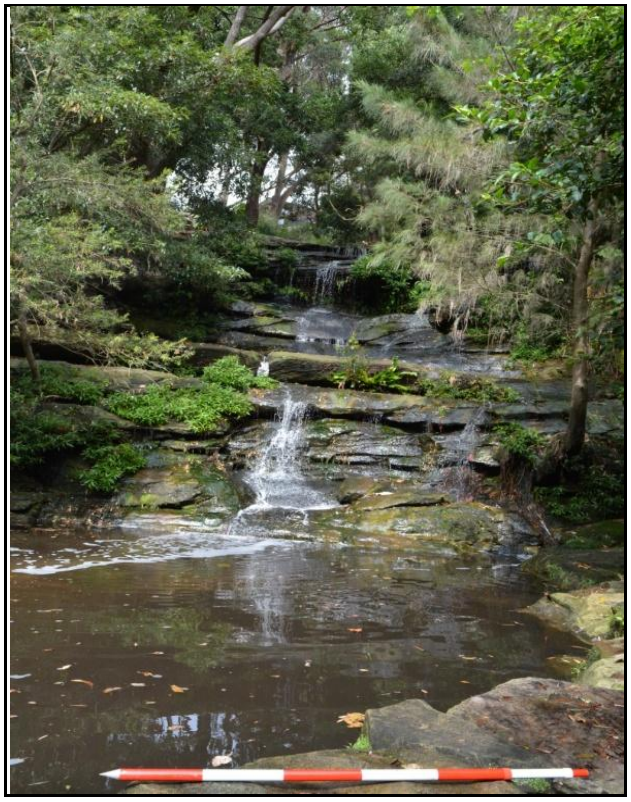


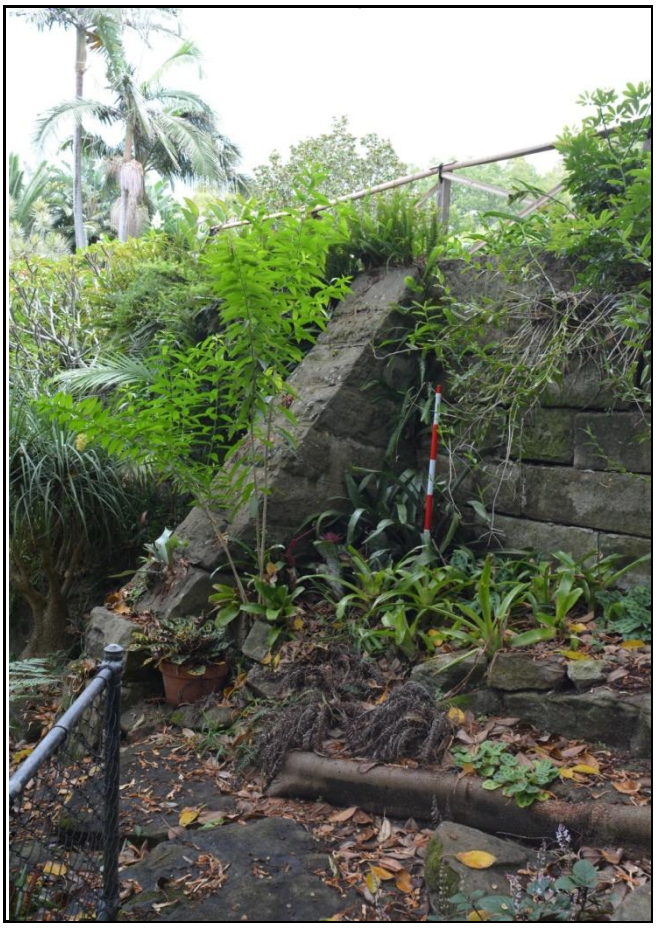
Figure 5.3: It is unclear whether the building footprint for the house was created by levelling off the sandstone first and/or if was filled and then later terraced to create this appearance.

Figure 5.4: The species (where it is a planted or native tree type) or age of the tree when it was cut down is unknown but the stump is sizable and it gives an indication of the changes the garden has undergone since the 1840s. The original trees on the estate lands will have been used partly for building the house, outbuildings and fences and partly as firewood

Figure 5.5: Partly unmodified sandstone element as part of the landscaped garden

Figure 5.6: Quarried sandstone overhang that retains part of its 'roof'

Figure 5.7: Most if not all of this sandstone will have been cut and shaped on-site. The form of the original platforms at the head of the gully and its shelving sides with no doubt some rock overhangs of different sizes at different levels are now hard to imagine



5.2 Cultural heritage values

The following points and opinions were expressed by David Ingrey during the site inspection and are presented below in dot point form because that format more accurately conveys how these topics of discussion emerged and how they were expressed during the course of conversation. I have added references where relevant and expanded some points where they intersect with some of the Aboriginal themes that have been touched on elsewhere in this report:

- The coastal country and lifestyle at Bronte was very important to the old people and continues to be so to the local Aboriginal community today. Aboriginal peopled shaped the complex ecologies and ecotones of sheltered gullies likes these through continual firing techniques over many thousands of years and managed the plants and grasses along the freshwater stream to attract swamp and rock wallabies that could be hunted in these literal 'gully traps'.

- The interconnectedness of this gully to other important art, burial and camping grounds in the Aboriginal landscape of eastern Sydney was important but is admittedly difficult to understand in some respects. Traditional Aboriginal 'pathways' are known orally and reconstructed books such in Aplin's 'Difficult Infant' (1988: Figure 2.3) that include a track from North Bondi to Sydney Harbour near Vaucluse, as well as possibly a more substantial route from Botany Bay to the harbour east of Sydney. In addition, Bradley had found a 'good track' in June 1788 leading to and from Rose Bay to Bondi Beach (cited in Derricourt 2011:17). These pathways and others are inferred to have crossed the centennial parklands area and also to have led into Little Bay and were given as examples to show how the old people 'segmented' the land into different zones that were used for different purposes at different times. Bronte was used to describe coastal fishing and 'gully hunting', rock engraving on the headlands and ridges were places also used for spotting for fish (including pods of Humpback whales that regularly migrated, and still do, from the south in the winter months), and ochre and clay extraction at Little Bay.
- The engraved and painted art at North Bondi and elsewhere in eastern Sydney would have played a role in initiation and teachings about the coastal environment and how its resources should have been used. The discovery of a mundoe trail (at Dover Heights) leading out to the ocean on 'rough' sandstone usually that may in other circumstances have been considered to be a poor choice for engraving because of the coarse nature of the rock, suggests a different type of message/story was being told from that which was probably being taught or recorded by the fish and totem engravings for example at Bondi. Coastal gullies such as at Bronte also formed an important part of these cultural landscape stories.
- The impacts of colonisation (the 'coming of strangers') and adapting to entirely new ways of thinking and living will have been hard for the 'old people' and their succeeding generations.

Dominic Wy Kanak (Waverley Council) provided the following comments after reviewing an earlier draft of this document:

- Creation mythology or 'Dreaming' stories about the country on which Bronte House was built are 'intangible' dimensions under the Burra Charter, and spiritual values form an important part of the Aboriginal cultural significance of the place.
- The Aboriginal political significance of places like Bronte is considerable because of its position on the strip of coastline that was mapped in 1770 by Cook and was passed by Governor Philip and the First Fleet following their relocation from Botany Bay to Sydney Cove. In this context, it is possible that the heights at the future site of Bronte House were a potential lookout spot from which Cook's and later Philip's voyages would have been observed by Sydney Aboriginal

people prior to and during both landings, and similar observations on the coast would have been made from places such as the cliffs at Bondi.

- Research may identify Bronte House as a place where Aboriginal Stolen Generations worked as domestic servants who may have been indentured to successive Bronte House occupants following the departure of the Lowe's in the early 1850s.

Figure 5.8: This image appears to date to the ownership of the third owner - Joseph Burdekin Holdsworth – and probably dates to the mid 1860s. The man tending to the horse to the right appears to be Aboriginal and may have been a 'stable hand' employed at the house at the time (CLSP 2014)

- Bronte House was created using resources such as tree wood, sandstone and shell midden or live shell beds for mortar that were provided by the country and were formerly under the custodianships of the traditional Sydney owners.

5.3 Evaluation of identified values

5.3.1 Environmental values

A central environmental history value identified through this study revolves around the recognition that this Aboriginal country at Bronte has had a long and dynamic natural evolution of its own and that human interactions with the land started many tens of thousands of years before it was alienated and granted by the Crown to Mortimer Lewis in the 1830s. In this long-view historical context, Bronte as a 'place' has been in a very real sense situated within numerous different 'settings' over its evolutionary history. These settings have ranged from times when it constituted a sheltered coastal gully during periods of higher sea levels such as it exist today, to other times when Bronte formed part of an inland

valley or escarpment within a broader coastal hinterland plain situated many kilometres from the coast and at times when it was colder, drier and windier than present and supported vegetation communities and animals that were different than today. Aboriginal people have probably lived continuously on the land at Bronte throughout the major climatic and environmental changes that have taken place during the last 30,000 years and environmental and archaeological records that potentially survive buried in different places on the former Bronte estate lands may be able to document an equally long and probably unbroken history of Aboriginal occupation of this transformative landscape.

5.3.2 Archaeological values

No Aboriginal archaeological sites have been identified at Bronte House or garden, or in Bronte Gully. However, Bronte House was built in a 'site favourable' location on top of an elevated topographic position overlooking a steep sided east-facing sandstone coastal valley that was drained by a freshwater creek. These landscape attributes will have continued to be important to Aboriginal people after white settlement where a relatively sparse white population may have allowed Aboriginal people to continue to maintain access to both coast and woodland environments in close proximity to possibly important traditional fishing spots and engraving sites in this part of eastern Sydney.

5.3.3 Archaeological historical values

There are very few direct historical references to Aboriginal people at Bronte in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. However, the Aboriginal history for eastern Sydney as a whole suggests that coastal embayment gullies such as Bronte are likely to have continued to be used by Aboriginal people possibly into the 1830s after which Aboriginal may have more frequently used the country further south around La Perouse and Botany Bay where there was probably far less settler interference.

5.3.4 Aboriginal cultural values

The following Aboriginal cultural heritage values have been identified for this study:

- Bronte House was built very late in a much longer story of Aboriginal occupation of Sydney and the house and grounds are in some respects incidental to that Aboriginal history. This unbroken Aboriginal coastal history included periods where Ice-Age sea levels saw people living on former coastlines sometimes located a long way off to the east this life is now only reflected by the oldest archaeological coastal sites we have now that were situated well inland from the sea for the most part when they were occupied.
- The sea was always important to 'saltwater people' for food and other resources and continues to be so today. Sheltered gullies like Bronte formed an integral part of a far wider spiritual and social coastal cultural landscape that extended beyond Botany Bay to the far south coast. Organ (1990) documents traditional Aboriginal stories of marine animal ancestors such as

whales, sharks, dolphins and different species of fish on the NSW coast which provided spiritual connections to offshore waters. Tharawal people for example are recorded to have believed dolphin's held special powers of protection ('policeman') and killer whales and many seabirds (both resident and migratory) such as pelicans and cormorants also had spiritual significance as totems (Wesson 2005). The importance of caring for totem animals extends in the modern world to safeguarding the animal's habitat and marine resources were and continue to be part of the spiritual wellbeing of coastal Aboriginal people.

- Coastal Aboriginal people have a long tradition of 'making a living from fishing' since 1788. There are numerous historical examples of early Aboriginal involvement in commercial fishing operations run by Europeans including participation in abalone fishing and whaling operations on the southern NSW coast. One of the best known examples of the latter fishing was the first shore-based whaling station established at Twofold Bay in the 1830s that attracted Aboriginal people to the bay for employment. By the 1840s this had a strong influence on the patterns of Aboriginal movement and settlement with many Aboriginal people moving to live close to the whaling stations. From the late 1800s government authorities encouraged coastal Aboriginal groups to make a living from fishing (by subsidising fishing boats for example) and Aboriginal commercial fishermen often attempted to continue to fish according to traditional and sustainable practices using skills and knowledge passed on from generation to generation but equally as often found that their methods (such as estuarine and beach netting) were rendered less effective in the face of modern 'catch-all' methods and/or illegal by modern fisheries legislation. Members of the contemporary La Perouse community continue to fish for and 'gather' abalone using traditional methods and this continues a practice where enterprising Aboriginal people have used their fishing skills taught to them to support their own small-scale lobster and abalone trading activities. A firsthand experience drawn from a broader Aboriginal story titled '*mutton fish – a dying tradition?*' (Cruse et al 2005) explains aspect of this tradition in the following way:

> In traditional times, when Aboriginal people gathered food from the ocean, particularly mutton fish, it was a cultural thing that took place many years ago. But we know that from my forefathers, particularly from my dad and my uncles. They taught me how to gather mutton fish along the south east coast of NSW. The mutton fish were gathered for food and many times we gathered them to trade…..There was a special way of processing mutton fish…it was there on the rocks that the meat of the shellfish was taken out of the shell. And the shell was always left on the tidal line. The mutton fish was pounded on the rocks there to tenderise, and taken home and cooked… When we took mutton fish home we shared with others, that was the traditional thing.'

6.0 Evaluation and Conclusions

6.1 Assessing Aboriginal heritage significance

The reason for significance assessments is to explain why particular sites or places may be important to the community and to allow for appropriate management strategies to be developed when changes in landuse circumstances may potentially affect the assessed significance values of a site or a place.

Cultural significance is defined in the *Australian ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* (the *Burra Charter*) as '*aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations*' (Article 1.1). This aspect of significance may be derived from the fabric of a place, association with a place, or the research potential of a place. While these definitions are more commonly used with reference to buildings or items, they can also in a number of respects also apply to archaeological features and deposits.

This preliminary assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance of the potential Aboriginal archaeological resources that may be contained within the site incorporates a consideration of the Aboriginal cultural values as they were explained during the consultation process with the project RAP's, follows current OEH guidelines (NPWS 1997:5-11), and also uses additional criteria that are derived from the Burra Charter (see below). An important position that needs to be made clear as part of the assessment process is that not all sites are equally significant and not all heritage sites at a general level will warrant equal consideration and management. The significance of heritage sites also changes over time, often as more research is undertaken in archaeological and environmental circumstances, and as community values change and develop over time.

This does not lessen the value of the heritage assessment approach, but is an integral part of the process of determining what is conserved for future generations and why. OEH guidelines for the assessment of significance of Aboriginal sites, objects and places identify two types of significance criteria; *cultural significance* and *archaeological significance.*

Cultural significance concerns the values of a site or feature to a particular community group which in this case is the local Aboriginal community. Aboriginal Archaeological heritage sites, objects, and some landscapes are all often important for different reasons, or have become important to Aboriginal people over time. This importance involves both people's historical links to 'country' in general, and possible attachments to specific areas in particular, as well as an overall concern of many Aboriginal people for the continued protection of the land and its cultural heritage sites.

Scientific significance in archaeological contexts is usually assessed using criteria that aim to evaluate a given site's contents, state of preservation (integrity), representativeness or rarity, and research potential. A preliminary evaluation of the significance of Bronte House as a 'place' in its 'setting'

according to the criteria below is provided using the following ways to grade the potential 'scientific' (as opposed to Aboriginal cultural heritage) significance of this assessment of the Aboriginal historical, archaeological and environmental values :

- *Archaeological research potential* incorporates values of intactness (whether it has stratigraphic integrity or is disturbed), the association of the site to other sites in the local or regional (or State) context, and sometimes also how the site may fit into a dated chronology if one exists, when considering how the site may contribute to our further understanding of past Aboriginal life. This would also apply to environmental evidence, and this area of assessment is consistent with *Criterion 'e'* of the *Heritage Branch* guidelines (see below). Historical research suggests that limited information is recorded about Aboriginal people at Bronte, but future research may identify more evidence or ways to look at what evidence is at hand now.
- *Representativeness* is a term to convey the idea that most Aboriginal archaeological (and environmental) sites are representative of a particular 'type' or sub-type/class which for example would apply to a rock shelter with art as distinct from an open campsite with stone artefacts. This issue is tricky in archaeological heritage management because often it has to be decided whether particular sites should be conserved to ensure a representative sample of the archaeological record is retained for future generations. All Aboriginal heritage sites, or at least most, are important to Aboriginal people today as are the written records of their history. This general area of assessment is broadly consistent with *Criterion 'a'* of the *Heritage Branch* guidelines (see below). The Aboriginal historical records for eastern Sydney provide an idea of in what types of scenarios Aboriginal people probably used Bronte after 1788. In this regard, Bronte Gully is likely to functioned and has been used by Aboriginal people in ways in the past that were typical of similar coastal bays to the north and south.
- *Rarity* can apply to a unique or uncommon archaeological or environmental site itself or elements of its component parts (archaeological rare finds or contexts) as much as written records and what they can tell us can be 'rare finds', and the first two categories can be assessed at a local, regional, State and national level. This area of assessment is consistent with *Criterion 'a'* of the *Heritage Branch* guidelines (see below).

6.1.2 Assessment against standard Criteria

NSW Heritage Branch *Assessing Heritage Significance* establishes seven evaluation criteria that reflect significance categories and representativeness by which a place can be evaluated. The following responses to each below have been guided by the Aboriginal archaeological and cultural heritage findings and conclusions that are documented in this report.

Criterion (a) – an item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The Aboriginal and environmental heritage values of Bronte Gully in its coastal setting are considerable and will have attracted repeated use by people in the past. While any archaeological evidence that may remain buried or obscured in the gully or gardens of Bronte House will be important and especially to the local Aboriginal community, it is expected that the potentially archaeology will comprise stone artefacts or engravings that will most likely be of a general character and composition representative of similar sites recorded in the local Waverley landscape.

Criterion (b) – an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The identities of the Aboriginal people who may have visited and used the place in the past, but it is likely that their individual role in NSW's cultural-evolution was minor.

Criterion (c) – an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).

Bronte House and its setting, along with Bronte Gully and the coastal strip, all retain considerable aesthetic appeal that is typical of these east facing sheltered gullies, but the 'light foot prints' left on the land from past Aboriginal landuse (firing etc) and the absence of engraved or painted art for example makes it is unlikely that the site as an Aboriginal place fulfil this criterion.

Criterion (d) – an item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

The land is very important to the local Aboriginal community for a number of cultural heritage reasons that are identified below.

Criterion (e) – an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

Bronte Gully has the potential to retain important environmental evidence about the natural history of the coast, and reasonable potential to retain archaeological resources useful to understanding of Aboriginal life in eastern Sydney over a considerably long period of time.

Criterion (f) – an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

It is unlikely that rare archaeological or environmental evidence Occurs in Bronte Gully and the available documentary records do not indicate that any significant Aboriginal activity or natural event occurred that will have left an uncommon or rare trace

Criterion (g) – an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments.

It is considered that the site's inferred Aboriginal history and potential archaeological and environmental history resource is likely to be broadly representative of similar sites in Sydney at a general level. However, we know relatively little about Aboriginal heritage connections with most historical houses in east Sydney (Elizabeth Bay House and Vaucluse House being exceptions because their Aboriginal histories have been examined), and no other comparable historical examples in Waverley have been studied at this time.

6.1.3 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.

7.0 Management Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided in response to issues below that are recommended for future action in the 2014 CMP:

1. *'The setting of the place should include Bronte Park and Beach (Policy 2).*

   This is consistent with an Aboriginal heritage perspective of the place, and the Aboriginal cultural heritage values and attachments that have been identified for the place and its setting and are recommended for recognition in the SHR listing for Bronte House.

2. *Fabric that should be removed includes planting in the eastern garden that block historic views from the house to the east to Bronte Beach, Nelson Bay and the ocean (Policy 10).*

   Future works in the garden to remove plantings along with other potential changes to existing ground surfaces have the potential to expose Aboriginal rock engravings and axe grinding grooves and it is recommended that future site works such as these should be discussed with the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council at preliminary planning stages to identify whether the LPLALC have an interest in monitoring this activity.

3. *The place should be interpreted (Policy 13).*

   Aboriginal themes and 'story-lines' that add to our understanding of the story and significance of the place are explored in this report, but any future decisions about interpretation should be developed in consultation with the LPLALC.

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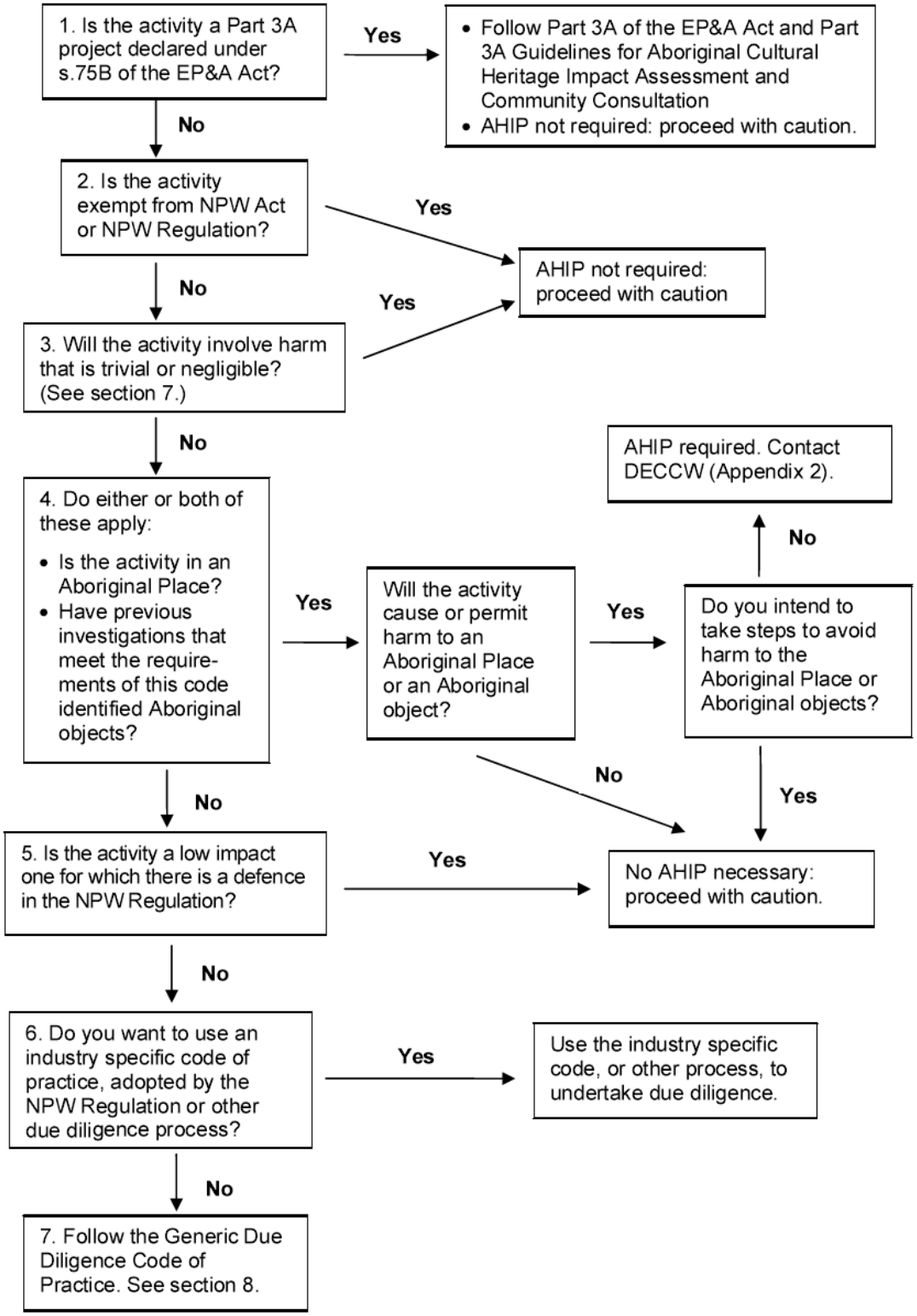
Appendix 1

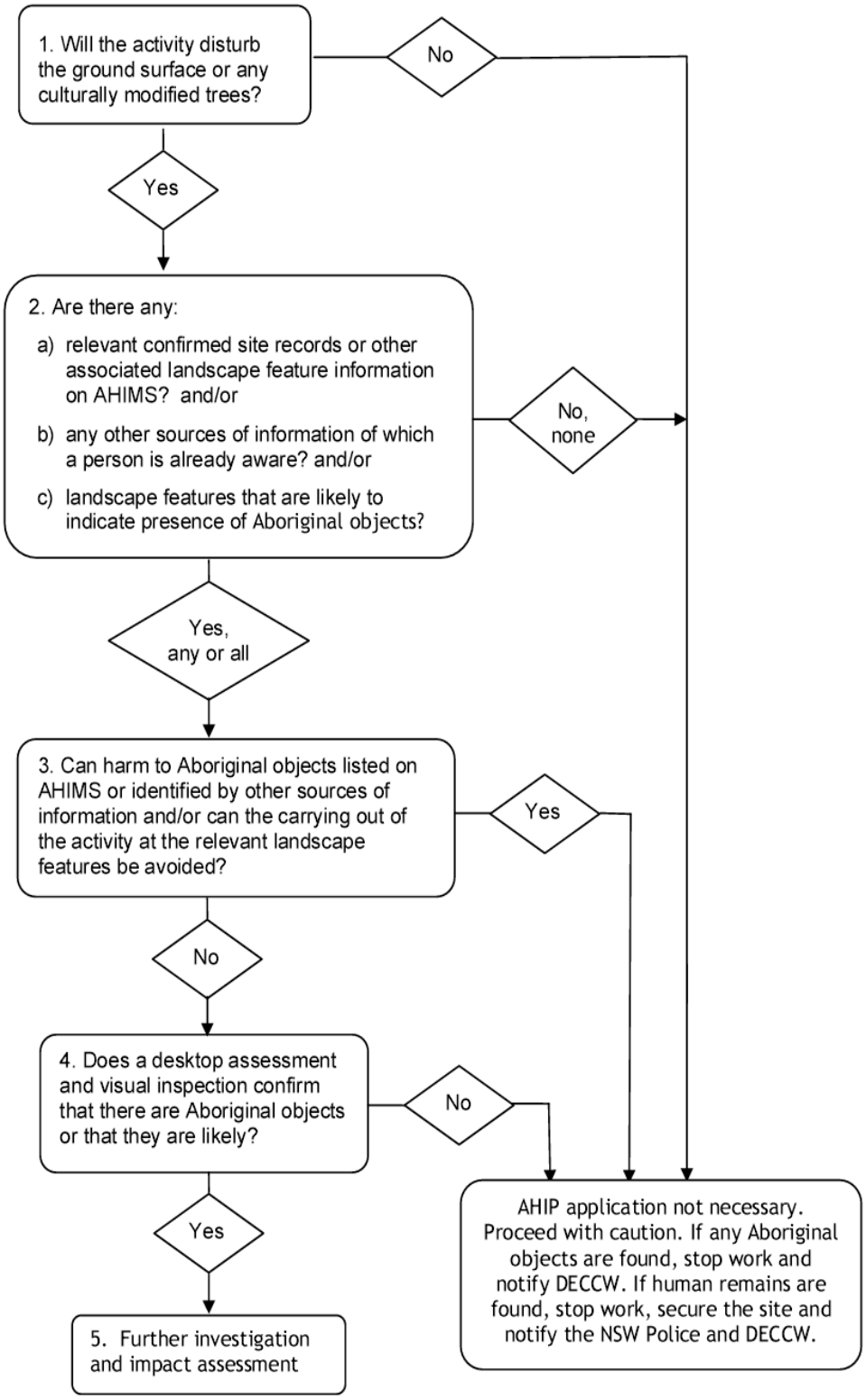
OEH Due Diligence Code of Practice

Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW – NPWS Act 1974

1 Do you need to use this due diligence code?



8 The generic due diligence process



Appendix 2

AHIMS Sites Searches

Office of Environment & Heritage

AHIMS Web Services (AWS)
Search Result

Purchase Order/Reference : Bronte basic

Client Service ID : 163636

Dominic Steele Archaeological Consulting

Date: 25 February 2015

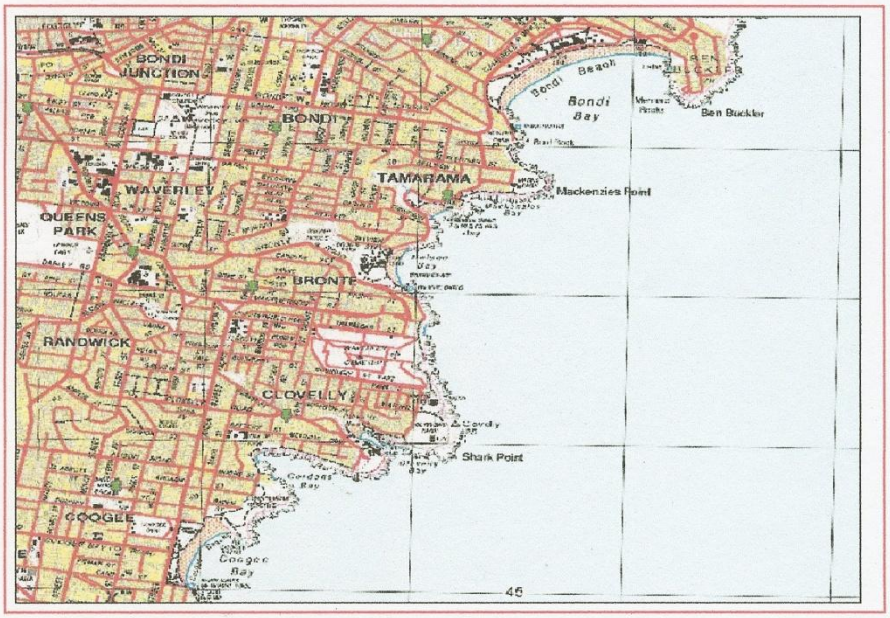
21 Macgregor Street
CROYDON New South Wales 2132
Attention: Dominic Steele

Email: dsca@bigpond.net.au

Dear Sir or Madam:

AHIMS Web Service search for the following area at Datum :GDA, Zone : 56, Eastings : 339200 - 341000, Northings : 6245000 - 6248800 with a Buffer of 50 meters, conducted by Dominic Steele on 25 February 2015.

The context area of your search is shown in the map below. Please note that the map does not accurately display the exact boundaries of the search as defined in the paragraph above. The map is to be used for general reference purposes only.



A search of the Office of the Environment and Heritage AHIMS Web Services (Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System) has shown that:

7	Aboriginal sites are recorded in or near the above location.
0	Aboriginal places have been declared in or near the above location. *

If your search shows Aboriginal sites or places what should you do?

- You must do an extensive search if AHIMS has shown that there are Aboriginal sites or places recorded in the search area.
- If you are checking AHIMS as a part of your due diligence, refer to the next steps of the Due Diligence Code of practice.
- You can get further information about Aboriginal places by looking at the gazettal notice that declared it. Aboriginal places gazetted after 2001 are available on the NSW Government Gazette (http://www.nsw.gov.au/gazette) website. Gazettal notices published prior to 2001 can be obtained from Office of Environment and Heritage's Aboriginal Heritage Information Unit upon request

Important information about your AHIMS search

- The information derived from the AHIMS search is only to be used for the purpose for which it was requested. It is not be made available to the public.
- AHIMS records information about Aboriginal sites that have been provided to Office of Environment and Heritage and Aboriginal places that have been declared by the Minister;
- Information recorded on AHIMS may vary in its accuracy and may not be up to date .Location details are recorded as grid references and it is important to note that there may be errors or omissions in these recordings,
- Some parts of New South Wales have not been investigated in detail and there may be fewer records of Aboriginal sites in those areas. These areas may contain Aboriginal sites which are not recorded on AHIMS.
- Aboriginal objects are protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 even if they are not recorded as a site on AHIMS.
- This search can form part of your due diligence and remains valid for 12 months.

3 Marist Place, Parramatta NSW 2150
Locked Bag 5020 Parramatta NSW 2220
Tel: (02) 9585 6380 Fax: (02) 9873 8599

ABN 30 841 387 271
Email: ahims@environment.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Office of Environment & Heritage NSW GOVERNMENT

AHIMS Web Services (AWS)

Extensive search - Site list report

Purchase Order/Reference : Bronte ext

Client Service ID : 156881

SiteID	SiteName	Datum	Zone	Easting	Northing	Context	Site Status	SiteFeatures	SiteTypes	Reports
45-6-2306	Gordons Bay;	AGD	56	339100	6245850	Open site	Valid	Grinding Groove : -	Axe Grinding Groove	
	Contact	Recorders	W Hayes					Permits		
45-6-0694	Middle Head;Port Jackson;	AGD	56	339594	6246471	Open site	Valid	Art (Pigment or Engraved) : -	Rock Engraving	
	Contact	Recorders	Unknown Author					Permits		
45-6-2060	South Bondi Cave;	AGD	56	340320	6247930	Closed site	Valid	Shell : -, Artefact : -	Shelter with Midden	1809
	Contact	Recorders	Michael Guider					Permits		
45-6-2169	Bondi Beach;	AGD	56	340650	6248550	Open site	Valid	Artefact : -	Open Camp Site	
	Contact	Recorders	Michael Guider					Permits		
45-6-1947	Tamarama Beach Cave;	AGD	56	339990	6247380	Closed site	Valid	Shell : -, Artefact : -	Shelter with Midden	
	Contact	Recorders	Michael Guider					Permits		
45-6-0750	Marks Park;Tamarama;Bondi Beach;	AGD	56	340420	6247470	Open site	Valid	Art (Pigment or Engraved) : -	Rock Engraving	
	Contact	Recorders	Mr.Peter Brookhouse					Permits		

Report generated by AHIMS Web Service on 03/12/2014 for Dominic Steele for the following area at Datum :GDA, Zone : 56, Eastings : 339200 - 341000, Northings : 6245800 - 6248800 with a Buffer of 50 meters. Additional Info : for a cmp update. Number of Aboriginal sites and Aboriginal objects found is 6

This information is not guaranteed to be free from error omission. Office of Environment and Heritage (NSW) and its employees disclaim liability for any act done or omission made on the information and consequences of such acts or omission.

Appendix 3

The 'Spanish Proclamation'

The Secret Visitors Project

A sceptical look at beliefs in Australian history

The 'Spanish Proclamation'

High above Bondi Beach with spectacular views out to sea you will find a small rock engraving which became one of the proofs used by aviation pioneer Lawrence Hargrave in support of his theory that the Spanish had landed in eastern Australia in 1595. He thought that the Spanish had made this carving as their official record of their presence and possession of the land, and termed it the Spanish Proclamation. Hargrave's argument convinced very few people and the story associated with the engraving remains largely forgotten.

Hargrave is best known for his aeronautical experimentation, for which he is rightly recognised as a pioneer (http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A090194b.htm?hilite=hargrave%3Blawrence). Much of this took place in the late 19th century; once the Wright brothers flew successfully his work was superseded by others. Perhaps in part driven by relevance deprivation, during mid 1906 Hargrave was inspired by the discovery of a cannon in Torres Strait and his own memories of work in the same area in the 1870s to develop a theory that the Spanish mariner Lope de Vega in the ship *Santa Isabel* [or *Ysabel*] had been separated from Alvaro de Mendana de Neira's expedition to settle the Solomon Islands and had instead travelled as far south as Sydney Harbour, where they stayed for perhaps 3 years before being rescued.

(https://secretvisitors.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/spanish-proc1.png)
Figure 1. Hargrave's recording of the 'Spanish Proclamation'.

Hargrave presented his theory to newspapers and in a lecture to the Royal Society of NSW in June 1909. The second part of his talk was presented in December 1909 to strong negative reaction. The published Royal Society papers, and later self-published documents and newspaper letters introduced a range of evidence to support his theory. One of his key proofs was the engraving at Bondi.

The engraving

Description

The engraving [Figure 1] is located on the headland to the north of Bondi Beach, known since at least the 1830s as Ben Buckler. Later it was also called Meriverie [various spellings, earliest being Meriberri], which was also the name of the quarry that mined a basaltic dyke on the headland. The engraving is on exposed rock near the edge of the cliff, partly within a shallow natural depression that holds a few centimetres of rainwater. About 50 metres to the south is a large rock exposure that contains a number of Aboriginal rock engravings, later re-cut by Waverley Council. Immediately to the northwest is the tall chimney of the Bondi Ocean Outfall Sewer (http://sydneywater.com.au/Sustainability/OurHeritageAssets/_item_view.cfm?hi=4570662). The engraving is currently surrounded by a small chain fence.

The engraving shows two sailing ships in profile. Around and over them are a series of letters – BALN ZAIH – and other engravings such as a cross within a circle. They are engraved into the surface of the sandstone. They are oriented to be read from the west.

The full set of motifs are:

Ship 1 – port side view, curved hull, suggestion of rudder, sterncastle and two part forecastle, bowsprit. Measures 660 mm long by 220 mm high.

Ship 2 – starboard side view, curved hull, delineated keel, sterncastle, bowsprit, about 12 portholes marked by dots. Has deteriorated too much to allow measurement, but scaled from existing drawings is about 1000 mm long by 250 mm high.

Lettering – first line B A L N, second line Z A I H, third line W O. The O is divided into quarters with a vertical cross. Lettering height ranges from 135 mm for the Z to 150 for the B. The first two lines are about 500 mm long.

Line – a line 400 mm long with a small triangle at either tip.

The engravings were first noted by Campbell in his 1899 recording of the nearby Aboriginal engravings. He mentioned that these engravings looked much less weathered than the Aboriginal motifs [Campbell 1899: 11]. Watson and Vogan [Watson 1911] detected two different hands at work, while Hargrave conceded that the N, I and H were scratched rather than chiselled in [Hargrave 1914: 34]

When inspected in March 2010 the engraving was found to be in poor condition. Recent wet weather had resulted in part of the engraving being covered with standing water. The lettering is clear, as is Ship 1 at the bottom of the panel. The outline of Ship 2 to the right had all but disappeared, and could only be faintly detected.

Parts of the rock platform surface are exfoliating, where the hardened surface rind of stone had detached from the bedrock and popped off completely, exposing softer stone. The chains that had been erected around the panel are also dragging on the rock and abrading the stone.

Interpretation

Hargrave read the motifs as being a single coherent and purposeful message, cut into the shallow depression in one episode. In his scheme it was the semi-official proclamation of the survivors of Lope de Vega's expedition, made after their rescue by the *Santa Barbara* in c.1600. In his reading the two ships are the *Santa Isabel* [or *Ysabel*] and the *Santa Barbara*. The lettering Hargrave interprets as *Santa BArbara, Santa YZAbel* for the ships and '**L**', '**N**', '**H**' being initials of the senior men present. '**W**' was the name they gave to this country. The cross in the circle was Spain's symbol for conquest in the name of God.

Read together the symbols and letters meant, 'We in the Santa Barbara and the Santa Ysabel conquered W… from point to point. By the sign of the Cross.' The initials represent Lope de Vega and his three witnesses, N, I and H. This version appeared in his 1911 booklet and he maintained it essentially as is until his death. One variation that appeared in his later thoughts is that he thought W… referred not more generally to the eastern Australian coast but to an island formed from the higher land between Randwick to South Head, believing that this was separated by swamp or open water from the rest of Sydney in 1595.

Hargrave also believed that the name Meriverie itself was Spanish in origin, being Mare-y-ver-e = 'Sea view' [Hargrave 1914: 34].

History of the engraving

Hargrave's interest

The headland at Ben Buckler had already been the scene of significant European activities before Hargrave's attention was drawn to it. Quarrying the 'white metal' basaltic dyke at O'Brien's Bondi Quarry began in 1860-61 and continued for decades. In 1888 a sewer vent was installed near the engravings as part of the Bondi Sewer. In 1910 it was replaced with the current sewer tower.

The engraving first came to notice when Aboriginal carvings were being recorded by WD Campbell, who produced a detailed corpus of engravings in the Sydney district for the Geological Survey of NSW. After describing the Aboriginal engravings immediately to the south he noted:

> *[s]ome clue as to the slow rate of decomposition of the rock surface is afforded by a small carving which has been done with a chisel, by a white man evidently. It is one chain north-easterly from the north end of this group; it represents the hulls of two small vessels with the old-fashioned high poop and forecastle in vogue at the time of the founding of the Colony. Although this is considerably weathered, it is not anything like so much as that which the group above has undergone* [Campbell 1899: 11].

The earliest mention of the Spanish Proclamation by Hargrave is a 1:1 tracing that he made of the engravings onto linen sheet. The annotation that the engravings sat in a shallow depression that may have prevented 'wanton vandalism' is dated 12.3.1910 [Hargrave 1914: unnumbered]. Apart from this there is a note in his personal papers held in the Powerhouse Museum Archives (http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/archives/) dated to 18.4.1910, which follows the form Hargrave used when he had a bright idea and wanted to document it properly within his files. The note identifies the lettering and their equivalents which he would later propose as the translation. Other undated material in his papers includes comparative hull profiles of the *Santa Barbara*, *Santa Isabel* and Columbus's *Santa Maria*.

The President of the Royal Australian Historical Society James H. Watson had already disagreed with Hargrave publicly over the origin of engravings of human and animal figures at Woollahra Point, suggesting that rather than being of Spanish origin they were done by convicts early in the colonial period. In Watson's view the outstretched arms were meant to show a convict tied to a whipping frame [Watson 1909]. When Hargrave ventured more public comments in 1911 Watson issued a strong critique in a newspaper letter.

> *Regarding the Ben Buckler engravings the carvings on the Bondi cliffs, to my mind-and also to that of Mr. A. J. Vogan, who accompanied me when I inspected them have been done at different periods, the larger ship being much older than the other. The royal-forecastle of the smaller appears to have been added, as also the bowsprit, and is not a part of the original. The letters look much more recent than the ships.* [Watson *SMH* 15.9.1911 p. 5]

The letter is interesting in several ways. Clearly, Watson was systematically examining the evidence Hargrave put forward in support of his theory. Secondly, he mentions Arthur J. Vogan, who was to shortly embark on his own even more fanciful analysis of Aboriginal engravings and evidence for prehistoric migrations into Australia and the Pacific.

In 1911 Hargrave wrote to the Spanish Consul seeking support to protect the engravings at Woollahra Point and Ben Buckler but without success. Around this time he also approached the Mitchell Library to see if they could fund the recovery of 'the most important document in Australian history' as he called the Bondi carving. They declined, suggesting instead the Australian Museum [1914: unnumbered]. An upset Hargrave wrote to his two daughters in Britain, saying that this was unacceptable, as the Australian Museum staff were wedded to the Aboriginal engravings idea. Hargrave was at the same time working with Museum staff to excavate a midden on one of the Woollahra Point blocks near his home, in the hope of finding evidence to support his theory. His exasperation at the treatment of the Spanish Proclamation spilled over into an angry letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, in which he says

> *Your liberal-minded readers will understand better what "discredited" means when I tell them that the Mitchell Library declines to preserve the oldest document in Australia, the Spanish proclamation at Meriveries; that the Australian Museum tells me the few things that I say relate to Spain are all rubbish; that the Historical Society, through their president and secretary, ascribe the industry of certain in telligent convicts as being accountable for things I render reasons for being Spanish.* [Hargrave *SMH* 12.9.1911, p. 7]

One possible convert that Hargrave made in this debate was Norman Lindsay, then an illustrator at the *Bulletin* magazine. Lindsay was deeply interested in historical ships and was a proficient model-maker, as well as being a very competent craftsman and artist in a range of media, a trait that probably endeared him to Hargrave who admired practical skills. In the magazine *The Lone Hand* in 1913 Lindsay wrote his own appreciation of the Lope de Vega story, illustrating it himself. The illustrations of the Lope de Vega story cover the ship, the carving of the Spanish Proclamation [see Figure 2 below], the last castaway making the bamboo figure een by Hargrave on Ugar Island in Torres Straits and the alleged shipwreck on Facing Island.

Lindsay's belief in the story was qualified. In discussing the Spanish Proclamation he says 'What the lettering accompanying these carvings means I prefer to leave out of this discussion. Mr Hargrave has his theory, which is very ingenious and may be right.' [Lindsay 1913: p. 274].

Hargrave maintained his belief in the inscriptions and his overall theory until his death in early 1915. Almost no-one later admitted to having followed and supported his belief, something that Hargrave himself did not find a concern:

> *Still, it is better to be always in a minority of one and state your views as plainly as your ability allows than to have the support of a majority who do not know the meaning of the things you have attempted to portray.* [Hargrave *SMH* 12.9.1911, p. 7]

After Hargrave

Hargrave's death effectively ended the speculation about these engravings. The inter-war period generally was very quiet in terms of speculations about secret visitors, a phenomenon we have yet to fully understand. Some significant new information did appear that helps us to understand the possible origin of the engravings.

A letter was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* by CW Peck in 1928. Peck had written a number of books and newspaper articles on Aboriginal legends and was involved in the Anthropological Society of NSW. While he was generally sympathetic to Aboriginal people

(https://secretvisitors.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/lawson-meriverie.png)
Figure 2. Norman Lindsays depiction of the engraving of the Spanish Proclamation

and their past he strongly disagreed with the idea that they were necessarily responsbile for the rock engravings around Sydney. He believed this on the basis of no recorded evidence by early European settlers. It was in this context that he critiqued others who believed that Aboriginal engravings were authentic, arguing that some at least were the work of whites.

> *There are at the present time living in or near Sydney two brothers, both over 70 years old, and both native born. … Out Palm Beach way there are aboriginal rock carvings (sic) done by these brothers in the days of their youth. … I think they sat back and laughed when Lawrence Hargreaves found out so much about the visits of some old Spaniard to Ben Buckler, and they certainly laugh at the naming of the high pooped ships crudely drawn. … Will it not be funny when the Ben Buckler drawings are fenced in, and school children are marched down to see the pictures of the Spanish ships that came here in the sixteenth century.* [Peck *SMH* 4.10.1928: 6]

He went even further in a letter in the Sydney *Sun:*

> *The Spanish galleons on the rocks at Ben Buckler were cut by two employees of the Dredge Service who were ardent fishermen about 60 years ago.* [Peck *Sun* 11.9.1929].

Michael Terry wrote of the engravings, uncritically accepting them as part of a broader range of evidence for Spanish or Portuguese voyaging down the east coast [Terry 1969]. The next advocate for European voyagers was Kenneth Gordon McIntyre who, although he provides evidence in support of his claim that Spanish sailed down the eastern coast, does not mention any of Hargrave's sites.

Gilroy featured the engravings in *Mysterious Australia* [1995: 237-239] although he mistakenly referred to them as being on the north head of Botany Bay. The tone of his description is also equivocal about their authenticity, which is unusual as Gilroy often embraces even quite implausible anecdotal accounts of discoveries.

This part of the headland has now become a golf course which is reasonably compatible with the retention of the engravings. The Aboriginal engravings were deepened to make the images stand out in 1951 and again in 1964, a practice that has severely affected their appearance. In 1986 the Spanish Proclamation engraving was recognised and added to the Waverley Council Local Environment Plan as an item of environmental heritage (http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_01_2.cfm?itemid=2620434). There has been subsequent vandalism and addition of new graffiti but most remain clearly legible. The protective fencing however is now doing more damage than good.

Analysis

How do we critique Hargrave's reading of the engravings? It almost is too outlandish to even know how to start and how would we convince Hargrave that it was suspect? Clearly from 1910 Hargrave had lost all perspective on his Lope de Vega theory and was unable to rationally assess any arguments or evidence contrary to his scenario. He had delivered his second Lope de Vega talk to the Royal Society of NSW in December 1909 and the reaction was so negative that they declined to hear a third instalment. Hargrave was keen to find evidence that proved his argument, and the engravings at Ben Buckler seemed to fit the bill.

Unlike Hargrave's reading of the Woollahra Point engravings as being non-Aboriginal there is no dispute regarding the European origin of these engravings. Hargrave went to great lengths to compare the ships with other more-or-less contemporary illustrations, such as those of Columbus's voyages. While moderately successful in showing that they were not typical of late 19th century built ships the conclusion could not be pushed too much further.

The explanation of the lettering, however, really strains credulity. Turning a bunch of letters into an elaborate message conveying information about ship names, conquest and the names of witnesses simply does not work. At different times Hargrave pleaded the illiteracy of the crew and the Peruvian slave miners but this is at odds with the importance he places on the message as Lope de Vega's parting memorial. The idea that such an important message would be so poorly composed was one he could never surmount, and made even sympathetic supporters, such as Norman Lindsay, question this fundamental basis for his theory.

Peck's information about these being either deliberate fakes or simply old graffiti is very specific and places their creation at about 1870. Watson and Vogan [Watson 1911] noted that the two ship engravings were of different depth, which is now borne out by the almost complete disappearance of Ship 2, and Campbell also stated they were clearly much fresher

cutting than the Aboriginal engravings immediately to the south, consistently with Peck's claim. The earliest reference I have to O'Brien's Bondi Quarry operating is 1861, which also allows for the possibility of quarry workmen being implicated in their creation as well.

Conclusion

In conclusion there is second-hand but reasonable evidence that the engravings were done in about 1870, by known individuals. The condition of the engravings is consistent with a post-European date, and certainly not in the order of four centuries. The differing engraving of the motifs suggests a number of hands, and it is reasonable to suppose that they are a palimpsest made over time rather than representing, as Hargrave thought, a coherent group with a single meaning. Hargrave's interpretation of the meaning of the engraving cannot be supported in any way. It stretches the limited content to fit his desired theory of Lope de Vega's presence in Sydney. The reading is illogical and pushes credibility. In the face of alternative plausible explanations Hargrave's interpretation cannot be accepted as the explanation for the engravings.

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To be checked

Appendix 4

An Example of a SHR Listed Historic Homestead with Identified Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Values

An Example of a SHR Listed Historic Homestead with Significant Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Values

Dunmore House, Patersons River, 1837. Watercolour by Robert Russell.

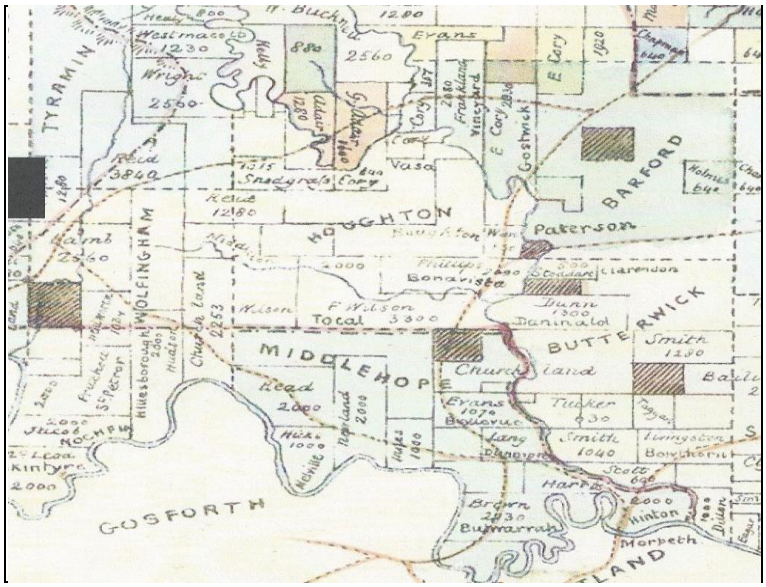
Dunmore House on the Paterson River at Woodville[32]

White annexure and settlement of the Hunter Valley was rapid after Governor Brisbane had directed Henry Dangar in early 1822 to survey the region in readiness. The first settler homes that were built were most often on very large 'estates' that took in all the 'best' river, creek, forest country and prime grasslands. These estates were created within a cadastral grid that was defined by plans drawn by Dangar and others during this period that became the blueprints for settlement and superimposed over the land a uniform grid of one square mile base blocks that quickly became translated on the ground as a contiguous jigsaw pattern of free-settler land holdings*. A number of the earliest buildings dating from that 'pioneer' or 'frontier' period survive today as tangible expressions of this important period of the Hunter's history. Some these buildings are listed on the SHR including Dunmore House which is on the Paterson River (or '*Yimmang'*) near the village of Largs. The house was built on land originally granted to George Lang in 1822. Following his death in 1825, Dunmore passed to his brother Andrew. The back portion of the house was completed by 1827 and the rest of the home was completed between 1833 and 1837. Andrew Lang was a brother of the well known colonial cleric, politician and historian John Dunmore Lang.

[32] This summary has been extracted from a report prepared for a broader ccomparative heritage study of pre 1850s homestead complexes in the Hunter region undertaken by CLSP in 2012 (DSCA November 2012 – 'Identifying Aboriginal archaeological and historical connections').

The 1,050 acres ordered from the Crown by George Lang in April 1822 was the first selection reserved in 'Middlehope Parish' and was doubled in size and named Dunmore through the purchase of adjoining land at Phoenix Park or '*Narragan'* to local Aboriginals in 1824 (Lang 1834:95). Construction of the homestead was completed by the time the village of Largs was established on the estate lands by c.1837 when Lang encouraged about twenty families, most of who came to NSW from poor circumstances in coastal Scotland, to become tenants on the property. The existing house had replaced an earlier (c.1827) slab dwelling and was built on a prominent ridge between two large lagoons that created the Narragan peninsula. Dunmore House had sight lines to other properties of the day along the river and theoretically acted as an important link in a chain of visual communication crucial for flood warning to farmers living on the flood prone lands downstream. In 1834, J.D. Lang described Dunmore in a way that mirrors many of the values that would have also made the place attractive to Aboriginal people before it was taken. He was also aware of what local Aboriginal people thought of their country and was told to him by 'Wallaby Joe' who he had met whilst riding in the district in the early 1830s. Lang recounted that every *'remarkable point of land'* had an Aboriginal name with as much accuracy in regards to locating a place as the street grid in London (Lang 1834:113-114). Wallaby Joe's name was '*probably been given him by some of the convict-servants of the neighbouring settlers'* (ibid:114). Dunmore included a mile and a half of river '*windings',* rich alluvial soil, lightly timbered forest pasture, and the lagoons parallel to the river were the resort of wild ducks, pelicans and black swans. Gammage (2012:223) speculates that Lang may have found a '*complex and beautiful*' landscape '*template*' at Narragan possibly created by Aboriginal people using controlled fire management techniques to maintain plant and animal resource abundance, predictability, continuity and choice.

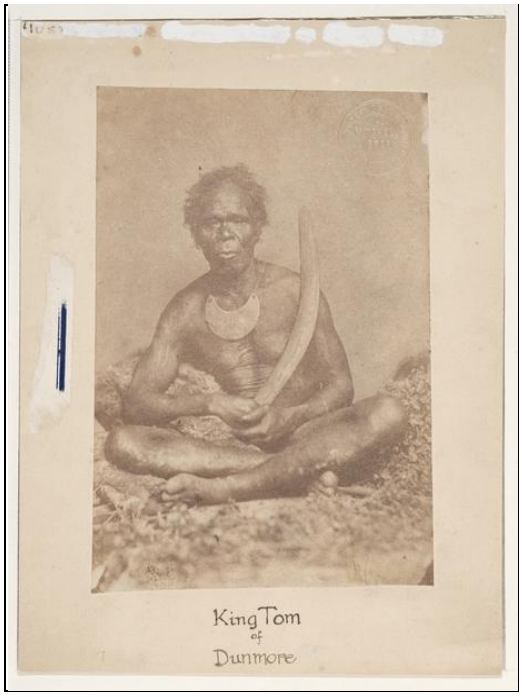
Extract of Baker's 1837 'Map of the County of Durham showing Lang's Dunmore Grant in the Parish of Middlehope (Paterson Historical Society 2013)



A number of Aboriginal stories are attached to Dunmore House and the country on which it was built that can be reconstructed from what we know of the lives of a number of men including '*King Tom of Dunmore*', '*King George of Cawarra'* (Gresford*)* who was a '*universal favourite among the whites'* (MM, 18 August 1877), '*Murphy'* who was a member of the '*Maitland tribe'* with an impressive mid-century charge sheet and jail time (see Freemason's Journal, 1 January 1852), and the '*celebrated' 'Melville'* who was executed for double murder in public in front of the wall of Maitland gaol in 1843 (MM, 18 August 1877). The accounts suggest a distinct disinterest or otherwise lack of awareness by the whites of the affairs of the other formed a part of sharing the land in the 1840s and 1850s. In particular, some of the interactions (or lack thereof) that display elements of the persistence and continuity of traditional Aboriginal ritual and ceremony, can be seen to have taken place in the same space and time zones but to have unfolded within completely '*separate places'* (Harman 2006:182).

We can trace aspects of King Tom's life from the early 1840s when he was a relatively young but already widely known district identity, through to when his staged studio photograph was taken in Maitland in 1861 at the age of between fifty and sixty before his death and likely burial in 1875 on the Hunter River about three miles west of Dunmore House. The suspected burial site of King Tom is located about 500m from Bolwarra House and is marked by an engraved sandstone block lying in a levee-protected paddock commemorating the death of '*King Tom of Dunmore-*' who (inscribed underneath) '*Died December 1875*' (Sullivan 2003:173-179).

'King Tom of Dunmore, Maitland, September 1861 (State Library of NSW).



One of few direct historical references to King Tom at Dunmore House is at the end 1843 in a newspaper account describing a search for the lost eighteen months old daughter of one of the Lang brothers' assigned servants who was for a time thought to have fallen into a large pond or reservoir on the estate. The search party asked:

> *'two blacks who were often about, to go in and see if she was there, the names of the blacks being King Gorman, of the Green-hills tribe* [Morpeth area]*, and Tommy, King of Dunmore. King Gorman refused, and said he knew nothing of the child, but Tommy went in, but could not find her. As the two blacks had been about the hut that day, suspicion was excited by their manner that they had stolen away the child, and information being given to the police, they were apprehended, and up to Thursday night it was generally reported that they had murdered the poor child, several slight circumstances apparently telling against them'* (The Australian, 3 December 1844).

The small girl was soon found playing with sticks in the bush unharmed. King Tom and Gorman were then discharged from custody. Later in 1847 Governor Fitzroy visited West Maitland and King Gorman standing on High Street made an '*exceedingly polite bow'* as he passed to which Fitzroy as politely returned and was seemingly amused (Maitland Mercury, 6 February 1847). Nothing more is known about Gorman or his relationship with King Tom and the Lang's estate at Dunmore. Fifteen years later a '*King Bob of Morpeth* and '*King Wedrow of Dunmore*' was among twenty people who were '*served'* their blankets at the Courthouse. Both were sixty, and of the others some were between fifty with two '*having seventy summers*' and probably more (SMH, 9 June 1862). The latter may have been born before the British landed at Sydney Cove in 1788 and will have been approaching initial initiation ages if young men when the timber gangs first arrived in the area from around c.1801.

King Tom described to a correspondent from the *Maitland Mercury* the following memory of a spot on the Paterson River nearby to Dunmore House during flood in the early 1820s (MM, 25 August 1877):

> *'"King Tom" of Dunmore, whose death was recorded not a very long time since in the Maitland Mercury, and whose experience must have gone back fifty or sixty years, told me he never saw the site on which the Dunmore steam mills lately stood covered by flood water, there was always a portion of dry land there, though it had been frequently surrounded, and the space but limited. It was customary for the blacks to visit the place in flood time, as the spot then would swarm with wild animals of all descriptions, which fell an easy prey. I am not aware that the flood of 1874 covered the site alluded to, but if so it proves the flood to have been the highest known in the Paterson for at least fifty years; that is if "King Tom's" statement is to be relied on, and I have no reason to question its accuracy'.*

Tom appears to have developed some form of similar relationship with David Dickson who owned Bolwarra House who prior to his accidental death (when crushed by a dray) at the homestead in 1867

(MM, 28 May 1867) had been a long-time and highly (successful) respected Maitland settler (since 1839) who had emigrated from Scotland. Dickson was owner-occupier of Bolwarra House with his wife Jane who continued to live in the house after her husband's death. Dickson was fifty nine and his funeral cortege that assembled at The Falls punt was one of the largest to pass through West Maitland on the way to the East Maitland Presbyterian cemetery and included forty vehicles and one hundred and forty horsemen in the long train. The procession was closed by King Tom '*and three other aboriginals, dressed in their new blankets'* (MM, 4 June 1867). A number of meanings can be inferred by Tom's involvement in this ritual, but the reference to new blankets introduces an important Aboriginal historical research area that may help to sketch a possible background social context within which to evaluate this historical reference.

Dickson was widely known as a generous contributor to religious and scholastic efforts and local institutions including Maitland Hospital and Tom displayed his own personal benevolence by contributing '*two pairs wild ducks*' (valued at 5 shillings) to the Patriotic Fund for widows and orphans of men killed in the Crimea (MM, 14 March 1855). Lang collected contributions for this cause at Paterson and Alexander Park also collected four shilling donations each from '*Davis Gordon Wattle and T. M'Cartney (black Fellows)'* at this time (MM, 11 August 1855). Little more is known of King Tom. Christian Carl Krust, a German immigrant employed in the vineyards at Dunmore, described the '*regal insignia'* of King Tom's 'breastplate' and in a letter to a friend in Germany wrote that he was a polite and gentle man grateful for any tobacco and bread and was often seen wearing only an old shirt but otherwise naked (cited in Sullivan 2003:179).

Aboriginal historical events with light footprints like that described near the Dunmore mills are unlikely today to retain any physical trace. Another example of this type of site include a place at '*the back of Dunmore house*' that was reported to have been defined by uniformly marked trees in a selected part of the open forest where the ground was cleared to create paths connecting each of the trees (MM, 4 August 1877). The veracity of this recollection by the correspondent writing of the Maitland and Paterson districts in the 1830s are supported by references to other events interspersed through six related accounts including the execution of Melville for murder in 1843 and the hundreds of grinding grooves concentrated at '*Green Wattle Estate*' described later as an '*axe factory'* by Enright in *Mankind* in 1936.

Another account by this correspondent described a ritual '*fight'* and act of '*standing punishment'* he was invited to attend ('*having their confidence*') between *''George, King of Cawarra', attended by his tribe, and the celebrated Melville (who was many years afterwards hung in East Maitland), attended by his party'* at a place chosen '*about mid-way between Dunmore and Bolwarra house'.* The two rival parties numbered about fifty each and included women and children although the writer noted these fights

seldom had fatal consequences (MM, 18 August 1877). The opposing groups initially took up positions on separate hill sides divided by a gentle slope leading down to a narrow flat before long range and then close quarter fighting using traditional weapons took place between the men with the women and children forming rearguards. The focus of excitement after a time was an '*old man'* of fifty or sixty who subsequently was able to block with his '*eeleman'* (shield) and dodge dozens of spears and boomerangs thrown at him in a set routine with the intention to kill and only suffered a (comparatively) minor injury in the end. The animosity against the '*offender'* stopped as soon as the '*trial'* was over and the groups began talking in a friendly manner with the exception of Melville. After making an '*angry remark'* to King George, Melville walked excitedly away to a tree some distance off where he took a musket and held it towards King George in a menacing manner. As he saw he too retrieved a similar weapon and from his actions appeared to intimate he was also prepared for '*proceeding to extremities'.* The whole affair then ended.

The correspondent employed King George for a time pulling corn and his dress at the time consisted solely of a swallow-tailed blue cloth cloak with brass buttons and an old tall black hat. He appeared more pleased than angry at the laugh his appearance. The writer never found out where or when King George died, but it is probable he had traditional attachments in life to country around Gresford where Henry Lindeman had by 1843 established an 800 acre property he named '*Cawarra'*. He is also described to have '*held more influence over his country-men than any other chief in the district'* but little more is known about him although some things can be inferred.

The reference to him pulling corn is not in itself unusual but knowing the name and a little of the life of an Aboriginal individual during a period when people were at a broader level undergoing massive socio-economic and cultural adaptation processes and changes is however relatively uncommon. King George's dress (with seemingly no trousers similar to King Tom) reveals a number of insights within the context of research by Karskens (2011) into the use of European clothing by Aboriginal men that shows certain aspects of lives of people such as King George were possibly more complex than at first glance in a (settler) social world where relations were shaped by trade and exchange, diplomacy and hierarchy during the period. The description of his coat is more in keeping with a military (possibly Marine) 'tailcoat' rather than a shorter blue (gurrah) convict or labourer's jacket although blue was traditionally a 'working class' and blue dyes were cheap and such garments were also worn by all classes. Images of Aboriginal men wearing jackets and coats are common in early colonial art and some historians have interpreted this as a sign of 'mimicry' and the low status of Aboriginal people in a white settler society. However, Karskens presents a counter-argument that does not present a picture of '*broken people without hope'* (Karskens 2011:1). Wearing traditional and European clothing and being unclothed were customary to Aboriginal people in the Hunter after c.1820 and it is likely that personal, group or larger cultural choices were made according to circumstance when dress such as that described for King

George was chosen. Other accounts from the period also report men (and some women) wearing jackets when in towns, and/or otherwise in the company of whites, but observers at the same time suggest they were soon 'shucked off' by Aboriginal people back at their own camps.