

7th December 2012

1. Description of the proposed development

The Bankfoot House Precinct Redevelopment project is designed to provide new facilities on the Queensland State heritage listed place (602702). The proposed new facilities include a bus set-down area with associated pedestrian pathway outside the heritage listed area, and within the heritage listed area a driveway leading to car parking provision beside a multi-use building which is provided with landscape planting treatments. The works are planned for the 2013/2014 financial year.

2. Reasons for undertaking the development

Sunshine Coast Regional Council are undertaking the development.

In summary, the display of the historic house and its collections currently shares the same space as all modern curatorial activities and this is simply not workable or sustainable. The general lack of visitor facilities negatively affects all efforts that are made to promote the historic site to the general public.

In addition, access for vehicles is not well provided. Because the Council were aware of archaeological features located in the grounds, very appropriately from the beginning of its ownership, they have restricted vehicular access in the grounds. There is therefore no car parking at the site and staff, volunteers and visitors park their cars on the road verge in front of the house, which detracts from its aesthetic setting. For visitors arriving by bus, there is currently no designated drop-off area.

Since purchasing the historic homestead from the Ferris family in 2004, the local council have developed a general Management Plan (2005), encouraged the formation of a not-for-profit incorporated Friends of Bankfoot House community group, employed curatorial supervision, commissioned a Landscape Masterplan and carried out an archaeological remote sensing survey of the grounds to guide development work at the site.

The council benefit from strong local community support, however the Friends group and council staff have always had to carry out their activities within Bankfoot House, as

there is no other facility on the site, and this has been restricting for a number of reasons.

- They have to take extra care operating in the historic house environment to avoid excessive wear and tear on the historic fabric.
- They do not have adequate space to work on (conserve, research, document) the Bankfoot House collections.
- They do not have appropriate storage facilities for the historic collections or other modern equipment, and temporary stop-gap measures to address this problem, such as the positioning of portable storage containers in the grounds, tend to detract from the historical setting.
- They do not have modern comfort facilities. Staff and volunteers must use the toilet and kitchen in the house which is not appropriate in this historic house.
- They do not have an area separate from the house where interpretation and education activities can be delivered.
- The complete lack of facilities for receiving and enabling visitors severely hampers the staff and volunteer's ability to promote the historic site and provide an educational service in relation to an important part of Queensland's history.

The proposed development addresses all of these issues in a well planned and appropriate manner.

3.Applicable conservation policies

The scheme has been developed in light of the following conservation plans and management documents:

2005 Waldron, Page, Miller and Absolon *Bankfoot House: Management Plan* - N.B. it should be noted that the 2005 document was helpfully written to inform the then Caloundra City Council's efforts to appropriately manage the site and is now out of date. Whilst many of the conservation policies are appropriate, they are written without the current more detailed understanding about significance. For instance Conservation Policy 12 (Appendix B of the 2005 Management Plan) aims to "ensure that significant trees and vistas are cared for" but there is little understanding about which trees and vistas are really significant. Since the 2005 plan was written further detailed research and understanding about the site has been carried out (e.g. archaeology & landscape analysis) and the owner's proposed uses and developments have altered. In addition, the

planning context has changed as the site has now been entered onto the Queensland Stage heritage register. The council have taken on advice to comprehensively update this document from 2013 (DERM 2012, Foxon 2012)

2008 Brouwer, The Grounds Conservation Management Plan and Schematic Masterplan

2012 Foxon, Bankfoot House Management Plan: Strategy for update

2012 Brouwer, *Landscape Concept Plan*

1. Proposed changes to the heritage place

The following works are proposed with attendant impacts:

Access

A new bus drop off area with a pathway that connects to the new driveway and from there to the new archive building. The alignment of this pathway has recently been altered from inside the site to remain completely outside the property boundary in the road reserve (DERM 2012).

A new vehicle access driveway allows for staff, volunteer and visitor parking in a location that does not impinge on the view of the house and Mount Tibrogargan from the Old Gympie Road. The new driveway and car park will change the current grassed garden lawn considerably, however the car park areas are constructed of permeable Grass-Cel style paving and the whole vehicular access area is positioned so as to minimise the impact on the significant views from Old Gympie Road of Bankfoot House and the vista to Mount Tibrogargan in the distance behind the house. The new car parking area is screened from Bankfoot House with new hedge style landscape treatment (Brouwer 2012). A silky oak tree and a pine tree needs to be removed to allow for these works. A single timber post will also be removed.

Building

The proposed new Archive Building will be

set far back from the road in the north east corner of the property. The building and verandah is long and narrow in plan form and is aligned so that the narrow end faces the Old Gympie Road frontage, further minimising its impact on the aesthetic nature of the site.

The new building's style is honestly and clearly from the 21st Century and it does not aim to mimic the historic styles of other structures on the site. It is positioned

sufficiently far away from the main house so as not to compete with it in any way. The surface finishes of horizontal custom orb metal sheet cladding and timber batten screen to the western elevation are obviously modern. The outline of the new building is clean and uncomplicated. The roofline is a steeply pitched gable with no overhangs and does not copy the roofline of the historic house.

The building provides a broad range of important facilities for the professional management and interpretation of Bankfoot House and its collection in a compact form. In a change to the schematic master plan outlined in Brouwer's 2008 report (LSK02), it combines, in one slightly larger building development, the activities that were once planned for two separate building developments. This has completely removed the impact of the second development that was once destined for the southern side of the site.

Two pine trees will be removed to allow for these works.

Landscaping work

Heritage landscape architect Catherine Brouwer has been involved in the Bankfoot House project since 2008 and has proposed the landscape treatment for the new building, car park and driveway.

Along the majority of the northern site boundary a hedge-like planting will screen the archive building from the north aspect and help to reduce detrimental views of the neighboring property from Bankfoot House.

The car park area will be provided with hedge-like plantings on the southern side that will help to screen views of parked cars from Bankfoot House.

The south side of the archive building is provided with a series of mulched garden beds which extend out to the line of the car park area to the west. The proposed planting is small trees and shrubs in a massed ground cover. The small trees should be at the right height to provide a softening of views towards the archive building from Bankfoot House and Grounds. The aim is to semi-screen the new building whilst at the same time allowing for pedestrian access south/north from the grounds into the archive building.

It is worth noting that the southern car park boundary and new planting on the south side of the archive building follows an old fence line identified in the 2008 report. The current 3.4 acre Bankfoot House site is a much reduced parcel of land that was originally 160 acres in size.

Brouwer's new planting works, as well as providing a semi-screening effect, aim to provide a definite change in texture, surface and colour to bound the new development area. It seems appropriate to maintain this clear distinction between the original grassed garden and the new works by using landscaping, in much the same way that new buildings constructed close to historic structures are expected to be obviously styled from a different era.

Removal of mature trees

The proposed development aims to retain existing mature trees wherever possible (e.g. the driveway alignment is positioned so as to avoid two crepe myrtles). However it is proposed that three pine trees and a silky oak are removed. These trees do have general landscape value but are visually less significant than others in the garden. The very large *Araucaria Bidwillii* which are situated further forward in the property are much more noticeable when one arrives via the Old Gympie Road.

The origin of these mature trees is recorded by oral history (Chaddock 2012). The pines are self seeded from a Parent Pine (which was itself significant as it was planted by Wm Smith Burgess in the late 1920s) and along with the silky oak these sapling trees were allowed to grow on when the area was cleared of wattle trees by Jack Ferris in 1966. The timber post beside the silky oak is likely to be a stake provided for support of the young tree. By allowing these trees to survive whilst removing others, Jack Ferris demonstrated his passion for timber producing tree species. However, they are not the only pines and silky oaks which have been allowed to survive in the garden.

In attempting to measure significance, Brouwer's 2008 report does not recognise the pine trees or the silky oak as being particularly significant. Certainly, more significant mature trees exist in the garden and these are layered with social and oral historical significance (e.g. *Ficus* and *Araucaria Bidwillii*). The pines and silky oak identified for removal have relatively low significance.

If the scheme were to go ahead as proposed and the four trees were removed it would not leave the garden devoid of the pine and silky oak species. There are other silky oak and pine trees left in the garden to the south of the proposed development on the eastern side of the property.

Mitigation opportunities

There may be an opportunity to mitigate the impact of the mature tree removal by planting a new tree, maybe even one genetically similar to the original. One possible

location would be the original position of the Parent Pine that is mentioned by family members (Chaddock 2012).

Jack Ferris maintained the trees because he recognised their timber value. The timber from the trees could be re-used in the new building or elsewhere on the site. This re-use would reflect the significance of recycling and re-use of materials which is noted in the heritage listing under criterion B. It would also provide an opportunity to interpret the history of the site in the new building.

2.Setting and context of the place

The new works will not adversely affect the significant aesthetics of the site as they are described in the heritage listing. The views east to Mount Tibrogargan and into bushland and paddocks are not affected. Prominent Bunya and Fig trees will remain as distinctive elements in the landscape. The new works do not impinge on existing views from Bankfoot House to the north east and east, which will be retained and include the view past a pair of mature pine trees into bushland.

The views north and north north east from Bankfoot House will be altered by the proposed works. In her 2008 report (refer to drawing LSK01A) Brouwer identifies the views north and north north east from Bankfoot House into the adjacent rural property as 'Not compatible for heritage setting'. It is in these directions that the proposed works are located, and therefore the whole proposed scheme can be seen as an ideal opportunity to improve the visual impact of the neighboring property on the heritage setting.

3.Archaeological values

A remote sensing survey by GBG Australia in 2011 was conducted over large areas of the site and discovered very few unexpected anomalies. The remote sensing survey reinforced the existing understanding of the site based on historical photographic research. In the area of proposed development there were no archaeological features discovered.

4.References

Brouwer, 2008. *The Grounds Conservation Management Plan and Schematic Masterplan*

Brouwer, 2012. *Landscape Concept Plan*

Chaddock, 2012. *Oral History Record in relation to Pine trees and Silky oak in north part of house garden*

DERM, 2012 August 20th. *letter from Maureen Lillie to Mr Chris Vanderpol providing recommendations to Issue C of Middap Ditchfield Architects scheme*

Foxon, 2012 October. *Bankfoot House Management Plan: Strategy for update*

Foxon, 2012 November. *Use of Verandah space in proposed new Conservation Centre*

GBG Australia, 2011. *Subsurface Archaeological Investigation using ground penetrating radar and electromagnetic profiling methods on the grounds of Bankfoot House, Old Gympie Road, Glasshouse Mountains, Qld*

Middap Ditchfield Architects, 2012. *Various drawings including WD 1.01 F Site Plan, WDA 2.01 F Floor Plan, WDA 3.01 Archive Elevations and WDA 4.01 and 4.02 Archive Sections*

Waldron, Page, Miller and Absolon, 2005. *Bankfoot House: Management Plan*

Timeline
HERITAGE



Culture | Heritage | Communication

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Images of the site taken in December 2012:

Bankfoot House HIA	December 2012
	<p>View of proposed new building site, looking east along the northern fence line. The silky oak, timber post and one of the pine trees are visible. The shed in the neighboring property is inappropriate for the heritage setting.</p>
Bankfoot House HIA	December 2012
	<p>View of the proposed building site, looking north. The silky oak and three pine trees are visible. Note the brick construction house and shed in the neighboring property, which is inappropriate for the heritage setting.</p>

Bankfoot House HIA	December 2012
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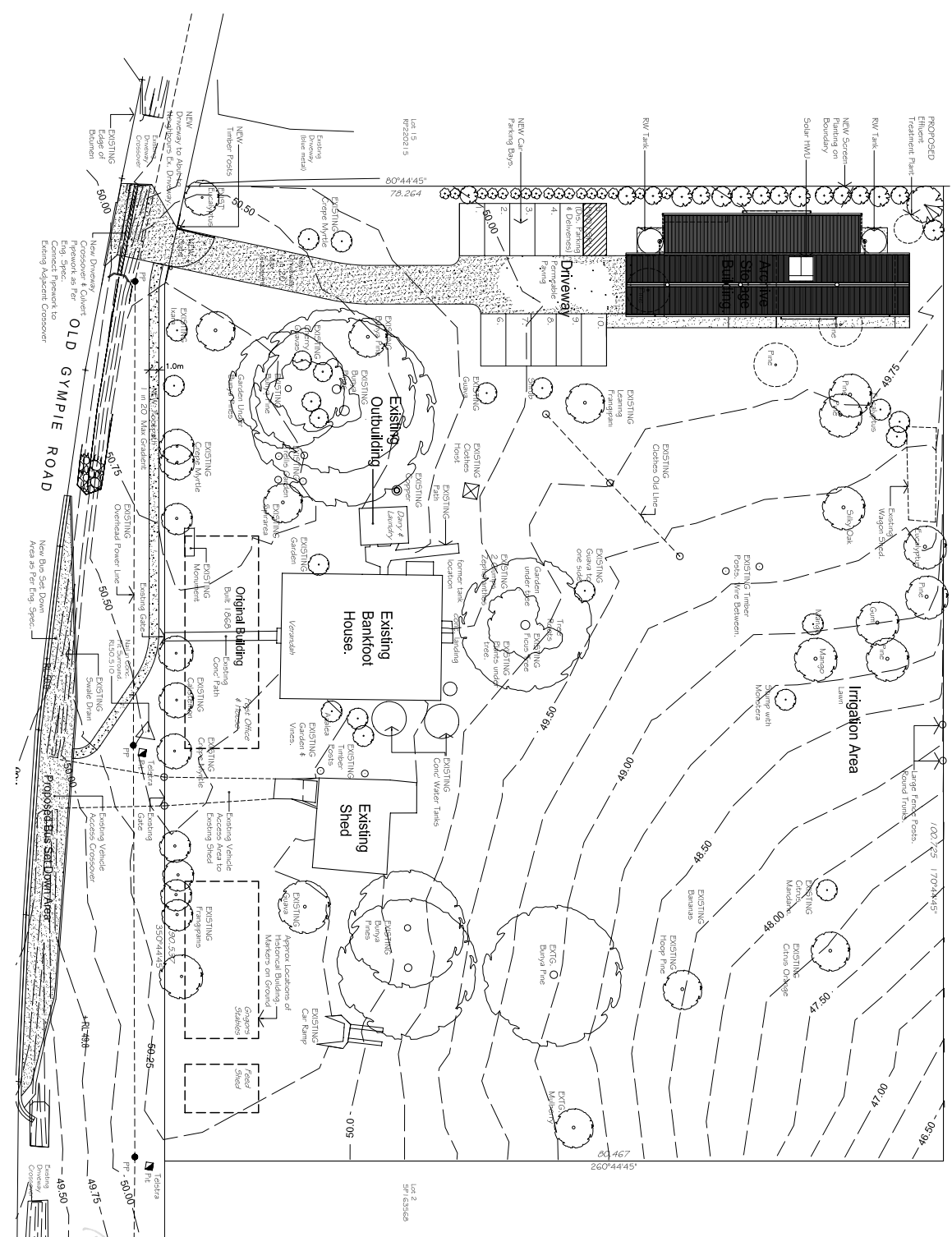
This view north east from Bankfoot House into the bushland behind the property includes pine trees and a silky oak and is not affected by the proposed works

Bankfoot House HIA	December 2012
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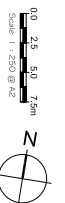
This view east from Bankfoot House includes a significant vista terminating in Mount Tibrogargan and is not affected by the proposed works

Bankfoot House HIA, Site Plan, December 2012



LEGEND

- New Planting / Tree to be Retained
- Tree to be Removed
- + RL 99.9 Proposed Spot Land



CLIENT
Sunshine Coast Regional Council
PROJECT BANKFOOT HOUSE PRECINCT Redevelopment

LOCATION
1998 Old Gympie Road
Arklowe Downs, (Archive Building)
Site Plan

DATE
1: 250 Aug 2012
2: 250 Aug 2012
3: 250 Aug 2012
4: 250 Aug 2012

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THESE PLANS ARE TO BE USED ONLY FOR THE PROJECT AND SITE SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED THEREIN. ANY OTHER USE IS UNLAWFUL.