

HERITAGE (CONSERVATION) ARCHITECTURE AWARD



Photography: Eric Sierens

Bronte House, Restoration & Management Clive Lucas Stapleton & Partners

Given to Waverly Council in 1948 after lobbying by the Institute, Bronte House and its landscaped grounds have been progressively conserved and guided by a now revised Conservation Management Plan. It is a rare surviving late Colonial period Regency style villa, built in c.1845 for Robert and Georgiana Lowe and designed by Colonial Architect, Mortimer Lewis.

In an innovative management arrangement it has been leased as a residence, thus restoring its original use. Lease conditions require the place to be open to the public occasionally, and tenant alterations are controlled by requirements for owners' consent and the development application process. A cyclic maintenance schedule and council inspections also ensure ongoing management of key elements such as roofs and drainage. Major external conservation works were

undertaken in 1981, 1983 and 2014 - the latter after the expiry of a 25 year lease. A skilled gardener has maintained the significant garden during recent construction works.

Works to the villa included replacement of the slate roofing (including substantial white ant repairs to the roof frame) and all of the unpainted timber fencing, as well as complete exterior and interior repairs and repainting using traditional lime wash. Sub-soil drainage and adjustment of ground levels adjacent to the building, an overhaul of door and window joinery and hardware, repair of tessellated tiling, renewal of top courses on stone chimneys and repairs to the dining room bay window joinery were also undertaken; all using skilled craftsmen and traditional methods. These works have prepared the property for a new long-term 'repairing lease'.