



Attachment 1 to Item 3.1.6.

Windsor Toll House Options Analysis

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WINDSOR TOLL HOUSE



OPTIONS ANALYSIS

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Issue: A

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

OCP Architects have been engaged by Hawkesbury City Council to investigate options for the future conservation and use of Windsor Toll House. This is against a backdrop of the building being unoccupied and experiencing significant deterioration of fabric, as well as being subject to repeated flooding in recent years.

Windsor Toll House is one of only two remaining examples in NSW and possibly Australia. As such it is a significant site and requires a high degree of due diligence, care and appropriate maintenance and conservation. In this context, this report considers a range of options for use of the site.

1.1 Site Identification

Windsor Toll House is located within the town of Windsor, in the Hawkesbury region of Greater Sydney. It is within the Hawkesbury Local Government Area, approximately 56 kilometres northwest of the Sydney CBD. The legal description of the site is Lot 1 of Deposited Plan 660716. Bridge Street, Windsor, on northern side of South Creek, below bridge ramp.



Figure 1: Map of Windsor showing the location of the Toll House, indicated in red, adjacent to South Creek and Fitzroy Bridge. (Source: OpenStreetMap, 2025)



Figure 2- Aerial View of the site, with the Toll House outlined in red. (Source: Sixmaps, 2025)



Figure 3: Aerial View of the site, with the lot boundary of the Toll House site outlined in red. (Source: Sixmaps, 2025)

1.1.1 The Heritage Item

Windsor Toll House was built in 1835 (likely preceded by an earlier structure on the site), adjacent to the toll bar (no longer extent). It is one of only two remaining in NSW and likely Australia, the other located at Mount Victoria.

The following table provides a summary of the statutory heritage listings that apply to the study area:

STATUTORY LISTING	ITEM NAME	SIGNIFICANCE	ITEM NO.
Hawkesbury Local Environmental Plan 2012	The Toll House	State	I150

1.2 Summary History of Windsor Toll House

Road tolls were collected at South Creek on the Windsor Road from 1802 to 1887. Preceded by at least one older toll house structure in the vicinity, the Windsor Toll House was erected in 1835 adjacent to the toll bar.

Windsor Toll House is one of only two remaining in NSW (and possibly Australia) the other being at Mount Victoria.

The projecting bay allowed the Toll Keeper to have an unrestricted view in both directions of traffic using the bridge crossing. The building was leased by Government to private operators, and tolls ranging from a farthing to 1/6 were collected for livestock and vehicles of all types. Double tolls were collected on Sundays.

Often inundated by floodwaters, the building was largely destroyed in the flood of June 1864 and was rebuilt in August of that year, with some alterations.

In 1886 a deputation was made to the Minister for Works, urging the toll to be abolished as it was unjust, particularly as many others throughout the country had been removed. The toll was eventually abolished by the Windsor Road Trust in 1887.

In 1975 a new high level bridge was constructed over South Creek almost concealing the Toll House from view. The building has in the past been damaged by both vandals and flood waters, however in 1997 Hawkesbury City Council carried out conservation works to the exterior with assistance from the NSW Heritage Assistance Program.



Figure 3: Toll House at Windsor in c.1935 (State Library of NSW)



Figure 4: Toll House at Windsor in 1947. (State Library of NSW)

2 DESCRIPTION

The Toll House, likely designed by William Wardell, is a single storey Regency style stuccoed sandstone and brick building of symmetrical design. The front elevation facing Windsor Road / Fitzroy Bridge has projecting central five sided bay with central door. Bays each side have windows set in arched recesses, stone paved porch at rear with timber verandah missing. The building has a hipped roof clad in corrugated steel. The internal layout consists of three rooms. Windows are twelve pane Georgian. Flooring is badly deteriorated, central room has no ceiling, fireplaces and mantles have been removed throughout, as have internal doors.



Figure 5: Front elevation and entry steps.



Figure 6: View of toll house from south east, showing yard and rear of building.



Figure 7: Internal view of toll house.



Figure 8: View of timber boarded ceiling (left) and roof space (right).



Figure 9: View of stone flagged verandah at rear of toll house.



Figure 10: View of existing pedestrian path that provides access to the site, looking in direction of Thompson Square.



Figure 11: Pedestrian footpath access to site at left, Fitzroy Bridge at centre, bicycle path at right, from which limited services vehicular access to the site could be provided.

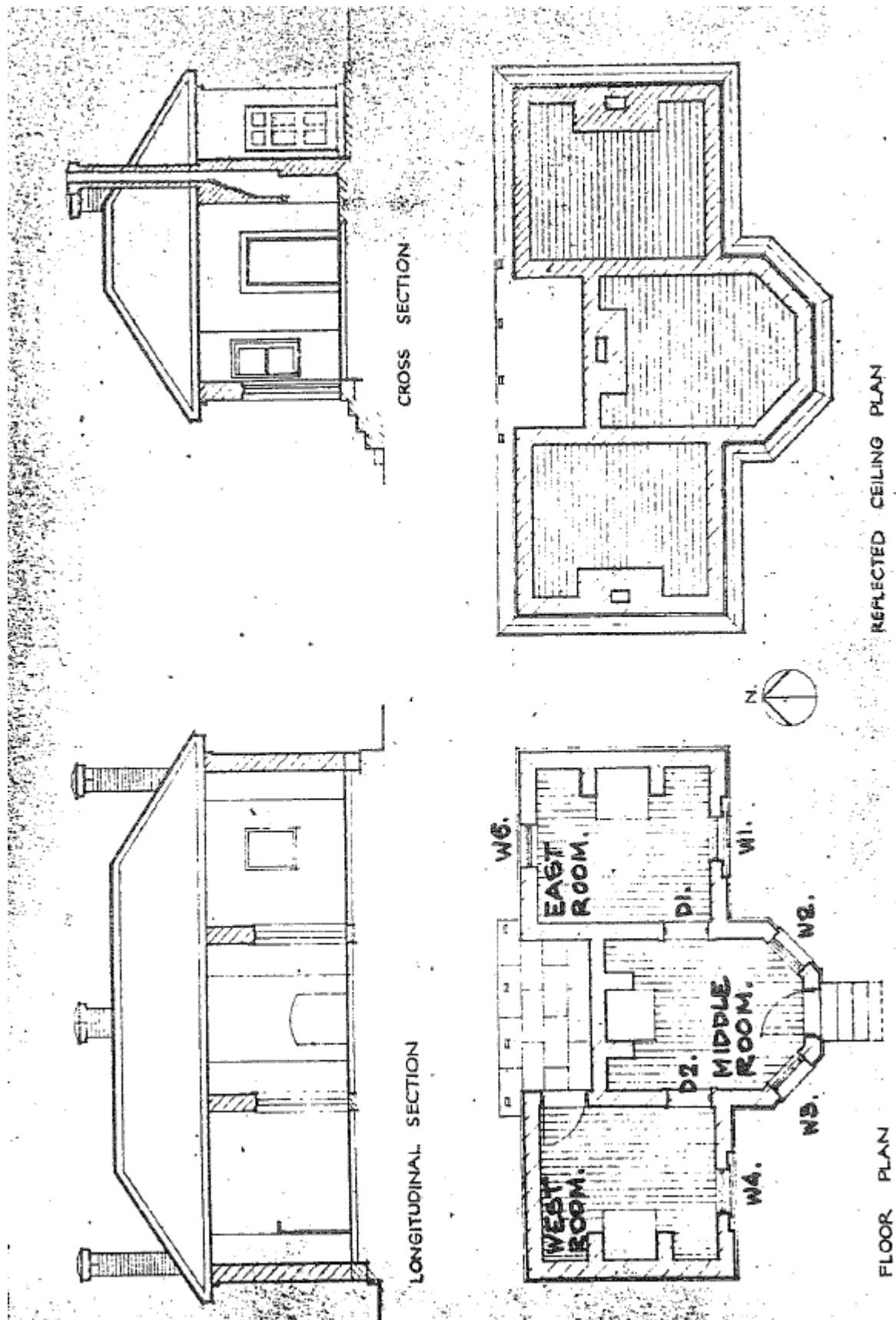


Figure 11: Drawings from 1997 showing elevations, floor plan, and reflected ceiling plan of the toll house (source: Hawkesbury City Council)

3 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Statement of Significance for Windsor Toll House

The following statement of significance has been sourced from the State Heritage Inventory (LEP) listing for the site.

A fine small colonial government building; reminder of the toll system and road network which prevailed last century. Was built as one of six in the colony. Its restoration could serve as a focal point for an Early Road Transport Museum at Windsor.

In OCP's opinion the existing statement of significance warrants revision and elaboration, particularly noting the toll house's historic and rarity values.

4 OPTIONS ANALYSIS

The following options for the future conservation and use of Windsor Toll House are against a backdrop of the building being unoccupied and experiencing significant deterioration of fabric, as well as being subject to repeated flooding in recent years.

4.1 Options

OPTION 1
<p><u>Do nothing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This option is not considered tenable. The toll house is listed on the Hawkesbury LEP as an item of heritage significance, and is also community owned. A do nothing approach will see the continued deterioration of the structure, which is rare as one of only two surviving toll houses in NSW.
OPTION 2
<p><u>Adaptively reuse</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing use is typically considered the most effective means of conserving a place. Often, disused heritage buildings have been adaptively reused as commercial premises, for example as coffee shops or offices; or as residences.• However, the Windsor Toll House poses some particular challenges. There are only three rooms, each of which are small. Given spatial constraints, it would be difficult to make usable for a commercial premises, particularly given DDA access constraints.• Vehicular access to the site is restricted, with no dedicated vehicular road directly into the site. Vehicular access into the rear of the site would require partial use of a pedestrian / bicycle path (refer to figure 11).• Given its location the building is subject to repeated flooding (four times since 2020 alone). This would put at risk any installation of permanent fittings and fixtures. As a result of the flood history, it is highly likely the building would be considered uninsurable against flooding, thus jeopardising the financial viability of any commercial operation.

OPTION 3
<p><u>Restore, make safe, use for interpretation and periodically activate for events</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While ongoing commercial or residential use as discussed under option 2 is considered non-viable, periodic use of the site, particularly tied in with specific events such as heritage week, is considered achievable. • Such periodic use could involve mobile food / coffee providers rather than permanent changes to the site for food provision. Other options for food provision include relationships with nearby commercial establishments including the Jolly Frog Hotel. • In conjunction with conservation works, interpretation measures could be provided to communicate the site's history to the public. This would not necessarily require full internal access. • As the building is subject to deterioration, particularly of internal fabric, responsible custodianship requires conservation works. It is considered that these could be undertaken in a staged manner. • The staged conservation works could in turn allow staggered levels of access, with initially the building viewed by the public externally only, followed by access to a single internal room.
RECOMMENDATION
<p>Recommendation: It is OCP's opinion that Option 3 is the preferred option. This option of staged conservation works and periodic activation will foster increased public access to the site, and public appreciation of the heritage values of this rare and significant site, while allowing the staged conservation of the site's significant fabric.</p>

5 CONCLUSION

Windsor Toll House is of heritage significance as a rare surviving example of the road toll and transport systems of early colonial NSW. There is only one other extant toll house in NSW, in Mount Victoria. Ongoing use of a place is the best method of conservation, however the toll house poses considerable hurdles to ongoing use given its size and location.

The impact of the preferred options discussed within this report, on the heritage significance of the building and wider historic Windsor setting is considered positive, if implemented in a considered manner, with both physical intervention into fabric and visual impact minimised as much as possible. Implementation will facilitate public use of the site which has been disused for decades, and by extension, will assist interpretation and public appreciation of its significant heritage values.