

# Geotechnical Assessment

**Project:** Alterations & Additions  
1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach NSW

**Prepared for:**  
Nicholas Sproats





## WHAT TO DO WITH THIS REPORT

While your geotechnical assessment report may be a statutory requirement from council in support of your application, it also contains information important to the structural design and construction methodology of your project. Therefore, it is critical that all relevant parties are provided with a copy of this report.

**We suggest you give a copy of your geotechnical assessment report to:**

- **Your Architect/Building Designer**
- **Your Certifier**
- **Your Excavation Contractor**
- **Your Structural/Stormwater/Civil Engineer**
- **Your Project Manager**
- **Your Builder**

## NEXT CRITICAL STAGES

Keep in mind that you will need AscentGeo again at different stages of your project. This may include:

- **Review or endorsement of structural plans/architectural plans for a Construction Certificate**
- **Foundation/Footing inspection**
- **Excavation hold point inspection**
- **Final site inspection and certification for an Occupation Certificate**

## GENERAL ADVICE

**If after reading this report you have any questions, are unsure what to do next or when you need get in touch, please reach out to us.**

Given AscentGeo can't be on site the whole time, we recommend that you or/and your builder take a lot of progress photos, especially during excavation. Many of the potential problems that may pop up can be resolved if we have clear photos of the work that's been done.

A lot can change on site during a construction project: some of these changes are normal and innocuous, while others can be symptoms of larger or more serious issues. For this reason, it's important to contact us to discuss any changes you notice on site that you aren't sure about. This could include but not be limited to changes to ground or surface water, movement of structures, and settlement of paths or landscaping elements.

We're here to help.

**The AscentGeo Team**

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## Geotechnical Assessment

For Alterations & Additions at

**1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach NSW**

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### Limitations

This report has been prepared for Nicholas Sproats c/- JJ Drafting Australia in accordance with AscentGeo's fee proposal dated 2 July 2024.

The report is provided for the exclusive use of the property owner and their nominated agents for the specific development and purpose as described in the report. This report must not be used for purposes other than those outlined in the report or applied to any other projects.

The information contained within this report is considered accurate at the time of issue with regard to the current conditions on site as identified by AscentGeo and the documentation provided by others.

The report should be read in its entirety and should not be separated from its attachments or supporting notes. It should not have sections removed or included in other documents without the express approval of AscentGeo.

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	Australian GeoGuide LR8, 2007. 'Examples of Good/Bad Hillside Construction Practice'.	
	Australian Geomechanics, 2007. 'Practice Note Guidelines for Landslide Management', Appendix C: Qualitative Terminology.	
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## **1 Overview**

### **1.1 Background**

This report presents the findings of a geotechnical assessment carried out at 1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach (the 'Site'), by AscentGeo. This geotechnical assessment has been prepared to meet Northern Beaches Council lodgement requirements for a Development Application (DA), as well as informing detailed structural design and construction methodology.

### **1.2 Proposed Development**

The proposed development will take place on Lot 41 in DP 6746, being 1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach as per plan by CMS Surveyors dated 9 April 2024.

Details of the proposed development are outlined in a series of architectural drawings prepared by JJ Drafting Australia, drawing numbers DA.01 to DA.09, DA.10 to DA.22, dated May 2024.

The works comprise the following:

- Small portion of the existing roof removed, minor excavations and preparation of new footings
- Construction of an upper floor addition at the rear of, and above, the existing dwelling
- Associated landscaping detail including construction of a low level retaining wall

### **1.3 Relevant Instruments**

This geotechnical assessment has been prepared in accordance with the following relevant guidelines and standards:

- Northern Beaches Council – Pittwater Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2014 and Pittwater Development Control Plan (DCP) 2014
- Appendix 5 (to Pittwater P21) Geotechnical Risk Management Policy for Pittwater – 2009
- Australian Geomechanics Society's 'Landslide Risk Management Guidelines' (AGS 2007)
- Australian Standard 1726–2017 Geotechnical Site Investigations
- Australian Standard 2870–2011 Residential Slabs and Footings
- Australian Standard 1289.6.3.2–1997 Methods of Testing Soils for Engineering Purposes
- Australian Standard 3798–2007 Guidelines on Earthworks for Commercial and Residential Developments.

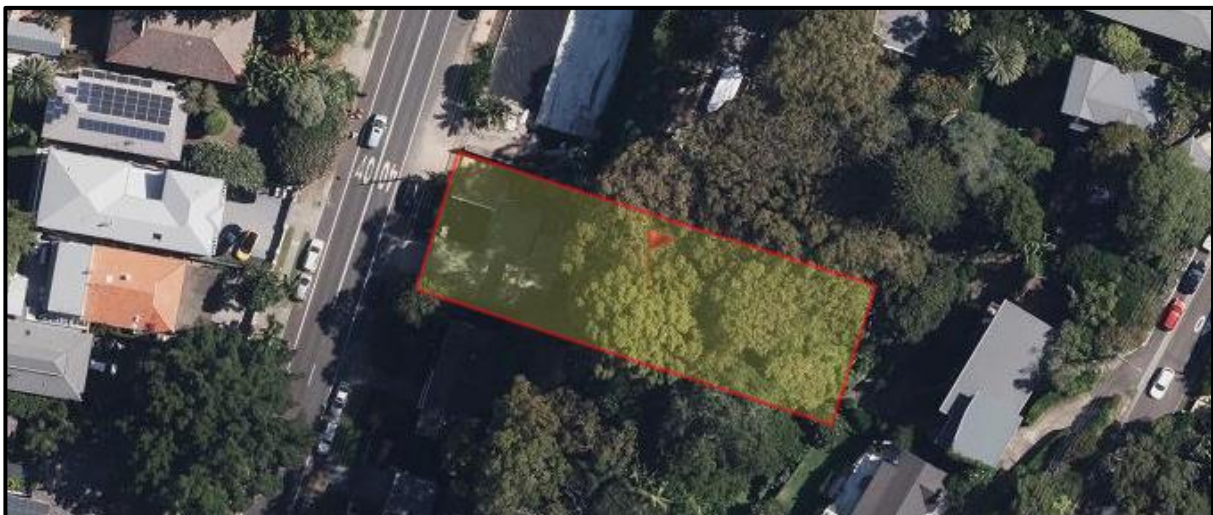
## 2 Site Description

### 2.1 Summary

A summary of site conditions identified at the time of our assessment is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Summary of site conditions

Parameter	Description
Site visit	Cameron Young, Engineering Geologist – 16/7/2024
Site address	1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach – Lot 41 in DP 6746
Site area m <sup>2</sup> (approx.)	1226m <sup>2</sup> (by calc.)
Existing development	1 & 2 storey split level clad house, metal roof. Metal and timber shed.
Slope Aspect	West
Average gradient	~25 degrees
Vegetation	Small and medium sized shrubs and trees, large trees towards site rear.
Retaining structures	Concrete block and mass concrete wall at the rear of the existing dwelling in good condition. Sandstone stack rock walls under the dwelling in reasonable condition.
Neighbouring environment	Residentially developed to the south and west. Barrenjoey Road to the west. Cleared and undeveloped lot to the north.



**Figure 1.** Site location – 1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach NSW (© SIX Maps NSW Gov)

## 2.2 Site Description

The subject site is situated in a residential area, has a rectangular shape and is bound by residential dwellings to the south and east. To the north of the site is a cleared and undeveloped lot with a concrete retaining wall in good condition. Barrenjoey Road runs along the front (western) boundary of the site. The site is on a steeply sloping ground with an average gradient of ~25 degrees, with westerly aspect (falling to its frontage). The frontage of the site is near level.

The existing building at the site is a 1 & 2 storey split level clad house and is in good condition. The footings of the house, where visible, are steel posts on concrete piers. At the rear of the dwelling is a concrete block and mass concrete wall, which is in good condition. The southern return of the mass concrete wall encapsulates a large sandstone boulder or overhanging block of the bedrock.

There are small to very large sized sandstone boulders within the soil profile around, under and behind the dwelling. A very large sandstone boulder, sits over the northern boundary of the site and shotcrete has been applied to material underlying this boulder within the site that adjoins the northern boundary. Where visible from the street frontage, this shotcrete application appears to be in good condition. A large sandstone boulder is located to the south of the fire pit in the rear yard. Several very large sandstone boulders litter the rear portion of the site. Generally, the large sandstone boulders across the site are deeply embedded within the soil profile or located on gently sloping portions of the slope and are likely to have been in these positions for long periods of time. Bedrock is outcropping in the slope at the rear of the existing dwelling in the area of the proposed works and is a highly fractured, thinly bedded sandstone.

The six photos presented in Appendix B show the general conditions of the site on the day of the site visit conducted by AscentGeo.

## 2.3 Geology and Geological Interpretation

The Sydney 1:100,000 Geological Sheet 9130 (NSW Dept. Mineral Resources, 1983) indicates that the site is underlain by the Newport Formation of the upper Narrabeen Group (Rnn). The Newport formation geology is typically comprised of interbedded laminite, shale and quartz, to lithic quartz sandstones.

The numerous sandstone boulders across the site are likely to have been transported downslope over long periods of time, as the low strength geology of the Newport Formation erodes and undermines higher strength sandstone portions within unit and the capping Hawkesbury Sandstone unit that is mapped as present to the east of Pacific Road above the site.

The soil profile consists of shallow uncontrolled silty fill and silty topsoil (O & A Horizons), silty sand (B Horizon) and low strength shale and sandstone bedrock (C Horizon). Based on our observations and the results of testing on site, we would expect depth to bedrock to be within <0.5m from current surface levels in the area of the proposed works and potentially deeper if fill material has been placed at the immediate rear of the retaining walls at the rear of the dwelling.

**Note:** The local geology is comprised predominantly of low strength, interbedded sandstone and shale bedrock. The sandstone and shale bedrock is often found in benched terraces, subsequently ground conditions on site may alter significantly across short distances. This variability should be anticipated and accounted for in the design and construction of any new foundations.

## 2.3 Fieldwork

A site visit and investigation was undertaken on 16 July 2024, which included a geotechnically focused visual assessment of the property and its surrounds; geotechnical mapping; photographic documenting; and a limited subsurface investigation including hand auger boreholes. Due to the outcropping rock in the general area of the proposed works, DCP testing to assess depth to rock was not deemed to be necessary.

### Hand Auger Borehole Testing

Two hand auger boreholes (BH01 & BH02) tests were drilled at the approximate locations shown on the site plan (Appendix A) to visually identify the subsurface material. Engineering logs of the hand auger boreholes are presented in Appendix C.

**Note:** The equipment chosen to undertake ground investigations provides the most cost-effective method for understanding the subsurface conditions given site access constraints. Our interpretation of the subsurface conditions is limited to the results of testing undertaken and the known geology in the area. While care is taken to identify the subsurface conditions on site, variation between the interpreted model presented herein and the actual conditions on site may occur. Should actual ground conditions vary from those anticipated, we recommend that the geotechnical consultant at AscentGeo is informed as soon as possible to advise if modifications to our recommendations are required.

## 3 Geotechnical Assessment

### 3.1 Geological Model

Based on the results of our site assessment, ground testing, geological mapping and our experience in the area, the subsurface conditions encountered on site may be summarised as follows in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Interpreted geological model

Unit	Material	Comments
1	Topsoil / Fill	Silty topsoil and fill material. Unit 1 is inferred to be uncontrolled and poorly compacted.
2	Silty Sand	Fine – medium grained, loose silty sand.
3	Shale	Generally, highly weathered, very low-low strength (Class V–IV*) interbedded shale and sandstone.

\* Pells, PJN, Mostyn, G & Walker, F, 1998 (Dec). 'Foundations on sandstone and shale in the Sydney region'. *Australian Geomechanics Journal*, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 17–29.

### 3.2 Site Classification

Due to the steep landslide prone slope, and the presence of large, detached sandstone boulders/joint blocks, the Site is classified as “P” in accordance with AS 2870–2011.

**Table 4.** Site classification table for residential slabs and footings (AS2870-2011)

Site Classification	Soil description	Expected range of movement
A	Most sand and rock sites with little or no ground movement from moisture changes.	
S	Slight reactive clay sites, which may experience only slight ground movement from moisture changes.	0–20mm
M	Moderately reactive clay or silt sites, which may experience moderate ground movement from moisture changes.	20–40mm
H1	Highly reactive clay sites, which may experience high ground movement from moisture changes.	40–60mm
H2	Highly reactive clay sites, which may experience very high ground movement from moisture changes.	60–75mm
E	Extremely reactive sites, which may experience extreme ground movement from moisture changes.	>75mm
P	May consist of any of the above soil types, but in combination with site conditions produce undesirable foundations. P sites may also include fill, soft soils, mine subsidence, collapsing soils, prior or potential landslip, soils subject to erosion, reactive sites subject to abnormal moisture conditions, or sites which cannot be classified otherwise.	

### 3.3 Groundwater

No groundwater was encountered during testing at the time of our inspection. Whilst dedicated groundwater monitoring was not within the scope of this assessment, due to the site elevation and position of the site relative to the slope and the underlying geology, no significant standing water table is expected to influence the site. The groundwater regime is not expected to be significantly affected by the proposed works and it is considered unnecessary to undertake preconstruction or construction stage groundwater monitoring.

Groundwater seepage during and after periods of inclement weather should be anticipated through permeable soil layers, close to the interface with weathered rock and from joints and discontinuities deeper in the weathered rock. Appropriate ground support measures should be utilised in soils overlying rock to manage any localised groundwater inflows and prevent ground loss due to saturated/fluidised sands.

### 3.4 Surface Water

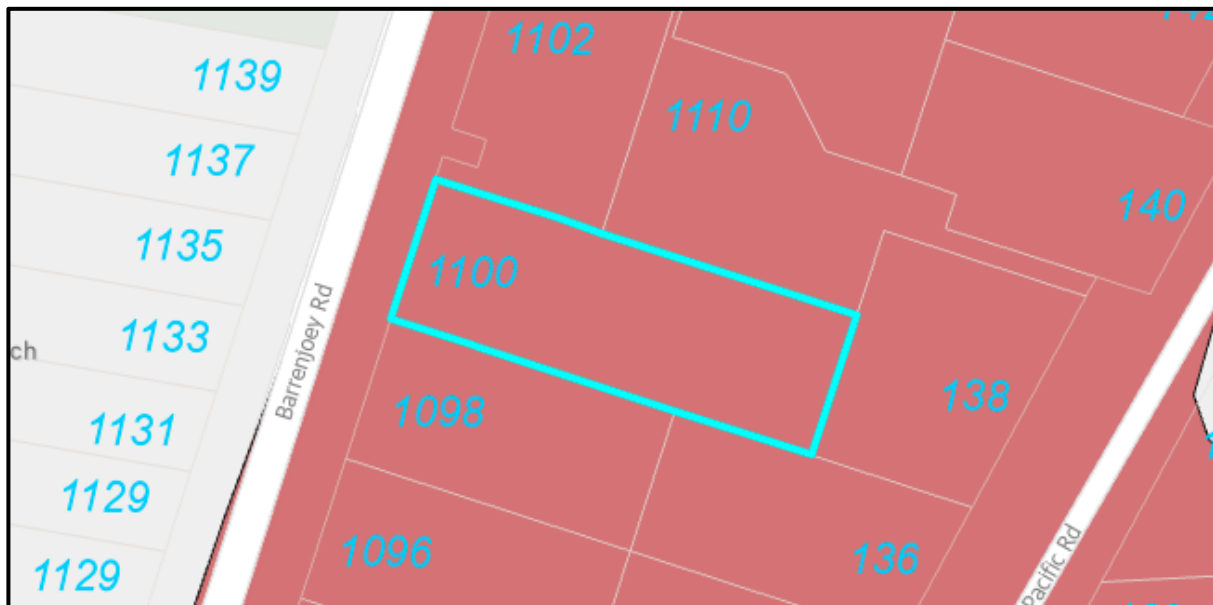
Overland or surface flows entering the site from the adjoining areas were not identified at the time of our inspection; however, normal overland runoff could enter the site from adjacent areas during

heavy or extended rainfall. Appropriate surface water diversions should be implemented to prevent overland runoff entering the site from adjacent areas during heavy or extended rainfall.

### 3.5 Slope Instability

A landslide hazard assessment of the existing slope has been undertaken in general accordance with Australian Geomechanics Society's 'Practice Note Guidelines for Landslide Risk Management', published in March 2007.

- No evidence of significant soil creep, tension cracks or landslip instability were identified across the site or on adjacent properties as viewed from the subject site at the time of our inspection.
- There are heavily weathered sandstone boulders and semi to fully detached joint blocks at various locations in the slope at the rear existing house. The sandstone boulders may have been originally mobilised by a large-scale historical (>100 years) rockfall/landslip event originating from the Hawkesbury unit above the site.
- Based on reference to the plan entitled "Geotechnical Hazard Mapping" (Ref. P21DCP-BC-MDCP2002, dated 2007) prepared by GHD LONGMAC on behalf of Northern Beaches Council (Pittwater), the site is mapped in a **Geotechnical Hazard H1** zone.



**Image 2.** PLEP Geotechnical Hazard Map  
– 1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach NSW © NBC Maps

**LEGEND**  
Pittwater Geotechnical Hazard Map  
■ Geotechnical Hazard H1  
■ Geotechnical Hazard H2

### 3.6 Geotechnical Hazards and Risk Analysis

No significant geotechnical hazards were identified beside or below the subject site, including but not limited to the immediately adjoining properties, and the road reserve.

There is low strength, highly fractured bedrock and several sandstone boulders on the slope to the rear of the existing house that may be destabilised during excavation works.



Whilst the proposed works are not considered to significantly impact the stability of the slope above the house, the potential failure of the slope does pose a potential hazard to the site over uncertain timeframes. Due to the gradual nature of erosional processes, the timing of such an event is not possible to accurately predict. Due to the underlying horizontally bedded bedrock, any failure of the slope is likely to be limited in extent to soil and loose materials.

Based on observation made during our site assessment the following geological/geotechnical hazards have been identified in relation to the proposed works:

- **Hazard One:** The potential mobilisation of detached sandstone boulders on site.
- **Hazard Two:** Landslip / failure of fill / soils from proposed excavation works
- **Hazard Three:** Rock failure from highly fractured or weak rock from proposed excavation works.
- **Hazard Four:** The steep slope that falls across the property, and continues above, failing and impacting on the property.

**Table 5.** Risk analysis summary

HAZARDS	HAZARD ONE	HAZARD TWO
TYPE	The potential mobilisation of detached sandstone boulders on site	Landslip / failure of fill / soils from proposed excavation works
LIKELIHOOD	'Possible' ( $10^{-3}$ )	'Possible' ( $10^{-3}$ )
CONSEQUENCES TO PROPERTY	'Medium' (15%)	'Medium' (15%)
RISK TO PROPERTY	'Moderate' ( $2 \times 10^{-3}$ )	'Moderate' ( $2 \times 10^{-3}$ )
RISK TO LIFE	$5.5 \times 10^{-6}$ /annum	$2.6 \times 10^{-5}$ /annum
COMMENTS	Following implementation of the recommendations outlined in Section 3.7, the above risk levels would reduce to 'Acceptable' levels within the site.	Following implementation of the recommendations outlined in Section 3.7, the above risk levels would reduce to 'Acceptable' levels within the site.
HAZARDS	HAZARD THREE	HAZARD FOUR
TYPE	Rock failure from highly fractured or weak rock from proposed excavation works.	The steep slope that falls across the property, and continues above, failing and impacting on the property
LIKELIHOOD	'Possible' ( $10^{-3}$ )	'Unlikely' ( $10^{-4}$ )
CONSEQUENCES TO PROPERTY	'Medium' (15%)	'Medium' (12%)
RISK TO PROPERTY	'Moderate' ( $2 \times 10^{-3}$ )	'Low' ( $2 \times 10^{-5}$ )



<b>RISK TO LIFE</b>	1.6 x 10 <sup>-5</sup> /annum	8.3 x 10 <sup>-7</sup> /annum
<b>COMMENTS</b>	Following implementation of the recommendations outlined in Section 3.7, the above risk levels would reduce to 'Acceptable' levels within the site.	This level of risk to life and property is 'ACCEPTABLE'.

### 3.7 Conclusion and Recommendations

The proposed development is considered to be suitable for the site. The existing conditions and proposed development are considered to constitute an '**ACCEPTABLE**' risk to life and a '**LOW**' risk to property *provided that the recommendations outlined in Table 6 are adhered to during design and construction.*

**Table 6.** Geotechnical recommendations

Recommendation	Description
<b>General</b>	<p>Due to the steep slope above the existing house, the fractured nature of the bedrock and the presence of detached boulders within the soil profile, it is strongly recommended that a builder and excavation contractor with demonstrable experience in this type of sensitive excavation be engaged to undertake the proposed works.</p> <p>AscentGeo can provide contacts for local contractors with suitable experience with sensitive excavation on request.</p>
<b>Soil Excavation</b>	<p>All excavation recommendations as outlined below should be read in conjunction with Safe Work Australia's <i>Code of Practice: Excavation Work</i>, published in October 2018.</p> <p>Soil excavation at the rear of the existing house will be required to establish new footings for the proposed works. It is anticipated that these excavations will encounter shallow uncontrolled fill, loose sandy soil, highly fractured bedrock and with detached sandstone boulders in the soil profile. Due to the steep slope and access limitations, it is anticipated that the excavations will be undertaken using handheld equipment.</p> <p>Following the careful removal of vegetation in the area of the proposed works, all sandstone boulders and highly fractured bedrock should be removed prior to beginning the excavation. Any roots to be removed should be cut, not pulled.</p> <p>The excavations should be undertaken carefully and in manor does not undercut boulders or fractured bedrock that may be exposed as the excavation progresses.</p>

Recommendation	Description																														
	<p>For shallow excavations (&lt;1.0m), provided the residual soil is battered back to a minimum of 45 degrees and covered, they should remain stable without support for a short period until permanent support is in place.</p> <p>The permanent retaining wall should be installed as soon as practically possible. Permanent batters are not considered appropriate for this site.</p> <p>The requirement for significant hard rock excavation (and associated vibration) is not anticipated.</p> <p>All excavated material is to be removed from the site in accordance with current Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) regulations</p>																														
Excavation Support	<p>The proposed works require only minor excavations to facilitate construction, as such, no significant excavation support is anticipated.</p> <p>If temporary support is required, this is anticipated to be managed by bracing to be installed by the builder.</p> <p>Pier liners may be helpful to prevent the collapse of the loose sandy soils.</p>																														
Retaining Structures	<p>Retention systems should be designed by a qualified structural engineer in accordance with Australian Standard AS 4678 using the following geotechnical parameters:</p> <table><tr><th colspan="3"></th><th colspan="3">Earth Pressure Coefficients</th></tr><tr><th>(Unit) Material</th><th>Bulk Unit Weight (kN/m<sup>3</sup>)</th><th>Friction Angle (°)</th><th>Active K<sub>a</sub></th><th>At Rest K<sub>0</sub></th><th>Passive K<sub>p</sub></th></tr><tr><td>(Unit 1) Fill / Topsoil</td><td>18</td><td>29</td><td>0.38</td><td>0.60</td><td>2.00</td></tr><tr><td>(Unit 2) Sand</td><td>19</td><td>29</td><td>0.33</td><td>0.50</td><td>2.50</td></tr><tr><td>(Unit 3) Shale</td><td>22</td><td>26</td><td>0.30</td><td>0.45</td><td>3.00</td></tr></table> <p>Retention systems should be designed to prevent hydrostatic pressure from developing behind the wall. As such, retaining walls to be constructed as part of the site works are to incorporate back wall subsoil drainage pipes, and are to be backfilled with suitable free-draining materials wrapped in a non-woven geotextile fabric (i.e. Bidim A34 or similar) to prevent the clogging of the drainage with fine-grained sediment.</p> <p>Design of appropriate retention systems should consider potential surcharges from sloping land above the wall, soil creep, presence of boulders, and the potential for further development on the upslope portion of the proposed works i.e. near the existing fire pit.</p>				Earth Pressure Coefficients			(Unit) Material	Bulk Unit Weight (kN/m <sup>3</sup> )	Friction Angle (°)	Active K <sub>a</sub>	At Rest K <sub>0</sub>	Passive K <sub>p</sub>	(Unit 1) Fill / Topsoil	18	29	0.38	0.60	2.00	(Unit 2) Sand	19	29	0.33	0.50	2.50	(Unit 3) Shale	22	26	0.30	0.45	3.00
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Recommendation	Description
<b>Footings</b>	<p>All pad, strip or piered footings should be founded on and socketed a minimum of 500mm into the in situ underlying weathered bedrock. For fully cleaned footings in at least low strength bedrock, the allowable bearing pressure is <b>400kPa</b>. Higher allowable bearing capacities may be achievable subject to inspection and certification of excavated footings by AscentGeo.</p> <p>New footings upslope of the concrete block and mass concrete retaining walls at the rear of the existing house should be taken to a depth such that no additional forces are applied to the existing retaining walls, unless otherwise assessed and approved by the structural engineer.</p> <p>Pier footings should be of sufficient diameter to enable effective base cleaning to be carried out during construction. Small diameter piers that cannot be cleaned should be designed for shaft friction, resulting in a longer rock socket.</p> <p>To mitigate the risk of differential settlement, it is essential that all footings are founded on competent bedrock of similar consistency. This may require excavation through sandstone boulders or the relocation of planned footings.</p> <p><b>It is essential that the foundation materials of all footing excavations be inspected and approved by AscentGeo before steel reinforcement and concrete is placed. This inspection should be scheduled while excavation plant and operators are still on site, and before steel reinforcement has been fixed or the concrete booked.</b></p>
<b>Fills</b>	<p>Any fill that may be required is to comprise local sand, clay, and weathered rock. Existing organic topsoil is to be cleared in preparation for the introduction of fill.</p> <p>Any new fill material is to be placed in layers not more than 250mm thick and compacted to not less than 95% of Standard Optimum Dry Density at plus or minus 2% of Standard Optimum Moisture Content. If supporting pavements or slabs, any new fill must be compacted to not less than 98% of Standard Optimum Dry Density at plus or minus 2% of Standard Optimum Moisture Content for the uppermost 300mm.</p> <p>All new fill placement is to be carried out in accordance with AS 3798–2007 ‘Guidelines on earthworks for commercial and residential developments.’</p> <p>Fill should not be placed on the site outside of the lateral extent of new engineered retaining walls. The retaining walls should be in place prior to the placement of new fill, with suitable permanent and effective drainage of backfill.</p>

Recommendation	Description
<b>Sediment and Erosion Control</b>	<p>Appropriate design and construction methods shall be required during site works to minimise erosion and provide sediment control. In particular, siltation fencing and barriers will be required and are to be designed by others.</p> <p>Uncontrolled stockpiling of soil on sloping portions of the site is not considered appropriate, however stockpiling of soil and excavated material may be possible on more level portions of the site. The management of excavated materials is the responsibility of the principal contractor.</p>
<b>Stormwater Disposal</b>	<p>The effective management of ground and surface water on site may be the most important factor in the long-term performance of built structures, and the stability of the block more generally.</p> <p>It is essential that gutters, downpipes, drains, pipes and connections are appropriately sized, functioning effectively, and discharging appropriately via non-erosive discharge.</p> <p>All stormwater collected from hard surfaces is to be collected and piped directly to the council stormwater network through any storage tanks or on-site detention that may be required by the regulating authorities, and in accordance with all relevant Australian Standards and the detailed stormwater management plan by others.</p> <p>Saturation of soils is one of the key triggers for many landslide events and a significant factor in destabilisation of structures over time. As such, the review and design of stormwater systems must consider climate change and the increased potential for periods of concentrated heavy rainfall.</p>
<b>Inspections</b>	<p>It is essential that the foundation materials of all footing excavations be visually assessed and approved by AscentGeo before steel reinforcement and concrete is placed. <b>Failure to engage AscentGeo for the required hold point/excavation/foundation material inspections will negate our ability to provide final geotechnical sign off or certification.</b></p>
<b>Conditions Relating to Design and Construction Monitoring</b>	<p>To comply with Northern Beaches Council conditions and enable the completion of Forms 2B and 3, as required by Council's Geotechnical Risk Management Policy, it may be necessary at the following stages for Ascent to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the geotechnical content of all structural engineer designs prior to the issue of Construction Certificate – <b>Form 2B</b></li> <li>Complete the abovementioned excavation hold point and foundation material inspections during construction to ensure compliance to design with respect to stability and geotechnical design parameters</li> </ul>

Recommendation	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>By Occupation Certificate stage (project completion), AscentGeo must have inspected and certified excavation/foundation materials. A final site inspection will be required at this stage before the issue of the <b>Form 3</b>.</li></ul>

Should you have any queries regarding this report, please do not hesitate to contact the author of this report, undersigned.

For and on behalf of **AscentGeo**,



**Cameron Young** BEnvSci Geol MAIG  
Engineering Geologist



**Ben Morgan** BScGeol MAIG RPGeo  
Managing Director | Engineering  
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## 4 References

Australian Geomechanics Society Landslide Taskforce, Landslide Practice Note Working Group 2007 (Mar). 'Practice Note Guidelines for Landslide Risk Management 2007'. *Australian Geomechanics Journal*, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 63–114.

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Pells, PJN, Mostyn, G & Walker, F, 1998 (Dec). 'Foundations on sandstone and shale in the Sydney region'. *Australian Geomechanics Journal*, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 17–29.

Safe Work Australia, 2018 (Oct), *Code of Practice: Excavation Work*, Safe Work Australia.

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# **Appendix A**

Site plans

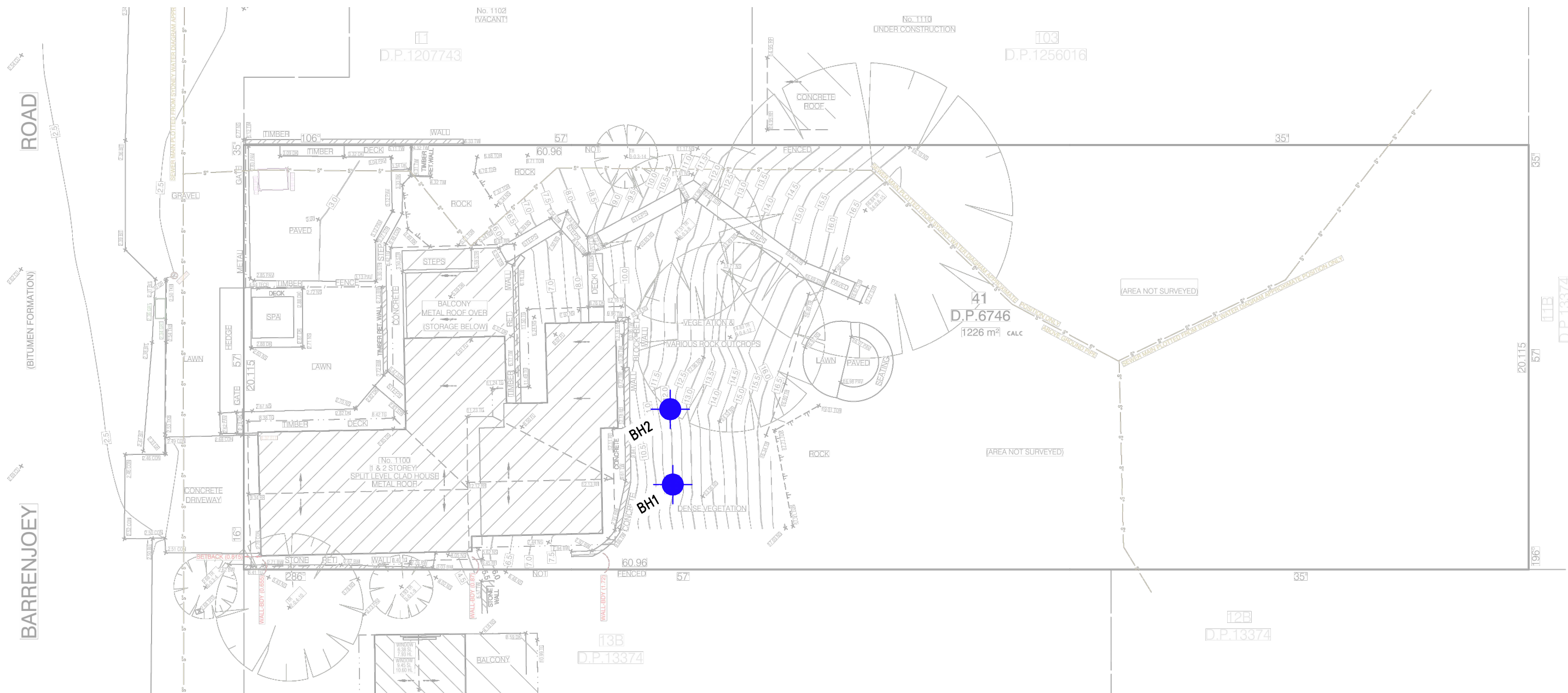




LEGEND



BOREHOLE LOCATIONS



SITE PLAN/GROUND TEST LOCATIONS  
SCALE NTS

REV	DATE	REVISION DESCRIPTION	REV BY	CHKD
A	18.07.24	PRELIMINARY ISSUE	VT	BM



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SITE PLAN/GROUND TEST LOCATIONS  
AT 1100 BARRENJOEY ROAD  
PALM BEACH NSW

DATE: 18/07/2024

SCALE: AS SHOWN @ A3

DRAWING TITLE:  
SITE PLAN

DRAWING NO:  
AG 24269- S1

INTERPRETED SUBSURFACE SECTION ONLY.  
ACTUAL GROUND CONDITIONS MAY VARY.



**INFERRED GEOLOGICAL SECTION**  
SCALE NTS

LEGEND

- UNCONTROLLED FILL / SILTY SAND TOPSOIL
- SILTY SAND
- NEWPORT FORMATION BEDROCK
- SANDSTONE BOULDERS

						<div><div>ASCENTGEO</div><div>GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTING</div></div>	ABN: 71 621 428 402 www.ascentgeo.com.au	CLIENT: NICHOLAS SPROATS	INFERRED GEOLOGICAL SECTION AT 1100 BARRENJOEY ROAD PALM BEACH NSW	DATE: 18/07/2024
							(02) 9913 3179 admin@ascentgeo.com.au			SCALE: AS SHOWN @ A3
							1457 Pittwater Road North Narrabeen NSW 2101	COPYRIGHT: THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF ASCENT GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTING. COPYING OF THIS MATERIAL IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF ASCENT GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTING CONSTITUTES AN INFRINGEMENT OF COPYRIGHT		DRAWING TITLE: SECTION
A	18.07.24	PRELIMINARY ISSUE				VT	BM			DRAWING NO: AG 24269- S2
REV	DATE	REVISION DESCRIPTION				REV BY	CHKD			

## **Appendix B**

Site photos





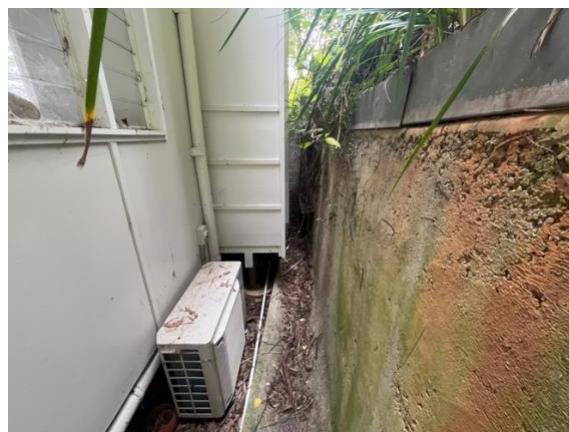
**Photo 1:** Residence frontage



**Photo 2:** Residence rear



**Photo 3:** Residence rear and area of the proposed works



**Photo 4:** Mass concrete wall at the rear of the residence.



**Photo 5:** Rear yard littered with sandstone boulders



**Photo 6:** Large sandstone boulders towards the rear of the site.

## **Appendix C**

Bore Logs | DCP Test Results

Easting : 0.00  
Northing : 0.00  
Total Depth : 0.4 m

Location : 1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach NSW  
Logged By : Cameron Young  
Date : 17/07/2024

Job Number : AG 24269  
Client : Nicholas Sproats  
Project : Alterations & Additions

Depth (m)	Water	Graphic Log	Drilling Method	Material Description	Consistency	Moisture	Classification Code	DCP graph
				Fill Silty SAND SM: grey brown, fine grained, with fine sized gravel, dry.		D	SM	
				BH1 refusal at 0.4m (Scraping on bedrock or boulder)				

Easting : 0.00  
Northing : 0.00  
Total Depth : 0.4 m

Location : 1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach NSW  
Logged By : Cameron Young  
Date : 17/07/2024

Job Number : AG 24269  
Client : Nicholas Sproats  
Project : Alterations & Additions

Depth (m)	Water	Graphic Log	Drilling Method	Material Description	Consistency	Moisture	Classification Code	DCP graph
				Fill Silty SAND SM: grey brown, fine grained, with fine sized gravel, dry, vine / ground covering plant roots within the profile.		D	SM	
				BH2 refusal at 0.4m (Scraping on bedrock or boulder)				



## **Appendix D**

### Information Sheets

# General Notes About This Report

## INTRODUCTION

These notes have been prepared by Ascent Geotechnical Consulting Pty Ltd (Ascent) to help our Clients interpret and understand the limitations of this report. Not all sections below are necessarily relevant to all reports.

## SCOPE OF SERVICES

This report has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services set out in Ascent's proposal under Ascent's Terms and Conditions, or as otherwise agreed with the Client. The scope of work may have been limited by a range of factors including time, budget, access and/or site constraints.

## RELIANCE ON INFORMATION PROVIDED

In preparing the report, Ascent has necessarily relied upon information provided by the Client and/or their Agents. Such data may include surveys, analyses, designs, maps and design plans. Ascent has not verified the accuracy or completeness of the data except as stated in this report.

## GEOTECHNICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

Geotechnical and environmental reporting relies on the interpretation of factual information, based on judgment and opinion, and is far less exact than other engineering or design disciplines.

Geotechnical and environmental reports are prepared for a specific purpose, development, and site, as described in the report, and may not contain sufficient information for other purposes, developments, or sites (including adjacent sites), other than that described in the report.

## SUBSURFACE CONDITIONS

Subsurface conditions can change with time and can vary between test locations. For example, the actual interface between the materials may be far more gradual or abrupt than indicated.

Therefore, actual conditions in areas not sampled may differ from those predicted, since no subsurface investigation, no matter how comprehensive, can reveal all subsurface details and anomalies.

Construction operations at or adjacent to the site and natural events such as floods, earthquakes or groundwater fluctuations can also affect subsurface conditions, and thus the continuing adequacy of a geotechnical report. Ascent should be kept informed of any such events, and should be retained to identify variances, conduct additional tests if required, and recommend solutions to problems encountered on site.

## GROUNDWATER

Groundwater levels indicated on borehole and test pit logs are recorded at specific times. Depending on ground permeability, measured levels may or may not reflect actual levels if measured over a longer time period. Also, groundwater levels and seepage inflows may fluctuate with seasonal and environmental variations and construction activities.

## INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Data obtained from nominated discrete locations, subsequent laboratory testing and empirical or external sources are interpreted by trained professionals in order to provide an opinion about overall site conditions, their likely impact with respect to the report purpose and recommended actions in accordance with any relevant industry standards, guidelines or procedures.

## SOIL AND ROCK DESCRIPTIONS

Soil and rock descriptions are based on AS 1726 – 1993, using visual and tactile assessment, except at discrete locations where field and / or laboratory tests have been carried out. Refer to the accompanying soil and rock terms sheet for further information.

## COPYRIGHT AND REPRODUCTION

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## FURTHER ADVICE

Ascent would be pleased to further discuss how any of the above issues could affect a specific project. We would also be pleased to provide further advice or assistance including:

- Assessment of suitability of designs and construction techniques;
- Contract documentation and specification;
- Construction advice (foundation assessments, excavation support).

# Abbreviations, Notes & Symbols

## SUBSURFACE INVESTIGATION

### METHOD

#### Borehole Logs

AS#	Auger screwing (#-bit)
AD#	Auger drilling (#-bit)
B	Blank bit
V	V-bit
T	TC-bit
HA	Hand auger
R	Roller/tricone
W	Washbore
AH	Air hammer
AT	Air track
LB	Light bore push tube
MC	Macro core push tube
DT	Dual core push tube

#### Excavation Logs

BH	Backhoe/excavator bucket
NE	Natural exposure
HE	Hand excavation
X	Existing excavation

#### Cored Borehole Logs

NMLC	NMLC core drilling
NQ/HQ	Wireline core drilling

### SUPPORT

#### Borehole Logs

C	Casing
M	Mud

#### Excavation Logs

S	Shoring
B	Benched

### SAMPLING

B	Bulk sample
D	Disturbed sample
U#	Thin-walled tube sample (#mmdiameter)
ES	Environmental sample
EW	Environmental water sample

### FIELD TESTING

PP	Pocket penetrometer (kPa)
DCP	Dynamic cone penetrometer
PSP	Perth sand penetrometer
SPT	Standard penetration test
PBT	Plate bearing test
s <sub>u</sub>	Vane shear strength peak/residual (kPa) and vane size (mm)
N*	SPT (blows per 300mm)
Nc	SPT with solid cone
R	Refusal

*\*denotes sample taken*

### BOUNDARIES

————	Known
-----	Probable
.....	Possible

## SOIL

### MOISTURE CONDITION

D	Dry
M	Moist
W	Wet
Wp	Plastic Limit
WL	Liquid Limit
MC	Moisture Content

### CONSISTENCY

VS	Very Soft
S	Soft
F	Firm
St	Stiff
VSt	Very Stiff
H	Hard
Fb	Friable

### DENSITY INDEX

VL	Very Loose
L	Loose
MD	Medium Dense
D	Dense
VD	Very Dense

### USCS SYMBOLS

GW	Well graded gravels and gravel-sand mixtures, little or no fines
GP	Poorly graded gravels and gravel-sand mixtures, little or no fines
GM	Silty gravels, gravel-sand-silt mixtures
GC	Clayey gravels, gravel-sand-clay mixtures

SW	Well graded sands and gravelly sands, little or no fines
SP	Poorly graded sands and gravelly sands, little or no fines
SM	Silty sand, sand-silt mixtures
SC	Clayey sand, sand-clay mixtures
ML	Inorganic silts of low plasticity, very fine sands, rock flour, silty or clayey fine sands
CL	Inorganic clays of low to medium plasticity, gravelly clays, sandy clays, silty clays
OL	Organic silts and organic silty clays of low plasticity
MH	Inorganic silts of high plasticity
CH	Inorganic clays of high plasticity
OH	Organic clays of medium to high plasticity
PT	Peat muck and other highly organic soils

## ROCK

### WEATHERING

RS	Residual Soil
XW	Extremely Weathered
HW	Highly Weathered
MW	Moderately Weathered
DW*	Distinctly Weathered
SW	Slightly Weathered
FR	Fresh

*\*covers both HW & MW*

### STRENGTH

EL	Extremely Low
VL	Very Low
L	Low
M	Medium
H	High
VH	Very High
EH	Extremely High

### ROCK QUALITY DESIGNATION (%)

=  $\frac{\text{sum of intact core pieces} > 100\text{mm}}{\text{total length of section being evaluated}} \times 100$

### CORE RECOVERY (%)

=  $\frac{\text{core recovered}}{\text{core lift}} \times 100$

### NATURAL FRACTURES

#### Type

JT	Joint
BP	Bedding plane
SM	Seam
FZ	Fractured zone
SZ	Shear zone
VN	Vein

#### Infill or Coating

Cn	Clean
St	Stained
Vn	Veneer
Co	Coating
Cl	Clay
Ca	Calcite
Fe	Iron oxide
Mi	Micaceous
Qz	Quartz

#### Shape

pl	Planar
cu	Curved
un	Undulose
st	Stepped
ir	Irregular

#### Roughness

pol	Polished
slk	Slickensided
smo	Smooth
rou	Rough

# Soil & Rock Terms

## SOIL

### MOISTURE CONDITION

Term	Description
Dry	Looks and feels dry. Cohesive and cemented soils are hard, friable or powdery. Uncemented granular soils run freely through the hand.
Moist	Feels cool and darkened in colour. Cohesive soils can be moulded. Granular soils tend to cohere.
Wet	As for moist, but with free water forming on hands when handled.

For cohesive soils, moisture content may also be described in relation to plastic limit ( $W_p$ ) or liquid limit ( $W_L$ ). [ $>>$  much greater than,  $>$  greater than,  $<$  less than,  $<<$  much less than].

### CONSISTENCY

Term	c (kPa)	Term	c (kPa)
	<sup>u</sup>		<sup>u</sup>
Very Soft	$< 12$	Very Stiff	100 - 200
Soft	12 - 25	Hard	$> 200$
Firm	25 - 50	Friable	-
Stiff	50 - 100		

### DENSITY INDEX

Term	$I_D$ (%)	Term	$I_D$ (%)
Very Loose	$< 15$	Dense	65 - 8
Loose	15 - 35	Very Dense	$> 85$
Medium Dense	35 - 65		

### PARTICLE SIZE

Name	Subdivision	Size (mm)
Boulders		$> 200$
Cobbles		63 - 200
Gravel	coarse	20 - 63
	medium	6 - 20
	fine	2.36 - 6
Sand	coarse	0.6 - 2.36
	medium	0.2 - 0.6
	fine	0.075 - 0.2
Silt & Clay		$< 0.075$

### MINOR COMPONENTS

Term	Proportion by Mass coarse grained	fine grained
Trace	$\leq 5\%$	$\leq 15\%$
Some	5 - 2%	15 - 30%

### SOIL ZONING

Layers	Continuous exposures
Lenses	Discontinuous layers of lenticular shape
Pockets	Irregular inclusions of different material

### SOIL CEMENTING

Weakly	Easily broken up by hand
Moderately	Effort is required to break up the soil by hand

### SOIL STRUCTURE

Massive	Coherent, with any partings both vertically and horizontally spaced at greater than 100mm
Weak	Peds indistinct and barely observable on pit face. When disturbed approx. 30% consist of peds smaller than 100mm
Strong	Peds are quite distinct in undisturbed soil. When disturbed $>60\%$ consists of peds smaller than 100mm

## ROCK

### SEDIMENTARY ROCK TYPE DEFINITIONS

Rock Type	Definition (more than 50% of rock consists of....)
Conglomerate	... gravel sized ( $> 2\text{mm}$ ) fragments
Sandstone	... sand sized (0.06 to 2mm) grains
Siltstone	... silt sized ( $<0.06\text{mm}$ ) particles, rock is not laminated
Claystone	... clay, rock is not laminated
Shale	... silt or clay sized particles, rock is laminated

### STRENGTH

Term	$I_s50$ (MPa)	Term	$I_s50$ (MPa)
Extremely Low	$< 0.03$	High	1 - 3
Very Low	0.03 - 0.1	Very High	3 - 10
Low	0.1 - 0.3	Extremely High	$> 10$
Medium	0.3 - 1		

### WEATHERING

Term	Description
Residual Soil	Soil developed on extremely weathered rock; the mass structure and substance fabric are no longer evident
Extremely Weathered	Rock is weathered to such an extent that it has 'soil' properties, i.e. it either disintegrates or can be remoulded, in water. Fabric of original rock is still visible
Highly Weathered	Rock strength usually highly changed by weathering; rock may be highly discoloured
Moderately Weathered	Rock strength usually moderately changed by weathering; rock may be moderately discoloured
Distinctly Weathered	See 'Highly Weathered' or 'Moderately Weathered'
Slightly Weathered	Rock is slightly discoloured but shows little or no change of strength from fresh rock
Fresh	Rock shows no signs of decomposition or staining

### NATURAL FRACTURES

Type	Description
Joint	A discontinuity or crack across which the rock has little or no tensile strength. May be open or closed
Bedding plane	Arrangement in layers of mineral grains of similar sizes or composition
Seam	Seam with deposited soil (infill), extremely weathered insitu rock (XW), or disoriented usually angular fragments of the host rock (crushed)
Shear zone	Zone with roughly parallel planar boundaries, of rock material intersected by closely spaced (generally $< 50\text{mm}$ ) joints and /or microscopic fracture (cleavage) planes
Vein	Intrusion of any shape dissimilar to the adjoining rock mass. Usually igneous








































Shape	Description
Planar	Consistent orientation
Curved	Gradual change in orientation
Undulose	Wavy surface
Stepped	One or more well defined steps
Irregular	Many sharp changes in orientation

Infill or Coating	Description
Clean	No visible coating or discolouring
Stained	No visible coating but surfaces are discoloured
Veneer	A visible coating of soil or mineral, too thin to measure; may be patchy
Coating	Visible coating $\leq 1\text{mm}$ thick. Ticker soil material described as seam

Roughness	Description
Polished	Shiny smooth surface
Slickensided	Grooved or striated surface, usually polished
Smooth	Smooth to touch. Few or no surface irregularities
Rough	Many small surface irregularities (amplitude generally $< 1\text{mm}$ ). Feels like fine to coarse sandpaper

Note: soil and rock descriptions are generally in accordance with AS1726-1993 Geotechnical Site Investigations

# Graphic Symbols Index

Soil		Rock		Water Measurements	
	Fill		Sandstone		Level at time of drilling
	Peat, Topsoil		Shale		Level after drilling
	Clay		Clayey Shale		Inflow
	Silty Clay		Siltstone		Outflow
	Gravelly Clay		Conglomerate		
	Sandy Clay		Claystone		
	Silt		Dolerite, Basalt		
	Sandy Silt		Granite		
	Clayey Silt		Limestone		
	Gravelly Silt		Tuff		
	Gravel		Coarse grained Metamorphic		
	Sandy Gravel		Medium grained Metamorphic		
	Clayey Gravel		Fine grained Metamorphic		
	Silty Gravel		Coal		
	Sand				
	Gravelly Sand	<b>Other</b>			
	Silty Sand		Asphalt		
	Clayey Sand		Concrete		
			Brick		

# Foundation Maintenance and Footing Performance: A Homeowner's Guide



CSIRO  
BTF 18  
replaces  
Information  
Sheet 10/91

Buildings can and often do move. This movement can be up, down, lateral or rotational. The fundamental cause of movement in buildings can usually be related to one or more problems in the foundation soil. It is important for the homeowner to identify the soil type in order to ascertain the measures that should be put in place in order to ensure that problems in the foundation soil can be prevented, thus protecting against building movement.

This Building Technology File is designed to identify causes of soil-related building movement, and to suggest methods of prevention of resultant cracking in buildings.

## Soil Types

The types of soils usually present under the topsoil in land zoned for residential buildings can be split into two approximate groups – granular and clay. Quite often, foundation soil is a mixture of both types. The general problems associated with soils having granular content are usually caused by erosion. Clay soils are subject to saturation and swell/shrink problems.

Classifications for a given area can generally be obtained by application to the local authority, but these are sometimes unreliable and if there is doubt, a geotechnical report should be commissioned. As most buildings suffering movement problems are founded on clay soils, there is an emphasis on classification of soils according to the amount of swell and shrinkage they experience with variations of water content. The table below is Table 2.1 from AS 2870, the Residential Slab and Footing Code.

## Causes of Movement

Settlement due to construction

There are two types of settlement that occur as a result of construction:

- Immediate settlement occurs when a building is first placed on its foundation soil, as a result of compaction of the soil under the weight of the structure. The cohesive quality of clay soil mitigates against this, but granular (particularly sandy) soil is susceptible.
- Consolidation settlement is a feature of clay soil and may take place because of the expulsion of moisture from the soil or because of the soil's lack of resistance to local compressive or shear stresses. This will usually take place during the first few months after construction, but has been known to take many years in exceptional cases.

These problems are the province of the builder and should be taken into consideration as part of the preparation of the site for construction. Building Technology File 19 (BTF 19) deals with these problems.

## Erosion

All soils are prone to erosion, but sandy soil is particularly susceptible to being washed away. Even clay with a sand component of say 10% or more can suffer from erosion.

## Saturation

This is particularly a problem in clay soils. Saturation creates a bog-like suspension of the soil that causes it to lose virtually all of its bearing capacity. To a lesser degree, sand is affected by saturation because saturated sand may undergo a reduction in volume – particularly imported sand fill for bedding and blinding layers. However, this usually occurs as immediate settlement and should normally be the province of the builder.

## Seasonal swelling and shrinkage of soil

All clays react to the presence of water by slowly absorbing it, making the soil increase in volume (see table below). The degree of increase varies considerably between different clays, as does the degree of decrease during the subsequent drying out caused by fair weather periods. Because of the low absorption and expulsion rate, this phenomenon will not usually be noticeable unless there are prolonged rainy or dry periods, usually of weeks or months, depending on the land and soil characteristics.

The swelling of soil creates an upward force on the footings of the building, and shrinkage creates subsidence that takes away the support needed by the footing to retain equilibrium.

## Shear failure

This phenomenon occurs when the foundation soil does not have sufficient strength to support the weight of the footing. There are two major post-construction causes:

- Significant load increase.
- Reduction of lateral support of the soil under the footing due to erosion or excavation.
- In clay soil, shear failure can be caused by saturation of the soil adjacent to or under the footing.

## GENERAL DEFINITIONS OF SITE CLASSES

Class	Foundation
A	Most sand and rock sites with little or no ground movement from moisture changes
S	Slightly reactive clay sites with only slight ground movement from moisture changes
M	Moderately reactive clay or silt sites, which can experience moderate ground movement from moisture changes
H	Highly reactive clay sites, which can experience high ground movement from moisture changes
E	Extremely reactive sites, which can experience extreme ground movement from moisture changes
A to P	Filled sites
P	Sites which include soft soils, such as soft clay or silt or loose sands; landslip; mine subsidence; collapsing soils; soils subject to erosion; reactive sites subject to abnormal moisture conditions or sites which cannot be classified otherwise



#### Tree root growth

Trees and shrubs that are allowed to grow in the vicinity of footings can cause foundation soil movement in two ways

- Roots that grow under footings may increase in cross-sectional size, exerting upward pressure on footings.
- Roots in the vicinity of footings will absorb much of the moisture in the foundation soil, causing shrinkage or subsidence.

### Unevenness of Movement

The types of ground movement described above usually occur unevenly throughout the building's foundation soil. Settlement due to construction tends to be uneven because of:

- Differing compaction of foundation soil prior to construction.
- Differing moisture content of foundation soil prior to construction.

Movement due to non-construction causes is usually more uneven still. Erosion can undermine a footing that traverses the flow or can create the conditions for shear failure by eroding soil adjacent to a footing that runs in the same direction as the flow.

Saturation of clay foundation soil may occur where subfloor walls create a dam that makes water pond. It can also occur wherever there is a source of water near footings in clay soil. This leads to a severe reduction in the strength of the soil which may create local shear failure.

Seasonal swelling and shrinkage of clay soil affects the perimeter of the building first, then gradually spreads to the interior. The swelling process will usually begin at the uphill extreme of the building, or on the weather side where the land is flat. Swelling gradually reaches the interior soil as absorption continues. Shrinkage usually begins where the sun's heat is greatest.

### Effects of Uneven Soil Movement on Structures

#### Erosion and saturation

Erosion removes the support from under footings, tending to create subsidence of the part of the structure under which it occurs. Brickwork walls will resist the stress created by this removal of support by bridging the gap or cantilevering until the bricks or the mortar bedding fail. Older masonry has little resistance. Evidence of failure varies according to circumstances and symptoms may include:

- Step cracking in the mortar beds in the body of the wall or above/below openings such as doors or windows.
- Vertical cracking in the bricks (usually but not necessarily in line with the vertical beds or perpend).

Isolated piers affected by erosion or saturation of foundations will eventually lose contact with the bearers they support and may tilt or fall over. The floors that have lost this support will become bouncy, sometimes rattling ornaments etc.

#### Seasonal swelling/shrinkage in clay

Swelling foundation soil due to rainy periods first lifts the most exposed extremities of the footing system, then the remainder of the perimeter footings while gradually permeating inside the building footprint to lift internal footings. This swelling first tends to create a dish effect, because the external footings are pushed higher than the internal ones.

The first noticeable symptom may be that the floor appears slightly dished. This is often accompanied by some doors binding on the floor or the door head, together with some cracking of cornice mitres. In buildings with timber flooring supported by bearers and joists, the floor can be bouncy. Externally there may be visible dishing of the hip or ridge lines.

As the moisture absorption process completes its journey to the innermost areas of the building, the internal footings will rise. If the spread of moisture is roughly even, it may be that the symptoms will temporarily disappear, but it is more likely that swelling will be uneven, creating a difference rather than a disappearance in symptoms. In buildings with timber flooring supported by bearers and joists, the isolated piers will rise more easily than the strip footings or piers under walls, creating noticeable doming of flooring.

#### Trees can cause shrinkage and damage



As the weather pattern changes and the soil begins to dry out, the external footings will be first affected, beginning with the locations where the sun's effect is strongest. This has the effect of lowering the external footings. The doming is accentuated and cracking reduces or disappears where it occurred because of dishing, but other cracks open up. The roof lines may become convex.

Doming and dishing are also affected by weather in other ways. In areas where warm, wet summers and cooler dry winters prevail, water migration tends to be toward the interior and doming will be accentuated, whereas where summers are dry and winters are cold and wet, migration tends to be toward the exterior and the underlying propensity is toward dishing.

#### Movement caused by tree roots

In general, growing roots will exert an upward pressure on footings, whereas soil subject to drying because of tree or shrub roots will tend to remove support from under footings by inducing shrinkage.

#### Complications caused by the structure itself

Most forces that the soil causes to be exerted on structures are vertical – i.e. either up or down. However, because these forces are seldom spread evenly around the footings, and because the building resists uneven movement because of its rigidity, forces are exerted from one part of the building to another. The net result of all these forces is usually rotational. This resultant force often complicates the diagnosis because the visible symptoms do not simply reflect the original cause. A common symptom is binding of doors on the vertical member of the frame.

#### Effects on full masonry structures

Brickwork will resist cracking where it can. It will attempt to span areas that lose support because of subsided foundations or raised points. It is therefore usual to see cracking at weak points, such as openings for windows or doors.

In the event of construction settlement, cracking will usually remain unchanged after the process of settlement has ceased.

With local shear or erosion, cracking will usually continue to develop until the original cause has been remedied, or until the subsidence has completely neutralised the affected portion of footing and the structure has stabilised on other footings that remain effective.

In the case of swell/shrink effects, the brickwork will in some cases return to its original position after completion of a cycle, however it is more likely that the rotational effect will not be exactly reversed, and it is also usual that brickwork will settle in its new position and will resist the forces trying to return it to its original position. This means that in a case where swelling takes place after construction and cracking occurs, the cracking is likely to at least partly remain after the shrink segment of the cycle is complete. Thus, each time the cycle is repeated, the likelihood is that the cracking will become wider until the sections of brickwork become virtually independent.

With repeated cycles, once the cracking is established, if there is no other complication, it is normal for the incidence of cracking to stabilise, as the building has the articulation it needs to cope with the problem. This is by no means always the case, however, and monitoring of cracks in walls and floors should always be treated seriously.

Upheaval caused by growth of tree roots under footings is not a simple vertical shear stress. There is a tendency for the root to also exert lateral forces that attempt to separate sections of brickwork after initial cracking has occurred.



The normal structural arrangement is that the inner leaf of brickwork in the external walls and at least some of the internal walls (depending on the roof type) comprise the load-bearing structure on which any upper floors, ceilings and the roof are supported. In these cases, it is internally visible cracking that should be the main focus of attention, however there are a few examples of dwellings whose external leaf of masonry plays some supporting role, so this should be checked if there is any doubt. In any case, externally visible cracking is important as a guide to stresses on the structure generally, and it should also be remembered that the external walls must be capable of supporting themselves.

#### Effects on framed structures

Timber or steel framed buildings are less likely to exhibit cracking due to swell/shrink than masonry buildings because of their flexibility. Also, the doming/dishing effects tend to be lower because of the lighter weight of walls. The main risks to framed buildings are encountered because of the isolated pier footings used under walls. Where erosion or saturation cause a footing to fall away this can double the span which a wall must bridge. This additional stress can create cracking in wall linings, particularly where there is a weak point in the structure caused by a door or window opening. It is, however, unlikely that framed structures will be so stressed as to suffer serious damage without first exhibiting some or all of the above symptoms for a considerable period. The same warning period should apply in the case of upheaval. It should be noted, however, that where framed buildings are supported by strip footings there is only one leaf of brickwork and therefore the externally visible walls are the supporting structure for the building. In this case, the subfloor masonry walls can be expected to behave as full brickwork walls.

#### Effects on brick veneer structures

Because the load-bearing structure of a brick veneer building is the frame that makes up the interior leaf of the external walls plus perhaps the internal walls, depending on the type of roof, the building can be expected to behave as a framed structure, except that the external masonry will behave in a similar way to the external leaf of a full masonry structure.

### Water Service and Drainage

Where a water service pipe, a sewer or stormwater drainage pipe is in the vicinity of a building, a water leak can cause erosion, swelling or saturation of susceptible soil. Even a minuscule leak can be enough to saturate a clay foundation. A leaking tap near a building can have the same effect. In addition, trenches containing pipes can become watercourses even though backfilled, particularly where broken rubble is used as fill. Water that runs along these trenches can be responsible for serious erosion, interstrata seepage into subfloor areas and saturation.

Pipe leakage and trench water flows also encourage tree and shrub roots to the source of water, complicating and exacerbating the problem.

Poor roof plumbing can result in large volumes of rainwater being concentrated in a small area of soil:

- Incorrect falls in roof guttering may result in overflows, as may gutters blocked with leaves etc.

- Corroded guttering or downpipes can spill water to ground.
- Downpipes not positively connected to a proper stormwater collection system will direct a concentration of water to soil that is directly adjacent to footings, sometimes causing large-scale problems such as erosion, saturation and migration of water under the building.

### Seriousness of Cracking

In general, most cracking found in masonry walls is a cosmetic nuisance only and can be kept in repair or even ignored. The table below is a reproduction of Table C1 of AS 2870.

AS 2870 also publishes figures relating to cracking in concrete floors, however because wall cracking will usually reach the critical point significantly earlier than cracking in slabs, this table is not reproduced here.

### Prevention/Cure

#### Plumbing

Where building movement is caused by water service, roof plumbing, sewer or stormwater failure, the remedy is to repair the problem. It is prudent, however, to consider also rerouting pipes away from the building where possible, and relocating taps to positions where any leakage will not direct water to the building vicinity. Even where gully traps are present, there is sometimes sufficient spill to create erosion or saturation, particularly in modern installations using smaller diameter PVC fixtures. Indeed, some gully traps are not situated directly under the taps that are installed to charge them, with the result that water from the tap may enter the backfilled trench that houses the sewer piping. If the trench has been poorly backfilled, the water will either pond or flow along the bottom of the trench. As these trenches usually run alongside the footings and can be at a similar depth, it is not hard to see how any water that is thus directed into a trench can easily affect the foundation's ability to support footings or even gain entry to the subfloor area.

#### Ground drainage

In all soils there is the capacity for water to travel on the surface and below it. Surface water flows can be established by inspection during and after heavy or prolonged rain. If necessary, a graded drain system connected to the stormwater collection system is usually an easy solution.

It is, however, sometimes necessary when attempting to prevent water migration that testing be carried out to establish watertable height and subsoil water flows. This subject is referred to in BTF 19 and may properly be regarded as an area for an expert consultant.

#### Protection of the building perimeter

It is essential to remember that the soil that affects footings extends well beyond the actual building line. Watering of garden plants, shrubs and trees causes some of the most serious water problems.

For this reason, particularly where problems exist or are likely to occur, it is recommended that an apron of paving be installed around as much of the building perimeter as necessary. This paving

### CLASSIFICATION OF DAMAGE WITH REFERENCE TO WALLS

Description of typical damage and required repair	Approximate crack width limit (see Note 3)	Damage category
Hairline cracks	<0.1 mm	0
Fine cracks which do not need repair	<1 mm	1
Cracks noticeable but easily filled. Doors and windows stick slightly	<5 mm	2
Cracks can be repaired and possibly a small amount of wall will need to be replaced. Doors and windows stick. Service pipes can fracture. Weathertightness often impaired	5–15 mm (or a number of cracks 3 mm or more in one group)	3
Extensive repair work involving breaking-out and replacing sections of walls, especially over doors and windows. Window and door frames distort. Walls lean or bulge noticeably, some loss of bearing in beams. Service pipes disrupted	15–25 mm but also depend on number of cracks	4



should extend outwards a minimum of 900 mm (more in highly reactive soil) and should have a minimum fall away from the building of 1:60. The finished paving should be no less than 100 mm below brick vent bases.

It is prudent to relocate drainage pipes away from this paving, if possible, to avoid complications from future leakage. If this is not practical, earthenware pipes should be replaced by PVC and backfilling should be of the same soil type as the surrounding soil and compacted to the same density.

Except in areas where freezing of water is an issue, it is wise to remove taps in the building area and relocate them well away from the building – preferably not uphill from it (see BTF 19).

It may be desirable to install a grated drain at the outside edge of the paving on the uphill side of the building. If subsoil drainage is needed this can be installed under the surface drain.

#### Condensation

In buildings with a subfloor void such as where bearers and joists support flooring, insufficient ventilation creates ideal conditions for condensation, particularly where there is little clearance between the floor and the ground. Condensation adds to the moisture already present in the subfloor and significantly slows the process of drying out. Installation of an adequate subfloor ventilation system, either natural or mechanical, is desirable.

**Warning:** Although this Building Technology File deals with cracking in buildings, it should be said that subfloor moisture can result in the development of other problems, notably:

- Water that is transmitted into masonry, metal or timber building elements causes damage and/or decay to those elements.
- High subfloor humidity and moisture content create an ideal environment for various pests, including termites and spiders.
- Where high moisture levels are transmitted to the flooring and walls, an increase in the dust mite count can ensue within the living areas. Dust mites, as well as dampness in general, can be a health hazard to inhabitants, particularly those who are abnormally susceptible to respiratory ailments.

#### The garden

The ideal vegetation layout is to have lawn or plants that require only light watering immediately adjacent to the drainage or paving edge, then more demanding plants, shrubs and trees spread out in that order.

Overwatering due to misuse of automatic watering systems is a common cause of saturation and water migration under footings. If it is necessary to use these systems, it is important to remove garden beds to a completely safe distance from buildings.

#### Existing trees

Where a tree is causing a problem of soil drying or there is the existence or threat of upheaval of footings, if the offending roots are subsidiary and their removal will not significantly damage the tree, they should be severed and a concrete or metal barrier placed vertically in the soil to prevent future root growth in the direction of the building. If it is not possible to remove the relevant roots without damage to the tree, an application to remove the tree should be made to the local authority. A prudent plan is to transplant likely offenders before they become a problem.

#### Information on trees, plants and shrubs

State departments overseeing agriculture can give information regarding root patterns, volume of water needed and safe distance from buildings of most species. Botanic gardens are also sources of information. For information on plant roots and drains, see Building Technology File 17.

#### Excavation

Excavation around footings must be properly engineered. Soil supporting footings can only be safely excavated at an angle that allows the soil under the footing to remain stable. This angle is called the angle of repose (or friction) and varies significantly between soil types and conditions. Removal of soil within the angle of repose will cause subsidence.

### Remediation

Where erosion has occurred that has washed away soil adjacent to footings, soil of the same classification should be introduced and compacted to the same density. Where footings have been undermined, augmentation or other specialist work may be required. Remediation of footings and foundations is generally the realm of a specialist consultant.

Where isolated footings rise and fall because of swell/shrink effect, the homeowner may be tempted to alleviate floor bounce by filling the gap that has appeared between the bearer and the pier with blocking. The danger here is that when the next swell segment of the cycle occurs, the extra blocking will push the floor up into an accentuated dome and may also cause local shear failure in the soil. If it is necessary to use blocking, it should be by a pair of fine wedges and monitoring should be carried out fortnightly.

**This BTF was prepared by John Lewer FAIB, MIAMA, Partner, Construction Diagnosis.**

The information in this and other issues in the series was derived from various sources and was believed to be correct when published.

The information is advisory. It is provided in good faith and not claimed to be an exhaustive treatment of the relevant subject.

Further professional advice needs to be obtained before taking any action based on the information provided.

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## EXAMPLES OF **GOOD** HILLSIDE PRACTICE



## EXAMPLES OF **POOR** HILLSIDE PRACTICE



**PRACTICE NOTE GUIDELINES FOR LANDSLIDE RISK MANAGEMENT 2007**  
**APPENDIX C: LANDSLIDE RISK ASSESSMENT**  
**QUALITATIVE TERMINOLOGY FOR USE IN ASSESSING RISK TO PROPERTY**

***QUALITATIVE MEASURES OF LIKELIHOOD***

Approximate Annual Probability		Implied Indicative Landslide Recurrence Interval		Description	Descriptor	Level
Indicative Value	Notional Boundary					
10 <sup>-1</sup>	5x10 <sup>-2</sup>	10 years	20 years	The event is expected to occur over the design life.	ALMOST CERTAIN	A
10 <sup>-2</sup>		100 years		The event will probably occur under adverse conditions over the design life.	LIKELY	B
10 <sup>-3</sup>	5x10 <sup>-3</sup>	1000 years	200 years	The event could occur under adverse conditions over the design life.	POSSIBLE	C
10 <sup>-4</sup>		10,000 years		The event might occur under very adverse circumstances over the design life.	UNLIKELY	D
10 <sup>-5</sup>	5x10 <sup>-5</sup>	100,000 years	20,000 years	The event is conceivable but only under exceptional circumstances over the design life.	RARE	E
10 <sup>-6</sup>	5x10 <sup>-6</sup>	1,000,000 years	200,000 years	The event is inconceivable or fanciful over the design life.	BARELY CREDIBLE	F

**Note:** (1) The table should be used from left to right; use Approximate Annual Probability or Description to assign Descriptor, not *vice versa*.

***QUALITATIVE MEASURES OF CONSEQUENCES TO PROPERTY***

Approximate Cost of Damage		Description	Descriptor	Level
Indicative Value	Notional Boundary			
200%	100%  40%  10% 1%	Structure(s) completely destroyed and/or large scale damage requiring major engineering works for stabilisation. Could cause at least one adjacent property major consequence damage.	CATASTROPHIC	1
60%		Extensive damage to most of structure, and/or extending beyond site boundaries requiring significant stabilisation works. Could cause at least one adjacent property medium consequence damage.	MAJOR	2
20%		Moderate damage to some of structure, and/or significant part of site requiring large stabilisation works. Could cause at least one adjacent property minor consequence damage.	MEDIUM	3
5%		Limited damage to part of structure, and/or part of site requiring some reinstatement stabilisation works.	MINOR	4
0.5%		Little damage. (Note for high probability event (Almost Certain), this category may be subdivided at a notional boundary of 0.1%. See Risk Matrix.)	INSIGNIFICANT	5

- Notes:** (2) The Approximate Cost of Damage is expressed as a percentage of market value, being the cost of the improved value of the unaffected property which includes the land plus the unaffected structures.
- (3) The Approximate Cost is to be an estimate of the direct cost of the damage, such as the cost of reinstatement of the damaged portion of the property (land plus structures), stabilisation works required to render the site to tolerable risk level for the landslide which has occurred and professional design fees, and consequential costs such as legal fees, temporary accommodation. It does not include additional stabilisation works to address other landslides which may affect the property.
- (4) The table should be used from left to right; use Approximate Cost of Damage or Description to assign Descriptor, not *vice versa*

## PRACTICE NOTE GUIDELINES FOR LANDSLIDE RISK MANAGEMENT 2007

### APPENDIX C: – QUALITATIVE TERMINOLOGY FOR USE IN ASSESSING RISK TO PROPERTY (CONTINUED)

#### *QUALITATIVE RISK ANALYSIS MATRIX – LEVEL OF RISK TO PROPERTY*

LIKELIHOOD		CONSEQUENCES TO PROPERTY (With Indicative Approximate Cost of Damage)				
	Indicative Value of Approximate Annual Probability	1: CATASTROPHIC 200%	2: MAJOR 60%	3: MEDIUM 20%	4: MINOR 5%	5: INSIGNIFICANT 0.5%
A – ALMOST CERTAIN	10 <sup>-1</sup>	VH	VH	VH	H	M or L (5)
B – LIKELY	10 <sup>-2</sup>	VH	VH	H	M	L
C – POSSIBLE	10 <sup>-3</sup>	VH	H	M	M	VL
D – UNLIKELY	10 <sup>-4</sup>	H	M	L	L	VL
E – RARE	10 <sup>-5</sup>	M	L	L	VL	VL
F – BARELY CREDIBLE	10 <sup>-6</sup>	L	VL	VL	VL	VL

Notes: (5) For Cell A5, may be subdivided such that a consequence of less than 0.1% is Low Risk.

(6) When considering a risk assessment it must be clearly stated whether it is for existing conditions or with risk control measures which may not be implemented at the current time.

#### *RISK LEVEL IMPLICATIONS*

Risk Level		Example Implications (7)
VH	VERY HIGH RISK	Unacceptable without treatment. Extensive detailed investigation and research, planning and implementation of treatment options essential to reduce risk to Low; may be too expensive and not practical. Work likely to cost more than value of the property.
H	HIGH RISK	Unacceptable without treatment. Detailed investigation, planning and implementation of treatment options required to reduce risk to Low. Work would cost a substantial sum in relation to the value of the property.
M	MODERATE RISK	May be tolerated in certain circumstances (subject to regulator's approval) but requires investigation, planning and implementation of treatment options to reduce the risk to Low. Treatment options to reduce to Low risk should be implemented as soon as practicable.
L	LOW RISK	Usually acceptable to regulators. Where treatment has been required to reduce the risk to this level, ongoing maintenance is required.
VL	VERY LOW RISK	Acceptable. Manage by normal slope maintenance procedures.

Note: (7) The implications for a particular situation are to be determined by all parties to the risk assessment and may depend on the nature of the property at risk; these are only given as a general guide.

## **Appendix E**

Geotechnical Forms 1 & 1A  
Northern Beaches Council – Pittwater LEP

**GEOTECHNICAL RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR PITTWATER**  
**FORM NO. 1 – To be submitted with Development Application**

Development Application for	Nicholas Sproats
	Name of Applicant
Address of site	1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach NSW

**Declaration made by geotechnical engineer or engineering geologist or coastal engineer (where applicable) as part of a geotechnical report**

I, Ben Morgan on behalf of AscentGeo Geotechnical Consulting  
(insert name) (Trading or Company Name)

on this the 06.08.2024 certify that I am a geotechnical engineer or engineering geologist or coastal engineer

as defined by the Geotechnical Risk Management Policy for Pittwater - 2009 and I am authorised by the above organisation/company to issue this document and to certify that the organisation/company has a current professional indemnity policy of at least \$2 million.

**Please mark appropriate box**

- ☐ Prepared the detailed Geotechnical Report referenced below in accordance with the Australia Geomechanics Society's Landslide Risk Management Guidelines (AGS 2007) and the Geotechnical Risk Management Policy for Pittwater - 2009
- ☒ I am willing to technically verify that the detailed Geotechnical Report referenced below has been prepared in accordance with the Australian Geomechanics Society's Landslide Risk Management Guidelines (AGS 2007) and the Geotechnical Risk Management Policy for Pittwater - 2009
- ☐ Have examined the site and the proposed development in detail and have carried out a risk assessment in accordance with paragraph 6.0 of the Geotechnical Risk Management Policy for Pittwater - 2009. I confirm the results of the risk assessment for the proposed development are in compliance with the Geotechnical Risk Management Policy from Pittwater - 2009 and further detailed geotechnical reporting is not required for the subject site.
- ☐ Have examined the site and the proposed development/alteration in detail and am of the opinion that the Development Application only involves Minor Development/Alterations that do not require a Detailed Geotechnical Risk Assessment and hence my report is in accordance with the Geotechnical Risk Management Policy for Pittwater – 2009 requirements for Minor Development/Alterations.
- ☐ Have examined the site and the proposed development/alteration is separate form and not affected by a Geotechnical Hazard and does not require a Geotechnical report or Risk Assessment and hence my Report is in accordance with the Geotechnical Risk Management Policy for Pittwater – 2009 requirements
- ☐ Provided the coastal process and coastal forces analysis for inclusion in the Geotechnical Report

**Geotechnical Report Details:**

Report Title: Geotechnical Assessment Report for alterations and additions at 1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach (AG 24269)  
Report Date: 6 August 2024  
Author: Cameron Young  
Author's Company/Organisation: AscentGeo Geotechnical Consulting

**Documentation which relate to or are relied upon in report preparation:**

Architectural design plans prepared by JJ Drafting Australia, drawing numbers DA.01 to DA.09, DA.10 to DA.22, dated May 2024.

I am aware that the above Geotechnical Report, prepared for the abovementioned site is to be submitted in support of a Development Application for this site and will be relied on by Northern Beaches Council as the basis for ensuring that the Geotechnical Risk Management aspects of the proposed development have been adequately addressed to achieve an "Acceptable Risk Management" level for the life of the structure, taken as at least 100 years unless otherwise stated and justified in the Report and that reasonable and practical measures have been identified to remove foreseeable risk.

Signature



Name Ben Morgan

Chartered Professional Status MAIG RPGeo (Geotechnical & Engineering)

Membership No. 10269

Company AscentGeo Geotechnical Consulting



**GEOTECHNICAL RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR PITTWATER**  
**FORM NO. 1(a) - Checklist of Requirements for**  
**Geotechnical Risk Management Report for Development Application**

Development Application for <u>Nicholas Sproats</u>	Name of Applicant
Address of site <u>1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach NSW</u>	

*The following checklist covers the minimum requirements to be addressed in a Geotechnical Risk Management Geotechnical Report. This checklist is to accompany the Geotechnical Report and its certification (Form No. 1).*

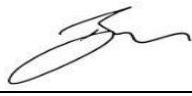
**Geotechnical Report Details:**

Report Title: Geotechnical Assessment Report for alterations and additions at 1100 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach (AG 24269)
Report Date: 6 August 2024
Author: Cameron Young
Author's Company/Organisation: AscentGeo Geotechnical Consulting

**Please mark appropriate box**

- ☒ Comprehensive site mapping conducted 17/03/2022  
(date)
- ☒ Mapping details presented on contoured site plan with geomorphic mapping to a minimum scale of 1:200 (as appropriate)
- ☒ Subsurface investigation required
  - ☐ No Justification .....
  - ☒ Yes Date conducted 17/03/2022
- ☒ Geotechnical model developed and reported as an inferred subsurface type-section
- ☒ Geotechnical hazards identified
  - ☒ Above the site
  - ☒ On the site
  - ☐ Below the site
  - ☐ Beside the site
- ☒ Geotechnical hazards described and reported
- ☒ Risk assessment conducted in accordance with the Geotechnical Risk Management Policy for Pittwater - 2009
  - ☒ Consequence analysis
  - ☒ Frequency analysis
- ☒ Risk calculation
- ☒ Risk assessment for property conducted in accordance with the Geotechnical Risk Management Policy for Pittwater - 2009
- ☒ Risk assessment for loss of life conducted in accordance with the Geotechnical Risk Management Policy for Pittwater - 2009
- ☒ Assessed risks have been compared to "Acceptable Risk Management" criteria as defined in the Geotechnical Risk Management Policy for Pittwater - 2009
- ☒ Opinion has been provided that the design can achieve the "Acceptable Risk Management" criteria provided that the specified conditions are achieved.
- ☒ Design Life Adopted:
  - ☒ 100 years
  - ☐ Other ..... specify
- ☒ Geotechnical Conditions to be applied to all four phases as described in the Geotechnical Risk Management Policy for Pittwater - 2009 have been specified
- ☒ Additional action to remove risk where reasonable and practical have been identified and included in the report.
- ☒ Risk Assessment within Bushfire Asset Protection Zone

I am aware that Pittwater Council will rely on the Geotechnical Report, to which this checklist applies, as the basis for ensuring that the geotechnical risk management aspects of the proposal have been adequately addressed to achieve an "Acceptable Risk Management" level for the life of the structure, taken as at least 100 years unless otherwise stated, and justified in the Report and that reasonable and practical measures have been identified to remove foreseeable risk.



Signature	
Name	Ben Morgan
Chartered Professional Status	MAIG RPGeo (Geotechnical & Engineering)
Membership No.	10269
Company	AscentGeo Geotechnical Consulting