

# HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

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100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag

August 2021| J4312

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Preamble**

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared in conjunction with a revised Planning Proposal for a new mixed use development at No. 100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag, New South Wales.

The site is located within the City of Willoughby. The principal planning control for the site is the *Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 2012 (WLEP 2012)*. The site is not listed as a heritage item (Schedule 5 Part 1) and is not located within a Conservation Area (Schedule 5 Part 2) identified by the *WLEP 2012*. The site, however, adjoins the Griffin Heritage Conservation Area as it is defined by Schedule 5 Part 2 of the *WLEP 2012* and lies within the vicinity of the Community Centre, No. 10 The Postern, Castlecrag, listed by Schedule 5 Part 1 of this plan. Under Part 5.10 of the *WLEP 2012*:

(4) Effect of proposed development on heritage significance

The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause in respect of a heritage item or heritage conservation area, consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the item or area concerned. This subclause applies regardless of whether a heritage management document is prepared under subclause (5) or a heritage conservation management plan is submitted under subclause (6).

(5) Heritage assessment

The consent authority may, before granting consent to any development:

- (a) on land on which a heritage item is located, or
- (b) on land that is within a heritage conservation area, or
- (c) on land that is within the vicinity of land referred to in paragraph (a) or (b), require a heritage management document to be prepared that assesses the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect the heritage significance of the heritage item or heritage conservation area concerned.

The appropriate heritage management document in this instance is a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS). This HIS has been prepared at the request of Greencliff Castlecrag Pty Ltd and accompanies plans prepared ffmtstudio.

### **1.2 Authorship**

This HIS was prepared by Alice Fuller, B.App.Sc.(CCM), M.Herit.Cons.(Hons), and James Phillips, B.Sc.(Arch), B.Arch., M.Herit.Cons.(Hons), of Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning.

### **1.3 Limitations**

Given that the site is not subject to any statutory heritage listing, no provision was made for a heritage assessment of the existing building complex on the site.

The Conservation Area and nearby heritage item were viewed from the public domain only.

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## **1.4 Methodology**

This assessment has been prepared with reference to the *NSW Heritage Manual* update *Statements of Heritage Impact* (2002) and with reference to the Council planning controls listed under Section 1.6.

### **1.4.1 Physical Evidence**

A site visit was carried out in June 2020. Unless otherwise stated, the photographs in this statement were taken on this occasion. These photographs are supplemented with images from Google Maps as accredited.

### **1.4.2 References**

#### **1.4.2.1 General References**

- 'Bid to preserve Griffin Centre Heritage,' *The Crag*, June 2019, p.1.
- Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd, *Eric M. Nicholls Study of his Architecture in the Willoughby City Council Area*. Unpublished study for Willoughby City Council, 2003.
- GSDA, *Castlecrag Homes- Scenic Marine suburbs of Middle Harbour*, 1928.
- Heritage 21, *Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy- Castlecrag. The Quadrangle, Castlecrag: Walter Burley Griffin Research Report*. Unpublished report prepared for Bruce Swalwell Architects dated February 2019. Copy provided by the client. See copy in Appendix 1.
- Johnson, Donald Leslie, *Australian Architecture 1901-1951*, NSW, Sydney University Press, 1980.
- Liston, Carol, 'Draft Thematic History' for John Falk Planning in association with Rodney Jensen and Associates, *Willoughby Heritage Study*. Unpublished study for Willoughby Council, September 1986.
- Pike, Douglas, (gen. ed.), *The Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 9 1891-1939*, Victoria, Melbourne University Press, 1983.
- 'Protestor interrupts Castlecrag Ceremony,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 August, 1979, p.3
- Walker, M., Kabos, A. and Weireck, J., *Building For Nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag*, 1994.
- Willoughby City Library, *Fact Sheet No. 8: Willoughby City Facts Castlecrag*, 2002.

#### **1.4.2.2 NSW LPI Records**

- Certificates of Title Volume 900 Volume 33; Volume 3184, Folio 143. NSW LPI.

#### **1.4.2.3 State Heritage Inventory Listing Sheets**

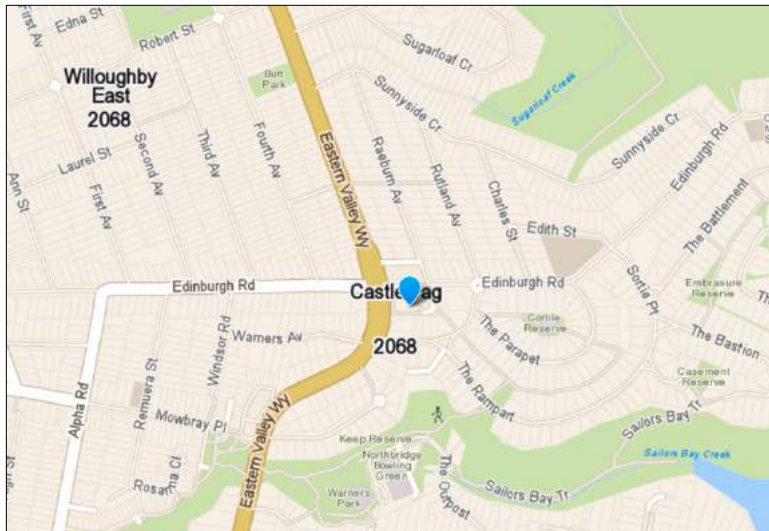
- *Community Centre*, No. 10 The Postern, Castlecrag. State Heritage Inventory Database No.: 2660252.

#### **1.4.2.4 Planning Controls and Guidelines**

- *Willoughby Development Control Plan*.
- *Willoughby Local Centres Strategy 2036*.
- *Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 2012*.

## 1.5 Site Location

The site, No. 100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag, is located on the south eastern corner of Edinburgh Road and Eastern Valley Way (Figure 1). The site is identified a Lot 11 D.P. 611594 and Lot 1 D.P.43691. The site is currently occupied by the Quadrangle Shopping Village.



**Figure 1:**  
**Site Location.**  
Whereis.com.au

## 2.0 THE SITE AND ITS SETTING

### 2.1 The Site

The site is only briefly described for the purposes of this statement, given that it is not proposed to retain the existing building and given that no part of the site is subject to a statutory heritage listing.

The site is irregular in shape. It has a northern boundary to Edinburgh Road of 87.99m; a wide curving boundary to Eastern Valley Way; a western boundary, to Eastern Valley Way, of 47.86m; and an irregular southern and eastern boundary. The site is 5,166.0sqm in size. The natural fall of the site is to the south.

The majority of the site is occupied by the building complex known as The Quadrangle Shopping Village. The Quadrangle Shopping Village presents to Edinburgh Road as a predominately single storey building complex and to Eastern Valley Way as a single storey building over a high undercroft. The walls are constructed of rendered and painted masonry or face brick, with large metal framed doors and windows. The roof forms are flat or concealed, with tiled sloping parapets to Edinburgh Road, Eastern Valley Way and the internal courtyard.

The complex is centred around a paved L-shaped courtyard, which is accessed off Edinburgh Road. This courtyard is level with Edinburgh Road. The fall of the site to the south provides for parking beneath the retail level. The carpark is accessed from a driveway off Edinburgh Road, on the eastern boundary of the site. There is a high brick wall along the southern boundary and a two – three metre high retaining wall along the western (Eastern Valley Way) boundary.

The majority of the site is covered in hard surfaces. There are trees set within a narrow garden bed along the southern boundary. The canopy of this line of trees thins towards the western end of the boundary. There are also several, more widely spaced, trees along the western (Eastern Valley Way) boundary and along the northern (Edinburgh Road)



boundary of the site. Trees on the site, as identified by the separate arborist report that accompanies this application, include several Wallangarra White Gums and a Spotted Gum along Edinburgh Road and Eastern Valley Way; and Tallowoods, Sydney Blue Gums, Turpentines, a Sydney Red Gum, a Brushbox and a Bangalay along the southern boundary.<sup>1</sup>

Figures 2 to 11 illustrate the site, with a focus on the eastern and southern boundaries, being the boundaries that immediately adjoin the Griffin Conservation Area. Refer also to the survey and arborist report that accompany this application.



**Figure 2: Aerial photograph over the site.**  
Whereis.com.au; annotation by WP Heritage and Planning.



**Figure 3: The site from the corner of Eastern Valley Way and Edinburgh Road.**

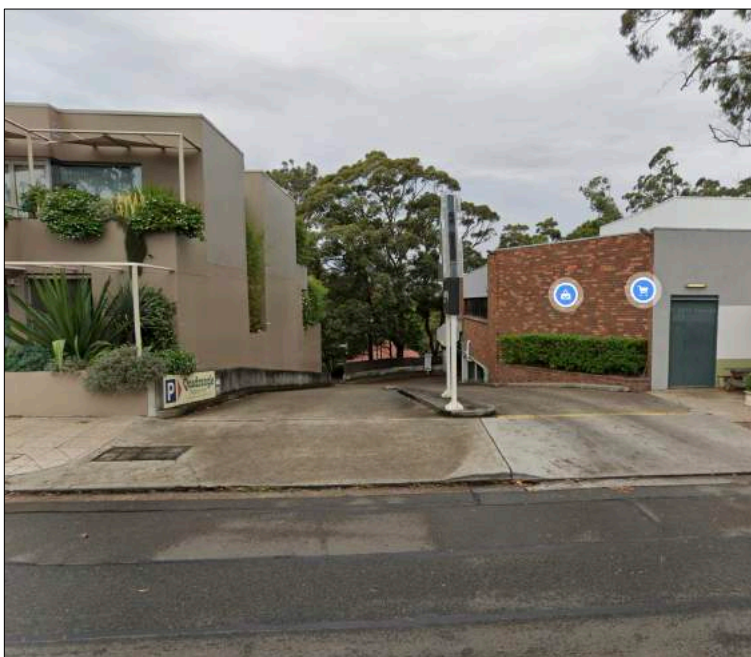
<sup>1</sup> Advanced Treescape Consulting, *Arboricultural Impact Assessment: Quadrangle Shopping Village, 100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag, NSW 2068 (Report Update- August 2021)*. Dated 30 August, 2021.



**Figure 4:**  
**The site from**  
**Edinburgh Road.**  
Google Maps,  
November 2020.



**Figure 5:**  
**Main entrance into**  
**the Quadrangle from**  
**Edinburgh Road.**



**Figure 6:**  
**Driveway on the**  
**eastern side of the**  
**site, off Edinburgh**  
**Road. This is also a**  
**slot view into the**  
**Conservation Area.**  
Google Maps,  
November 2020.





**Figure 7:**  
Eastern elevation of  
The Quadrangle from  
the driveway on the  
eastern side of the  
site.



**Figure 8:**  
Looking west along  
the southern  
boundary showing  
the high brick wall  
and line of trees.



**Figure 9:**  
The site from Eastern  
Valley Way, showing  
the western elevation  
of the building and  
the trees along this  
boundary.





**Figure 10:**  
Looking east along the  
southern boundary from  
Eastern Valley Way.



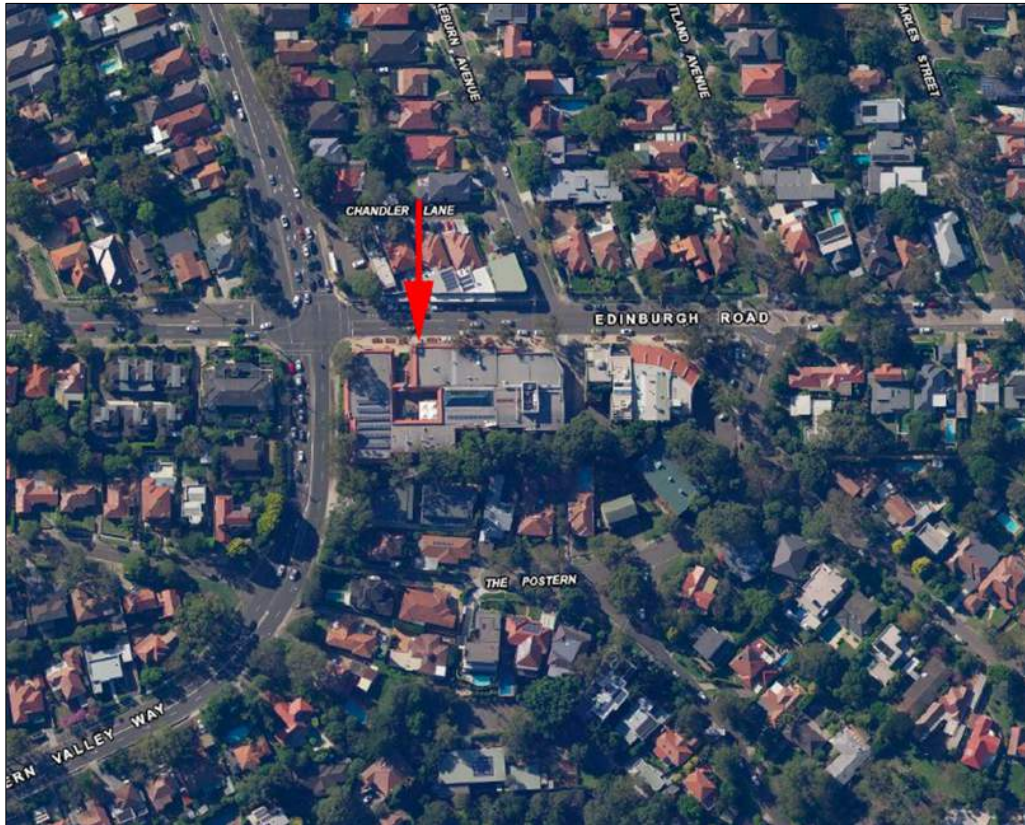
**Figure 11:**  
Looking along the trees on the  
southern boundary.

## 2.2 The Setting

For the following, refer to Figure 12.

The site is located within a mixed commercial/residential setting in which buildings are predominately one and two storeys in height.

Edinburgh Road carries two lanes of traffic in either direction. The section of the road in which the site is located is level. There are paved footpaths to either side. Opposite the site, on the **northern** side of Edinburgh Road, lie a row of one and two storey late 1930s/early 1940s brick commercial buildings. Continuing east are one and two storey dwellings of mixed architectural periods and styles. The properties on this side of the road do not form part of a Conservation Area. Refer to Figures 13 and 14.



**Figure 12: Aerial photograph over the site and the surrounding area.**  
SIX Maps; annotation by WP Heritage and Planning.



**Figure 13:**  
Edinburgh Road  
opposite the  
subject site.





**Figure 14:**  
Continuing east  
of Figure 27.

**South** of the subject site, and at its western end, lie residential properties fronting Eastern Valley Way. These properties occupied by one and two storey residential flat buildings and dwellings of varying architectural periods and styles. They lie at varying levels to the road and within lots with varying degrees of planting. These properties do not form part of a Conservation Area. Refer to Figure 15.



**Figure 15:**  
South of the  
subject site.

South of the site, at its eastern end, lie properties part of the Griffin Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is described in Section 3.0 below. None of the dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the site were designed by Griffin or his partner Eric Nicholls.

**East** of the site lie properties part of the Griffin Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is described in Section 3.0 below.

**West** of the subject site, on the south western corner of Edinburgh Road and Eastern Valley Way, lies a c.2000s two storey residential flat building with rendered walls and a hipped tiled roof set behind a high street wall and hedge. Completing the intersection, on



the north western corner of Edinburgh Road and Eastern Valley Way, lies a single storey painted brick dwelling. Refer to Figures 16 and 17.



**Figure 16:**  
Flat building  
on the south  
western  
corner of  
Edinburgh  
Road and  
Eastern Valley  
Way opposite  
the site.



**Figure 17:**  
View towards  
the north  
western  
corner of the  
intersection.

### 3.0 SUMMARY OF STATUTORY HERITAGE LISTINGS FOR THE SITE

No. 100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag is:

- Not listed as a heritage item on the State Heritage Register under the auspices of the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*.
- Not listed as a heritage item by Schedule 5 Part 1 of the *WLEP 2012*.
- Not located within any heritage conservation area as defined by Schedule 5 Part 2 of the *WLEP 2012*.
- Not identified as an archaeological site by Schedule 5 Part 3 of the *WLEP 2012*.

#### 4.0 HERITAGE ITEMS/CONSERVATION AREAS IN THE VICINITY OF THE SITE

For the following, 'in the vicinity' has been determined by physical proximity to the site, existing and potential view corridors and the massing and scale of the proposed works.

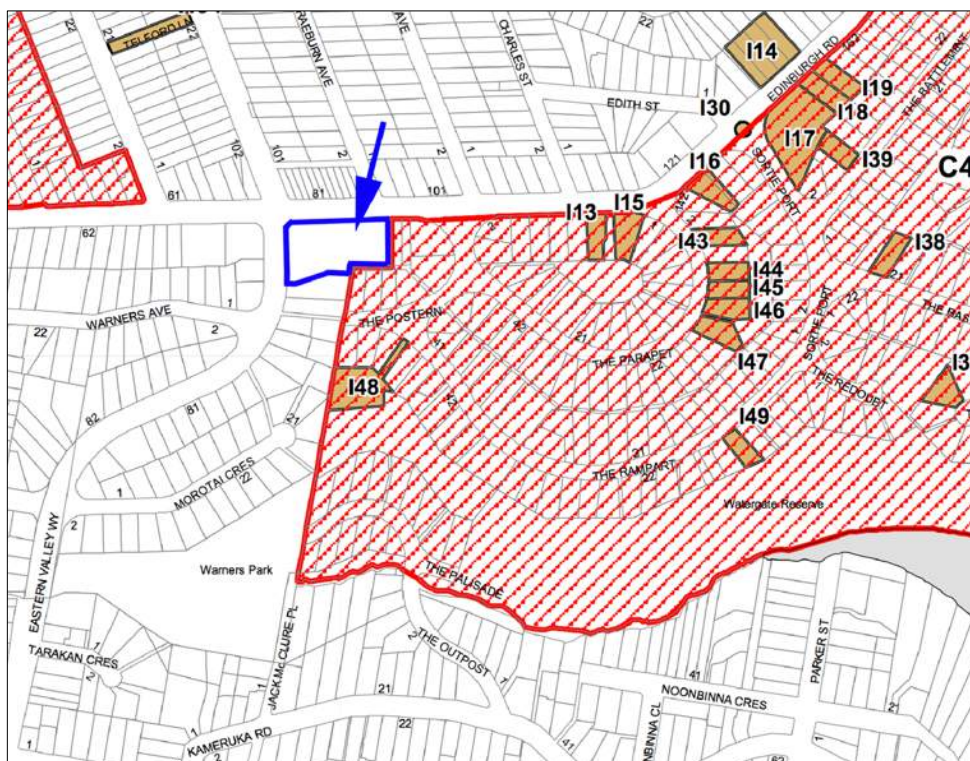
The following considers statutory listings only.

#### 4.1 State Heritage Listings

There are no heritage items listed on the State Heritage Register or a s170 Register, under the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*, in the vicinity of the site.

#### 4.2 Local Heritage Listings

Figure 18 reproduces a detail from the Willoughby Heritage Plan, part of the *WLEP 2012*. Within this plan, heritage items are coloured brown and numbered. Archaeological items are coloured yellow and numbered. Conservation Areas are hatched in red. The subject site is outlined in blue and marked by an arrow.



**Figure 18: Heritage Map. The subject site is outlined in red and marked by the arrow.**  
*Willoughby WLEP 2012; annotated W.P. Heritage and Planning.*

#### 4.2.1 Schedule 5 Part 1 of the *WLEP 2012*

There are no heritage items listed by Schedule 5 Part 1 of the *WLEP 2012* adjoining the site boundaries.

The heritage items to the east- *House (including original interiors)*, No. 136 Edinburgh Road (I13) and *House (including original interiors)*, No. 140 Edinburgh Road (I14)- are considered to be sufficiently removed from the subject site for works of the proposed nature to have no impact upon their setting or on significant view corridors to/from them. Edinburgh Road is level; there are numerous dwelling and trees between the site and these items. They are not considered further for the purposes of this statement.

To the south of the site, and separated from it by a number of intervening properties, lies the Community Centre, No. 10 The Postern (I48). Given that the land slopes downwards

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towards this item, the proposed works have the potential to impact upon its setting. Its significance and setting are considered in Section 6.0 below.

#### **4.2.2 Schedule 5 Part 2 of the WLEP 2012**

The site adjoins the following Conservation Area listed by Schedule 5 Part 2 of the *WLEP 2012* on its eastern and part of its southern boundary:

- Griffin Heritage Conservation Area (C4)

The significance of this area, and its relationship to the site, is discussed in Section 5.0 below.

#### **4.2.3 Schedule 5 Part 3 of the WLEP 2012**

There are no archaeological sites listed by this Schedule in the vicinity of the site.

### **5.0 GRIFFIN CONSERVATION AREA**

This area is shaded red and marked 'C4' in Figure 18 above. It adjoins the eastern boundary of the site and part of the southern boundary.

#### **5.1 Brief History of the Conservation Area**

The following provides a brief history of the Castlecrag Estate, now the Griffin Conservation Area.

##### **5.1.1 Greater Sydney Development Association and Walter and Marion Griffin**

In 1920, a large part of the present-day suburb of Castlecrag was purchased by the Greater Sydney Development Association (GSDA), who owned over 500 acres within the Parish of Willoughby.<sup>2</sup>

The GSDA acquired their Middle Harbour land at a fortuitous time. During the 1920s and 1930s a second wave of subdivisions swept through the Willoughby Municipality. Throughout the 1920s, Willoughby was regularly third on the list of districts of Sydney with regard to the number of new buildings constructed. In 1922, for example, 98 applications for subdivisions or re-subdivisions were approved. This period of rapid growth was influenced by the anticipated opening of the Harbour Bridge (1932) and the increasing use of the motor car, two events that brought Willoughby into closer contact with Sydney. The population expanded accordingly, from 28,067 in 1921 to 42,251 in 1933 and 51,945 in 1947. Population growth slowed over the following three decades, isolating this period as being particularly formative in the history of the area.<sup>3</sup>

The shareholders of the GSDA were a diverse group of people, ranging from Federal politicians, including the long serving Speaker of the House, Sir Elliot Johnson, architects, businessmen and members of Melbourne Chinese community. The main instigator and moving force behind the group was the American born architect Walter Burley Griffin (1876-1937) and his wife Marion Mahony Griffin (1871-1961).

Griffin won the international design competition for the Australian Federal Capital in 1911 with the aid of his wife, also a licence practicing architect. Griffin made an extended visit to Australia in 1913, one which culminated in his appointment as the Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction. The Griffins settled in Melbourne. In 1921, having faced years of obstruction while trying to implement his design for Canberra and then lack of funding due to World War I, Griffin's official appointment was not renewed.

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<sup>2</sup> For details see Certificate of Title Volume 3184, Folio 143. NSW LPI.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics cited in see: Dr. Carol Liston, 'Draft Thematic History' for John Falk Planning in association with Rodney Jensen and Associates, *Willoughby Heritage Study*. Unpublished study for Willoughby Council, September 1986, p.16.

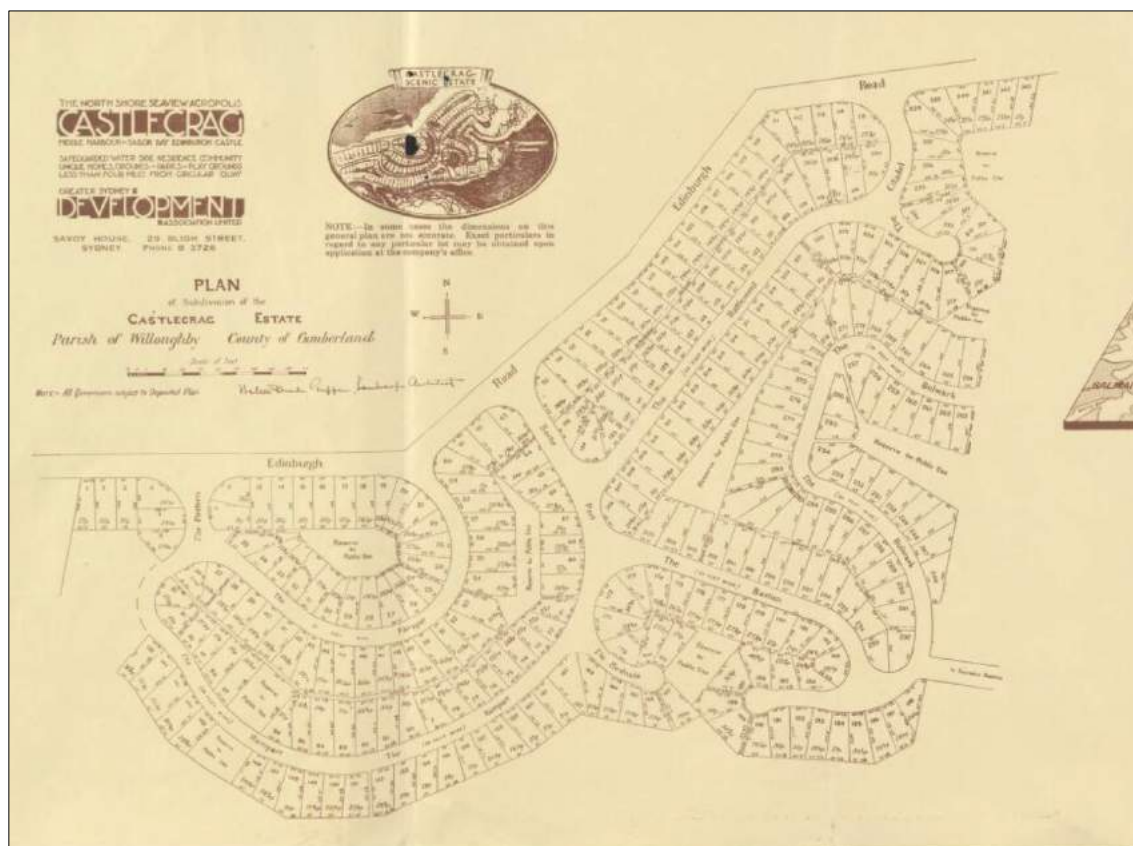


Following the formation of the GSDA, Griffin was appointed its Managing Director. The faith placed in Griffin was considerable. Griffin held the right to one tenth of the shares, each with ten times the right of an ordinary share. He thus had the power to out-vote all the other shareholders combined.<sup>4</sup>

Griffin envisaged opening the GSDA lands gradually as demand require. A prospectus produced by the GSDA outlined their plans for their large Middle Harbour property, which included Mowbray Point, the Sugarloaf and Little Sugarloaf promontories, for

‘...high class residential suburbs conserving to their maximum their natural beauty with adequate access to the waterfronts for the public the provision of swimming baths and boating and sailing facilities; the establishment of reserves for recreation purposes including riding, golf, cricket, tennis, bowls, and other exercises; and the construction of buildings and all other improvements aesthetically in keeping with the surroundings, so far as possible of the native rock and subordinate to the natural beauty of the land.’

The first of the planned GSDA Estates was the Castlecrag Estate. The original Castlecrag Estate was smaller than the present-day suburb and is defined by Figure 19. The name, Castlecrag, was only later applied to the entire peninsula. The layout of this estate was designed by Griffin, who walked over the terrain providing markers for the surveyors to follow. This approach set the subdivision apart from many of the period.



**Figure 19: Greater Sydney Development Association Ltd, *Plan of the subdivision of the Castlecrag Estate, Parish of Willoughby, County of Cumberland, 1921.* This subdivision is essentially the area now the Griffin Conservation Area.**

National Library of Australia.

<sup>4</sup> M. Walker, A. Kabos and J. Weireck, *Building For Nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag*, 1994. On line extract from a book published in 1994 by the Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc.

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Shareholders in the GSDA were offered a free block of land on the Castlecrag Estate with the proviso that they then built a house on the land. Five shareholders accepted the offer and commissioned Griffin (and the GSDA) to design and build their houses. These demonstration houses, under construction in 1921-22, accorded with Griffin's firmly belief in the provision of examples, not just the promotion of theory:

'I take as accepted in the modern educational system that we learn by doing.'<sup>5</sup>

The GSDA undertook widespread promotion of Castlecrag and their objectives. Griffin and his wife gave public lectures illustrated by lantern slides, wrote articles for architectural and trade journals, placed large advertisements in newspapers and produced two substantial brochures, *Castlecrag Album* (1925) and *Castlecrag Homes* (1928). In the latter the Estate was described as:

'The thoroughfares are carved out of bed-rock and are finished in bituminous concrete or rolled blue stone asphalt, with ample width...with every now and again a circular terminal way to serve as a halting place or turning point...the roads...when seen from above...have almost merged into the foliage through which they pass.

In order to provide short cuts embowered lanes intersect the main highways, thus facilitating movement from crest to waterfront. As the services and utilities of all the homes are supplied from the rear of each, the roads are not disfigured by poles and wires nor is the splendid road surface continually dug up to provide conveniences for new homes.

Ample public reserves have been made through Castlecrag and Cove, apart from the innumerable small parks and playgrounds intended for the benefit of the houses immediately abutting. In keeping with the idea of a Castle (Castlecrag) the roads and public reserves on that promontory have been given appropriate names- such as...The Battlement in the case of highways, and The Turret and The Keep in the case of reserves.'<sup>6</sup>

In strong contrast to the earlier descriptions of Willoughby previously cited, Griffin wanted no artificial boundaries or red tiled roofs. He instead sought a closer integration with nature:

'I want Castlecrag built so that each individual can feel the whole of the landscape is his.'<sup>7</sup>

Strict covenants were placed on the land. Figure 20 reproduces these covenants.

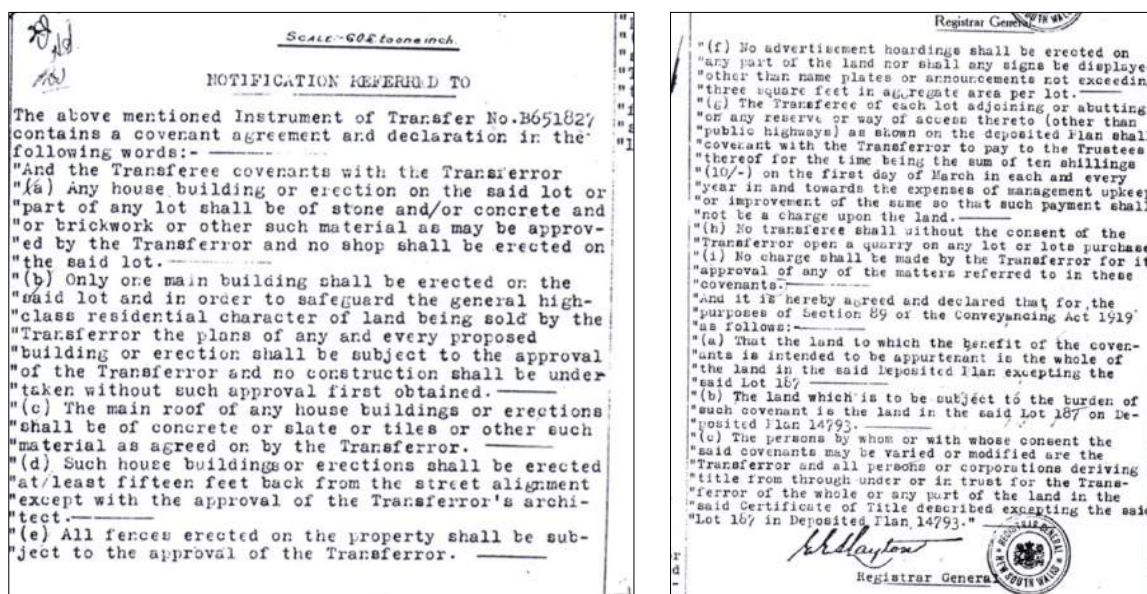
The GSDA produced a silent movie entitled *Beautiful Middle Harbour* for showing in local cinemas. Many people (and not just prospective purchasers) visited the estate, a popular route being via ferry or boat from The Spit.

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<sup>5</sup> Cited in Walker, M., Kabos, A. and Weireck, *op.cit.*, 1994.

<sup>6</sup> GSDA, *Castlecrag Homes- Scenic Marine suburbs of Middle Harbour*, 1928, pp.10-11.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in Willoughby City Library, *Fact Sheet No. 8: Willoughby City Facts Castlecrag*, 2002.



**Figure 20: Covenants on the Castlecrag Estate**

This set cited C.T. Volume 4153 Folio 134.

In 1924, Walter and Marion moved from Melbourne to Sydney to supervise the development of the Castlecrag Estate. Marion Mahony Griffin's principal role at Castlecrag was as 'community leader', organising a variety of cultural events, many of which were staged in the rock gully that had been adapted to serve as an amphitheatre.<sup>8</sup>

Between 1929 and 1935, the years surrounding and including the Great Depression, what had since become the firm of Griffin and Nicholls (see below) survived on commissions for the design of municipal incinerator buildings for the Reverberatory Incinerator and Engineering Company (RIECo). The incinerator projects provided an outlet for Griffin and Nicholls to express their growing interest in the aesthetics of anthropomorphism, a spiritual philosophy developed by Rudolf Stein, through the use of symbolism and repetitive motifs in cement, tile and brick. Decorative references to the 'four ethers' - fire, light, chemical and earth- are expressed.

The challenges presented by the downturn in the economy were coupled with the difficulty of accessing the estate. One early visitor recalls having to travel by ferry from Milsons Point, tram to Northbridge and from there on foot.<sup>9</sup> Of the fifty houses Griffin designed prior to his departure from Australia in 1935 only sixteen were ever built in Castlecrag. With the exception of several undated project designs (which may have been produced after 1933), Griffin would not build again in Castlecrag after 1933.<sup>10</sup> By 1938, only 19 houses, including the 16 designed by Griffin, had been built on the estate.<sup>11</sup>

### 5.1.2 Eric Nicholls and Castlecrag

After Griffin's death in India in 1937, his former partner, Eric Nicholls (1902-1965), was given power of attorney with regard to Castlecrag matters on Marion Mahony Griffin's behalf. This included the approval of plans under the covenants at Castlecrag on the behalf of the GSDA. Nicholls enforced the covenants, despite the difficulties of post war development, but later made some concessions, such as permitting the use of pitched

<sup>8</sup> Douglas Pike (gen. ed.), *The Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 9 1891-1939*, Victoria, Melbourne University Press, 1983, pp.108-9.

<sup>9</sup> Willoughby City Library, *Fact Sheet No. 8: Willoughby City Facts Castlecrag*, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd, *Eric M. Nicholls Study of his Architecture in the Willoughby City Council Area*. Unpublished study for Willoughby City Council, 2003, p.9.

<sup>11</sup> Douglas Pike (gen.ed.), *op.cit.*, 1983, pp.108-9.



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tilled roofs. In doing so, he made a 'lasting contribution to the preservation of the character of Castlecrag.'<sup>12</sup>

Eric Nicholls had joined Walter Burley Griffin's Melbourne Office at the age of 19. In 1923, he became an associate, taking charge of the Melbourne office following W.B. Griffin's departure for America to place his affairs in order and Marion's move to Castlecrag. Characteristics that were to be more fully developed at Castlecrag are foreshadowed in a number of Nichol's early commissions in Melbourne, including his own residence at No. 18 Willis Street, North Balwyn (1928):

Griffin's influence, as is Nicholl's derivation from it, was clear:

'...Eric M. Nicholls' architecture was.... similar to Griffin's in one aspect- chunky, squat proportions- but different very different in plan and elevation. The derivation was unmistakable but the exploitation of the Griffin influence takes on a new mode.'<sup>13</sup>

In 1931 Nicholls became a partner in the firm, which now changed its name to Griffin and Nicholls Architects. Nicholls joined Griffin in Sydney in 1932 and moved into the *Moon House*, Castlecrag, which had been built for Moon Chin Wah, one of the original GSDA shareholders, in 1922. When W.B. Griffin died in India in 1937, Marion gave permission for Nicholls to continue using the practice's name.

From 1941, Nicholls practiced on his own. He designed 58 buildings in the Willoughby area, including 26 private homes. Nicholls built at least 19 houses in Castlecrag and made additions to a number of others during the period 1937-1954. During the 1940s, in his capacity as Honorary Town Planner for Council, Nicholls designed the Albert Chowne Memorial Hall (1945), baby health centres at Penshurst and Help Street, as well as additions to the Willoughby Council Offices. Nicholls

'...was described by Marion Mahony Griffin as 'an exquisite draftsman'- this praise from one who herself was described by Reyner Banham as 'the greatest architectural delineator of his (sic) generation...better than Wright and...Adolf Loos'.... Nicholls was a man of high ideals and vision, and together with his wife, was part of a group of like-minded people involved in and promoted the artistic, cultural and social life of the Castlecrag community...'<sup>14</sup>

In 1959, he was joined by his son, Glynn, and Robert Elliot, forming the firm Nicholls, Elliot and Nicholls. Nicholls died in 1965.

The first two houses designed by Nicholls following Griffin's departure for India, the *Deans House* (1937) and *Camelot* (1938), demonstrate the influence of Griffin's Castlecrag buildings. *Camelot* is considered to essentially be a reworking of one of Griffin's earlier project designs.<sup>15</sup> Particular characteristics carried over from Griffin include the use of squat proportions and granular stone masonry. Later houses demonstrate combined aspects of this organic stream of architecture with an early appreciation of European modernism. All his houses, demonstrate his great ability in siting buildings on challenging allotments. Nichols also designed what is now the Castlecrag Community Centre, which lies to the south of the site and is described in Section 6.0 below.

Further information about the history of Castlecrag and a discussion of Griffin's legacy can be found in a paper prepared by Heritage 21 in June, 2018 to guide the initial phases of this project. A copy of this paper can be found in Appendix 1 of this statement.

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<sup>12</sup> Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd, *op.cit.*, p.15.

<sup>13</sup> Donald Leslie Johnson, *Australian Architecture 1901-1951*, NSW, Sydney University Press, 1980, p.125.

<sup>14</sup> NSW State Heritage Inventory Form.

<sup>15</sup> Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd, *op.cit.*, p.11.

### 5.1.3 The Historic Relationship of the Site to Griffin's Castlecrag Estate

It is important to consider the historic relationship of the subject site (if any) to the original Castlecrag Estate and thus the Conservation Area.

An examination of historic plans indicates that only the eastern-most part of the site formed part of Griffin's Castlecrag Estate. The remainder of the site is located on land first subdivided by Richard Hayes Harnett (Snr) in the late nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup> The abrupt transition from the curving roads of the Castlecrag Estate into the surrounding area on its western (and northern) sides is readily apparent in the 1921 plan, Figure 19 above, and even more so in the 1943 aerial photograph, Figure 21, below.



**Figure 21: (Aerial Photograph over the site and the surrounding area), 1943.**  
SIX Maps

In the 1943 photograph, Figure 21, the distinct edge of the Castlecrag Estate subdivision as it runs through the subject site between the two buildings that directly address Edinburgh Road is readily apparent. This photograph also shows that the site had been cleared of all vegetation, except in the lower south eastern corner. Eastern Valley Way was a relatively new road at this time (opened in 1939).

Figure 21 also shows that, by 1943, a local shopping centre had been established on Edinburgh Road just east of its intersection with Eastern Valley Way. The earliest commercial building erected as part of this centre is located on the southern side of the road, just east of the subject site and on land part of the Castlecrag Estate. This building, erected in 1924, still stands and is now known as the Griffin Centre. The building, see Figure 22, was designed by local architect/builder S.A. Spargo and approved by Griffin as part of his vision for a self-sufficient community.<sup>17</sup> The building has been altered and added to over time. The commercial buildings on the northern side of Edinburgh Road, directly opposite the subject site, were erected in the late 1930s/early 1940s.

<sup>16</sup> With reference to Certificate of Title Volume 900-33, which includes land part of the subject site. NSW LPI.

<sup>17</sup> 'Bid to preserve Griffin Centre heritage,' *The Crag*, June 2019, p.1.



**Figure 22:**  
The Griffin  
Centre, as  
published in  
Castlecrag  
Album, a  
promotional  
booklet  
produced by the  
Greater Sydney  
Development  
Association  
c.1926.  
*The Crag*, June  
2019.

Prior to the 1970s, there were two shops and a building belonging to radio station 2RC on the site. None of these buildings still stand.

The Quadrangle Shopping Village was opened in August 1979 by Alderman Noel Reidy, Mayor of Willoughby. The new shopping centre had been bitterly opposed and was built only after the case went before the Local Government Appeals Tribunal.<sup>18</sup> The Castlecrag Progress Association had had an input into the design, in particularly characteristics such as the generous setbacks from Edinburgh Road, wide eaves and the consideration to the way in which the building 'reads in the round.' Figure 23 provides a photograph of the newly completed Quadrangle. Additional photographs can be found in the Heritage 21 report in Appendix 1.



**Figure 23:**  
Quadrangle  
Shopping  
Village,  
Edinburgh Road,  
Castlecrag, 1981.  
Willoughby City  
Library, Ref No.  
003147.

## 5.2 Description of the Conservation Area

Part H 3.5 of the *Willoughby Development Control Plan (DCP)* provides the following brief description of the Griffin Conservation Area:

'Within residential properties, the lack of front fences and separate garages retain the transition from street to reserve that Griffin intended by minimal building within the first 10m zone of the property. The intent was that the house was to exist in the bush landscape without the artificiality of property boundaries.

<sup>18</sup> 'Protestor interrupts Castlecrag ceremony,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 August, 1979, p.3.



Griffin's main aims in designing the Estate were to get away from the traditional suburb with its rectangular grid street pattern, imposed upon the landscape without thought for topography, and to demonstrate that architecture could be subordinate to and harmonious with the landscape. To Griffin, architecture, the site planning, town planning and landscape design were inseparable. Any structure had to fit into the overall landscape of the area - being harmonious rather than obtrusive. He achieved this integration through his design philosophy - narrow winding roads following contours, linked open space networks, lack of fences, unobtrusive houses, retention of bushland in the reserves, walkways, nature strips and road islands. Roads are unobtrusive because of the proliferation of natural vegetation, their winding nature, the grass and bushland verges, the sandstone kerbs and narrow widths. All these aspects, the natural landforms of rock outcrops, cliffs, gullies etc. and the rock cuttings for the road and also the culverts are extremely important and of great significance in the Griffin Heritage Conservation Area.

The form of houses proposed by Griffin was single storey, or in rare cases two storey buildings based on a series of projecting wings radiating from the central area and fireplace. The elevational treatment tended towards strong horizontals because of a design intention to integrate with the landscape. This is reinforced by the use of masonry blocks with strong horizontal window lintels and flat roofs. The finishes tended toward natural materials such as stone and the use of colours which reflect the bushland setting.<sup>19</sup>

The following considers the character of the Conservation Area within the immediate vicinity of the subject site in greater detail. Refer to Figure 24, an aerial photograph over the site. In this photograph, the site is identified by the arrow and the boundary of the Griffin Conservation Area in red.



**Figure 24: Aerial photograph over the site and the Conservation Area.**  
SIX Maps; annotations in red by WP Heritage and Planning.

<sup>19</sup> Willoughby DCP, Section H3.5.



The immediately adjoining property to the east of the subject site is No. 116 Edinburgh Road. No. 116 Edinburgh Road forms the north western corner of the Griffin Conservation Area. The building on this site is a c.1980s-2000s two storey (to Edinburgh Road) rendered masonry mixed-use building with a flat roof. This building increases to three storeys in height to the rear. It addresses Edinburgh Road, presenting a blind elevation to the subject site. It has a staggered setback from Edinburgh Road and lies on its western boundary. Continuing east, No. 118 Edinburgh Road is similarly a modern two storey building. This building steps down in height to meet the single storey (to Edinburgh Road) Griffin Centre at No. 120-126 Edinburgh Road. As identified above, four of this group of shops was erected in the early 1920s; a fifth shop was added in more recent times. Refer to Figures 25 to 28.



**Figure 25:**  
Nos. 116 and  
118 Edinburgh  
Road.



**Figure 26:**  
The western  
elevation of  
Nos. 116 and  
118 Edinburgh  
Road as its  
presents to the  
site.



**Figure 27:**  
The Griffin  
Centre as it  
presents to  
Edinburgh Road.



**Figure 28:**  
The Griffin  
Centre is two  
storeys to the  
rear.

Adjoining the site to the **south**, and forming part of the northern boundary of the Griffin Conservation Area, lie Nos. 7, 9 and 11 The Postern. These sites lie below the level of the subject site. This section of The Postern is kerbed and guttered. The dwellings on these sites are single storey post 1943 face brick dwellings set within gardens largely characterised by introduced planting, with a backdrop of the trees that lie on the southern boundary of the site. Refer to Figures 29 and 30. Figures 8 and 11 above show these dwellings from the rear of the subject site.





**Figure 29:**  
Nos. 7 and  
9 The  
Postern to  
the south  
of the site.



**Figure 30:**  
Nos. 9 and  
11 The  
Postern to  
the south  
of the site.

Continuing south into the Conservation Area, the curving, often narrow, streets of the original Castlecrag subdivision become the dominant characteristic. Dwellings are one and two storeys in height and mixed in date and style. The level and type of vegetation varies considerably. Some properties have cleared front lawns with introduced planting; others maintain a more bush-like setting. Figures 31 and 32 illustrate other properties fronting The Postern within the immediate vicinity of the site.



**Figure 31:**  
Commercial  
building at No. 3  
The Postern.



**Figure 32:**  
Two dwellings on  
the southern side of  
The Postern near  
the subject site.

### **5.3 Existing Setting of the North Western Corner of the Conservation Area**

The setting of the north western corner of the Conservation Area as it exists today was described in Section 2.1 and 2.2 above.

### **5.4 Future Setting**

In late 2019, Willoughby Council adopted the *Willoughby Local Centres Strategy to 2036*, which sets out a future vision for the Castlecrag Local Centre. Figure 33 reproduces a diagram from this strategy entitled 'Indicative Master Plan for Castlecrag.' The plan envisages a greater density on the subject site with buildings of up to three storeys in height. The setting of the north western corner of the Conservation Area will change if this plan is implemented. Notable within this plan are the retention of the trees on the southern and western boundaries of the subject site and provision of a public space with good amenity and views to the tree line to the south.



#### INDICATIVE MASTER PLAN FOR CASTLECrag

This indicative Master Plan for Castlecrag details the key features for growth and shows how development might be achieved alongside other opportunities for public domain improvements in the centre.



#### Key features

1. Retention of the Griffin Centre and ground floor facade, roof line and active frontage. Identify as a heritage item.
2. A new park/green space
3. Extension of the curved facade of the Griffin Centre to reinforce The Postern, maximum height of 3 storeys.
4. Pedestrian links through to the Quadrangle site.
5. Mature boundary trees retained
6. A new plaza as part of the Quadrangle development with good solar access.
7. Shop top housing on the Quadrangle site, 4 storeys on Eastern Valley Way and up to 3 storeys above Edinburgh Road.
8. Up to 3 storeys with shop top housing whilst maintaining small scale shop fronts to Edinburgh Road.
9. Retain surface car parking
10. Opportunity for kerb blisters to improve mid-block crossing amenity
11. Threshold and kerb blister treatments to improve pedestrian amenity
12. Rooftop garden
13. Potential access to Quadrangle basement
14. Potential for a new left-out (or service) access from the Quadrangle.
15. Create a green entry point at the intersection of Eastern Valley Way and Edinburgh Road.

**Figure 33: Indicative Master Plan for Castlecrag.**  
*Willoughby Local Centres Strategy to 2036.*

## 5.5 View Corridors

The principal view corridors associated with the Griffin Conservation Area are obtained from within the Conservation Area and include views along the streets, views towards individual sites of significance, views along the streets, views into reserves and views between dwellings towards bushland. There are significant views into the Conservation Area from Middle Harbour and significant views out of the Conservation Area across Middle Harbour.

The following considers view corridors towards the Conservation Area that include the site and view corridors out of the Conservation Area that include the subject site.

The subject site lies at one of the principal entrances into the Conservation Area. Figures 34 to 36 below illustrate the subject site on approach from Eastern Valley Way and Edinburgh Road. It is noted that there are no significant view corridors over the site into the Conservation Area, though there are glimpses of the top of the tree line.



**Figure 34: View on approach over the site into the Conservation Area on approach along Eastern Valley Way from the south.**

Figures 37 to 42 illustrate the view out of the Conservation Area over the site. Refer also back to Figures 29 and 30 above for views towards the site from The Postern directly over Nos. 7-11 The Postern. There are glimpses of the existing building on the site through the trees from within the Conservation Area.



**Figure 35: A second view from the north west towards the site from a wider angle.**





**Figure 36: View from The Postern towards the site.**



**Figure 37: View from The Rampart towards the subject site. The roof of the existing building is just visible.**





**Figure 38: View west towards the site from Edinburgh Road over the Griffin Centre, which is part of the Conservation Area.**



**Figure 39: View towards the rear of the site from The Parapet.**

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## 5.6 Statement of Significance

Part H 3.5 of the *Willoughby Development Control Plan (DCP)* provides the following statement of significance for the area:

'The Castlecrag and Haven Estates are outstanding early examples of subdivision which respected the landscape character of an area, created community environments and provided shared views. This process was initiated by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin who were influential architects in the United States and Australia, and were known for their appreciation of the opportunities provided by landscape which was embodied in their plan for Canberra. The significance of the estates is heightened by the extant works of the Griffins which are nationally and internationally recognised.

The estates are a larger more complete demonstration of principles Griffins had developed in the United States and their first seven years in Australia. These innovative principles involved subdivision, contoured roads embedded in the sandstone topography and engineering processes that were aimed at conserving the sandstone terrain, stream systems, indigenous bushland and harbour foreshore, and provided extensive reserves and walkways through the estates that created an integrated open space network. The distinctive nomenclature the Griffins gave to the reserves and roads expresses the castle-like quality of the Castlecrag peninsula.

The estates embody the sense of community and social connection from the Griffins, the first investors and the Griffins' friends to a continuing community with a strong sense of connection to the place. Long established community facilities include the Haven Amphitheatre, Community Centre, Griffin shops, tennis courts, reserves and walkways.

The estates are unique in their application of small lots in a spectacular harbour setting with public vistas and filtered views providing the suburban ideal subordinated to the landscape.  
Key Period of Significance

1921 – 1935.<sup>20</sup>

This statement is adopted for the purposes of this assessment.

## 5.7 Curtilage

The boundaries of the Conservation Area are as described by the *WLEP 2012*. The boundaries as they relate to the subject site are identified in Figures 18 and 24 above.

## 5.8 Contribution of the Site to the Conservation Area

The subject site, although not within the Griffin Conservation Area, lies at a gateway to it. The site forms a small but vital shopping precinct for residents of the Castlecrag Peninsula and also acts as a social hub. The latter is an important function that ties back into the Griffins' ideals of community. It is generally considered that Castlecrag starts at the eastern side of the intersection of the Eastern Valley Way and Edinburgh Road. As such the site is integral to Castlecrag and the heritage significance ascribed to it.

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<sup>20</sup> *Willoughby DCP*, Section H3.5.

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## 6.0 CASTLECRAG COMMUNITY CENTRE

### 6.1 Brief History

The State Heritage Inventory listing sheet for the site provides the following history:

'Eric Milton Nicholls (1902-1965) was born in Linton, Victoria and at 19 joined the office of Walter Burley Griffin in Melbourne. He became an associate in 1923 at the age of 21 and took charge of the Melbourne office after Griffin went to America to settle his affairs and Marion moved to Castlecrag. Nicholls was described by Marion Mahoney Griffin as an "exquisite draftsman" - This praise from one who herself by Reyner Banham as the greatest architectural delineator of her generation...better than Wright and... Adolf Loos. In early 1931, Nicholls became a partner in the firm and its title changed to Griffin and Nicholls Architects. Nicholls moved to Sydney to run the Sydney office in 1932. He lived at 12 The Parapet, Castlecrag. After Walter Burley Griffin's death in Lucknow in 1937, Nicholls obtained Marion's permission to continue practising under the name of Griffin and Nicholls Architects and designed a further 9 houses in Castlecrag, 5 in Edinburgh Road, number 10 The Parapet and one in the Battlement. From 1941, Nicholls practised on his own and designed another 58 buildings in the Willoughby area, including 26 private homes. In 1959 his son Glynn and Robert Elliot, both architects, joined the firm and it became known as Nicholls, Elliot and Nicholls. His other local work, some honorary, includes: Castlecrag Community Hall; Albert Chowne Memorial Hall, Willoughby; Council Baby Health centres in Help Street, Chatswood and Penshurst Street, Willoughby. Nicholls, and his wife Mary, were deeply committed to anthroposophy and in 1934, following the Griffins membership three years earlier, they joined the St. John's Group, Sydney. Later Nicholls joined the Anthroposophical Society of Australia, of which he became general secretary in 1948. He undertook a pioneering role in establishing the first Rudolph Steiner School in Australia which now has campuses at Middle Cove and Castlecrag. Nicholls was a man of high ideals and vision and, together with his wife, was part of a group of like-minded people involved in and promoted the artistic, cultural and social life of the Castlecrag community. With the increasing need for pre-school kindergarten and community meeting place, the Castlecrag Community Circle established the Castlecrag and East Willoughby Community Advancement Co-Operative Society Limited in 1944 to find the means of getting a suitable building for community purposes. Members of various other community groups were invited to participate. The Greater Sydney Development Association donated land on the reserve off The Rampant and Eric Nicholls was invited to be the architect for a Community Hall that would house a kindergarten and be capable of extension. The local people responded with both funds and their labour. The present building was officially opened in November 1947 and is still used as a kindergarten. In 1965, when upkeep exceeded rentals, the Co-operative Society was wound up and the building taken over by Willoughby Council. The western section of the building is a later addition, designed as a community service by Eric Nicholls. It was opened in 1951 and is still operating for several hours a week, staffed by dedicated volunteers. Nicholls' plan for the building included the potential for another storey to be added as the community expanded. Nicholls had carried on the main concerns for the spiritual impulse of the Griffins for the Castlecrag community and his honorary work designing the Community Hall exemplified his commitment to the original concepts for the area. As well, significant Castlecrag citizens of the time were involved including the Deans and Frank and Anice Duncan, who was to be instrumental in the formation of the Walter Burley Griffin Society.'<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Community Centre*, No. 10 The Postern, Castlecrag. State Heritage Inventory Database No.: 2660252.



## 6.2 Description

The State Heritage Inventory listing sheet for the site provides the following description of the site:

'One storey building, with a flat roof hidden behind steeply sloping timber eaves and awnings for solar protection. The walls are made of rendered masonry. There is also glass in the utilitarian building. It's style is moderne villa with Post War Functionalism. The building is dominated by the unusual treatment of the deep timber eaves and attached timber awnings. Sections of the interior have the original exposed, painted ceiling joists and boards. The joists and boards extend to the exterior of the building, forming a deep eave to which is attached an unusual, deep, sloping awning which continues the joist and board treatment. The glass doors still retain their original hardware. Hopper windows feature in the curved rendered masonry sections of the building. The kindergarten and library buildings are situated on the southern section of a public space, most of which is occupied by a bitumen carpark. The kindergarten grounds have been landscaped in an appropriate manner for the function. Some large natives and a Camphor Laurel dominate the landscaping, there are natural and artificial lawn areas, stone and brick paved areas and sand pits.'<sup>22</sup>

Little of the building is visible from the public domain. Refer to Figure 43, which is taken from the carpark on the northern side.



**Figure 40:  
The  
Community  
Centre form  
the  
adjoining  
carpark.**

## 6.3 Setting

The Community Centre lies at the end of a long curving driveway off The Postern. The land rises above the carpark towards Edinburgh Road. There are several residential properties between the centre and the subject site. To the east and west lie dwellings. To the south lies bushland. The Quadrangle Village Shopping Centre is not visible from the item and vice versa.

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<sup>22</sup> *Community Centre*, No. 10 The Postern, Castlecrag. State Heritage Inventory Database No.: 2660252.

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#### **6.4 View Corridors**

The principal view corridors towards this item are obtained from the carpark to the north and the bushland to the south. The item is not visible from The Postern. The principal view corridors out of the item are to the south and the bushland that lies in this direction. There are no view corridors out of this item towards the north and the subject site.

#### **6.5 Statement of Significance**

The State Heritage Inventory listing sheet for the site provides the following statement of significance of this item:

‘10 The Postern has a high level of significance in the local area. The amenity was provided by the dedication of some notable Castlecrag residents in securing a site and raising funds for the building, its staffing and maintenance. As such it has a high local Historical and Social Significance with its association with many prominent residents including the Nicholls and the Deans, the Greater Sydney Development Association and the East Willoughby Community Advancement Co-Operative Society Ltd. The kindergarten and library have been operating for over half a century, the latter with volunteer staff. Thus it is an integral part of the Castlecrag community life and a direct link with people and philosophies, fundamental to the formation of the suburb. The building is a good example of the work of noted local architect, Eric Nicholls and its simple design give it a moderate level of aesthetic significance.’<sup>23</sup>

#### **6.6 Curtilage**

This item has a lot boundary curtilage (i.e. Lot 143, D.P.17416).

#### **7.0 SCOPE OF WORKS**

The following should be read in conjunction with the plans prepared by fjmtstudio that accompany this application.

It is proposed to demolish the existing buildings on the site and to construct a new mixed-use development. The basement level will house service areas and parking, accessed off a driveway in the location of the existing driveway off Edinburgh Road. The lower ground floor will provide additional carparking and retail spaces on the northern side and residential apartments on the southern side. The ground floor will house a combination of retail and residential spaces. Levels 1 and 2 will provide residential housing only. The building will demonstrate generous setbacks from Edinburgh Road at ground floor level. The levels above will project over part of this setback. Above Level 1, the building divides into two. The building presents a series of terraces to the rear. The proposed finishes will include smooth faced and split face Sydney sandstone, textured façade panelling in warm hues and Australian hardwood.

The proposal retains the existing mature trees at the front and rear of the site. Extensive new landscaping is provided for in private and public spaces with plant and material choices being informed by the local environment. Significant aspects of the design include the open space provided on Edinburgh Road and the through site link that makes a feature of the treescape behind.

This proposal revises an earlier planning proposal for the site submitted in June 2020 by reducing the height from a proposed three storeys along Edinburgh Road with four storeys on Eastern Valley Way to three storeys across the site and reducing the FSR from 2.2:1 to 1.8:1.

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<sup>23</sup> *Community Centre*, No. 10 The Postern, Castlecrag. State Heritage Inventory Database No.: 2660252.

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## 8.0 METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

The proposed works are assessed with an understanding of the objectives and controls provided by the *WLEP 2012* and the *Willoughby Development Control Plan (WDCP)*, in particularly Part H3.5 Griffin Heritage Conservation Area: C4. The requirements for HIS set out in the NSW Heritage Council publication *Statements of Heritage Impact* have been read and understood.

Although the site does not lie within the Griffin Conservation Area, consideration should also be given to the aims and objectives of the Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc. (WBGS), keepers of the Griffin legacy. The WBGS provide the following Aims and Objectives pertaining to construction on land forming part of the original Greater Sydney Development Association's holdings:

- To commemorate and promote a better understanding in Australia and internationally of the lives, ideals, vision and works of the Griffins;
- To promote the preservation and conservation of landscape designs, buildings and other works designed by or having an association with the Griffins.<sup>24</sup>

The WBGS provided guidelines for the Quadrangle Architectural Design Brief. In assessing the impact of the proposal, these guidelines have been taken into consideration.

It is noted that fjmtstudio won a design excellence competition judged by an independent jury for this proposal.

## 9.0 EFFECT OF WORK ON THE GRIFFIN CONSERVATION AREA

The first question that must be answered when new works are proposed next to a heritage item or conservation area is:

Why is the proposal required to be located to the item/area?

The subject site is located within the existing local centre for Castlecrag. This section of Edinburgh Road has long contained shops and services. The existing shopping complex has reached the end of its useful economic life.

The proposal also provides for a type of accommodation- residential units- that differs from the free standing dwellings that typify the Conservation Area. This provides a diversity of housing choices and increased housing along major transport routes- aims strongly expressed in NSW Government planning policies- that allows a broader spectrum of people to enjoy Castlecrag. Broadening appreciation of, and opportunities to enjoy, the natural bushland was a key driving force behind the establishment of Castlecrag. Providing for a mixed use development on the subject site, which lies on the fringes of the Conservation Area, meets these needs for services and accommodation choices without intruding into the Conservation Area itself.

Whilst not located within the Griffin Conservation Area, the management policies for the area, as set out in Part H3.5 of the *WDCP*, have informed the proposed works. The site is a sensitive one because it is located at the gateway into the Conservation Area. The proposal provides a transition from the traditional residential areas to the west of the Conservation Area, on the opposite side of Eastern Valley Way, and the unique character of the Conservation Area.

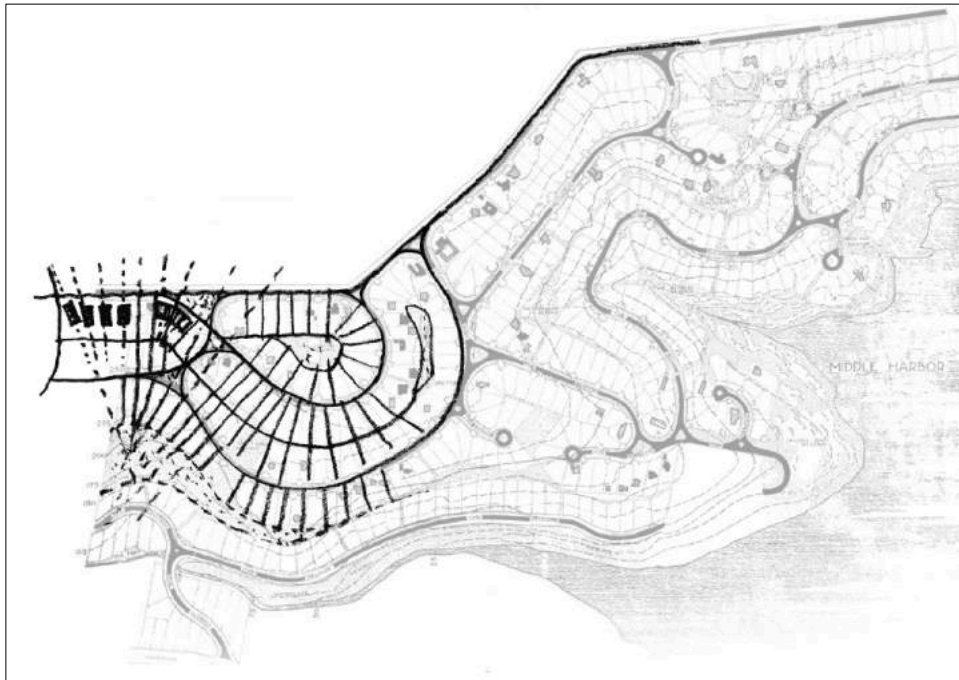
The first of the management policies for the Griffin Conservation Area set out in Part H3.5 of the *WDCP* establishes the desirability of maintaining the original subdivision pattern. The pattern of subdivision- the roads that follow the contours and the radial lot pattern- is arguably of greater importance to this conservation area than others of this period. As

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<sup>24</sup> WBGS website.



demonstrated by Figure 41 below, the architects of the proposal have taken note of the abrupt termination of Griffin's subdivision pattern on the eastern side of the subject site. The proposal seeks to better integrate the site with the underlying subdivision pattern of the Conservation Area by extending the fluid geometry of Griffin's subdivision pattern- both the street and lot pattern- into the site. Accordingly, the proposal is orientated to reflect the adjacent curve of both The Parapet and The Rampart, giving the proposal a more organic form than the existing building on the site. Given that the site is the gateway into the Conservation Area, a better integration with the underlying subdivision pattern will have a positive impact.



**Figure 41: Demonstrating how the proposed forms respond to the subdivision pattern.**  
fjmtsudio.

The management policies for the Griffin Conservation Area reinforce the importance of topography. Griffin's subdivision was informed by the natural topography, which in turn influenced the design of his dwellings. The topography of the subject site was altered with the construction of the existing shopping centre. There are none of the natural rock outcrops etc. that characterise many of the residential lots within the Conservation Area. The topography of the area has, however, informed the proposal. As explained by the architects in their Design Report:

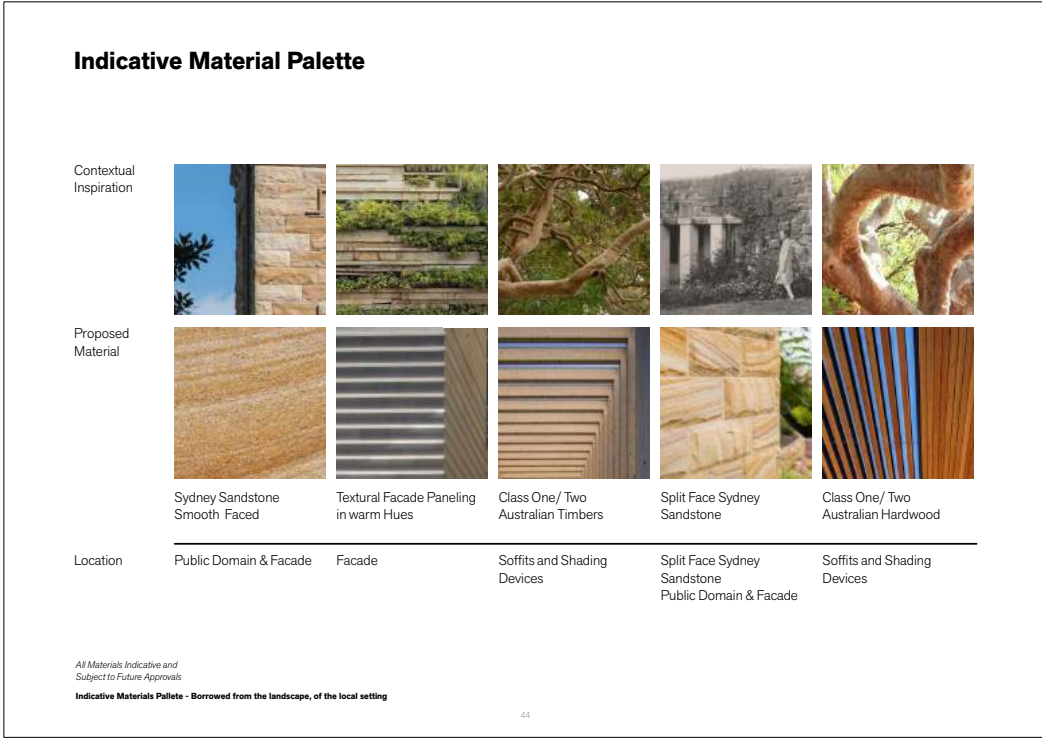
'The concept is a composition of two primary and essential architectural landscape forms:

A platform of landscaped terraces stepping down in relation to the natural contours of the site.

A series of sandstone pavilions carefully positioned on this platform in a gentle radial pattern.'

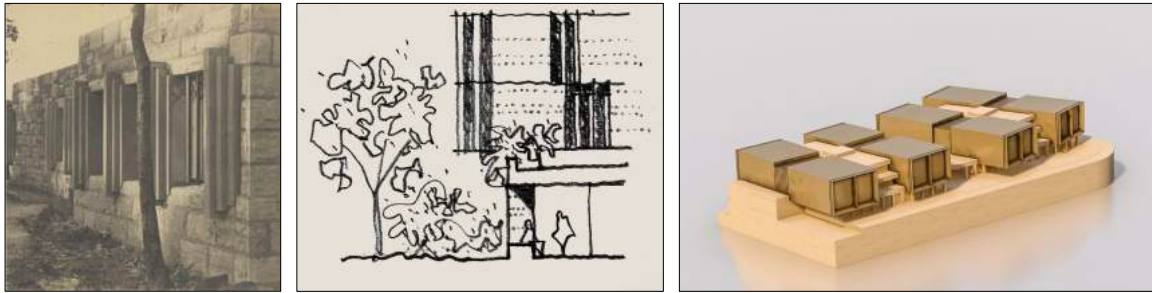
Dividing the upper-most level and providing landscaped terraces to the rear also helps manage massing and scale and maintains high level slot views through the site into the tree canopy beyond. The maintaining of views between buildings is an important characteristic of the Griffin Conservation Area. Reducing the height of the proposed buildings from the 2020 scheme to a uniform three storeys across the site brings it down to the tree line. Roof top elements, such as lift overruns, have been kept to a minimum and are centralised. Integration into the tree canopy is facilitated by roof top planting.

Griffin’s design principles inform the design and finishes of the proposal. Sandstone of different textures, warm hued textured façade panelling and timber anchor the built forms. These are materials used extensively by Griffin in his Castlecrag buildings; they complement the colours and textures of the local bushland. This approach is demonstrated by the way in which the indicative material palette is presented by the architects, where the proposed materials are matched with contextual images that include bushland and a photograph of one of Griffin’s dwellings. Refer to Figure 42 below.



**Figure 42: Demonstrating how the indicative material palette has been informed by the natural bushland and Griffin’s dwellings.**  
fjmtstudio.

The proposed elevations have a strong horizontal emphasis, as do Griffin’s buildings. The massing of Levels 1 and 2 is broken into two main building forms and then further broken with a recessed central bay and cantilevered forms. Bays and recesses, deep colonnades and reveals and timber shading devices break up the elevations and create interest through the play of light and shadow. This articulation is also reminiscent of the natural rocky outcrops and tiers and cliffs that characterise the area and the massing and forms of Griffin’s houses. The roofs are flat, as favoured by Griffin, and include planting. The influence of Griffin on the design process is demonstrated by the images in Figure 43, taken from different sections of the Design Report, prepared by fjmtstudio, that accompanies this application.



**Figure 43: Demonstrating the architecture of Griffin has informed the design. From left to right: The Wilson House (1929), with its massive walls, block like forms and deep recesses; development sketch fjt studio with cantilevering forms like the 'tiers of cliffs'; fjt studio model with well-articulated block like forms with recesses and bays following the radial subdivision pattern.**

Design Statement, fjtstudio.

The colonnades and pergolas are also an expression of the close integration of built form and landscape, of private and communal space, demonstrated by the proposal. These relationships are significant in Griffin's Castlecrag. The landscape has been designed to provide gentle transitions between private and public space. The landscape setting anticipates the Conservation Area proper, through the filtering of vistas to the building through vegetation, particularly as seen from Edinburgh Road. Retaining the trees along the southern boundary is integral to the proposal and is true to the design approach that would have been taken by the Griffins. The proposed works seek to sit comfortably within the landscape by reducing the height of the buildings below the treetops; by breaking the massing of Levels 1 and 2 as noted above; by following the radial pattern of the subdivision; through the use of strong horizontal forms; and through the use of materials and finishes that complement the natural surroundings. The retained trees provide a buffer to the southern neighbours and contribute to the through site link.

The landscape response for the site has carefully considered the layering in the Castlecrag landscape, expressed in the Design Report that accompanies this application as the sandstone gully, escarpment and ridge top woodland. Elements of each are provided on the site. The terraces will include mass planting with minimal paving to bring the natural landscape into the site.

The proposal commemorates and promotes a better understanding of the lives, ideals, vision and works of the Griffins. Castlecrag has always had a strong community associations, in some cases founded and fostered by the Griffins. The proposal provides generous setbacks from Edinburgh Road; a north facing communal gathering space- the 'ridge top gathering space'- complete with sandstone colonnades and dense landscape planting; and a through site 'gully walk' with sculptural element.

## 10.0 EFFECT OF WORK ON THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

The proposed works will have no impact on the fabric of the Community Centre and will not block view corridors to/from it. The proposed new buildings will not be visible within the principal view corridors out of this site, which are to the south. There will thus be no impact on the ability to understand the significance of the item as a long term community centre and as an example of the work of Eric Nicholls.

The proposed works will have no impact upon the immediate setting of the item because the site is separated from the site by distance and a number of intervening properties. If the proposed new building is visible in the distance from this item (noting that the viewing angle is acute), it will read as a distant element constructed of materials that complement the Conservation Area and with well-considered landscaping that will integrate it into the tree line as it matures.



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## 11.0 CONCLUSION

This HIS has considered the impact of a Planning Proposal for a new mixed use development at No. 100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag. The site adjoins the north western corner of the Griffin Conservation Area, which comprises the original 1920s Castlecrag Estate. While not part of the Conservation Area, the site lies at a gateway into the Conservation Area. The proposal has been designed with close regard to the management principles that govern the Conservation Area.

The proposed works will have no impact on the nearby heritage listed Community Centre.

The proposal will have an acceptable impact on the Griffin Conservation Area for the following reasons:

- The proposal continues the use of the site as the local shopping centre. The introduction of residential units diversifies housing choices, allowing a broader range of people to enjoy Castlecrag.
- The proposed built forms have been informed by the subdivision pattern of the Conservation Area and provide a better transition into it than the existing buildings on the site.
- The height of the proposal has been reduced from earlier schemes to better respect the more modest scale of buildings in the Conservation Area. The height of the buildings has been brought down to the tree line.
- The proposal demonstrates a recognition of the design principles of preservation and conservation of landscape and the integration of built form and the landscape in the work of the Griffins in Castlecrag. The proposal is integrated into its setting by reducing the height of the buildings to lie below the treetops; by breaking the massing of Levels 1 and 2 into two main building forms and then further breaking the massing of these forms with a recessed central bay and cantilevered forms; by following the radial pattern of the subdivision; and through the use of materials and finishes that complement the natural surroundings. A densely planted built form and public domain soften the boundary between public and private space in line with the Griffin's vision for the area.
- The scheme maintains and enhances the sense of community, important to the Griffins, by retaining communal space along Edinburgh Road in the ridge top community space.
- The materiality of the scheme is in harmony with the Griffin Heritage Conservation Area. There is an emphasis on the use of natural materials with texture and warm hued tones, such as sandstone and hardwood.

The scheme provides a well-designed and considered entrance into Castlecrag and a transition from the suburbs surrounding it.

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## **12.0      APPENDIX 1**

Heritage 21, *Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy- Castlecrag. The Quadrangle, Castlecrag: Walter Burley Griffin Research Report*. Unpublished report prepared for Bruce Swalwell Architects dated February 2019. Copy provided by the client.