

February 2019

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## **THE QUADRANGLE, CASTLECRAG**

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### **WALTER BURLEY GRIFFIN RESEARCH REPORT**

#### **1. Background**

Heritage 21 has been engaged by Bruce Swalwell Architects to provide a report on the legacy of Walter Burley Griffin's in terms of his contribution as an architect to the Castlecrag area and any design prompts that may be triggered by such a legacy. The report details Walter and Marion's earlier works, their inspirations and influences and discusses the early development of Castlecrag by the Griffins, including the vision Griffin had for the site and the contributions they made to the built, natural and communal environment. Heritage 21 then discusses ways of integrating his influence and style in the proposed development at the Quadrangle in Castlecrag, referred to as the 'subject site'.

## 2. Walter Burley Griffin

*The following has been extracted from the Australian Dictionary of Biography:<sup>1</sup>*

### 2.1 Early life

Walter Burley Griffin (1876-1937), architect, landscape architect and designer of Canberra, was born on 24 November 1876 at Maywood, near Chicago, United States of America, eldest of four children of George Walter Griffin, insurance agent, and his wife Estelle Melvina, née Burley. Griffin attended high school at Oak Park, graduated B.Sc. from Nathan Ricker's renowned school of architecture at the University of Illinois in 1899 and was admitted as an associate of the American Institute of Architects.

### 2.2 Career beginnings

Griffin started his career as a casual employee of Dwight Heald Perkins and other architects in Chicago's Steinway Hall, then in 1901-06 as an associate of Frank Lloyd Wright at Oak Park. He also undertook private commissions, the most notable of which were the Emery house (1903) and the landscape designs for the grounds of the state normal schools of Eastern Illinois (1901) and Northern Illinois (1906). Griffin started his own practice in Steinway Hall in 1906 and by 1910, when his work was featured in the Architectural Record, was becoming recognized as a practitioner of what eventually became known as the Prairie School of architecture.

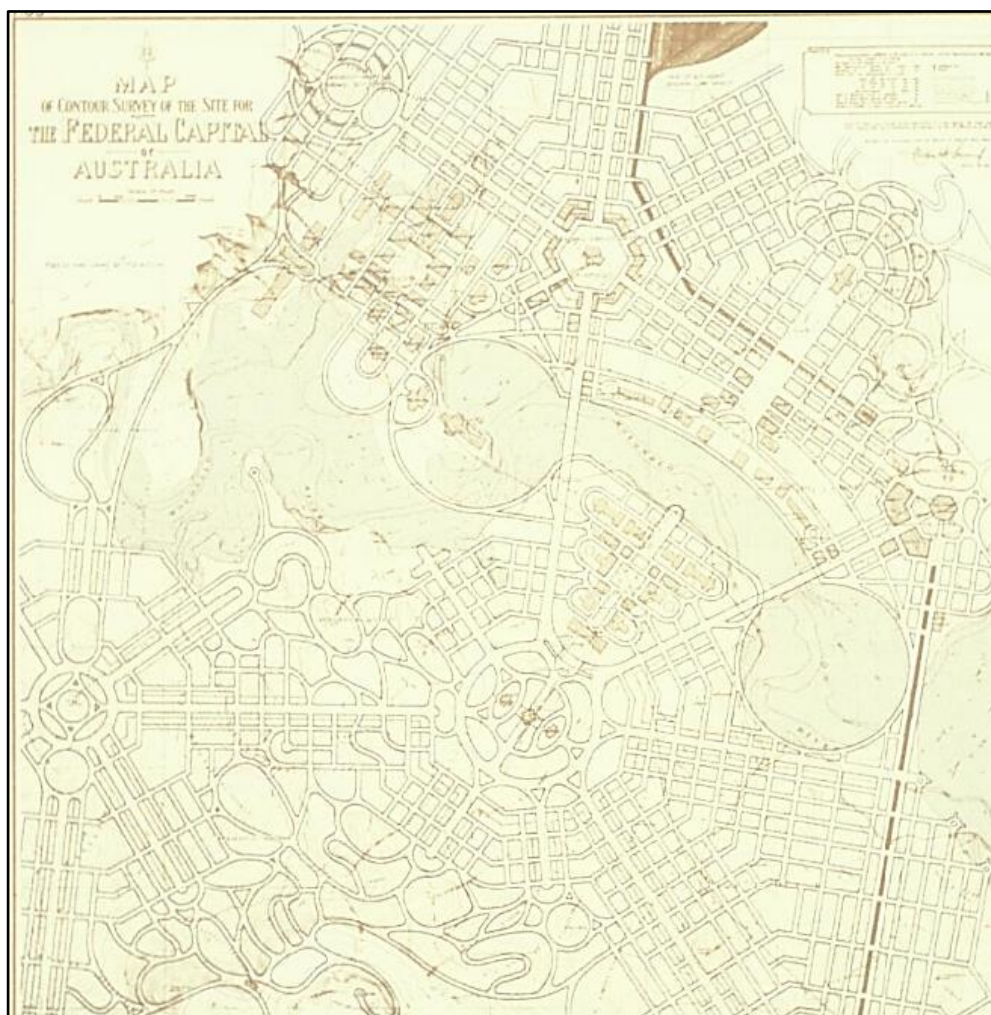


**Figure 1.** Emery House designed by Griffin in 1903. 1989.(Source: Maldre, Mati. Griffin Society. Retrieved from: <http://www.griffinsociety.org>)

<sup>1</sup> Harrison, Peter, 'Griffin, Walter Burley (1876–1937)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/griffin-walter-burley-443/text11115>, published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed online 4 June 2018.

## 2.3 New Federal Capital of Australia

Walter married Marion Mahony two months after the international competition for the design of the new Federal capital of Australia was announced. Assisted by others in Steinway Hall, including Roy Alstan Lippincott and George Elgh (all of whom joined the Griffins in Australia in 1914), Marion produced the elegant set of drawings illustrating Griffin's ideas. He won the competition in May 1912. Marion later claimed that it was only her importuning that persuaded him to complete the design, a grandly conceived arrangement for a national capital of 75,000, by the time required. Taking advantage of the topography within and around the splendid site, the plan was a masterly derivation from—and an extension of—the design ideas which Griffin had observed in the Chicago Fair (1893), the McMillan plan for Washington (1901), the Burnham and Bennett plan for Chicago (1909) and other work of their principal author, the Chicago architect Daniel Hudson Burnham, an outstanding figure in the City Beautiful movement.



**Figure 2.** Walter Burley Griffin Competition Entry 1911, Canberra [transparency] / Richard Clough (Source: Clough, Richard & Griffin, Walter Burley. (1911). *Walter Burley Griffin Competition Entry 1911, Canberra* Retrieved June 5, 2018, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-143691178>)

## 2.4 The Greater Sydney Development Association Pty Ltd

In 1913, a Melbourne newspaper recorded Walter Burley Griffin as declaring, 'Sydney ought to be the most beautiful garden city the world has ever seen'.<sup>2</sup>

The Greater Sydney Development Association ('GSDA') was formed by Walter Burley Griffin with the backing of Sydney and Melbourne politicians and businessmen.<sup>3</sup> The Association was registered in Sydney on 26 November 1920, with Burley Griffin retaining the role of Managing director from 1921 until his death in 1937.

Originally run from the registered office of 14 Martin Place, Sydney, the company was formed to:

A) acquire lands and buildings in New South Wales or elsewhere "and in particular to acquire about six hundred and forty-nine and one-half acres of land at Mowbray Point the Sugarloaf and little Sugarloaf promontories Middle Harbour Sydney" ...

B) "develop... any land acquired... and in particular by laying out and preparing the same for building purposes".<sup>4</sup>



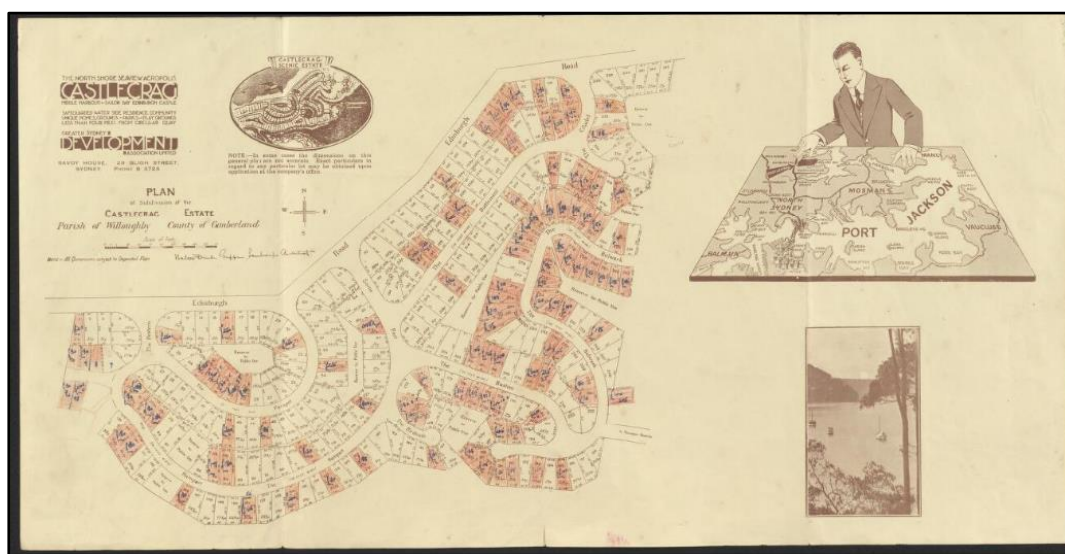
**Figure 3.** Scenic harbour suburb, Castlecrag, (Edinburgh Castle, Middle Harbour) advertisement, 1925-1928 (Source: Greater Sydney Development Association Limited & Griffin, Walter Burley. (1925). Scenic harbour suburb, Castlecrag, (Edinburgh Castle, Middle Harbour), [1] Retrieved June 5, 2018, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150337415>)

<sup>2</sup> TALK OF THE WEEK. (1913, August 28). *Punch* (Melbourne, Vic.: 1900 - 1918; 1925), p. 12. Retrieved from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article176549082>

<sup>3</sup> Leslie, Esther & Willoughby (N.S.W.: Municipality). Bicentennial Community Committee (1988). *The suburb of Castlecrag: a community history*. p. 71. Published for the Bicentennial Community Committee of Willoughby Municipal Council by Management Development Publishers, Sydney

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.72

They association held ambitious plans to develop Middle Harbour as a 'high class residential suburbs conserving to their maximum their natural beauty with adequate access to waterfronts for the public; the provision of swimming baths... the establishment of the reserves for recreation purposes ... 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'.<sup>5</sup> The GSDA set out to encompass Griffin's intentions to protect the development of Castlecrag through protective covenants which would control all land uses and construction. The Association would also implement these protective measures by slowly unrolling development out through sections, a common practise at the time.<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 4.** Plan of the subdivision of the Castlecrag Estate, 1921. Note coloured purchased allotments (Source: Plan of the subdivision of the Castlecrag Estate, Parish of Willoughby, County of Cumberland, [1] / Greater Sydney Development Association Limited, Savoy House, 29 Bligh Street, Sydney)

The first estate, Castle crag, designed to retain the character of the natural landscape, was begun in 1921 with several of Griffin's distinctive houses of rock and concrete intended to demonstrate the style of house lot-purchasers would be required to build. Although revered by later generations, the houses at the time were widely regarded as eccentric; they tended to leak. By Griffin's death in 1937 only nineteen houses, sixteen of them designed by Griffin, had been built on the 340 lots.

<sup>5</sup> Walker, Meredith & Weirick, James M & Kabos, Adrienne, 1953- & Walter Burley Griffin Society (1994). *Building for nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag*. Walter Burley Griffin Society, Castlecrag, NSW, Australia, p.9.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.9



**Figure 5.** Castlecrag contour model, ca. 1921 [Picture] (Source: (1921). Castlecrag contour model, ca. 1921 Retrieved June 6, 2018, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150178249>)

### 3. Marion Mahony Griffin

Marion Mahony was born on February 14, 1871 in Chicago, Illinois, the eldest daughter of Jeremiah Mahony, an Irish journalist and educator, and Clara Hamilton, a schoolteacher.<sup>7</sup> Her first cousin, architect Dwight Perkins, would be a great influence in Mahony's decision to further her education, graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1894, where she would go on to be the first woman to obtain an Illinois architecture license.<sup>8</sup> During her studies, Marion developed an interest in theatre, a pursuit that would lead to her involvement in 12 plays in the open air Haven Scenic Theatre, designed for Castlecrag by the Griffins, and the only theatre designed by the duo.<sup>9</sup>

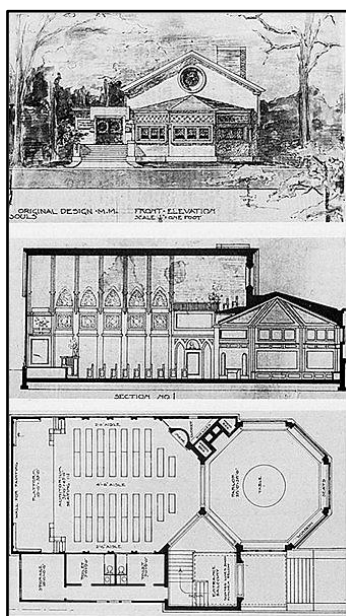
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<sup>7</sup> McGregor, Alasdair & Griffin, Marion Mahony, 1871-1961 & Griffin, Walter Burley, 1876-1937 & McGregor, Alasdair, 1954- (2009). *Grand obsessions: the life and work of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin*. Lantern, Camberwell, Victoria.) p27

<sup>8</sup> Griffin Society. 2017. *Marion Mahony Griffin*. Retrieved from: [http://www.griffinsociety.org/introducing\\_the\\_griffins/mmg.html](http://www.griffinsociety.org/introducing_the_griffins/mmg.html)

<sup>9</sup> Watson, Anne (Anne Jeanette) & Powerhouse Museum (1998). *Beyond architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin: America, Australia, India*. Powerhouse Publishing, Haymarket, N.S.W. p.49.

## Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag



**Figure 6.** All Souls Unitarian Church, Evanston, IL, 1902. Marion Mahony (Source: ProProfs. *Women In The Visual Arts: 20th C. Garden And Architecture*.2010. Retrieved from: [www.proprofs.com/flashcards](http://www.proprofs.com/flashcards))

Mahony would begin her career on her return to Chicago. In 1895, she joined Frank Lloyd Wright's Oak Park studio, a venture that would see her described as 'the head designer... if the studio had been organized along more conventional lines'<sup>10</sup> and a 'talented apprentice' by Wright himself<sup>11</sup>. In 1903 she produced her best-known commission under Wright, the Unitarian Church of All Souls in Evanston, Illinois.<sup>12</sup>

Marion married Walter Burley Griffin on June 29 1911 in Indiana. Their professional and marital relationship would last until Griffin's death in 1937. Although it has been stated Marion played "second fiddle" to Griffin's architectural accomplishments, Marion produced exquisite renderings for Griffin's drawings, and was a gifted painter, with a keen eye for theater production that would later influence the Haven Scenic Theatre.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 7.** Perspective view of Canberra site. 1 slide of watercolor painting: lantern, col.; 8.2 x 10.2 cm. (Source: Griffin, Marion Mahony & Griffin, Walter Burley. (1911). *Perspective view of Canberra site* Retrieved June 5, 2018, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150465623>)

<sup>10</sup> Watson, Anne (Anne Jeanette) & Powerhouse Museum (1998). *Beyond architecture: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin: America, Australia, India*. p.49. Powerhouse Publishing, Haymarket, N.S.W

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p.49

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p.51

<sup>13</sup> Griffin Society. 2017. *Marion Mahony Griffin*. Retrieved from: [http://www.griffinsociety.org/introducing\\_the\\_griffins/mmg.html](http://www.griffinsociety.org/introducing_the_griffins/mmg.html)

#### 4. Knitlock Construction

The following has been extracted from the National Museum of Australia:<sup>14</sup>

*Walter Burley Griffin began developing the knitlock construction method while working in Canberra. Possibly motivated by the labour and material shortages which beset the implementation of his architectural vision, the interlocking construction system formed an integral part of Griffin's vision for a simple, but non-standard workers cottage.*

*Patented in 1917, Griffin's 'segmental architecture', commonly known as knitlock, was intended as an antidote to the increasing standardisation of building and design processes in the 1920s. The knitlock system relied on two types of 'vertebrae' to form a concrete skeleton. Knitlock bricks required no cutting, bedding or plastering and allowed a greater diversity in building shapes. Their design was light yet sturdy, with a finished wall only six centimetres wide. The knitlock method has come to embody both Griffin's idealism as well as his commitment to a practical, adaptable and democratic architecture.*

Griffin would use this system in the construction of several Castlecrag houses. Creswick House (1926) was constructed using this method alone, whilst the construction of the State listed Duncan House (1934) would incorporate the natural texture of the quarried sandstone.<sup>15</sup> Although initially successful in persuading clients to use the system, unskilled labour and construction, coupled with the shadow of another World War would diminish its use as 'an affective alternative to conventional construction techniques'.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 8.** A corner knitlock brick still in its mould. (Source: National Museum of Australia. Retrieved from: [collectionsearch.nma.gov.au/](http://collectionsearch.nma.gov.au/))

<sup>14</sup> National Museum of Australia. *Urban life: Knitlock brick-making machine and brick*. n.d Retrieved from: [http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/landmarks/about\\_landmarks/urban\\_life](http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/landmarks/about_landmarks/urban_life)

<sup>15</sup> McGregor, Alasdair & Griffin, Marion Mahony, 1871-1961 & Griffin, Walter Burley, 1876-1937 & McGregor, Alasdair, 1954- (2009). *Grand obsessions: the life and work of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin*. Lantern, Camberwell, Victoria

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p359.

## 5. Castlecrag

### 5.1 Aboriginal History

The traditional lands of the Cammeraygal people surround Sydney's North Shore suburbs. For thousands of years, the traditional owners of the land had sheltered in the naturally formed caves of Castlecrag.<sup>17</sup> Although there is evidence of the Cammeraygal clan within the area after the invasion of European settlers, disease and devastating massacres of the Aboriginal people would lead to the displacement of the Aboriginal clans by the 1860s.<sup>18</sup>



**Figure 9.** Aerial view of Castlecrag, Middle Harbour and the Spit. Note heavy development of Mosman and the Spit Bridge in the background. (Source: Greater Sydney Development Association Limited. ([192-?]). Aerial view of Castlecrag, Middle Harbour and the Spit, Sydney Retrieved June 5, 2018, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150342465>)

### 5.2 Early European Settlement

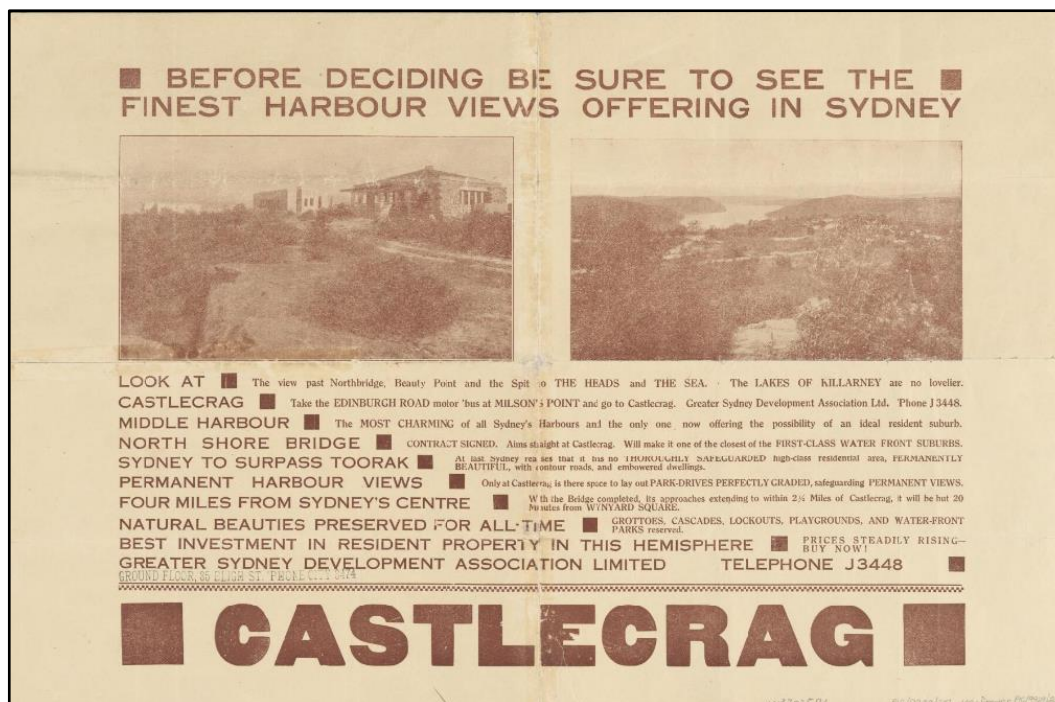
Although Middle Harbour was explored for natural resources shortly after the arrival of the First Fleet in January 1788, the area's steep and rugged terrain was not viewed favourably by

<sup>17</sup> Bevan, Scott (2017). *The harbour*. Cammeray, N.S.W. Simon & Schuster Australia

<sup>18</sup> Willoughby City Library Services. Willoughby Council. (2014). *History @ Willoughby. Aboriginal People. Fact Sheet* (13). Retrieved from: <http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/library/history-at-willoughby/aboriginal-history-resources/>

**Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag**

officials,<sup>19</sup> and would remain virgin Crown land until 1856, when portions were offered in a public auction.<sup>20</sup> Much of this land would be utilised for farming, particularly by Chinese market gardeners, who leased land for orchards,<sup>21</sup> and large tracts of land being purchased by Sydney transport companies for future development. However, the Bank Crash of 1892 would cement the future of Castlecrag; as debts mounted, the transport companies could not meet their repayments and would be forced into liquidation. These large land allotments would be assigned to the Association of North Sydney Debenture Holders Limited, who would in turn auction the land off to the Greater Sydney Development Association.<sup>22</sup>



**Figure 10.** Poster advertisement for Castlecrag estate, 1921. (Source: Greater Sydney Development Association Limited & Griffin, Walter Burley. (1921). Plan of the subdivision of the Castlecrag Estate, Parish of Willoughby, County of Cumberland, [5] Retrieved June 4, 2018, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150345365>)

### 5.3 Castlecrag Estate

Griffin was heavily involved within the early stages of the Castlecrag Estate subdivision. He traversed the terrain to design the road and allotment patterns, leaving markers for the later surveyors.<sup>23</sup> The GSDA applied to Willoughby Municipal Council on 9 March, 1921 for the subdivision of the model suburb Castlecrag Estate, stating the dimensions of land and roadways,

<sup>19</sup> Leslie, Esther & Willoughby (N.S.W.: Municipality). Bicentennial Community Committee (1988). *The suburb of Castlecrag: a community history*. Published for the Bicentennial Community Committee of Willoughby Municipal Council by Management Development Publishers, Sydney. pg. 5

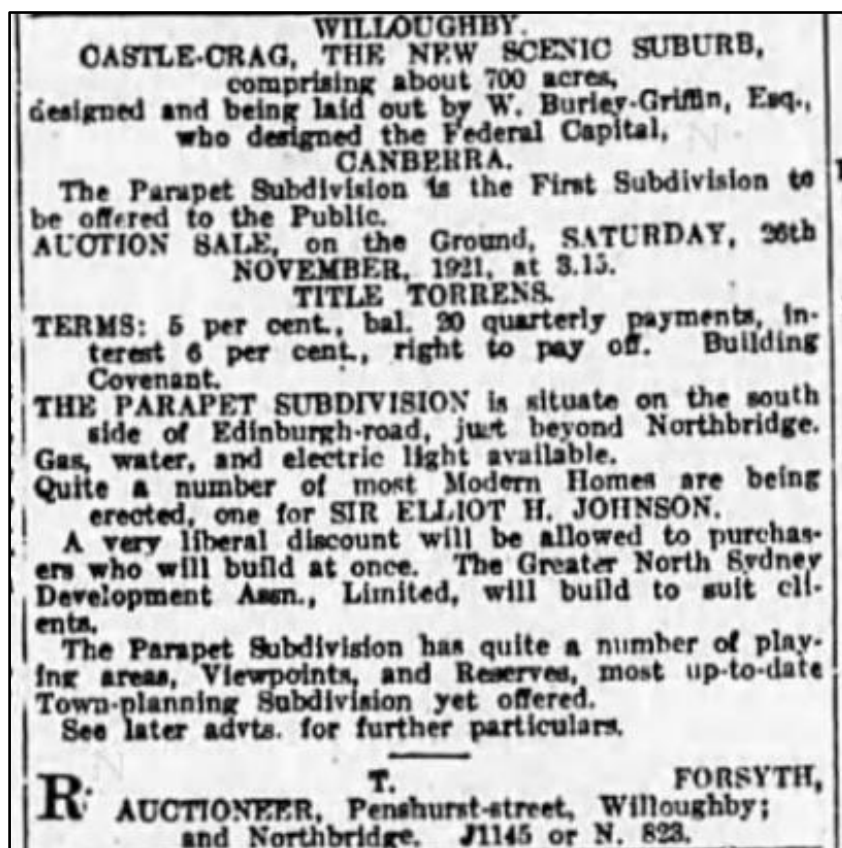
<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.5

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.7

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, pg. 8

<sup>23</sup> Walker, Meredith & Weirick, James M & Kabos, Adrienne, 1953- & Walter Burley Griffin Society (1994). *Building for nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag*. Walter Burley Griffin Society, Castlecrag, NSW, Australia. P. 8

with specific mention of the public access to reserves that were 'carefully located to preserve the best points of outlook, the caverns and the most picturesque rock features, turrets, towers, cliffs and ravines...'. Additionally, the covering application letter displays a clear understanding and intention to 'develop plantings for the thoroughfare and... to safeguard the character of the improvements and the preservation of the characteristic natural beauties in the individual holdings by covenants of sale, and by every means practicable to make this subdivision a model residential area for those appreciating the unique advantage of Sydney's headlands'.<sup>24</sup>



**Figure 11.**  
Advertisement of the scenic estate. Note the discount if building works were promptly started (Source: The Sydney Morning Herald (Sydney, New South Wales, Australia) 09 Nov 1921, Wed, Page 18. Retrieved from: newspapers.com)

Development at the site was quickly established. Almost seven months after the letter of approval, an auction was held on 26 November 1921 for 'The Parapet subdivision of the Scenic Marine Harbour suburb 'Castlecrag''. By the end of 1922, six houses had been constructed, with shops and an estate office constructed to the estate entryway.<sup>25</sup> Further sales were acquired when Marion organised a sales campaign in 1924 and the Griffin's moved to Castlecrag in 1925.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid p.10.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.11

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.11



**Figure 12.** Auction poster for Castlecrag. 1921.(Source: Greater Sydney Development Association Limited & Griffin, Walter Burley. (1921). Auction poster for Scenic Harbour suburb Castlecrag (Edinburgh Castle), Parapet Subdivision, [1] Retrieved June 4, 2018, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150301605>)

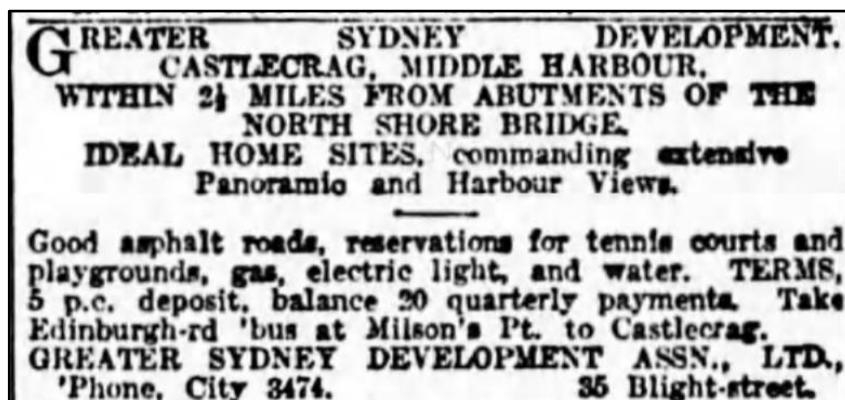
In 1926, the Griffin's purchased the Haven Estate, located on the eastern side of Castlecrag.<sup>27</sup> Although sales were made in these early years, the Griffin's would often battle the council in

<sup>27</sup> Griffin, Walter Burley & Turnbull, Jeff & Navaretti, Peter Y & University of Melbourne. Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning (1998). *The Griffins in Australia and India : the complete works and projects of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin*. Miegunyah Press, Melbourne

regards to building inspections, powerlines and the installation of septic tanks,<sup>28</sup> with Marion's later recollections accusing Sydney lawyers of discouraging land purchases, not because of the implemented covenants, but because the Griffin's were foreigners.<sup>29</sup> In 1928, Griffin began purchasing small parcels of land along the foreshore to preserve the landscape for the public. This plan would prove to be difficult in reality, with Griffin later stating this public benefit was 'constantly jeopardized by pressure for cash where there is no cash to squeeze out'.<sup>30</sup>



**Figure 13.** General view of Castlecrag development, [1] [picture] (Source: (1920). General view of Castlecrag development, [1] Retrieved June 6, 2018, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150300405>)



**Figure 14.** Land still for sale in Castlecrag. 1924. (Source: The Sydney Morning Herald (Sydney, New South Wales, Australia) 26 Jul 1924, Sat Page 22. Retrieved from: [newspapers.com](http://newspapers.com))

<sup>28</sup> McGregor, Alasdair & Griffin, Marion Mahony, 1871-1961 & Griffin, Walter Burley, 1876-1937 & McGregor, Alasdair, 1954- (2009). *Grand obsessions: the life and work of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin*. Lantern, Camberwell, Victoria, p.393

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p394

<sup>30</sup> Walker, Meredith & Weirick, James M & Kabos, Adrienne, 1953- & Walter Burley Griffin Society (1994). *Building for nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag*. Walter Burley Griffin Society, Castlecrag, NSW, Australia p.28

#### 5.4 The Griffin Covenants

Each allotment within the Castlecrag Estate was assigned a covenant. Although a common occurrence in New South Wales, Griffin made use of these restrictive controls, outlining the covenants of Castlecrag's development to include the controls that were unusual at the time, including, 'approval for the design... restriction on roof material... (and) the requirement for owners adjoining reserves to contribute to the management and upkeep of the reserves'.<sup>31</sup>

Additional conditions included in the Parapet subdivision included:

*(c) Any house building or erection on any lot or part of any lot shall be of stone and/or concrete and/or brickwork or other such material as may be approved by the Vendors and no shop shall be erected on any lot except lots 1 to 6 inclusive.*

*(d) only one main building shall be erected on each lot...in order to safeguard the general high-class residential character of the land being sold by the Vendors the plans of any and every proposed building... shall be subject to the approval of the Vendors and no construction shall be undertaken without such approval first obtained.*

*(f) Such house buildings... shall be erected at least fifteen feet back from the street alignment...*

Griffin's 'passionate hatred for ... red bricks and tiled landscapes of Sydney'<sup>32</sup> would cause issues in the late 1920s, with some residents taking issue with the required (and often defective) flat roofing. Most infamous was the Rivett case, where a pitched roof frame was constructed without architectural supervision.<sup>33</sup>

Following Griffin's death in 1937, these specific covenants were administered by Griffin's partner, Eric Nicholls, who initially endorsed Griffin's controls, would later relax the insistence of stone and flat roofs, although he sought to preserve the height and siting of development.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Walker, Meredith & Weirick, James M & Kabos, Adrienne, 1953- & Walter Burley Griffin Society (1994). *Building for nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag*. Walter Burley Griffin Society, Castlecrag, NSW, Australia.p.21

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.21

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.21

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p.21

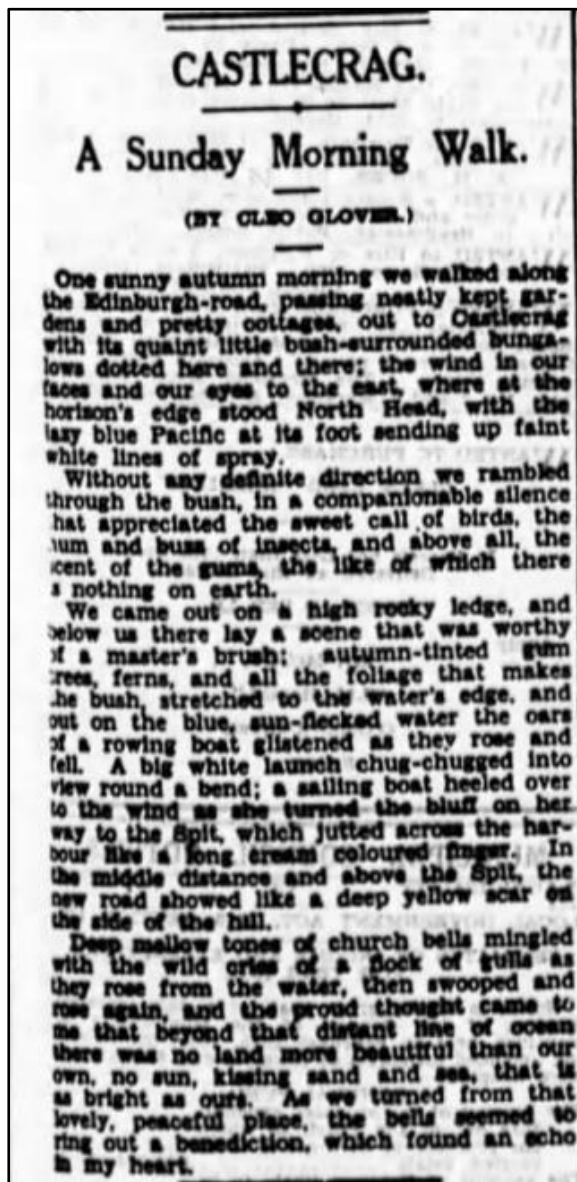


Figure 15. The wonders of Castlecrag, 1931. (Source: The Sydney Morning Herald (Sydney, New South Wales, Australia) 28 Feb 1931, Sat Page 9. Retrieved from: [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com))

## 5.5 The Griffin Vision

*People spend a lifetime trying to get a large piece of land, put a house on it and plant it like a park. Few can afford to reach their goal. What I want to do is to give everyone a chance to attain such a dream. I want Castecrag to be built so that each individual can feel that the whole of the landscape is his. No fences, no boundaries, no red roofs to spoil the Australian landscape; these are some of the features that will distinguish Castlecrag.*

Walter Burley Griffin's vision for Castlecrag, 1921<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Leslie, Esther & Willoughby (N.S.W.: Municipality). Bicentennial Community Committee (1988). *The suburb of Castlecrag: a community history*. Published for the Bicentennial Community Committee of Willoughby Municipal Council by Management Development Publishers, Sydney. P. 73

Griffin's designs would draw inspiration from his earlier works in Mason City, Iowa. They were made to be viewed 'in the round' – the external elevations of the side and rear of a home were just as important to Griffin as the front façade.<sup>36</sup> These dwellings were purposely designed to respect their surroundings: views and vistas were to be maintained, and the built forms were to interact harmoniously with the natural landscape. In the case of Castlecrag, this would entail the retention of 'sandstone outcrops, watercourses and bushland, narrow roadways that follow the topography and contours... bonded by indigenous vegetation and the network of walkways, reserves and open spaces'.<sup>37</sup>

Griffin houses were constructed with stone or knitlock (or a combination of both). The stones came from the excavation of the roadways and was often of poor quality.<sup>38</sup> Early houses were constructed for the GSDA on Edinburgh Road, with shareholders properties located along The Parapet. These houses were 'sited and designed to provide an appreciation of the landscape, with living rooms away from the street facing the view'.<sup>39</sup> Some houses would be developed with side entrances, where the view could be appreciated before entering the homestead.<sup>40</sup> Due to the covenants placed on the allotments, dwellings are also setback from the streetscape and are now often hidden by the landscape.

Materials and detailing were designed with the upmost respect to the surrounding landscape and the eccentric nature of the built environment; the rustic stone work patterns and the fenestration was specific to each house, as was the ashlar stone fireplaces, which was considered the centerpiece of each dwelling.<sup>41</sup> The Griffin houses of Castlecrag were designed to fit within their surroundings and the geometric format of the plan surroundings; rectangle, square and interlocking layouts were designed to be symmetrical, although they often showed varying scales and layouts. The houses were often small in scale, as Griffin had reacted to the economic circumstances, yet proved he believed the economy would recover, by designing some of the dwellings as a base "nuclei", where additions could be added when funding became available.<sup>42</sup>

Griffin's designs and layouts were seen at the time as the complete antithesis of Sydney's suburban houses; he designed stone houses with flat concrete or galvanised iron roofs, indulged in rough plaster internal wall finishes (painted in natural colours), constructed windows in varying sizes, from narrow casements to picture windows and full glass sheets for uninterrupted

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<sup>36</sup> Walter Burley Griffin Society, Inc. 2017. *Conserving Griffin Heritage*. Retrieved from: [www.griffinsociety.org/Conservation/heritage.html](http://www.griffinsociety.org/Conservation/heritage.html)

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, para. 4

<sup>38</sup> Griffin, Walter Burley & Turnbull, Jeff & Navaretti, Peter Y & University of Melbourne. Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning (1998). *The Griffins in Australia and India: the complete works and projects of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin*. Miegunyah Press, Melbourne. p.79

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.p.80

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.p.80

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.80

<sup>42</sup> Leslie, Esther & Willoughby (N.S.W.: Municipality). Bicentennial Community Committee (1988). *The suburb of Castlecrag: a community history*. Published for the Bicentennial Community Committee of Willoughby Municipal Council by Management Development Publishers, Sydney. p.74

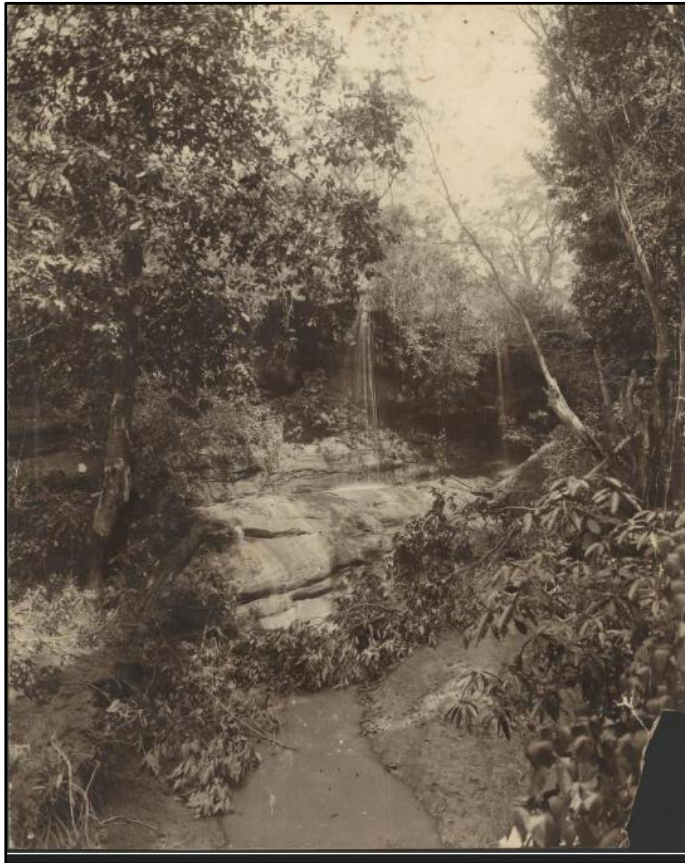
views.<sup>43</sup> Joinery also played a distinctive component of a Griffin home, with windows and doors displaying individual original designs. To the façade, Griffin incorporated trellises for vines around some houses and collected seeds from the local plant species, planting around the developments to restore the native bush setting which had been decimated over the past century.<sup>44</sup>

## 5.6 The communal environment

*Beauty is where nature is allowed to work itself out*

Walter Burley Griffin, 1913<sup>45</sup>

The suburb layout, including the restrictions on boundary fences, open reserves and public spaces would also be incredibly innovative and define Griffin's motivation towards a communal, natural environment.



**Figure 16.** View of Castlecrag bushland pathways, [picture]. (Source: ([192-?]). [View of Castlecrag bushland with specimen tree, Sydney, 2] Retrieved June 7, 2018, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150377371>)

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p.76

<sup>44</sup> Griffin, Walter Burley & Turnbull, Jeff & Navaretti, Peter Y & University of Melbourne. Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning (1998). *The Griffins in Australia and India: the complete works and projects of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin*. Miegunyah Press, Melbourne. p.78

<sup>45</sup> Leslie, Esther & Willoughby (N.S.W.: Municipality). Bicentennial Community Committee (1988). *The suburb of Castlecrag: a community history*. Published for the Bicentennial Community Committee of Willoughby Municipal Council by Management Development Publishers, Sydney P.73

Griffin's designated recreation areas far exceeded the minimum regulated by Council (15% to Council's 2%).<sup>46</sup> He would also enhance the surrounding 'castle' atmosphere, naming some of the reserves (Tower and Buttress reserves) in keeping with the castle-related street names (all streets in the suburb relate to area of a castle). Laneways extend throughout the suburb, covering spaces between some dwellings and recently marked by posts highlighting the directions and reserve names. Some display incredible views to the harbour and headlands, a Burley Griffin design staple within the area. However, it would be remiss to not acknowledge the lack of maintenance to these paths and reserves. As early as 1970s, the National Trust was aware of the absorption of reserves and paths by adjoining properties, the areas 'allowed to become overgrown with bush, or used for dumping trash'.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, recent clean ups are evident, with the paths being cleared for access to paths and the reserves.

This focus on engagement with the surrounding landscape is often contributed to his appreciation for the native flora of Australia and his want to 'prove that architecture and landscape should be designed together, and inhabitants grouped by communal interests'.<sup>48</sup> This emphasis on community living would become a major factor in the success on the estate and would continue long after the Burley Griffin's left Castlecrag. Early community life in the suburb included water sports on the harbour, a music group and perhaps the most interesting to Marion Burley Griffin, the Haven Scenic amphitheater, located on a sloped corner lot along The Scrap. A long-held interest in the theatre would lead to the natural development of the amphitheater, where Marion and fellow thespians put on theatrical events.<sup>49</sup>



**Figure 17.** Night performance of *Iphigenia in Tauris* by the Greek Consul given at the Haven Scenic Theatre (Source: (1920). *The Home: an Australian quarterly* Retrieved June 7, 2018, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-371304851>)

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.p.94

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 74

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p.73

<sup>49</sup> Walker, Meredith & Weirick, James M & Kabos, Adrienne, 1953- & Walter Burley Griffin Society (1994). *Building for nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag*. Walter Burley Griffin Society, Castlecrag, NSW, Australia. p33

Although used frequently by the local community, the amphitheater has been greatly affected by time, nature and a general lack of maintenance, which has culminated in a local fundraiser to restore the theatre to its former glory.

### 5.7 Castlecrag Shopping Centre

The shopping centre is located on both sides of Edinburgh Road and situated east of the Eastern Valley Way. The south side of the centre contains the oldest section (the Griffin Centre, 1924) residing beside the most recent shopping development (The Quadrangle, opened on 15 August 1979).<sup>1</sup> The north side consists of a group of buildings that were once the site of the 2RC Radio Broadcasting Station.<sup>2</sup> The brick buildings were completed around the mid-1940s.



**Figure 18.** 1943 Aerial image of the entry to Castlecrag. The Quadrangle location is marked by the red arrow (Source: NSW Property and Information, Sixmaps.com)

#### 5.7.1 The Quadrangle

Opened in 1979 by the Ald. Noel Reidy, the Mayor of Willoughby, the construction of the Quadrangle shopping centre was opposed before the first brick was laid. Originally the site of Castlecrag's first service station,<sup>3</sup> the future development of the area faced opposition from the local community, including the Castlecrag Progress Association ('CPA'). The CPA was instrumental in prohibiting the early proposed development of the site and would eventually be a guiding influence in the final design of The Quadrangle, despite the initial vitriol projected

## Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag

in the local "The Crag" newsletter. Today, the building hosts a range of small businesses and a supermarket chain store. Its siting at the entryway to the main arterial road into Castlecrag cannot be mistaken, nor should it be ignored. Although constructed as a low lying, one storey building, it is immediately visible in the round, a quality that was endorsed by Griffin in the early development of the area. The building is also significantly setback from the roadways, in conjunction with the covenants set by the GSDA.



**Figure 19.** Griffin shops along Edinburgh Road. 1978. (Source: Castlecrag Progress Association. Gallery. Retrieved from: <http://castlecrag.org.au/gallery/>)



**Figure 20.** The Quadrangle shopping centre from Edinburgh Road. 1981. (Source: Willoughby City Council. *Picture Willoughby*. Retrieved from: <http://www.photosau.com.au>)

## Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag



**Figure 21.** The Quadrangle shopping centre from Edinburgh Road. 1981. (Source: Willoughby City Council. Picture Willoughby. Retrieved from: <http://www.photosau.com.au>)



**Figure 22.** The Quadrangle (Source: Heritage 21, 30.05.2018)




**Figure 23.** The Griffin Centre located east of The Quadrangle (Source: Heritage 21, 30.05.2018)

## 6. Griffin's Heritage Items

Castlecrag has 35 heritage-listed items within its boundaries, relating to the suburbs early settlement and the built forms of Griffin and his partner Eric Milton Nicholls. The below tables depict the 15 state and locally-listed heritage items attributed to Burley Griffin. The following statements have been extracted from the State Heritage Inventory.

### 6.1.1 State-Listed Heritage Items

Item Name	Duncan House	Address	8 The Barbette	SHR	00742/ 134	Images
Statement of Significance						
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE						
<p>The Duncan House at Number 8 The Barbette, Castlecrag, is historically significant as a fine example of the work of Walter Burley Griffin, an internationally significant architect. It is historically important as one of the original houses in the Castlecrag area, which were all built in the 1920s-1930s. It is rare as one of thirteen surviving examples. It is representative of the planning concepts by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin who initiated the Castlecrag community, where they planned houses to be built of local sandstone and locally made concrete resembling the stone, in sympathy with natural topographical forms and Australian flora.</p>						
AESTHETIC AND TECHNICAL SIGNIFICANCE						
<p>The house has aesthetic and technical significance, embodying the materials and planning vision of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin. The house is a diminutive yet perfectly proportioned example of W B Griffin's work, using his patented knit lock concrete, ribbed and gracefully crenelated, yet grounded in the earth through the use of heavy rusticated protruding stone corner piers. The unique roofing and flooring systems also sat the house closer to ground level than more commonly elevated houses. The house is technically unusual and significant, being the last Griffin-designed house to be built in Castlecrag and exhibiting a form of knit lock benefitting from the introduction of galvanising for its steel reinforcing.</p>						<p><b>Figure 24.</b> Duncan House, 8 The Barbette. C. 1930s. Mr Duncan's home with Mrs. Duncan in photo. (Source: Willoughby Council. Willoughby City Library. 002/002202. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.photosau.com.au/Willoughby/">www.photosau.com.au/Willoughby/</a>)</p>

**Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag**

The Duncan House is aesthetically significant for blending with its setting, situated below a slope and backing onto a reserve. The chevron motif French doors open to the garden in close proximity, modelling methods of home building several decades ahead of later popular trends.

**SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

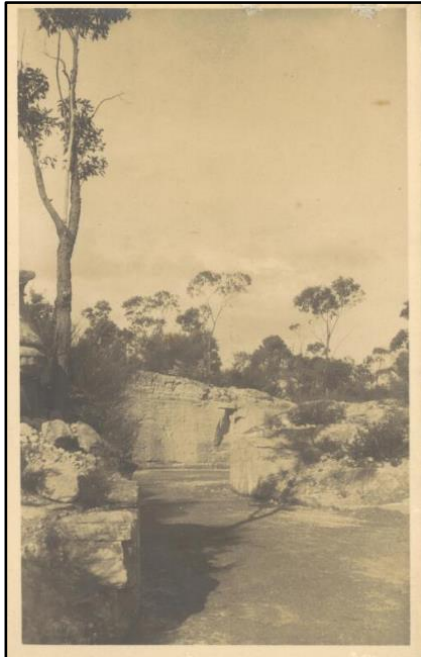
The house has social significance for being associated with the Griffins who also lived in the Castlecrag community, and for being the home for over 50 years of Mr Frank Duncan. Duncan and his wife Anice commissioned the house and were associates of the Griffins. They were active community members valued by the community (present and past).

When Mr Duncan planned to move away from the house in 1988, he indirectly inspired the formation of the Walter Burley Griffin Society. The house had significance with many original finishes and forms intact and the local community wished to preserve it as a house museum. They were unsuccessful, but the house has social significance for having inspired the work of the Society who have subsequently contributed to the appreciation and understanding of the Griffins' vision and importance.



**Figure 25.** Driveway of 8 The Barbette (Source: Heritage 21, 30.5.2018)

Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag

Item Name	Fishwick House	Address	15 The Citadel	SHR	01751/142	Images
Statement of Significance						
<p>The Fishwick house is of State significance as a remarkably intact, representative example of the domestic architecture of Walter Burley Griffin which retains the integrity of its original architectural layout, design and decorative detailing. It is also a rarity as it is one of 13 remaining Griffin-designed houses in the Griffins' (Walter Burley &amp; Marion Mahony Griffin) Castlecrag Estate and one of two of these houses that was built to the scale and level of design detail consistent with its original design.</p> <p>The design, construction and detailing of the Fishwick house demonstrates Griffin's commitment to combining creativity and artistry with innovative uses of technology and materials. The house and its landscape setting, located in the Griffins' Castlecrag Estate, are valuable research resources for the study of the Griffins' work and the philosophy underpinning Walter's design innovations. The house has social significance at a local level as a gathering place for the local community. It was at the Fishwick house that the Community Circle met, a community group formed by Marion Mahony, the architect wife of Walter Burley Griffin. It was also the venue for a long-standing community cooperative formed to fundraise for community facilities such as the local kindergarten and community centre.</p>						
						<p><b>Figure 26.</b> Site of Fishwick house prior to construction, Castlecrag, New South Wales, 1929 (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <a href="https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150262396/view">https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150262396/view</a>)</p>

Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag





**Figure 27.** Exterior view of newly completed Fishwick house, Castlecrag, Sydney, New South Wales. 1929. (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150262396/view>)




**Figure 28.** Fishwick House. (Source: Heritage 21. 30.05.2018)

### 6.1.2 Locally- Listed Heritage Items


Item Name	House (including original interiors) GSDA No 1		Images	
Address	136 Edinburgh Road	Item No.	I13	
Statement of Significance				
<p>GSDA No 1 has historic value in its association with the Griffins, in its intactness of form and detail and its importance as an initial component of the innovative subdivision and community of Castlecrag. The house has social value for its role in the development of Castlecrag, its prominent siting, innovation in domestic design and relationship to the adjoining Corteille Reserve.</p> <p>The house has aesthetic value deriving from its design planning and use of local materials, its relationship with GSDA No 2 and Corteille Reserve, the relationship of the house and garden, and as one of the 15 houses designed by architects Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin for Castlecrag.</p> <p>The house has research potential to reveal original Griffin architectural and landscape concepts, construction techniques, finishes and details. It is very intact in detail and form and has been carefully restored.</p>				 <p><b>Figure 29.</b> Exterior view of GSDA Dwelling no. 1, Lot 17, 136 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <a href="https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150300002/view">https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150300002/view</a>)</p>  <p><b>Figure 30.</b> GSDA No.1 Exterior (Source: Heritage 21. 30.05.2018)</p>

Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag

Item Name	House (including original interiors) GSDA No 2			Images
Address	140 Edinburgh Road	Item No.	I15	
Statement of Significance				
<p>GSDA No 2 has historic value for its association with the Griffins and its importance as a prominent initial component of the innovative subdivision and community of Castlecrag. The house has social value in its role in the development of Castlecrag, its prominent siting, innovation in domestic design and relationship to the adjoining Corteille Reserve.</p> <p>The house has aesthetic value deriving from its design planning and use of local materials, its relationship with GSDA No 1 and Corteille Reserve, the relationship of the house and garden as one of the 15 houses designed by architects Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin for Castlecrag.</p>				




**Figure 31.** View of exterior dwelling, GSDA Dwelling no. 2, 140 Edinburgh Road, Lot 19, Castlecrag, 1921 (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150302155/view>)




**Figure 32.** GSDA No.2 (Source: Heritage 21. 30.05.2018)

Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag

Item Name	Johnson House (including original interiors)			Images
Address	4 The Parapet	Item No.	I43	
Statement of Significance				
<p>This house was designed by architect Walter Burley Griffin and is the only one of his 14 Castlecrag houses that features a pitched roof. Part of the Griffin-Castlecrag Conservation Area, this house comprises a group with numbers 8, 12 and 14 The Parapet to demonstrate Griffin's design principle of siting houses in relation to the landscape and to one another. It is one of 14 Griffin designed houses that were built in Castlecrag, 13 of which remain.</p>				




**Figure 33.** The exterior of the Johnson House, Lot 58, The Parapet, Castlecrag (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150303058/view>)




**Figure 34.** Johnson House, 4 The Parapet (Source: Heritage 21. 30.05.2018)

Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag

Item Name	Grant House (including original interiors)			Images
Address	8 The Parapet	Item No.	I44	
Statement of Significance				
<p>This house was designed by architect Walter Burley Griffin and is one of the most intact Griffin houses. It is one of a group of houses in the Parapet which together, demonstrate the Griffin principles of siting houses in the in relation to the landscape and to one another. Significant as the house that he and his wife chose to live in, it is one of fourteen houses designed and built by the Griffins in Castlecrag, 13 of which remain.</p>				





**Figure 35.** View of Grant House, 1920s (Source: Willoughby Council. Willoughby City Library. 002/002205. Retrieved from: [photosau.com.au/Willoughby](https://photosau.com.au/Willoughby))

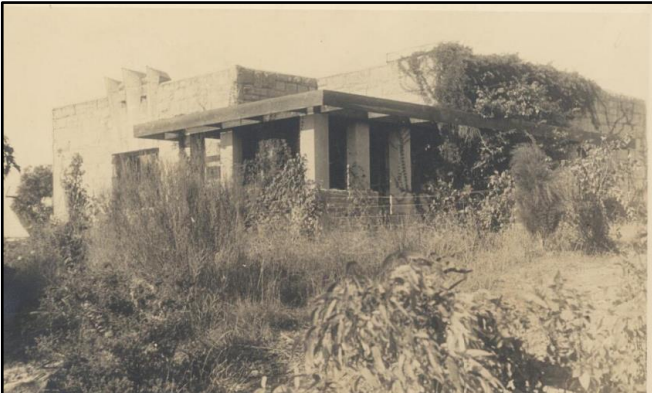



**Figure 36.** Interior view of living room of the Grant house, 1922. (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150403626/view>)

Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag


Item Name	Moon House (including original interiors)			Images
Address	12 The Parapet	Item No.	I46	
Statement of Significance				
<p>A Walter Burley Griffin house which has been enlarged with additions from architect Eric M. Nicholls. Called Gables because the heavily articulated ribbon of windows with bold triangular forms over the casements. May have appeared almost as large white crystals on the stone surface.</p> <p>Designed by Walter Burley Griffin in 1921 for C.W.Moon. Residence of Eric Nicholls in 1930. Forms part of the original Castlecrag subdivision</p>				
				
				<p><b>Figure 37.</b> Exterior view of Moon House, 12 The Parapet, 1921 (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <a href="https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150395876/view">https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150395876/view</a>)</p>
				
				<p><b>Figure 38.</b> Exterior view of Moon House, 12 The Parapet, Lot 54 (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <a href="https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150454973/view">https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150454973/view</a>)</p>

Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag


Item Name	Cheong House (including original interiors)			Images
Address	14 The Parapet	Item No.	I47	
Statement of Significance				
<p>Cheong House was designed by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahoney Griffin who were major figures in early 20th century architecture in Australia. The house is significant as one of 14 houses designed by the Griffins in Castlecrag as part of the original subdivision of Griffin's model suburb. The original portion of the house is largely intact and in good condition and demonstrates the Griffin's design philosophy. Important as a group along with Nos.4, 8 and 12 The Parapet.</p>				 <p><b>Figure 39.</b> Exterior view of Cheong House, Lot 53, 14 The Parapet (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <a href="https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150276746/view">https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150276746/view</a>)</p>  <p><b>Figure 40.</b> 14 The Parapet (Source: Heritage 21. 30.05.2018)</p>

Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag

Item Name	Felstead House (including original interiors)			Images
Address	158 Edinburgh Road	Item No.	I19	
Statement of Significance				
<p>The house has historic value in its association with the Griffins, in its intactness of form, finish and detail and its importance as an initial component of the innovative subdivision and community of Castlecrag. The house has social value in its role in the development of Castlecrag and its innovation in domestic design. The house has aesthetic value deriving from its design, planning and use of knit lock and as one of the 15 houses designed by architects Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin for Castlecrag. The house has research potential to reveal original Griffin architectural and landscape concepts, construction techniques, finishes and details. The house is rare among Griffin houses in Castlecrag in its planning and the use of a pitched roof.</p>				





**Figure 41.** Exterior of Theo Felstead House, Lot 99, 158 Edinburgh Road (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150303457/view>)




**Figure 42.** Interior of Theo Felstead House (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: [nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150303750/view](https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150303750/view))

## Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag


Item Name	Robert Guy House, 'Temple of Aphrodite' (including original interiors)			Images
Address	23 The Bastion	Item No.	I38	
Statement of Significance				
<p>This house was designed by prominent architect Walter Burley Griffin and is an excellent demonstration of the Griffin design principles of siting houses in relation to landscape. It has historical significance as part of Griffin's planned subdivision of Castlecrag and is one of the 14 Griffin designed houses, 13 of which remain.</p>				 <p><b>Figure 43.</b> Interior view of living room of the Guy house, 1926. (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <a href="http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150404279/view">nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150404279/view</a>)</p>  <p><b>Figure 44.</b> View of Guy House (Source: Heritage 21 30.05.2018)</p>

Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag

Item Name	Mower House 'Casa Bonita' (including original interiors)			Images
Address	12 The Rampart	Item No.	I49	
Statement of Significance				
<p>12 The Rampart was designed by architects Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahoney Griffin who were major figures in early 20th century architecture in Australia. The house is significant as one of 15 houses designed by the Griffins in Castlecrag as part of the original subdivision of Griffins model suburb. The Mower house was the first knit lock house with a flat roof and demonstrates the Griffin design philosophy of siting houses in relation to the landscape.</p>				





**Figure 45.** Construction of Ellen Mower's House, 12 The Rampart, Castlecrag (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150148049/view>)





**Figure 46.** Exterior view of Mower House (Source: Heritage 21, 30.05.2018)

Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag

Item Name	Creswick House / House of Seven Lanterns (including original interiors)		Images
Address	4 The Barbette	Item No.	I32
Statement of Significance			
<p>This house was designed by architect Walter Burley Griffin and is one of the most intact Griffin houses. It is one of a group of three Griffin houses in the Barbette, which together demonstrate the Griffin principles of siting houses in relation to landscape and to one another. It is one of three houses built from knit lock in Castlecrag and demonstrates the application of Griffin's concrete block structural system to a small flat roofed house. It is rare as one of fourteen houses designed by Griffin and built in Castlecrag, 13 of which remain.</p>			 <p><b>Figure 47.</b> Creswick House, 4 The Barbette, 1927 (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <a href="https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150405524/view">nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150405524/view</a>)</p>  <p><b>Figure 48.</b> Creswick House, 4 The Barbette, 1927 (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <a href="https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150305050/view">https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150305050/view</a>)</p>


Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag

Item Name	The Long Griffin / The Wilson House (including original interiors)			Images
Address	2 The Barbette	Item No.	I31	
Statement of Significance				
<p>The house is significant as a work of architecture in its landscaped surrounds; as part of the context of the Griffin Houses at 4 and 8 The Barbette and as part of the planned suburb of Castlecrag. The house is also significant as the work of the architect Walter Burley Griffin.</p>				

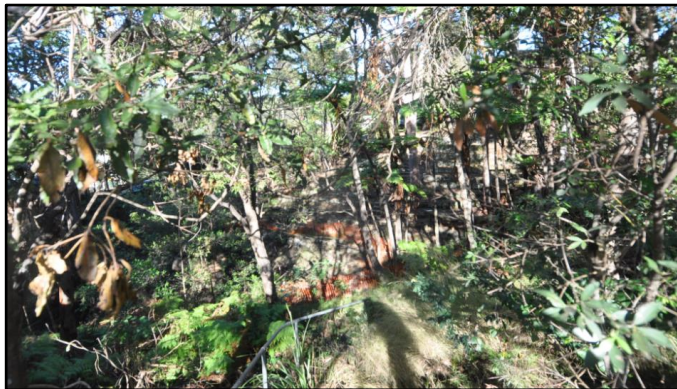

<p><b>Figure 49.</b> T.H.R. Wilson House, 1929 (Source: Eric Milton Nicholls Collection. NLA Trove. Retrieved from: <a href="http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150304754/view">nla.gov.au/nla.obj-150304754/view</a>)</p>

<p><b>Figure 50.</b> 2 The Barbette (Source: Heritage 21, 30.05.2018)</p>

## Walter Burley Griffin's Legacy ▪ Castlecrag

Item Name	Haven Amphitheatre/ Haven Estate Theatre/ Castlecrag Amphitheatre /New Haven Scenic Theatre			Images
Address	The Barricade, corner The Bulwark	Item No.	I35	
Statement of Significance				
The Haven Amphitheatre has significance through its association with the architects Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin, the theatre has historic significance as part of Griffin's unique Castlecrag subdivision. Rare as the only Griffin-designed theatre, it has strong local community and social significance as on ongoing facility for social and cultural activities.				



**Figure 51.** Haven Scenic Theatre, 1935 (Source: The Home: an Australian quarterly Retrieved from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-371304851>)



**Figure 52.** Haven Amphitheatre (Source: Heritage 21, 30.05.2018)

## 7. Legacy

The Griffins Castlecrag is often stated as a legacy of ideas stemming from their ability to create relationships between the built environment, the surrounding landscape and the inhabitants of the area.<sup>50</sup> This approach to architecture, to landscape and to community was considered eccentric, and yet a welcome change to Sydney and Melbourne's more Bohemian society; the "creatives" that would be inspired by the interaction between nature and built forms, and the promoted communal activities that encircled these natural and manmade environments.

This legacy of ideas is most evident in Burley Griffin's influence on Australian architecture, where architects are inspired by 'the approach to design in suburban bushland areas than as a source for plan arrangements or the overall form and character of houses'.<sup>51</sup> His use and integration of natural resources such as stone and his decorative detailing, most particularly the ornamental window fenestration, would prove to be incredibly insightful to new designs and are often seen as a 'source of inspiration for details in other houses'.<sup>52</sup>

However, his natural legacy has been compromised in the years following his death and Marion's return to America in the late 1930s. Public land was slowly taken over by private owners, exotic planting often overshadows the native bushland and 'ostentatious and vulgar, overly large houses'<sup>53</sup> now tower over the original estate dwellings, some featuring the terracotta tiles Griffin despised. Yet even with these particular failings, Castlecrag is heralded as a core example of environmental design – built with nature, not against it.

The surrounding community and local government council have established various methods of conserving the Griffin legacy. Willoughby City Council listed the Griffin houses at Castlecrag in the Local Environment Plan 1995 (LEP1995) as heritage items (represented in Section 7.0 above). The Council also listed the surrounding area as The Griffin Conservation Area, which follows the South side of Edinburgh Road from the corner of The Quadrangle to the foreshore and ending near the cul-de-sacs of The Bulwark and The Scarp. Soon after Walter's death, trees were planted along Edinburgh Road, and a fountain was installed on the island at the junction of Sortie Port and Edinburgh Road in 1965. The main entrance to The Quadrangle also features a grounded plaque marking Griffin's earlier accomplishments and the earliest shopping centre on Edinburgh Road features a large "Griffin Centre" sign to the eastern façade.

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<sup>50</sup> Walker, Meredith & Weirick, James M & Kabos, Adrienne, 1953- & Walter Burley Griffin Society (1994). *Building for nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag*. Walter Burley Griffin Society, Castlecrag, NSW, Australia. pg.76

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p.76

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p.76

<sup>53</sup> McGregor, Alasdair & Griffin, Marion Mahony, 1871-1961 & Griffin, Walter Burley, 1876-1937 & McGregor, Alasdair, 1954- (2009). *Grand obsessions: the life and work of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin*. Lantern, Camberwell, Victoria, p.503

## 8. Existing Context

Griffin's Castlecrag designs predominately consisted of one level dwellings, some of which were designed to be extended upon once funding became available. The area surrounding the subject site consists of one-to-two level structures, mostly for commercial purposes. As stated above, the north side of Edinburgh Road consists of mid-20th century buildings, capped by curved facades to the east and west. The design of the current Quadrangle echoes some of the design principles set by Griffin's early covenants, and the scale of his heritage-listed items in the area; the current structure is set back from the busy road way, is a single storey form and presents articulated forms that provide for additional landscaping. The façade of the building is also broken up by large panes of glass, a method used by Griffin to allow for optimum views to the surrounding landscape. The layout of the current building also provides evidence of early subdivision by separating the wings of the structure through the open quad to the northern entry. Although not designed by Griffin, there is clear evidence that the shopping centre has utilized his design principles within the development.

## 9. Design Prompts

Although the subject site is not heritage-listed and does not reside within the Griffin Heritage Conservation Area, it retains a visual connection to Griffin's model suburb of Castlecrag. The following design prompts outline areas where Griffin's ethos and vision for Castlecrag can be incorporated into the proposed development at The Quadrangle site.

### 9.1 Character

The character of Griffin's Castlecrag can be defined by his vision for the suburb as a built environment that incorporated new designs in a native setting with a keen interest in community driven spaces. Griffin's subdivision of the Castlecrag Estate was subservient to the natural landscape and the views and vistas the typography of the area provided, maximizing the potential for the interactions of people and place. This focus on the view corridors and vistas should be incorporated in any new development, with a focus towards the surrounding native landscape and the views to and from the surrounding Heritage Conservation Area and the heritage-listed items contained within.

Griffin's built forms obeyed the natural landscape, built to be inconspicuous within the local bushland. They also encapsulated the inventive and modern building techniques Griffin championed, using his own contraption to build some of the early Castlecrag homes. His one storey houses were designed to be viewed from all angles, essentially distributing the significance of the facade to all visible areas. These unique design aspects are uncommon in the context of Australia's suburban houses, and thus significant to the character of Griffin's Castlecrag. These design principles should be respected and responded to within new development at the subject site.

His reserves and pathways were to be used by the community to engage with each other and with his beloved Australian landscape. The detailing of these public space lies within his planning specifications; these reserves and pathways were chosen by Griffin after he roamed the landscape and were selected for their prominent view corridors and vistas to the surrounding landscape and harbour, effectively for all to enjoy. New development should respond to these intricate details of communal, public spaces, with an emphasis on the use of the surrounding landscape for public and community access.

Griffin's use of the "castle" terminology within the suburbs roadways and reserves is a noticeable, if not charming characteristic that continues the communal meaning of the area. This significant contribution could be incorporated in new development (building name etc) if deemed appropriate.

As stated above, a key communal area of Castlecrag is the Haven amphitheatre. The theatre was designed by Walter and his wife; it has been an integral part of the beginning stages of the community with its eclectic theatrical performances and, later, the community's interest in restoring the detailed stone seating and stage area to its former glory. The Haven displays a clear link to Griffin's principles of ideas in the public domain, incorporating nature with an open setting to entice community engagement. This detail is key to the Griffin legacy and should be responded to in future developments.

## **9.2 Scale**

The proposed scale of the building should reflect the natural landscape of the surrounding bushlands. Mature trees surround the site and are integral to Griffin's vision. They should be preserved and responded to within any new development. Additional setbacks to upper levels would help break up any bulk and should be navigated by view lines towards the natural landscape of the suburb, or be designed to open up to create vistas to the surrounding landscape. As stated above, The Quadrangle resides on Edinburgh Road; the physical, visible and symbolic entryway to Castlecrag. The proposed scale should respect if not represent this link to the suburb and be subordinate to the natural landscape.

## **9.3 Form**

The form of any development on the subject site should respond to and be subservient of the surrounding built and natural environments. As a prominent corner location, the massing of the building should be placed to the southern rear of the site and follow the contours of the natural landscape, much like Griffin's earlier works. This arrangement of built parts would allow for a maximization of views for the streetscape and reduce the bulk of the form from the more significant Edinburgh Road streetscape. As detailed above, Griffin held a particular hatred towards red terracotta roof tiles, and the sloped roofs that they were built upon. As an early covenant of the area and one of Griffin's preferred roofing styles, roof lines should be flat with little detailing (if any). Again, this scaling back from addition height would optimise the natural connection to the landscape through the views and vistas created with lower roof lines.

The treatment of the façade should also echo Griffin's unconventional use of varying window sizes, from narrow to large spans. These openings do not need to be virtual copies but should respond and respect the neighbouring designs and patterns.

#### **9.4 Siting**

The new development should respect the historic context of the suburban streetscape of Edinburgh Road. Griffin homes were designed to be seen "in the round"; all facades of the site were just as important as the front. This detail was not common in suburban home designs and contributes to the vision of Griffin's Castlecrag, where it should be respected and responded to in any new development.

The established setbacks along this streetscape are evidently influenced by Griffin's principles and development should be aligned to the existing setback of the subject site from Edinburgh Road (if not further back) in order to continue the conspicuous and significant front landscape of the area. The siting of the development should also respond to that of Griffin's earlier works and be subservient to the natural contours of the landscape. Side setbacks should also be retained if not expanded upon to encourage views to the natural environment from Edinburgh Road. Part of Griffin's vision was to create an open environment for the local public to enjoy the native landscape. This should be respected and represented in the reduction of fencing (a key covenant in the Castlecrag Estate) to any new development and include the continuous use of native flora to respond to the siting of any new development and provide privacy to dwellings.

A main component of Griffin's vision embraces the use of views and vistas to maximize the relationship between people, space and the natural environment. New development should echo these visual interactions by retaining views to natural features, including the surrounding bushland and any views to the foreshore.

#### **9.5 Materials and Colour**

As detailed above, Griffin used the local natural environment to design and construct his buildings, both figuratively and physically. His use of stone is evident, if not extremely characteristic of his design principles of incorporating nature into the built environment. A key component of Griffin's legacy also comes from the incorporation of new ideas in construction techniques; his Knitlock devise made it possible to use the locally quarried sandstone in new and innovative ways. Although the system has since fallen out of use, the faint stonemasonry recessed joints left on the surviving Griffin Knitlock buildings are important details that contribute to his construction legacy. These materials should not be replicated within the new development, rather simply and sympathetically referenced and re-interpreted when designing the built façades.

Materials and colours should respond to the ethos of Griffin's homes and the surrounding landscape; Griffin employed natural recessive colours to blend inconspicuously with the local bushland and utilised the texture of the exterior masonry as internal walls that effectively brought the outside in. A distinctive component of any Griffin home also includes the joinery and its use within the setting of the site. These material concepts should be harmoniously

referenced in future development. Roofing materials should respond to the built environment of Castlecrag whilst also respecting the preferred material sources of Griffin's early homes.

## **9.6 Detailing**

Griffin utilized his keen sense of proportions and the relationship between spaces to detail his Castlecrag buildings to be recessive and yet eccentrically modern. Common details include the use of narrow casement and picture windows, with some structures incorporating large spans of glass sheets. These details were utilised to further the relationship between the landscape, the home and the inhabitants, and should be incorporated into future designs. As stated above, Griffin's attention to landscape along the building façade emphasised his conviction of the relationship between the building and the surrounding landscape. This early landscape detailing should be responded to in new development, where avenues to incorporate native species into the built environment should be explored.

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