

Castlecrag Timeline

1960-1978

1960s A fund-raising appeal was made by Castlecrag Community Centre Committee for a fountain to honour Walter Burley Griffin. Bim Hilder, a local sculptor and friend of Griffin, was commissioned to design this significant work.



Griffin Fountain

1960s The National Trust of Australia (NSW) organised its first tours and inspections of some Griffin houses in Castlecrag.

1964 The Castlecrag Progress Association was revitalised and took over the functions of the Castlecrag & East Willoughby Cooperative Advancement Society. The Progress Association remains active promoting its objectives, namely:

1. To do everything possible to promote and further the interests of the district of Castlecrag or such other nearby area where it is possible that such benefit should accrue to the advantage of the district and could enhance and stimulate the community life of residents of Castlecrag and environs; and
2. 1965 To conserve the natural and human heritage of Castlecrag for the benefit of future generations.

1965 Max Dupain, undertook an extensive photographic essay to document the Griffin buildings in their landscape setting at Castlecrag. Dupain subsequently donated a number of these photographs to the Walter Burley Griffin Society.

1965 The Castlecrag Progress Association organised inspections of some Griffin houses, including the Fishwick, Grant, Wilson, Creswick and Duncan houses, to raise money for the memorial fountain.

The Bim Hilder-designed Griffin memorial Fountain was erected on the traffic island at the intersection of Edinburgh Road and The Sortie Port, providing a prominent entry to the Griffin Estates. The plaque is inscribed 'in recognition of the life and work of Walter Burley Griffin'. It was officially opened on 23 October during the celebrations of the Centenary of Willoughby Municipality. On the same day native trees were planted at the shopping centre, several owners of Griffin houses opened their homes for inspection and a demonstration of the design and construction of knitlock tiles used in some of the Griffin houses, was organised in the Infants' School grounds. The committee's appeal was oversubscribed by £400.

1968 Castlecrag architect Hugh Buhrich commenced work on his much-admired house at the end of Edinburgh Road. It is partly an addition to a former Griffin knitlock home. The exterior of the single-storey pavilion is a mixture of materials, including concrete beams, toughened glass and perforated timber louvres.

1970 The Castlecrag Progress Association raised \$1000 as a contribution to Willoughby Council for the re-erection of the shark net at Retreat Reserve beach.

1970s The Progress Association established a Heritage and Classification Committee "to work for the listing of the Castlecrag Estate as an historical precinct by the National Trust of Australia."

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- 1971 Bruce Ward was elected to Willoughby Council for Middle Harbour Ward to represent Castlecrag interests.
- 1972 *Castlecrag*, a superbly illustrated book edited by Addie Saltis, assisted by local resident and leading architectural writer Eva Buhrich, was published by Castlecrag Infants School Club to raise funds for landscaping the school grounds and the purchase of native plants.
- 1972 The television documentary, *Walter Burley Griffin; a draftsman who went to Australia*, was produced by the Australian Broadcasting Commission. It reviewed Griffin's work in Melbourne, Sydney, Castlecrag and elsewhere.
- 1973 The Progress Association commissioned a team from the School of Architecture at the University of NSW to undertake a redesign of Edinburgh Road incorporate traffic calming measures. The proposal, known as the James Plan, was presented in July.
- 1974 Those landowners who had not sold their land to the Department of Main Roads received a letter advising them of compulsory acquisition of their property. The Progress Association established a committee of approximately 20 residents, some with technical qualifications, to meet the challenge of proposed construction of Warringah freeway along the Northern Escarpment of Castlecrag. The committee prepared a Traffic Impact Report; Survey of Social Effects; Acoustical Investigation; and Environmental Impact Study.
- 1974 *Castlecrag News*, a two-page roneoed newsheet of the Progress Association commenced publication. It was issued monthly and opposition to the Warringah Freeway was a dominant theme. There were seven issues in 1974, but it did not appear again until 1977.
- 1974 Local resident and conservationist, Addie Saltis, formed a group to clear 'the massive overgrowth of weeds and building rubble from the Haven Amphitheatre... as they worked they also drew in other residents.' These included Beverley Blacklock and Dianne Street.
- 1974 On notification from Bruce Ward that he would not seek re-election to Willoughby Council, the Progress Association endorsed John Crew as its candidate for Middle Harbour Ward. John, a prominent TV writer, producer and director, and newspaper executive, had been a resident of Castlecrag for 18 years. He was successful in the election on 21 September.
- 1974 A group of Castlecrag residents, coordinated by Dianne Street, chairman of the Castlecrag Heritage & Classification Committee, commenced negotiations with the National Trust to have Castlecrag classified as a historical area.
- 1976 Restoration of the Haven Amphitheatre was completed with a new stage and changing facilities designed by local architect, Robert Sheldon. A Management Committee was formed and the first production – *Salome*, directed by Howard Rubie with a cast of local residents, and actors from the Artists Group Theatre – was staged. Plays, concerts and recitals have been held in the amphitheatre on a continuing basis for the past 25 years, with the annual 'Carols by Candlelight' a significant community event. Robert Sheldon received a commendation in the 1977 RAI Merit Awards for Architecture & Civic Design for his role in achieving a notable community amenity.



Yoeman of the Guard

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- 1976 The 'Castlecrag Heritage Festival' was held from 3-11 April. It was organised as part of the Australian American Festival of Sydney to celebrate the US Bicentenary by Castlecrag residents with assistance from the National Trust. It featured an exhibition titled 'Walter Burley Griffin and his Castlecrag', and several of the Griffin houses were open for inspection.
- 1977 The Castlecrag Conservation Society was established with the objective of preserving and conserving the natural and social environment of the suburb. It had initially been the Conservation Committee of the Progress Association.
- 1977 The incoming State Government headed by Neville Wran fulfilled an election pledge by abandoning the Warringah Expressway extension to Seaforth and other controversial freeways planned for Sydney. The Government subsequently set up a Commission of Inquiry into the Warringah Transport Corridor headed by Mr DS Kirby.
- 1977 Alderman John Crew advised that he would not contest the Council elections. The Progress Association, under president Con Saltis, endorsed Dianne Street as its candidate. Dianne was successful at the election held on 17 September, having campaigned on the theme that Castlecrag should remain a beautiful retreat.
- 1977 Architects Kloots and Morgan designed the Babet House at 41 The Scarp. To meet the challenge of the extremely difficult site, they stacked levels connected by an open stair, with a naturalistic palette of materials and sparing use of colour.
- 1978 The revived newsletter of the Progress Association, *The Crag*, issue No.1 was published in March with Bob Ronai as editor. It was a 4-page (foolscap) roneoed stencil production and featured a story by Addie Saltis on the history of the Castlecrag Progress Association.