

THE CRAG

NEWSLETTER OF
CASTLECrag PROGRESS
ASSOCIATION INC.

seventy six years of community development
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Progress Association Committee

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- * Vice Presidents: David Harrop
Bob McKillop
- Secretary: Elizabeth Lander
- * Treasurer: Diana Jones
- * Committee: Peter Moffitt
Gay Spies
John Steel
Howard Rubie

Next General Meeting

8pm Tuesday

23 October 2001

Castlecrag Community Centre

Refreshments

will be served

.....
There will be a

Public Meeting at

WARNER'S PARK

Sunday 21 October

4pm

to discuss future
uses of the former

**NORTHBRIDGE
WOMEN'S
BOWLING CLUB**

Warners Park: whither our Open Space?

The Crag has previously drawn its readers' attention to the current debate over the future of the **Northbridge Women's Bowling Club Site**. The site is part of and within the public reserve known as Warner's Park, the public open space between Castlecrag and our neighbours to the south. The Warner family gifted the land to Council in the early 1950s with the stated intention that it be used for passive recreation activities.

Willoughby Council now has the challenge of how to make best use of the site and, to this effect, it called for expressions of interest for the future use of the Women's Bowling Club Site. This process has drawn enthusiastic responses from a wide range of interest groups. Given the importance of the site to Castlecrag, the Progress Association has become involved in this complex matter. CPA representatives have attended meetings in Northbridge on the future use of the site and we have made a submission to Council on the issues involved.

Our submission highlighted the valuable recreational space for our residents which is provided by Warner's Park and noted its role as a zone of demarcation between the suburbs of Castlecrag and Northbridge. In recognition of the importance of this open space, the Walter Burley Griffin Society had successfully applied for a Centenary of Federation Grant in 1999 to construct the Griffin Federa-

tion Track through Warner's Park. The Track provides an important symbolic and practical linkage between Castlecrag, Northbridge and the Griffin Incinerator in South Willoughby. This linking of the three communities comes at a time when the upper section of Sailors Bay Creek (the ex-Warringah Freeway land) valley is the subject of a Landcom planning study that is likely to result in significant expansion of medium density housing, and a consequent influx of new residents to the area.

The competing interests for the future use of the Women's Bowling Club site include a junior soccer field, private child-care centres, tennis courts for Shore School and a proposal by Council for an Environment Centre. Some of these applicants seek to divert the use of public space for the exclusive use of a narrow base of clientele. Others involve active recreational uses that are not seen as appropriate by the local residents. They see to Warner's Park as having particular circumstances, namely a secluded parkland area in a natural amphitheatre where increased noise would be disruptive and where vehicular access is restricted.

The Castlecrag Progress Association has expressed its support for the establishment of an **Environment Centre** on the site of the Women's Bowling Club, together with the further development of this and adjacent areas for

(continued on page 3)

BILL LUCAS

Architect

1924 - 2001

Bill Lucas, an architect who contributed much to the spirit of Castlecrag with some of his significant houses in the late 1950s and early 1960s, died in September.

His Castlecrag work includes a group of four houses in The Bulwark. The best known of these is No. 80 The Bulwark, commonly known as *The Glass House*, which he and his architect wife Ruth built in 1957 and occupied until 1974.

Bill Lucas was a most influential architect through his progressive architectural thinking and social attitudes. He produced a very substantial body of work and, through his teaching, was an important influence on a whole generation of Sydney architects.

We will include a longer article on Bill Lucas in a future edition of *The Crag*.

Peter Moffitt

CASTLECrag PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.

6/77 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag

The Crag is edited by

Kerry McKillop (9958 4516) and

Elizabeth Lander (9958 5384).

Please send all correspondence and membership renewals to the above address.

Linkages - Opening of Griffin Federation Track

The Griffin Federation Track was officially opened by Joe Hockey, Member for North Sydney and Pat Reilly, Mayor of Willoughby City Council, on Sunday 16 September at Turret Reserve. The track links the Willoughby Incinerator with the Griffin Conservation Area at Castlecrag, both of which were designed by Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin.

The Federation Track celebrates the invaluable legacy created in Willoughby City by the Griffins, designers of the Federal capital. At Castlecrag, the Griffins designed an urban community on the foreshores of Middle Harbour to work in harmony with the Australian landscape. These Griffin Estates, now called the Griffin Conservation Area, are recognised as probably one of the major achievements of two of the most prominent architects of the 20th century: architects who came to Australia as a direct consequence of Federation.

The advancement of that vision is an objective of the Griffin Federation Track. It was funded by a grant from the Commonwealth Government's Federation Community Projects Program, awarded to the Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc., with additional support from Willoughby Council.

Preparation of the Griffin Federation Track by Council began two years ago and has been expertly managed by Council officers Alfred Bernhard and James Smallhorn, who have supervised a team of bush regenerators and stonemasons. The route of the track begins in The Rampart near the Community Centre, goes through The Keep Reserve from Castlecrag to Northbridge, follows the creek to Eastern Valley Way, then on to its other side through the former market garden area to Alpha Road, thence to Willoughby Incinerator in the Bicentennial Reserve.

At the official opening of the track Professor Carrick Chambers highlighted the importance of the track and its links to other walking tracks in Willoughby City. He also noted the physical break in the continuity of the track caused by Eastern Valley Way and expressed the desire for a pedestrian tunnel under this extremely busy road to create a safe crossing for users of the Track.

Take a walk along the track and enjoy the beauty of its bushland, which in The Keep Reserve below The Rampart is among the best in Castlecrag. Look for the plaque showing the route, a short distance from the entrance to the Community Centre, in The Rampart.

Creeks in Castlecrag

Council staff will be at the **Castlecrag Quadrangle on Friday 19th October 12-2pm** with information on **Creeks in Castlecrag**. If you would like to find out more about Sugarloaf, Camp and Sailors Bay Creek and what you can do to help keep them clean, pop down and have a chat to the friendly staff.

e-restore snippets

In September the 'Totally Wild' Television program and Taronga Zoo filmed the removal of bamboo from bushland near Edinburgh Road and The Scarp. The bamboo is removed by Council's bush regeneration contractors and is then sent to Taronga Zoo where it is fed to Pandas, Antelopes and Camels and used by Elephants as toothpicks. The removal of this weed is part of Council's *e.restore* program **Target Noxious Weeds**. The story will be shown on the Channel Ten television program soon.

The control of morning glory vine along the northern escarpment and the works on stormwater outlets behind Cheyne Walk are continuing.

These activities are funded by Council's *e.restore* environmental levy. For more information on these activities call Erika Klimpsch, Catchment Education Officer at Council on 9777-7942.

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Warner's Park - (contd)

passive recreational use. That argument was based on the expected demographic changes in eastern Willoughby. However, it is apparent that Council is under considerable pressure to maximise wider benefits that could be generated by the Bowling Club site. In this context, the issue of complementary or compatible uses becomes an important issue.

From our own experience in Castlecrag, we are aware that a child-care use would require the exclusive occupation of the former Bowling Club building during the week. Therefore the day-care and Environment Centre proposals are in competition for access to the building, although the Centre also seeks use of the bowling green area. The junior soccer proposal is primarily concerned with the creation of a playing field (smaller than a normal field) for use on Saturday mornings. It is therefore seen as a compatible use with groups that might use the building facilities, although there is competition with the Environment Centre for use of adjacent space.

The local residents see soccer as an active use that does not fit in well with the special zoning classification of Warner's Park, while a day care use would involve privatisation of public space for a small group of beneficiaries. They therefore strongly favour the Environment Centre as the most compatible use from their perspective and believe that a far broader range of beneficiaries would arise through visits there by school and other interested groups.

So the task of optimising access to the site does not have an easy solution. The Progress Association needs feed-back and advice on what position it should take on this matter. Your attendance at the forthcoming Public Meeting on Sunday 21 October at 4pm on the future use of Warner's Park, at the clubhouse, (walk along the Griffin Federation Track from The Rampart or drive to The Outpost, Northbridge), is urged. Alternatively, if you are unable to attend, your advice to CPA committee members re your thoughts on this matter would be appreciated.

Editors

A Walk through the Castle: Road and Place Names in Castlecrag

The Griffins' legacy in Castlecrag includes their skilful subdivision of much of the rugged peninsula, the houses they designed, their protection of native vegetation, and their imaginative street and place names. What inspired the Griffins to use the terminology for the parts of a medieval fort or castle to enrich the meaning of our steep and rugged peninsula?

There is no information on why they chose these place names. Perhaps the name Castlecrag may have led to thinking about the use of appropriate associated names. Did the early street name Edinburgh Road, which runs the full length of the ridge and helps define the isthmus, lead to considering the structure of Edinburgh Castle in Scotland? Some day their sources may be discovered in archives. However even without this information it is possible, by analysing the meaning of the street and place names, to see the logic and care of their selection.

The Postern is the first road to the south as one passes the shops moving east along Edinburgh Road; in a castle it means 'a passage' 'and sometimes refers to 'a back door or gateway, a secret means of exit.' Our Postern leads to a number of places.

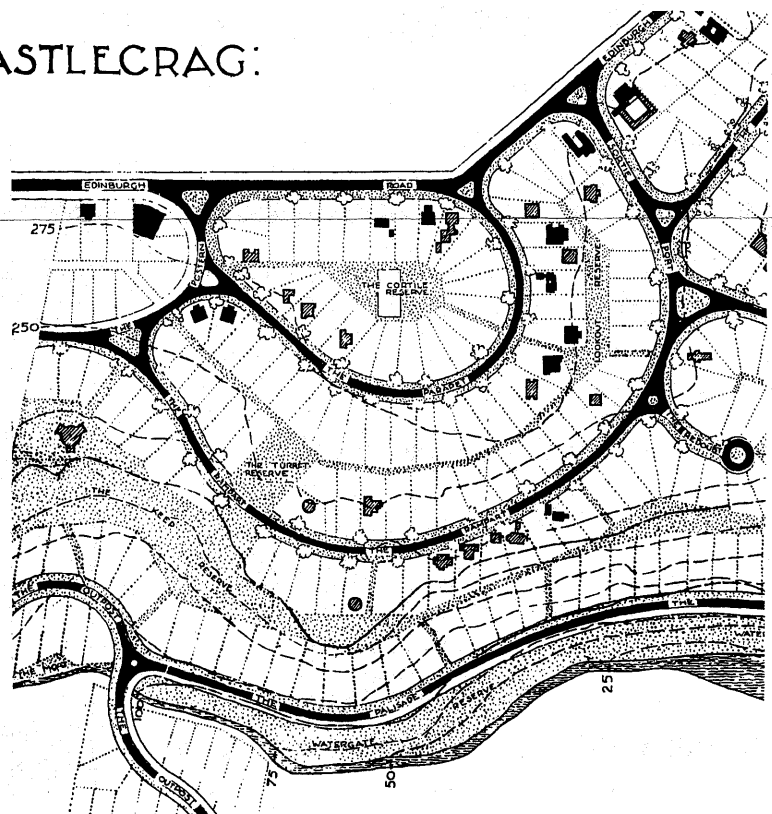
A small pedestrian lane somewhat secretively leads to The Corteil Reserve; a corteil is a small, enclosed court, the site of the tennis courts in the grand plan for Castlecrag.

The Postern also leads to both The Parapet and The Rampart. The Parapet is well described as 'an elevation to protect from attack', or in architectural terms 'a wall at the edge of a platform.' If you doubt this meaning, visit the Lookout Reserve and you will see the low sandstone cliff forming the natural boundary of the properties in The Parapet overlooking this reserve.

From here walk along the pathway that backs the other houses until you arrive at the pleasant grassy wooded Turret Reserve. Be sure to stand on the rock outcrop of The Turret to enjoy the broad view of Northbridge and much more. It is one of the finest viewing areas in Castlecrag. Indeed you almost feel that you are standing on a real turret, defined either as a small tower crowning the angle of a wall or a small tower on a larger building. Technically our turret is a 'staircase turret' with its new sandstone steps (part of the recently-opened Federation Track), bringing you down to The Rampart.

(continued on page 4)

↑ CASTLECRAG:



A Walk through the Castle

(contd)

A Rampart in a fortified castle is 'an elevation capable of being defended'; also it is part of a castle 'on which a parapet is raised'; hence we have our Parapet on the higher ground.

Now on The Rampart there are choices to be made. To the east it will guide you back to The Postern; but immediately opposite The Turret the new Federation Track leads through a forested area down to **The Palisade** and **The Outpost**. These bring you to quiet roads leading up the hill to the Northbridge shops. Possibly The Palisade was named from the fences that separated what was then farmland. An Outpost can be defined as 'a place outside the limits of a camp', 'a place at a distance from the main body of an army', again well named!

This brings you to the large green spaces of Warner's Reserve and the edge of the **Watergate Reserve**. As its name implies this large area of bush borders a stream flowing into Middle Harbour.

(to be continued)

Carrick Chambers

(the map on the previous page is from the book *Building for Nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag* by M Walker, A Kabos and J Weirick which can be purchased by phoning 9958 4516)

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Buhrich House placed on Heritage Register

The **Buhrich House** in Castlecrag, considered to be one of Australia's finest modern houses, has recently been listed on the State Heritage Register. The Register lists items of particular importance to the people of NSW.

The cover of the latest edition of 'Heritage' (the quarterly newsletter of the NSW Heritage Office and Heritage Council of NSW) features a photograph of this unique house with 'its bold and original sculptural design'.

The 'Heritage' article states: 'Perched atop a cliff in Castlecrag, **Buhrich House** is considered to be one of the finest modern houses in Australia. It was designed in the late 1960s by highly regarded immigrant architect Hugh Buhrich for himself and his wife, Eva Buhrich. It features a unique combination of off-the-shelf materials, hand-crafted features, modelling of architectural space and relationship to the site. **Buhrich House** was nominated for listing by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.'

Wanted - pre-loved computers

Willoughby Legion Club is forming a 'Computer Club' to teach retired people how to use a PC. A professional instructor has volunteered to teach people free of charge and the club now needs a number of computers for the students. If you have an old computer no longer needed, would you consider donating it to the club?

Enquiries: Eddie Britt 9958 7449

Stiff Gins at The Haven Sunday 21 October 3pm

From 2pm a special shuttle bus to transport patrons will operate continuously from side Graham's Butchers in Edinburgh Road.

There is no parking at the theatre
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