

NEWSLETTER OF THE CASTLECRAG PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

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*Record of a Walk taken through the Griffin-designed Walkways and Pathways of
Castlecrag: 17 January 1993*

The intrepid band of adventurers assembled in Rockley Street at 7.30am on their voyage of discovery of the nearly-forgotten walkways and reserves of Castlecrag. Sean Lander, who has good knowledge of the location and state of repair of these, had offered to escort us.

The reserves and walkways (footpaths) are an integral part of Griffin's design for Castlecrag. The reserves were planned for many different purposes, eg viewing, entertainment, business and activities at a community club and for the general enhancement of life in this special place. The footpaths were designed to enable access to the reserves and to allow pedestrian traffic its safe and quick passage through the suburb without having to encounter the dangers of the streets. What far-sighted vision!

We walked east along Rockley Street and took the steps cut by Griffin to connect with the road to the boatshed. Rather than go down that road we turned north east and took the path, via further made and cut steps, to the old swimming area which is now a sad memory of its golden sands. We then turned west and walked and scrambled up The Retreat Reserve noting stands of indig-enous flora and some bushland regeneration done in the lower section. This is a very beautiful area, its silence and shade giving great pleasure to all. Exiting to The Bulwark from this reserve is not possible because of heavy growth so the steps of a private house were used. The next part of the walk was made by turning north along The Bulwark, noting various walkways to the north and south of it, most of which are hard to identify because of being closed by adjacent houses or by difficult terrain. At The Bartizan we took the well-defined

path and steps to exit in The Citadel, noting but not taking the path off it to the Tower Reserve and also noting in a westward direction, the path's continuing to the Oriel Reserve. From The Citadel we walked for a short distance along The Battlement and came to the path which leads to the Gargoyle Reserve. The entrance to this path (all the pathways are 10 feet wide) is impossible because of heavy planting by adjacent neighbour/s, so we continued to the walkway which leads to The Embrasure Reserve. This walkway is in good condition but no reasonable access to that reserve exists because of impenetrable growth. To overcome this problem we walked to the end of The Battlement, turned east into The Bastion, and 100 metres down were able to enter The Embrasure Reserve from another walkway. This is a wonderful, large area, very overgrown and neglected but very ready for restoration, we felt. Some large native trees still grow, showing neither pest nor poison attack. We exited along a watercourse to The Bulwark, where we inspected the Griffin-built culvert under the road, and noted that it is in some need of repair. We continued south east up The Bulwark and noted the walkway between nos. 100 and 102, which goes down to the bay and Retreat Reserve. The Bulwark veers south to The Barbette and here we noted the walkway beside no.2, which is not passable, and were able to see via access through no.2, the reserve below the houses in that street. We presumed that this reserve is unnamed because it covers the area The Palisade would have taken had it been built. Walking west again we took the walkway (newly stepped and handrailed) connecting The Barbette to The Redoubt and The Casement Reserve. This Reserve is kept in excellent condition by residents in houses adjoining. The Redoubt >

The Annual General Meeting of the Castlecrag Progress Association will be held at the Community Centre, corner The Postern and The Rampart, Tuesday 23 February at 8pm. All welcome!

The Castlecrag Conservation Society will hold its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 17 March at the Infants School, Edinburgh Road, at 8pm. For details ring Harold Spies, President, 958 8569.

joins The Rampart and at close to that point we entered a walkway (now built as a driveway) to the Lookout Reserve. This Reserve is a cleared grassy area and is well kept though lacking indigenous growth. To arrive at The Parapet we were able to exit along a well-kept path which continues across The Parapet to the much-used Cortile Reserve.

The weather this day was very hot and the time was now 10.30am, so a decision was made to terminate the walk at this point. The nature of the day was exploratory and it was firmly resolved, after giving much thanks to Sean Lander, that more walks will be made, preferably when the weather is cooler, and that more participants should be present.

Elizabeth Lander



Children's Theatre in our own Backyard

In 1992 local resident **Lindy Batterham** was the recipient of a grant from the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council to assist her in the creation of a theatre piece for young children. The grant was awarded in recognition of her past work as a writer and performer of theatre for young people, and although her professional work has taken a back seat for the past five years since the birth of her second daughter, Lindy has continued to dabble in theatre work.

Locally, she serves on the hard-working Haven Amphitheatre Committee. She also was one of the prime movers behind the memorable community event *Castlecrag Carnival* in November 1989 which revolved around the threatened sale of the school site. The musical theatre piece *Keep Your Hands Off Our Assets* performed on the day, involved over fifty residents and the event attracted over 2000 people to the school site. It was a highly successful and creative way for the community to express concern about the school closure and sale.

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Now Lindy has written her third one-woman theatre piece for young children. *Blossom's Backyard* (formerly called *Ancient Mumma*) has an ecological theme and reminds us of our connection with Mother Earth. Directed by Kerry Dwyer, the play employs humour, pathos, dance, song, drumming and audience participation. Approved by the NSW Department of School Education, and already warmly received by its audiences, *Blossom's Backyard* will tour infant, junior primary schools and kindergartens as well as a school holiday theatre season in 1993.

There will be a special public performance of *Blossom's Backyard* at **Castlecrag School** on **Saturday 20th February at 3pm**. It is best suited for 3-10 year olds and their families, but age is no barrier to the enjoyment of this delightful theatrical experience.

Admission \$4 everyone. Tickets at door. For further information phone 958 8326.

Public Participation in Urban Planning

Elizabeth Lander and Bob McKillop

The impact of *development* on the character of Castlecrag has long been a priority issue for our community. For over 66 years the Castlecrag Progress Association Inc. has been involved in activities to conserve the unique character bequeathed to the suburb by its early residents and the area's natural heritage. Protection and conservation of the natural environment of the Castlecrag peninsula has been a constant theme of the Association's activities.

Last year Willoughby City Council carried a motion calling on community groups to be consulted on all development applications (DAs) in their areas. Since then, the Progress Association has been invited to comment on DAs submitted for the suburb. The Association has formed a sub-committee whose sole responsibility is to examine the DAs Council brings to our attention. At all times it hopes to appraise the applications quickly and to act with the utmost integrity. Our desire is always to eliminate conflict and we are particularly interested in those DAs which raise wider issues of concern in our suburb.

We are concerned at the changes which Willoughby Council's Consolidated City Plan will bring to the land and building developments in Castlecrag. The present Development Control Plan reflects a past period of planning and we believe tighter and better-specified controls are now needed. All aspects of heritage value in this suburb need to be preserved. We are concerned that the Dual Occupancy regulations override Council's policies, and that developments to the foreshore infringe its public use, environment and heritage value.

A DA which has been of particular concern to the Progress Association is one relating to *The Quadrangle*. Letters have been written and on-site meetings held covering our many objections but the only positive result is that Council will ask the owners to replace the present exotic planting with native plants. We are concerned still with the lack of safe egress from the supermarket to Edinburgh Road and with the aesthetic judgements which are at variance with the low-key character of the shopping centre and with the design influence of Walter Burley Griffin.

Castlecrag Heritage

Community participation in the urban planning process carries a responsibility to pursue a set of principles which represent community values and ideals. Castlecrag has a strong heritage which draws on Walter Burley Griffin's early vision for a community deliberately planned in harmony with the Australian landscape. Griffin wrote at length on the need for buildings to be integrated with

their natural landscape, and was enthusiastic over the opportunities generated by the beauty of the Castlecrag peninsula and its native bushland. In March 1928, he wrote for *Advance! Australia* in these terms:

Nowhere in the modern world have the conditions set a more attractive problem for the architect than in the wooded rock ledges of the headlands of Sydney Harbour - a nice problem, for the factors are definitely clear-cut and simple socially, economically and aesthetically: - A million people free to exercise their own judgement, economically able to provide themselves with fully equipped and appointed substantial homes with a beautiful, easily worked stone underlying their sites and all other building materials indigenous, and all skill and equipment handy, and the most beautiful outlook, background and garden setting possible to imagine; complete to start with.

The aesthetic requirements are modesty to the extent of subordination of structural features to the striking characteristics of the forested cliffs, using the stone and level coursing uniform with them that will accomplish this, and a diminutive scale of one storey that can accord with the diminutiveness of natural forms without breaking with the established habits and accepted type plans. After a hundred years during which every alternative has been introduced from every corner of the earth this natural formula is now being tried out at Castlecrag, in Sydney Harbour.

These principles underlie the Castlecrag heritage which the Association seeks to preserve. In the natural features of the harbour and its foreshores, together with the historical significance of the Griffin Estate, Castlecrag has something special which the Association believes is worth fighting for. We recognise that Castlecrag's desirable location and environment for urban living attract developers and residents to the suburb, many of whom do not share the environmental values of older residents. This means that the Association needs a clear vision about the form of development which should be supported within the Castlecrag Peninsula.

Development Control Plan No.3

The Association receives approaches from residents seeking support for their individual developments and from those opposing these changes. We are regularly drawn into these conflicts. Effective arbitration requires a set of clear guidelines about the kind of urban environment we wish to pursue and the elements which will contribute to this. To this end, the Progress Association joined with Willoughby Council in 1980 to undertake a Local Environmental Study of the Castlecrag Peninsula.

An Advisory Committee of residents was established and met formally once a month between June 1981 and November 1982. The Committee prepared the Local Environment Study to provide information upon which alterations to existing Statutory planning controls could be based. As a result of their work, **Development Control Plan No.3 Castlecrag (DCP3)** was formally adopted by Willoughby Municipal Council on 18 May 1987.

The LES reported that much of the infill development in Castlecrag was unsympathetic to the basic character of Castlecrag. Problems were arising from the clearing and excavation of land for development, and from inappropriate alterations to existing dwellings by residents. The Committee recommended that statutory controls should be amended to impose limitations on development, to preserve the character and environment of the suburb and its adjoining waterways. New development standards were proposed and these were incorporated, with modifications, into DCP3.

Land and Environment Court

Willoughby Council have sought to uphold the principles of DCP3 in their assessment of DAs submitted to Council. In several instances, developers have appealed to the Land and Environment Court against Council decisions. Defence against such appeals is an expensive business for Council and its ratepayers.

The most recent case concerns a development proposal for 7-9 The Tor Walk in Castlecrag. The DA proposed four large mansions on the block, which would generate a glass and concrete wall of development from one boundary to another. Council requested support from the Progress Association for the Court hearing between 11 and 15 January. The Progress Association supported Council's rejection of the DA on the grounds of overdevelopment which is unsympathetic to the spirit of the Local Environment Plan and DCP3. Specifically, we were concerned that:

1. Significant areas of bushland should be preserved in the site in order to retain the natural character of the area, with buildings sited to ensure the protection and maintenance of this tree cover.
2. The proposed buildings would dominate the natural setting, particularly when viewed from the water or opposite shore. There is need for separation and a reduction in the bulk of the buildings to achieve harmony with the natural environment.
3. Development on this scale would greatly increase the amount of impermeable surface, thereby increasing the amount of water runoff into adjacent bushland and the harbour. The existing stormwater drain serving the area is

already overtaxed. More information is required on the impact of this runoff on the natural environment.

4. The proposed boating pavilion, while being a reconstruction of an existing building, is located below the foreshores building line and should therefore be confined to boating purposes.

Lessons Learned

The frequency and cost of appeals against DAs rejected on the basis of DCP3 highlights the need for more precise guidelines on the type of development we wish to support in Castlecrag. Our Local Environment Study was an early example of community participation in the formulation of an urban LEP and DCP. Much has changed over recent years in terms of planning concepts and government policy changes, such as the dual occupancy code. As a consequence, the specification of development controls was not as precise as those in more recent DCPs adopted by other councils. In this situation, DCP3 has been less effective than originally hoped.

Increasing pressure from developers to construct buildings in Castlecrag which are unsympathetic to the character of the suburb generates the need to upgrade the control instruments in DCP3. The experience of the recent Land and Environment Court hearing highlights the need for this review to be tackled with a sense of urgency in 1993.

Please come to the **AGM of the Progress Association on 23 February at 8pm, Community Centre**, to show your interest in these issues concerning the character and amenity of your suburb.

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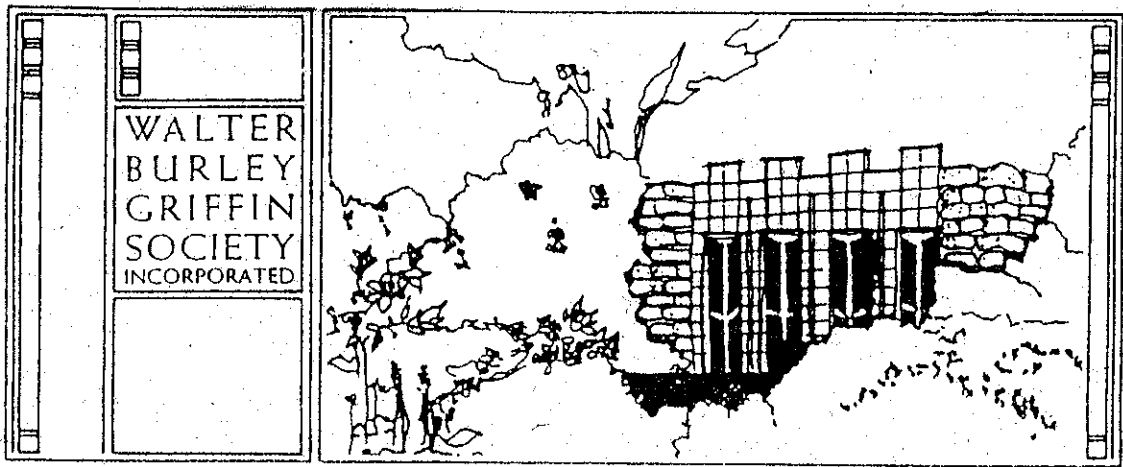
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A Dangerous Time for our Heritage

Walter Burley Griffin is famous for his design of this nation's capital but it would probably be his design of Castlecrag for which he would prefer to be remembered. At Castlecrag Griffin not only did the town planning but also built 13 of the houses that demonstrated his philosophy of integrating the built environment with the landscape.

Only a few of the houses remain intact now, most have undergone alterations and additions since the 1920s when they were built. Now, possibly the best preserved of all Griffin's Castlecrag houses, the **Greater Sydney Development Association's No.1 Dwelling**, is under threat. It has been in single ownership since 1947 and still retains all its original joinery, decorative exposed beam ceilings and original timber light fittings designed by Griffin. The house was built by Griffin's company as a demonstration house to show the character that he planned for the "garden suburb" of Castlecrag. The house is built of sandstone with dramatic crystalline keystones above the windows and is set in a beautiful garden with ponds designed by Griffin and native trees planted by him. To walk into the house is like stepping back in time seventy years. The owner was devoted to its upkeep and the garden was her life's work.

The significance of this house and its garden have been publicly recognised for 20 years. In 1973 it was included on the **Royal Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter's list of 20th Century Buildings of Significance**. It was listed on the **Local**

Environment Plan of 1985 and on **Willoughby City Council's draft Heritage Study of 1987**, and it is listed as an item of **Local and State Significance** in **Council's draft Consolidating Instrument Report**. **The National Trust** have the whole of Griffin's Castlecrag estate listed as an urban conservation area. But Willoughby Council still has no heritage protection for it or any of the Castlecrag Griffin houses.

Thus at present the only body empowered with preservation controls on the house and garden is the **Heritage Council of NSW**. The National Trust has applied to the Heritage Council for a Conservation Order on the house and Willoughby Council has applied for a Section 130 Order to prevent demolition. Thus the Heritage Council shares an immediate responsibility with Willoughby Council's long-term responsibility to ensure the preservation of this house and garden which many believe is of international significance.

The **Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc.** would ideally like the house to be acquired for the public to be preserved for all time. With this in mind the Society has approached the **Historic Houses Trust** which is the only government body able to acquire heritage property. The Society has had a meeting with **Peter Collins**, our local Member of Parliament and Minister for the Arts, whose responsibilities include the Historic Houses Trust. The Society believes that public acquisition is the only sure way of adequately protecting this house and garden, which stands "at the gateway" to our suburb.

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Willoughby Video Project

Are you interested in being involved in a production committee to produce a pilot video featuring short stories about and of interest to older people? We need people to be involved in acting, directing, make-up, props, wardrobe, artwork etc.

If you are interested, please attend the Video Project Committee Meeting at 1.30pm at the Dougherty Community Centre, 7 Victor Street Chatswood on 26th February 1993. Sponsored by Willoughby City Council. Phone Barry Styles 412 9100 for more information.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to all the Castlecrag students who did so well in the HSC exams; and to Fiona van Graan whose Major Work has been chosen for the prestigious ArtExpress at the Art Gallery of NSW; and to Castlecrag resident Dr Roberts who received the AM Award in the Australia Day Honours.

Bunga Raya Satay House

Soon to Open

The native Hibiscus, the national flower of Malaysia, has given its name to a stylish new restaurant soon to open in the Quadrangle Shopping Village. The designers of the restaurant have aimed to create a welcoming and relaxing atmosphere of the highest international standards. A special VIP function room will be available, with handpainted ceilings inspired by an upmarket hotel in Casablanca. Boasting 3 types of cuisine - Malaysian, Thai and Chinese - the restaurant will be managed by Mrs June Tan who has owned the successful Malaysian satay restaurant, the Manly Asian Kitchen, for 9 years. Functions can be catered for, also take-away service will be available. Of course, satays are the speciality of the house.

To celebrate the opening of the restaurant, a special promotion is offering Castlecrag patrons 10% discount until the end of March.

Opening hours are 11am - 11pm, 7 days.

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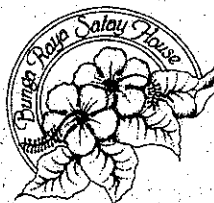
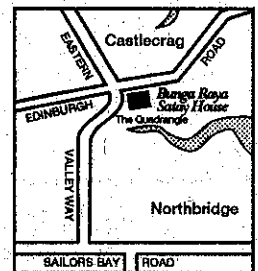
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Special Cat Missing!!!

Pickette, the kitten who lived at the caravan on the school site, has been lost while walking with her owners. She was a great favourite with all who visited the caravan during the long months of the successful occupation of the school site. She made her permanent home with the Weingarth family and is much missed by all, but especially Hilary (aged 7). Anyone who knows the whereabouts of this small, black and white, desexed cat, please contact Steve or Louise Weingarth 958 6566.

Local Area Transport Management Plan

Bob McKillop

The impact of vehicular traffic is of increasing concern to communities throughout the Sydney metropolitan region. Peninsular suburbs such as Castlecrag face a special set of problems yet to be adequately appreciated by traffic authorities.

During 1992, a committee of local residents and Ward Aldermen prepared a draft Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) Plan for Castlecrag. The committee received submissions from a number of residents and local business people who expressed concern that the quality of our local environment is being diminished by traffic problems. Topics of concern are:

- * speeding traffic (dangerous driving), especially on Edinburgh Road, The Bastion and The Bulwark, which threatens the safety of citizens; the pedestrian crossing on Edinburgh Road at the school is a danger spot;
- * lack of facilities for walking and cycling;
- * parked vehicles taking over public space;
- * the reduced sense of community associated with car-travel and the transfer of business away from local commerce to larger centres outside the suburb; and
- * problems of access into Castlecrag due to traffic congestion. Congestion at the shopping centre reduces the attractiveness of the facilities for people to shop and interact.

The LATM committee also concerned itself with how Castlecrag's unique heritage impacts on traffic issues. Walter Burley Griffin's design for Castlecrag sought to integrate living space with the landscape, with naturally landscaped spaces behind housing lots to segregate pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Protection of this heritage is an additional objective of the Traffic Management Plan.

The committee was concerned not only with physical responses to perceived problems, but also with addressing the more fundamental issues of reducing car use within the suburb. This covers the need to reduce travel and enhance alternative transport means including walking, cycling and public transport. To this end, the LATM Plan examines the concept of a **Neighbourhood Bus Service** to help reduce car dependence in Castlecrag. One option is a locally-run mini-bus service, prepaid from Council rates, to provide a regular link between individual homes and local shopping centres/transport interchanges. Local or personalised transport services can now be provided on-demand through the use of modern communication technology for ordering, scheduling and billing the services.

The draft Castlecrag LATM Plan aims to:

- * reduce the severity and number of accidents in Castlecrag;
- * improve the urban street environment for non-motor car users;
- * enhance local economic activity by creating a better environment in the shopping centre and establishing a stronger community focus;
- * conserve Castlecrag's *Griffin heritage*;
- * reduce the barrier effects of motor traffic on pedestrian and cycle movements; and
- * reduce local air and noise pollution, and vehicle fuel consumption.

These objectives are to be met through alterations to streetscapes to *calm traffic*, support for alternative means of transport and more positive community attitudes toward our environment. A five year time frame is proposed, with the initial emphasis on improving traffic safety. Linking traffic management with heritage conservation measures (restoration of reservations and walkways) is a particular feature of the Castlecrag LATM.

During Phase 1 (1993-95), the focus will be on improving traffic management along **Edinburgh Road** as the main traffic artery into Castlecrag. Priority tasks comprise:

- a Improving the traffic flow through the shopping centre by changing the bus zone to 0700-1830 Mondays to Fridays and ensuring that this and the "No Stopping Zone" are adequately policed;
- b Improved traffic safety through *traffic calming* facilities, namely
 - * improvement of the pedestrian crossing near the school to retard traffic speed and overtaking;
 - * installation of a *chicane* at the park to shift the line of passage at the "long straight";
 - * provision of a cycleway on the southern side of Edinburgh Road;
 - * examination of the need for a pedestrian crossing at St James Church and a traffic calming measure near the junction of Edinburgh Road and Sunnyside Crescent.

The intention is that any physical works would avoid bumps as a means of slowing traffic. Rather, the road would be landscaped through chicanes or similar features with native plants, thus breaking the visual impression of a "speedway" and improving the environmental impact of the streetscape;

- c Involvement of the Castlecrag business community in an overall approach to generating a friendlier environment which will attract >>

more people to the local shopping centre. This covers reduction in traffic congestion and the establishment of more congenial conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. The potential for a neighbourhood bus service will be examined.

Under future phases of the Plan, facilities for traffic management and enhanced pedestrian and cyclist access will be extended to streets such as The Bastion, The Bulwark and Sunnyside Crescent. Attention will also be given to restoration of Castlecrag's walking tracks as a *heritage project* to enhance Walter Burley Griffin's original design concepts for an urban community.

The LATM Plan was submitted to Council on 14 September 1992 for inclusion of priority works in the 1993 Works Program. Council responded by congratulating the Association on the very comprehensive and detailed work of the draft LATM Plan. Proposals for traffic improvements at the park and school pedestrian crossing on Edinburgh Road were given a high priority. When the 1993 Works Program was finalised, however, none of the Castlecrag proposals received funding. It is recognised that Council faces tight budgetary constraints, but the criteria used to allocate priorities also appear to be at fault. The planning process focuses on individual construction activities rather than overall LATM planning concepts and rating criteria give emphasis to traffic intensity and past accident history. Deaths rate 10 points, serious injuries 8!

The LATM committee will continue to develop and refine the draft Plan with the intention of presenting a more comprehensive and detailed document to Council for funding from 1994. Ideas and support from residents are much appreciated.

* The committee comprises Joan Coggins, Ian Drewe, Eric Kaye, Bob McKillop, Henry McLaughlin, Arthur Manning, Sue Randle, Pat Reilly, Howard Rubie and John Squire.

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Please send to the Treasurer, Diana Jones, Box 6/77, Castlecrag.

The Crag is edited on behalf of the Castlecrag Progress Association (Box 6/77 Castlecrag) by Judy Stone - Herbert (958 7961) and Kerry McKillop (958 4516). Contributions and letters are most welcome. The deadline for the next issue is 20th March 1993. Deliveries: Donna Sife (958 1841).

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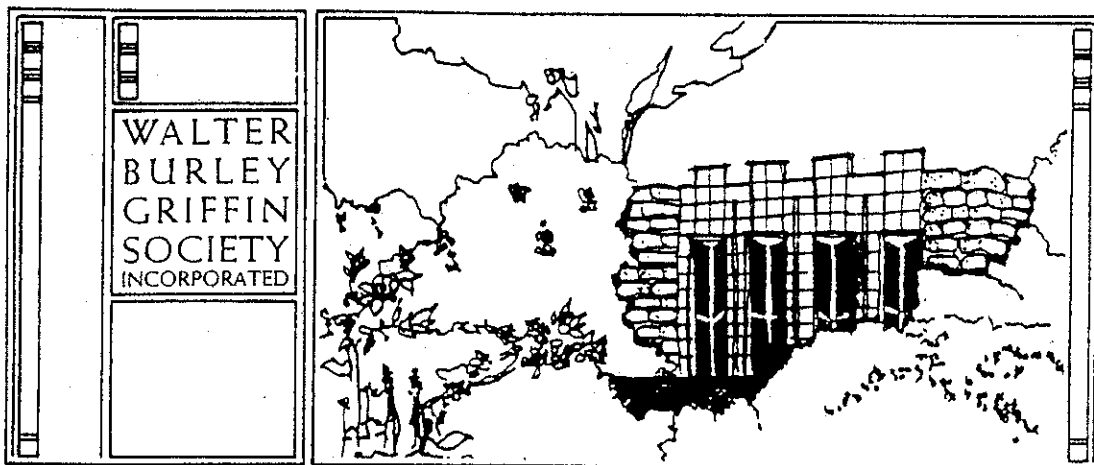
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STOP PRESS HISTORIC HOUSES TRUST BUYS GRIFFIN HOUSE

Last Saturday, 13th February 1993, saw the culmination of four and a half years of hard work by the **Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc.** with the purchase of **136 Edinburgh Road Castlecrag** by the **Historic Houses Trust of NSW.**

The house was the first built by Griffin's company, the **Greater Sydney Development Association Ltd**, at **Castlecrag** and is known as **GSDA No.1 Dwelling**. Because the house was lived in for such a long time by one owner, the late **Mrs Erna Klabe**, it is in virtually original condition.

The purchase by **Historic Houses Trust** represents an innovative initiative in active heritage preservation. This bold experiment has been embraced wholeheartedly by **Historic Houses Trust** and the **Minister for the Arts, Mr Peter Collins**, our local member.

The intention of the Trust is to prepare a conservation plan for the house, carry out conservation and then resell the house subject to appropriate controls and covenants. Those covenants are expected to include the house being open for inspection on a limited basis each year.

The Trust intends to have open days during the house's conservation so that the public can appreciate what is involved by observing the work in progress.

After several weeks of constant effort by the Society to convince the Minister and the **Historic Houses Trust** we were delighted to learn late last Friday of the success of our representations. However, we were concerned as to whether the **Historic Houses Trust** could allocate sufficient funds for the purchase. Late on Friday we approached **John McNerney, City Planner of Sydney City Council**, who has delegated authority in relation to the fund to be used for commemorating Griffin's work and which was generated as a result of the demolition of **Griffin's Pymont Incinerator**. Representatives of the Society have been involved in a committee set up to determine how the fund is to be spent. In spite of the proposed allocation of the fund having been finalised in January, **John McNerney** had no hesitation in making \$50,000 available to the **Historic Houses Trust** to assist with the purchase. Without that extra funding **GSDA No.1 Dwelling** could not have been purchased.

This is an exciting project which will involve the **Castlecrag community** in this new approach to solving the problem of heritage preservation. In the words of **Peter Watts, Director of the Historic Houses Trust**: "We want, through this property, to prove an important house can be intelligently and economically conserved, continue its domestic use but retain its significance for the future".

Peter Collins and **Historic Houses Trust** are to be congratulated on this important imaginative initiative.