

Castlecrag Timeline

1986-1997

- 1986 On 19 January, some 200 local residents attended a ceremony at the corner of The Citadel and Edinburgh Road to plant shrubs in memory of Roma Hilder and other residents who had played a part in the cultural and environmental life of the Castlecrag community. Many then adjourned to Bim Hilder's house for refreshments and to watch a film on Bim's father, the esteemed painter Jesse Jewhurst Hilder.
- 1986 A new bus shelter, erected with funds raised by the Castlecrag Progress Association and to the winning design by Francis Maratea and Michael Burgess in a competition sponsored by the Progress Association, was opened at 'The Pinnacle' on 25 May. It took its name from a sandstone house that was constructed by Walter Burley Griffin in the 1920s, using the walls of a former stable or shed. Griffin added a high pitch roof with his patent *knitlock* tiles. The house was demolished in the 1950s.
- 1987 Mary Baker and Kerry McKillop took over as editors of *The Crag* from issue No. 56 (November/December). Kerry had helped Rita Kaye with the past six issues of the newsletter.
- 1987 At the September Council elections, Alderman Eric Kaye was defeated by 81 votes in Middle Harbour ward, thus bringing to an end a long period of direct representation by the suburb on Willoughby Council.
- 1988 In response to a State Government proposal to examine options for the Extension of the Warringah Freeway through Castlecrag, the Progress Association organised a meeting with State election candidates on 13 March at the Community Centre to canvass their views on the proposal.
- 1988 Willoughby Municipal Council published *The Suburb of Castlecrag: a community history* compiled by Esther Leslie as part of its Bicentennial History series.
- 1988 Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc. was established by a group of people inspired by the need to preserve the unique architecture and town planning of Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin. The society aims to promote the preservation and conservation of landscape designs, buildings and other works designed by or having a connection with the Griffins. It has been active in promoting the Griffin's vision for Castlecrag and in supporting the conservation of their heritage, both in the suburb and elsewhere.

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1988



The official party at the opening of the Sugarloaf Regeneration Project on 20 December 1988. Don Burke is at the centre with John Spender (MP for North Sydney) and Gay Spies (foreground).

Photo, Rita Kaye.

The Federal Member for North Sydney, the Hon. John Spender, conducted a ceremony to mark the completion of the Sugarloaf Bush Regeneration Project on 20 December. Master of Ceremonies, Don Burke stated that 'A pivotal area for Sydney has been Castlecrag. The early work of Walter Burley Griffin in establishing his suburb and restoring the bushland was a farsighted and critical thing for the city.'

1990

The Walter Burley Griffin Society obtained a \$6000 dollar-for-dollar grant from the Heritage Assistance Program of the NSW Department of Planning to produce a book on the history and conservation of the Griffin Estates, Castlecrag. The book, *Building for Nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag* by Meredith Walker, Adrienne Kabos and James Weirick, was published by the Society in 1994. The book documents the history of the Griffin estates and proposes principles for their conservation. In April 1995 *Building for Nature* received a National Trust of Australia (NSW) Award for Community History (this book is available for purchase from Pam's café or the Society).

1990

A community residents action group, SOS*Crag, was established to save the Infants School from closure. The community organised a Castlecrag Carnival on 30 April 1989 as part of its effort and some 3000 people attended. Giant 3-metre high puppets of Marion and Walter Griffin were constructed for that performance and to help the community defend itself against those who would steal its school.

Following formal closure of the school, a public meeting on 24 January 1990 called on Willoughby Council to support the community in its fight to retain the school, and local residents established a picket line which was to last for four years.

The SOS*Crag group commenced its own newsletter and the school buildings were made available for community activities. Mrs Hilda Chapple, who had come to Castlecrag in 1927, became involved in the campaign and expressed her views through *The Crag*. In September 1990, SOS*Crag made a submission for re-opening the school to the Minister for Education.



The SOS*Crag rally at Parliament House in May 1989 to save the Castlecrag Infant's School. Photo: Rita Kaye.

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- 1990 *The Griffin*, an Alex Popov-designed house at 8 Rockley Street, won the Robin Boyd Award, the highest national architecture prize for residential work. The judges as described it: 'a reverent tribute to Griffin ... but a beautiful and liveable building, which responds to the needs of the client and the constraints of the site.' Other prominent Popov houses are at 171-3 Edinburgh Road and 39 Linden Way.
- 1991 The Progress Association endorsed Sue Randle as its nominated representative in the Local Government Elections on 14 September. Sue was elected to Middle Harbour Ward and set about her work with enthusiasm. Sue was re-elected in 1995.
- 1991 The Haven Amphitheatre celebrated the upgrading of the stage with a Community Tea Dance featuring the Willoughby City Brass Band on 1 December. The band and puppets of Walter and Marion Griffin led a parade from the shops to the Amphitheatre.



The Willoughby City Brass Band leads the procession to the Community Tea Dance at the Haven Amphitheatre, 1 December 1991. Photo: Rita Kaye.

- 1992 Castlecrag residents Max Dupain (AC, services to photography) and Leonard Teale (AO, for performing arts and the community) received Australia Day awards. Both had been active in community affairs. Leonard Teale died of a heart attack while walking in Rockley Street in May 1994. The Leonard Teale Lookout at the end of Rockley Street has been dedicated in his honour.
- 1992 A Council sub-committee of local residents prepared a draft Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) Plan for Castlecrag. It sought to address community concerns regarding speeding on Edinburgh Road, lack of facilities for walking and cycling, problems of access to the suburb due to traffic congestion and the reduced sense of community arising from car travel and the transfer of business out of the suburb.
- 1993 The Castlecrag Progress Association played a leading role in reforming the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations to provide a forum where Progress Associations from across the city could discuss issues of common interest. Meetings were held at the Castlecrag Community Centre for several years. Initial concerns centred on the impact of traffic from the Gore Hill Freeway on suburban streets and community opposition to the blanket dual occupancy provisions under SREP12. A delegation from the Federation met with the Minister for Planning, Robert Webster, on 23 September to voice opposition to the SREP12 provisions.
- 1993 The NSW Historic Houses Trust temporarily acquired the GSDA No.1 Dwelling at auction on 13 February and initiated a significant program of conservation works on this property, which is the first Griffin house in Castlecrag.

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- 1993 To commemorate the life of Edgar Deans, a memorial planting was held on 5 June by the Progress Association and the Walter Burley Griffin Society on the island at the corner of The Sortie Port and The Battlement. Some 150 people attended the ceremony and helped plant indigenous plants.



The play *Marion's Gift* by Lindy Batterham performed at the Haven Amphitheatre

- 1993 The play *Marion's Gift* by Lindy Batterham was performed at Haven Amphitheatre on 17 October by a large cast of residents and many children, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Marion Mahony Griffin giving Title Deeds of the Haven Amphitheatre and the foreshore Castlehaven Reserve to Willoughby Council.
- 1994 Following the sale of the Castlecrag Infants School site to the Glenside Rudolf Steiner School, SOC*Crag ended the State's longest running green ban and organised an event at the newly-named *Isle of Lament* opposite the school in Edinburgh Road. A proposal was put forward by advertisement in *The Sydney Morning Herald* for the community to buy the site back.
- 1995 The 100th issue of *The Crag* was marked with photographs of the new Progress Association committee under Elizabeth Lander as president, and a summary of Elizabeth's annual President's Report. It ushered in a stormy year as feelings in the community ran high over proposed amendments to the Foreshore Building Line (FBL) that had been established in the 1980s to protect the Middle Harbour foreshores.
- 1995 The 'Walter Burley Griffin, Marion Mahony Griffin Festival' was held on 27 August to celebrate 75 years of Castlecrag. Five houses (GSDA No.2 Dwelling, Moon, Creswick, Felstead and Fishwick) were open for inspection, a photographic exhibition featuring the Max Dupain collection was opened by David Moore, and Professor James Weirick gave a talk on the shareholders of the GSDA.

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- 1995 The Minister for Urban Affairs & Planning formally gazetted the Willoughby Local Environment Plan (LEP) 1995 on 15 November. Most of Castlecrag's residential areas were zoned as Residential 2A(2) Scenic Protection Zone, which requires housing that accommodates the scenic qualities and ecological values of environmentally sensitive natural areas by minimising impacts such as hard surfaces. Castlecrag places listed as Heritage Items under Schedule 6 were:
- State Significance:** Griffin houses at 2, 4 and 8 The Barbette, 23 The Bastion, 15 The Citadel, 136, 140 and 158 Edinburgh Road, 4, 8, 12 and 14 The Parapet, and 12 The Rampart; Eric Nicholls houses at 3 The Bastion, 215 Edinburgh Road; the Griffin Memorial Fountain; and Castlecrag Hospital.
- Local Significance:** Nicholls houses at 7 The Barbette, 37 The Bulwark, 10 The Parapet, 144, 170 and 183 Edinburgh Road; the four waterfront cottages on Sugarloaf Bay; Buhrich house at 375 Edinburgh Road; and the Community Centre at 10 The Postern.
- 1996 The Progress Association and the Walter Burley Griffin Society organised a public rally on 16 March to protest against the installation of overhead Pay TV cables by Optus Vision. On 1 and 2 May, local residents challenged Optus contractors preparing to roll-out cables without Council approvals. At a public meeting chaired by the mayor, Eunice Raymond, on 4 October a capacity crowd of Castlecrag residents vowed not to subscribe to Optus services until overhead cables were removed and laid underground.
- 1997 A draft Plan of Management for the Griffin Reserves and Walkways in Castlecrag, prepared for Willoughby Council by consultants Walker & Lehany, was placed on public exhibition. It was a response to concerns voiced by residents that Council had not adequately met its responsibility to maintain the Griffin system of nature reserves. Council established a Griffin Reserves Advisory Committee with representatives from the Progress Association and other community groups in the suburb.