



News Update 44

January 2007

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

Best wishes to all members for a happy new year, and may it be a very good one for Griffin heritage.

CANBERRA TOUR AND SPECIAL VIEWING OF NICHOLLS COLLECTION AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA, FRI 4 & SAT 5 MAY

The National Library of Australia has kindly offered a special viewing of the Nicholls Collection to members of the Walter Burley Griffin Society in the afternoon of Friday 4 May.

The Library acquired the Nicholls Collection in early 2006, and had a one-day public viewing last June. The collection has over 2500 items of astonishing scope and complexity, which the Library has been methodically cataloguing throughout 2006. Already much has been digitised and can be viewed on the web at www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview?pi=nla.pic-vn3603884

Friday 4 May will be a rare opportunity to see the Griffins' drafting and architectural skills in sketches, presentation drawings (including the Collection's 8 silk drawings), correspondence, renderings and photographs of their works.

The following day, Saturday 5 May, Professor James Weirick will lead a bus tour of Griffin's Canberra for both Sydney and Canberra participants (bookings will be necessary). Sydney members are asked to make their own travel arrangements to and from Canberra, and their own accommodation arrangements.

More information in the next newsletter. Members interested in reserving places on the bus tour at this stage can contact Brett Odgers on tel. 6286 4395 or email bjodgers@inet.net.au

HERITAGE FESTIVAL CASTLECRAG TOUR

For Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin nature was their great source of inspiration. Professor James Weirick will take this guided tour of Castlecrag where the Griffins implemented their dream for an idealised urban community subservient to the landscape. This tour will take you through some of the community reserves and walkways, past some Griffin houses and to the outdoor Haven Amphitheatre.

Sunday 18 March 2007

Time 10.00am (returning at 12.30pm)

Numbers limited. Cost \$25

Bookings essential, tel 02 9958 4516

MEMORIES OF A NATION EXHIBITION AT NAA CANBERRA, MARCH 2007

The National Archives of Australia is preparing a new exhibition, *Memories of a Nation*, due to open in March 2007, which will include Griffin's original report submitted in the Australian Federal Capital Competition, and a film of conservation work on the competition drawings. The NAA has mounted a permanent display of colour reproductions of the Griffins' competition drawings in the Visitors' Lounge, East Block.

NEWS FROM WBG CANBERRA CHAPTER

At a meeting attended by James Weirick on Wednesday 28 November and held at the National Archives, the Canberra Chapter confirmed the re-constitution of its committee: Brett Odgers (Chair), Dr Bruce Kent (Secretary), Luke Wensing (Treasurer), members Marion Halligan, Chris Bettle, John McManus, Nigel Morley and Dr Anne Kent. This committee will remain in place until the Canberra Chapter AGM in September 2007.

We thank Marion Halligan, Chris Bettle and John McManus for convening this crucial meeting to reactivate the Chapter. We also pay tribute to the contribution of former committee members, particularly the work of Di Jay as Chair since the inception of the Chapter.

James Weirick was also able to attend the first meeting of the new Canberra committee on Monday, 11 December (again at the National Archives). A number of initiatives for 2007 were discussed, including a proposal for starting an annual lecture series. James will conduct a bus tour of Canberra on Saturday 5 May following the viewing of the Nicholls Collection at the National Library on Friday 4 May (see above).

A further initiative of the Chapter will be to register with the ACT government the Society's strong interest in contributing to the planning for Canberra's 1911 and 1912 and 1913 centenaries. A public lecture in Canberra by Professor Paul Kruty during his planned visit to Australia in July/August 2007 is also possible.

The current status of the 'Griffin Legacy' Amendments to the National Capital Plan is the most pressing issue before the Canberra Chapter (see below). Both the Society and individual members of the Canberra Chapter made submissions to the National Capital Authority (NCA) on these amendments in late September. The Society issued a Media Release on this crucial matter, and this was distributed to Canberra media – radio, TV and newspapers.

To our concern, the Amendments – with only some minor revisions - were approved by the Minister for Local Government, Territories & Roads, Jim Lloyd, on 6 December. The last opportunity to review this controversial development plan for central Canberra, advanced by the NCA in Griffin's name, now rests with Parliament.

The Canberra Committee is liaising with key officers of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital on a 'roundtable' review scheduled for Friday, 23 February at Parliament House. The Society has raised significant issues regarding aspects of these amendments to the capital. We will be taking steps to seek a better outcome than is presently proposed.

Brett Odgers
Chair, Canberra Chapter

NCA PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN FOR CANBERRA

The Society made a detailed submission to the National Capital Authority (NCA) on 29 September 2006 in response to its invitation for comment on *The Griffin Legacy: Canberra the Nation's Capital in the 21st Century* and the proposed

amendments to the National Capital Plan. While the Society welcomed the endorsement of Griffin's achievement in the design of Canberra by the *Griffin Legacy* study, it expressed concern over the risks involved in the extensive infill of the largely undeveloped 'Commonwealth estate' within the Central National Area proposed in the draft amendments. In summary, the Society believes the proposals represent a high risk, irreversible step that could go seriously wrong.

We noted that, while *The Griffin Legacy* purports to provide a 'Strategic Vision' that ensures the nation's capital in the 21st century realises its potential and can accommodate the best of contemporary urban design, the document lacks an analysis of the factors that undermined the realisation of Griffin's vision in the 20th century and the core themes that could make the vision more relevant in the 21st century. In particular, the city form that has developed in Canberra has moved away from Griffin's design for a more compact city in which movement of people would primarily be by a public transit system due to the availability of cheap energy in the 20th century.

The 21st century has highlighted the need for more sustainable cities. By its very nature the concept of sustainability integrates environmental, economic and social factors into one (not balancing them off against each other) and thus must be integrative, as Griffin anticipated almost a century ago, with his transport network for Canberra and associated proposals for water recycling, urban horticulture, forest preserves, indigenous plantings etc.

The Society argued that to effectively embrace Griffin's principles, future initiatives would need to demonstrate:

- significant improvements in the sustainability of the built environment, the movement of people and goods, and open space;
- subservience of all built forms to the larger landscape;
- continuing commitment to the public domain, in particular, preservation of the continuous public foreshore around Lake Burley Griffin; and
- effective public participation and 'community building' as an integral part of the planning and development process of the Central National Area.

Together, these principles call for an approach that continues 'to bring the landscape and natural environment to bear on the developing built environment...to enhance and build lightly and harmoniously in the natural landscape'.

From these principles, detailed comments were made on each of the draft amendment documents, namely: 56, Principles and Policies; 59, City Hill Precinct; 60, Constitution Avenue; and 61, West Basin. The submission is available on the website's

news page, and to members on request to the Secretary.

The Minister for Local Government, Territories & Roads officially approved *The Griffin Legacy* amendments in December. The amendments are subject to a disallowance period of 15 sitting days of the House of Representatives and the Senate. This period may expire on 29 March 2007, but will be 'subject to the politics and procedures of the Senate where the expiry date could be in May 07'.

SOCIETY'S AGM AND OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF WEBSITE

While the Walter Burley Griffin Society's website www.griffinsociety.org went live on 27 June, it was officially launched on 14 November 2006 by Emeritus Professor Jill Roe.

The launch was followed by the Society's AGM at which Professor James Weirick was re-elected as President, Akky van Ogtrop as Vice President, John Kabos as Treasurer, and Kerry McKillop as Secretary. Colleen Fry, Adrienne Kabos, Martin O'Donoghue, Margaret Petrykowski, Stuart Read, Professor Geoff Sherington and Michael Thomson are the committee members. Emeritus Professor Carrick Chambers is the Society's Patron.

THE COOLEY HOUSE, LOUISIANA, USA

This article was written by Professor Paul Kruty and published in the Walter Burley Griffin Society of America's newsletter of Fall 2006. It is republished here with permission.

The Gilbert Cooley house in Monroe, Louisiana, is now in safe hands. One of Griffin's most important houses, it is also the only building in the United States to reflect the Griffins' Australian developments. Designed in 1908 but not constructed until 1925 under the direction of Henry Pynor, a young architect from Australia who had worked for the Griffins, the Cooley survives in remarkably original-if precarious-condition.



Cooley House, Monroe, Louisiana, USA, 1925
nla.pic-vn3603884-s332, Nicholls Collection,
National Library of Australia

Now, thanks to a consortium of amazingly dedicated individuals and groups, the Cooley house is undergoing a complete renovation and restoration, with the ultimate goal of opening it to the public as a house museum and extension of Monroe's Masur Museum of Art.

This incredible development, which began in earnest less than a year ago, is worth recounting in some detail. Following its adaptive reuse as a law office, among several other light business uses, the house was given to the G. B. Cooley Foundation, a local philanthropic organization that carried the name of Captain Cooley, but had no legal interest in the house until that point. When I last visited the house nearly a decade ago, it was already showing signs of neglect, including a leaking roof and other problems of general maintenance. In recent years I have exchanged e-mail messages with Mil Bodron, an architect from Monroe living in Dallas, about possible solutions to the looming problems settling over a monument that was beloved by a contingent of Monroe natives, local and ex-patriot but virtually unnoticed by everyone else. Following its dubious distinction of being named to the 'Ten Most Endangered Sites in Louisiana' last year, the Cooley house inspired a renewed effort to preserve it. In December, Sue Prudhomme, Director of the Masur Museum, wrote to the Griffin Society asking for advice. We sent them encouragement and suggestions, plus eventually I mailed a set of Griffin Newsletters and various publications on the Griffins.

In Monroe, the large group of people who were clearly committed to the project organized into a 'Friends of the Cooley House' and eventually incorporated as a non-profit organization under the name 'Cooley House Foundation, Inc.' The group is now headed by Lauren Beach, a Monroe architect who has become the guiding force. In June, the city of Monroe and the G.B. Cooley Foundation negotiated a lease agreement which was put before the city council and passed several weeks later. The whole development was given extensive local press coverage. On June 30 the group announced a short-term fund drive to raise \$15,000 by 11 July. On 12 July the Monroe City Council unanimously passed the Cooley House lease/purchase resolution, by which time the Foundation had collected \$15,050, enough to keep the house operating while a major fundraising operation could get underway, and also enough to show the strong interest in the project. The next day the Monroe News-Star announced in a banner headline, "Cooley House to Open in 2 Months; the building, one of the most endangered historical sites in La., will showcase Monroe's past."

In September, the group held an official news conference to announce their lease agreement,

their incorporation, and delivered presentations to local groups. Meanwhile, work on stabilizing the building has already begun. A temporary plastic membrane has been placed over the leaking roof after the original tiles were removed and stored in the garage. This revealed that only 10% of the tiles showed damage and a replacement source (the original manufacturer!) has been located.



Interior view of Cooley House, Monroe, Louisiana, USA, 1926, nla.pic-vn3603884a-s167, Nicholls Collection, National Library of Australia

A group of students led by Professor Guy Carwile has begun documentation of the house interior for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS).

We will periodically update you on this exciting development. Meanwhile, if you wish to know more, or to offer your own advice, please contact Lauren Beach at: lbeach@archplus.com

JOYCE FLORENCE BATTERHAM 1916–2006 A CELEBRATION OF COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

One of Castlecrag's last links with Walter and Marion Griffin was broken on 16 November 2006 with the death of Joyce Batterham. Just six months after joining with Joyce on the occasion of her 90th birthday, a large number of her family, friends and colleagues came together again at the Castlecrag Community Centre on 24 November to 'remember, celebrate and mourn' her remarkable life.

Born at Rockdale on 16 May 1916, Joyce was the fifth of Absalom and Annie Deans' six children. Both Absalom and Annie grew up in English families in which progressive Christian concern for the disadvantaged was a dominant theme. Absalom was ordained as a Congregational minister a month after their marriage and the young couple set out for the Western Australian goldfields as missionaries. Absalom was subsequently posted

to Rockdale in Sydney, and then the family moved to Melbourne while Joyce was still very young. She completed her schooling there, but was also strongly influenced by the values she gained from her parents.

Joyce first came to Castlecrag as a young girl in late 1931 to stay for a short time with her eldest brother Edgar and his wife 'Cappy', and also Frank and Anice Duncan who were all living in the GSDA No.2 house. Edgar Deans was the Secretary of the Greater Sydney Development Association.

During the War, Bob and Joyce Batterham became residents of Castlecrag, initially living with Rawson and Nancy Deans in the Fishwick House in The Citadel. Joyce and Bob became active members of the community and their four children - Robin, Tim, Dan and Lindy - grew up in the suburb. Joyce studied stenography under Lady Helen Beeby, who lived in the Felstead House on Edinburgh Road. Her skills also contributed significantly to community organisations in her suburb.

In 1944, Joyce joined with Frank Duncan to establish the Castlecrag & East Willoughby Community Advancement Co-operative Society Ltd to raise money for a community centre. Joyce was setting out on her lifelong involvement in Castlecrag community affairs.

As secretary to the co-operative, she worked tirelessly mobilising people to run artists' fairs, prepare afternoon teas and make Christmas toys to raise money for the project. It was therefore a proud moment for Joyce when her efforts became reality in November 1947 with the official opening of the Community Centre. Its function was expanded in 1951 with the opening of the Castlecrag Community Library. Joyce remained a tireless worker for the centre, serving as a volunteer at the library and as secretary for the Community Centre Management Committee for many years.

Joyce's other great passion was lobbying for the establishment of the Castlecrag Infants' School. These efforts were rewarded with the official opening of the school on 30 June 1950. It was to become a centre of community life for generations of Castlecrag families. Accordingly, when the government moved to close the school at the end of 1989, Joyce's deep sense of social justice was aroused and she was to play a leading role in the community's fight to retain the school, for the next five years. Through her union links, she was instrumental in 'green bans' being placed on the site and she was to the forefront in the demonstrations organised by the *SOS*Crags* group.

Joyce was always incredibly generous with sharing her knowledge about the early years of Castlecrag and the Griffins, including for the Society's book *Building for Nature: Walter Burley Griffin and*

Castlecrag, the Powerhouse's exhibition on the Griffins in 1998/99, and as guest speaker at several AGMs of the Castlecrag Progress Association.

Joyce was deeply committed to social justice and didn't ever stop contributing to the community, enriching the lives of many. She is greatly missed.

NEWS FROM INDIA

Newspapers in India have reported a Supreme Court decision of 21 October 2005 to hand back extensive properties to the Raja of Mahmudabad, Amir Mohammad Khan, the son of Walter Burley Griffin's most significant Indian client, the Raja of Mahmudabad (1915 – 1973).

To explain past events and the Griffin connection, extracts from Professor James Weirick's essay titled 'The Magic of America: Vision and Text' in the book *Walter Burley Griffin A Re-View*, published in 1988 by Monash University Gallery, are quoted below. Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin "arrived in British India at a time when British control was beginning to be loosened, between passage of the Government of India Act of 1935 and the first provincial elections to be held under that Act in February 1937.....

"...the most fascinating of the Griffins' experiences on the edge of this political maelstrom was their consultancy to the Raja of Mahmudabad, the largest landowner in the United Provinces, a young man of twenty-one who had just come into his inheritance. In the Raja of Mahmudabad, Griffin had at last found a client who combined great wealth with courage, tenacity and the very highest ideals. As the Raja described himself many years later, "in my childhood I had shown somewhat Tolstoyan inclinations of detesting the class to which I belonged and what it stood for". In 1936, he broke decisively with the taluqdar clique in Lucknow and committed himself and all that he had, to the support of Jinnah and the Muslim League.

"Griffin had come into contact with the Raja shortly after arriving in Lucknow, but it was not until September 1936 that he was invited to the Mahmudabad estates. He had been commissioned to design a Library and Museum for the great Husainiya collection which had been assembled at Mahmudabad over four generations – one hundred thousand books and manuscripts in Urdu, Persian and Arabic At the main Mahmudabad palace, Griffin was also commissioned to design a mosque ...

"Alas, none of the work was ever carried out, but a scheme for the Library was prepared and characteristically for Griffin, "the materials to be used were mainly reinforced concrete and

it was so planned to enable it to grow on the same basic pattern as the number of books in the Library would increase". The Library for the Raja of Mahmudabad was the last great project of Walter Burley Griffin's life ...

It is thus an interesting new chapter reported in the Indian press in late 2005. After a 32-year long legal battle, the current Raja of Mahmudabad, Amir Mohammad Khan who is the son of Griffin's client, has regained ownership of his ancestral property which had been declared enemy properties and resumed.

The *Daily News & Analysis* (Mumbai) on 27 November 2005 reported that 'All the properties might have been enemy properties when the raja was alive, but after his death their description had changed.' The Supreme Court in India has ordered that all the properties including many prime properties and well appointed buildings, prestigious shops in Lucknow as well as extensive rural farmland be handed back to the Raja, popularly known as Suleiman.

He is an occasional professor of astrophysics at the Imperial College, London, and Institute of Astronomy at Cambridge University. The court decision will affect the livelihoods of many thousands of people, but as the *Indian Express* (New Delhi) reported on 18 Dec 2005, the Raja has "assured that he would adopt a 'compassionate' stand towards the decades-old occupants."

Editor's note: The beautiful presentation perspective by Marion Mahony Griffin of Walter Burley Griffin's design for the Mahmudabad Library for the Raja can be viewed on the website under Gallery > India > Mahmudabad Library. It is a magnificent design in an abstracted, decorated modernist style that was presented by Marion Griffin to the young Raja just 4 days before Walter Griffin died.

PHOLIOTA'S CONSTRUCTION DATE

by Simon Reeves

The construction date of Griffin's *Pholiota* in Heidelberg has never been firmly established, so when a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) was funded by Heritage Victoria in 2004, the chance to set the record straight was taken up by *heritage ALLIANCE*, whose senior historian, Simon Reeves, has a long association with Griffin research.

Claims that *Pholiota* dated from 1919 could be readily dismissed, as Walter himself once noted, in a letter of January 1920, that he had not then built any houses in Australia save for 'a pair of weekend cottages' (ie *Gumnuts* and *Marnham* in Frankston). A more frequently cited date of 1922 had a firmer basis, suggested by municipal rate books and an

interior photograph published in August that year. While the latter provides a *terminus ad quem*, the former is ambiguous. The first clear reference to a house on Lot 100, owned by W B Griffin, appears in the rate book dated 21 November 1922. A year before, the same site was rated as vacant land, with the word 'humpy' later added in pencil – prompting the supposition that *Pholiota* was either not yet built (as there was no increase in value) or that 'humpy' referred to its incomplete state.

Pholiota, however, could not have been built during 1922, as the Lippincotts – whose presence is noted in Marion's account of its construction – had moved to New Zealand in December 1921. This places the building's date between early 1920 (when Walter wrote his letter) and late 1921 – although the range can be narrowed even further. One of Walter's Indian clients recalled the architect stating that he had built 'a very small house for himself' while still supervising the Canberra plan – a tenure that ended in December 1920. This also tallies with a remark by Roy Lippincott that *Pholiota* had been finished for 'about 12 months' when he left for New Zealand. *Ergo*, the building must have been built in 1920.

During research for the CMP, Simon Reeves found the final piece of the puzzle in the Shire of Heidelberg's building permit ledger for 1915 to 1923, which contained five entries for houses in Glenard Drive. Four, including Lippincott's house on Lot 99, were accounted for, while the fifth, dated 29 April 1920, referred to a 'sleepout room' worth £50 and built by R A Lippincott. Interleaved in the ledger's pages was a sketch plan of an unmistakable one-roomed house, 21 feet square.

The mystery had finally been solved. Construction of *Pholiota* began in May 1920 and was finished by the end of that year – a fact confirmed by the hitherto overlooked date on the Certificate of Title, which notes that Walter became proprietor of Lot 100 in August 1920. The sleepout reference, and the use of Lippincott's name rather than Griffin's, implies that the project obtained approval as an addition to Roy's adjacent property rather than a discrete dwelling. This, furthermore, explains why the building is not acknowledged by rate books until after November 1921 – following Lippincott's departure and the sale of his house.

CASTLECRAG PRIVATE HOSPITAL: A SHORT HISTORY

Castlecrag Private Hospital is establishing a display of old photographs interpreting the history of the hospital. It is a colourful history, with the origins of the hospital going back to 1927 when Dr Edward William Rivett purchased the Walter Burley Griffin-designed 'King O'Malley House' on the corner of Edinburgh Road and Sortie Port. This had been constructed on Lot 96 of the original Griffin subdivision of Castlecrag in 1922-23 and was financed by King O'Malley, the flamboyant Minister for Home Affairs in the Federal Government at the time the international design competition for the Australian Federal Capital was held. It was O'Malley who resolved the controversy over the design for Canberra by endorsing the majority view of the selection committee and approving the plan of fellow-American Walter Burley Griffin. O'Malley became a strong supporter of Griffin in the subsequent upheaval over the



Above: Cabarisha Hospital following completion of the post-war obstetrics wing on Edinburgh Road. The island where the Griffin fountain now stands is on the left and the main entrance to the hospital was off Sortie Port as shown here. Courtesy Ramsay Healthcare.

implementation of his plan, and he continued this support to the Castlecrag project.

The O'Malley house was leased by Edgar Herbert, a friend of the Griffins and a pioneer in physical education who came to Sydney from Melbourne to work with GZ Dupain at his Institute of Physical Education. Herbert was the foundation President of the Castlecrag Progress Association and his family lived in the O'Malley House until 1927. The house was a small stone cottage, very similar to the Cheong House at 14 The Parapet. Herbert's daughter Erwin remembers that the picture window in the living room offered a commanding view of Middle Harbour and The Spit. It was 'a typical Griffin house with polished floors and a blue and white Chinese rug in the living room'.

Dr Edward Rivett had graduated in medicine from Sydney University in 1920 and became Resident Medical Officer at Sydney Hospital and The Women's Hospital that year. Rivett practised in general surgery and obstetrics. Following his purchase of the O'Malley House in 1927, it was converted into a small five-bed hospital. Griffin's office designed significant extensions to the house to provide a two-storey 20-bed hospital, which Rivett called *Cabarisha* after a legendary Indian healer. Rivett's vision was to provide a hospital that was more a home than an institution, in which people could be nursed back to health in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity. The grounds were laid out with lawns, gardens, ponds, fountains and a tennis court – which was used by staff and local residents.

Further extensions to designs by Eric Nicholls were made to the hospital, notably a wing along Sortie Port and a nurses' home in The Battlement in the 1930s, and an obstetrics wing along Edinburgh Road after the War. It remained very much a family affair, with Edward's sister, Dr Amy Christine Rivett, assisting at *Cabarisha* for some considerable time from her practice in Northbridge. His sons Ronald and Howard also worked there as medical practitioners. The topsy-like growth of the facility resulted in a rambling geography, however, leading to a high staff-to-patient ratio. This, together with the need for new equipment and techniques to keep abreast of medical developments, resulted in financial losses by the 1960s.

To the older residents of Castlecrag the hospital was and always will be *Cabarisha*. Dr Rivett was a very popular doctor and the hospital was a thriving business, with many of his patients coming from the local community. The post-war baby boom made heavy demands on the hospital's obstetrics facilities, so the wing along Edinburgh Road was added, with Dr Rivett undertaking some of the construction himself.

Many of Castlecrag's post-war babies were born at *Cabarisha*, with the two-weeks of post-natal care provided there enabling mothers to return home fully able to meet life's demands. Dr Rivett is remembered with affection for the professional standards of care he brought to his practice and for a hospital that was at one with the beauty of its natural setting.

Following the death of Edward Rivett and Christine Rivett in 1962, Ronald and Howard continued the business, changing the name to the Castlecrag Private Hospital. In 1970 they reluctantly decided to sell to a company with adequate capital for further development of the facilities. This did not eventuate and the hospital was unsold. The present remodelled building was opened on 5 January 1986. The architect, Michael Cavanagh, endeavoured to preserve the character of the former hospital, with the front façade being retained and the building's past character reflected in the new Griffin-like mouldings in the other façades.

Bob McKillop and Elizabeth Lander

MITCHELL LIBRARIAN IDA LEESON AND THE GRIFFINS

In a new book titled *Ida Leeson: A Life*, author Dr Sylvia Martin tells the remarkable story of the first woman to be appointed Mitchell Librarian. It is an engrossing portrait of a woman of achievement in what was still predominantly a man's world. It has a fascinating chapter about the few years when Ida and her partner, Florence Birch, purchased a block in the Castlecrag Estate, in 1929 and then rented a house in The Parapet and became very involved in the Castlecrag community including with the Progress Association and the Haven Scenic Theatre productions.

Ida Leeson was Mitchell Librarian from 1932 to 1946, and in 1935 she was responsible for enlisting Walter Burley Griffin's aid in the campaign to save Hyde Park Barracks. Marion Mahony Griffin wrote in 'Magic of America' that when she followed Walter to India, she took with her letters of introduction for India: "one from Miss Leeson saying we were two of the greatest people in the world". After Walter's death in India, and before Marion left Castlecrag to return to Chicago, Sylvia Martin writes "Ida Leeson collected articles and documents by Walter Burley Griffin to be preserved in the Mitchell Library. Nearly a decade later, after Ida had retired from the Library, she wrote a letter to the former federal Labor politician, King O'Malley ... [asking for financial support for] that labour of love – 'The Magic of America'."

Allen and Unwin, 242pp, \$29.95

FISHWICK HOUSE PLACED ON STATE HERITAGE REGISTER

A Castlecrag house and garden were recently listed on the NSW State Heritage Register, reflecting their significance to the state and the importance of both Castlecrag and the Griffins' legacy to us all. The gazettal in December was made by the NSW Minister for Planning and responsible for Heritage, the Hon. Frank Sartor.

The Fishwick house is of State significance as a remarkably intact, representative example of the domestic architecture of Walter Burley Griffin retaining the integrity of its original layout, design and decorative detailing. It is rare as one of 13 remaining Griffin houses in the Castlecrag Estate and one of two built to the scale and level of detail consistent with its original design. The design, construction and detailing demonstrates Griffin's commitment to combining creativity and artistry with innovative uses of technology and materials. The house and its landscape setting are valuable research resources for studying Griffin's work and philosophy. 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 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.

The Fishwick House sits on what appears to be a large rock below the Tower Reserve. The house was constructed in 1929, designed to sit in harmony with the natural surroundings. It is large and lavish compared with the other Griffin Castlecrag houses. It has two storeys with a west-east axis from The Citadel to the harbour and ocean. Siting and design enjoy extensive views of bushland, harbour and ocean.

The house is primarily of sandstone quarried on and near the site. It is asymmetrical, incorporating split floor levels in stark contrast to the simple rectangular forms of most of Griffin's Castlecrag work. The design produces strong external geometry manifested as a series of stepped forms with horizontal planes, reflecting the site's contours.



Fishwick House, Castlecrag, 2006. Photo A.Kabos

Thomas Fishwick was a technically minded and progressive client, allowing Griffin the opportunity to design numerous modern amenities, innovative design ideas and artistic effects unique amongst Castlecrag houses and on a larger scale. The site was landscaped with dry stone walls, sandstone steps, large natural rock escarpments and dramatic sandstone boulders. The garden had become overgrown over the years and major re landscaping was undertaken in 1998. This included restoring dry stone walls and steps and addition of new pathways, a pond, paved area, walls and plantings.

(State Heritage Register listing, edited by Stuart Read).



News Update editors: Adrienne Kabos (02) 9958 2060 and Kerry McKillop (02) 9958 4516. Contributions are welcomed.

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MEMBERSHIP FORM

MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____
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 Please make cheques payable to:
 Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc. and post to
 The Treasurer c/- 12 The Parapet, Castlecrag, 2068

The Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc. was established in 1988 and aims to create a greater awareness and appreciation of the Griffins' design, architecture and planning, and thereby encourage the conservation of their internationally significant work.

Adult	\$ 25pa
Child (under 16 years)	\$ 5pa
Student	\$ 5pa
Household (2 adults + up to 2 children)	\$ 40pa
Community organisations	\$ 40pa
Business organisations	\$ 50pa

Overseas members add \$10 to the fees listed above.