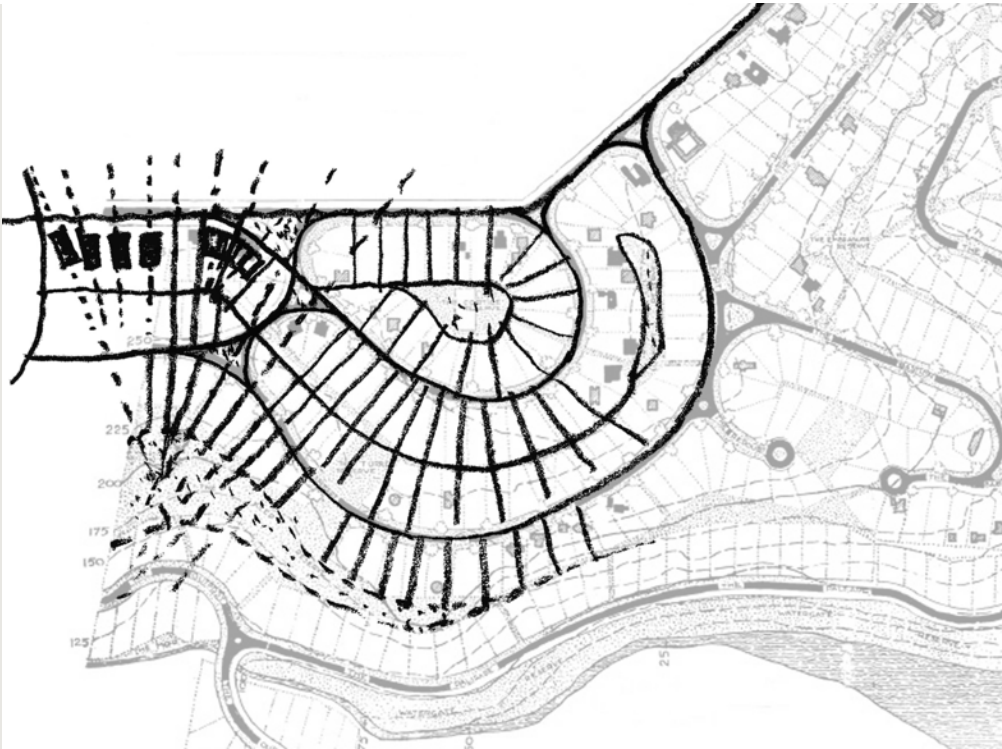


STATEMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT



State Significant Development Application SSD-90134958

No. 100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag

March 2026 | J4312_03

**Weir
Phillips**
Heritage

Level 19, 100 William Street, Woolloomooloo, NSW 2011

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0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Statement of Heritage Impact (SoHI) has been prepared by Weir Phillips Heritage to accompany a detailed State Significant Development Application (SSDA) which seeks consent for the construction of a shop top housing development, designed by fjcstudio, comprising of a 4-storey podium with ground floor specialty retail tenancies, two 11-storeys residential envelopes from the existing ground level with communal open space on the rooftop, and 5 levels of basement car parking with retail space. The proposal includes 150 dwellings and strata subdivision at 100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag.

A previous development application (DA-2024/17) was approved on 29th January 2025 by Willoughby Council. Subsequently, all buildings on site have since been demolished.

This report has been prepared in response to the requirements contained within the Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the mixed use development and issued for the SSDA (SSD-90134958). Specifically, this report has been prepared to respond to the SEARs requirements issued below.

SEARs Item	Description of Issue and Assessment Requirements	Section reference (this report)
22	Environmental Heritage Where there is potential for direct or indirect impacts on environmental heritage, provide a Statement of Heritage Impact and Archaeological Assessment (where required), in accordance with the relevant guidelines.	Section 6 Archaeological Assessment is beyond the scope of this report.

While the proposed development is higher than the existing built form and surrounding low-density dwellings, its design mitigates visual impacts through appropriate podium heights, deep setbacks above the podium, articulation of façades, use of materials and finishes that complement the local context, and retention and integration of vegetation. The development draws on Griffin’s design principles, including the integration of built form with landscape, radial alignment reflecting the original subdivision geometry, and strong horizontal emphasis to reduce perceived bulk.

The scheme provides a well-designed and considered entrance into Castlecrag and a transition from the suburbs surrounding it. The proposed works fulfil the aims and objectives of the LEP 2013, the DCP 2013 and the Housing SEPP by improving the quality and diversity of housing options in the Willoughby LGA while respecting the heritage significance of the items in the vicinity of the site.

Report Preparation	
Principal	James Phillips B.Sc. (Arch.), B.Arch., M.Herit.Cons.(Hons)
Associate Director	Anna McLaurin B.Envs.(Arch.), M.Herit.Cons. MURP.
Report Details	

Statement of heritage impact for: Mixed use development comprising of a 4 level podium, 7 levels above the podium and 4 basement levels

Prepared For Project Edinburgh Pty Ltd and accompanies plans prepared fjstudio.

Revisions			
Revision	Date	Prepared by	Reviewed by
Draft 1	17.11.2025	AM	JP
Final	20.11.2025	AM	AM
Final (minor amendments)	02.03.2026	AM	AM

We acknowledge that the land on which we live, learn and work as the traditional country of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. We acknowledge these traditional owners of this land and acknowledge their living cultures and the unique roles they have played in maintaining life, language, and culture in this region. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and all Aboriginal people.

Cover photo: How the proposed forms respond to Griffin's original subdivision pattern.
Fjstudio.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

This Statement of Heritage Impact has been prepared in conjunction with a SSDA for a new mixed use (commercial and residential) development at No. 100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag, New South Wales.

The site is located within the City of Willoughby Local Government Area. The principal planning instrument for the site is the *Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 2012 (WLEP 2012)*. The site is not listed as a heritage item by Schedule 5 Part 1 and is not located within a Conservation Area defined by Schedule 5 Part 2 of the *WLEP 2012*. The site, however, adjoins the Griffin Heritage Conservation Area and lies within the vicinity of items listed by Schedule 5 Part 1 of this plan.

Under Part 8 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021* (EP&A Regulation) this mixed used development constitutes a state significant development (SSD). A proposal for SSD requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This report has been prepared in support of EIS.

SEARs Item	Description of Issue and Assessment Requirements	Section reference (this report)
22	Environmental Heritage Where there is potential for direct or indirect impacts on environmental heritage, provide a Statement of Heritage Impact and Archaeological Assessment (where required), in accordance with the relevant guidelines.	Section 6 Archaeological Assessment is beyond the scope of this report.

1.2 Methodology

A site visit was carried out in October 2023. Unless otherwise stated, the photographs in this statement were taken on this occasion.

This SoHI has been prepared with reference to the Heritage NSW publications *Assessing Heritage Significance* (2023 update) and *Statements of Heritage Impact* (2023 update) and with reference to the planning documents listed under Section 8.

The historical information and assessments of significance contained in this SoHI partly rely on existing studies, (refer to Section 8 below). Acknowledgment of the authors of these studies is duly given.

An assessment of archaeological potential and archaeological significance, Aboriginal or historical is outside the scope of this report.

1.3 Limitations

Given that the site is not subject to any statutory heritage listing, no provision was made for a heritage assessment of the existing building complex on the site. A separate Development Application (DA-2024/13) has been lodged with Council for the demolition of this building complex.

The Conservation Area and nearby heritage item were viewed from the public domain only. Detailed histories of this area and these items from first principles were not provided for. The information provided by the readily available sources listed under Section 8 below were relied upon.

1.4 Consultant Statement

We, the undersigned confirm this Statement of Heritage Impact addresses the requirement of SEAR No. (SSD-90134958) and relevant State and local legislation, policies, and guidelines. A full reference list contained in Section 8 of this report.

We further confirm to the best of our ability that none of the information contained in the Statement of Heritage Impact is false or misleading.



James Phillips

B.Sc. (Arch.), B.Arch., M. Herit.Cons (Hons.)

Principal

Weir Phillips Heritage



Anna McLaurin

B.Envs (Arch) M.Herit.Cons., MURP

Associate Director

Weir Phillips Heritage

2 Site Location

The site, No. 100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag, is located on the south eastern corner of Edinburgh Road and Eastern Valley Way (Figure 1). The site is identified a Lot 11 D.P. 611594 and Lot 1 D.P.43691. The site is currently occupied by the Quadrangle Shopping Village. A separate DA (DA-2024/13) has been approved and the demolition of the existing buildings on the site has occurred.

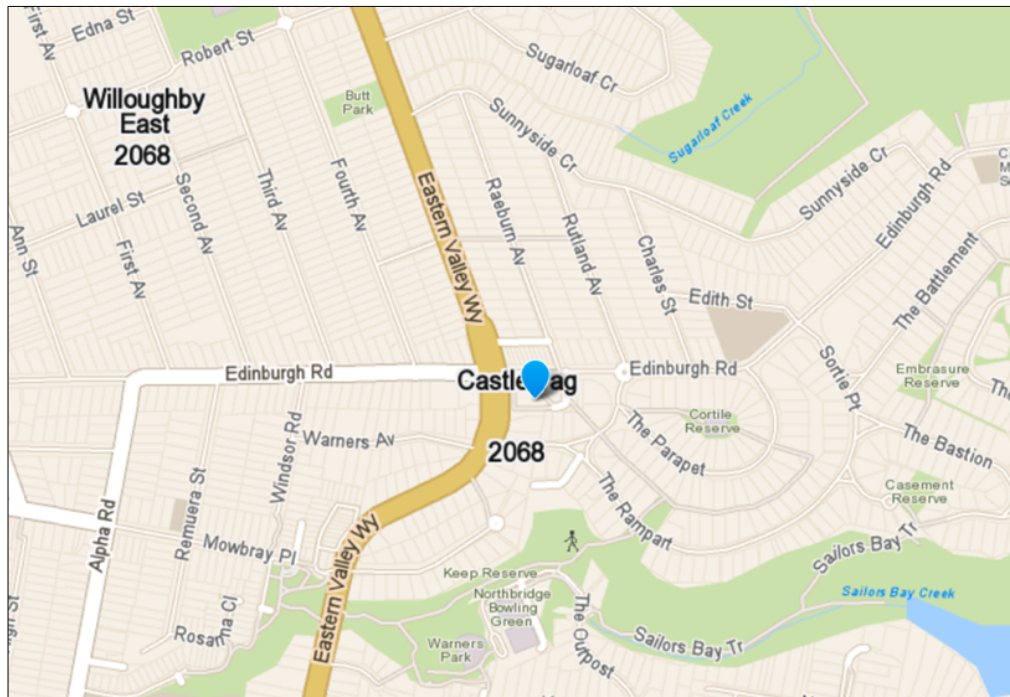


Figure 1 Site Location.

Whereis.com.au

2.1 The Existing Site

The site is only briefly described for the purposes of this statement, given that there is a separate DA for the demolition of the buildings upon it and given that no part of the site is subject to a statutory heritage listing.

The site is irregular in shape. It has a northern boundary to Edinburgh Road of 87.99m; a wide curving boundary to Eastern Valley Way; a western boundary, to Eastern Valley Way, of 47.86m; and an irregular southern and eastern boundary. The site is 5,166.0sqm in size. The natural fall of the site is to the south.

There are trees set within a narrow garden bed along the southern boundary. The canopy of this line of trees thins towards the western end of the boundary. There are also several, more widely spaced, trees along the western (Eastern Valley Way) boundary and along the northern (Edinburgh Road) boundary of the site. Trees on the site, as identified by the separate arborist report that accompanies this application, include several Wallangarra White Gums and a Spotted Gum along Edinburgh Road and Eastern Valley Way; and Tallwoods, Sydney Blue Gums, Turpentines, a Sydney Red Gum, a Brushbox and a Bangalay along the southern boundary. These trees are not local 'old growth,' but were planted when the existing shopping complex was built.

Figure 2 to Figure 4 illustrate the site, with a focus on the eastern and southern boundaries, being the boundaries that immediately adjoin the Griffin Conservation Area. Refer also to the survey and arborist report that accompany this application.



Figure 2: Aerial photograph over the site showing all structures on site demolished.
Nearmap 2025; annotations by WPH

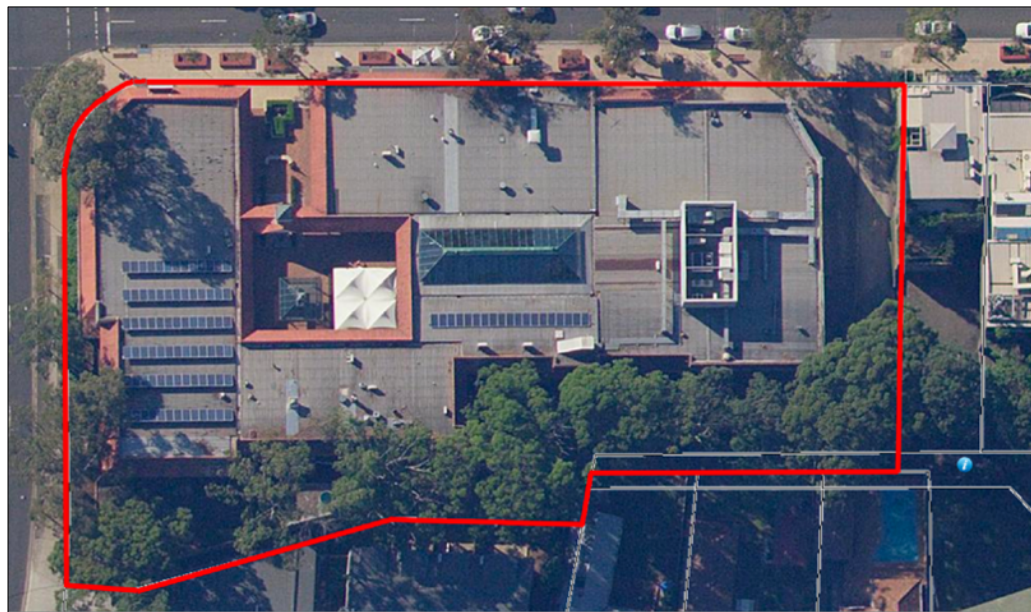


Figure 3: The site prior to demolition.

Nearmap 2024; annotations by WPH



Figure 4: The site from the corner of Eastern Valley Way and Edinburgh Road prior to demolition.



Figure 5: The site today with all buildings demolished.

2.2 The Setting

For the following, refer to Figure 6 an aerial photograph over the site and wider surrounds.

The site is located within a mixed commercial/residential setting in which buildings are predominately one and two storeys in height. The site has a greater height limit and FSR ratio than most sites within the surrounding area, which is largely zoned for residential uses including R2 (low density) and C4 (environmental living) to the south and east; R3 (medium density residential) to the west and (E1 local centre, also permitted 11m buildings fronting Edinburgh Road), R2 and R3 to the north.

Refer to Figure 6 and Figure 8.



Figure 6: A wider aerial photograph showing the surrounding the site showing the general residential setting.

Nearmap 2025; annotations by WPH

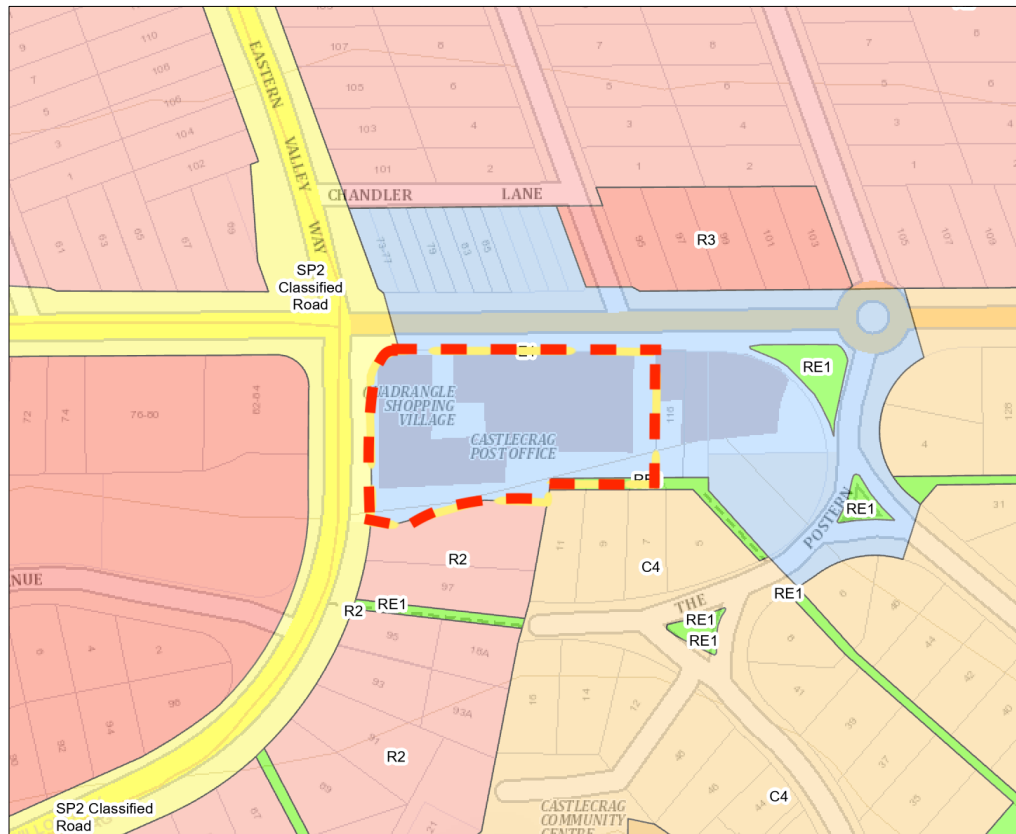


Figure 7: Zoning plan, showing different zones within the surrounding area. The site is outlined in red.



Figure 8: Showing the height limits in the area surrounding the site, which is outlined in red.

Edinburgh Road carries two lanes of traffic in either direction. The section of the road in which the site is located is level. There are paved footpaths to either side.

Opposite the site, on the **northern** side of Edinburgh Road, lie a row of one and two storey late 1930s/early 1940s brick commercial buildings. Continuing east are one and two storey dwellings of mixed architectural periods and styles. The properties on this side of the road do not form part of a Conservation Area. Refer to Figure 9 and Figure 10.



Figure 9:
Edinburgh
Road
opposite the
subject site,
looking west



Figure 10:
Edinburgh Road
opposite the
subject site,
looking east

South of the subject site, and at its western end, lie residential properties fronting Eastern Valley Way. These properties occupied by one and two storey residential flat buildings and dwellings of varying architectural periods and styles. They lie at varying

levels to the road and within lots with varying degrees of planting. These properties do not form part of a Conservation Area. Refer to Figure 11 and Figure 12.



Figure 11:
Units
immediately
south of the
subject site.



Figure 12:
Streetscape
south of the
subject site.

South of the site, at its eastern end, lie properties part of the Griffin Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is described in Section 4 below. None of the dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the site were designed by Griffin or his partner Eric Nicholls.

East of the site lie two storey c.1990s building, which mark the boundary of the Griffin Conservation Area. No. 116 Edinburgh Road forms the north western corner of the Griffin Conservation Area. The building on this site is a c.1980s-2000s two storey (to Edinburgh Road) rendered masonry mixed-use building with a flat roof. This building increases to three storeys in height to the rear. It addresses Edinburgh Road, presenting a blind elevation to the subject site. It has a staggered setback from Edinburgh Road and lies on its western boundary. Continuing east, No. 118 Edinburgh Road is similarly a modern two storey building. This building steps down in height to meet the single storey

(to Edinburgh Road) Griffin Centre at No. 120-126 Edinburgh Road, which is listed as a heritage item. The Griffin Centre and the Griffin Conservation Area is described and illustrated in Section 4 below. Refer to Figure 13 and Figure 14.



Figure 13: No. 116-118 Edinburgh Road to the east of the site.



Figure 14: No. 116 Edinburgh Road as it presents to the site.

West of the subject site, on the south western corner of Edinburgh Road and Eastern Valley Way, lies a c.2000s two storey residential flat building with rendered walls and a hipped tiled roof set behind a high street wall and hedge (No. 62-64 Edinburgh Road). South of this building, and part of the immediate setting the site, is a two storey

residential development recently completed at No. 1-5 Warners Avenue. Refer to Figure 15 to Figure 16

Completing the intersection, on the **north western** corner of Edinburgh Road and Eastern Valley Way, lies a single storey painted brick dwelling (No. 69 Edinburgh Road) Refer to Figure 18



Figure 15: No. 62-64 Edinburgh Road on the south western corner of Edinburgh Road and Eastern Valley Way opposite the site.



Figure 16: A recently completed , opposite the subject site, on the other side of Eastern Valley Way.



Figure 17:
Render of the
development
at No. 1-5
Warners
Avenue,
Willoughby.

Domain.



Figure 18: No.
69 Edinburgh
Road on the
north western
corner of
Edinburgh
Road and
Eastern Valley
Way, lies a
single storey
painted brick
dwelling.

3 SUMMARY OF STATUTORY HERITAGE LISTINGS FOR THE SITE

No. 100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag is:

Listing Type	Item Name and Details	Listing Number
State Heritage Register under the <i>Heritage Act 1977</i> (NSW).	N/A	N/A
In the vicinity of items on the State Heritage Register under the <i>Heritage Act 1977</i> (NSW).	N/A	N/A
Listed as an item of local heritage significance by Schedule 5 of the <i>WLEP 2012</i> .	N/A	N/A

Located within the vicinity of local heritage items by Schedule 5 of <i>WLEP 2012</i> .	Yes.	Griffin Centre, 120 Edinburgh Road (I253) Community Centre, No. 10 The Postern (I48)
Located within a Heritage Conservation area.	N/A	N/A
Located within the Vicinity of a Heritage Conservation Area	Yes	Griffin Heritage Conservation Area (C4)
Identified as an archaeological site by Schedule 5 Part 3 of the <i>WLEP 2012</i> .	N/A	N/A

4 HERITAGE ITEMS/CONSERVATION AREAS IN THE VICINITY OF THE SITE

For the following, 'in the vicinity' has been determined by physical proximity to the site, existing and potential view corridors and the massing and scale of the proposed works.

The following considers statutory listings only.

4.1 State Heritage

There are no heritage items listed on the State Heritage Register or a s170 Register, under the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*, in the vicinity of the site.

4.2 Local Heritage

Figure 19 reproduces a detail from NSW Planning Portal showing heritage items in the vicinity of the site. Within this plan, heritage items listed by Schedule 5 Part 1 of the *WLEP 2012* are coloured brown. Conservation Areas listed by Schedule Part 2 of the *WLEP 2012* are hatched in red. The subject site is outlined in red. WP Heritage and Planning have added the numbers (from the *WLEP 2012*) to identify the items. There are no archaeological items (listed by Schedule 5 Part 3 of the *WLEP 2012*) within the vicinity of the site.

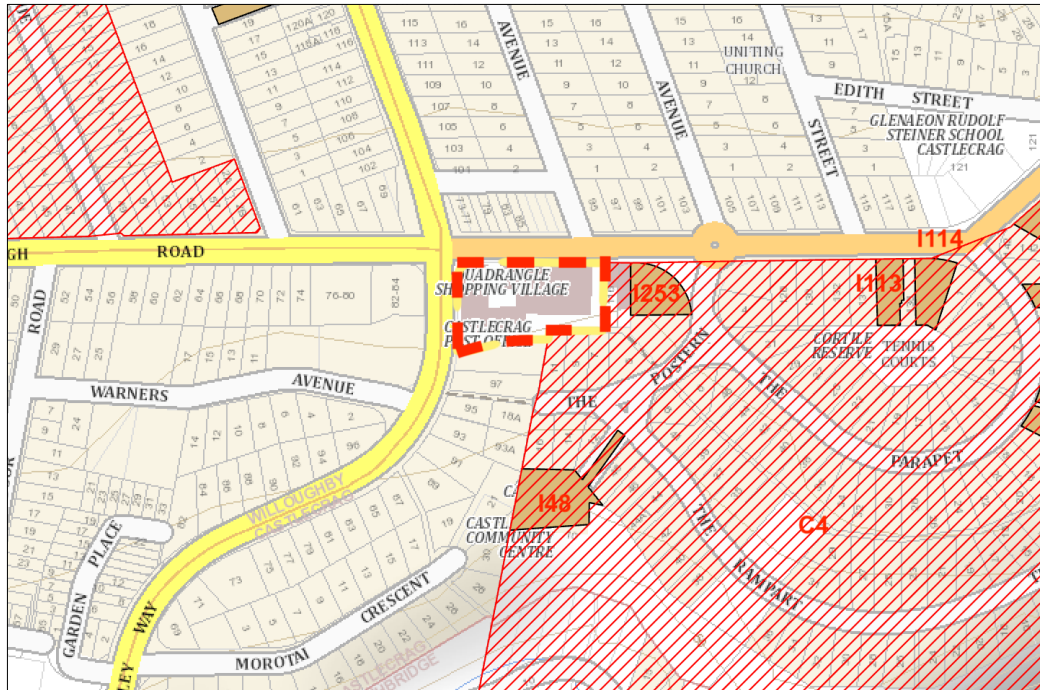


Figure 19: Heritage Map. The subject site is outlined in red.

Planning Portal NSW; annotated W.P. Heritage

4.2.1 Schedule 5 Part 1 WLEP 2012: Heritage Items

There are no heritage items listed by Schedule 5 Part 1 of the *WLEP 2012* adjoining the site boundaries.

The following heritage items lie the vicinity of the site.

4.2.2 Griffin Centre, 120 Edinburgh Road (I253)

There is one heritage item in the immediate vicinity of the site, being the *Griffin Centre*, No. 120 Edinburgh Road. This item is located close by the south eastern corner of Edinburgh Road and The Postern. It is separated from the site by Nos. 116 and 118 Edinburgh Road, two c.1990s (to Edinburgh Road) buildings built to their front and side boundaries.

There is no listing sheet for this item, which has been recently gazetted, on the State Heritage Inventory.

Brief History

The following information is obtained from:

- Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd, '*Griffin Centre*' Shops. Report for the Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc., 27 May 2019.

Refer to this document for a detailed history of this item. Briefly:

"The "Griffin Centre" shops were the second group of shops constructed in Castlecrag. The first shops were constructed in 1921 further west along Edinburgh Road to a design by

Walter Burley Griffin. The Griffin-designed building comprised a pair of shops housing a grocer and a display showroom for the Castlecrag Estate's developer, the GSDA. With the opening of the Castlecrag Estate Sales Office on the corner of Edinburgh Road and The Parapet the GSDA showroom was closed and the space amalgamated to form part of the grocer shop.....

The construction of this pair of shops coincided with the construction of the first houses on the Castlecrag Estate, the GSDA 1 and GSDA 2 Dwellings of 1921. The shops and these first two houses were soon followed by the Grant, Johnson, Moon & Cheong houses in 1922 and the O'Malley House in 1923.

In 1924, coinciding with the construction of further houses on the Castlecrag Estate, architect/ builder S.A. Spargo lodged a Building Application to construct four shops on land he owned on the corner of Edinburgh Road and The Postern. The four shops were constructed by S.A. Spargo between 1924 & 1925 and the first general meeting of the Castlecrag Progress Association, of which Spargo was an active member, was held in the basement of the shops in November 1925.

The shops have undergone a number of changes including the conversion of the four shops to a small supermarket in 1958 and the addition of a fifth shop in 1959. In 1972/74 the Basement was altered to accommodate a Bistro in addition to the then existing Wine & Spirit Shop and the amenities area for the supermarket staff. In 1991 major alterations to the fabric of the building were made which also changed the appearance of the building.¹

Figure 28 provides a photograph of the building from the mid 1920s.



Figure 20 The Griffin Centre, as published in Castlecrag Album, a promotional booklet produced by the Greater Sydney Development Association c.1926.

The Crag, June 2019.

¹ Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd, 'Griffin Centre' Shops. Report for the Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc., 27 May 2019, pp.3-4.

Description

The Griffin Centre has a fan-like crescent floor plan that follows the curve of The Postern. The walls are rendered masonry and painted brickwork. The building is single storey to Edinburgh Road and two storey to the rear. The front section lies under a tiled roof divided by projecting dividing parapets, which have been modified from the original. The original shop fronts, verandah supports and fascia detailing have also all been altered. Refer to Figure 21 and Figure 26



Figure 21: The Griffin Centre from Edinburgh Road.



Figure 22: The side and rear elevation of the Griffin Centre.

Setting

The setting of this item to the north and west is the same as the setting for the subject site, described in Section 2.4 above. As noted above, this item is separated from the

subject site by two c.1990s masonry buildings, No. 116-118 Edinburgh Road (Figure 20 above). Continuing east lies an at grade carpark accessed from The Postern. The Postern falls and curves from its junction with Edinburgh Road. On the opposite corner of The Postern there is a single storey brick dwelling that is heavily screened by vegetation from the corner. Diagonally opposite the Centre, on the northern side of Edinburgh Road, lie single storey dwellings. To the south of the Griffin Centre lies No. 3 The Postern, a recently completed four storey residential flat building.

Refer to Figure 23 to Figure 26 below.



Figure 23: Carpark on the western side of the Griffin Centre, looking north.



Figure 24: Property on the opposite side of The Postern to the carpark.



Figure 25: Recently completed flat building to the south of the Griffin Centre.



Figure 26: Northern side of Edinburgh Road, diagonally opposite the Griffin Centre.

View Corridors

The principal view corridors to/from the Griffin Centre are obtained to/from Edinburgh Road. Unless standing at a wide angle, the view towards the Centre on approach from the west along Edinburgh Road, past the subject site, is largely blocked until close by the site by the adjoining buildings and the curved elevation of the Griffin Centre. The view is more open on approach from the east because of the openness of the adjoining carpark. The proposed new building will be visible within both view corridors in conjunction with the Griffin Centre.

Refer to Figure 27 and Figure 28. In these photographs, the Griffin Centre is marked '1' and the subject site '2.'



Figure 27: View towards the Griffin Centre (marked '1') on approach past the subject site (marked '2') from the west.



Figure 28: View towards the Griffin Centre, marked '1' on approach along Edinburgh Road from the east. The subject site is marked '2' m(prior to the demolition of the structures on site).

There are no significant views out of this item towards the subject site.

Statement of Significance

There is no readily available statement of significance for the Griffin Centre. The Robertson and Hindmarsh heritage assessment provides the following statement of significance, which is adopted for the purposes of this assessment:

'The "Griffin Centre" shops, dating from 1924, are of historical significance at a Local level as an integral part of the Griffin Heritage Conservation Area under *Willoughby LEP 2012* and as the only surviving original shops dating from the beginning of the Castlecrag Estate.

The shops are of aesthetic significance at a Local level as their design followed that of the two shops designed by Griffin in late 1921 for the Greater Sydney Development Association Ltd (GSDA) further west on Edinburgh Road (now no longer extant). The existing altered group of shops does retain its original form of pitched tile roofs, projecting dividing parapets, and fan-like crescent floor plan as it follows the curve of The Postern. They maintain a visual link to the early days of the village shopping centre. Griffin had approved the design of the "Griffin Centre" shops in his role as the architect for the GSDA.

The shops are of social significance at a Local level as an essential part of Castlecrag community life from 1925 onwards as a place for both shopping and the location of community meetings. The shops have remained in continuous use from their construction as retail spaces and have proved to be remarkably adaptable reflecting the changing nature of retail in the area.'²

Curtilage

This item has a lot boundary curtilage (i.e. Lot 1 D.P. 591269).

4.2.3 Community Centre, No. 10 The Postern (148)

To the south of the site, and separated from it by several intervening properties, lies the Community Centre, No. 10 The Postern. Given that the land slopes down towards this item, the proposed works have the potential to impact upon its wider setting.

Brief History

The State Heritage Inventory listing sheet for the site provides the following history:

'Eric Milton Nicholls (1902-1965) was born in Linton, Victoria and at 19 joined the office of Walter Burley Griffin in Melbourne. He became an associate in 1923 at the age of 21 and took charge of the Melbourne office after Griffin went to America to settle his

² Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty Ltd, Griffin Centre' Shops. Report for the Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc., 27 May 2019, p.4.

affairs and Marion moved to Castlecrag. Nicholls was described by Marion Mahoney Griffin as an "exquisite draftsman" - This praise from one who herself by Reyner Banham as the greatest architectural delineator of her generation...better than Wright and... Adolf Loos. In early 1931, Nicholls became a partner in the firm and its title changed to Griffin and Nicholls Architects. Nicholls moved to Sydney to run the Sydney office in 1932. He lived at 12 The Parapet, Castlecrag. After Walter Burley Griffin's death in Lucknow in 1937, Nicholls obtained Marion's permission to continue practising under the name of Griffin and Nicholls Architects and designed a further 9 houses in Castlecrag, 5 in Edinburgh Road, number 10 The Parapet and one in the Battlement. From 1941, Nicholls practised on his own and designed another 58 buildings in the Willoughby area, including 26 private homes. In 1959 his son Glynn and Robert Elliot, both architects, joined the firm and it became known as Nicholls, Elliot and Nicholls. His other local work, some honorary, includes: Castlecrag Community Hall; Albert Chowne Memorial Hall, Willoughby; Council Baby Health centres in Help Street, Chatswood and Penshurst Street, Willoughby. Nicholls, and his wife Mary, were deeply committed to anthroposophy and in 1934, following the Griffins membership three years earlier, they joined the St. John's Group, Sydney. Later Nicholls joined the Anthroposophical Society of Australia, of which he became general secretary in 1948. He undertook a pioneering role in establishing the first Rudolph Steiner School in Australia which now has campuses at Middle Cove and Castlecrag. Nicholls was a man of high ideals and vision and, together with his wife, was part of a group of like-minded people involved in and promoted the artistic, cultural and social life of the Castlecrag community. With the increasing need for pre-school kindergarten and community meeting place, the Castlecrag Community Circle established the Castlecrag and East Willoughby Community Advancement Co-Operative Society Limited in 1944 to find the means of getting a suitable building for community purposes. Members of various other community groups were invited to participate. The Greater Sydney Development Association donated land on the reserve off The Rampant and Eric Nicholls was invited to be the architect for a Community Hall that would house a kindergarten and be capable of extension. The local people responded with both funds and their labour. The present building was officially opened in November 1947 and is still used as a kindergarten. In 1965, when upkeep exceeded rentals, the Co-operative Society was wound up and the building taken over by Willoughby Council. The western section of the building is a later addition, designed as a community service by Eric Nicholls. It was opened in 1951 and is still operating for several hours a week, staffed by dedicated volunteers. Nicholls' plan for the building included the potential for another storey to be added as the community expanded. Nicholls had carried on the main concerns for the spiritual impulse of the Griffins for the Castlecrag community and his honorary work designing the Community Hall exemplified his commitment to the original concepts for the area. As well, significant Castlecrag citizens of the time were involved including the Deans and Frank and Anice Duncan, who was to be instrumental in the formation of the Walter Burley Griffin Society.³

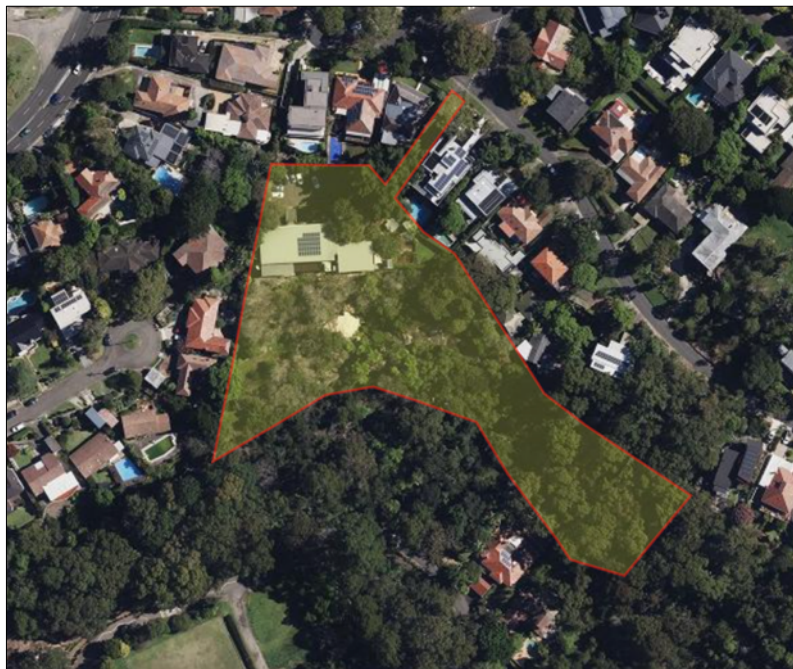
³ Community Centre, No. 10 The Postern, Castlecrag. State Heritage Inventory Database No.: 2660252.

Description

The State Heritage Inventory listing sheet for the site provides the following description of the site:

*'One storey building, with a flat roof hidden behind steeply sloping timber eaves and awnings for solar protection. The walls are made of rendered masonry. There is also glass in the utilitarian building. Its style is moderne villa with Post War Functionalism. The building is dominated by the unusual treatment of the deep timber eaves and attached timber awnings. Sections of the interior have the original exposed, painted ceiling joists and boards. The joists and boards extend to the exterior of the building, forming a deep eave to which is attached an unusual, deep, sloping awning which continues the joist and board treatment. The glass doors still retain their original hardware. Hopper windows feature in the curved rendered masonry sections of the building. The kindergarten and library buildings are situated on the southern section of a public space, most of which is occupied by a bitumen carpark. The kindergarten grounds have been landscaped in an appropriate manner for the function. Some large natives and a Camphor Laurel dominate the landscaping, there are natural and artificial lawn areas, stone and brick paved areas and sand pits.'*⁴

Little of the building is visible from the public domain. Refer to Figure 29 and Figure 30



**Figure 29:
No. 10 The
Postern
within its
setting.
SIX Maps.**

⁴ Ibid.



Figure 30: The Community Centre form the adjoining carpark.

Setting and View Corridors

The Community Centre lies at the end of a long curving driveway off The Postern. It is not visible from The Postern. The land rises above the carpark that lies on the northern side of the item towards Edinburgh Road and the subject site. There are several residential properties between the centre and the subject site. To the east and west lie dwellings. To the south lies bushland.

The principal view corridors towards this item are obtained from the carpark to the north and the bushland to the south. The principal view corridors out of the item are to the south and the bushland that lies in this direction. There are no significant view corridors out of this item towards the north and the subject site.

The existing buildings on the subject site are not visible from the item and vice versa. Even if the top of the proposed new building were visible above the intervening dwellings and planting, the view corridor is not a significant one because it does not contribute to the ability to understand the significance of the item.

Refer to Figure 29 and Figure 30 above and Figure 31 below.



Figure 31: View from the car park to the north of the Community Centre towards the subject site.

Statement of Significance

The State Heritage Inventory listing sheet for the site provides the following statement of significance of this item:

‘10 The Postern has a high level of significance in the local area. The amenity was provided by the dedication of some notable Castlecrag residents in securing a site and raising funds for the building, its staffing and maintenance. As such it has a high local Historical and Social Significance with its association with many prominent residents including the Nicholls and the Deans, the Greater Sydney Development Association and the East Willoughby Community Advancement Co-Operative Society Ltd. The kindergarten and library have been operating for over half a century, the latter with volunteer staff. Thus it is an integral part of the Castlecrag community life and a direct link with people and philosophies, fundamental to the formation of the suburb. The building is a good example of the work of noted local architect, Eric Nicholls and its simple design give it a moderate level of aesthetic significance.’⁵

Curtilage

This item has a lot boundary curtilage (i.e. Lot 143, D.P.17416).

4.2.4 Other

The heritage items further to the east- *House (including original interiors)*, No. 136 Edinburgh Road (113) and *House (including original interiors)*, No. 140 Edinburgh Road (114)- are sufficiently removed from the subject site for works of the proposed nature to have no impact upon their setting or on significant view corridors to/from them. Edinburgh Road is level; there are numerous dwelling and trees between the site and these items. They are not considered further for the purposes of this statement.

⁵ *Community Centre*, No. 10 The Postern, Castlecrag. State Heritage Inventory Database No.: 2660252.

4.2.5 Schedule 5 Part 2 of the WLEP 2012: Griffin Conservation Area

The site adjoins the Griffin Heritage Conservation Area (C4) listed by Schedule 5 Part 2 of the *WLEP 2012* on its eastern and part of its southern boundary:

- This area is shaded red and marked 'C4' in Figure 19 above. It adjoins the eastern boundary of the site and part of the southern boundary.

4.3 Brief History of the Conservation Area

The following provides a brief history of the Castlecrag Estate, now the Griffin Conservation Area.

Greater Sydney Development Association and Walter and Marion Griffin

In 1920, a large part of the present-day suburb of Castlecrag was purchased by the Greater Sydney Development Association (GSDA), who owned over 500 acres within the Parish of Willoughby.⁶

The GSDA acquired their Middle Harbour land at a fortuitous time. During the 1920s and 1930s a second wave of subdivisions swept through the Willoughby Municipality. Throughout the 1920s, Willoughby was regularly third on the list of districts of Sydney with regard to the number of new buildings constructed. In 1922, for example, 98 applications for subdivisions or re-subdivisions were approved. This period of rapid growth was influenced by the anticipated opening of the Harbour Bridge (1932) and the increasing use of the motor car, two events that brought Willoughby into closer contact with Sydney. The population expanded accordingly, from 28,067 in 1921 to 42,251 in 1933 and 51,945 in 1947. Population growth slowed over the following three decades, isolating this period as being particularly formative in the history of the area.⁷

The shareholders of the GSDA were a diverse group of people, ranging from Federal politicians, including the long serving Speaker of the House, Sir Elliot Johnson, architects, businessmen and members of Melbourne Chinese community. The main instigator and moving force behind the group was the American born architect Walter Burley Griffin (1876-1937) and his wife Marion Mahony Griffin (1871-1961).

Griffin won the international design competition for the Australian Federal Capital in 1911 with the aid of his wife, also a licence practicing architect. Griffin made an extended visit to Australia in 1913, one which culminated in his appointment as the Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction. The Griffins settled in Melbourne. In 1921, having faced years of obstruction while trying to implement his design for Canberra and then lack of funding due to World War I, Griffin's official appointment was not renewed.

Following the formation of the GSDA, Griffin was appointed its Managing Director. The faith placed in Griffin was considerable. Griffin held the right to one tenth of the shares,

⁶ For details see Certificate of Title Volume 3184, Folio 143. NSW LPI.

⁷ Statistics cited in see: Dr. Carol Liston, 'Draft Thematic History' for John Falk Planning in association with Rodney Jensen and Associates, *Willoughby Heritage Study*. Unpublished study for Willoughby Council, September 1986, p.16.

each with ten times the right of an ordinary share. He thus had the power to out-vote all the other shareholders combined.⁸

Griffin envisaged opening the GSDA lands gradually as demand require. A prospectus produced by the GSDA outlined their plans for their large Middle Harbour property, which included Mowbray Point, the Sugarloaf and Little Sugarloaf promontories, for

‘...high class residential suburbs conserving to their maximum their natural beauty with adequate access to the waterfronts for the public the provision of swimming baths and boating and sailing facilities; the establishment of reserves for recreation purposes including riding, golf, cricket, tennis, bowls, and other exercises; and the construction of buildings and all other improvements aesthetically in keeping with the surroundings, so far as possible of the native rock and subordinate to the natural beauty of the land.’

The first of the planned GSDA Estates was the Castlecrag Estate. The original Castlecrag Estate was smaller than the present-day suburb and is defined by Figure 39. The name, Castlecrag, was only later applied to the entire peninsula. The layout of this estate was designed by Griffin, who walked over the terrain providing markers for the surveyors to follow. This approach set the subdivision apart from many of the period.

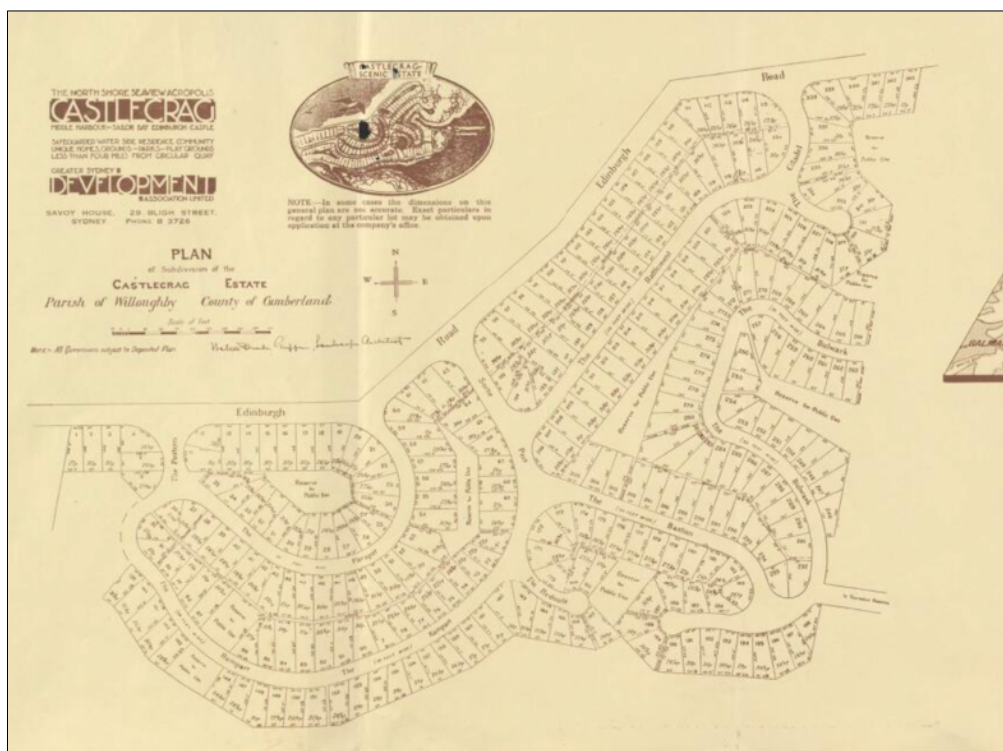


Figure 32: Greater Sydney Development Association Ltd, *Plan of the subdivision of the Castlecrag Estate, Parish of Willoughby, County of Cumberland, 1921*. This subdivision is essentially the area now the Griffin Conservation Area.

National Library of Australia.

⁸ M. Walker, A. Kabos and J. Weireck, *Building For Nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag*, 1994. On line extract from a book published in 1994 by the Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc.

Shareholders in the GSDA were offered a free block of land on the Castlecrag Estate with the proviso that they then built a house on the land. Five shareholders accepted the offer and commissioned Griffin (and the GSDA) to design and build their houses. These demonstration houses, under construction in 1921-22, accorded with Griffin's firmly held belief in the provision of examples, not just the promotion of theory:

'I take as accepted in the modern educational system that we learn by doing.'⁹

The GSDA undertook widespread promotion of Castlecrag and their objectives. Griffin and his wife gave public lectures illustrated by lantern slides, wrote articles for architectural and trade journals, placed large advertisements in newspapers and produced two substantial brochures, *Castlecrag Album* (1925) and *Castlecrag Homes* (1928). In the latter the Estate was described as:

'The thoroughfares are carved out of bed-rock and are finished in bituminous concrete or rolled blue stone asphalt, with ample width...with every now and again a circular terminal way to serve as a halting place or turning point...the roads...when seen from above...have almost merged into the foliage through which they pass.

In order to provide short cuts embowered lanes intersect the main highways, thus facilitating movement from crest to waterfront.

As the services and utilities of all the homes are supplied from the rear of each, the roads are not disfigured by poles and wires nor is the splendid road surface continually dug up to provide conveniences for new homes.

Ample public reserves have been made through Castlecrag and Cove, apart from the innumerable small parks and playgrounds intended for the benefit of the houses immediately abutting. In keeping with the idea of a Castle (Castlecrag) the roads and public reserves on that promontory have been given appropriate names- such as...The Battlement in the case of highways, and The Turret and The Keep in the case of reserves.'¹⁰

In strong contrast to the earlier descriptions of Willoughby previously cited, Griffin wanted no artificial boundaries or red tiled roofs. He instead sought a closer integration with nature:

'I want Castlecrag built so that each individual can feel the whole of the landscape is his.'¹¹

Strict covenants were placed on the land. Figure 40 reproduces these covenants.

The GSDA produced a silent movie entitled *Beautiful Middle Harbour* for showing in local cinemas. Many people (and not just prospective purchasers) visited the estate, a popular route being via ferry or boat from The Spit.

⁹ Cited in Walker, M., Kabos, A. and Weireck, *op.cit.*, 1994.

¹⁰ GSDA, *Castlecrag Homes- Scenic Marine suburbs of Middle Harbour*, 1928, pp.10-11.

¹¹ Cited in Willoughby City Library, Fact Sheet No. 8: Willoughby City Facts Castlecrag, 2002.

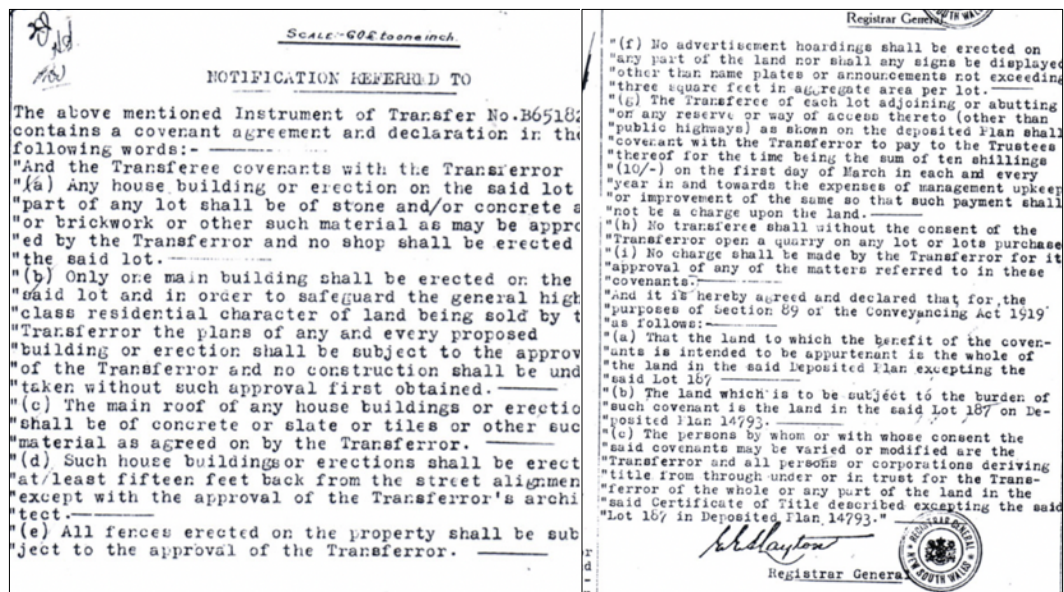


Figure 33: Covenants on the Castlecrag Estate

This set cited C.T. Volume 4153 Folio 134. NSW LPI.

In 1924, Walter and Marion moved from Melbourne to Sydney to supervise the development of the Castlecrag Estate. Marion Mahony Griffin's principal role at Castlecrag was as 'community leader', organising a variety of cultural events, many of which were staged in the rock gully that had been adapted to serve as an amphitheatre.¹²

Between 1929 and 1935, the years surrounding and including the Great Depression, what had since become the firm of Griffin and Nicholls (see below) survived on commissions for the design of municipal incinerator buildings for the Reverberatory Incinerator and Engineering Company (RIECO). The incinerator projects provided an outlet for Griffin and Nicholls to express their growing interest in the aesthetics of anthropomorphism, a spiritual philosophy developed by Rudolf Stein, through the use of symbolism and repetitive motifs in cement, tile and brick. Decorative references to the 'four ethers' - fire, light, chemical and earth- are expressed.

The challenges presented by the downturn in the economy were coupled with the difficulty of accessing the estate. One early visitor recalls having to travel by ferry from Milsons Point, tram to Northbridge and from there on foot.¹³ Of the fifty houses Griffin designed prior to his departure from Australia in 1935 only sixteen were ever built in Castlecrag. With the exception of several undated project designs (which may have been

¹² Douglas Pike (gen. ed.), *The Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 9 1891-1939*, Victoria, Melbourne University Press, 1983, pp.108-9.

¹³ Willoughby City Library, Fact Sheet No. 8: Willoughby City Facts Castlecrag, 2002.

produced after 1933), Griffin would not build again in Castlecrag after 1933.¹⁴ By 1938, only 19 houses, including the 16 designed by Griffin, had been built on the estate.¹⁵

Eric Nicholls and Castlecrag

After Griffin's death in India in 1937, his former partner, Eric Nicholls (1902-1965), was given power of attorney with regard to Castlecrag matters on Marion Mahony Griffin's behalf. This included the approval of plans under the covenants at Castlecrag on the behalf of the GSDA. Nicholls enforced the covenants, despite the difficulties of post war development, but later made some concessions, such as permitting the use of pitched tiled roofs. In doing so, he made a 'lasting contribution to the preservation of the character of Castlecrag.'¹⁶

Eric Nicholls had joined Walter Burley Griffin's Melbourne Office at the age of 19. In 1923, he became an associate, taking charge of the Melbourne office following W.B. Griffin's departure for America to place his affairs in order and Marion's move to Castlecrag. Characteristics that were to be more fully developed at Castlecrag are foreshadowed in a number of Nichol's early commissions in Melbourne, including his own residence at No. 18 Willis Street, North Balwyn (1928):

Griffin's influence, as is Nicholl's derivation from it, was clear:

*'...Eric M. Nicholls' architecture was.... similar to Griffin's in one aspect- chunky, squat proportions- but different very different in plan and elevation. The derivation was unmistakable but the exploitation of the Griffin influence takes on a new mode.'*¹⁷

In 1931 Nicholls became a partner in the firm, which now changed its name to Griffin and Nicholls Architects. Nicholls joined Griffin in Sydney in 1932 and moved into the *Moon House*, Castlecrag, which had been built for Moon Chin Wah, one of the original GSDA shareholders, in 1922. When W.B. Griffin died in India in 1937, Marion gave permission for Nicholls to continue using the practice's name.

From 1941, Nicholls practiced on his own. He designed 58 buildings in the Willoughby area, including 26 private homes. Nicholls built at least 19 houses in Castlecrag and made additions to a number of others during the period 1937-1954. During the 1940s, in his capacity as Honorary Town Planner for Council, Nicholls designed the Albert Chowne Memorial Hall (1945), baby health centres at Penshurst and Help Street, as well as additions to the Willoughby Council Offices. Nicholls

'...was described by Marion Mahony Griffin as 'an exquisite draftsman'- this praise from one who herself was described by Reyner Banham as 'the greatest architectural delineator of his (sic) generation...better than Wright and...Adolf Loos'....

¹⁴ Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd, *Eric M. Nicholls Study of his Architecture in the Willoughby City Council Area*. Unpublished study for Willoughby City Council, 2003, p.9.

¹⁵ Douglas Pike (gen.ed.), *op.cit.*, 1983, pp.108-9.

¹⁶ Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd, *op.cit.*, p.15.

¹⁷ Donald Leslie Johnson, *Australian Architecture 1901-1951*, NSW, Sydney University Press, 1980, p.125.

Nicholls was a man of high ideals and vision, and together with his wife, was part of a group of like-minded people involved in and promoted the artistic, cultural and social life of the Castlecrag community...'¹⁸

In 1959, he was joined by his son, Glynn, and Robert Elliot, forming the firm Nicholls, Elliot and Nicholls. Nicholls died in 1965.

The first two houses designed by Nicholls following Griffin's departure for India, the *Deans House* (1937) and *Camelot* (1938), demonstrate the influence of Griffin's Castlecrag buildings. *Camelot* is considered to essentially be a reworking of one of Griffin's earlier project designs.¹⁹ Particular characteristics carried over from Griffin include the use of squat proportions and granular stone masonry. Later houses demonstrate combined aspects of this organic stream of architecture with an early appreciation of European modernism. All his houses, demonstrate his great ability in siting buildings on challenging allotments. Nichols also designed what is now the Castlecrag Community Centre, which lies to the south of the site and is now listed as a heritage item (see below).

The Historic Relationship of the Subject Site to Griffin's Castlecrag Estate

It is important to consider the historic relationship of the subject site (if any) to the original Castlecrag Estate and thus the Conservation Area.

An examination of historic plans indicates that only the eastern-most part of the site formed part of Griffin's Castlecrag Estate. The remainder of the site is located on land first subdivided by Richard Hayes Harnett (Snr) in the late nineteenth century.²⁰ The abrupt transition from the curving roads of the Castlecrag Estate into the surrounding area on its western (and northern) sides is readily apparent in the 1921 plan, Figure 32 above, and even more so in the 1943 aerial photograph, Figure 34, below.



¹⁸ NSW State Heritage Inventory Form.

¹⁹ Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd, *op.cit.*, p.11.

²⁰ With reference to Certificate of Title Volume 900-33, which includes land part of the subject site. NSW LPI.

Figure 34: Aerial Photograph over the site and the surrounding area in 1943.

SIX Maps

In the 1943 photograph, Figure 34, the distinct edge of the Castlecrag Estate subdivision as it runs through the subject site between the two buildings that directly address Edinburgh Road is readily apparent. This photograph also shows that the site had been cleared of all vegetation, except in the lower south eastern corner. Eastern Valley Way was a relatively new road at this time (opened in 1939). The shops, now the Griffin Centre, are clearly visible to the east of the site.

Prior to the 1970s, there were two shops and a building belonging to radio station 2RC on the site. None of these buildings still stand.

4.3.1.1 Description of the Conservation Area

Part H 3.5 of the *Willoughby Development Control Plan (DCP)* provides the following brief description of the Griffin Conservation Area:

'Within residential properties, the lack of front fences and separate garages retain the transition from street to reserve that Griffin intended by minimal building within the first 10m zone of the property. The intent was that the house was to exist in the bush landscape without the artificiality of property boundaries.'

Griffin's main aims in designing the Estate were to get away from the traditional suburb with its rectangular grid street pattern, imposed upon the landscape without thought for topography, and to demonstrate that architecture could be subordinate to and harmonious with the landscape. To Griffin, architecture, the site planning, town planning and landscape design were inseparable. Any structure had to fit into the overall landscape of the area - being harmonious rather than obtrusive. He achieved this integration through his design philosophy - narrow winding roads following contours, linked open space networks, lack of fences, unobtrusive houses, retention of bushland in the reserves, walkways, nature strips and road islands. Roads are unobtrusive because of the proliferation of natural vegetation, their winding nature, the grass and bushland verges, the sandstone kerbs and narrow widths. All these aspects, the natural landforms of rock outcrops, cliffs, gullies etc. and the rock cuttings for the road and also the culverts are extremely important and of great significance in the Griffin Heritage Conservation Area.

*The form of houses proposed by Griffin was single storey, or in rare cases two storey buildings based on a series of projecting wings radiating from the central area and fireplace. The elevational treatment tended towards strong horizontals because of a design intention to integrate with the landscape. This is reinforced by the use of masonry blocks with strong horizontal window lintels and flat roofs. The finishes tended toward natural materials such as stone and the use of colours which reflect the bushland setting.'*²¹

²¹ *Willoughby DCP*, Section H3.5.

The following considers the character of the Conservation Area within the immediate vicinity of the subject site in greater detail. Refer to Figure 35, an aerial photograph over the site. In this photograph, the subject site is identified by the arrow and the boundary of the Griffin Conservation Area in red.



Figure 35: Aerial photograph over the site and the Conservation Area.

SIX Maps; annotations in red by WP Heritage

The two storey commercial building No. 116 Edinburgh Road, adjoining the subject site to the **east**, forms the north western corner of the Griffin Conservation Area.

Adjoining the subject site to the **south**, and forming part of the northern boundary of the Griffin Conservation Area, lie Nos. 7, 9 and 11 The Postern. These sites lie below the level of the subject site. This section of The Postern is kerbed and guttered. The dwellings on these sites are single storey post 1943 face brick dwellings set within gardens largely characterised by introduced planting, with a backdrop of the trees that lie on the southern boundary of the site.



Figure 36:
Nos. 7 and 9
The Postern
to the south
of the site.



Figure 37:
Nos. 9 and 11
The Postern
to the south
of the site.

Continuing south into the Conservation Area, the curving, often narrow, streets of the original Castlecrag subdivision become the dominant characteristic. Dwellings are one and two storeys in height and mixed in date and style. The level and type of vegetation varies considerably. Some properties have cleared front lawns with introduced planting; others maintain a more bush-like setting. Figure 38 and Figure 39 illustrate other properties fronting The Postern within the immediate vicinity of the site.



Figure 38:
Commercial building
at No. 3 The Postern.



Figure 39: Two
dwellings on the
southern side of The
Postern near the
subject site.

4.3.1.2 Existing Setting of the North Western Corner of the Conservation Area

The setting of the north western corner of the Conservation Area as it exists today was described in Section 2.4 above.

4.3.1.3 Future Setting

In late 2019, Willoughby Council adopted the *Willoughby Local Centres Strategy to 2036*, which sets out a future vision for the Castlecrag Local Centre. Figure 40 reproduces a diagram from this strategy entitled ‘Indicative Master Plan for Castlecrag.’ The plan envisages a greater density on the subject site with buildings of up to three storeys in height. The setting of the north western corner of the Conservation Area will change if this plan is implemented. Notable within this plan are the retention of the trees on the

southern and western boundaries of the subject site and provision of a public space with good amenity and views to the tree line to the south.

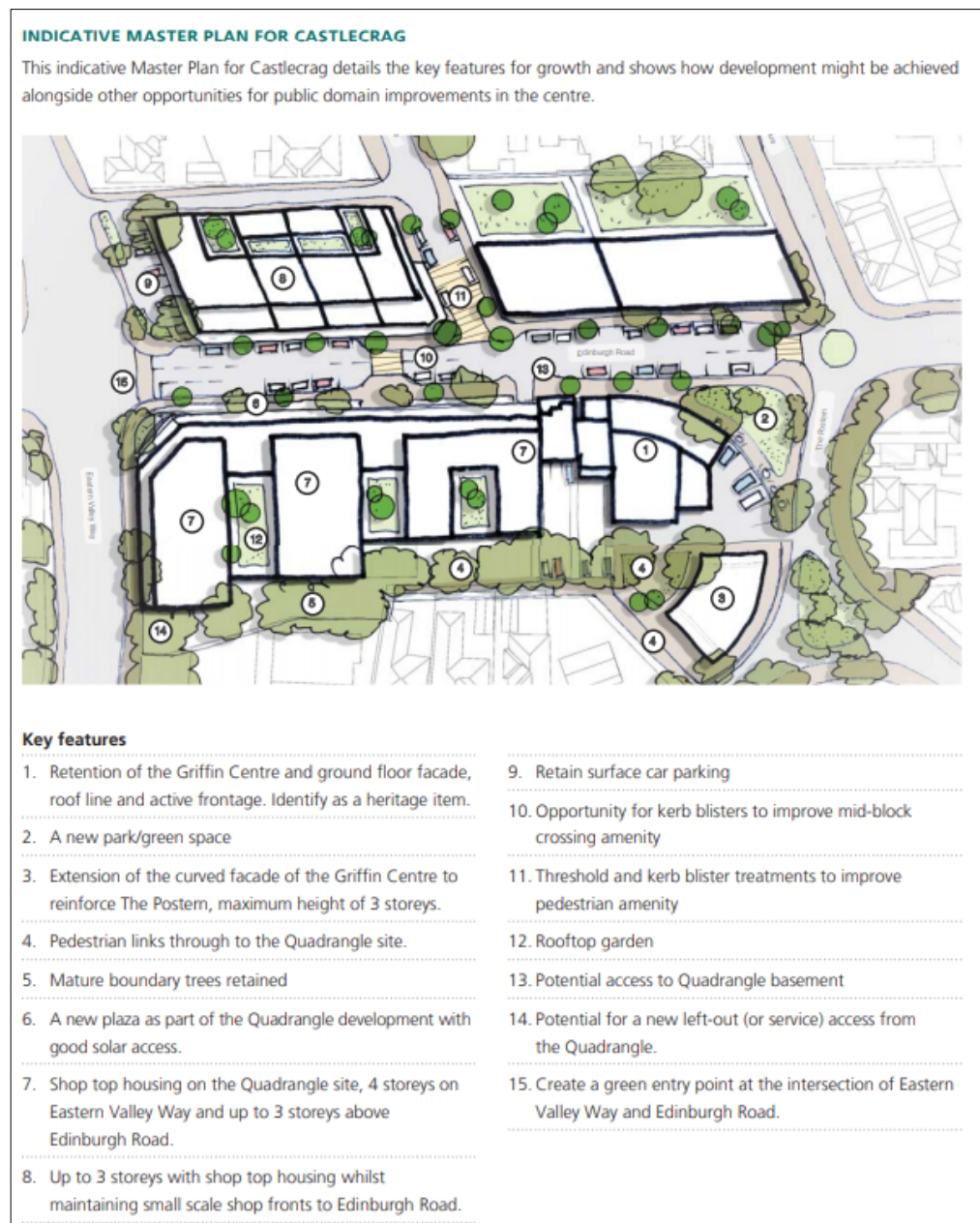


Figure 40: Indicative Master Plan for Castlecrag.

Willoughby Local Centres Strategy to 2036.

4.3.1.4 View Corridors

The principal view corridors associated with the Griffin Conservation Area are obtained from within the Conservation Area and include views along the streets, views towards individual sites of significance, views along the streets, views into reserves and views between dwellings towards bushland. There are significant views into the Conservation

Area from Middle Harbour and significant views out of the Conservation Area across Middle Harbour.

The following considers view corridors towards the Conservation Area that include the site and view corridors out of the Conservation Area that include the subject site.

The subject site lies at one of the principal entrances into the Conservation Area. Figures 34 and 35 above and Figures 48 and 49 below illustrate the subject site on approach from Eastern Valley Way and Edinburgh Road. There are no significant view corridors into the Conservation Area from Eastern Valley Way that include the subject site.



Figure 41: View along Edinburgh Road past the subject site (on the RHS – prior to demolition) towards the Conservation Area from Eastern Valley Way.



Figure 42: View on approach to the site and the Conservation Area (to the south) from a wide angle on approach along Eastern Valley Way from the south.

Figure 43 to Figure 46 illustrate the views out of the Conservation Area over the subject site. The trees on the subject site are skyline elements in these view corridors, which are over modest Post World War II dwellings. There are no Griffin or Nicholls designed dwellings in these view corridors. From some viewpoints, the site is completely concealed because of the topography, vegetation and the narrow curving streets.



Figure 43: A second view from the north west towards the site from a wider angle. The roof of the existing building on the site is visible.



Figure 44: View from The Postern towards the site.



Figure 45: View from The Rampart towards the subject site. The roof of the existing building is just visible.



Figure 46: The site is completely concealed in this view corridor by the tree canopy.

4.3.1.5 Statement of Significance

Part H 3.5 of the *Willoughby Development Control Plan (DCP)* provides the following statement of significance for the area:

‘The Castlecrag and Haven Estates are outstanding early examples of subdivision which respected the landscape character of an area, created community environments and provided shared views. This process was initiated by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin who were influential architects in the United States and Australia, and were known for their appreciation of the opportunities provided by landscape which was embodied in their plan for Canberra. The significance of the estates is heightened by the extant works of the Griffins which are nationally and internationally recognised.

The estates are a larger more complete demonstration of principles Griffins had developed in the United States and their first seven years in Australia. These innovative principles involved subdivision, contoured roads embedded in the sandstone topography and engineering processes that were aimed at conserving the sandstone terrain, stream systems, indigenous bushland and harbour foreshore, and provided extensive reserves and walkways through the estates that created an integrated open space network. The distinctive nomenclature the Griffins gave to the reserves and roads expresses the castle-like quality of the Castlecrag peninsula.

The estates embody the sense of community and social connection from the Griffins, the first investors and the Griffins’ friends to a continuing community with a strong sense

of connection to the place. Long established community facilities include the Haven Amphitheatre, Community Centre, Griffin shops, tennis courts, reserves and walkways.

The estates are unique in their application of small lots in a spectacular harbour setting with public vistas and filtered views providing the suburban ideal subordinated to the landscape.

Key Period of Significance

1921 – 1935.²²

This statement is adopted for the purposes of this assessment.

4.3.1.6 Curtilage

The boundaries of the Conservation Area are as described by the *WLEP 2012*. The boundaries as they relate to the subject site are identified in Figure 19 above.

4.3.1.7 Relationship of the Site to the Conservation Area

The subject site, although not within the Griffin Conservation Area, lies at a gateway to it as the area is approached along Edinburgh Road from the west. The site forms a small but vital shopping precinct for residents of the Castlecrag Peninsula and also acts as a social hub. The latter is an important function that ties back into the Griffins' ideals of community. It is generally considered that Castlecrag starts at the eastern side of the intersection of the Eastern Valley Way and Edinburgh Road. As such the site will have an impact on how the Conservation Area is experienced and appreciated. The site is visible from some parts of the Conservation Area. It, however, is concealed from others by distance, topography and vegetation and because of the narrow curving streets.

4.3.2 Schedule 5 Part 3 of the WLEP 2012: Archaeological Sites

There are no archaeological sites listed by this Schedule in the vicinity of the site.

5 SCOPE OF WORKS

The following should be read in conjunction with the plans prepared by fjstudio (architectural) and Site Image (landscape) that accompany this application.

This SSDA seeks consent for the construction of a shop top housing development comprising of a 4-storey podium with ground floor specialty retail tenancies, two 11-storeys residential envelopes from the existing ground level with communal open space on the rooftop, and 5 levels of basement car parking with retail space. The proposal includes 150 dwellings and strata subdivision at 100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag.

The proposal retains the majority of the existing mature trees at the front and rear of the site. The trees that it is proposed to remove are identified by the arborist report that accompanies this application.

Extensive new landscaping is provided for in private and public spaces with plant and material choices being informed by the local environment. Significant aspects of the design include the open space provided on Edinburgh Road and the through site link at

²² Willoughby DCP, Section H3.5.

street level that makes a feature of the treescape behind and provides connection to The Postern and the Castlecrag pathway network beyond.

5.1 METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

The proposed works are assessed with an understanding of the objectives and controls provided by the *WLEP 2012* and the *Willoughby Development Control Plan (WDCP)*, in particularly Part H2.5 Infill Development and Part H3.5 Griffin Heritage Conservation Area: C4. The requirements for SoHI set out in the *Department of Planning and the Environment Guidelines for preparing a statement of heritage impact* (2023) have been read and understood. Three key questions are raised by these guidelines with regard to works in the vicinity of a heritage item as follows:

- Will the proposed works affect the heritage significance of the adjacent heritage item or the heritage conservation area?
- Will the proposed works affect views to, and from, the heritage item? If yes, how will the impact be mitigated?
- Will the proposed works impact on the integrity or the streetscape of the heritage conservation area?

Although the site does not lie within the Griffin Conservation Area, consideration should also be given to the aims and objectives of the Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc. (WBGS), keepers of the Griffin legacy. The WBGS provide the following Aims and Objectives pertaining to construction on land forming part of the original Greater Sydney Development Association's holdings:

- To commemorate and promote a better understanding in Australia and internationally of the lives, ideals, vision and works of the Griffins;
- To promote the preservation and conservation of landscape designs, buildings and other works designed by or having an association with the Griffins.²³

The WBGS provided guidelines for the Quadrangle Architectural Design Brief that informed the initial Planning Proposal. In assessing the impact of the proposal, these guidelines have been taken into consideration.

6 EFFECT OF WORKS

6.1 Reason for the Proposed Works

The first question that must be answered when new works are proposed within the vicinity of a heritage item or conservation area is:

Why is the proposal required to be located to the item/area?

The subject site is situated within the existing local centre of Castlecrag, an area along Edinburgh Road that has historically accommodated shops and community services. The existing shopping complex has reached the end of its economic and functional life, presenting an opportunity for renewal. The proposed development introduces a

²³ WBGS website.

residential component that differs from the traditional free-standing dwellings characteristic of the adjoining Conservation Area. In doing so, it provides a broader range of housing options and supports increased residential density along a major transport corridor, objectives strongly promoted by current NSW Government planning policies. This approach enables a wider cross-section of people to experience and enjoy life in Castlecrag.

Expanding appreciation of, and access to, the natural bushland was a central principle underpinning the original establishment of Castlecrag. The proposed mixed-use development on the subject site, located at the edge of the Conservation Area, responds to this legacy by providing for contemporary service and accommodation needs without intruding into the heritage precinct itself.

While the proposed height exceeds that of the surrounding low-density residential context, the location of the site outside the HCA boundary and its proximity to the major intersection of Edinburgh Road and Eastern Valley Way make it an appropriate place to concentrate additional building height and density. This outcome protects the low-scale character of the Griffin Conservation Area while achieving the State Government's objectives for high-quality, diverse housing options within the Willoughby LGA.

6.2 Effect of Works on the Griffin Conservation Area

The proposal, while significantly higher than what was previously approved on the site, has been carefully designed to minimise its visual impact on the adjoining Griffin HCA. Although there will be some visual contrast due to the scale disparity between the new building and the lower-scale heritage dwellings, the impacts are moderated through the incorporation of a series of design measures. These include appropriate podium heights, deep setbacks above the podium, the use of finishes and materials that reflect those found within the HCA, and the retention of existing vegetation on site supplemented by new planting integrated into the building's design.

The proposal has been developed to sit comfortably within the emerging future context of an area that will support a mix of housing types at a higher density than currently exists. It aligns with the objectives of the Housing SEPP, promoting diverse and high-quality residential outcomes while continuing the tradition of well-designed 'quality' housing that underpins the significance of the adjoining Griffin Conservation Area.

While the subject site is not located within the Griffin Conservation Area, the management policies set out in Part H3.5 of the WDCP have informed the proposal. The site occupies a sensitive position at the gateway to the Conservation Area, providing an important visual and physical transition between the traditional residential areas west of Eastern Valley Way and the distinctive landscape and built form character of the Conservation Area itself.

In recognition of the first management policy for the Griffin Conservation Area, which emphasises maintaining the original subdivision pattern, the proposal responds to the abrupt termination of Griffin's radial street and lot geometry on the eastern side of the site. The design integrates and extends this underlying pattern into the development, orientating the new built form to follow the curves of The Parapet and The Rampart. This

approach produces a more organic form than the existing development and contributes to a more seamless visual transition into the Conservation Area.

While the increased height introduces a degree of visual contrast, the proposal does not attempt to mimic the pitched roof forms of the adjacent heritage dwellings, which would be inappropriate at this scale. Instead, it adopts a complementary architectural language with flat roof forms that visually recede behind the tiled roofs of nearby houses. Deep setbacks above the podium and a strong horizontal emphasis help to reduce the perceived bulk, while careful modulation and articulation of the façades further break down the massing.

The proposed towers will result in some overshadowing of nearby dwellings. Those buildings located immediately to the south, which are outside the Heritage Conservation Area, will experience increased shadowing during parts of the day. The dwellings to the east, while affected by some afternoon overshadowing, will continue to receive ample morning and midday sunlight, maintaining a reasonable level of solar access consistent with residential amenity expectations in this setting.

Importantly, the orientation of the development ensures there is no overshadowing of the heritage dwellings to the north, allowing their established gardens, an integral element of their Federation-era setting, to continue to flourish. The proposal also draws upon Griffin's design principles, particularly the integration of landscape and built form. The podium steps with the natural contours of the site, supporting a series of pavilion-like elements arranged in a gentle radial pattern that continues the geometry of the Griffin subdivision.

The material and colour palette references the local bushland and sandstone character of Castlecrag, employing natural and warm-hued finishes, such as textured sandstone, ceramic panels, and bronze-toned cladding, to anchor the building in its landscape setting. Roof gardens, deep planters, and green spines between the building forms soften the built edges and promote integration of the podium into the existing tree canopy.

The landscape strategy reinforces the layered natural character of the Castlecrag landscape, drawing on the typologies of the sandstone gully, escarpment, and ridge-top woodland. Existing mature trees, particularly along the southern boundary, are retained wherever possible to maintain the vegetated buffer and filter views from Edinburgh Road and surrounding residential streets. New planting within and around the building will extend this green character, further blending the development with its surroundings.

Although the building will be visible from limited vantage points at the entry to the Conservation Area, its prominence will be moderated by the tree canopy, an appropriately scaled podium local topography, and the winding, vegetated streetscapes that define Castlecrag. As such, the visual catchment of the proposal from within the Conservation Area itself will be restricted.

6.3 Effect of Works on the Griffin Centre

The proposed works will have no impact on the fabric of the Griffin Centre and will not block view corridors to/from it. The public will still be able to fully view and appreciate this item.

The proposal will not be visible in significant view corridors out of the item.

The proposed works will be visible in view corridors that include the item, particularly on approach from the east, and will form part of its immediate setting. The impacts are acceptable for the following reasons:

- The proposal is of a larger massing, scale and height than the Griffin Centre because it is located on a larger site with different height/FSR controls. The item and the site will, however, be separated by Nos. 116 and 118 Edinburgh Road, the two storey forms of which will mitigate between the four storeys presentation of the proposal to Edinburgh Road and the single storey presentation of the Griffin Centre to Edinburgh Road.
- The proposal is orientated on its site in the same way that the item is orientated on its site.
- The proposed front setbacks retain existing planting on the site and within the public domain. This will assist in integrating the proposal into the streetscape. The proposed building is set no further forward on the site than the existing building.
- The proposal is contemporary in design. It does not seek to copy the pitch tile roof that is so dominant in views of the item from Edinburgh Road. Replicating such a roof form of a building of the proposed massing and scale would dominate and compete with the heritage item. Massing and scale is managed by breaking the building form into two above Level 4, through the use of a flat roof form broken only by small elements and through good articulation- with vertical and horizontal forms.
- The proposed materials, colours and finishes have been chosen to compliment the character of the adjoining Griffin Conservation Area, of which the Centre is a part. They will not give the proposal undue prominence in the setting of the Centre.

6.4 Effect of Works on the Community Centre

The proposed works will have no impact on the fabric of the Community Centre and will not block view corridors to/from it. The proposed new buildings will not be visible within the principal view corridors out of this site, which are to the south. There will thus be no impact on the ability to understand the significance of the item as a long term community centre and as an example of the work of Eric Nicholls.

The proposed works will have no impact upon the immediate setting of the item because the site is separated from the site by distance and several intervening properties. If the top of the proposed new building is visible in the distance from this item (noting that the viewing angle is acute), it will read as a distant element constructed of materials that complement the Conservation Area and with well-considered landscaping, including to the roof top, that will integrate it into the tree line as it matures. Most of the mature trees to the rear of the site will be retained and will remain visible on the skyline.

7 CONCLUSION

This SoHI has considered the impact the SSDA for a new mixed use development at No. 100 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag on heritage items and conservation areas in its vicinity. The site adjoins the north western corner of the Griffin Conservation Area. While not part of the Conservation Area, the site lies at a gateway into the Conservation Area. The proposal will provide a much needed update to the local centre and aligns with the *Willoughby Local Centres Strategy 2036* and Housing SEPP.

The proposal will have an acceptable impact on the Griffin Conservation Area for the following reasons:

- The proposal continues the use of the site as the local shopping centre, which is a long established use. The introduction of residential units diversifies housing choices, allowing a broader range of people to enjoy Castlecrag.
- The proposed built forms have been informed by the subdivision pattern of the Conservation Area and provide a better transition into it than the existing buildings on the site.
- The proposal demonstrates a recognition of the design principles of preservation and conservation of landscape and the integration of built form and the landscape in the work of the Griffins in Castlecrag. The proposal is integrated into its setting by maintaining the height of the buildings at/ below the treetops; by breaking the massing of podium into two main building forms and then further breaking the massing of these forms with a recessed central bay and cantilevered forms; by following the radial pattern of the subdivision; and through the use of materials and finishes that complement the natural surroundings. A well planted built form and public domain soften the boundary between public and private space in line with the Griffin's vision for the area.
- The scheme maintains and enhances the sense of community, important to the Griffins, by retaining communal space along Edinburgh Road in the ridge top community space.
- The materiality of the scheme sympathetic with the palette of the Griffin Heritage Conservation Area. There is an emphasis on the use of natural materials with texture and warm hues, such as sandstone and dark metal.

The scheme provides a well-designed and considered entrance into Castlecrag and a transition from the suburbs surrounding it. The proposed works fulfil the aims and objectives of the *LEP 2013* and the *DCP 2013* and the Housing SEPP by improving the quality and diversity of housing options in the Willoughby LGA while respecting the heritage significance of the items in the vicinity of the site.

8 REFERENCES

8.1 General References

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8.2 NSW LPI Records

Certificates of Title Volume 900 Volume 33; Volume 3184, Folio 143. NSW LPI.

8.3 State Heritage Inventory Listing Sheets

Community Centre, No. 10 The Postern, Castlecrag. State Heritage Inventory Database No.: 2660252.

8.4 Planning Controls and Guidelines

- Willoughby Development Control Plan.
- Willoughby Local Centers Strategy 2036.
- Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 2012*.
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021*