



## WHAT EXPERTS AND AUTHORITIES SAY

**Introductory Note:** Increasingly over the years in books, journal articles, magazines, exhibitions and television and radio programmes, many people have commented on the qualities of the Fishwick house - most very favourably. While references to such comments are publicly available through normal research sources, a large proportion are not. For convenience, some of the most interesting and important quotations from authoritative sources have been gathered here, grouped by subject.

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### On its prominence

“This house is the most celebrated of the Griffin houses in Castlecrag, because it demonstrates the Griffin ideas applied for a client with the will, the means and the enthusiasm to implement them.” Meredith Walker et al *Building for Nature* 1994. p62

“Our tour...will visit the Fishwick house [which] is recognised as one of the most important 20<sup>th</sup>-century houses in Australia.” Promotion of house visit by Historic Houses Trust of NSW *Members Newsletter* Spring 2009.

“The house is widely regarded as the finest, most intact Griffin house in Australia.” Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc. website. *Griffin Heritage Inventory* 2006. p2

“One of the best things [Griffin] did.” Professor James Weirick, Director of the Master of Urban Development programme, University of New South Wales, Sydney, is Australia’s pre-eminent Griffin authority. From an interview quoted in *Eight Great Houses* Guy Allenby 2002. p30

### On its significance

“Because of its design qualities and prominence among the Griffin houses in Castlecrag, the Fishwick house has always had a high level of local significance. Following its restoration, in my opinion, it ranks among the most important Griffin buildings in both the United States and Australia. As a well restored, outstanding example of his residential architecture, I believe it has significance at an international level.” From submission by Paul Kruty, Professor Emeritus of Architectural History at the University of Illinois, America’s pre-eminent Griffin authority. *Testimonial for NSW Heritage Office* 2004.

“The Fishwick house...is the largest, most innovative and intact of the [Castlecrag] houses. Its significance at both state and national levels is recognised by its heritage listings...It remains, in essence, Griffin’s ode to the Australian bush.” Jenna Reed-Burns *Private Sydney* 2000. p77

“The Fishwick house is an inspirational creation and one worth keeping for the generations ahead.” Press release from Dr David Kemp, then the minister responsible for Australia’s federal Department of Environment & Heritage. *Extract from the government’s 2002-03 Cultural Heritage Projects Programme*.

## **On its qualities and design features**

“The design, construction and detailing of the Fishwick house demonstrates Griffin’s commitment to combining creativity and artistry with innovative uses of technology and materials.” NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. *The Fishwick House* 2006. p1

“In a number of important respects, it demonstrates the culmination of the development of Griffin’s design and landscaping ideas in Australia.” NSW Office of Environment and Heritage website: [Home>Topics>Heritage places and items>Fishwick House>History](#).

“The first houses in Castlecrag were very modest in size, but later brochures promised buyers more elegant and expensive buildings in an ‘exclusive’ suburb. In this connection it is notable that some of the houses widely regarded as Griffin’s best are the biggest ones, from the 1903 Emery house to the 1912 Melson and Blythe houses (all in the Mid-West US) and the 1929 Fishwick house.” Professor Dustin Griffin *The Writings of Walter Burley Griffin* 2008. Introduction p xxxvii

## **On the relationship between the house and its surroundings**

“Certainly Griffin was trying to integrate the [Fishwick] house into the surroundings. Griffin had sought to work with existing sandstone rock ledges and the lay of the land. He very much wanted the home ‘settled’ into the landscape - if subservient to it - as though it had been there for all time.” Guy Allenby *Eight Great Houses* 2002. p48

“Of the 14 houses that were designed and built in the harbourside suburb...only a few have escaped major renovations. While this news would certainly disappoint the late American architect, Griffin would no doubt be pleased to know that the largest and grandest that was built - the Fishwick house - is one of them and is still surrounded by native vegetation.” Jenna Reed-Burns *Australian Gardens for a Changing Climate* 2008. p49

“The house and its landscape setting.....are valuable research resources for the study of the Griffins’ work and the philosophy underpinning Walter’s design innovations.” NSW Office of Environment and Heritage - [Home>Topics>Heritage places and items>Fishwick House>History](#).

## **On its restoration**

“Castlecrag was to be Griffin’s model garden suburb, exemplifying his organic principles whereby the houses, built from local materials, would possess an internal and external harmony. In the event, only ...13 survive, most of them significantly altered. The Fishwick house, however, has been scrupulously restored and is one of only two houses where the original client...had the means to build anything more than a modest bungalow.” Paul McGillick *Australian Architecture* 2005.

“The Fishwick house, winner in the restoration category, is a remarkable project combining all the essential ingredients for the successful conservation of a very important house: careful research, investigation of the fabric and execution of the work. The house is one of Sydney’s treasures. It was fascinating to see the owners having a passion and enthusiasm which is not always shared by owners of such iconic buildings. There were a number of unusual and difficult conservation problems that they carefully worked through to achieve a highly successful outcome which is empathetic with the idiosyncrasies of the house.” Extract from letter from Patrick Reilly, Mayor Heritage Awards 2000 Jury re: *Willoughby City Council City Awards 2000*. 14<sup>th</sup> April 2000.