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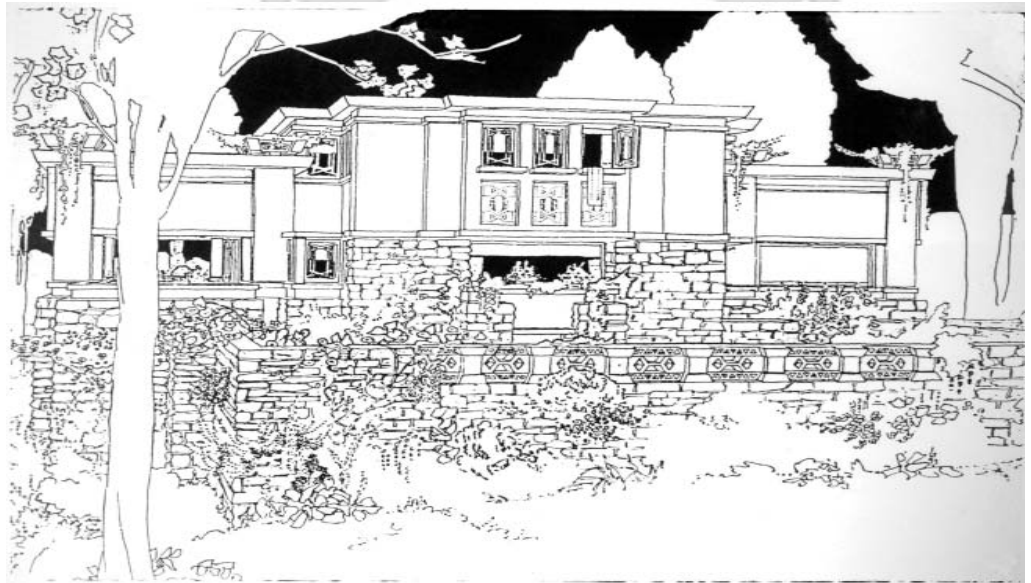
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FIFTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR 30-31 MAY IN MASON CITY, IOWA

The fifteenth annual meeting of the Walter Burley Griffin Society of America will be held in Mason City, Iowa, on Friday and Saturday, 30-31 May 2014. And what a meeting it is looking to be! Thanks to Bob McCoy's continued persistence and goodwill, there will be eleven buildings open for touring. This will necessitate two afternoons of tour times—Friday and Saturday. The meeting will start late on Friday morning, with a welcome, introduction, and box lunch before the afternoon gets underway. The evening will begin with a reception and keynote address by Professor James Weirick of the University of New South Wales. Dinner is on your own. Saturday morning is to begin with a morning session of lectures at the Mason City Public Library, 225 2nd St SE, followed by lunch on your own, followed by the second round of walking tours. (Note: half the houses will be open one afternoon and the other half the second afternoon.) The meeting will end with a reception on Saturday evening, followed by dinner on your own.

Accommodations are available at the following, all of which have offered special conference rates by mentioning the Griffin Society: *Quality Inn and Suites*, 410 5th St. SW, 866-460-7456 (a half mile from the public library); *Holiday Inn Express and Suites*, 3041 4th St SW, 866-460-7456 (a mile and a half from library); and *Country Inn and Suites*, 4082 4th St SW, 641-423-1770 (two and a half miles from library). Please contact the hotels directly with your reservations. In addition, a limited number of rooms remain in the Society's name at *Wright on the Park*, the restored Park Inn Hotel and City Bank building. Please contact Peter B. Griffin directly at wbgociety@charter.net for availability. Look for registration information and conference costs in the next newsletter, as well as on the Griffin website WBGriffinSociety.org.



James Blythe house, Mason City, 1913, perspective by Marion Mahony Griffin.



C. L. Jenks house, Lauderdale Lakes, WI,
1907. Photo by Paul E. Sprague.

GRIFFIN'S JENKS HOUSE TRULY IN PERIL

Since we last reported about the Jenks house in Spring 2011, little has changed regarding the dire situation of its continued existence—until recently. The property is now about to go up for auction (no date set yet), with the land listed as the total value of the property, meaning that the assumption is that the site will be cleared for a new McMansion. A call has gone out on the PrairieMod website looking for sympathetic buyers or saviors of some sort, along with a host of modern and historic photographs. Check that site for updates [prairiemo.com]. In mid-October PrairieMod contacted the Griffin Society about the building, and board member Paul Kruty put them in touch with members of the family trying to save the house. Kruty also provided the website with a brief account of the history of the house and its significance. FYI, the first scholar to locate the Jenks summer house in modern times was board member Paul Sprague in the 1970s.

REVIEWING THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING

By Lucille Durko Pohl, Sarasota, Florida

Some eighty-five members came together in Evanston, Illinois on June 29, 2013 for the fourteenth annual meeting of the Walter Burley Griffin Society of America. The morning session allowed the group to gather at the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art located on the campus of Northwestern University. They were greeted by Peter Griffin who introduced Alesha Cerny, Paul Sprague and Gaylord Otte, each of whom presented a paper. In the meeting notes Paul Kruty referred to the speaker topics as being representative of discussing Griffin in terms of preservation, research, and adaptive reuse.

To address “preservation” Alesha Cerny of the National Park Service regional center in Omaha, Nebraska, discussed her role in the ongoing process of nominating Griffin’s Stinson Memorial Library in Anna, Illinois, to be a National Historic Landmark. The Griffin Society toured this library during our annual gathering in 2010, when the Society also published its monograph on the building. Ms. Cerny discussed the steps required for completion in order to present the nomination to the office of the Secretary of the Interior. Because many of the original records survive and the interior is largely intact, Ms. Cerny’s task has been made easier. Naming the Stinson Library a National Historic Landmark would complete another step in its preservation history. It is already on the National Register of Historic Places (1978) and is worthy of additional recognition.

To address “scholarly research” our own Paul Sprague presented his paper on Idalia, Florida, a town planned by Griffin in 1911, before he got involved in the Canberra project. Dr. Sprague first discussed the fact that Griffin considered himself an architect, landscape architect, and town planner, all of which were addressed in the Idalia plan. The plan of this town to be located on the Caloosahatchee River in southwest Florida included the development of areas for commercial, public, and residential use. Griffin also developed a schematic design for a major commercial building which was a structure meant to house businesses, a general store and a keeper’s flat. His plan also included suggestions for plantings, these being tropical varieties new to him. Some of the streets were cut but the venture failed when developer Edward Staten was unable to attract enough buyers to realize his project. This, coupled with the financial failures of the 1920s, ultimately caused him to have to sell the property for taxes. Thus Griffin’s plan for Idalia was never realized.

To address “adaptive reuse” Griffin homeowner Gaylord Otte showed slides and talked about his ongoing project restoring and expanding the Comstock II house, built in 1911-12 in Evanston. He talked about the challenges facing the owner of an historic home that needs to be updated and expanded a century after it was built. Mr. Otte had to submit plans for approval by the Evanston Preservation Commission and make revisions in accordance with their criteria. Evanston building codes also had to be satisfied. In addition, having applied for a grant from the State of Illinois he had to comply with

state criteria. Mr. Otte is also the general contractor for his project and did much of the restoration work himself. Later in the day Griffin members toured his home.

Paul Kruty next introduced the rest of the day's agenda including the special exhibit at the Block Museum of Art, several buildings on the Northwestern campus, and the afternoon house tours.

The Block Museum exhibit "Drawing the Future: Chicago Architecture on the International Stage, 1900-1925" was curated by David Van Zanten, architectural historian and professor of art and art history at Northwestern University. He was present to give Griffin Society members a most informative guided tour of his exhibit which included many architectural drawings by Burnham, Wright, Griffin, Mahony, and other Chicago architects and explained the influence of these drawings, projects, and drawing styles on international ideas of city planning and architectural presentations before World War I. At this time there was an ongoing dialogue between American and European architects and through the Canberra Plan by Griffin with Australia as well. Many drawings by European architects and planners were also included. The show gave us all a chance to refresh our memories of Burnham's Chicago Plan, Griffin's plan of Canberra, and other notable examples of architecture and architectural planning of the time, and to just enjoy Marion Mahony Griffin's beautiful unique and mature style of rendering. It reminded us that architectural renderings can be art.

Since we were on the Northwestern University campus it was suggested that we view Gustavus Swift Hall (1908-9, George Maher), the Shakespeare Garden (1915, Jens Jensen), and a Faculty House for Northwestern University (1894, Spencer & Kendall). Following the box lunch, we were invited to tour four houses, all located in Evanston. They included the Edwin and Abbie Hurlbut House (1910-11, Spencer & Powers) replete with Prairie style details, original cabinetry, and stained glass windows. The more casual linen storage room and dressing room on the second floor were of special interest. Thank you to owners Martha and Roger Pascal who were preparing to put this house on the market. The Frederick and Grace Kretsinger House (1908, Tallmadge & Watson) was influenced more by modern architecture in Germany and Austria than by the Prairie school. The

lovely fireplace tiles in the dining room as well as the leaded glass in the living room were designed by Giannini and Hilgart and were quite exquisite. Again, we thank owner Camellia Laing for sharing her fine home with us.

We had already visited the Frederick Carter House (1909-10, Walter Burley Griffin) in 2006 shortly after it was bought by new owners. Since then, this house has been beautifully maintained and exhibits all the fine points of Griffin's architectural and interior design. The addition of a second story to the garage and a reconfiguration of the kitchen without changing the exterior of the building were fine additions to a house that will continue to be one of Griffin's best known buildings. Owners Mark Ouweleen and Sarah Harding deserve much credit for their ongoing work.

The last house on our agenda was the Comstock II House designed by Griffin in 1911-12 and discussed in the morning session by owner Gaylord Otte. The manner of restoration opened a stream of dialogue between the owner and individual members of the Griffin Society. Limitations set by differing local and state preservation organizations created some design decisions that do not seem to comply with the original design. The design of the porch enclosure was of particular interest to our members. The owners have spent considerable time updating and restoring this Griffin house which was in very poor condition when they acquired it. We thank Gaylord and Lynn Otte for bringing this house to its current condition and for allowing us to see their progress.

It was a good day, maybe a little low key, but always fun to reunite with the members of the Walter Burley Griffin Society who are indeed representatives of preservation, ongoing research, and adaptive reuse of the fabulous living works of Walter Burley Griffin and his partner Marion Mahony Griffin.

See you all again next year in Mason City.

MMG's "FAIRIES" MURAL

By Glenda Korporaal, Sydney

*Editor's note: Marion Mahony Griffin's mural in Chicago's Armstrong grammar school, known to Griffin aficionados for many years, otherwise remains a well-kept secret. The following piece appears in the latest issue of the newsletter of the Griffin Society of Australia, to whom we are grateful for permission to reproduce it, with minor emendations. For photographs of the mural, see the Powerhouse catalog, edited by Anne Watson, **Beyond Architecture** (1998), p.48, and Mary K. Gray, **A Guide to Chicago's Murals** (2001), p. 267. The full mural appears on pp. 30-31 in **Marion Mahony Griffin: Drawing the Form of Nature** (Block Museum of Art, 2005). The mural was preliminarily restored by the Conservation Center in 1997/98, as part of the comprehensive project to stabilize murals in Chicago Public Schools.*

Just before the last annual meeting of the Griffin Society, Professor David Van Zanten of Northwestern University arranged a visit for myself and my husband to the G. B. Armstrong School to see the amazing mural painted by Marion Mahony Griffin. Called "Fairies Feeding the Herons," it was done by Marion during a visit back home to Chicago in 1931, for the graduating class of that year. Marion's younger sister, Gene, was a teacher at the school, which Gene's daughter, Clarmyra, attended. Marion was staying with her sister just a few blocks from the school.

We were amazed at how wonderful the mural looked so many decades later. It is in remarkably good condition and appears to have had some restoration work done at some stage. The mural is in a hallway, about shoulder-to-head height of an ordinary adult. School children walk past it all day every day. We were struck with how wonderful the mural was but also with the very real possibility that this great piece of art and very loving work by Marion was so vulnerable to damage and to the elements.

The school's principal, Otis L. Dunson III, is proud of the mural and aware of its significance. He has kept the school in immaculate condition. As principal he has also been keen to get his students to study countries overseas as well, in line with the school's official name: The G. B. Armstrong School of International Studies. He also told us the story of a break-in at the school recently, where vandals had spray-painted many of the walls. He rushed into the school as soon as he knew about it and, for some reason, they

had spared Marion's wonderful mural.

The mural needs to be professionally preserved and then protected with something like non-glare glass. There also needs to be some sort of plaque or sign next to it explaining its significance and history. Principal Dunson is keen for this to happen; but what is needed now is some modest funding as well as some drive at the Chicago end to make things happen. Professor Van Zanten's wife is a curator at the Art Institute and perhaps her expertise or connections could be brought in to help with the preservation. Van Zanten, who lives a few miles away, is also willing to help.

This is an ideal project for any Australians living in Chicago or with a Chicago/Midwest connection to promote as an exercise in good will between the two countries—maybe one for an Australian/US group in Chicago or the US. It is something very much in the spirit of the Griffins and its preservation has the potential to become a symbol of Australian/American cooperation, as well as a means of keeping Marion's work alive.

My husband and I gave Principal Dunson \$100 to contribute to a fund to help restore and preserve the mural. I promised to try to seek some broader support for the idea on my return to Australia. Any ideas are welcome to me at glendak@bigpond.net.au or contact Principal Dunson at the school directly.

The address is:

G. B. Armstrong School of International Studies
2110 W. Greenleaf Avenue
Chicago, IL 60645
Ph: 773-534-2150
Fx: 773-534-2192

Email: odunson@cpa.edu

CENTENARY OF WBG FIRST SETTING FOOT ON AUSTRALIAN SOIL

The Griffin Society of Australia celebrated the centenary of the Griffins' arrival in Australia with three days of events in Canberra on 15-17 August. Beginning on Thursday, the Society's annual Marion Mahony Griffin Lecture was delivered by the Australian architect Caroline Pidcock, while the next day featured a symposium of international scholars, including Dr. Karl Fischer, a well-known urban planner and historian from the University of Kassel, James Weirick of the University of New South Wales, and our own Paul Kruty from the University of Illinois. Prof.

Kruty examined Griffin's American planning and architecture before his arrival in Australia and Prof. Weirick recounted the development of Canberra during Griffin's time and in the following decades. Dr. Fischer was forced to withdraw at the last moment because of illness. Instead, a roundtable discussion ended the day. Finally, a bus tour on Saturday was led by Prof. Weirick, who related the exciting story of the development of Canberra "from sheep paddock to the national capital, the international competition, the Griffins' vision and plans, political intrigue and bureaucratic intervention," according to the Society's newsletter, by stopping at key locations around the city to uncover Griffin's proposed design and its relationship with the existing city.



T. W. Fishwick house, Castlecrag, 1929. Photo by Paul Kruty.

RECENT PROMINENCE OF GRIFFIN'S WORK IN AUSTRALIA — ESPECIALLY CASTLECRAG

By Andrew Kirk, Castlecrag

That the lives and works of the Griffins continue to reach and appeal to a broader audience is clear from the recent prominence of their "dream suburb" Castlecrag and the Fishwick house (1929), their largest house in Castlecrag. Three recent books and a TV documentary all describe Walter as an important pivotal figure in Australian architecture as it moved from being grounded in historic styles to become more respectful of the local climate, landscape and native bushland. In each, the Fishwick house is prominently featured as an excellent example of his planning, landscaping and design principles.

20th Century World Architecture

Phaidon Press, one of the world's most respected publishers of architecture and design books, recently released this authoritative reference book internationally. It is extremely large (832 pages) and com-
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prehensive, comprising "the finest built architecture from around the world in the 20th century, juxtaposing architectural icons with regional masterpieces." It describes and analyses 757 buildings with a wide variety of sizes and uses—commercial, residential, civic, religious, cultural—in 97 countries. Griffin is one of the few architects in it who have more than one building considered "of outstanding importance." These are Newman College (1916) and the Capitol Theatre (1924) in Melbourne and the Fishwick house in Sydney.

The Fishwick house is featured on a full-color page. It is one of only 134 single residences included in the atlas and is the only Australian house represented from the first half of the 20th century. It and Wright's Robie house (1908) are the only ones from early 20th century Chicago architects.

Building Australia

This six-part TV series was produced by the History Channel with assistance from the Australian National Trust and recently screened in Australia through cable television. It was funded by Screen Australia's National Documentary Program. It "uses the history of individual houses as a way to explore the architectural and social history of Australia." The Fishwick house was chosen to represent the early 20th century, exploring in depth Griffin's important role in introducing modernist, non-derivative thinking to Australian architecture and his "utopian visions for the Australian residential community."

Landmarks - A History of Australia in 33 Places

Australia's National Museum in Canberra recently published this book to complement its new permanent gallery of the same name. Castlecrag was selected as one of four suburbs to represent the diversity of urban life in Australia. The book "explores the links between historical events, people and places across Australia," and devotes six pages to Castlecrag. The museum's gallery displays a variety of artifacts, plans and photographs about Castlecrag, along with a large display panel featuring the Fishwick house.

Garden Voices

Anne Latreille, long-time Gardening Editor of *The Age*, Melbourne's most prominent newspaper, and one of Australia's most respected writers on landscaping and gardening has just released this, her fifth book. Published by Blooming's Books, it "examines the work, lives and messages of selected garden designers, past and present, around Australia." The nineteen

gardens featured all “*have understood and responded to the places where they work in such a way that their gardens...impart a special message.*” The essence of Griffin’s message is said to be “*respect the land, respond to nature and touch the land lightly.*” The concentration is on Newman College and Castlecrag; two large photographs of the Fishwick house and its garden of native plants are featured.

INDIAN MONOGRAPH STILL AVAILABLE

The Griffin Society is pleased to make available a limited number of new copies of the ground-breaking book, *Two American Architects in India: Walter B. Griffin and Marion M. Griffin, 1935-1937*, published in conjunction with the international conference, “The Griffins in Context: American, Australia, India,” held at the University of Illinois in October 1997. Written by Paul Kruty and Paul E. Sprague, the book is a comprehensive examination of the brief but productive period during which the Griffins worked in northern India. Long unavailable and difficult to find, the book is for sale through the Griffin Society for \$25, which includes shipping and handling. (A few used copies are currently available on Amazon for up to \$98.82 plus shipping.) Copies may be ordered on the website or by writing to the Walter Burley Griffin Society of America, 1152 Center Drive, St. Louis, MO, 63117.

SOCIETY’S TWO PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Everyone who is interested in the Griffins and in the Prairie School will want to own the Society’s two original publications, available through the website and by ordering directly from the Society’s headquarters in St. Louis.

Marion Mahony and Millikin Place presents for the first time the whole exciting story of the development of Millikin Place in Decatur, Illinois. As Paul Kruty explains, “The history of Millikin Place is the personal story of Marion Mahony and Walter Griffin. The chain of events set in motion in September 1909, when Mahony agreed to complete Wright’s buildings while he was abroad for a year, not only brought Walter and Marion together in Decatur, but it soon led to their marriage, and later to the extraordinary Rock Crest/Rock Glen commission in Mason City, Iowa, and finally to Australia.”

Walter Burley Griffin and the Stinson Memorial Library reveals the international significance of the Griffins’ major public building in the United States, a work

that H. Allen Brooks called “a brilliant design and a fitting climax to Griffin’s American career.” Drawing on the priceless collection of letters and documents surviving at the library, Paul Kruty recounts the story of the commission, design, construction, and reception of the building, as well as its contexts in Griffin’s career, the public library in America, and the architect’s intention to create a Modern representational public architecture.

Marion Mahony and Millikin Place sells for \$29.95, while *Walter Burley Griffin and the Stinson Memorial Library* sells for \$25, plus s & h. Griffin Society members receive a 20% discount on both publications.

MEMBERSHIP

The Walter Burley Griffin Society Of America is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation under IRS Code 501 (c)(3). We invite you to become a “Friend” of the Society. For annual dues of \$25.00, you will receive a periodic newsletter keeping you abreast of the Society’s activities, such as lectures, tours, exhibitions, and other events related to the Griffins’ work. (\$20.00 for seniors 65 and older.)

The Society seeks comments, advice, suggestions, and news from you, its friends. The Society needs your financial support. All donations are tax-deductible.

If you wish to join the Society or renew your membership in the Society, please fill out the following form and mail it to us at the address below - or email us that you are attending the Annual Meeting and you can pay for both membership and meeting at that time.

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Company: _____

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