

# THE GRIFFIN NEWSLETTER

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Please email news items to the editor.

## TWENTIETH ANNUAL MEETING

**SATURDAY/SUNDAY, 1-2 JUNE 2019**

**JOIN US IN DECATUR and SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**

**MEETING:** The twentieth annual meeting of the Walter Burley Griffin Society of America will be held during the weekend of 1-2 June 2019, in Decatur on Saturday, with an optional extension on Sunday to Springfield, Illinois. The morning session on Saturday will be held at the University Commons, Millikin University [marked "12" on the attached map]. Parking will be available in the visitors' lot directly in front (south) of the Commons building. Doors of the Commons will open at 8:30 with the lectures beginning at 9:00 and ending at noon. Speakers include preservation architect Mike Jackson recounting the restoration of the Dana house; James Weirick returns to lecture on Griffin's lost Shanghai plan; artisan and scholar Ted Ellison examines the glass mosaics of the Prairie School; and Paul Kruty prepares us for Millikin Place and the afternoon events. A buffet lunch will be served in the same building.

The afternoon tour, which includes the four houses on Millikin Place plus the Millikin Homestead, will begin at 1:30 and end at 4:30, followed by a wine-and-cheese reception at the Adolph Mueller house, No. 4 Millikin Place, lasting until 5:30. Dinner is on your own. On Sunday morning, we will meet at 10:00 am at the Susan Lawrence Dana house in Springfield for private tours led by Mike Jackson and Anthony Rubano.

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** The conference hotel is the Decatur Conference Center and Hotel, Route 36 & Wyckles Rd., Decatur, IL 62522, 217-422-8800. Please ask for the Griffin Society rate.

**BACKGROUND:** Millikin Place is a private street on the west side of Decatur, Illinois, that consists of four grand houses from 1909-11—two designed by Marion Mahony (for Robert and Adolph Mueller, at Nos. 1 and 4 Millikin Place), one by Frank Lloyd Wright and Marion Mahony (for E. P. Irving at No. 2 Millikin Place) and one by a California bungalow firm—plus a large Italianate mansion from the 1870s (the Millikin Homestead) and a group of interesting houses from the 1920s-30s (exterior viewing only). The three Mahony/Wright houses were built by the Chicago office of Herman Von Holst, who assumed Wright's practice in September 1909 and hired Marion Mahony as chief designer. The three were landscaped by Walter Burley Griffin. The Society visited Millikin Place once before, in 2007, to coincide with the publication of our first book, *Marion Mahony and Millikin Place*.

It looks to be a very exciting meeting. We look forward to seeing you there!

**Please send in your registration as soon as possible. It really helps.**

# DECATUR, ILLINOIS

Centrally located in the heart of the Midwest, Millikin is just three hours from Chicago, St. Louis, and Indianapolis.



www.millikin.edu

## MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS MAP

- Academic / Administration**
  - 1001 M10 - Millikin Hall - [www.millikin.edu](http://www.millikin.edu)
  - 1001 M11 - Alumni Development Center
  - 1001 M12 - College Hall
  - 1001 M13 - Economic Science & Sport Psychology
  - 1001 M14 - South Hall - Business Office Support Services
  - 1001 M15 - Grinnell Physical Education Center
  - 1001 M16 - Health Services Center
  - 1001 M17 - Leidy-Tabor Science Center
  - 1001 M18 - Millikin Dental Health Clinic
  - 1001 M19 - Millikin Music Center
  - 1001 M20 - Milling Chapel
  - 1001 M21 - Fritsch Center for Theatre & Dance
  - 1001 M22 - University Commons

- Arbitration**
  - 1001 M23 - Student Tennis Courts
  - 1001 M24 - Daniels Indoor Sports Center (DISC)
  - 1001 M25 - Department of Art Media
  - 1001 M26 - Frank M. Lindley Track & Field
  - 1001 M27 - Grinnell Physical Education Center
  - 1001 M28 - Workman Family Softball Field
  - 1001 M29 - Future Workman Family Baseball Field
- Dining**
  - 1001 M30 - Big Blue Bistro - [www.millikin.edu](http://www.millikin.edu)
  - 1001 M31 - Goldie's Cafe - [www.millikin.edu](http://www.millikin.edu)
  - 1001 M32 - Commons, the Library, University Dodge
  - 1001 M33 - Oneida from Bagels - [www.millikin.edu](http://www.millikin.edu)
  - 1001 M34 - Jimmy John's
  - 1001 M35 - Workout Dining Room - [www.millikin.edu](http://www.millikin.edu)

- Hoousing**
  - 1001 M36 - Alpha Chi Omega
  - 1001 M37 - Alpha Hall
  - 1001 M38 - Backloun Hall
  - 1001 M39 - Delta Delta Delta
  - 1001 M40 - Gamma Hall
  - 1001 M41 - Nu Nu House
  - 1001 M42 - Millikin East & West Apts.
  - 1001 M43 - New Hall 4
  - 1001 M44 - Pi Beta Phi
  - 1001 M45 - Sigma Alpha Ipsilon
  - 1001 M46 - Pi Tau Phi
  - 1001 M47 - The Kappa Epsilon
  - 1001 M48 - Walker Hall
  - 1001 M49 - Wood Hall
  - 1001 M50 - The Woods at Millikin Apartments

- Fire & Performing Arts**
  - 1001 M51 - Albert Taylor Theatre
  - 1001 M52 - 30 Arts & Theatre Center
  - 1001 M53 - Biblio Museum
  - 1001 M54 - Millikin Fine Arts Center
  - 1001 M55 - Call Arts
  - 1001 M56 - Performance House
  - 1001 M57 - Performance Music Center
  - 1001 M58 - Milling Chapel
  - 1001 M59 - Pope Dennis Studio Theatre
  - 1001 M60 - smc
- Public Safety**
  - 1001 M61 - Emergency
  - 1001 M62 - Dining



**MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY**

1001 W. Main St., Decatur, IL 62521



James B. Millikin House, 1875



Irving Residence in Winter  
Designed by Marion L. Mahony and  
Frank L. Wright in 1909-10



Robert Mueller house,  
Designed by Marion L. Mahony in 1910



Millikin Place Entrance Post,  
Designed by Marion L. Mahony in 1910-11



A. Mueller Residence with Griffin's original landscaping,  
Designed by Marion L. Mahony in 1910.

## GOINGS-ON AT THE FISHWICK HOUSE

by Andrew Kirk

fishwickhouse.org

*Griffin's magnificent house for T. W. Fishwick of 1929 has been called "the most celebrated of the Griffin houses at Castlecrag," a dwelling created "for the type of client Griffin had in the United States, but did not have in Australia." Accounts are found in two books published by the Walter Burley Griffin Society Incorporated in Australia: Meridith Walker, Adrienne Kabos and James Weirick, **Building For Nature: Walter Burley Griffin and Castlecrag** (1994), 62-64; and Anne Watson, ed., **Visionaries in Suburbia, Griffin Houses in the Sydney Landscape** (2015), 94-104. Members will remember that in 2003 at Mason City, Andrew Kirk, then president of the Walter Burley Griffin Society Incorporated, spoke about the restoration of the Fishwick house at that time; his own account of the meeting, "Thoughts from Australia," appeared in the next newsletter, Fall 2003. Andrew updated developments at Castlecrag and the Fishwick house in the Fall 2013 newsletter. The following report, which calls to mind Tannys Langdon's and Rich Berry's accounts of their experiences with the Peters and Ralph Griffin houses presented at the Edwardsville meeting of 2017, brings the story of this extraordinary building and the Kirks relationship to it, up to the present. Ed.*

Griffin's Fishwick house in Castlecrag, Sydney, is 90 years old this year. My wife, Sue, and I have lived in it for half of that time. Surely it would be reasonable to assume that both we and our house should be enjoying a serene existence by now. Not so.

It all began about four years ago when we unlocked the house's front door after a trip overseas to find its entrance hall flooded. It took us, the building's customary expert architect, and his trusty plumber some time to discover that dear old Walter had concealed a copper water pipe in an inaccessible cavity. Its repair required parts of the house's fabric to be destroyed. This meant that the New South Wales state government's Heritage Office (HO) had to become involved. It agreed to partially fund the search for the leak's source and necessary repairs through an Emergency Works Grant. It also insisted that a "Band Aid" solution was not acceptable. This decree led the HO to award a two year, dollar-for-dollar, Major Works Grant poetically entitled **Fishwick house: find causes of water leaks, rectify these, repair damage they caused and protect building from threats to its long-term stability.**

Of course, during those years Sue has just loved living in a gritty house constantly surrounded by tradesmen; however the finishing line is in sight. The final report is to be sent to the Heritage Office in mid-May. It will be the last of eight progress reports I've produced for them (this is the bureaucracy after all).

Curiously, during this period of domestic destruction the house has been the star of some important events. It is as if people with an interest in heritage architecture especially enjoy seeing restoration works in progress. Some examples:

- The Australian Architecture Association, a professional body which concentrates on modern buildings, organised a tour of three "outstanding" houses from different eras: ours from 1929, the 1973 Maley house and the 2001 Newton house. All of these are within a 150 metre radius. Each was considered highly innovative when built. The event was sold out. Tours of the three houses were led by their respective architects – I was the surrogate Griffin. Immediately afterwards, the owners, guides and visitors gathered in the house for a cocktail party and panel discussion which aimed to reveal insights on the nature of "good" modern architecture and its evolution.

- The NSW government cares for a group of 12 of the most prominent local historic houses, gardens and museums. For many years it had an affiliated "Friends Of" body which recently chose to become independent. This group, which is guided by some of the country's most highly-regarded and experienced heritage experts, academics, architects and consultants, also resolved to become national in scope and to adopt an entirely new charter: to aid and support owners of heritage listed houses. It adopted the name *Historic Houses Association of Australia*.

In April last year this new body hosted its inaugural two-day conference in Sydney's Conservatorium of Music, an outstanding 1817 building famously designed by an architect who just happened to be a convict, Francis Greenway. More than 200 people attended from all over Australia. They were said by the chairman to be "the royalty" of those interested in preserving the country's most important and treasured historic houses.

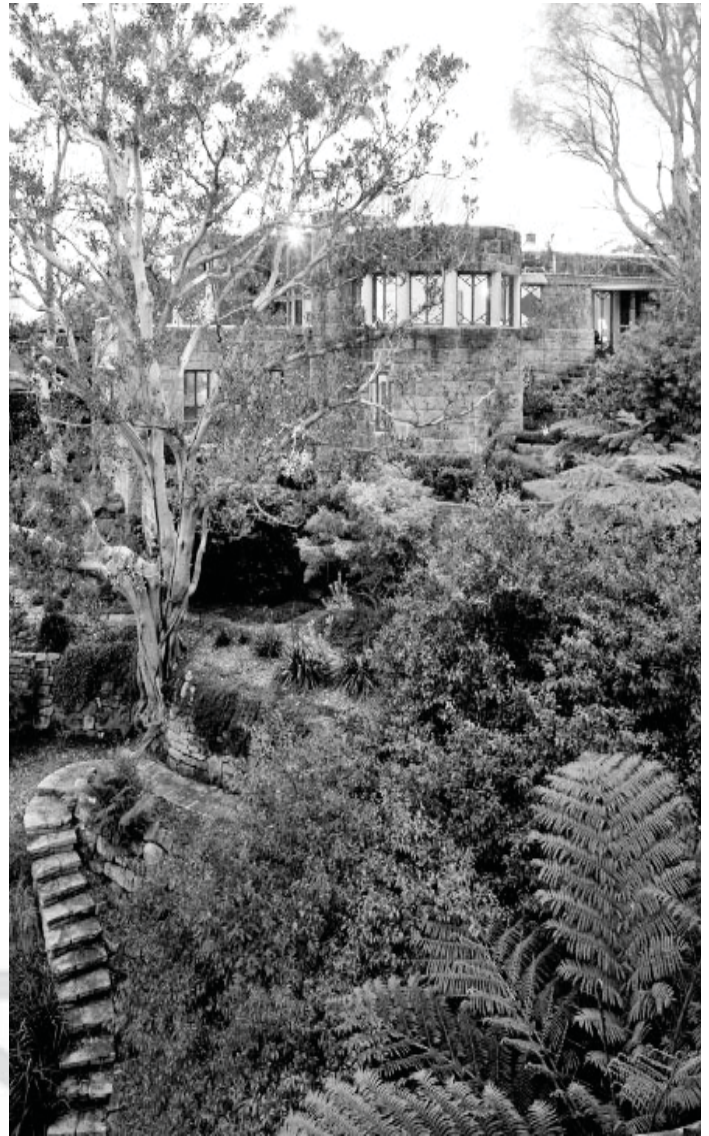
The Fishwick house was honoured to host a pre-conference cocktail party held so that the HHA board members, patrons, members of discussion panels and invited speakers could get to know each other. The sixty guests included prominent experts from the UK

and France, heads of the major national and state heritage organisations and representatives of state and local government agencies.

- Based on the HHA's exposure to the house it asked if we would agree to it making it a "member property," one of only 24 in the state of New South Wales. (See <https://www.hha.net.au/properties>.) Also, late last year, it organised a large group tour of the house and garden which was guided by Sue and me. They didn't seem to mind the dust and grit.



Fishwick street facade



Fishwick side view



Fishwick harbor facade

## AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

*In late January, Vin Plant sent us the following about his wife, Glenda Korporaal, author of "Making Magic: The Marion Mahony Griffin Story" (2015) and frequent participant in Griffin meetings since 2012:*

On Australia Day [January 26], the Australian government announced the award of an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) to Glenda for services to print media. To put it in context, the OAM is our version of the MBE that the Queen gave to the Beatles, back in the day.

Glenda is working in Beijing as the foreign correspondent for The Australian newspaper until the end of March, so we will have the celebratory party when she gets back. One isn't required to curtsy or bow!

Look forward to seeing you all at the June meeting!  
Vin and Glenda

## GRIFFIN SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

**On His Own: Walter Burley Griffin's First Two Houses; The Gables, Diamonds and Flowing Spaces of 1906 and 1907.**

By Paul Kruty, with contributions by Richard H. Berry, Tannys Langdon and Paul E. Sprague. 2017.

**Marion Mahony and Millikin Place: Creating a Prairie School Masterpiece.**

By Paul Kruty and Paul E. Sprague. 2007.

**Walter Burley Griffin and the Stinson Memorial Library: Modernism Comes to Main Street.**

By Paul Kruty. 2010.

**Rock Crest/Rock Glen, Mason City, Iowa: The American Masterwork of Marion M. and Walter B. Griffin.**

Essays by Robert E. McCoy, Paul Kruty, Paul E. Sprague and James Weirick. 2014.

To order copies of each, please see our website:  
[www.wbgriffinsociety.org](http://www.wbgriffinsociety.org)

## 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.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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