

## News Update

June 1991

### 1. HAVEN AMPITHEATRE CONCERT

The Willoughby Wind Quartet Afternoon Light Concert will be held this Sunday, 16th June at Griffin's own Haven Ampitheatre. See the enclosed green sheet for details.

In September there will be a season of plays by the Ensemble Theatre. This will be the first time a professional company will perform at the Haven Ampitheatre since its reconstruction.

### 2. THE DUNCAN HOUSE

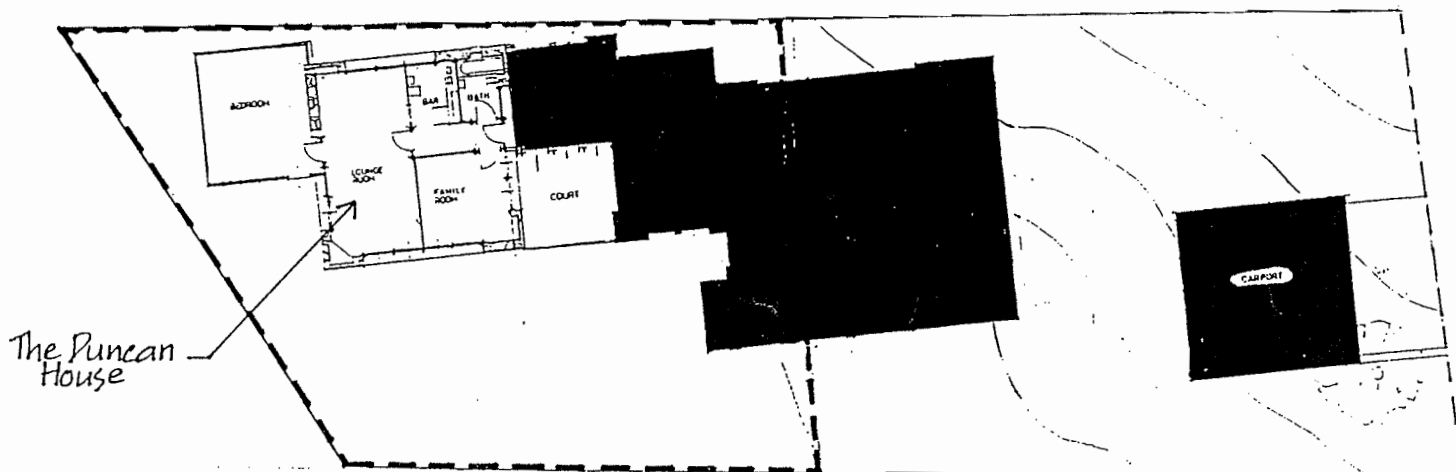
On the eve of the auction sale of *The Duncan House* in April 1989 the NSW Government put an Interim Conservation Order on the house to protect this internationally renowned architecture. The normal procedure for an Interim Conservation Order (ICO) is for it to remain in place until such time as it can be replaced by a Permanent Conservation Order (PCO) (usually 12 months). However, in the case of *The Duncan House* the ICO was allowed to lapse in April 1990 without being extended. The owners then objected to a PCO being placed on the house, though they had bought the house when the ICO was in place. The owners have made a building application to the Heritage Council which triples the size of *The Duncan House*. The proposed addition butts right up to the house, encroaching on what was the ICO area. This proposal completely destroys the integrity of the original house.

Instead of postponing the decision on the proposed additions until after the Permanent Conservation Order was considered, the Heritage Council immediately commenced consideration of the building application. The Heritage Council also permitted the owners to personally address their committee meeting. The same privilege, however, was denied the Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc. when we requested this. The Society's request to the Heritage Council to extend the ICO on the house has gone unanswered.

The Heritage Council has now approved the building plans and the owners have applied to Willoughby City Council for building approval. Overleaf is a plan showing *The Duncan House* with the proposed additions in black. With such large additions built right onto the house, the original Griffin concept will pale into insignificance, tacked on to the back of the new additions.

■ Proposed development

- - - Interim Conservation Order area from April 1989 to April 1990



*The Duncan House* has been described as "the most simple and exquisite" of Griffin's houses, and if the proposed extension is built, the house will be lost forever, its integrity destroyed.

In *The Duncan House* instance the Heritage Council has failed to properly protect this item of the state's heritage. The house has not only state significance but also national and international significance. It has now become the responsibility of Willoughby City Council to safeguard this heritage for the future.

### 3. PYRMONT INCINERATOR FAREWELL PARTY

Sadly, the Pyrmont Incinerator will soon be demolished to make way for a large complex of apartments. The Walter Burley Griffin Society is hoping to get permission from the developer who owns the site to have a farewell party there before it is demolished. The incinerator which is located between Bank Street and Saunders Street, Pyrmont, is resplendent even in its ruinous state. Unfortunately no Conservation Order was ever put on the building and since its 40 metre high decorated chimney stack and part of the roof were removed in the late 1970s, the building's deterioration has been rapid.

Even in its present state its magnificence can be appreciated. The unusual decorative tiles that adorn the external walls, together with the proportions of the building, are really inspiring. We will let you know as soon as we hear from the developer.

### 4. GRIFFIN LODGE, AVALON

During Heritage Week in April the National Trust held an open day of all their properties including *Griffin Lodge* at Avalon. This is the only domestic architecture of Walter Burley Griffin in public ownership. The house was completed in 1934 for Miss Stella James as a weekend retreat, and is nestled in amongst beautiful bushland.

Professor James Weirick, an authority on Walter Burley Griffin, gave a fascinating talk on the history of the house. Interest in the house was wonderful with approximately 300 people visiting it in the short two hours it was open.

The Society hopes to be permitted to hold its AGM this October at the house with Professor Weirick as guest speaker. Details later.

### 5. MEMBERSHIP

Memberships subscriptions are now due. Please find subscription form enclosed.