



Australian Institute of
Landscape Architects

07 November 2023

Heritage Council of NSW
Locked Bag 5020
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
heritagemailbox@environment.nsw.gov.au

**AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS (AILA)
SUBMISSION
IN SUPPORT OF LISTING
ON THE STATE HERITAGE REGISTER:**

Greenway,
24 Wentworth Road, Vaucluse
Address: (Ca- Ra - Rah) NSW, 2500
Traditional custodians: Gadigal

Public submission period closing date: 7 November 2023

Any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Louise Prowse,
Senior Heritage Officer, at Heritage NSW on telephone (02) 9873 8525 or by email:

louise.prowse@environment.nsw.gov.au

Proposed nomination: <https://apps.environment.nsw.gov.au/dpcheritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5068182>

PREFACE

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) pays respect to the Gadigal People, traditional owners of the land to which this proposal relates.

AILA is the peak national body for Landscape Architecture. The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) leads a dynamic and respected profession: creating great places to support healthy communities and a sustainable planet.

A central purpose of the AILA (NSW) Landscape Heritage Committee is to inform, inspire and enrich the culture of the discipline of Landscape Architecture in Australia and particularly the identification and understanding of both natural and cultural landscapes in NSW together with the role of such knowledge in the processes of planning and design.

STATEMENT

AILA supports the proposed listing of 'Greenway' on the state heritage register.



BACKGROUND

AILA notes the nomination findings:

- Owner organisation: not stated (private residence)
- 'Greenway' is bounded to the north by Wentworth Road, to the south by 2A Fisher Avenue, to the east by Fisher Avenue and to the west by 26 Wentworth Road.
- The nomination¹ as proposed:
<https://apps.environment.nsw.gov.au/dpcheritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5052983>
 - *'Greenway is likely to be of state heritage significance as one of the finest and earliest Inter War Mediterranean houses designed by prominent architect Professor Leslie Wilkinson, as his family residence. It is likely of State significance for its historic, associative, aesthetic, research, rarity and representative values.*
 - *Greenway has potential historical and associative value as the earliest example of Wilkinson's domestic architecture. Wilkinson is credited with introducing Mediterranean classical architecture to the Sydney landscape and Greenway is the earliest known example of his domestic work. Greenway is likely of associative value as Wilkinson's home, and at times, workplace, and for its illustrative capacity as the authoritative expression of Wilkinson's domestic design. Wilkinson was one of the most influential architects in the Interwar period in Australia and his response to the Australian climate was innovative in both design and approach.*
 - *Greenway likely has research and representative values as a reference site for the study of architecture in Australia and the introduction of European influences and climate considerations in architectural design. Greenway enables contemporary architects to understand the architectural ideas pioneered by Wilkinson throughout his life exploring design suited for the Australian climate, relationship of the building to its context and orientation of rooms and layout to maximise the occupants' comfort through design. It is illustrative of the key characteristics of the Inter War Mediterranean style of architecture. As such, it is of potential State significance to^{*2} architects, planners and the NSW community.*
 - *Greenway has potential aesthetic and technical value for its architectural design which combines restrained classical detailing with pioneering techniques to maximise comfort. Greenway is architecturally innovative as a pioneering precursor to sustainability design concepts. Its siting and internal configuration is intentionally oriented to maximise light ingress, ventilation, amenity and protection from southerly winds and the interiors showcase recycled*

¹ SHR proposed curtilage extension under consideration:

<https://apps.environment.nsw.gov.au/dpcheritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails>

² Refer recommendations : consider adding Landscape Architects to the list.



materials as design features. Greenway likely has aesthetic and rarity values as early Inter War Mediterranean/Neo-Georgian style house in an intact landscaped setting. The grove of *Angophora costata* (Sydney Pink Gums) are unique in the municipality as the last major grouping of indigenous tree on the plateau. Greenway has rarity values as one of the earliest houses designed to be built around existing vegetation and not the other way round.

Heritage Council of New South Wales



State Heritage Register - Proposed Curtilage: Greenway
24 Wentworth Road, Vaucluse
Plan: 3317

0 10 20 m

Map scale: 1:750 @ A4
Datum/projection: GCS GDA 94
Date: 23 June 2023



- Proposed SHR Curtilage
- Land Parcel
- SUBURB
- LGA
- Road

Figure 1 : Draft Curtilage supplied by Heritage NSW



Figure 2 : Satellite image of the site – Google maps



Figure 3: Sydney Morning Herald image of the 'Greenway' property published 2 July 2022



Figure 4: Photograph by Mitchel Solomon, 1988 published in Apperly, 1989. Inter-War Mediterranean c. 1915-c. 1940, page 172, image no. 430 courtesy of Caroline Simpson Library, State Library NSW.



Figure 5: 'Greenway' photographed in Google Street View



Figure 6: 2023 photograph of the Edmund Blackett 1850's designed quadrangle, completed in the 1920s Masterplan for University of Sydney by Professor Wilkinson.

AILA has considered the landscape context and property in terms of its Connection with Country, its design, the contribution of Professor Leslie Wilkinson to the discipline of Landscape Architecture and the understanding that the significance of the site should begin with landscape.

- The part of South Head (Car-Ra-Rah), the coastal headland on which the proposed listing sits, consists of the west-southwest facing benched slopes of Triassic Hawkesbury sandstone falling to the harbour embayments and beaches of Hermit Bay and The Hermitage Foreshore Walk. The pre-colonial landscape is evident in the rock outcrops along Wentworth Road and the intact stand of *Angophora costata*, Smooth-barked apple, that remains as a fragment of the pre-colonial vegetation community. The ridge, extending from the Vaucluse Water Reservoir, at the high point of Clairvaux Road, to Steele Point, in Sydney Harbour National Park includes harbourside villas, parks and gardens of Carrara, The Hermitage, Strickland House and Greycliffe House to the west-southwest and Vaucluse House and gardens in the northeast facing gully draining to Vaucluse Bay.
- The presence of Aboriginal heritage and cultural connection of the Gadigal to Car-ra-rah and the Sydney Harbour are integral to the proposed listing.
- It is our understanding that the house and garden was sited in 1923 by Leslie Wilkinson (1882-1973) relative to the visual setting of Sydney Harbour.
- His designs '*consistently formed elegant outdoor spaces with stone paths, classical pergolas, and vistas to formal gateways and decorative fleches usually as an adjunct to a carefully proportioned façade.*'³
- Leslie Wilkinson is regarded as a precursor of the discipline of Landscape Architecture in Australia, and this excerpt from Newcastle Herald in 1936 sheds light on his vision for both post-industrial landscape planning and landscape architectural education;

³ Tanner, in Aitken & Looker 2002, p.643.



"He said that beautification of urban and suburban areas ranked among the finest forms of community service. In many places there was arising a favourable state of public opinion. Many people were becoming interested in tree planting, and many were desirous of helping. The desire had come out of the hunger of hearts. It had come after many years of tolerance of conditions which people were now setting out to improve. In cities that had become industrialised, trees had been cut down and tree planting had lagged. In a place like Newcastle, with its renewed prosperity, it was fine to know that there was a quickening consciousness of the beauty that came from pleasant surroundings, and of the health and the colour and quietude that over-tired spirits might acquire from peaceful and harmonious surroundings. The Tree Planting and Preservation League had banded people together in an attempt to brighten up the surroundings of the city and to bring an added breath of nature into the town..."

LANDSCAPE HARMONY.

After mentioning the avenues of Norfolk Island palm trees at Manly and Coogee, Professor Waterhouse said that in estimating any landscape, harmony, unity, and rhythm had to be considered. So far in Australia there was not the means of studying landscape architecture in any public institution. He looked forward to the day when this school of landscape architecture would be established, where people could go for inspiration and for effective training in the work that was now being done by amateurs. It was a dream of the future, but he hoped that it would be realised." 10 March 1936, p.5

In this article, the author also describes Wilkinson's appreciation of the design of King Edward Park, its relationship with the sea, echoing the landscape sensibility demonstrated in the siting of his home, 'Greenway', in Vaucluse.



Figure 7: 'Greenway' is considered by Erica Esau as exemplary of 1920s Australian Spanish style and Pacific Rim references between Australia and California 1850-1935. Photo : Anne Higham, RAIA (NSW)

Greenway is significant for these reasons;

- Greenway is the **first known residential landscape and house designed** by Wilkinson,



- It represents **neo-Georgian traditionalism**, demonstrating the influence of **Francis Greenway (1777-1837)**, Australian architect of the early Georgian era, after whom it is named,
- The design is **inspired by the Australian landscape**; it leaves the natural topography and exposed geology intact and integrates the house and garden in harmony with its setting,
- The 'Greenway' house and garden is **typical of Wilkinson's Inter-war Mediterranean design**, comprised of;
 - Considering *'every aspect of the house's physical location to take advantage of the natural contours of the land'*⁴.
 - Conserved sandstone outcrops, integrated in the design,
 - A sequence of garden spaces defined by gateways, masonry elements,
 - Designs the house and garden walls to be painted coloured light tones of brown-pink to reflect with the distinctive colouration of *Angophora bark*⁵, and blend in the appearance of the house with the existing landscape.
 - Demonstrates use of a number of typical Mediterranean style features; *Groin-vaulted arches, loggias, French windows, wooden-beamed ceilings facades and surfaces*⁶ and wide steps of irregular sized flagstones, curving with the contours.
 - Classical proportions.

The proposed listing of 'Greenway' is assessed in terms of its value for association with Wilkinson, not only as a leading architect 'strongly influenced by Mediterranean architecture *and landscapes*', but also as

- an advocate for the establishment of the discipline of Landscape Architecture in Australia as early as 1936 or earlier.
- Founding Professor of the first full -time course in Architecture in Australia.
- as University of Sydney Architect from 1919 and creator of the 1920s Masterplan for the University of Sydney, including completion of the Quadrangle design begun by Edmund Blackett in the neo-Gothic style and respecting of some of the principles of the Griffin Master Plan, 1915, that was not adopted⁸. Together with the Griffin 1910 Masterplan, Wilkinson's influence unified the campus, in a move towards a Mediterranean style response to the climate, with various forms of courtyard definition, roadside tree planting and creating views of significance⁹,

⁴ Esau, E. Images of the Pacific Rim: 1920s Australia and Spanish style architecture, p.296

⁵ Wilkinson quoted by George Molnar in Falkiner, p102, as quoted in Esau, p.296.

⁶ Esau, E. Images of the Pacific Rim

⁷ Tanner, in Aitken & Looker 2002, p.643. (our emphasis)

⁸ University of Sydney Grounds Conservation Management Plan, p.1C

⁹ University of Sydney Grounds Conservation Management Plan, pp.9, 116.



- An authority and influence on the widespread the adoption of the Mediterranean style, Californian references and 'a landscape sensibility' across Australia, such as the design for campus of the University of Western Australia, supported by his 1919 essays¹⁰ on style,
- Tracing the influence of American landscape design in Australia, being the first project Wilkinson designed immediately after visiting Bostonian architect Charles A. Platt (1861-1933) on his way to Australia. Platt was known for skilfully integrating garden and architectural structure and strongly referenced classical Italian simplicity in design.
- An early adopter of the city beautiful, beaux arts and highly original landscape-led planning principles demonstrated by American Landscape Architects, Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahoney Griffin. Wilkinson's master planning role at the University of Sydney immediately followed that of Griffin. The Griffins were the first to officially use the title, 'Landscape Architect' in Australia, with their winning entry for the Federal Capital competition in 1912. Educated in Architecture and Landscape Gardening at the University of Illinois, and inspired by Olmsted and Vaux, 'Landscape Architects' of Central Park, New York in 1863 and 'the Emerald Necklace' of parks in Boston, Walter Burley Griffin challenged planners like Wilkinson to strive for visionary planning in Australia. Wilkinson was later charged with the realisation of the Griffin Plan for Canberra as a member of the National Capital Development Committee.

The Surviving Master Plans

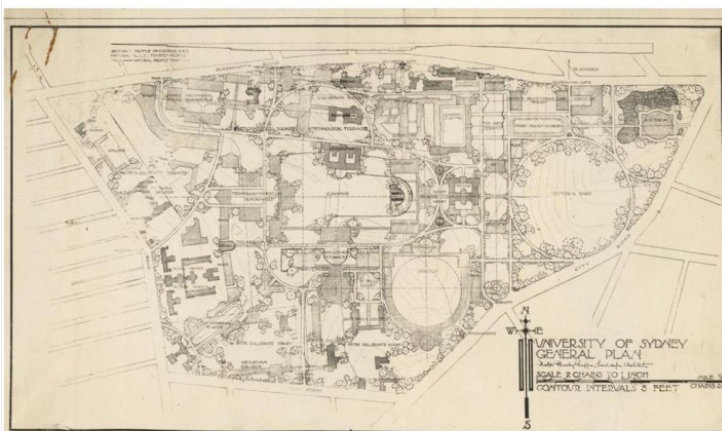


Figure 2.11: Walter Burley Griffin's General Plan for the University of Sydney, 1915.
(Source: Part of Eric Nicholls Collection, National Library of Australia, nla.pic-vn3603884-s210)

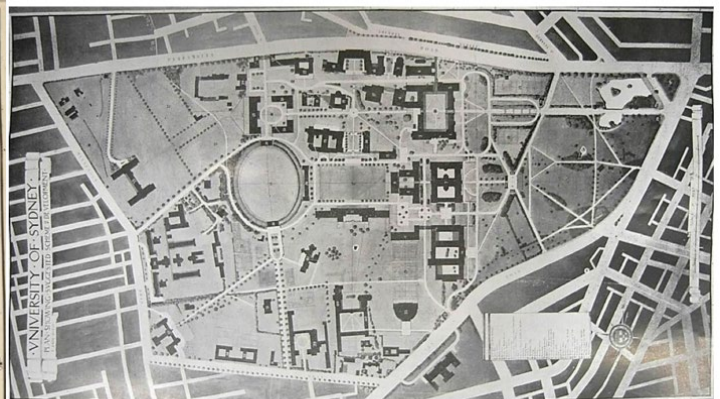


Figure 2.12: Leslie Wilkinson's master plan, submitted to the University Senate in January, 1920.
(Source: University of Sydney Archives)

Figure 8: Surviving Master Plans for the University of Sydney 1915-1920, from *The University of Sydney Grounds Conservation Management Plan (revised) 2014*.

- Influential, together with William Hardy Wilson, Walter Bagot and Robin Dods, in traditionalism, architectural simplicity and the 1920s -30s revivalism of colonial architectural styles.
- Blended neo-Georgian and Interwar Mediterranean styles of design and responses to climate, integrating landscape and architecture in Australia, along with the work of Edna Walling (Victoria), Jocelyn Brown and Paul Sorensen (NSW) and Elsie Cornish (SA), ahead of the Australian profession of Landscape Architecture being formed from 1963- 1967. USA

¹⁰ Wilkinson, 1919.



American Society of Landscape Architects formed in 1899 and Britain's Institute of Landscape Architects was founded in 1929.

- Collaborator with E. G. Waterhouse on the gardens related to courts and spaces at the University of Sydney
- As designer of New South Wales country house and garden projects; Hazeldean, Cooma in 1937 and Michelago, from 1948-60.
- Completed Blacket's work at the grounds of St Michael's Church, Vaucluse
- An advocate for legislated conservation of avenues of large old trees such as the **Moreton Bay fig trees at Islington Park, Newcastle, Australia**, with the **Tree Planting and Preservation League**,
- As early as 1936, **specifier of measures for the maintenance of street trees** in good health¹¹.
- An advocate for maintaining the integrity of the plan for Macquarie Street by;
 - **restoring Hyde Park Barracks**, declaring its significance as an Australian historical monument and comparing it to the State House at Boston, U.S.A. and
 - calling for the **preservation of (former) Burdekin House** as stately feature comparable with no 10 Downing Street.
 - relocating the Hospital to further out of town, afforded by modern transportation
 - lamenting the deflection of the Hyde Park axis, as another travesty, and that
 - *"Government should realise that they are the trustees of the few remaining historic buildings for the nation"*¹²

RECOMMENDATIONS

AILA supports the listing as proposed, with a recommendation to extend the curtilage and with an amendment.

Subdivisions compromise this setting, but despite this, the important point, that the 'Greenway' house and garden was sited relative to the visual setting of Sydney Harbour, could be reflected in the listing and the curtilage. AILA recommends the 'Greenway' curtilage be extended to include at least the road reserve, if not the full original property boundary and significant harbour viewsheds.

The proposed listing should read: 'As such, it is of potential State significance to landscape architects, architects, planners and the NSW community'

¹¹ 'Beauty in Trees', Newcastle Herald 1936, p.5

¹² SMH, 12.02,1937, p.10



This listing, and an extended curtilage, would exemplify Wilkinson's landscape-led, climate responsive design sensibility. In doing so, it continues the role he envisaged for Landscape Architectural excellence: to provide inspiration for the profession of landscape architecture, to lead multidisciplinary planning and design.

CONCLUSION

AILA commends the listing of landscape heritage in New South Wales and welcomes further dialogue on the proactive listing and conservation management planning of landscapes as an important part of the process of identifying, understanding, and caring for landscapes of heritage significance.

Sincerely yours,

David Moir,

AILA NSW PRESIDENT

SUBMISSION TEAM

This submission has been prepared by a working group of AILA NSW Landscape Heritage Group members.



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