

BURLEY GRIFFIN INCINERATOR

FACTS AND FIGURES

- The Burley Griffin Incinerator ('the big burner') cost £37,000. An additional £13,000 was spent on excavation, retaining walls, ground works and roadworks.
- 100 trucks, each carrying around 11.45 cubic metres of household rubbish, visited the big burner daily.
- It is said that there was always one furnace alight from its commissioning in 1937 until its closure in 1971.
- The smoke stack was 40 metres high and contained two flues.
- Permanent staff included a supervisor, charging staff, furnace attendants (called 'firemen') and a crane driver, along with an electrician, a bricklayer and an off-sider for each.
- Amenities included a wash room, shower room, locker room, mess room, and a rest area to recuperate after strenuous work.
- The grounds of the big burner were landscaped with gardens and rockeries in Central American style – cactus, and other typical plants.
- There was also a small burner on the site (built in 1910). It dealt with contraband goods seized by Customs and end-of-range stock from manufacturers, among other things.
- On 17 September 1971, both burners were decommissioned. Twenty staff were working at the complex at the time.
- Demolition of the stack of the big burner took place in stages, and at great cost, during the 1980s.
- Demolition of the big burner began on 7 May 1992 – the day after Council approval was given.
- The postal address of the incinerator complex was 120 Saunders Street, Pymont. Hill Street was resumed during the construction of the big burner.
- In all, the Griffins, in partnership with Australian architect Eric Nicholls, designed 13 reverberatory incinerators while living in Australia.
- The big burner was the last incinerator designed by the Griffins before Walter moved to India in 1935. He died in India, aged 60, in 1937. His wife, Marion, followed him to India in 1936 and died in the USA, aged 90, in 1961.
- The Burley Griffin Incinerator at Willoughby on Sydney's Lower North Shore is now a popular café.