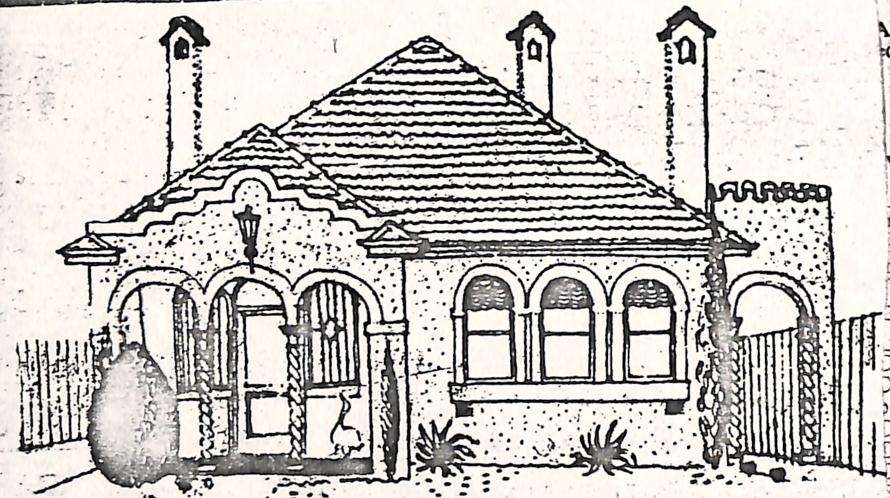


IN THE 'TWENTIES



What Robin Boyd in *Australia's Homes* calls "a major step of stylism"—Spanish mission.

He says of it, "Perhaps the strongest single influence in twentieth century stylism: Yellow stucco . . .

standard baroque precast columns, groups of triple arches, cordova tiles on chimneys and featured walls, boxed eaves, black wrought iron window grille, ornate lantern . . ."

From

"CANBERRA TIMES"

Canberra, A.C.T.

16 DEC 1961

ROBIN BOYD SEES MORE "UGLINESS"

The success of Robin Boyd's *Australian Ugliness* has inspired his publishers to republish two of his works, *Australia's Homes*, first published in 1951, and a hardcover edition of the *Ugliness*.

Australia's Homes is brought up to date with a 1961 foreword by the author, who appears not to have meliorated at all, and is in fact as unregenerate in the foreword as he was in the original.

He calls the book "a study in the vernacular in domestic building in Australia," but it is considerably more than that.

Although, as the author says, it is occupied largely with the small houses which have taken up some two-thirds of the building capacity of the nation, it covers a considerably wider field—the manners, tastes, drinking and social habits, customs, and gardening tastes of Australians.

It divides the Australian home-building progress into eras, in the course of which Boyd spares no one—home builders, architects, government officials or politicians. He lashes out at Stylism as savagely as he did a decade later against Featurism.

Boyd tells of the struggles, sometimes unavailing, of new schools of architects, whose styles have flourished and fallen out of favour.

He tells of the fights which some architects had to wage against Bumbledom and prejudice, even through the law courts, to be allowed to depart from the hallowed schools of the past.

He recalls that as recently as 1941, an architect, Albert Hanson, struck trouble when he built his own home in Canberra.

He built a rectangular house, with ivory-washed brick walls, a roof pitched in a single low gable and painted light green.

Boyd says that some residents of the surrounding district lodged an unsuccessful complaint with the authorities, claiming that the roof would depreciate values of neighbouring houses and "would be detrimental to the standard of buildings in this area, or in residential area on the South side of Canberra."

As usual, Boyd gives a special reference to Canberra. In this book as in the later *Ugliness*, he shows a great warmth and admiration

for Walter Burley Griffin, designer of Canberra—though he admits Griffin's faults.

Boyd observes with sorrow that "the shimmering image of a practical Shangri-la has been shattered by thousands of forbidding, pretentious, competitive villas.

He says "The Australian domestic ideal proved too strong for the idea of building in a common cause. Instead . . . it produced the familiar variegation of a typically Australian suburb—thousands of average homes, very few really good and few really bad."

In his foreword, which also is a summing up, he laments "the degree of Diggerism and male superiority . . . which make the power lawn-mower almost universal but the dishwasher still a sluggish seller."

The hardcover reprint of *The Australian Ugliness*, by Cheshires, gives an opportunity to have a second look and an afterthought on the book.

The reviewer's opinion is the same. It is a book which will make most readers think hard and will make a considerable percentage annoyed. Both are excellent things.—R.

AUSTRALIAN HOME, Robin Boyd. Melbourne University Press. (Paperback, 8/6.

THE AUSTRALIAN UGLINESS, Robin Boyd. Cheshires.