

YOUR HOME

THE WORLD OF THE

Our nation's history — 60... OF

THIS is a book of considerable importance. It may become, I feel, one of the most influential books published in the last 20 or 30 years.

What its impact on the architectural profession will be would not care to guess. It doesn't matter much, anyway.

Its impact on the layman, the fellow who really decides what Australia's predominant architectural style will be at any time, is what really matters.

me, as a layman, it as a blaze of architectural enlightenment. I can not tell if it is rate in minute detail, its overall truth is stanted by its continual plication to what one s during every minute nt in a Melbourne sub- ro.



MR. BOYD has been supremely successful in charting the ebb and flow of Australian architecture from the time of the First Fleet to the present day.

His book is the social, economic, and technological history of the Australian people as reflected in their homes.

It is immensely informative and just as entertaining.

Take, for example, his description of "boom-style" (about 1890) interiors:

"In large and small houses colored leadlights filled every fanlight, statuettes, and urns crowded the parapets, stucco left the external walls, and mixed colored bricks were laid in stripes and radiating arches. Caryatides, statuettes, urns, marble inserts, and curved glass bay windows smothered the street facades.

"Indoors, if the builder left any wall plain, the owner covered it. Before long even the floral wallpaper was almost hidden by pictures. Photographs and engravings were plentiful and cheap, but a mirror or a water-color—anything that could support a frame—was acceptable. Where the wall looked through it was fitted with brackets, painted fans, corner shelves, or hanging cabinets. Vases or statuettes sat on every shelf.

"Ingenuity constantly added new effects. A bedroom mirror would be treated as the basis of a scene of a pond, with bulrushes and butterflies painted round the perimeter. Three child's spades bound about the middle and spread as a tri-

pod would support a bucket with a growing fern. Silk bows on bed and window valances were to be much admired."

EVERY major trend in architecture in this country is discussed — Georgian Primitive, Colonial Georgian, Gothic Revival, Italianate — and so on through to the post-World War II austerity and the L-shape styles of the present day.

These styles are not treated merely as the products of unaccountable whims and fancies of public taste.

They are shown to be the reactions of Australian

AUSTRALIA'S HOME, by Robin Boyd, Melbourne University Press. Aust. price 25/. Reviewed by JOHN DRAKE

home builders to the country, to climatic conditions, to economic boom and bust.

And every style is illustrated with admirable line drawings which condense the whole feeling of a style into a few square inches.

No aspect of the history of home building in this country goes unnoticed.

Labor-saving devices, gas, water, electric light, sewerage — they're all covered in great detail.

Years of research, planning, writing, and rewriting must have preceded its publication.

BUT the significance of this book lies not in its informative, so much as in its formative aspects.

Every second person you meet nowadays is buying a home or building a home.

What sort of homes should we build?

Probably 95 out of 100 home builders are babes in the forest, at the mercy of every wolf of fashion.

It is no good saying you rely on your good taste to get yourself a beautiful home.

Architectural tastes have been so debased in Australia that few of us have any real standards of judgment.

Only a few people who are fortunate enough to fall into the hands of an imaginative architect, who is imperious enough to build them beautiful and good homes in the face of all opposition, are going to get homes that will permanently satisfy them.



IT is impossible to give anybody good taste in architecture, or any art, all neatly wrapped up in a paper parcel.

Good taste is acquired, and its acquisition depends to a huge extent on a study of the history of style and the philosophical basis of the art in question.

If you read Mr. Boyd's book you will be more than three-quarters of the way down the road that leads you to a realisation of what you should require of the home you may build during the next few years.

His book, too, may make life easier for architects, practitioners in one of the most ungrateful of the arts.

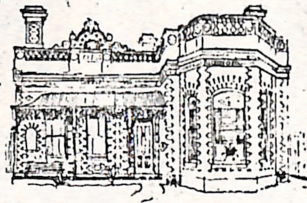
Architects labor under difficulties that would not be endured by members of any other profession.

No surgeon, for instance, would listen for an instant to a patient's recommendations about the way he should conduct an operation.

The architect's clients, on the other hand, commonly treat him as a draftsman, a man whom they have engaged to knock their own architectural ideas into shape.

No artist would tolerate the actions of a weak-witted buyer who insisted on pencilling moustaches on the subjects in his portrait groups.

The owner of an architect-planned house almost

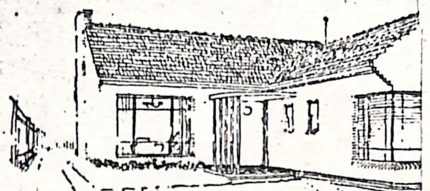


1890

Boom Style . . . Ornamentation lays heavily on the facade.



1920



1950

L-shape . . . After popular design undergoes radical change since the asymmetrical front

always feels at liberty to do what he likes to it.

By showing what the architect can do in designing an exciting and satisfying home, Mr. Boyd may create a better intellectual climate for the members of his profession to work in.

On the debit side there is very little to cavil at in his work.

In his attempts, usually very successful, to make his book easy and pleasant to read, Mr. Boyd occasionally lapses into mere smartness.

His amusement at the architectural monstrosities that the tasteless have run up at different times is occasionally a little cruel.

I would some expect Mr. Boyd kind of home to build in 19

BUT coming to alter the is the most and lucid Australian published

If you building a afford not

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