

Aust. Press Cuttings Agency

Melbourne, Victoria

From

"SUN HERALD"

Sydney, N.S.W.

17 OCT 1971

He was a foe of the ugly

By CHRIS ANDERSON

Architect Robin Boyd once said his writing was nothing more than a hobby — "a mere night time thing."

But his night time scribbings made him famous—as an outspoken critic of buildings, streets, towns, cities, the environment and the world in which we have to live.

He not only criticised. He made suggestions for making it a better place to live.

Mr Boyd died on Friday night in the Royal Melbourne Hospital after a four-week illness. He was 52.

Architecturally, he was regarded by his peers as an innovator. Some likened him to Burley Griffin in the field of domestic design.

He was certainly versatile, going from domestic architecture in the forties and fifties into grand institutional buildings in the mid-sixties, then becoming involved in exhibition work of Australian pavilions overseas.

But perhaps his most famous work was his book published in 1969: "The Australian Ugliness." It made the author better known for his writings than his chosen profession as an architect.

His sweeping commendations of all that is hideous in Australian life and design caught the headlines. In the book he hit out at the new suburbs sprawling round the big cities, saying: "Underneath a few 'personalising'

features, hundreds of thousands of individually produced villas almost give the impression that they want to appear mass-produced."

Of this book one critic wrote: "It hits a smug suburbia right in the rhododendrons. The book castigates everything that moves in the Australian environment; fifth-rate design and building standards, hideous billboards, neon signs, tree loppers and the garish used car lots.

"His book is a virtuoso performance, putting into words the doubts and fears of a new generation."

But Mr Boyd's work as an educator and a public conscience had been going on for 15 years before he wrote "The Australian Ugliness." In fact, Boyd's public role really began in 1946, when he was the inaugural director of the world's first architectural advisory service—run by the Victorian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects.

His advice, published through a Melbourne newspaper, helped thousands of returning servicemen plan their homes.

This work established him and he became known as one of the nation's foremost avant garde architects.

More recently he had attacked take-away food shops as the latest form of the Great Australian Ugliness. He

said their design varied between unoriginal, phony, clumsy, traditional, crude and jarring.

Robin Boyd was the son of the Australian landscape painter, Penleigh Boyd. The Boyd family rated in artistic achievement with many other Australian greats.

Robin Boyd was four years old when his father died in a motor accident in 1923. His mother decided there were enough painters in the family, and directed him toward architecture, even while he was at school.

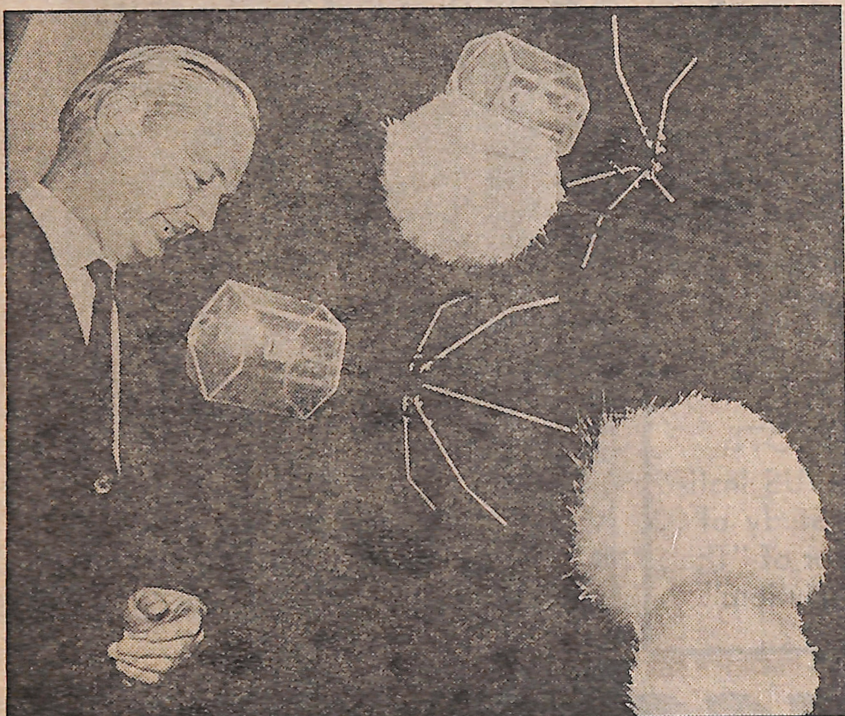
He was educated at Glamorgan Preparatory School and at Malvern Grammar. Then he studied architecture at Melbourne Technical College.

He was articled to Kingsley Henderson, then one of Melbourne's leading architects. From there he branched out to become architect, lecturer, author and waspish critic.

He won the Victorian Institute's citation for the best educational building in 1969 for McCaughey Court, a seven-storey flat block at Melbourne University.

When he won The Australian Institute of Architects Gold Medal in 1969 he was still working at his best and most famous building — the "Space Tube" at Expo 70 in Osaka, Japan.

ROBIN BOYD, 1919-1971



Robin Boyd at Expo 70