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'Above all, an intensely
nationalistic Australian'

Boyd was a fighter

By KEITH DUNSTAN

IT IS almost impossible to put Robin Boyd under a tidy, precise label.

He was an architect, a writer, a town planner, a man who could illustrate his own books, a lecturer, a wit and, above all, an intensely nationalistic Australian.

He was an extraordinarily gentle man to meet, sometimes almost withdrawn.

Those who worked with him and under him and those who were his close friends all talk of one thing — they had never known him to become rattled or lose his temper.

He was gentle in company, but he was quite fearless as a fighter for what he believed to be right and as a critic. His pen had lethal qualities.

He practised as one of the nation's top architects. At the same time he wrote as a critic.

This meant not only that he had to practise what he wrote about, but he had to stand by his words in front of his colleagues. No man had a higher reputation.

Pollution and destruction of the environment has become only recently a popular cause, but Robin Boyd was railing against it 20 years ago.

He invented a number of words that have come into the language.

One was "featurism" — dishonest design, faked appearances, gimmickry, cosmetics, camouflage.

He gave as an example the Sydney Harbor

Bridge. Those pylons were pure featurism — they served no purpose.

He was a purist. He despised the nostalgia movement — the creation of buildings to fit in with a mood of 80 years ago.

But he also believed the Government should legislate to delay or prevent the destruction of all buildings of historic importance.

"Austerica" was another Boyd word. It meant the mindless copying by Australia of everything American.

The Boyd style always had a great purity.

He did a housing estate at Glen Waverley called "Appletree Hill" — no fences, front or side, no telegraph poles, no overhead wires; every angle pleasing to the eye.

Australian classics

He wrote several books, most of which have become classics — "Victorian Modern," "Australia's Home," "The Australian Ugliness," "The Walls Around Us" and "The Puzzle of Architecture."

He believed Australians should think for themselves, create their own ideas and produce towns of a distinctively Australian character.

Robin was a member of the astonishing Boyd family of painters, writers and potters. Arthur



● ARCHITECT Robin Boyd . . . work ranged from large buildings to fun pop architecture.

Boyd, David Boyd and Guy Boyd were his cousins.

His mother thought there were enough artists in the family and interested him in architecture.

One of his designs which really satisfied him was the house he built for Grant Featherston in The Boulevard, Ivanhoe. It had one main, huge living section, three storeys high, which was about 40 ft. by 40 ft.

Other Boyd buildings were the John Batman Motor Inn, Domain Park, the apartment building in Domain Rd. Menzies College at LaTrobe University, McCaughey Hall at Melbourne University and the Black Dolphin motor inn at Merimbula, NSW.

His range was extraordinary — from large buildings to fun pop architecture such as the Fish Bowl in Toorak Rd., South Yarra.

He was responsible for the design of the Australian exhibits at Montreal and Osaka.

AUSTRALIA CARRIES HIS CREATIVE MARK

ROBIN BOYD was a creative Australian who had made his mark on this country, the Premier, Sir Henry Bolte, said yesterday.

Sir Henry said Robin Boyd's death was a loss to Australia.

Mr Boyd died on Friday. He was 52.

He leaves a widow, a son and two daughters.

The immediate past-president of the Victorian chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Mr Peter McIntyre, said: "He is going to leave a void we will never be able to fill.

"He did so much in each field of architecture and did it so well.

"He was completely and utterly dedicated to architecture."

Architect Sir Osborn McCutcheon said: "I worked with him many times.

"His wisdom and liveli-

ness of mind made it a joy to work with him.

"He put his activities together in a remarkable way."

The Herald professor of fine arts at Melbourne University, Prof. Joseph Burke, said: "He was a creative architect of great originality.

"He was the artistic conscience of his country, in the future of which he passionately believed and to which he had made outstanding contribution at a comparatively early age."

Architect Sir Roy Grounds said: "Robin had an approach of a knight in shining armor that most of us as kids imagine but never really achieve in real life.

"His combination as practising architect, critic, lecturer and writer, his initiative as a leader in his profession at every level he touched upon, marked him for all of us as the man living at the height of his times."

Architect Mr B. B. Patten said: "I think he was best known here and overseas as an authority in architectural history and criticism.

"He was probably the only architect in the country with an international reputation for his architectural contribution.

"He had a great breadth of approach in his architectural profession — practitioner, lecturer, writer, teacher."