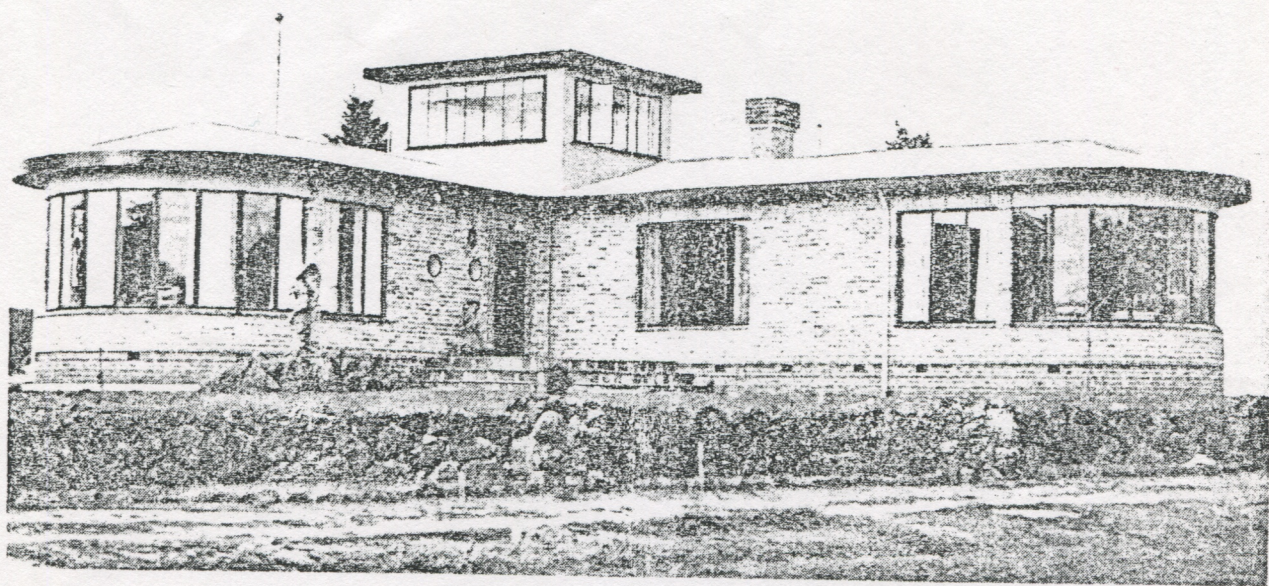


HISTORY OF SUNWAYS
COPY - FOR RESIDENTS' WRITING DESK



There are 86 windows in this attractive house, "Sunways," on Wendource Parade, Ballarat. Eighty-six windows—and not a blind. Richards & Co. Photo.

Vibrating With Sunshine And Glass

Mrs W. D. Thompson's striking home at Ballarat that overlooks Lake Wendouree.

By ELIZABETH AULD

A HOUSE with 86 windows but only eight rooms, with all those windows and not a blind—and a house with the right vibrations, has become one of the sights of Ballarat. Parlor tourist coaches pause outside it on their way round Lake Wendouree, and all day long callers ask if they might "see over."

And Mrs W. D. Thompson, a Ballarat identity, who built the house and lives in it, is always obligingly willing to open her front door to genuine home-lovers, to conduct them through the sunny rooms and up the little spiral stairway to her square sleepout on top of the house.

The sleepout alone has 28 windows, and through them is visible the long view of Lake Wendouree and the Ballarat National Garden trees.

Planned to catch beauty from every angle, as well as sunlight, all the main rooms in this sunny home will give you a glimpse of garden, lake or tree, and while there is sun they get the sun.

Because of this, because of her great love of sunlight, and fittingly with her own sunny personality, Mrs Thompson has called her house "Sunways."

"I spent half my life behind walls earning my living," said Mrs Thompson, discussing her home, "and I made up my mind that if I ever had the opportunity I would build a home whose walls did not shut out the beauty of the outdoors and the warmth and light of the sun."

Fortune and her own amazing business ability favored Mrs Thompson. She prospered in her work and retired, and then she was left with a plot of land. She decided to fulfil a dream of a lifetime—to build.

She built "Sunways."

Although she consulted an architect and a builder her own ideas predominate, even to a drastic alteration here and there of original plans, but the main achievement of the building, to Mrs Thompson, is that it has the right vibrations.

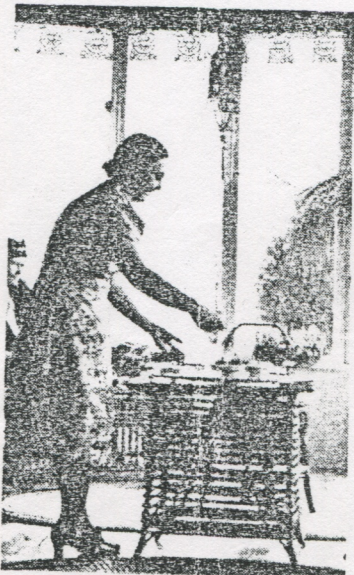
"It is difficult to live evenly and harmoniously without the right vibrations," said Mrs Thompson.

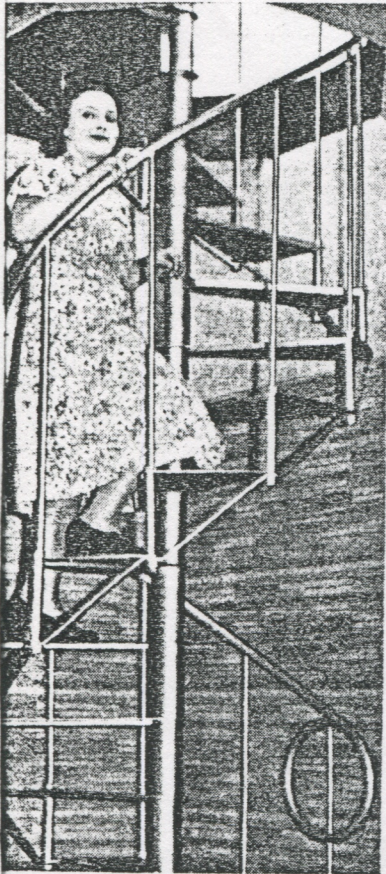
Surrounded by sunlight, living behind windows bathed in the sun's rays, Mrs Thompson had found that rare achievement, house contentment. To her, 86 windows without a blind do not reflect a glare, but warm friendliness, and they enable her to live in beauty all day long.

Unexpectedly she has found that all her windows provide her with an air-conditioning system.

"When one or two windows in the sleepout, just above the staircase are open," she said, "they send down a cooling draught that cools the whole house. When I want the house to be warm I have those windows shut."

Another real achievement is to have 86 windows and not a creak. The secret of this is that they are all leaded. Not even in the sleepout on top of the house, when the four winds of Ballarat are raging in a storm, is





The Golden Spiral Stairway.

there ever a single protesting squeak from one window.

All through the house Mrs Thompson has introduced original ideas of her own. In the main bedroom, almost surrounded by windows, with two chromium beds, and a fine copy of an old Florentine urn, brought back by Mrs Thompson from a trip abroad, is an intriguing invention of hers.

It is a wicker couch made rather on the lines of the old "conversation" chairs, with back rests at each end slightly twisted so that two people can face one another. But to be more restful, it is long enough to enable them to put their feet up, and designed to prevent the feet being too near the face at the other end! The bottom framework of the couch is in one long round piece to prevent scratching the floor.

Mrs Thompson had this lounge made in Ballarat by a returned soldier, as well as a chair to match.

A narrow wooden beam across the ceiling suggests a partition between the sunny bay of the windows and the bedroom proper, and from the beam hangs a strip of beautiful guipure lace.

A French mirror above the little table between the cupboards is edged with glass French pears. French crystal grapes, that make the small

chandelier light, are really part of an inverted basket. The cupboards are papered like the walls, which have an apple blossom motif at intervals low down on the

paper. The door of one cupboard leads into the small dressing room, not a cupboard at all.

French rugs on the floor are in cream and brown.

From the entrance foyer, glass doors lead into the sunny sitting-room, which has glass doors again leading to the sun room, with its long range of windows rather like a peninsula.

Mrs Thompson designed the attractive self patterns on the glass doors, representing hollyhocks, wheat ears, butterflies, and clouds, and the concealed lighting hides behind glass frames patterned with ships, in glass.

In the sitting-room Mrs Thompson has combined old Chippendale furniture that has been in her family for years, with modern furnishing. Most attractive coverings have a faun background with strong French yellow and blue patterns, colors which are caught up in the carpet. The Venetian glass mirror comes from the home of an Austrian aristocrat, and is very old.

The mantelpiece and surrounds of the fireplace look like painted wood, but they are made of iron treated in a new way.

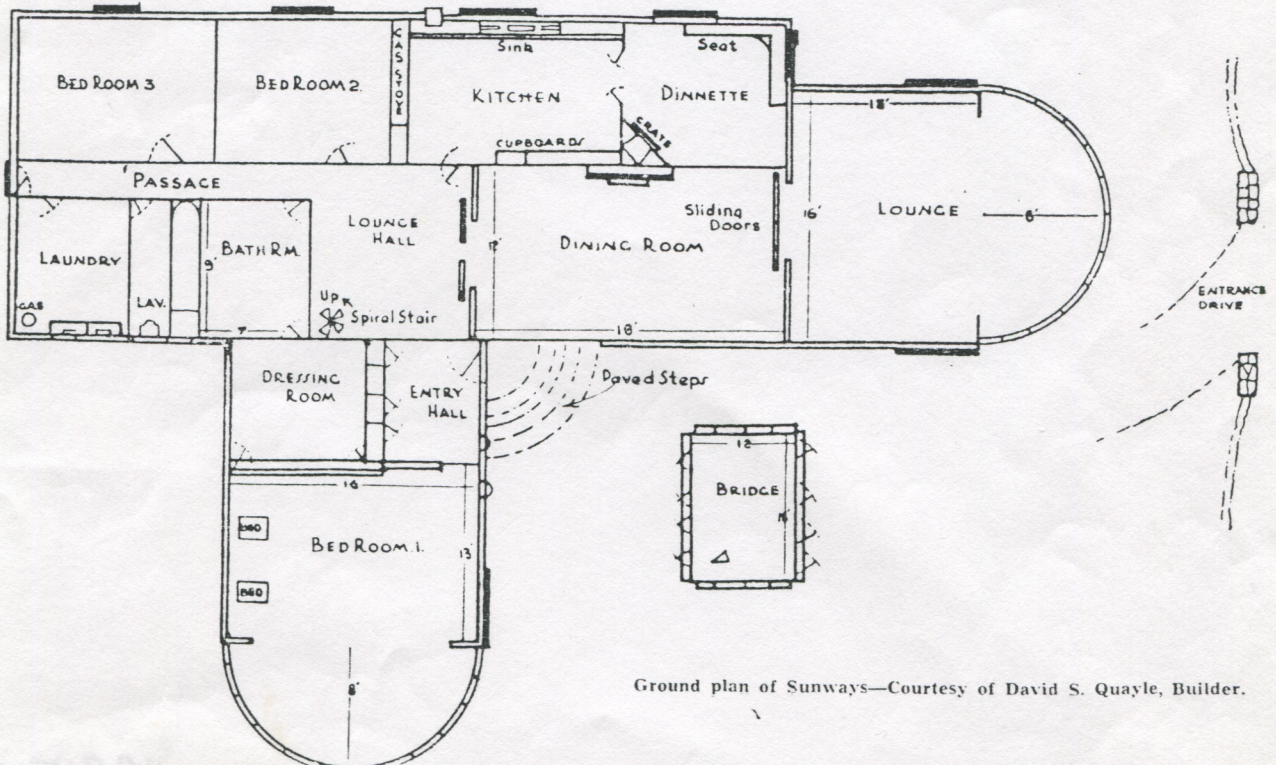
In this room Mrs Thompson has incorporated another new idea. Little drawers fitting into the wall into the tiny dining room, and papered to look indistinguishable from the wall, are used to place afternoon tea in so that there is no need to move about from room to room for visitors.

Through the lounge glass doors to the sun room is like stepping on to the glassed-in boat deck of an ocean liner.

Attractive brown cane chairs brightened with a raffia touch of yellow, green, and red, all made by the returned soldier in Ballarat, match one or two cane tables, and here another urn, a copy made in Florence of a medieval Florentine urn, houses a palm and garden grasses that flourish in the sun.

A wicker cake basket holds glowing fruit and a quaint Chinese temple hanging lamp reflects again those sunny colors—red, yellow and golden brown.

Folding doors slide along a wall to admit one to the dinette with its wall table and seats, and designed to give a long-range view through windows and doors. The kitchen again, with its long window range, one complete side of sink, and marble table has its long lake view through folding doors, dinette room and sun room.



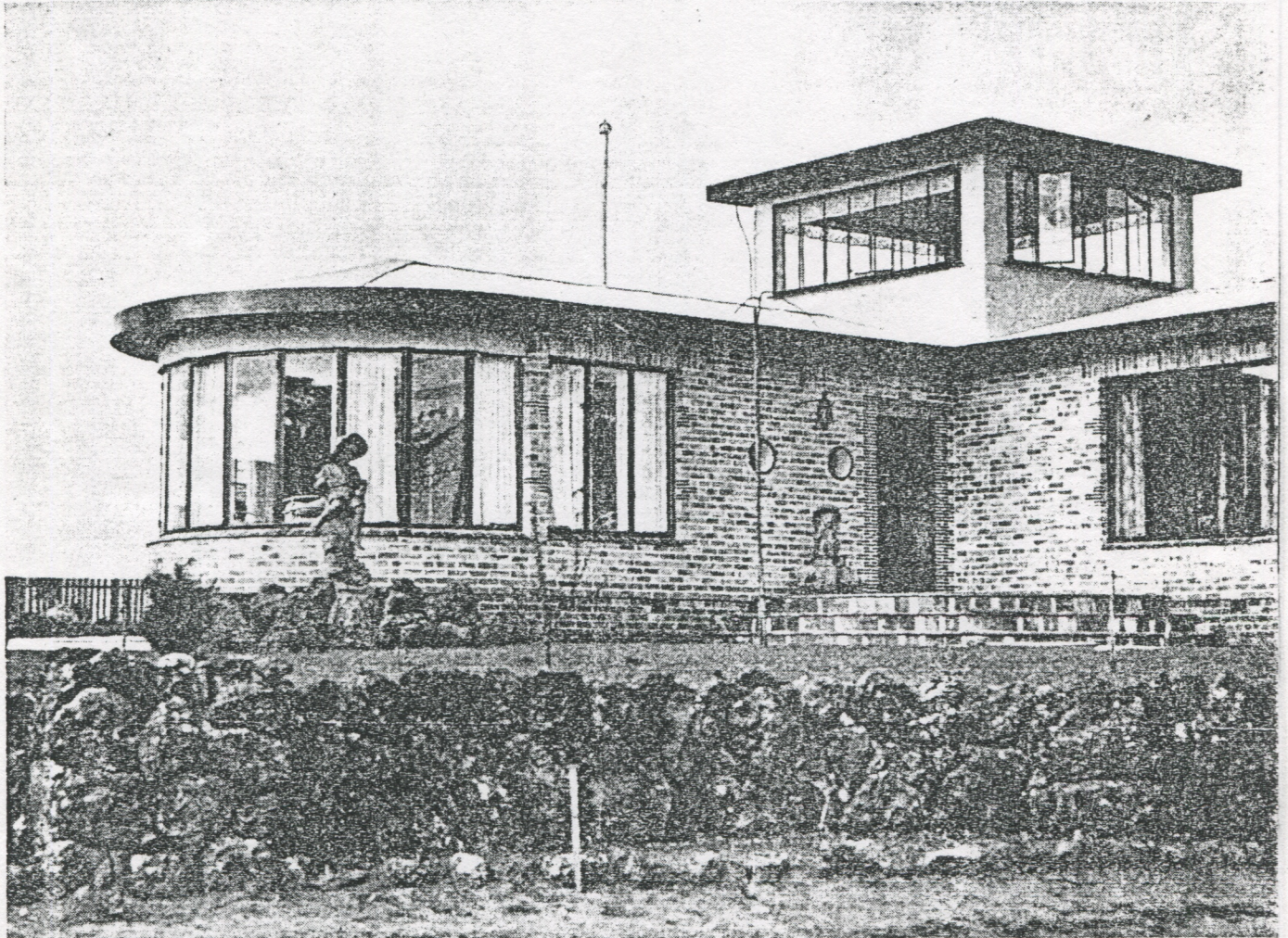
Ground plan of Sunways—Courtesy of David S. Quayle, Builder.

From the foyer the little golden spiral staircase leads up to the sleep-out. It owes its existence to a picture in Home Beautiful of the little spiral staircase in the ship-like home at Ranelagh, of Mr Roy Grounds. Mrs Thompson took such a fancy to it that she came to Melbourne to find the owner and was then invited to Ranelagh to see the staircase for herself.

She liked it even better in the original and finding that Caslake was the artist who made it she bade him produce a replica.

Up the stairs and into the sleep-out leads to the loveliest and most comprehensive view in Ballarat and

character of the building demanded a roof of very low pitch. The area of glass in the walls, plus the Ballarat summer, necessitated either some special material or some form of insulation. Mr Quayle solved the problem by using fibrolite asbestos-cement instead of galvanised iron or tiles, and "Sunways" was the first house in Ballarat to carry a roof of this kind. It had to be specially made—there being no curved guttering in existence, for example—but, working from the builder's specifications, the roof was manufactured as a special job, and up to date has given perfect satisfaction.



The left wing of the house and the sleepout above known familiarly as "the bridge." This photograph shows part of the low stone wall that has been planted on both sides. A noteworthy point is that apart from the roof and the steel framing for the windows the whole of the material for the building is of Ballarat production and manufacture.

to the large, high comfortable lounge where Mrs Thompson puts tired guests to rest for an hour or two and to gaze at the view for their minds' peace.

It is from the forward windows of this room that one appreciates the remark of Mr David S. Quayle, the builder, that "Sunways" was built like a ship. It is easy to imagine that one is looking out across the lake from the bridge of a ship, and when the framework of the house was complete the lower floor was always referred to as "the deck."

From this window, too, one examines with interest the form and character of the roof. This important part of the structure required no end of thought. The

Behind a cupboard that obscures a little of some windows is Mrs Thompson's bed, which is let down at night for sleeping, and by day serves as a temporary screen from the curious.

One little guest room is modelled on a French bedroom. It has a large featherbed, with soft down cushions, and a French doll sits on a prayer chair behind the door. On the walls, and by the window and by the centre light, are little pink gilt figures representing the torch of peace, the horn of plenty, happiness, and so on and across the top of the dressing table ingeniously converted from an old cedar wardrobe is a strip of lovely French lace.

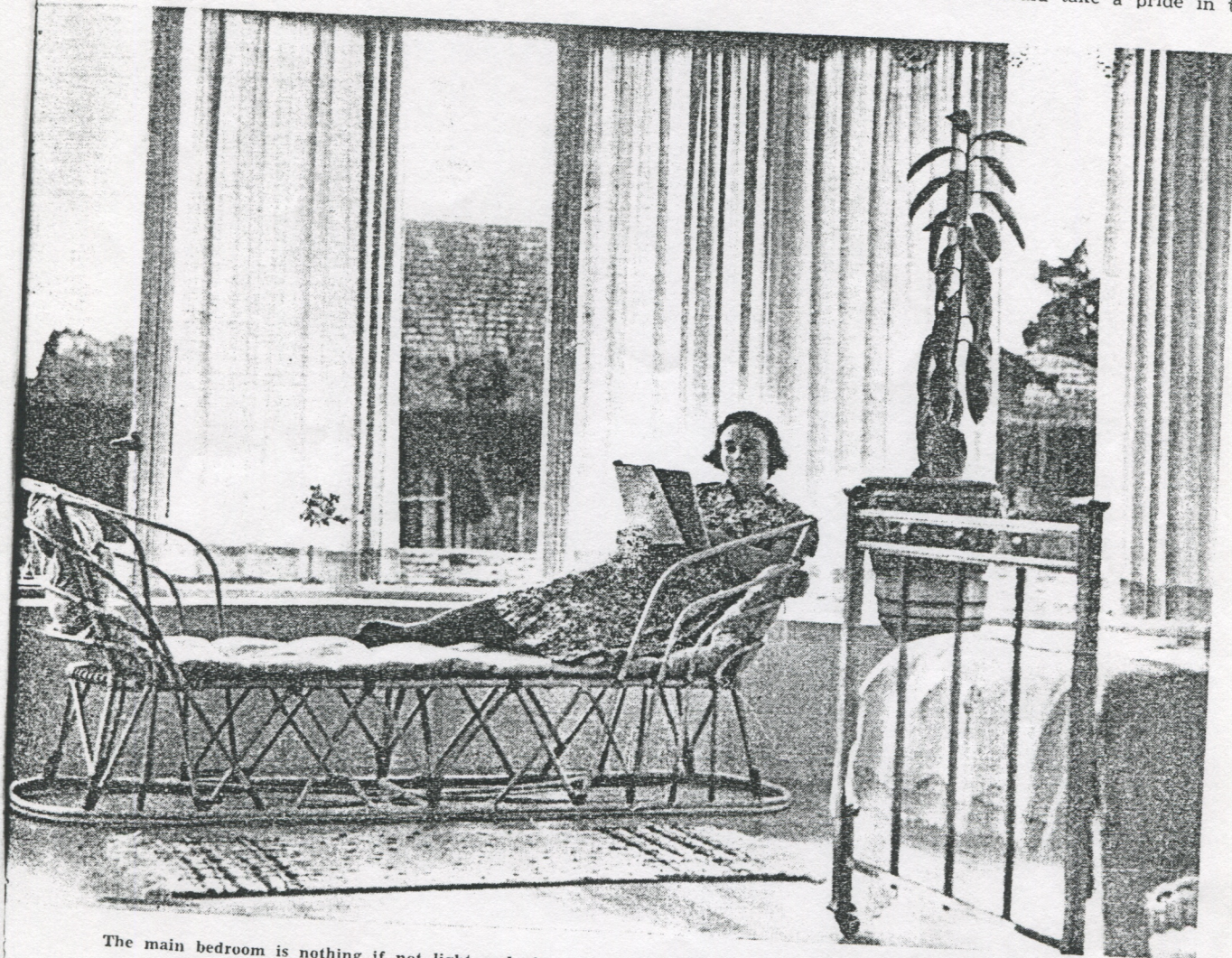
There is a touch of mystery to the uninitiated in this original house. Cupboard doors when opened, are apt to prove entrances to a room instead of to a cupboard, but they save passages, which Mrs Thompson dislikes.

In her love of the beautiful view she has two small portholes in some necessary wall between the front door and the main bedroom, which, although they are not more than a foot or two apart, look out on extraordinarily divergent lake scenes.

A bowl of lighted grapes and leaves from Venice reflect lovely lights from the sun by day and electricity by night, in the window of the lounge room, and the colors are blended in the curtain.

Outside, from one angle, the wings of this smiling house stretch out like the wings of a bird, and where there is no window the walls are made of pinkish brick that is familiarly known as Ballarat brick.

So much is local in the manufacture of Sunways that it is only natural Ballarat should take a pride in this



The main bedroom is nothing if not light and airy. Beautiful guipure lace hangs from the ceiling beam. Note, too, the cane lounge which Mrs Thompson designed "for comfort, ease and conversation."

Mrs Thompson is particularly proud of her original stone wall outside, which is curved to make little gardens, not inside, but unselfishly outside the main garden, so that passers-by may benefit from their beauty.

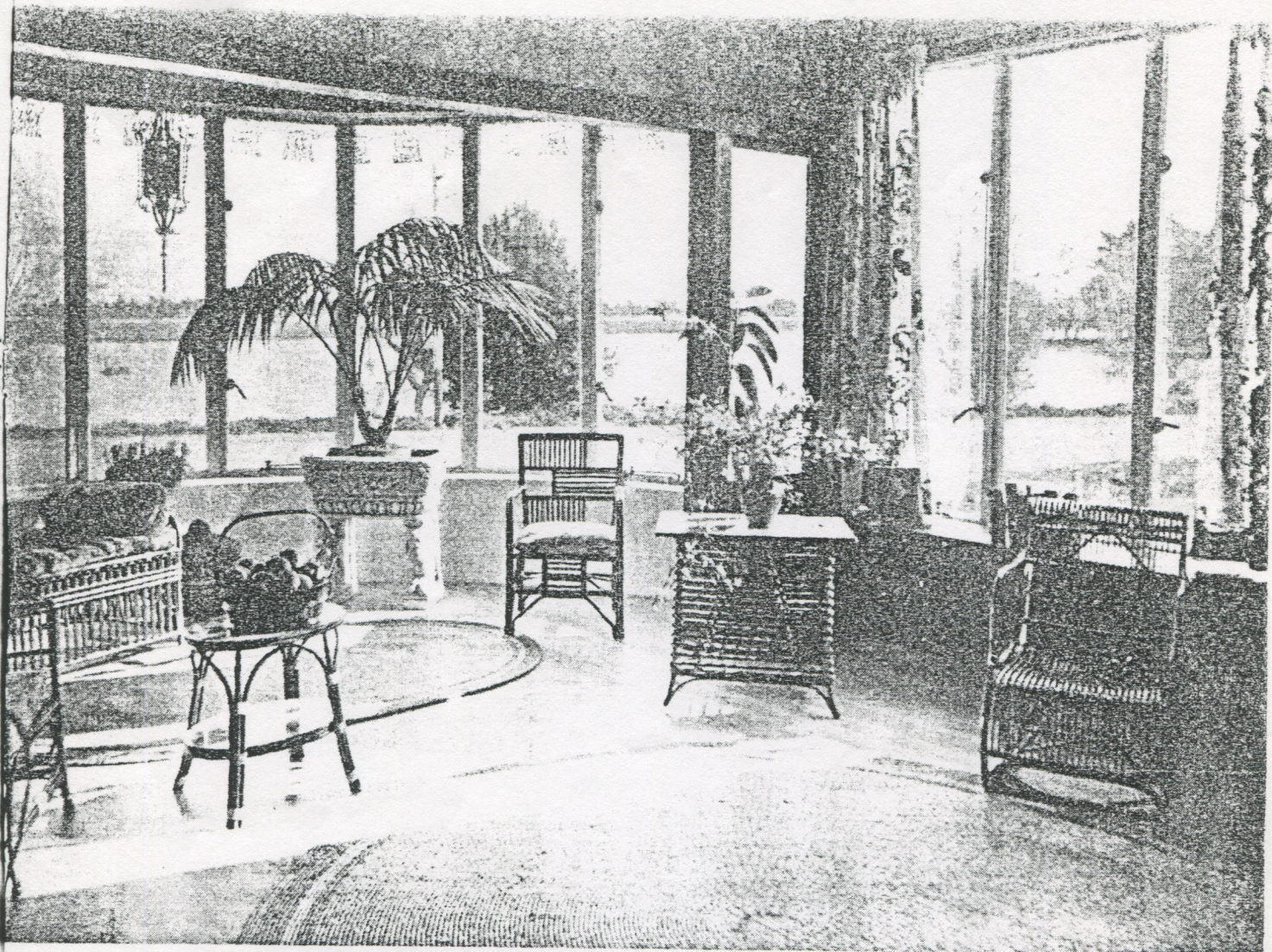
Two little figures in the garden, one near the front door, one in the middle of the lawn, were brought back from England and Florence by Mrs Thompson on her last trip abroad.

Through her house she has papered the walls, trying to get with the paper colors that blend with sunlight, and she has noted with satisfaction that sun streaming through the windows all day does not fade the paper. One small concession to privacy she has made in the sitting room with a draw curtain, and she has creamy draw curtains in the main bedroom, but the sunny effect remains.

unique home. It takes a pride in Mrs Thompson, too, who was unceasing in her work for soldiers, both during and after the war, and who, with the girls of her old firm, Lucas and Co. Pty. Ltd., put up the Arch of Victory in Ballarat at the entrance to the Avenue of Honor, 14 miles long, with 3000 trees, all planted by Mrs Thompson and the Lucas girls.

Mrs Thompson is an institution in Ballarat, and now, it seems, her unique house is about to become one, too.

→
The lower photograph on the opposite page is the Sitting Room, with its Chippendale chairs, Viennese mirror and unique iron fireplace. Glass doors, bearing Mrs Thompson's design of butterflies, clouds, wheat ears and hollyhocks, open into the Sunroom which is shown in greater detail in the upper picture.



How sitting room and sun room are linked.

Australian Home Beautiful. April 1, 1939. Page 19.

