The Home

An exhibition of material from the Monash University Library Rare Books Collection

31 March 2006 - 30 June 2006

Exhibition room, level 1, ISB Wing, Sir Louis Matheson Library, Clayton campus
Item 68: *Don’t dream, build: your guide to building beautiful new style homes of Hardie’s “Fibrolite” / issued with the compliments of James Hardie and Coy, Pty. Ltd., “Fibrolite” asbestos cement building material manufacturers.* (Sydney: James Hardie & Coy, [195-?])

Item 62: *Realising your dream of home / Wunderlich Limited Manufacturers.* (Sydney: Wunderlich, [1925-?])

Exhibition and catalogue by Richard Overell, Rare Books Librarian, Monash University Library, Box 4, Monash University, Victoria, 3800 Australia. An electronic version of this catalogue, with additional illustrations, is available at the Monash University Library website. Electronic catalogue prepared by Iris Carydias.

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The Home

An exhibition of material from the Monash University Library, Rare Book Collection

Introduction

In the old brown house on the corner, a mile from the middle of the city, we ate bacon for breakfast every morning of our lives. There were never enough chairs for us all to sit up at the meal table; one or two of us always sat on the floor or on the kitchen step, plate on knee. It never occurred to us to teach the children to eat with a knife and fork. It was hunger and all sheer function: the noise, and clashing of plates, and people chewing with their mouths open, and talking, and laughing. Oh, I was happy then. At night our back yard smelt like the country. Helen Garner, *Monkey Grip* (1977).

Helen Garner’s nostalgic evocation of communal living (and loving) in inner city Melbourne reminds us of the many densely laden and powerfully conflicted meanings that attach to a simple term like ‘home’. The imaginative site of individual and collective memory, the idea of home – with its links to the familiar and the familial – has a special pull upon us all. As Ien Ang and Michael Symonds suggest, it ‘occupies a place in the heart of modern cultural experience — as an apparently inescapable centre of return and a rare site of idealised mutual love and belonging’.\(^1\) Forever linked to concepts of identity and security, the shifting meanings of ‘home’ shape histories of migration, dislocation, and globalization, just as surely as they do histories of material culture.

This exhibition examines the home in the context of both architectural and social history, with a particular (though not exclusive) focus upon the twentieth century Australian experience. It highlights the ways in which the practices of home owning, home-building and home-making occupy a central part of our cultural consciousness, the significance of which far exceeds our basic need of shelter. As Fiske, Hodge and Turner once observed, ‘at least half of the monthly mortgage payments paid by the average Australia home owner goes towards sustaining meanings, rather than keeping out the rain’.\(^2\) While the booming property markets of recent years have heightened concerns over home affordability, and environmental debates have forced us to question the size, density and energy efficiency of our housing stock, nothing seems to have dented the national pursuit of home ownership. As the *Australian Financial Gazette* remarked in 1890, ‘not to own your own home is unpardonable in a country like Australia’.\(^3\)

As we know, despite attachments to the idea of the bush as a defining feature of the Australian experience, by the 1890s Australia was already one the most highly urbanized settlements in the world and most of its cities and towns grew with little regard to planning, with the result that many of the inner city areas that Garner’s characters flocked to in the 1970s in fact had little to recommend them in the latter years of the nineteenth century. Writing of Melbourne in the 1880s, David Harris notes that by then ‘the inner suburbs held few attractions for working-class people in search of home ownership and respectability’, particularly when larger blocks and cheaper


\(^3\) Cited Fiske, Hodge and Turner, p. 27. It should be noted that at this point time, whatever their desires and aspirations, a greater number of Australians rented rather than owned their homes.
land could be had further out. ‘The factory fumes, crime and disease of the inner suburbs’, he adds, ‘also helped persuade middle class people to leave’.4 A typical Melbourne inner city dwelling at the turn of the century might have boasted a fourteen foot frontage, two bedrooms, a kitchen with an earth floor, no sanitary or laundry facilities and a backyard no more than three feet deep. It was not uncommon for homes in Collingwood to sprout tents and other makeshift structures in the backyard to provide more sleeping accommodation. Evidently those responsible for erecting such buildings had not had the benefit of Charles Bruce’s _Rudimentary Treatise on Cottage Building, or, Hints for Improving the Dwellings of the Labouring Classes_ from 1862 (item 3). While the squalid condition of these houses drew the attention of the social reformers of the day, they nevertheless persisted well into the twentieth century. Item 37, the _First (Progress) Report_ of the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board, demonstrates that as late as 1937 these same problems of overcrowding, poverty and disease in inner Melbourne remained unresolved and formed the object of sustained investigation under a state sponsored program of ‘slum clearance’.

Fleeing the inner city, however, generally meant embracing the suburbs, that ‘shrunken version of the free selector’s dream’.5 And while Australians generally express a love-hate relationship with the sprawling suburbs that make up their cities and towns and persist in satirizing life as it is lived there, the unavoidable truth is that most Australians choose to make their home there. What we perhaps forget is that this was once a very literal concept, with large numbers of people taking up the challenge of building their own houses. In the postwar years, for example, bank loans to purchase land on which to build came with far more favourable terms than those to purchase existing housing. In 1952 owner-builders were responsible for the majority of houses then under construction around the country, with many families living in tents and caravans (or hastily completed garages) while building their own homes over months or even years. _The Australian Women’s Weekly_ around this time carried an account by a young bride of taking up residence in the bathroom after their honeymoon as this was the only room with walls in their far-from-complete dream home.6 Those building their own home generally did not employ the services of an architect. They were far more likely to avail themselves of the house design services provided through popular magazines and department stores (such as the Myer Emporium in Melbourne) who could supply ready-made plans for a modest abode. Or they could have consulted _The Homemaker’s Book of Plans_ (item 86) or Guy Church and R. Drysdale Smith’s 1947 book, _What About a House Again?_ (item 39), both of which offered designs and general information about houses which could be built relatively cheaply and within the restrictions of the immediate post-war period. It is reasonable to assume that the spare lines of many such dwellings dating from this period probably owe less to the influence of architectural modernism than to the problem of limited funds and shortages of materials.

But if building the home was characterized as men’s work, decisions regarding the interior décor clearly required a woman’s touch. As item 79 ( _Interior Decoration: A Guide to Furnishing the Australian Home_ by Margaret Lord) and item 90 ( _Modern Furnishing and Decoration_ by Derek Patmore) show so well, the process of decorating offered an opportunity to give ‘personality’ to the home. As the familiar paint charts and colour guides (item 77, 81-84) show us, an infinite number of decorating choices (or ‘expressions of self’) existed within the general conformity of a prevailing period style. And while the home itself may have been a commodity, it was also an excellent place to showcase other commodities. The array of advertisements in the popular magazines on display (e.g. _Australian Home Beautiful_ and _Australian House and Garden_) reminds

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5 Cited Fiske, Hodge and Turner, p. 27.
us of the extent to which the practice of home-making across the twentieth century became increasingly intertwined with the practices of consumption. So while item 110 (Makeshifts and Other Home-made Furniture and Utensils) suggests that many serviceable items of furniture could be made quite cheaply from recycled kerosene tins, item 93 (Furnishing with Color) assures readers that purchasing ready-made items is a simpler and superior way to achieve the desired ‘look’ for their homes, a look that was always more international than recognizably Australian. The stylish magazine layouts for home interiors, however, minimise the effort involved in home decorating and home-making by suggesting that the house is less a site of domestic labour, than a work of art. In the same way, the illustrations accompanying promotional booklets for home appliances such as the Sunbeam Mixmaster (item 88) or the Semak Vitamizer (item 89) are more suggestive of a still life than of a domestic life. The ‘finished’ quality of these types of images tends to hide the reality of women’s routine domestic work which is, as we know, ‘never done’. Instead, the homes we are invited peruse are empty of the people, dirt and domestic chaos that characterize daily life as we know it. That quality of empty perfection, however, is precisely why such images are so appealing to us. They provide a space in which to dream. (Which is, after all, one definition of ‘home’.)

Maryanne Dever

(Melbourne : McPhee Gribble Publishers, 1977)
Preface

The intention in this exhibition is not to give a detailed history of domestic architecture but rather to provide researchers with an idea of the resources available in the Monash University Library Rare Books Collection should they wish to study the architectural and social history associated with the concept of “the home.”

The items on display range in date from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth century. They are English, American, European and Australian, but bearing in mind that all were purchased locally, the main emphasis is on the Australian experience, inevitably influenced by overseas trends.

Richard Overell
Rare Books Librarian
Monash University Library

England in the nineteenth-century

1. Malton, James, d. 1803.

An essay on British cottage architecture: being an attempt to perpetuate on principle, that peculiar mode of building, which was originally the effect of chance. Exemplified by fourteen designs ... the whole extending to twenty-three plates, designed and executed in aqua-tinta. / by James Malton ... 2nd ed., with two additional plates. (London, Thomas Malton, also to be had at Taylor’s Architectural Library, Holborn, 1804)

James Malton came from a family of architects. The book consists of a series of aquatints of designs for houses accompanied by plans.

Such works were used as pattern books for builders in the colonies. This copy is accompanied by an architectural sketch, belonging to a previous owner of the book, of a “back elevation” of a building.


Domestic architecture : containing a history of the science, and the principles of designing public edifices, private dwelling-houses, country mansions and suburban villas, with practical dissertations on every branch of building, from the choice of site to the completion of the appendages ... / by Richard Brown. (London : G. Virtue, 1842)
The intention of this work was to display a variety of housing styles suitable for copying by local architects.

Among the “Exemplars of various styles” we find, the “Cottage Ornée”, mansions, manor-houses, halls and “suburban residences” from the Tudor and Stuart periods, as well as numerous styles from such places as Italy, Greece, Switzerland, Egypt, China and even Burma.

The book is open at the plate of a “Pompeian suburban villa”, now home to two young ladies with a King Charles spaniel and boasting a “Withdrawing room”, a Conservatory and a Billiard room.

3. Allen, C. Bruce (Charles Bruce)

Rudimentary treatise on cottage building, or, Hints for improving the dwellings of the labouring classes / by C. Bruce Allen. 4th ed., with an appendix containing designs also for a higher class. (London : Virtue Brothers & co., 1862)

This “Rudimentary treatise” was part of a series of books, all in the same format, conveniently small for carrying by those migrating to the colonies.

The author’s charitable intentions are made clear in the first chapter.

The condition of the poor is, without doubt, unfriendly to mental culture and progress. … [and] exerts a most baneful influence on domestic affections. A family crowded into a single and narrow apartment, which is at once living room, kitchen, bedroom, nursery, and often hospital, must, without great firmness and self-respect, be wanting in neatness, order and comfort. The want of an orderly and comfortable home is among the chief evils of the poor. (p. 2)

The book is open at a “plan for a labourer’s cottage.”

4. Doré, Gustave, 1832-1883.

London, a pilgrimage / by Gustave Doré, and Blanchard Jerrold. (London : Grant, 1872)

Doré’s illustrations for his London are notable for their infernal quality. They were important for raising the awareness of the educated middle-class to the plight of the poor in a way similar to Dickens’s novels.

The volume is open at an engraving of “Wentworth Street, Whitechapel”. This was deep in the London slums.

5. Proposed stables and coachman’s house, near Richmond on Thames / Maurice B. Adams, Architect, from The Building News, 30 Nov. 1888.

Trade journals such as The Builder and The Building News, and the local Australasian Builder and Contractor’s News were sources for the latest trends in architectural fashion. The plate on display gives plans and elevations and has the caption, “Practical architecture with detailed estimates.”

A summer at Port Phillip / by Robert Dundas Murray. (Edinburgh : William Tait, 1843)

This account of a visit to pre-gold rush Melbourne includes as a frontispiece, “Villa on the Yarra, near Melbourne.” The villa appears to be on the Punt Road Hill, and presents quite an idyllic prospect.

Murray writes of the rapid expansion of Melbourne that “During the few months of my stay more than a hundred dwellings had risen from the ground, all of which were inhabited immediately on completion.”

He describes the houses, commenting that because of the high price of labour and the level of demand for homes their design has been simplified,

Passages and lobbies are carefully avoided as being of superfluous utility; windows are made to serve the purposes of doors and doors those of windows; and, in fine, every appendage that could possibly be curtailed is made to yield to motives of economy. There is, however, much of picturesque beauty in the aspect of these houses, as they are seen crowned by their low pavilion roofs, with dropping eaves, and resting in the shade of the broad verandahs which encircle their walls, (p. 34-35)

7. Meredith, Louisa Anne, 1812-1895.

Over the straits : a visit to Victoria / by Louisa Anne Meredith; with illustrations from photographs, and the author's sketches. (London : Chapman and Hall, 1861)

Mrs. Meredith lived in Tasmania where her husband Charles was a member of Parliament. While in Melbourne she visited various “pretty spots” including Hawthorn.

Hawthorn, on the banks of the Yarra, is a very pretty village; there too is the most charming cottage residence I saw in Victoria; and being the property and the creation of a public character, Dr., now Sir James Palmer, Speaker of the Legislative Council, I think I need have no scruple in mentioning it. The great, and unfortunately too peculiar charm of “Burwood,” is the excellent taste with which the grand old native trees around have been preserved, and the quaint picturesque Elizabethan house, so skilfully placed nestling among them, that the necessity of its own youth does not obtrude itself on one’s mind: all looks in perfect keeping and consistency. The material is the dark-blue stone I admired so much in Melbourne buildings, and it forms an effective ground-tint for the lovely climbing plants, which are trained in graceful draperies around the house, one side of which is clothed with ivy, garlanded over with roses and fuchsias. … From the sloping bank of the Yarra, here fringed with young and graceful trees, is a
vast, distant view of Melbourne (suggestive of London seen from Hampstead), just enough to enhance the beauty and quiet of such a retreat. I saw nothing else so English looking as “Burwood,” in the whole colony … The grand old, gnarled, and bending gum-tree, which figures in a sketch I made there, might almost be fancied an oak, especially with that arched porch and oriel window peeping under its branches. (p. 179-180)

This is the sketch on display, used as the head-piece to chapter five of her book.


This celebratory work, published to coincide with the centenary of Australia’s first settlement, shows some of the boom-period mansions. Those on display are, “Tara, the residence of Matthew O’Shanessy, Esq., Camberwell,” and “Como, Toorak, the residence of Mrs. C. M. Armytage.”


This was another of the boom-period publications. It is open at the illustration of the “Residence of Hon. M. H. Davies, Toorak.” This was on the corner of Lansell and St. Georges Roads, Toorak. Davies was one of the speculators involved in the land boom in Melbourne in the 1880s, and was ruined in the crash in 1892.

10. *Sands & McDougall’s Melbourne and suburban directory for 1885.* (Melbourne : Sands & McDougall, 1884)

The 1885 edition of the Melbourne Directory, published during the land-boom, had bound in at the front, a *Pamphlet of useful information for persons wishing either to build, borrow or invest*, by the Universal Building Societies. (1884) This included a series of plans and coloured elevations by the Melbourne architects N. Billing & Son, 78 Collins St. West, of homes ranging from the “Wooden house to be built for £100”, to the “Two semi-detached brick residences to be built for £1400.”

The copy on display is open at the “Brick dwelling to be built for £850” and the “Brick dwelling to be built for £1100”.

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This cartoon was part of a series satirising the wave of speculative building which was going on in Melbourne at the time.

We see a row of new houses with a sign, “These desirable properties for sale. Apply Runemup Builder.”

The caption reads,

On Sunday Runemup the “speculative builder,” accompanied by Mrs. Runemup, takes his usual Sunday stroll down to the charming little villas which Runemup is erecting at a fashionable watering place.

Runemup. – “Nice little cribs, ain’t they Maria?”
Mrs. R. – “They are so. Couldn’t we live in one ourselves during the summer? So nice and close to the sea too.”
Runemup. – “Good heavens Maria. What are you thinking of? They are built for sale. Tell you what I’ll do if you like: I’ll let your mother live in one rent free. She’s insured pretty heavy ain’t she?”

The usual criticism was that the new houses were built on poor foundations, with very little lime in the mortar.


This was the grand Australian publishing venture of its age. On display is volume 1 open at two views of Sydney, “From Woolloomooloo to Darlinghurst”, and “A glimpse of Sydney from Darlinghurst.”

We see rows of two and three-storey terraces lit up against the night sky.


Old colonial architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania / by Hardy Wilson. (Sydney : Published by the Author at Union House, 1924)

William Hardy Wilson was an architect and water-colourist. On an early trip to the United States he became attracted to the colonial revival style. He returned to Sydney determined to make Australians aware of their own colonial architecture.

In practice this meant a revival of a simpler, Georgian style, characteristic of many of the large houses still surviving in Tasmania. His professional designs for houses were based on such models.

The volume is open to show the collotype print of “Cottages at Albion Street, Surry Hills, New South Wales.”
Frank Lloyd Wright


*Buildings, plans and designs / by Frank Lloyd Wright. (New York : Horizon Press, 1963)*

This work was first published in German in 1910-11, as *Ausgeführt Bauten*, but all copies meant for distribution in America were destroyed in a fire.

Frank Lloyd Wright designed many private homes in the “prairie style” using low, horizontal lines appropriate to the landscape of the American mid-west. The houses are recognisably “modern” and his style was influential in Australia.

Le Corbusier


*Kommende Baukunst / Le Corbusier ; übersetzt und herausgegeben von Hans Hildebrandt : Mit 230 Abbildungen. (Stuttgart : Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1926)*

Le Corbusier was one of the most influential twentieth century architects. In his first book, *Vers une architecture* (1923), published in English as, *Towards a New Architecture*, he coined such epigrams as, “A house is a machine for living in.” This is the German translation.

His first large contract was for a workers’ city of forty houses at Pessac, near Bordeaux. His avant-garde, rather severe, architectural style was similar to the Bauhaus school of Walter Gropius and is, perhaps unfairly, now seen as an influence in the debased public housing designs of the high-rise Housing Commission flats.

Early twentieth-century American

16. Building Brick Association of America.

*One hundred bungalows / Published for the Building Brick Association of America. (Boston : Rogers & Manson, [1912])*

The bungalow appeals to the small householder. If built of brick it will have beauty, dignity and stability.

The American bungalow style became very popular in Melbourne in the 1920s. In this book we find a selection of the designs submitted for a competition to plan “a brick bungalow to be built complete – exclusive of land – for $3000.” (p. 3)
Early twentieth-century English


_Houses, villas, cottages and bungalows for Britishers and Americans abroad: a book showing how they should be built and what they ought to cost_ by George Gordon Samson. (London : Crosby Lockwood, 1910)

The cover illustrations are of “A Swiss chalet” and “A Riviera house costing £320.”

The book is a valuable source of information concerning the Englishman's attitude to foreign architecture, and to life abroad in general. There is a chapter on the “bungalow”, which was originally an Anglo-Indian design.

The true bungalow has all its rooms on one storey, although very many of those we are accustomed to see in England have attic bedrooms in the roof. This, while it may be advantageous in some ways and in certain instances, yet destroys their character as true bungalows. (p. 114)

There are several plans for bungalows, ranging in price from £240 to £1,400. Some of these plans feature the front porch and pillars characteristic of the bungalow design adopted so widely in Australia.

18 Samson, G. Gordon (George Gordon)


This is a step-by-step guide to the entire process involved in building your own home. Chapter 3 is, “The building of the house - from the foundations to the roof.” Other chapters cover the tasks involved in flooring, plastering, glazing, paper-hanging, and plumbing. There are even chapters on “How to make your own bricks” and “Thatching and how to do it.”

In bold type in his “Preface”, Samson states,

_There is a fact I want every reader to bear in mind always, and it is this: The man who has once built unaided only lone room – let us say one tiny outhouse only 8 or 9 feet square for example, if he has formed a fireplace in it, put a floor and a ceiling and a door in it and roofed it – that man will never afterwards feel the slightest fear that he will not be able to build a good sized house. He will know that he can do it._ (p. ix)


_Garden cities in theory and practice: being an amplification of a paper on the potentialities of applied science in a garden city_ by A. R. Sennett. (London : Bemore and Sons, 1905)

The “garden city” concept in town planning was promoted in the late 1890s by Ebenezer Howard in England. It involved buying a large band of agricultural land in the
countryside and building a satellite town in the rural setting. A “greenbelt” between the
garden city and the metropolis was integral to the plan.

In 1903 Letchworth, thirty miles north of London, was developed along these lines, and
in 1920, Welwyn Garden City was established nearby.

Sennett in his book on display cites as examples to follow, Port Sunlight, a model
ville designed by W. H. Lever for the workers of his soap factory in Bebington,
Cheshire, in 1888, and Bournville, in Worcestershire, set up in 1894 by George
Cadbury and his architect, W. Alexander Harvey, for the employees of the Cadbury
chocolate factory.

Garden City in Melbourne was built on reclaimed land at Sandridge Flat, west of Port
Melbourne. The State Savings Bank started the project in 1929, and the Victorian
Housing Commission took it to completion. The intention was to provide low cost, but
low density housing for workers. The 184 duplex buildings were designed by G. B.
Leith, modelled on those of the Welwyn estate in Britain. Each house sold for £850.

20. James, Charles Holloway, 1893-

Small houses for the community / by C.H. James and F.R. Yerbury ; with a
foreword by Raymond Unwin. (London : C. Lockwood, 1924)

This is an attempt by a pair of architects to present a detailed analysis of the problems
involved in providing houses for the workers, and the factors to be considered in
achieving the best outcome. It covers such aspects as the choice of site, the design
and materials to be used, as well as the construction, internal arrangements and finish
of the houses themselves.

Welwyn Garden City is used as a case study and detailed plans and specifications for
the buildings are included.


Houses we live in / Ministry of Health. (London : H.M.S.O., 1939)

This rather prescriptive text gives advice to people as to the best style of house in
which to live. Even the design of the garage is commented upon,

The garage should be designed in keeping with the house. Decoration is
inappropriate and it is out of keeping with the trim and businesslike lines of
the modern car.

The tenor of the publication seems to be in the direction of the clean, uniform line
equating to modernity and progress. The book is open to show two double-storey
houses, one is brick, with a bay window and a porthole feature, the other is a very
plain, cement-rendered building with an upper storey deck. The caption reads,

Given free choice … in which house would you prefer to live?

Looking at these houses now the answer is unclear, but one can presume the Ministry
of Health meant us to unhesitatingly choose the more modern, clean-lined home.
Early twentieth-century Australia


The cover illustration of this book shows a typical, modest but comfortable, Australian house of the period. In the section headed “Homes for the people” we find a disquisition on the advantages of home ownership compared to renting. In particular the benefits conferred by the Government in passing the 1910 *Advances for Homes Act* are dwelt upon.

To enable the man almost without capital to purchase his own home is to put in his hands a most satisfactory means of saving, one of the finest forms of insurance against the troubles of the future, and to add to the happiness of the whole household by the knowledge that they are acquiring their own home; there is a fascination to all the family in owning a house rather than having to pay rent to the dreaded landlord. (p. 69)

23. *Domestic architecture in Australia* / edited by Sydney Ure Smith and Bertram Stevens in collaboration with W. Hardy Wilson. (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1919)

This was a special publication of the journal *Art in Australia*. It features examples of both old and new houses, many of which have been photographed by Harold Cazneaux.

The book is open at a photograph of the residence of H. Robertson of New Farm, Brisbane. Queensland houses are characterised by their verandahs with blinds, a necessity in keeping cool and catching the breezes.

Hardy Wilson contributed an article on building “Puralia”, his own home, accompanied by photographs of the exterior and interior of the house. The Melbourne architect, H. Desbrowe Annear also has an article, on “The recognition of architecture”, in which he argues that people should use architects rather than having their houses designed by builders.

As an example of the benefits of living in an architect-designed house he cites,

The lack of lateral space in the rooms people use during their hours of wakeful ease, the inconvenience in the service of food, and the waste of space and want of fresh air in all sleeping apartments, can all be economically cured by the thoughtful architect acting in obedience to the dictates of his art. The dwellers in good houses well designed would then show that elastic ease of aristocratic well-being which should be the true heritage of all good Australians. (p. 22)

Dunlop & Hunt were a firm of builders at 317 Collins Street, Melbourne. Here they presented a range of homes which they have built, designed by their architect. These designs were offered as suggestions to prospective clients. They also offered to negotiate home loans as explained in the section, “Why pay rent?”

Why pay rent? We either build for cash, or we give the easiest terms obtainable in Australia for those desiring to build on the easy payment plan. We charge only 4/- per week for each £100 lent, including principal and interest. (p. 31)

The book includes photographs and floor-plans of a wide variety of Melbourne homes from the turn of the century, ranging from “large and handsome residences” to “pretty compact Villas.”

25. *Australian homes.* Volume number 1. (Melbourne: Ramsay, 1927)

Although a substantial sized volume, this was intended as the first issue of a periodical, but no further issues appeared.

The leading article is, “A modern Toorak home.” It begins,

This charming home with its old world atmosphere was a delightful commission by a client who had just returned from a two years sojourn in the “Old Country” and whose instructions were to plan and design a typically English home reminiscent of the Southern and Eastern counties of England, but made suitable for the climatic conditions of Australia. (p. 13)

The architects were the Melbourne firm of Barlow & Hawkins. The exterior is of “specially-picked clinker-bricks selected more for colour than texture knobs and excrescences so dear to the heart of the jerry builder.” (p. 20)

The item is open at a water-colour view and garden lay-out of “Colinton” Mont Albert Road, Canterbury”. This is a fine example of the English influence on our domestic architecture.


It can be argued that brick veneer houses have some of the advantages of both solid-brick and timber constructions. They have the exterior beauty and insulating power of brick while having the ease of installation of central heating, electrical wiring and plumbing of a timber house. The walls and ceilings were often of fibrous plaster.
27. *Centenary homes 1934-35 / The Building Industry Congress of Victoria, Board of Publicity.* (Melbourne : The Board, [1935?])

The emphasis in this book, published as part of the Victorian Centenary celebrations was “modern homes for modern people.” It included detailed plans and elevations of the prize winners in the Centenary Homes competition, one category of which was for the “Perfect Home to cost £1550” won by D. C. Ward of Burwood. There were also categories for concrete homes and asbestos-cement homes.


*Designs of timber-framed dwelling houses available for selection by applicants for credit foncier building loans / chief architect G. Burridge Leith.* (Melbourne : The State Savings Bank of Victoria, 1938)

This includes 35 plans and elevations of weather-board houses, all with terra-cotta tile roofs. The designs are still very recognisable to anyone driving around the Melbourne suburbs.

The book comes with a leaflet giving the details of the Credit Foncier loans being offered by the Bank.

29. Clive King (Firm)

*Homes / by Clive King.* (Oakleigh, [Vic.] : McLean Publishing Co., [1940])

Clive King was an Oakleigh builder with his headquarters at 5-7 Atherton Street, also with a City showroom at 367 Flinders Street.

His book of 42 plans and specifications gives us a good idea of the range of homes being built in Melbourne at the beginning of the War, before the shortage of materials and manpower caused a slump in the building industry.

30. *When you build.* (Melbourne : Australian Plaster Industries Pty Ltd, [1940?])

The two-storey brick house on the cover was designed by the architects R. M. and M. H. King for Mrs. Davey, North Road, Brighton. It begins with a section headed, “Every family should own its own home” and has a section showing “Why it pays to employ an architect.” The different types of houses include “Brick veneer, the modern method of home construction”, and “Timber homes”. Fibrous plaster is promoted throughout, especially for the interior finishing, as the booklet was published with the compliments of the Country Fibrous Plaster Manufacturers’ Association of Ballarat.
31. Barnett, F. Oswald (Frederick Oswald), 1883-1972


32. Victoria. Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board.

_First (progress) report, with appendices and supplements : slum reclamation : housing for the lower-paid worker : short term programme / Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board. (Melbourne : The Board, [1937])_

33. Barnett, F. Oswald (Frederick Oswald), 1883-1972.

_Housing the Australian nation / by F. Oswald Barnett & W.O. Burt. (Melbourne : Research Group of the Left Book Club of Victoria, 1942)_

34. Barnett, F. Oswald (Frederick Oswald), 1883-1972.

_We must go on : a study in planned reconstruction and housing / by F. Oswald Barnett, W.O. Burt, F. Heath. (Melbourne : Book Depot, 1944)_

35. Communist Party of Australia.

_Houses, slums, private enterprise and the future. (Sydney : Australian Communist Party, [1944])_

36. Reeves, John H.

_Housing the forgotten tenth : an investigation of the problem tenant / John H. Reeves. (Melbourne : Church of England Men's Society and the Brotherhood of S. Laurence, 1944)_

37. Communist Party of Australia.

_Wanted, a new housing policy for Victoria. [Melbourne : Communist Party of Australia, 1957?]

Since the mid-nineteenth century, the crowded inner-city housing precincts of the poor of Melbourne had been a matter of concern to governments and citizens. Although there were enquiries set up by governments on the nineteenth century the problem persisted, made worse by the 1929 depression and the economic hardships of the 1930s.
Frederick Oswald Barnett was the son of a quarryman thrown out of work in the collapse of the building boom in the early 1890s. In 1923 he visited an inner-city slum and was shocked by what he saw. He studied part-time at Melbourne University, completing a Masters thesis in 1931 based on the answers to 150 questionnaires he had circulated to the people living in the slums between Brunswick and Smith Streets in Fitzroy. A summary of his thesis was published in 1933 as *The unsuspected slums*. He set up a lobby group to convince the premier Albert Dunstan to inspect the slums himself. After doing this the Premier was impressed enough to set up a Housing Investigations and Slum Abolition Board.

The Board’s report included some very powerful photographs of the conditions under which people in such suburbs as Carlton were living. Country towns were also investigated and some shocking conditions found. Much was made of the fact that many of the people visited had no laundry, bath or toilet facilities and were often forced to cook in lean-to’s at the back of the house. The cover of John Reeves pamphlet shows this vividly.

In 1938 the Victorian Housing Commission was set up, but with the war intervening it was not until the 1950s that slum clearance began to take effect. Barnett protested against this as did the Communist Party, which had also been campaigning for better housing during the 1940s. However, by the 1960s people were being re-housed in low-rise and high-rise flats.

**England after the War.**

38. Anthony, Hugh.


This was a book written to prompt the government into taking action on the post-war housing crisis in Britain. The Blitz had destroyed entire streets of houses and servicemen were returning to civilian life who had previously lived with their parents. Now they needed homes of their own.

*This country needs 4,000,000 houses immediately. Such a programme obviously calls for wider and more imaginative building methods and techniques which have been developed in recent years, but which are still unfamiliar to the public. In this book Hugh Anthony (a pseudonym which conceals the names of two well-known young architects) attempts to define more clearly such terms as “prefabrication”, “temporary housing”, “mass-production”, etc.*

39. Church, Guy, 1880-


The intention with this book was to give designs and general information about houses which could be built within the restrictions of the immediate post-war period, (maximum cost £1200; maximum area 1000 sq.ft.) then added to as the restrictions are lifted. The example on the cover is also used for the frontispiece with the caption, “Planned for future expansion to come within post-war costs and area limits.” We see two versions of the same basic design, before and after the suggested additions.
40. Esher, Lionel Gordon Balioi Brett 1913-


41. Leacroft, Richard.


The “modern” or “contemporary” style of architecture with the clean lines of the Bauhaus, was a pre-war development but after the war it became synonymous with “architect-designed,” when people discussed new houses.

Architect Lionel Esher is not ill-disposed to this trend though he treats it with a large grain of salt. In a reference to Le Corbusier’s quote, “A house is a machine for living in,” Esher comments on the impracticalities inherent in such designs,

People began to spell machine with a capital M, and in the face of a great deal of evidence to the contrary it was solemnly believed that if a thing does its job efficiently it will be beautiful. …

It is easy to guess the effect of these ideas on the looks of buildings. Ornament was banished (the word ceased to be used unless qualified by the epithet “superfluous”), and with it went the various projections, copings, cornices, string courses, etc., which had traditionally served to throw rainwater clear of the wall face and protect it from penetration. … The modern house arrived in a blaze of glory and after a brief summer of astonishing beauty faded like a flower in the frost. (p. 36-37)

He supports his opinion with a pair of photographs showing the deterioration such designs can suffer if left to weather.

The Richard Leacock book is remarkable for the wealth of graphic detail in the illustrations. We are shown in a series of cross-section drawings the processes involved in building “the ordinary brick house of today.”

At this time Penguin was publishing several titles meant to cultivate the public interest in architecture during the post-war building revival, repairing the destruction of the Blitz.
Post-war Australia


*Home again: domestic architecture for the normal Australian* / by John D. Moore. (Sydney : Ure Smith, 1944)

After setting out in detail his ideas of the particular characteristics in the Australian landscape and climate which should be taken into account by local architects, John Moore devotes a chapter to “What is wrong with our houses?”

He found that the faults were often in the aspect of the house, e.g. if a house is built on the north side of the street, it should not therefore have its kitchen facing north into the sun and the living and bed-rooms facing south where they are “cheerless”. Among faults of design he also cites the main entrance door; the fact that it is usually in the wall facing the street is mere convention,

> It can quite easily be placed somewhere about the centre of either side wall – if the site warrants it. By doing this the internal passage space is reduced to a minimum, because the house is entered at the natural junction of the living and sleeping quarters; no space is taken away from one to enable you to get to the other. (p. 22)

He has many more points of criticism to make, including the opinion that “So many of our houses are depressing in colour.” (p. 24)

He then offers 14 designs for “normal homes” which he believed would be suitable for the varying situations found in Australia. Among the examples are a “Pisé house with central courtyard for hot country” and “House where outer suburbs merge into countryside.”


*Victorian modern: one hundred and eleven years of modern architecture in Victoria, Australia* / by Robin Boyd. (Melbourne : Architectural Students' Society of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, 1947)

Robin Boyd was a member of the famous Boyd family of Melbourne; the artist Penleigh Boyd was his father. In 1946 he became Director of the Small Homes Service set up by the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in conjunction with The Age newspaper.

From the beginning of his architectural career Boyd was a convinced “Modernist” and in *Victorian Modern*, his first book, he places the style into his version of the local vernacular.
44. Bunning, Walter, 1912-1977

*Homes in the sun: the past, present and future of Australian housing* / by Walter Bunning; foreword by Dr. H.C. Coombs. (Sydney: W.J. Nesbit, 1945)

Bunning was an architect and town planner who had worked for the Commonwealth Housing Commission during the War. His influential book, *Homes in the Sun* argued that Australian houses should be designed primarily to suit local conditions. Taking advantage of the sun is one of the themes being put forward but the book is more wide-ranging, having sections on the design of apartments, but most especially the need for community planning.

45. Beiers, George.

*Houses of Australia: a survey of domestic architecture* / by George Beiers. (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1948)

This was in some ways an up-date of the 1919 *Art in Australia* publication, *Domestic architecture in Australia*. Sydney Ure Smith was involved with both books, and George Beiers was the architectural editor of that journal in its closing years.

The cover shows “Ultimo” a house “near Sydney, New South Wales”, taken from Lycett’s *Views in Australia or New South Wales & Van Diemen’s Land* (1824-25), and an Arthur Baldwinson designed house at Palm Beach, NSW.

There is much space given to the recent development in Australia of flats. Among those featured are “Clendon Flats” in Clendon Road, Armadale, Melbourne, designed by Roy Grounds. This was where Robin Boyd and his wife lived when they were first married.

46. Beaufort homes. [Melbourne: Beaufort Division, Dept. of Aircraft Production, 1947?]

This was a project that was intended to provide cheap pre-fabricated houses using the facilities of the Federal Aircraft factory, which had been producing the Beaufort bomber.

A model home was set up in the Treasury Gardens. The factory was re-tooled ready to begin production on the first ten thousand homes in 1947, but when the government changed the project was abandoned.

47. “The steel house: its place in the housing scheme” by Domus (C. E. Carter), *Australasian handyman*, v. 1, no. 3, Nov. 1946, p. 3-6, 8.

“Domus” was the name under which Mr. Carter wrote many books on home carpentry and handyman guide-books. He was the editor and publisher of *Australasian Handyman*. Here he gives his thoughts on the Beaufort model home on display in the Treasury gardens.
He was impressed by the steel framed construction and the ease with which additions could be made. The article discusses many of the criticisms which had been made of the home and is able to show that these are, in the main, unreasonable and the plan is a very good one for the low income earner. His summary of it is,

a home which must provide the answer to the man who asks, “How can I obtain a comfortable home, modern conveniences and minimum of upkeep at a price which I can afford?” (p. 6)


This was a compilation of Australian and American plans, the first of which is for a “Californian home for a family of five or six. Designed by foremost American architect in collaboration with a landscape artist.” The caption reads, “Revolutionary in its planning.”

The post-war period in Australia marked a departure from the British model. From now on Australian architects looked to the US for inspiration.

49. Royal Victorian Institute of Architects. Small Homes Service.

   Small homes : how to build a home this year / Small Homes Service of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, with the Age. ([Melbourne] : Small Homes Service : The Age, [1948?])

The Small Homes Service published a series of architect-designed plans. Sets of the blueprints were sold for £5. This copy includes tipped-in a note that,

   In order to avoid excessive repetition of popular designs, sales of each plan are limited to fifty (25 metropolitan and 25 country)


   24 plans : Small Homes Service, special modern home folder. (Melbourne : The Institute, [195-?]) 1 folded sheet

This sets out the rationale of the Small Homes Service,

   Its aims are to bring architectural services within the reach of those who would not normally consult an architect, and to raise the standard of house design in Victoria by making available for a nominal charge the work of leading domestic architects in the state.

In the *Guide to Victorian Architecture*, published in 1956, the RVIA referred to the “Small Homes Service” (p. 44)

   Many houses will be seen in the newer suburbs, some bearing the hallmarks of the architect designed and supervised home. In over 5000 cases, these new homes have never known the hand of an architect. They were built by their owners, using standard drawings (architect prepared) and specifications obtained from the Small Homes Service. Notable examples: Corner Scott and Gibbs Streets, Beaumaris; 33 Scott Street, Beaumaris; 19 Lorraine Avenue, Box Hill; Wilson Road, Glen Waverley.

In 1951, 44% of the houses started were by owner-builders (see *The Australian Dream* / Powerhouse Museum, 1993, p. 76) Wep’s cartoon cover shows the bright side of the plight such amateurs faced, but we can also sense the discomfort of living in temporary accommodation on-site, and the look of despair in the man’s face as he sits and surveys the half-finished timber frame speaks volumes.


This was published to help the homebuilder in estimating the full cost of his project. It is open at two of the typical Small Homes Service designs, both of ten squares, one is rectangular, the other L-shaped.

They represent approximately the extremes in the range of shapes adopted for the plans of the vast majority of Victorian small houses.

53. *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.)

*Specification of The Age dream home, 1955: built at 45 Union Road, Surrey Hills and awarded as first prize in "The Age" news quiz.* (Melbourne : The Age, 1955)

This was designed by the Small Homes Service.

America in the fifties

54. *A treasury of contemporary houses* / selected by the editors of *Architectural record*. (New York : F.W. Dodge Corporation, 1954)

55. *The second treasury of contemporary houses* / selected by the editors of *Architectural record*. (New York : F. W. Dodge Corp., 1959)


These all feature houses in the “contemporary” style usually built in natural settings. Their interiors are also described and illustrated in detail, being mostly open-plan with plenty of glass, looking onto gardens of bush settings.
The introduction to the *House Beautiful* volume, sets the confident tone of the period. It is entitled, “The beauty of common sense”,

These houses have in ample measure the three qualities that Vitruvius recommended during the Roman Empire that all houses should have: commodity, firmness and delight. But they have them in a magical mixture that creates an aura around the life lived there. They all have a near-spiritual quality which you recognise in some secret part of you, when you enter them, but which is very elusive and difficult for the camera to capture. As a result, they create a rewarding and uplifting environment for the people living within.

It is as an environment for people to live within that you should view these homes. These are not facades to copy, for they have a full depth of quality having nothing to do with stylistic labels. A really good house tends to elude classification by common style labels, for other qualities stand out instead: rationality, poetic beauty, sympathetic relationship to the site, tolerant understanding of people’s needs and foibles – and recognition of the inescapable demands of climate.

The appeal of such modern designs together with their adaptability to the Australian climate saw these styles eagerly taken up by architects and home-buyers in Australia.

*Australia in the sixties*

**57. Woman’s world / edited by Alleyne M. Jukes. (Melbourne : M.A. White, [196-?])**

This is an encyclopedic work published for the bridal market. It includes information on all aspects of married life, and has a large section on buying or building a home. It is open at a photograph of the couple inspecting the partly-completed, modern house on a sloping, wooded site.

**58. Kalmar, Steven.**

*You and your home / by Steven Kalmar. (Sydney : Shakespeare Head Press, 1964)*

Steven Kalmar was best-known as the writer of the “You and your home” section in Sydney’s *Sunday Telegraph*.

This is a compendium of the taste of the period, both in the house-styles and especially in the interior décor. It was written partly to cater for the early wave of home renovators.
The 1960s saw the beginnings of the craze for buying up older residences and renovating them. The inner-city terraces in Sydney and Melbourne were being demolished for high-rise flats when people began to look at them with a different gaze, seeing their heritage value, if properly restored.

In his introduction the author comments,

> Over the past five or six years terrace houses have been “taken over” by authors, artists, architects, and actors, who have bought houses, often in conditions which at first sight look beyond repair, and with great flair, “done them up”.

> Terrace houses have a lot to recommend them to present-day buyers, not only for their attractive exterior design, but their compact and adaptable interiors. Many visiting architects have praised the terrace house for being so superbly suited to the landscape and climate of Australian cities. Naturally enough, over the years many houses have been left to fall into disrepair and are no better than slums. But as has been proved in recent years, terrace houses need not be slums; they are structurally sound and well built, and even though they may lack some modern amenities, they lend themselves to conversion to individual needs without major structural alteration and at quite reasonable cost. (p. 7-8)

After lamenting that “the recent boom in terrace house buying has raised prices so that they now tend to be out of all proportion to the real worth of the house”, Mr. Hillier, who has, we are told, “completely transformed two terrace houses in Sydney from a dilapidated state into houses of immense charm”, warns the prospective buyer to check especially the wiring, the plumbing and the rising damp.

For examples of renovations to terrace houses which we would now consider unsympathetic, see item 121.
Wunderlich

60. Wunderlich Limited.

Wunderlich art metal ceilings: their application in the modern home. (Sydney: Wunderlich Limited, [1921])

61. Wunderlich Limited.

The roof defines the building. (Sydney: Wunderlich Limited, [1922])

62. Wunderlich Limited.

Realising your dream of home / Wunderlich Limited Manufacturers. (Sydney: Wunderlich, [1925?])

63. Wunderlich Limited.

Durabestos, asbestos-cement, building sheets / Wunderlich Ltd. (Sydney: Wunderlich, [1926])

64. Wunderlich Limited.

Prize winning designs for your post-war asbestos-cement home. (South Melbourne: James Hardie & Co. and Ltd., [1945?])

65. Wunderlich Limited.

Colourful modern home designs: Wunderlich "durabestos" building sheets / Wunderlich Ltd. ([Sydney?] : Wunderlich, [195-?])

The Wunderlich Patent Ceiling and Roofing Co. Ltd. was set up in Sydney in the 1890s, by the Wunderlich brothers. They had taken out a patent for stamped metal ceilings. By 1897 they had become the sole agents in Australia for Marseilles tiles. They opened terracotta tile works at Brunswick in Melbourne and at Rosehill in Sydney, and developed an asbestos mine in Tasmania to enable them to market fibro sheeting. This part of their business was taken over by James Hardie in 1964.
James Hardie

66. James Hardie and Co.

Fibrolite homes: (fibro-cement) / James Hardie & Coy. (Melbourne: The Company, [1934])

67. James Hardie and Co.

Hardie’s genuine fibrolite asbestos cement products made in Victoria / James Hardie & Coy. (South Melbourne: James Hardie & Coy., 1941)

Under the line on the cover, “Made in Victoria”, a previous owner, with an agenda, has made a note, “by sweated labour.”

68. James Hardie and Co.

Don’t dream, build: your guide to building beautiful new style homes of Hardie’s “Fibrolite” / issued with the compliments of James Hardie and Coy. Pty. Ltd., “Fibrolite” asbestos cement building material manufacturers. (Sydney: James Hardie & Coy, [195-?])

James Hardie was a Scottish businessman who migrated to Melbourne in 1887. He started a tanning business, but after a trip back to Britain, Europe and North America in 1903, he became interested in a new type of roofing and lining material made by the French Fibro-Cement Co. It was made from cement and asbestos and had the advantages of being fire and pest resistant, as well as being light-weight and cheap to manufacture. The firm began to manufacture “fibrolite” in 1917, and it was seen as being very useful in building especially in the lower end of the domestic house market. Robin Boyd’s “House of tomorrow” for the 1949 Melbourne Modern Home Exhibition was made of fibro, and he built a fibro “mansion” in Eltham as an example of what could be achieved to offset the malaise analysed in his book The Australian Ugliness (1960)

It was not until the 1970s that a general awareness began to develop as to the dangers in working with asbestos. The dust generated in the manufacture was causing mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases.
Masonite

69. Masonite Corporation (Australia)

Masonite home plans: also garages, interiors & storage walls. ([Sydney : Masonite Corporation?, 195-])

70. Masonite Corporation (Australia)

Masonite built-in furniture. (Melbourne: Masonite Corporation, 1955.)

71. Masonite Corporation (Australia)

Masonite: furniture designs. (Sydney: Masonite Corporation (Aust.), [195-?])

The “home plans” book begins with the question, “What is Masonite?”

Masonite is a scientifically manufactured board, made entirely of exploded wood fibres of Australian timbers hitherto thought valueless. It is grainless, knotless, has no protruding fibres, slivers or other defects found in timber.

Although it is best known now as a material for indoor fittings, the company initially tried to promote it for exterior use as well. As a rival for fibrolite sheeting they marketed a special line, “Masonite Tempered Presdwood”. Despite their claim that this was more moisture resistant than timber it did not prove so in practice.

Problems with water notwithstanding, demand for Masonite was strong, for interior finishing and especially for cupboards and cheap furniture.

The most famous piece of Masonite was Rolf Harris’s “Wobble-board.”

Counter-culture

72. New Zealand whole earth catalogue. no. 2 (Wellington, Alister Taylor Pub. 1975)


74. Lin, Wei-Hao, 1944-

Basic mud brick / by Lin Wei-Hao ; illustrated by the author ; edited by Ron Edwards. 2nd (enl.) ed. / [enlarged by Ron Edwards] (Kuranda, Qld.: The Rams Skull Press, 1986)

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw an upsurge of interest in alternative lifestyles. People formed themselves into communes and purchased land on the edge of cities, or in the countryside. There they built their own houses; often they were geodesic domes or made of mud-brick.
The article, “An ecologically sound architecture is possible” reprinted in the New Zealand whole earth catalogue no. 2, (p. 202-203), appeared originally in Architectural design (July 1972). It was by the American architect Malcolm B. Wells. He believed that

We lost a precious thing when we became the only animals incapable of building their own nests. The miracle that is a brick will be forever lost to the man who never lays one. Build with your hands as much as you can; you’ll never regret it. (p. 203)

He was not in favour of “instant domes and throwaway buildings” but recommended the “A-frame”, a plan for which accompanies the piece.


In the hills around Melbourne, areas such as Warrandyte and Eltham were the preferred locations for the “back to the earth” architects.

The magazine article begins,

Looking east to a Dandenong’s view on a gentle slope of Lower Plenty, Victoria is the adobe house of artist Lindsay Edward and his wife. The designer, Alistair Knox, formed earth from the site into mud-brick to make the walls. (p. 7)

Interior Decoration

76. Ionides, Basil.

Colour and interior decoration / by Basil Ionides. (London : Country Life, 1926)

Interior decoration books give us an important insight into the taste of each generation and are useful to those interested in restoring period homes.

Basil Ionides has arranged his book into chapters on particular colours, adding at the end one on the “Disrepute of colours.”

Pale blue of a hedge-sparrow-egg tone also was once used: it is never considered now by those of taste. It seems to have died out slowly, its last gasps being in cheap silk blouses. (p. 73)

His general principles remain sound,

One great influence on colour is the window space allowed by the architecture of the rooms; when large windows were fashionable, then bright colours were not. …

The light from large windows is too strong for bright colours: one must have soft colours. In the same way a dark room must have bright colours to penetrate the gloom. (p. 72)

The frontispiece chosen for the book shows, “A bedroom with brown walls enlivened by bright colour,” which I fear would still be far too gloomy for today’s taste.
77. Patmore, Derek, 1908-

*Colour schemes for the modern home* / by Derek Patmore. (London : Studio Ltd.; New York : The Studio Publications, 1933)

78. Miller, Duncan.


The *Studio* magazine as well as its *Year-book of decorative art* and its occasional publications such as these are key indicators of the taste of each period.

Derek Patmore’s illustration of a modern study is in the rounded deco style adapted for a small, utility space. The wood is Oregon pine “which has a pleasant gold colour” and the room is brightened both by sunlight, a “BP” print, and a large novelty wall clock.

Duncan Miller’s book is open at “before and after” photographs of a sitting-room in a London flat. We see it in its bare state with walls, windows and a fireplace. After its “make-over” it looks quite modern, an effect partly achieved by the lighting.

The moulded cornice and the panels on the walls have been taken away and the plain surfaces increase the apparent size of the room.

The lower photograph also illustrates the lighting of curtains from the floor, this time by two floodlights placed on the ground behind the large sofa. (p. 74)

79. Lord, Margaret Florence, 1908-1976.

*Interior decoration : a guide to furnishing the Australian home* / Margaret Lord. (Sydney : Ure Smith, 1944)

In her “Foreword”, Margaret Lord refers to the growing trend overseas of setting up schools of interior decoration, while here it still generally depends on “the good taste of the amateur.”

If we are to take full advantage of the present-day rapid changes in methods of manufacture, new processes and new materials, we must have instruction in the subject. The need is great in Australia; our interiors are too often an undiscriminating imitation of imported styles, with little comprehension of our own problems of furnishing. In this book I have sought to relate the general theories of interior decoration to our own particular Australian needs. (p. 1)

The colour illustrations demonstrate how “sunshine and the sea” can be used as key-notes for modern Australian interior design. The rooms shown are from Roy Grounds Frankston home.

Two views of a Living Room by the sea. The designer, Roy Grounds, has made effective use of the natural colours and textures of wood, tiles and fabrics. The first view shows how a large map has been used to make an effective wall decoration. (p. 76-77)
80. Faulkner, Ray, 1906-


This American book on interior design was first published in 1954. The third edition (1968) was reprinted in Sydney in 1970 for the Australian market. The cover features a view of the Sydney Harbour Bridge from a harbour-side living room; the photograph continues onto the back cover where we can see the Opera House.

This lovely waterside home overlooking Sydney Harbour typifies the exciting influence that the best of international design is having on today’s Australian home. (Photographed especially for “Inside today’s home” by Kurt Vollmer.)

Paint

81. Brindley, B. H.

*Australian home decorator and painter* / B.H. Brindley. (Melbourne : Colorgravure Publications, [1952])

82. Stewart, Anne.

*The colorful home* / by Anne Stewart. (Sydney : Taubmans Ltd., [195-?])

83. *At home with colour*. (Sydney : Taubmans Industries, [195-])

All of these are from the 1950s. Mr. Brindley’s book sets out possible colour schemes for each room and explains the underlying principles. The book is open at a spread on “Aspect and color”.

The two Taubmans books give very detailed suggestions as to the most modern colour schemes for each room. The cover of Anne Stewart’s book shows the exterior of a beautiful two-storey Mediterranean-style house, predominantly white, but with red doors and black iron-work.

*At home with colour* is open at a kitchen done in ivory and green; other options are also illustrated in cinnamon, olive and coral, and blue. Notice the “hutch-style” split door.

The woman painting a brick wall on the cover was Mary Maxwell, who contributed an article to this special painting issue, “Quote was £150, so I painted it myself for £20.” (p. 35-37)

Also on display are two colour charts from 1965 for “Dulux Spruce” and Berger Brisk house paints.

The Kitchen


The cover shows a typical Australian kitchen from the 1930s, with its ice-chest, lino and “Kooka”.


This is open at an advertisement, “Design for a small Hotpoint all-electric kitchen,” opposite an article which advises you to, “Plan your kitchen to save steps.” The article is accompanied by plans which show the walking routes in two different kitchen floor-plans.


The article compares a kitchen designed by a woman with one designed by a man. The kitchen featured on the cover was designed by Leslie H. Runting for Mr. and Mrs. Hebden, 2 Derry St., Essendon.

88. *How to use your Sunbeam mixmaster: full instructions for use 172 tested recipes*. (Sydney: Cooper Engineering Company, [195-?])

89. *Over 400 tested recipes for your Semak Vitamizer*. ([Carlton, Vic.]: Semak Electrics Pty. Ltd, [195-?])

Electric kitchen appliances became more common in Australia in the 1950s. When someone described a kitchen as having “all mod cons” this is what was usually meant.

The Sunbeam Mixmaster was the most desirable appliance, but the Semak Vitamizer, as seen on Bob Dyer’s Pick-a-Box, was perhaps even more prestigious. The Semak recipe book included a section on “Adult party drinks” such as the “Sherry joy-maker” and the “Hazy-dazy.”
The Living Room

90. Patmore, Derek, 1908-

*Modern furnishing and decoration /* by Derek Patmore. (London : Studio Ltd., 1934)

The living room shown here was designed by the head of Fortnum and Mason’s Furnishing Department, as “an example of how to decorate a modern room with only a moderate outlay.” (p. 33)

The colour scheme in green, yellow and brown, is built around the painting.

91. “Modern ideas in furniture and furnishing”, *Australian Home Beautiful, 1 August 1934.*

The cover shows the living room of Mr. C. Max Werner in Moorakyne Ave., Malvern. Both the house and the furniture were designed by the architect, Rae Featherstone.

The living room centres on the fireplace which is described in the article, “Harmony in furnishing when an architect designs the furniture” (p. 15-19)

A fireplace treatment featuring the modern horizontal line – it is sand-finished in keeping with the wall, with inset marble decorations. The mantel shelf has a veneered edge of Queensland walnut. The open hearth is screened when not in use by an oxidized metal sliding grille. (p. 16)


The living room on the cover of this Melbourne furniture catalogue is altogether less intimidating than that designed by Fortnum and Mason’s. The parents look quite at home watching their son read his comics.

93. Storey, Walter Rendell

*Furnishing with color.* (New York, American Studio Books, 1945)

Through the 1940s and especially into the 1950s and 1960s there was a trend in modern homes for open plan interiors. Typically the living and dining areas would be combined. Here we see two possibilities, in a London house (left), and an American one (right).

94. “30 ways to divide a room”, *Australian home beautiful, August 1956.*

The cover features a living area where the dining room is divided from the lounge room by Venetian blinds. Note also the Scandinavian style chairs, and the modern Lazy Susan.

The cover shows an open-plan living space looking out into the upper canopy of Australian bush.

The house has little resemblance to the stereo-typed Australian home. It is Sydney’s latest much-talked-about home, belonging to architect Mr. Ken Woodley at Mosman. It breaks new ground in home design, shows a new way of building on a steep slope, and offers a new, brighter, freer way of family living in areas instead of rooms. (p. 5)

Wallpaper

96. Have the home beautified with wallpaper. (Melbourne : John Danks & Son, [193-?])


Until the mid-1960s wallpaper was very popular for decorating the interior of the home. The problem was hanging it, something which amateurs constantly found difficult, and changing it when the pattern became faded or unfashionable.

The cover of Practical household decorating shows a handyman putting up wallpaper over an old plaster wall.

98. “Choosing the paper”, Australian Home Beautiful, 1 November 1932.

This couple are looking at floral patterns to match their lounge suite.

99. Crown Wallpapers series 71. [Pattern Book] [196-]

This pattern book from the mid 1960s includes samples of Crown wallpapers produced in England, as well as samples for a new product “Stripovin” vinyl wall covering, made in Canada.

Large, bright florals predominate but there are also many more traditional patterns as well as the flock-finished, relief patterns which gave the wall texture. Brick or timber patterns were available.

We acquired this volume for the collection of Vietnam War press-cuttings which a previous owner has pasted onto the backs of the samples.
Bathroom

100. John Danks & Son.

*Catalogue / John Danks & Son. 1952 ed. (Melbourne : John Danks & Son Pty Ltd, 1952)*

John Danks & Son were one of the largest hardware and home suppliers in Melbourne. Their 1952 catalogue is open at a page where they are promoting “Lustrtile”, a Masonite based sheet, “the perfect wallboard for kitchens, bathrooms, shower recesses, or wherever a tile effect is required.” (p. 65)

The illustration shows the bathroom decorated in black and maroon with yellow vanity basin and bath.


This catalogue was circulated in Melbourne by Shanks & Co. It is open to show a curved bath with brown tiled floor and light and dark purple wall tiles. There is a shower above the bath with a quarter glass screen. Also displayed is a brochure for one of Shanks & Co.’s own appliances, “The elegant Milos” vanity basin, seen here in yellow in a black tiled bathroom.


This features a predominantly green and yellow bathroom with light steaming in through a clear-glass, leaded window. The article has the title, “The pluperfect bathroom” (p. 15-16), and advises the home-owner to have a recessed bathroom heater installed.

103. [Bathroom at Mr. Bert Watts’ house, North Fitzroy], *Australian Home Beautiful*, 1 May, 1939.

The bathroom is described as “really luxurious”. It is finished in light brown tiles and has a dressing alcove attached. The cover illustration shows the endless vista which can be seen in the mirrors.

> The inside wall and the ends of the bath itself are of gold mirror and the photograph shows just one half of the reflections. (p. 7)

The gardening feature in this issue promises, “More about hydroponics: growing plants in water inside or outside the house” by Aqua.

104. “This was our bathroom a week ago, just look at it now”, *Australian Home Beautiful*, p. 110, December 1956 issue.

This advertisement for “Hardie’s Tilux, marble-finished wall panels”, shows the before and after. The old bathroom has dingy look with its hot water geyser and a claw-foot bath; the new is brightly decorated in green and yellow with a separate shower recess.
105. Australian Town Planning Conference and Exhibition (2nd : 1918 : Brisbane, Qld.)

Catalogue : Second Annual Town Planning Conference and Exhibition, 30th July to 6th August, 1918. (Brisbane : A. J. Cumming, Govt. Printer, 1918)

The verandah was a feature on the Anglo-Indian home but because of the Australian climate was readily adaptable for local conditions. Queensland homes are the best-known Australian examples and the illustration used for the cover of this 1918 Brisbane Town Planning conference publication is typical. The wooden balustrading and the high stumps are characteristic of the style, and the front garden with a palm tree and a poinsettia is also very Queensland.

106. Stewart, Anne.

The colorful home / by Anne Stewart. (Sydney : Taubmans Ltd., [195-?])

On display is “The sun verandah” showing a bamboo chair, a steamer chair and a simple couch, looking out onto the garden, shaded by canvas blinds, the predominant colours being cream and green.

Furniture and fixtures

We have several furniture catalogues, mainly from the early twentieth-century.

107. Maple & Co.

[Furniture catalogue] (London, Maple & Co., [192-])

This is open to show “The ‘Cha Ya’ portable garden house”, with its cane furniture.

108. Furniture designs (London, Thos. Atkins & Sons, [192-])

This catalogue of furniture is stamped by its Melbourne distributors:

Made expressly for C. F. Rojo & Sons Pty. Ltd., 501-511 Swanston St. European labor only.

The labour reference is to the contemporary agitation on the part of the local tradesmen and their union against furniture made in Melbourne by cheap Chinese labour, particularly in the factories in the streets and lane-ways in the north-eastern corner of Melbourne’s Central Business District. C. F. Rojo & Sons was a long-established Melbourne firm specialising in hand-made, period reproduction pieces.
George Hudson Pty. Ltd. was a Sydney firm of timber merchants. They ventured also into building but here we see one of their catalogues for doors and floors. It is open at a Pacific maple and walnut door with an art-deco dressing table in green and black wood.


This booklet was published for use by new migrants who often had to “make-do” when they were setting themselves up in their new country. The lounge chair and book-cases made from kerosene boxes shown on the cover is typical of the suggestions in the book.

The 1930s depression made such “makeshifts” even more relevant to many home-makers.

**The Garden**

We have extensive holdings of gardening books, which will be the subject of another exhibition in the near future.

111. Pescott, Edward Edgar, b. 1872.

*Gardening in Australia: a practical guide to laying out and cultivating gardens, lawns, hedges, paths ... soil preparation, etc., etc.* / by Edward E. Pescott. (Melbourne: Whitcombe & Tombs, [1926])

This book is on display for its cover illustration of the ideal Australian home and garden from the 1920s. We see a neat lawn, a hedge and standard roses along a curving drive which winds beneath an arbour to the backyard garage.


The most famous Australian garden designer, Edna Walling, regularly contributed articles to the *Australian Home Beautiful*, often providing sample plans for people to try.

In this special garden week issue, as well as providing “Two garden designs” (p. 30-31) she has an article on “Some Essentials of garden design” (p. 38) The issue also included an article, “Remodelling an old garden” by Olive Mellor. (p. 52)

Olive Mellor was the magazine’s garden journalist. In the October 1956 issue she designed a garden for new-homebuyers Mr. and Mrs. Pickering of East Ivanhoe, “the newest of Melbourne’s architect’s playgrounds.” (p. 36) As “this is the magazine of practical living,” Mrs. Mellor did an “on-site job”. The detailed plans were published in
the article, calling for 114 different types of plants. The problem facing many young
marrieds was how to soften and beautify the barren blocks on which their dream house
had been built.

This was a typical suburban block 60 ft. by 130 ft. sloping to the front. Each
section of it presented as problem – most of them just the problems that
face any small block owner. The carefully planned solutions will help
readers from Burnie to Broome. (p. 36)

When Mrs. Mellor re-visited the concept in 1961 she provided two plans, one for a
“Conventional” garden, the other for a “Natural” garden of Australian natives.

The house shown is “an average two-bedroom home (S/T 639) selected from HB’s [i.e.
Home Beautiful’s] Small Homes Service range of plans” (p. 33)

115. Concrete for amateurs and builders : an
Australian home beautiful handbook. (Melbourne :
United Press, 1935)

116. Eldridge, R. V. F.
Concrete and cement work : an Australian home
beautiful handbook for the guidance of home
workers and tradesmen / by R.V.F. Eldridge.
(Melbourne : United Press, [1937])

These “Homecrafts” handbooks published by
Australian Home Beautiful in the 1930s gave detailed
instructions to the home handyman for building
garden beds, drive-ways, “crazy pavements” and
even swimming pools for their yards.

The Home Handyman

We have a good collection of manuals for the home handyman. This is not just a recent
phenomenon, although of course the television shows such as Noni Hazlehurst’s
“Better homes and gardens”, has made it into a national obsession.

117. The War-time handyman’s book. ([Melbourne : Domus, 1943?])

Wartime shortages made the necessity of doing-it-yourself even more pressing.


Solvol was the soap of choice for mechanics and all those who needed to remove
grease. This book was issued in the post-war period and has a scene on the cover of
the man working in his shed, and his wife bringing him a cup of tea.

119. Matthew, William Percival,
The practical home handyman : a comprehensive guide to constructional and
repair work about the house / edited by W. P. Matthew. (Melbourne : United
Press, [1949])
This is an encyclopaedic work. As well as the usual home carpentry and concreting jobs it includes chapters on how to fix appliances and how to maintain your car. The cover shows the man being helped by his daughter.

120. *Australian picture handyman*. (Melbourne: Colorgravure Publications (Herald & Weekly Times), [195-?])

This publication was heavily-illustrated and easier to follow. The end-papers are done in cartoon style with 32 versions of the handyman working on his house and in his back-yard (31 are working, the other is floating on his back in the ornamental pool)


This was the first in a series of articles on “how to brighten your home.” Among the many examples are two which involved renovation double-storey terraces. One of the stories is headed, “Al set for another century”, and involved the complete renovation of a “terrace-type house over 90 years old into a luxury modern home.” The house was in Avoca Street, Randwick. “Ron Well, slaughterman at a Sydney abattoirs chose the colors, fabrics, furnishings and designed the wrought iron,” (p. 38) he was the Captain of the Coogee Surf Life Saving Club and his fellow club-members helped him do the work over a six month period.

122. Maddocks, Cheryl.

*Renovations and home maintenance for the handywoman* / by Cheryl Maddocks and Mary Moody. (Cammeray, N.S.W.: Horwitz Grahame, 1982)

The introduction begins,

> This book has been written to help and encourage practical and energetic women who want to tackle renovation and repair work that has traditionally only been handled by men. It is not intended as a sexist document; on the contrary, the advice given will be helpful to any person interested in home improvements.

The “Introduction” is a good summary of the reasons why people find it sensible to do their own repairs.

The cost of labour involved in hiring professional tradesmen is usually too great for most home owners, who find it necessary to do their own running repairs to prevent the house from deteriorating. There has also been a big swing towards doing up older homes and once again the labour costs are beyond the reach of most renovators. …

Modern power tools have played a big part in the home maintenance revolution, enabling even unskilled people to acquire expertise in various areas. Over the years these tools have become lighter, safer and cheaper – the reason why so many women have decided to “do-it-themselves.”
Magazines

It would be possible to do an entire exhibition on this subject using only magazines. We have good holdings of titles such as the *Australian Home Beautiful*. The changing styles of home design and interior decoration can be traced in exact detail by looking through the monthly issues.

Some issues have been displayed in appropriate spots in the exhibition, and have been noted in the text.

A selection of *Australian Home Beautiful* and *Australian House and Garden* are displayed on the screens and in the corridor cases. One of the more striking covers has the caption, “Hollywood by Moonlight”. It refers to an article, “Hollywood by sunlight” (p. 35-40) on the film stars' houses. The influence of the movies on Australian house design can be seen, for example, in the 1930s fashion for Spanish Mission style homes. John O'Grady's house, designed by himself and his wife in 1959, on top of a cliff overlooking the Georges Rives north of Sydney, and built with the royalties from *They're a weird mob*, is featured on the cover of the August 1967 issue.

*Laminex*, the popular, new plastic covering for kitchen table and bench tops was one of the key products used to brighten homes in the 1950s and 1960s. It was made in Cheltenham, a suburb of Melbourne. Advertisements appeared in magazines throughout the period, one on display is from the *Australian Home Beautiful*, December 1961. Under the heading, “Surprise him! Do it yourself with Laminex!” we see a woman covering a bench-top as her husband returns from doing the grocery shopping.

Also on display are some *Women’s Weeklies*, *Woman’s Days* and English *Picture Posts*, as well as a *Saturday Evening Post*, 18 July 1959. This shows a family about to lose their house to a freeway development.

The issues of *Picture Post* have stories on slum clearance and the housing problem. “Build high to clear the slums”, by Peter Eadie, *Picture Post*, 12 March 1955, p. 22-24, promotes the building of high-rise flats as the answer to re-locating people from slum housing. This of course was the direction followed by the Victorian Housing Commission.

“A ‘Picture Post’ guide to the housing jungle” by Fyfe Robertson, *Picture Post*, 29 October 1955, p. 14-15. 62, puts forward an argument that “rent control”, is only a short term benefit to the poor as it means landlords have no incentive to do running repairs to their properties.

An issue of the *South Australian Homes & Gardens* April 1940, is on display showing a typical small weatherboard home of the period. It also has an article by Edna Walling, on “Foundation planting” (p. 24-25, 52)

The *Woman’s Day*, 22 May 1950 has an article on a “Bachelor girl’s flat: it’s a dream says Elinor Ward.” The issue for 32 December 1951 shows a young couple on the cover, re-painting their kitchen in red and cream, promoting the “£750 prizes for our “Remodel your kitchen” competition”.

*A.M. the Australian Magazine*, 2 March 1954, has an article on “The war of the houses” by Gerald Stewart (p. 16-18) This deals with the problems architects were experiencing in having their designs approved by local councils. Two of Harry Seidler’s houses are shown. The one at Castlecrag initially had its plans rejected, because, to quote a letter from the Willoughby Council to Seidler, such a design was “not in the public interest.”
They also disapproved of the internal lay-out, which was such that, “one could spit from the main bed-room into the living-room.” (p. 16)

The issue of *Australian House and Garden*, December 1963 includes an article by Joern Utzon, the designer of the Sydney Opera House, commenting on modern Sydney houses. He found them “ill-related” and “disharmonious”; too many different styles built together. He preferred housing built to form a community, and offered the example of a project he had designed in Denmark of 64 houses “in harmony with the movement of the landscape.” (p. 15)

Also on display are some of the advertisements which feature in the magazines. There is a series on “Feltex”, a carpet material which used very stylish graphic design for its advertisements on the back covers of *Australian Home Beautiful*, *The Home Annual*, and *Man* magazine from 1937 to 1940. Two issues of the *Australian home beautiful* (Jan. and Feb. 1939) have different advertisements for the 1939 Home and Building Exhibition, at the Melbourne Exhibition Building 17 February to 4 March, 1939. The model used in the design for the January 1939 advertisement was by the architectural firm of Leighton Irwin.

**Architectural Model**

We have on display a model of a Harold Desbrowe-Annear (1865-1933) house at 34 The Eyrie, Eaglemont. The model was built by Melbourne architect Peter Crone who now lives in the house and has allowed us to borrow the model for this exhibition.

Desbrowe Annear was born in Bendigo. Robin Boyd said of him, that he “was the first Australian-born architect to have the rebellious spirit which was necessary for one to be a pioneer of the modern movement in architecture.” (*The walls around us* / Robin Boyd, 1962, p. 52)
The Bain family of 69 Windella Street, Kew

123. [Original water-colour sketches of the Bain family life at 69 Windella Street, Kew between 1952 and 1958.]

These water-colours were sent back to England in letters to relatives. One of the sketches on display shows the famous Australian invention, the Hills Hoist.

The rotary clothes line-- a wonderful idea. Used everywhere here. They are of metal galvanised. Sunk well into the ground. You can heighten them & they whirl round in the wind. The makers fit them in situ, embedding them in a concrete foundation. This is the smallest size.

The sketch shows children swinging on the hoist while they are hanging out the clothes. It also shows a plan and elevation of the hoist, giving the measurements.

Other sketches show the family doing home improvements.

A model Hill’s Hoist is on display on top of the main cabinet, courtesy of Mick Stone, Camberwell Books.