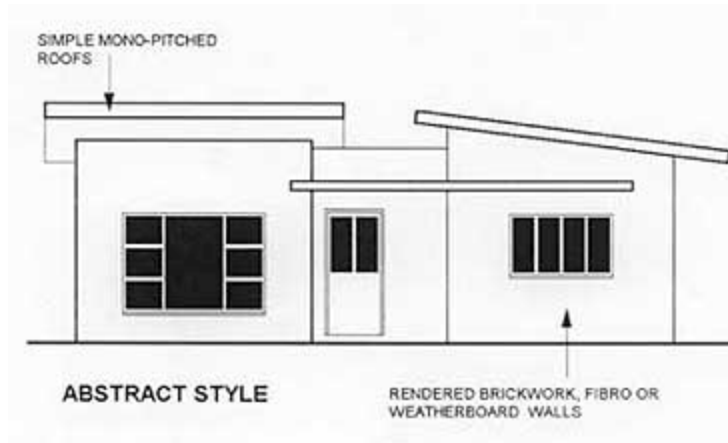


In 1948, a young Architect from Austria burst onto the Australian Architectural scene and started work on what is now one of Australia's most well known homes – the Rose Seidler House at Turramurra on Sydney's North Shore.



The Architect's name was Harry Seidler and the abstract house he built for his parents won the Sulman Medal for its unique design. It also won him an enormous battle with the local Council over whom he eventually triumphed.

Seidler's success paved the way for many Abstract designed homes to be built during the 1950's and early 1960's.

They were based on Seidler's original design, says Architect Greg Butler, most often with flat metal roofs, partially hidden by roof overhangs. They were usually steel framed with infill panels and lots of glass, which sometimes (as with the case of Seidler's original design) formed an entire glass wall.

Mr Butler also notes that many Abstract designed homes have a clinical or industrial type feel, with a minimalist approach. The design uses clean lines and uses geometric proportions that were critical to the overall visual effect.

The Abstract home also followed the Architectural school of thought that buildings are foreign to the land, they should not blend in with the surrounds, but make a statement and consequently, they were often slightly suspended above the ground, to give a 'hovering' type effect.

The floor plan of an Abstract home says Mr Butler, is open plan and indeed one of the most promoted features of Seidler's original Abstract design was the extraordinary flexibility of the interior through the use of the internal steel column supports and moveable interior divisions.

Positive Features

Unlike many of Australia's suburban homes, the Abstract style home is built for the Australian environment. It is not a design that has come from overseas that is intended for a colder climate such as the United Kingdom. It is instead designed to embrace the Australian outdoors and through the use of glass, it establishes excellent indoor-outdoor connections.

The open plan layout is also very popular amongst buyers and it provides a flexible forum for change.

As the design is usually steel framed, they are generally very sturdy homes.

The Renovation Potential

With the Abstract designed home being based on geometric proportions, addition and extensions to this style are not particularly difficult.

However, Mr Butler suggests that when renovating this style of home, attention should be given to improving the home's thermal (heating and cooling) qualities and detailing the weak areas of the house, such as the roof and water proofing the joints.