

Housing Style

The Federation House

As the name suggests, the Federation style house was built in the Federation era from the end of the 19th century to the 1920's. It was the first distinctive Australian house type, designed to embrace the outdoor lifestyles of the Australian people.



According to Architect David Baillie, typical Federation homes have front verandas with decorative timber handrails, with tiling on the patio floor and on entry into the house. He says the houses are usually made of a deep red or dark brown brick, often with a mix of the two.

The roofs of federation houses are typically made of terracotta tiles, with an assortment of decorative features such as gables and motifs adorning the exterior of the property. Leadlight windows are also a common feature of the Federation style house and a result, Federation houses are often very picturesque and eye catching.

Most Federation houses are free standing and single storey, with the more upmarket properties being double storey. They are usually medium to large size properties, with the common layout, says Baillie, being a main bedroom at the front off the verandah, a lounge room at the end of the hallway and utility areas towards the back.

Traditionally these type of houses had an outside toilet and laundry located at the far end of the back garden, however today most Federation homes have been renovated to relocate these areas (or at least the toilet) inside.

The decorative features of Federation style homes does not end at the exterior of the property, with most Federation homes featuring internal decorative features such as high ceilings, plasterwork and even ornamental roses in the lights for those upper market properties.

Positive Features

One of the Federation house's most positive attributes style is its aesthetic value. With its decorative external and internal features and rambling style, Federation homes can look visually sensational. In addition to presenting well, the Federation style has the advantage of being a good size and designed to cater specifically for the Australian lifestyle.

Renovation Potential

While there are a number of challenges associated with renovating Federation homes, the end result is always viewed as being well worth the effort.

One challenge according to Baillie is the need to match the original building material with the new. This may include matching tiles, floorboards, bricks, etc. This can often increase the cost of renovating this particular type of home. However, Federation homes can be integrated well with other design styles and renovations to this type of home can create a level of comfort and pleasantness of surrounds that is second to none.

With large back gardens, the Federation style lend themselves well to rear extensions and, as is the case with most older style homes, the kitchen and bathroom areas are often the first places that renovations will begin.