



Housing Style

Post World War Two

Housing shortages followed World War II with returning service people, an increase in new marriages and a Commonwealth Immigration plan, "populate or perish".

Demand for housing meant building materials were short in supply and because of the prior war focus of industry would remain unavailable to many for some time and at a premium cost.

Smaller housing styles resulted with floor plans reduced to 12 or so squares in size.

Roads remained unsurfaced or even unmade where houses were needed and services were few. Owner Building became a very popular alternative with many living in 'on site garages' during home construction.

An austere form of housing emerged in response to all these pressures over a period spanning almost fifteen years.

Post World War Two

1950's Austerity – Queensland Housing Commission Homes

A very common sight nowadays in middle ring suburbs of Brisbane and other major provincial towns is a home known affectionately as 'Housing Commission' or 'War Service'.

These timber framed low-set or high-set homes were on concrete stumps, modest in size and resulted in sturdy construction with the use of quality hardwood framing over structurally short spans and with hardwood weatherboard cladding an effective double for wind bracing.

Some earlier homes were built without the weatherboards and with fibro cement sheets as cladding. Fibro featured throughout as interior linings and papering was sometimes required to cover over inferior linings or material imperfections.

Corrugated roofing of fibro or asbestos cement and iron prevailed. Red tile roofs would follow as later builders of post war homes benefited from the gradual improvement in material manufacturing and supply.

In plan the houses contained only two or three bedrooms, a single living dining room, a kitchen, small bathroom and an external back yard toilet and laundry. This was the simple result of compromises and reductions on account of shortages. Often such items as plaster moulds and cornices were deleted or replaced with simple timber mouldings reducing the attention to decoration to the purely economical or achievable.

Positive Features

These homes did however enjoy large allotments which were often unceremoniously cleared of all trees. By now each house will have its own family footprints and the heights of children's growth upon doorway architraves will still mark some as so little has been done to change many of these homes since baby boomer kids moved on.

Available, affordable and well located nowadays. Strong and crying out for an aesthetic new lifestyle makeover some of these are now targets for renovator's makeovers of the new property movement.

Renovation Potential

Size is important so additions and alterations for bigger living area, rumpus and car accommodation can begin the process for many. Home improvement has included purely superficial additions such as 'bay' type front bedroom window projections and tacked on Queensland cottage look revival themes.

Importantly however an increasing number of new owners are employing architects with architectural responses and ideas which add to and change in a contemporary functional way the look and lifecycle of these modest homes often with amazing value adding results.

Integrating house and garden, incorporating indoor – outdoor fold-away walls and doors, many forms of contemporary additions and designs seem possible nowadays with these homes.