



Housing Style

The Queensland Colonial Property Workers Cottage and Middle Class Cottage

The Colonial Early 'Settlers' style began in the Colonial era of the early 1800's and today there are few original early Colonial properties from this era remaining.

However, the design style of Queensland Colonial Property evolved into what can be termed 'Workers Cottage' from the 1870's to 'Queensland Colonial' in the period prior to 1901 – ie. when Queensland was a colony prior to Federation. According to registered architect Ron Tanton, the Colonial Cottage style is well known for its modest symmetrical design, with windows on either side of the central front door.

The roof shapes varied in the early cottages reflecting available building materials and budget expenditure. The roofs were pitched gable ended over side walls with limited or no gable overhangs and often a broken pitch continued the main roof over the front verandah.

Usually consisting of only a single storey and constructed in braced single skin timber. Mr Tanton notes that most Colonial Cottages have a full width front verandah. The typical Workers Cottage is very simple reflecting only some decorative features typical of England and Ireland. However unique design attributes of the Middle Class cottage property include sometimes a steeply pitched roof and sometimes attic windows that reflect a rural German influence.

Inside a traditional Colonial 'Cottage' style home is a simple room layout sometimes made up of bedrooms and separate dining, living area and kitchen, with timber floors and painted timber walls throughout. Some of the later cottages featured a simple hallway separating the sleeping areas from the living areas. Mr Tanton says that today Colonial 'Cottage' style homes have corrugated iron pitched roofs.

Positive Features

Mr Tanton records that there are a number of positive features of Colonial Cottage style homes. Firstly there is the quaint value of the Cottage style which displays a sense of history.

Secondly there is the suitability of the single skin of timber construction making them easy to relocate and renovate. Many of the styles original features such as timber floors are popular also today and the easy maintenance of the roof with corrugated iron is also popular. Often built close to the street, these homes generally have a generous rear plot of land to extend into.

Renovation Potential

The most common renovation, says Mr Tanton, to a Queensland Colonial Cottage style property is to add a rear extension. Today the cottage will suit a bathroom located off an extension or deck to the rear or to extend the living and bedroom areas. Like most renovations to period homes, there may be some matching of construction materials required, however this will vary according to when the residence was built.