

# Housing Style

## The Red Brick Home

The traditional Australian red brick home was a by-product of World War II. After the end of the war, there was a shortage of building materials resulting in significant rationing of many materials.



This rationing, coupled with the notion that solid building could only be born by bricks and the fact that all materials had to be cut by hand (there were no power tools around then), led to the creation of small brick houses on large, flat blocks of land.

According to Architect Bob Anderson, most of the time these houses were positioned on the block without any thought to the site's attributes, such as the aspect and orientation, privacy, views or thermal considerations.

Consequently, the house's positioning on the site is this style's biggest drawback.

A typical red brick home, says Anderson, has no decoration and is very plain. The roofs are often made of tile or concrete, with the windows made of aluminium. In its era, the style was very economical and often had small rooms, with single garages.

Anderson also notes that in an effort to expand the size of these houses, people often added verandah's or lean-to additions to the back of the house.

### Positive Features

While it's not true that only bricks can be used to build solid structures and many other materials can be equally effective, it is true that when used properly, bricks construct strong, solid homes and in this context, most red brick homes are, as Anderson describes, "built like a tank".

If solidly built, the red brick house can lend themselves very well to renovation, but Anderson warns that if a client wants to remain in the "red brick" realm, with a completely matching extension, the work may become more difficult due to the heavy weight of the bricks and the cost of bricks today.

Another positive feature is that these types of houses are often on large blocks of flat land.

### Renovation Potential

With the poor positioning of these houses on the land, Anderson says that renovations to these homes often involve completely reversing the functions of the house, such as turning the bedrooms into the living areas, etc.

Anderson also says that as these houses are generally structurally sound, first level additions are common. With such large outdoor areas many people also create large outdoor entertaining areas and seek to improve the indoor-outdoor connections and establish visual links with the outdoor environment.

Anderson adds that people often convert the front gardens into practical courtyards and often move the garage from the rear of the garden closer towards the house to make better use of the available space.

For those not particularly partial to the red brick look, these types of homes also benefit from some form of rendering.