

Housing Style

The Californian Bungalow

Built between 1915 and the 1940's in Australia, Californian Bungalows were based on the American bungalow design. The style was hugely popular in Australia during this time and resulted in Californian Bungalows being a common site across Australian suburbia.



Archicentre Architect Roy Lowe says a typical Californian Bungalow is reasonably sized, generally with three bedrooms and a separate living room that faces East or South, away from the summer sun. Generally Lowe says, the kitchen, dining room and laundry were placed towards the rear of the home, with little access to natural light.

With a heavy, solid appearance, Californian Bungalows are easily recognisable by a number of identifiable characteristics. For instance they are usually single storey with a two to three gabled roof style with terracotta tiles and large pillars supporting a front verandah.

The structure was built low to the ground and today many still feature the original fittings and finishes such as stained glass windows, ornate ceilings and painted gables with battens or shingles.

Californian Bungalows were often made out of a dark brick and commonly used building materials on the walls and columns include sandstone, face brick, painted render and pebbledash.

Positive Features

One of the Californian Bungalows strongest features, according to Lowe is that they are generally structurally very sound. They are also usually positioned on a good-sized block, with a large backyard and many Californian Bungalows still have a number of its original and ornate features intact today.

Renovation Potential

According to Lowe, Californian Bungalow's have tremendous potential for affordable alterations and additions. Lowe notes that as the houses are generally solidly constructed, the front part of the home (including the bedrooms and lounge) can be retained, while the rear of the property can be opened up to create more space, light and links with the outdoor environment.

He also says that rear extensions to Californian Bungalow's are very common as they provide a clean start and finish point. Typical renovations include adding a bedroom, opening out the rear portion of the house to the yard and creating a first floor addition. The simple roof form of the Californian Bungalow's also makes them well suited for an upper addition.