REVIEW


This book is compiled by the directors of the Centre for Settlement Studies to mark the 150th anniversary of South Australia's European settlement. It draws upon information from previous heritage studies undertaken by the surveys of the Barossa (1976-77), Hahndorf (1977), Lobethal (1982) and Birdwood (1984).

It is encouraging to see the detailed work of heritage surveys transcribed into a readable and simply presented hard-cover book. It is a valuable companion for anyone planning a trip through the Adelaide Hills and the inclusion of an early plan for each settlement is helpful.

The book concentrates on the development of private towns in the hills (stretching from Kersbrook in the north, to Macclesfield in the south) which ‘... were subdivisions of well-chosen rural sections by enterprising colonists hoping to make a profit from the sale of town allotments.

Key factors in the establishment of such towns were the availability of water supplies and good transport facilities... [then] a surveyor was engaged, usually at the cheapest possible price, and simple rectangular divisions were created.’

In the towns established by German immigrants, the long ‘hufen’ strips of land were preferred to the small rectangular allotments of the British towns.

Measured drawings prepared by students of architecture at the South Australian Institute of Technology are included and while these vary in quality, it is helpful to have such detailed coverage of individual buildings and techniques of construction. However, the inclusion of some very faint drawings does not appear justified, and detracts from the otherwise excellent quality of the book.

Detailed coverage is given to houses of these early settlers (such as the Schubert House, Springhead, 1855), a ‘large passage kitchen house ... commonly found in Prussia’ where the Schuberts reared their eight children. It is of interest to read the personal histories of these settlers and to visualise the very large families occupying what was by today’s standards, very modest accommodation. These personal histories are generally missing from other architectural assessments and the discussion of ‘people, places and buildings’ is one of the main strengths of this book.

The book is a welcome addition to serious literature relating to domestic architecture and patterns of settlement in Adelaide. With Stefan Pikusa’s The Adelaide House, it will no doubt become a useful reference document for people interested in understanding the wealth and variety of early buildings in and around Adelaide.

Reviewed by Elizabeth Vines

CONTRIBUTORS

RICHARD AITKEN is an architect and conservation consultant in private practice in Melbourne. He has prepared conservation analyses and policies for gardens including Government House, Melbourne (with Nigel Lewis) and several important botanic gardens. He has a special research interest in garden buildings.

BOB KING, a Melbourne consultant physician, owns and races vintage cars and has a long-standing interest in Australian motoring history.

BARRY PATTEN, a well-known Melbourne architect, was a director of Yuncken Freeman Architects for 30 years and now has a small consulting practice. As well as the Myer Music Bowl his buildings include the BHP building and the State Government offices in Treasury Place.

CHRYST SPICER teaches English at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. He is doing research for books...
about the location of historic memorial in Melbourne, and the graves of noted Australian authors throughout Australia.

LES TOD
lives in Sydney and is a manager with Telecom. He is vice-president of the Australian Theatre Historical Society, and acted as editor of its quarterly magazine. He has acted as consultant on historic theatres to the NSW Heritage Council.

FRANK VAN STRATEN
director of the Performing Arts Museum at the Victorian Arts Centre, has worked in the advertising and recording industries and has a lifelong interest in theatre history.

ELIZABETH VINES
an architect, lives in Adelaide. She is heritage adviser to the municipality of Broken Hill.

At the wheel of his Bugatti, winner of the 1931 Australian Grand Prix, Bob King ‘road races’ through the streets of Adelaide during the 1985 AGP festival.