

Modelling Queensland Buildings

NOTES on MODELLING QUEENSLAND BUILDINGS By Jim Fainges

The study of local building construction or (vernacular architecture can be very interesting and an extremely rewarding pastime for a Model Railroader, no matter which area, country or region he is interested in portraying in prototype.

Australia is no different to the rest of the world, in that Australian architecture often varies quite distinctly in the different States, and can even vary within the state.

My interest is in mainly modelling Queensland Railways and therefore the architecture, commercial, domestic and rural that is associated with the original prototype.

The difference in such architecture is quite noticeable, especially in the earlier years of development of railways within Queensland.

Climate and materials also play a great part in the design of such architecture, plus the availability of materials, such as the easy access to hardwood timbers in earlier years and this product was therefore used extensively in all manner of Queensland architecture.

The Queensland climate can range from Mediterranean (the southern highlands around Stanthorpe) to sub Tropical and the Tropics of the far north, and this extensive range of climate has a great input into the kind of buildings found within the State.

The construction used in house design is probably the best example: with houses that are built above ground level on stumps. In years gone by, such stumps could be up to several metres high on uneven terrain, and this allowed the circulation of air beneath the house to cool the house in the higher climates. In post war years Queensland followed the southern states with bricked in foundations.

Northern construction again differed, in that many houses were built with what is known as external framework, thus having the actual timber cladding acting as an inside wall feature.

Another important point, was the situation of the wood stove in the kitchen. In southern states, a wood stove was usually built in, giving added warmth to the kitchen as the focus point of the household activities. In Queensland, because of the heat factor, the stove was removed slightly from the main part of the kitchen, and was projected from the actual kitchen and situated in its own curved corrugated iron housing - thus taking the excessive heat away from the kitchen. In years past, the kitchen was also often a separate part of the

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house divided from the rest of the house by a walkway, and this type of kitchen often had a dirt floor.

The external stairways that gave access to the house were constructed in wood, with some abutting the buildings, whilst other were wide grand affairs jutting out in front.

Verandahs were very much a feature of early house, and often were built on all four sides of the house, or at least on two sides, to give coolness to the adjoining rooms. A feature found on many of these verandahs was the old squatters chair.

Corrugated iron water tanks, at least one, and often three or four, were built again on high stands and connected to the roof to collect the rainwater run off, the only water system to most homes and homesteads before the 2nd War. In the country these could be filled by the nearby Southern Cross windmill.

Corrugated iron roofing (that stood up to hailstorms and tropical downpours) were the most common roofs to be seen before World War 2. It is only in the last 50 years that tile roofs became a common sight.

The back of the house can also give pointers to the era you are modelling, with open lean to wash-houses (laundries), with a copper nearby in the yard, a chook (fowl) house further up the yard past the backyard (often homebuilt) earth closet complete with "noisome thunderbox".

All the aforementioned features give the modelling of Queensland prototype its distinctive look.

Depending on the era of the prototype being modelled, care is always needed when portraying the type and style of buildings used on the layout - ie. running steam era trains with either a K.F.C. or a Pizza Hut situated on the layout. The only exception to this is if you are operating a Preservation railway system.

Houses and business premises alter with time. A 1900's house could be included in a railway layout situated in later time zone. Before the 2nd War such a house could have verandahs fully or semi enclosed with decorative trellis, and after the war with fibro cement and/or glass louvres.

The sun hoods found over many windows in the older homes altered from the metal or wood type to permalium striped efforts seen in profusion over the last 20 years.

Shop fronts which started out as multi-light wood frames, often with decorative glass used in the top section have been replaced on modern buildings with plate glass and aluminium.

In the same vane, if you have motor vehicles on your layout, be sure that they are the vehicles that would have been used, housed often in a separate garage, under the battened house, (but not in a carport). In the time zone that you have set on your layout, or have a very good excuse to answer should some observant person viewing your layout pick the anomaly - there is always one, believe me.

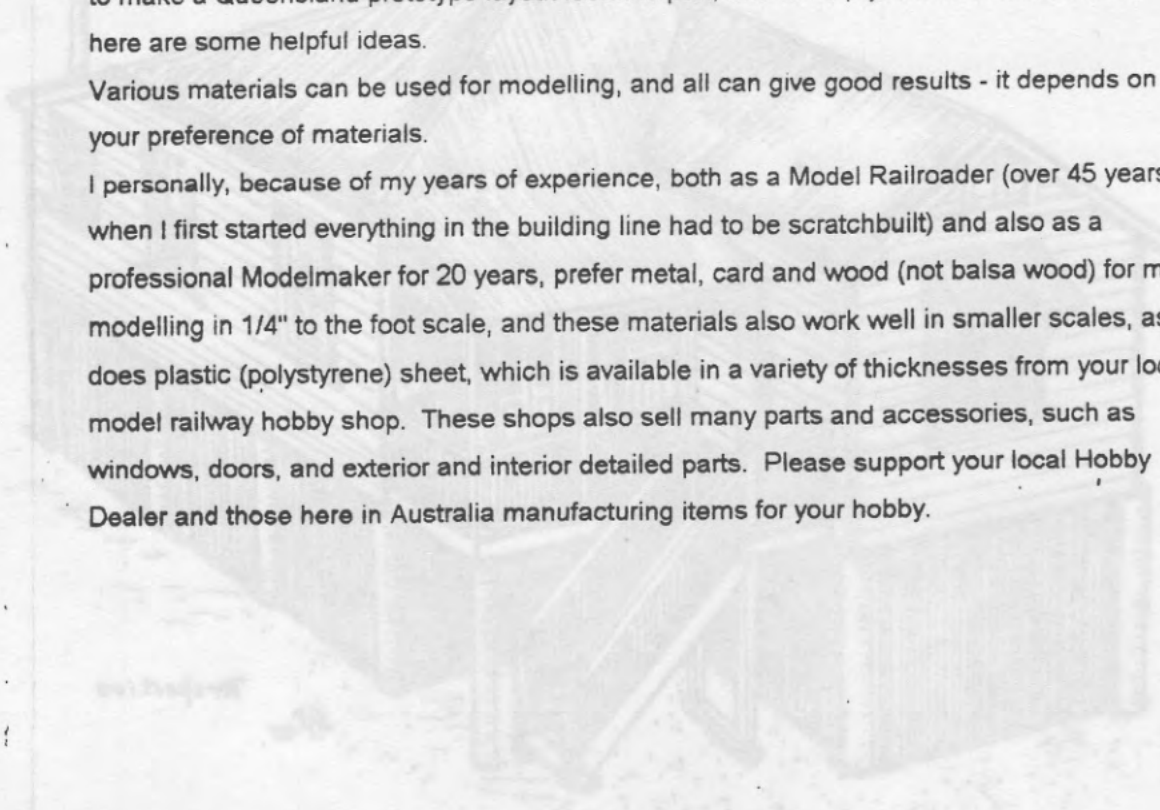
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So remember care should always be taken when deciding which buildings, etc. to use on your layout - they may look spectacular, but could be completely out of context.

Allowing for the variations of scale and gauges, these features can, and should be modelled to make a Queensland prototype layout look the part, and to help you achieve this effect, here are some helpful ideas.

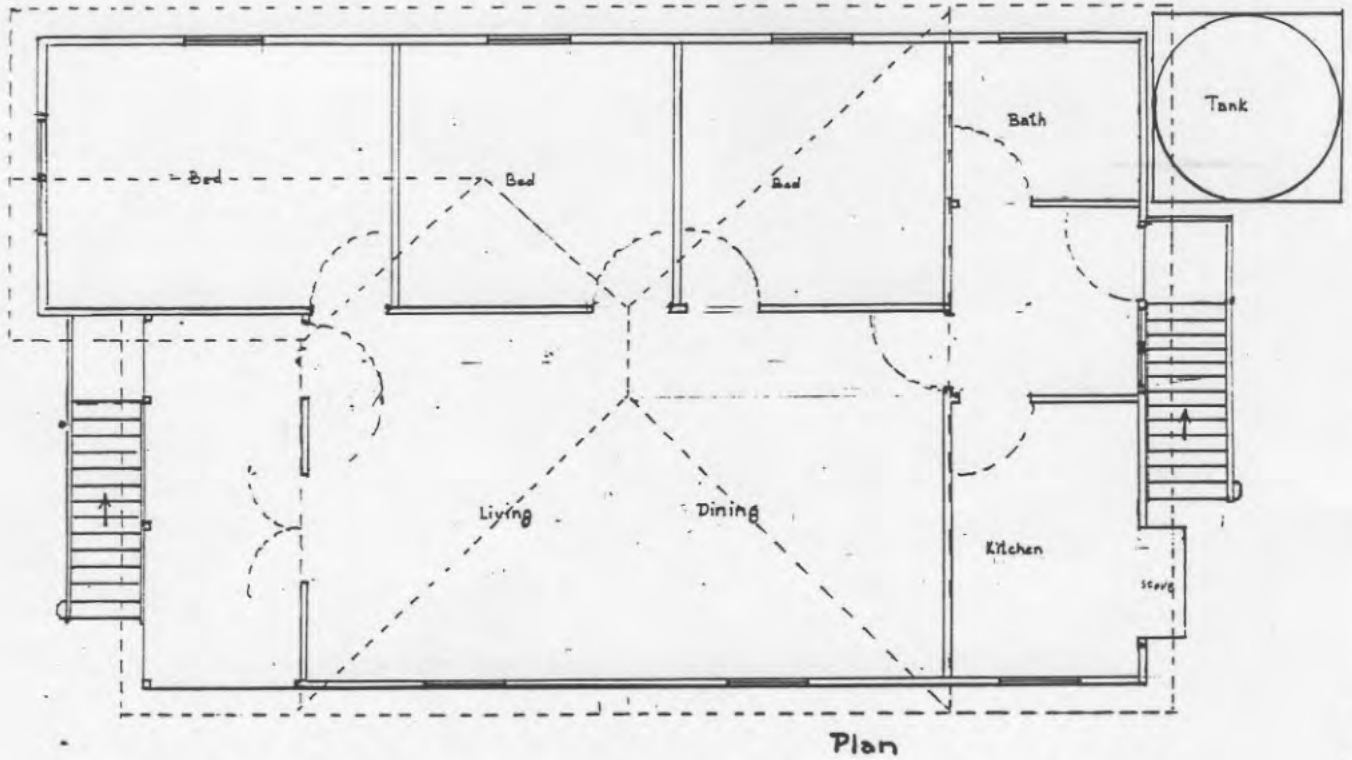
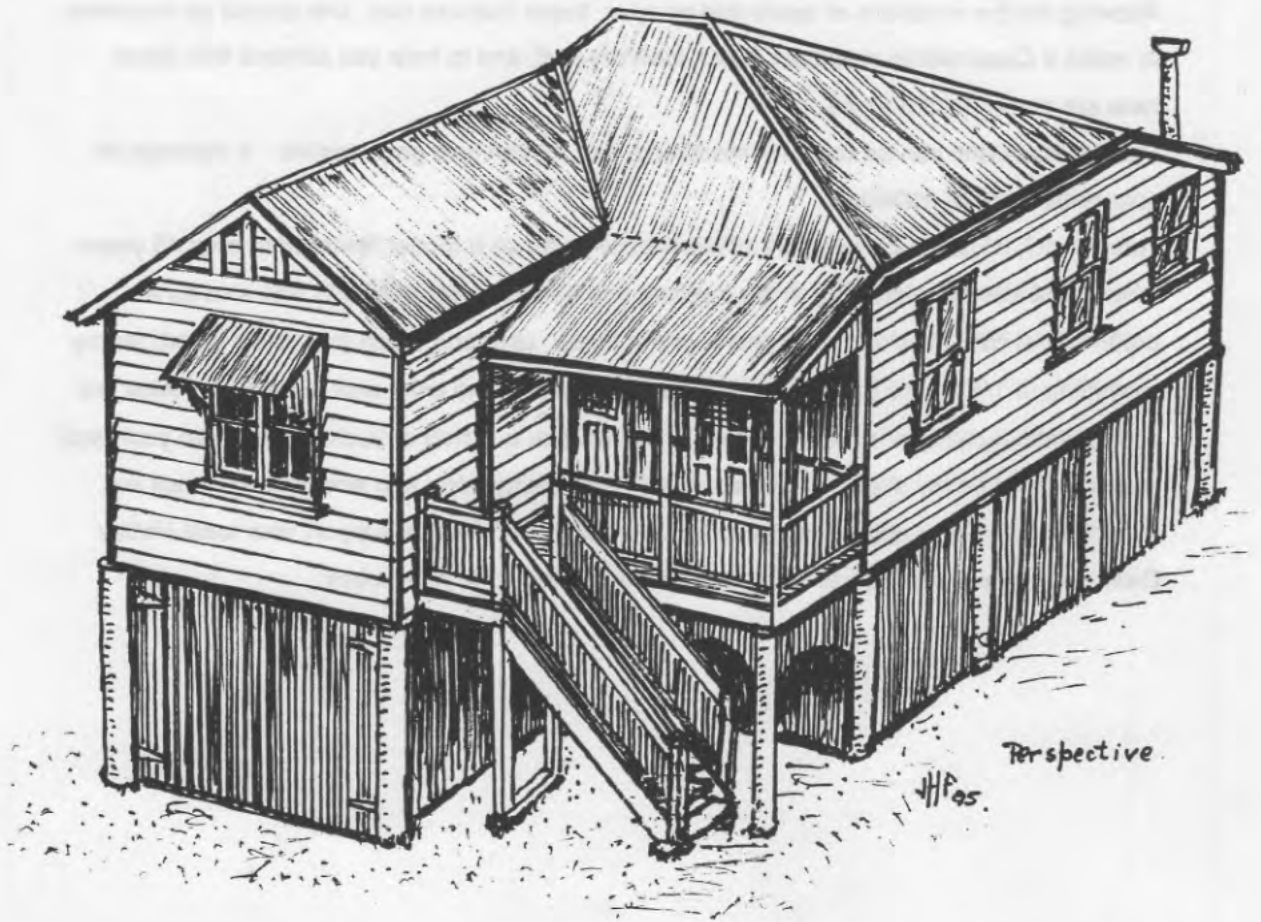
Various materials can be used for modelling, and all can give good results - it depends on your preference of materials.

I personally, because of my years of experience, both as a Model Railroader (over 45 years - when I first started everything in the building line had to be scratchbuilt) and also as a professional Modelmaker for 20 years, prefer metal, card and wood (not balsa wood) for my modelling in 1/4" to the foot scale, and these materials also work well in smaller scales, as does plastic (polystyrene) sheet, which is available in a variety of thicknesses from your local model railway hobby shop. These shops also sell many parts and accessories, such as windows, doors, and exterior and interior detailed parts. Please support your local Hobby Dealer and those here in Australia manufacturing items for your hobby.



Workers dwelling
1930-30
103-021

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Stumps/Battens - Torend (Black)

Workers dwelling.
1920-30's

Colour Scheme weather boards - DARK brown oiled.
windows, fascias etc - white
Handrails gutters - Brown

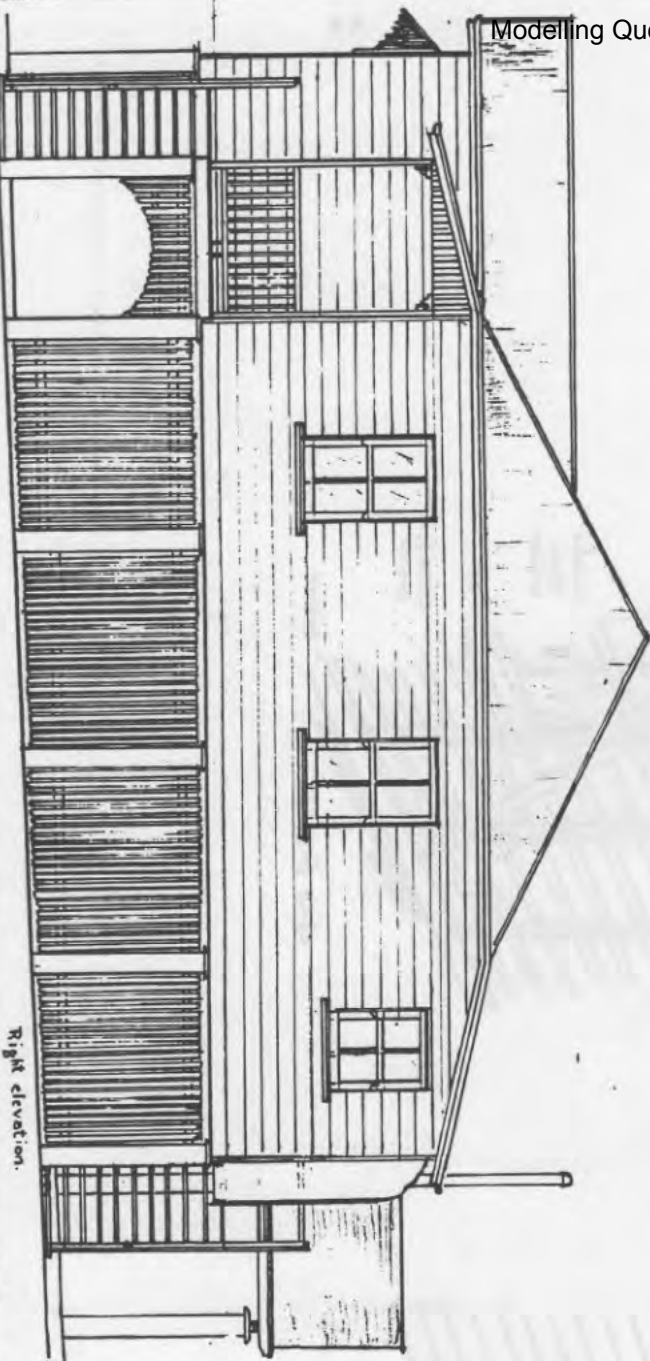
Queensland Workers Dwelling 1920 - 30

Drawn Jim Fainges 1995.

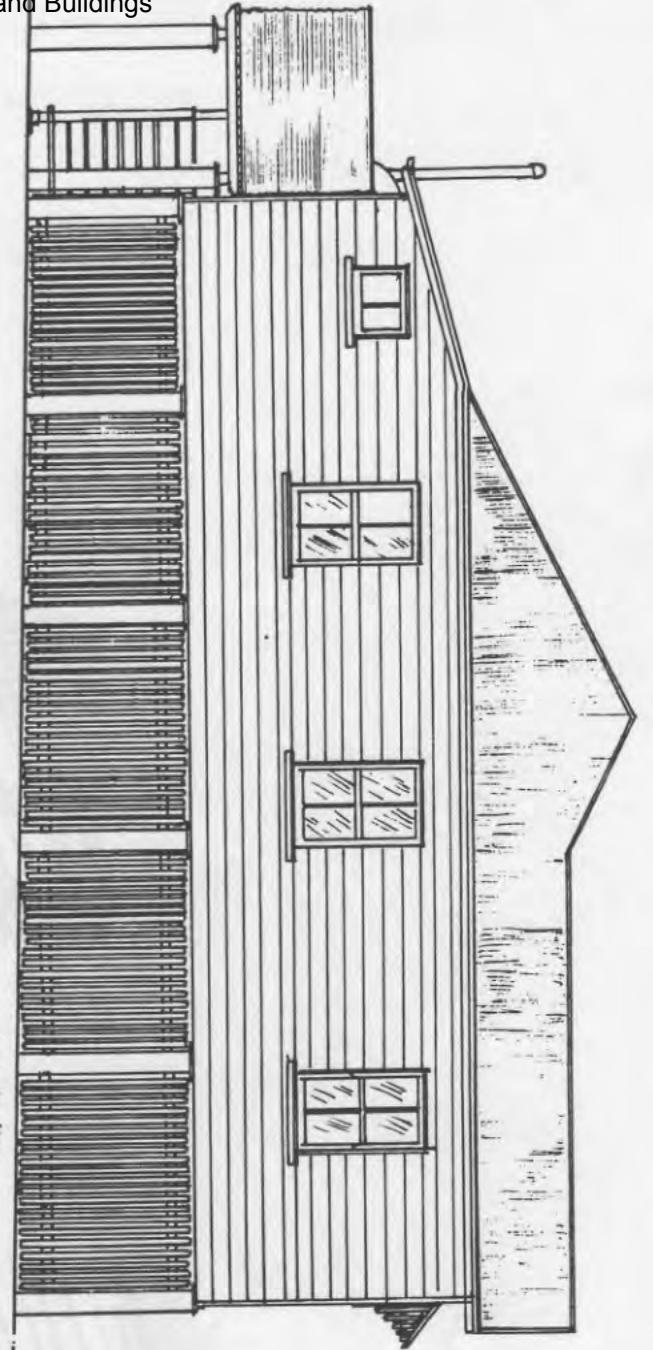
Scale 3.5mm:1ft 1:87.1.

Construction:- Timber weather board. V.J. with exposed studs on verandah corrugated iron roof. wood stumps & battens.

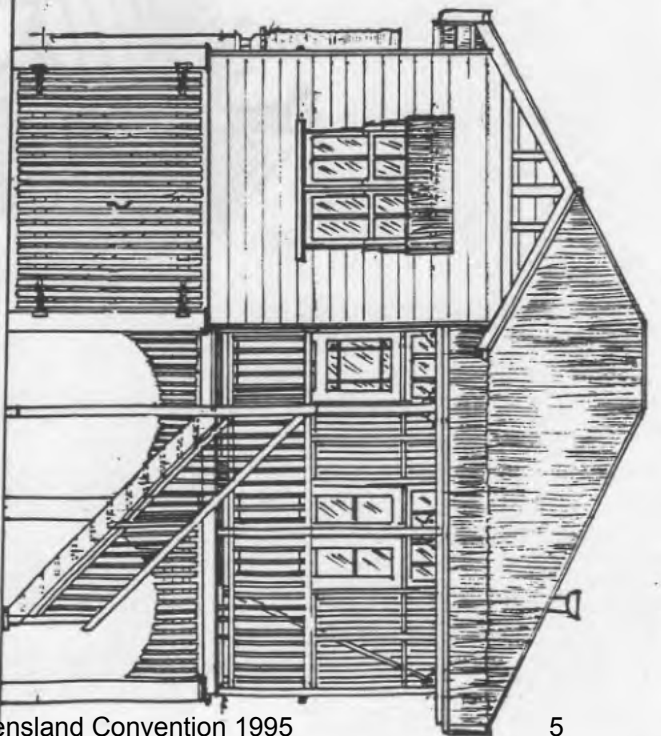
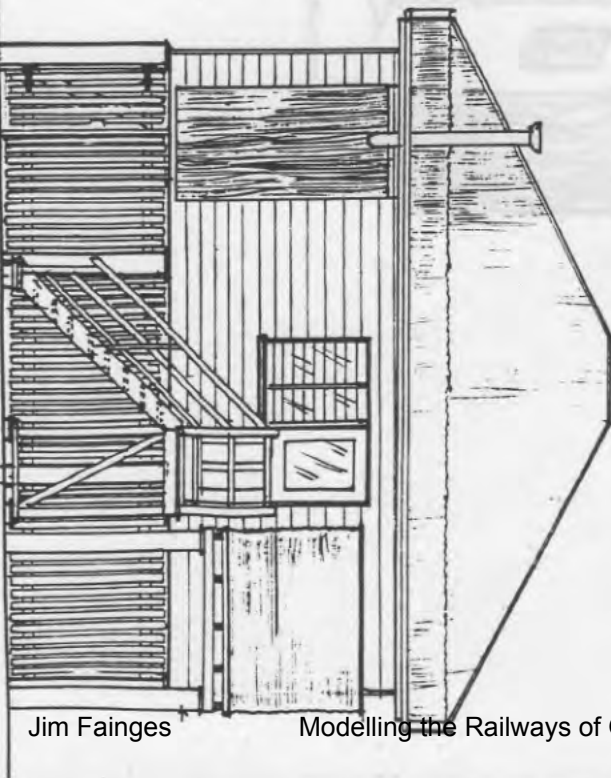
Right elevation.

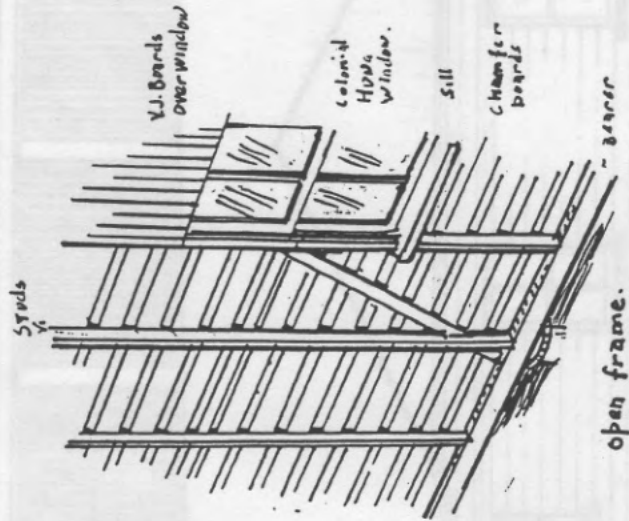
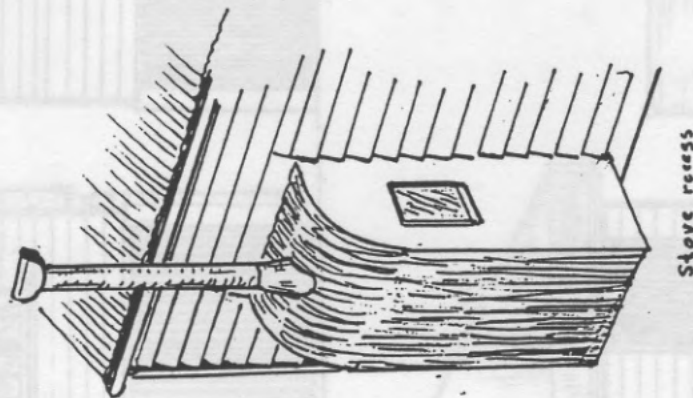


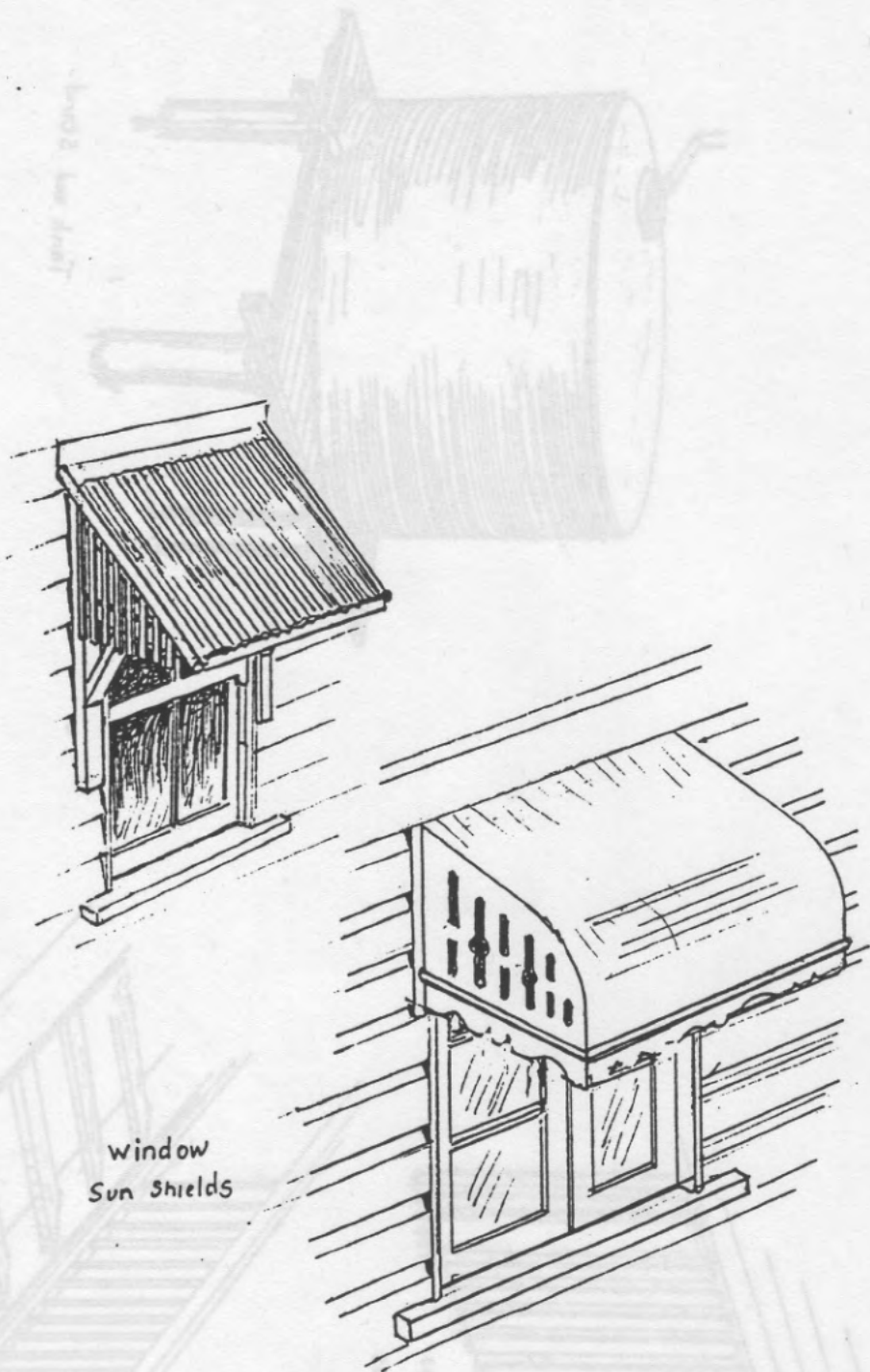
Left elevation.



Rear elevations







window
Sun shields

