

Judged to be a real family home

WHEN does a house, mere bricks and mortar, become a home? When eight children are raised in it, according to the owner of 762 Orrong Road, Toorak.

It is easy to see what the lady means. The house she, her surgeon husband and growing brood have occupied for 28 years is glowing with joie de vivre.

There are many reminders of the good times shared by a large family and its friends. In the kitchen is an industrial model dishwasher; on the spacious lawn are the final marks left by a marquee erected for a recent party. The pool and en-tout-cas tennis court have not been passed.

There have been so many birthdays and weddings here... our family has had a very happy life," says the owner, her voice tinged with nostalgia.

Unspoken is the fact that the children have left to start families of their own. The youngest son is upstairs studying for his final school exams and will soon be on his way too.

When the house is auctioned by agents R. T. Edgar at 3 pm on Thursday 25 November it will be the end of an era — and the start of another one for some younger family.

Architects Irwin and Stevenson were commissioned by a judge in 1914 to design the house, which is probably one of the earliest in Melbourne to reflect the Spanish mission influence made popular in Southern California.

A safe was built into a half cupboard especially for the judge's legal papers. These days, it is empty.

The judge's family lived in the house until the present owners bought it in 1953. One of the judge's daughters married the artist Sir Russell Drysdale, and the house was once hung with dozens of his works, along with those of Nolan and others.

At the front of the house, on the gravelled floor, is a big room often used for dancing. We are told that underneath the wall-to-wall carpet is a polished terraz floor in perfect condition.

Despite the Spanish architecture, the internal decoration is of the English club style: oak panelling, polished timber beams, Persian rugs, paintings and photographs of the owners' racehorses abound.



Artist's impression of 762 Orrong Road, Toorak

On the other side of the entrance hall from the front room is the large, L-shaped kitchen, the floor covered in bold black and white tiles laid chequerboard fashion.

A small passage leads from the kitchen to pantry and laundry. Back to the entrance hall, which has a mysterious door opening into a telephone room the size of a large linen cupboard; there are telephone extensions to various parts of the house.

The main passage, running east-west along the length of the house, gives access to a downstairs lavatory and two spacious storage cupboards. Jutting northwards at the end of the passage is a delightful study with an adjoining bar.

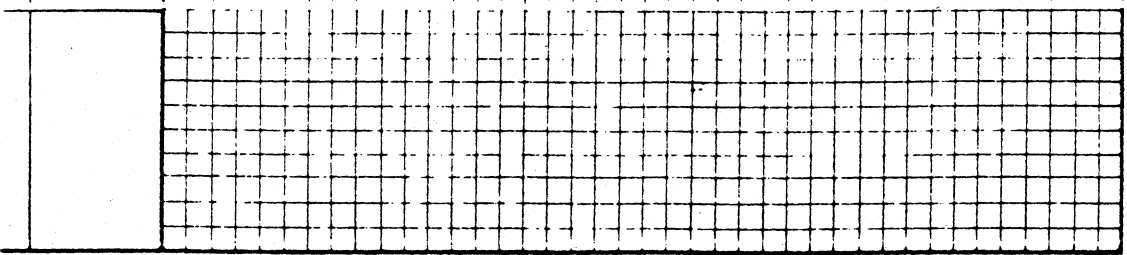
The walls are lined with books, sporting trophies and a collection of racing pictures and photographs. The atmosphere is something to be savoured, and could easily be recreated by a new owner.

A large family room and a smaller bedroom, once used by a maid complete the ground floor.

Two flights of stairs meet on a landing, which gives central access to five bedrooms, three bathrooms and a large games room on the upper floor.

Other features include central heating, a changing room and shower outside for swimmers and tennis players, and a double garage.

—ANDREW RULE



762 Orrong Rd. (14T)

Permit 1952 pounds for -
Internal renovations
Conservatory added
etc.

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(p. xviii).

Toorak residence?
Irwin & Stevenson