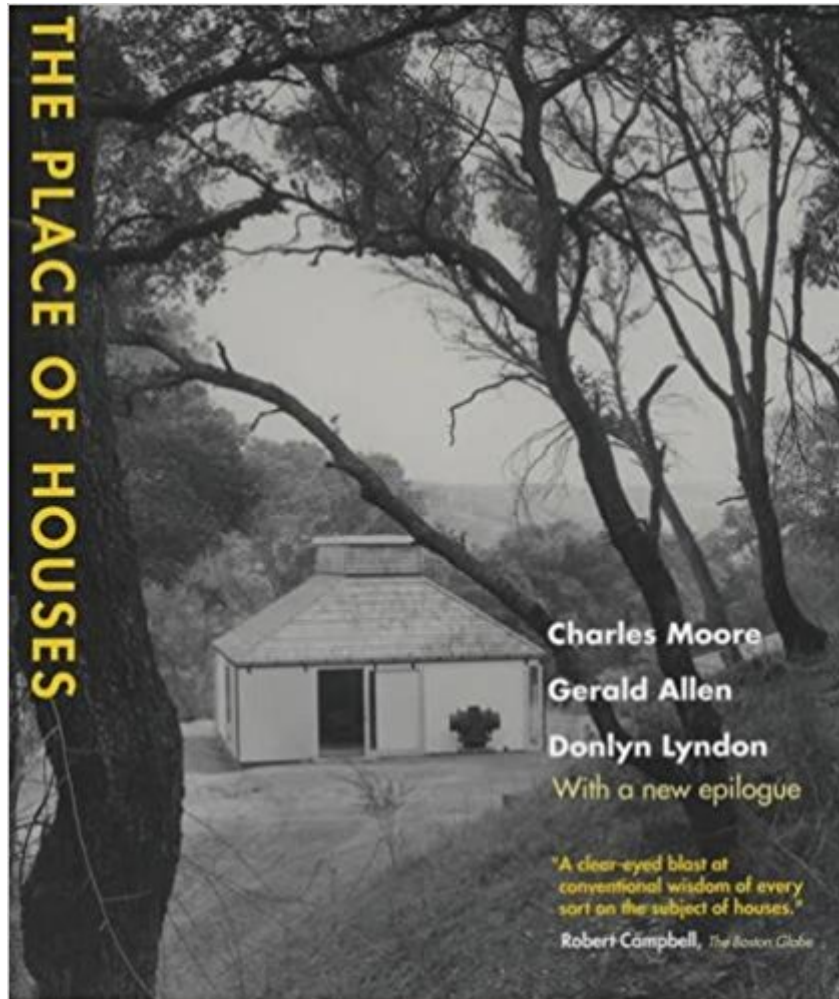




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The Place Of Houses



Synopsis

With a new epilogue Richly illustrated with houses large and small, old and new, with photographs, plans, and cutaway drawings, this is a book for people who want a house but who may not know what they really need, or what they have a right to expect. The authors establish the basis for good building by examining houses in the small Massachusetts town of Edgartown; in Santa Barbara, California, where a commitment was made to re-create an imaginary Spanish past; and in Sea Ranch, on the northern California coast, where the authors attempt to create a community. These examples demonstrate how individual houses can express the care, energies, and dreams of the people who live in them, and can contribute to a larger sense of place.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"For anyone thinking about building a new house, this is probably the book I'd recommend first. . . What's so great about THE PLACE OF HOUSES? It's the way it says, with rare eloquence, that houses are not about their architects."--"Boston Globe

Charles Moore (1925-94) was Dean of the School of Architecture at Yale, Chair of the Department of Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, Professor of Architecture at the University of California, Los Angeles, and O'Neil Ford Professor of Architecture at the University of Texas. Donlyn Lyndon, Professor of Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, has served as Chair of the Departments of Architecture at Berkeley, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and

the University of Oregon. Gerald Allen was an editor of Architectural Record when this book was written; he now practices architecture in New York. All three authors have designed noteworthy houses.

This book gives the reader what architectural school gives the architectural designer learning to become architect. Namely what spaces in and outside of a house are really all about. After reading it helps the reader to design his or her own house. Or really understand how the Architect designs a house anywhere in the worldbrian

Well documented and thoughtful. Worth rereading. I have recommended it to several people interested in understanding the thought underlying the design of houses.

A must to have

This is a great book for a college class or coffee table. I was needing something to help me design a home for today. I took the recommendation from an architect but it did not relly give me enough practical info.

I read this book 18 years ago when my wife and I were designing the house we would build within the next year, and I took a look at it today out of nostalgia for a very happy period in our lives. As I read over the comments posted by other readers, I was surprised that many of them were lukewarm if not positively unkind. Having had such a useful experience with Moore's book, I wondered why and found my answer in what was billed as the "most useful critical" review, a snapish sentence or two that complained that The Place of Houses was a disappointment because it did not contain enough practical information about building a house, a charge that is certainly true if one is looking for help in wielding a hammer and nails or being one's own general contractor. Moore and his co-authors meant the book to be inspirational, an orderly if still romantic look at how to think about both the designing of a house and its placement on a plot of land. It has not much to say about the style of the house in question or even its size and subdivision into rooms, the kind of stuff that the congenital perky people who become real estate agents talk about. But it does have an overwhelming amount to say about how one's house can relate to the contours of its lot and the drive-by existence of its street. More importantly, it gets a reader to think about the relative size of a bedroom to a kitchen, about how light enters almost any kind a house, and how that light both

defines and enlivens its walls, halls, and occupants. Tellingly--at least with regard to the crank who found too little practical information in it, the book also helps readers and housebuilders think about themselves and how they might use their new dwelling and how the particular options they are considering might effect them and how they'd like to live. In other words, the great value of *The Place of Houses* must be sought before one has a specific design in mind or, certainly, on paper, which I suspect is why so many previous reviewers were disappointed. If one has a slope-roofed Tudor in his dreams or a mid-century California ranch, the book will be of little use because someone besides Charles Moore has already answered all the inspirational and romantic questions about it--perhaps without an ounce of either inspiration or romance in those answers. When my wife and I built our house, we were fortunate to be starting from absolute zero in the process and with a ready source of practical information from a kindly architect who told us we could not afford his services in designing and building the loft-like house we envisioned. He told us instead to search out a local pole builder who would have all the practical skill we'd need to realize our dreams. But even with this powerful push along, we still had a great need for the sort of thing which the Moore book has aplenty, a series of almost spiritual tutorials on how one ought to think about the ways in which the components on any house work subliminally--every day of its life--on the sensibilities of its occupants. And the best thing about these tutorials is--as noted by one of the positive commenters on --that there is no evidence of a heavy-handed, egomaniacal architect behind them. Moore's advice worked just as well for our neo-industrial loft as it would have for the disappointed reader and his half-timber whatever or California whatsit.

I'm surprised this book hasn't received more positive attention. Combined with an introductory course taught by a prominent and extremely inspiring architect, this book changed my life perspective. Coming into it, I thought architecture had little to appreciate compared to other arts; afterward I realized how expressive of an art it truly is. I cannot imagine going through life without creating in the space around me something that inspires creativity in-and-of-itself. That is what is contained within this book.

Sometimes the structure of another's way of thinking can be stifling. This time, it provides a framework that allows you to explore more freely. Timeless in its vision and examples, the authors take you on a tour of classic and contemporary towns and homes, using them to stretch and free your thinking about what you want in a home. Near the end of the book, they include a chapter "Yours" that is primarily an extensive series of checklists that guide you to think of what is important

to the way you live and want to live. I especially appreciated their attitude, both stated and built into the fabric of the checklists: "Finally, it should feel right, able to receive you and to feed your enthusiasms. If when you have done all this you feel unsure about your capacity to realize your scheme in technical terms, seek someone with the expertise to help you -- but don't let him stifle your dreams." Though published in 1974, the book seldom includes dated details -- but occasionally includes a comment that seems jarringly current!

Ever since its arrival in the mid-1970's as a reference for architecture students and professionals alike, this book has been one of the finest references, also, for budding homeowners as well. It places into beautiful perspective the almost anatomical linkage between large and small scale; neighborhood, house and room. It further discusses, eloquently, the relationship -- the emotional relationship -- between architecture and its users. Moore, et al, uses examples of old American neighborhoods, discussing the evolutionary nature of their success, contrasting it with the tragic results of uneducated development in suburban sprawls. If I sustain one distant criticism, it is that Moore slightly overdid the use of his own design examples which, though helpful, present less variety in style than would have been helpful to the central point of the book. But let there be no doubt, this is quite a little gem for *anyone* interested in what makes for exquisite personal residential lives. It is timeless in its core content.

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