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The Culture Of Building



Synopsis

The Culture of Building describes how the built world, including the vast number of buildings that are the settings for peoples everyday lives, is the product of building cultures--complex systems of people, relationships, building types, techniques, and habits in which design and building are anchored. These cultures include builders, bankers, architects, developers, clients, contractors, craftspeople, building inspectors, planners, and many others. The product of these cultures, which operate building after building, is the built world of cities and settlements. In this book, Howard Davis uses historical, contemporary, and cross-cultural examples to describe the nature and influence of these cultures. He shows how building cultures reflect the general cultures in which they exist, how they have changed over history, how they affect the form of buildings and cities, and how present building cultures, which are responsible for the contemporary everyday environments, may be improved. Following the development of the idea of building cultures using several historical examples, the book lays out a framework that puts such topics as craft and professionalism, the vernacular and nonvernacular, and design and construction in common frameworks. Although the book ranges widely over different cultures and historical periods, it emphasizes the transformations that took place in architecture and building practice from the late eighteenth century to the present. Finally, the book uses a series of contemporary examples that demonstrate the building culture as a living concept. These examples, which include built work as well as innovative processes that go beyond the work of architects alone, are described as the seeds that can help the emergence of a better build world. This beautiful book features over 260 color and black-and-white illustrations, most from the authors extensive collection of slides, and includes photographs, prints, and drawings from historical archives and contemporary architectural offices.

Book Information

File Size: 8302 KB

Print Length: 400 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (May 12, 2006)

Publication Date: May 12, 2006

Sold by:Ã Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B0058RTMGS

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #319,510 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #73

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Customer Reviews

This book is used as a text in my introductory class on architecture at a university. Although the book is above an introductory level it is the most compelling book on the building culture that I know and students, or readers, will take away an enlightened and comprehensive view of architecture and the culture surrounding it. The author provides a thoroughly researched and historically based account of ideas, precedents and challenges that shaped building cultures and challenges that face the contemporary contemporary building culture as well.

Excellent book. A must for planners.

This book is absolutely vital, should be a 101 sort of book for every person involved in construction, and certainly part of every architecture school curriculum. As an architect, I am consistently bombarded with images of flash amazing buildings and projects, but as a person, I see the world is composed of perhaps 2%, if that, of such things. The great depth and breadth of architecture is forged in a manner that has very little to do with Detail or Dwell or Architectural Record (or Architizer these days). This book fills in that 98% and why things are as they are, why great built environments come from a shared base of knowledge and a healthy 'culture of building', rather than particularly potent designers noted in magazines and art history texts that we tend to fixate upon in the same way that celebrity dominates most fields of human endeavor. (Wow, such a run-on sentence, good thing I am not an author!) Highly recommended, one of my favorite books concerning my profession.

Overall a great discussion of how buildings affect their surroundings and make an impact on culture and how if we consider the culture of the place before building something we can achieve it more successfully involving communities and local materials, reducing ecological footprint and

costs. Great for designers and architects concerned with using history to improve architecture and sharing knowledge

For years, I have been waiting for an honest discussion about the interface between development, design, construction and history. The Culture of Building helps to answer some of those nagging questions of why the built world of America looks the way that it does. Davis skillfully compares the evolution and habits of several building cultures to help illuminate our own. It is an important book for my education as an architect.

An excellent introduction to why we build the way we do. Davis explains the role of conflicting forces and institutions in shaping the buildings we build. He recommends improvements which our culture and architects needs to make in order to build healthy communities.

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