

Book Reviews

Book Review Editor is Anne Sweaney

A Book Review:

HOUSING MARKETS AND HOUSING INSTITUTIONS: AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON edited by Bjorn Harsman and John M Quigley. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 1991, 338 pages.

Carol B Meeks

All nations have adopted a variety of housing policies, whether they are market oriented or centrally planned economies. This book compares policies in the housing markets of selected metropolitan areas in Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, the United States, Austria, Scotland, and Hungary. Thus policies in socialized and market economies are examined.

There is a general introductory chapter followed by chapters devoted to each city. The introductory chapter reviews the standard criteria for comparing policies. The city chapters analyze housing policies at the city, state, and national levels and attempt to relate given housing policies to the operation of the market.

The communities were not chosen randomly; all have high incomes and are highly developed. Even Hungary is quite well-off by world standards. Factors examined include private consumption per capita, real income per capita, and demographic characteristics; metropolitan population as a percent of national population, government expenditures in general, and for housing specifically. Housing characteristics, including the standard measures of quality, are also compared.

Housing policies are discussed in a historical context. Housing allowances, construction financing, rent control, the role of income tax in relation to housing, allocation of dwellings, public housing, housing assistance, mortgage policies and secondary mortgage markets, and building codes are the range of policies examined.

In addition to discussing policies adopted, the impact of those policies is also examined. For example, as a result of rent control or rationing policies, several countries have black markets for housing. The principal institutions that affect the production and distribution of housing are included.

The depth of discussion of policy is limited. The reader receives a broad brush picture. A real strength of the book is the comparative data on the housing situation in the seven countries which are explored. This book would be of interest to anyone concerned with international housing conditions and policies. The book could also be used to give students ideas of how issues are treated in other countries so that they might develop creative solutions to housing problems being examined in a course on United States housing policy.

Carol B Meeks is Department Chair of Housing and Consumer Economics at University of Georgia.

A Book Review:

***THE NEW YORK APPROACH* by Joel Schwartz. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press. 1993, 375 pages.**

Tammy L Carter

In *The New York Approach*, Joel Schwartz carries his reader through the history of New York City's urban redevelopment from the early 1930s through the mid-1950s. Schwartz focuses on the role Robert Moses, New York's Park Commissioner, played in the housing redevelopment.

Schwartz begins his book by discussing how New York's housing situation deteriorated to the point of redevelopment. City planners, under the leadership of Mayor La Guardia, took advantage of Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 to obtain federal money to help replace slum areas with middle-class housing, that was to be accessible to everyone.

Under Moses' direction, New York began replacing the slum areas with high-rent apartments that few minorities could afford. As a result, many minorities were forced to relocate to less expensive parts of the City. Federal housing money was used not only to build housing that was unattainable to the City's poor and minorities, but also to establish medical centers and university campuses.

Schwartz explains how Moses was allowed to retain his power through political allies, as well as how liberal city leaders helped him carry out his plans for New York City.

Schwartz supports his book with helpful illustrations, end notes to document information in each chapter, and specific details about New York's redevelopment that helps the reader understand Moses' manipulative power. Readers of *The New York Approach* may find Schwartz's references to so many people early in his book confusing and may have to back track in order to remember who did what in New York's redevelopment process. However, anyone interested in New York's redevelopment or urban redevelopment in the early to mid-1900s will appreciate the details Schwartz recounts.

Tammy L Carter is a graduate assistant in the Department of Apparel, Merchandising, and Interior Design at East Carolina University.

A Book Review:

***THE RESIDENT RETENTION REVOLUTION* by L C Harmon and K M McKenna-Harmon. Chicago, Illinois: Institute of Real Estate Management. 1994, 176 pages.**

Melody Vick

In the mid-80s, a revolution erupted that focused on what the customer actually wanted instead of companies trying to push their products upon people. This movement virtually transformed the way businesses were trying to win their customer's loyalties.

The Resident Retention Revolution provides the readers with customer service strategies proven to work with apartment marketing and management. The strategies are described in general terms in the beginning, and then become more precisely focused using the authors' words from their own personal experiences. The book introduces Japanese concepts as well as suggestions for dealing with the concepts' applications in apartment management.

Each chapter reveals informative ideas that help to enhance customer satisfaction and to retain residents. Harmon and McKenna-Harmon discuss a range of subjects, such as the process of hiring and firing of employees, advertising (especially by positive word-of-mouth), making a company resident-friendly, and the importance of questioning and listening. The text includes helpful excerpts to provide readers with a better understanding of what is being said.

This book introduces a variety of ways to the customer service approach that might differentiate from similar apartment products and promote profitability. Apartment managers, as well as other businessmen, will take interest in reading the methods that could lead to a winning business. Although the purpose for a company's self-help efforts is to enable the firm to stay in business, prosperity is an attractive goal.

Melody Vick is a graduate student in the School of Human Environmental Sciences at East Carolina University.

A Book Review:

***HISTORY OF HOUSING IN THE U.S. 1930-1980* by Joseph B Mason. Houston, Texas: Gulf Publishing Company. 1982, 180 pages, 43 photographs in black and white.**

Jeffrey Inman

Each chapter in this comprehensive history of the United States covers a decade of history between 1930 and 1980. This unique history describes the evolution and advances in architectural planning and design, building techniques, finance, marketing, and environmental and community planning.

Beginning with the Depression and ending this historical epic with a chapter on big business and big government, Joseph Mason observes and describes people, trends, and events of significance during each time period. The book includes a "first-hand" account of the builders in the United States during this time period, their successes, and their failures. In addition, the author traces the origin of the National Association of Home Builders; cites landmarks in housing history such as the Federal Housing Administration, and the Home Loan Bank Board; and devotes a special section to the Housing Hall of Fame, including a brief description of 95 of the leaders in housing during the 1920-1980 time period.

The author discusses both historic and timely aspects of topics such as retirement and condominium living, newtowns and planned communities, industrialization, and the energy crunch. Joseph Mason's career has been spent in editorial positions for *Building Age*, *American Builder*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Architectural Record*, and *Professional Builder*. This book would be an excellent addition to any library and is a must for all those who are interested in the history of the housing industry.

Jeffrey Inman is an instructor in the Department of Construction Management, East Carolina University.

A Book Review:

***BUILDINGS OF THE UNITED STATES* by Adolf K. Placzek, William H Pierson, Jr., and Osmund Overby. New York: Oxford University Press. 1994, 463 pages.**

Jeffrey Inman

This series of books, the first released in 1993, has been acclaimed to be "one of the most ambitious undertakings in publishing history" by the *New York Times*. This architectural survey, which reflects the geographic, climatic, and ethnic diversity of each of the states, is illustrated with many photographs and maps.

The latest of the collection, *Buildings of the District of Columbia* (1993), by Pamela Scott and Antoinette J Lee, is a comprehensive survey of Washington, D.C.'s diverse architectural history since 1790, the year in which the city became the capitol. Adjoining quadrants of the capital offer their own character and history, and include different types of structures designed for varied purposes. The volume includes public buildings, commercial blocks, theaters, churches, museums, private residences, and notable neighborhoods, as well as university campuses. The rich history of the area is captured in text and photographs providing the reader with a complete history of how the city became what it is today. Included in the book of 463 pages are entries for more than 474 buildings, 28 maps, and 325 photographs.

Other books available in the series so far, include *Buildings of Michigan* (1993) by Kathryn Bishop Eckert, *Buildings of Iowa* (1993) by David Gebhard and Gerald Mansheim, and *Buildings of Alaska* (1993) by Alison K Hoagland. The series' authors/directors plan to publish a minimum of two volumes a year. Paperback copies are being printed in 1995.

Jeffrey Inman is an instructor in the Department of Construction Management, East Carolina University.

A Book Review:

***BUILDING IN THE GARDEN: THE ARCHITECTURE OF JOSEPH ALLEN STEIN IN INDIA AND CALIFORNIA* by Stephen White. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. 1993, 369 pages.**

Tammy L Carter

Building in the Garden is Steven White's examination of Joseph Stein's architecture and how his work reflected environmental themes, from California to India. White introduces his book with an overview of Stein's life work from the Midwestern United States, to California and India. Throughout the book, he examines Stein's designs and how he worked to make his architecture reflective of nature and the natural environment.

White begins each chapter with an essay about the environment, where Stein worked, and his response to his surroundings. White then proceeds with a description of the issues Stein faced as his work evolved from the early 1940s until 1990.

White includes photographs and diagrams of Stein's finished creations, as well as illustrations of works by other people that influenced Stein. Blueprints, sketches, and illustrations help the reader understand and visualize Stein's work.

Building in the Garden is supported with a biographical sketch of Joseph Stein and his accomplishments. White then includes a chronological list of Stein's works, beginning in Los Angeles and ending with Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.

This book also includes helpful appendices that help the reader understand the reasoning behind Stein's architectural evolution.

White's portrayal and obvious admiration of Stein's architecture ensures that this book will interest future architects with an environmental consciousness. Its focus on topics such as "site and landscape" and "strength through shape" combines the aesthetics of nature with man's inherent need to build.

Tammy L Carter is a graduate assistant in the Department of Apparel, Merchandising, and Interior Design at East Carolina University.