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A Book Review of:

HOUSING AS IF PEOPLE MATTERED by Clare Cooper Marcus and Wendy Sarkissian (\$55.00) Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986.

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Although the title, *Housing As If People Mattered*, is somewhat of a misnomer because this book is concerned exclusively with the exterior housing environment and not the interior, the authors have done a commendable job of documenting research regarding site-design guidelines for medium-density family housing. The basic premise of the authors is that people most affected by housing policies and residential-design decisions should be given a voice. This book brings together these voices in a reference format for architects, landscape architects, city planners, teachers, students and the general public.

According to a study quoted in the text, although 96 percent of designers surveyed believe that the environment influences behavior and 87 percent are aware of the existence of environment and behavior research, only 20 percent have ever used research in their work. The reasons are numerous: difficulty in finding research; findings were frequently reported in jargon-ridden language; the design implications were not immediately obvious; and so on. *Housing As If People Mattered* does an effective job of overcoming these obstacles. Actually, the book is so well-organized, I believe anyone with an interest in the built environment would find it easy to read and understand, not just housing professionals.

Of the 14 chapters, 12 focus on designing aspects of the exterior environment including chapters such as "Parking," "Security and Vandalism," "Play Areas for Children," and "Personalization." The 254 guidelines are based on 100 case studies ranging from exterior color schemes to dumpster selection. Drawings and illustrations provide the readers with additional clarification of the guidelines.

While *Housing As If People Mattered* probably wouldn't be used as a basic text in the housing courses we teach, it is recommended as a supplemental text and certainly as a reference book. The authors' viewpoints regarding most designers may not be appreciated, but they are sadly true. "Most designers know how to design an adequate kitchen and a functioning bathroom, but their skills are not so highly developed in site planning, landscaping, play design and creating acceptable images." Marcus and Sarkissian's latest book would be a helpful tool.

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