

bedtime stories to children—the *book is geared to those aged 3 to 7*—but its message would be pertinent to all.

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*Equal Opportunity in Housing: A Bibliography of Research*, (HUD, 1975)

Prepared by the HUD Library, this 34-page publication contains a selection of some 266 recent books, periodical articles, studies and reports. The publication provides references on demographic patterns of minority groups and the political, legal, social, and economic aspects of enacting and enforcing fair housing laws.

This bibliography primarily includes materials published since 1968 and supplements the 1969 HUD Library publication, *A Bibliography of Research on Equal Opportunity in Housing*. Items listed in *Equal Opportunity in Housing: A Bibliography of Research* are generally available in libraries or book stores, or from publishers and issuing organizations.

The publication, HUD-337-2-A, may be purchased for 85 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

*The Cost Of Sprawl*, (Real Estate Research Corporation, 1974)

*"The Cost of Sprawl"*, a recent report prepared by the Real Estate Research Corporation for HUD, The Environmental Protection Agency, and the Council on Environmental Quality, analyzes the economic, environmental and social costs of various community development patterns and neighborhood types. Included in the analysis are the costs of communities ranging from those composed of low density single family detached homes to the high density planned community, and various types neighborhoods of 1000 dwelling units. The report consists of three sections: "Literature Review and Bibliography" (4111-0022) a \$3.25; the "Detailed Cost Analysis (411-0021) a \$2.95; and the "Executive Summary" (4111-0023) a \$.55. Copies may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents; Government Printing Office; Washington, D. C. 20602.

*How To Decorate Model Homes and Apartments*, by Carol Eichen. (New York: House & Home Press, 1974, \$24.95)

The preface touts this book as "the housing industry's first comprehensive, professional how-to guide on the art of merchandising housing through decorated model units." Carole Eichen Interiors, with a staff of 40, is "one of the nation's largest decorating firms for mass-produced housing." Mrs. Eichen, also a contributing editor to *House & Home* magazine, notes that her philosophy of design or objective in mode decoration is to get the prospect involved with the home...

...for it's only after the psychological sale is made at the subconscious level that the actual sale can be made...The answer lies in the emotional appeal, the excitement, the degree of satisfaction a buyer or renter senses the instant he beholds the product. It is at this moment the sale is made or lost. And what we are selling? A lifestyle. Not just furniture and accessories, floor and wall coverings, but a total concept calculated to deliver a rush of feeling that says to the buyer, 'this is it.'

"The Fundamentals" covered in Chapter One include:

1. Demographics (matching the model's taste, budget/income level, theme, etc., to the target population via market analysis);
2. Budgets ("formulas" to determine front-end outlay for models, contracting with the designer, recovering the cost.);
3. Decorator's sources (keeping up with current, well-stocked, dependable suppliers who deliver on time);
4. Scheduling (120 days from brainstorming to designing, ordering, and installation);
5. Installation (who does what, when, and in what order, beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending with final punch list check).

Some interesting quotes: "Because model home decoration is really decorating for the masses, each of your four or five models should have distinctively different interiors....never be tempted to use (only) one theme." "In any series of model homes, start with a bright house

and end with a bright house....bright colors are uplifting....we don't want to calm down the buyer at the last home." "Never under-scale with small furniture unless it is absolutely impossible to avoid doing so...open it up with furnishings in a lighter scale, perhaps with chrome and glass pieces." "Use a queen-sized bed at least. Today 75% of the public owns a queen or king-size bed." "Model home decoration and merchandising is an art that is trying hard to become a science." "A prime source for fresh ideas, one used by virtually every designer is the shelter magazines which showcase some of the best current thinking in the field of interior decoration." (*Budgeting Decorating, Better Homes and Gardens, Southern Living, House Beautiful, Family Circle, and Woman's Day* are cited.) The "Major Elements" (Chapter Two) are color, lighting, accessories, and built-ins. Color is probably the model-home merchandiser's single most powerful selling tool, but harnessing its persuasive power is perhaps the single biggest challenge, according to Mrs. Eichen. A single color scheme should be used throughout each model to make the product "creep into the prospect's memory and stay there." Noted by example are: basic guidelines for color selection and then establishment; "color schemes with good mass appeal and a minor offensiveness factor;" "such-death saleswise colors;" and colors that "overexcite." Of four models, one should definitely be a woman's home and one quite masculine; the other two should be designed to appeal to both. "Remember that the 'client' is a mass audience and it's the mass taste one must decorate for, thus one cannot gamble with any approach that smacks of custom interior design, nor can one decorate the models to suit one's own tastes." Hints are given to "what the masses want." Summarizing color, the author urges restraint: "Be bright, even bold, but don't over power.

Lighting (subtly) sets the mood....which psychologists note as one of the major motivational factors that influence the buying or renting decision. Production lighting, i.e., fixtures and chandeliers, is differentiated from mood or atmospheric lighting provided by lamps and non-stationary light fixtures. Several guidelines are given for working with lamps. The final and main point is to "keep those bulbs burning at all times" (to put the prospect in a mood to buy or rent).

Accessorizing gives warmth and personality, "the homey feeling the potential buyer or renter sub-

consciously searches for when trooping through model complexes." Minimum cost and maximum "identity value" are equal in importance with restraint: don't overdo it—simplicity sells. Plants and books are vital to inject livability (as well as fill space). Pictures must be chosen mainly for color and frame style and relate to the theme of the homes as well as the market profile.

Built-ins and add-ons can give the model home a truly lived-in, but customized feeling without resembling an individually-designed custom home. Built-in bookcases, desks, headboard treatments, toy boxes, window seat/storage units, and panelling are good choices, but should not be made to look like part of the house and should be tagged with a single uniform sign noting decorator options. Special caution is given regarding the use of "pure-mirroring" to make the room look deceptively larger (except in the bathroom, where "mirrorizing" can be used to almost sinful limits). The result will be a disappointed customer when he walks into his new, unfurnished home only to discover that it has shrunk.

After a preliminary word on the importance of first impressions—the initial impact of the interior on the prospect as he walks in the front door—Chapter Three goes into designing individual rooms with two notes:

1. Each room must, in itself, stand on its own in terms of creativity of design and tastefulness: each room must silently sell; and
2. A properly decorated model home should not serve as a subliminal prod to prompt a family to buy a complete houseful of furniture to go along with its new home....the models should not intimidate the prospect and not give him the feeling that his present furniture will not go into his new home."

"Living rooms are your first shot at your customer." A properly merchandised living room, perhaps better called the "receiving room" today sets the theme, offering at least one of these strong sales messages: comfort, elegance, entertainment, warmth, livability, and/or conservation.

After the primary decisions as to price, financing, locations, and size of home are made by both husband and wife, the woman has the greatest influence on which specific home is eventually bought, and the kitchen is indispensable in capturing her eye. Mrs.

Eichen prefers the “cluttered look” to give the kitchen personality, *after* the builder has made it functional—an interesting note on division of labor or turfdom. Family rooms, dens, dining rooms, master bedrooms, children’s bedrooms, bathrooms, patios and balconies are also each presented in turn. The “evolutionary” notes on the master bedroom, ‘the playroom for the grownups’, are worthy of mention.

“Supportive elements” are discussed in Chapter Four: salesmen and publicity (how to “sell from the models,” verbally tailoring the model homes to the prospects requirements & explaining alternatives; how to get publicity that is not paid advertising); model maintenance (cleanliness, theft, refurbishing, and even that “unique smell...available in aerosol cans”); and the sales office (“The subconscious sale is made in the model homes, but the conscious decision to buy is made in the sales office, which is the creation of the sales-office-exhibit builder, the project sales manager, the advertising/graphics person, and the interior designer.

The final chapter presents six case histories (five in California, the home of Mrs. Eichen’s firm), each with

photographs, historical and project notes, and the design philosophy and merchandising goals behind it. The case histories range from “low-price” condominiums to a moderate-price single family development, and luxury hi-rise units.

This 156-page book, with fifty pages of color photographs and 100 line drawings showing key features of the adjacent photographs, is easy and quick to read, and perhaps a good starting point for a student interested in pursuing this apparently fascinating and financially fruitful field. Although Mrs. Eichen evidently does not carry academic credentials in interior design, psychology, or marketing, she certainly has made an impressive track record which places her in the ranks of the professionals.

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*The Book Review Editor acknowledges that interior design is not her forte, but tentatively presents this review to evoke interest and perhaps a reaction in the form of volunteers to review design-oriented books.*