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# Introduction

The places where we live have become the subject of a continuous flow of discussion and illustration. What have typically been called “shelter” magazines (now perhaps more accurately described as “lifestyle” magazines) have proliferated on the newsstands. *Metropolitan Home* and *Sunset* magazines bracket the coasts with their respective visions of the good life incarnate. Numerous trade organizations involved in the production of housing put forth journals, hold conventions, prime the pump for newer and better housing. The Congress for the New Urbanism holds annual conferences to explore the habitability of the public realm and the ways in which it can be produced as an accompaniment to housing development, and many professional organizations offer seminars and courses in the design of good communities.

The fabric of space and experience that surrounds our lives is inexorably changing, transformed by the prosperity that lends many householders margins of comfort and a thirst for expression. Others, meanwhile, swept from the circle of affluence, are left struggling to extract a measure of dignity from straitened circumstances and tightly circumscribed spaces. Our means for making sense in our lives also appears to have changed, as the range of experience has been broadened through travel, media and the breathlessly immediate reach of electronic communication.

Yet however different or varied our circumstances, we encounter each day the stuff of inhabitation—doors, windows, desks, the passage between territories, the concourse of human traffic and the enveloping facts of the weather. We exchange with this fabric of things and events—moving, changing, pondering the things which we encounter, remembering, imagining, seeking qualities that bring satisfaction, confronting now with then, here with elsewhere, mine with ours with theirs. We inhabit.

Dwelling and outgoing are reciprocally related dimensions of inhabitation. We seek to dwell in a place, to understand it fully and to let it become richly embedded in our lives—to feel at home in a location and to linger there with some sense of emotional security, of belonging. We seek also to reach out from that center, and indeed we must, to go out into places less certainly our own, to experiences that are shared with others, to places of transaction and exchange, to places that challenge and extend our understanding of the world in which we live. The outgoings available to us present this opportunity.

Constructed this way, this polarity is rooted in the act of dwelling; it is the literal or metaphorical house from which we venture forth into the wider realm of outgoings. “Dwelling” has been much described, most intently in a spate of thoughts descended from Hegel’s philosophical

reflections on the deep significance of investing thought and emotion in place. “Outgoings” is a term that I first encountered in the writings of Frederick Law Olmsted:

*What, then, are the requisites of an attractive neighborhood, besides good neighbors, and such institutions as are tolerably sure to be established among good neighbors? The most important, I believe, will be found in all cases to be that of good out-goings from the private grounds, whether with reference to social visiting, or merely to the pleasure and healthfulness of occasional changes of scene, and more extended free movement than it is convenient to maintain the means of exercising within private grounds.*

English law apparently uses the term “outgoing” to mean something different: for “expenditures necessary for the upkeep of a property.” The two meanings are, of course, related. Indeed our reason for posing this discussion is to bring into focus our belief that in order to construct places that can nurture meaning in our lives, it is necessary to be deliberate about investing in the structure of a common realm. It is necessary to extend our concern from the dwelling itself to the outgoings that our collective dwellings and the landscapes that they inhabit provide, each for the other.

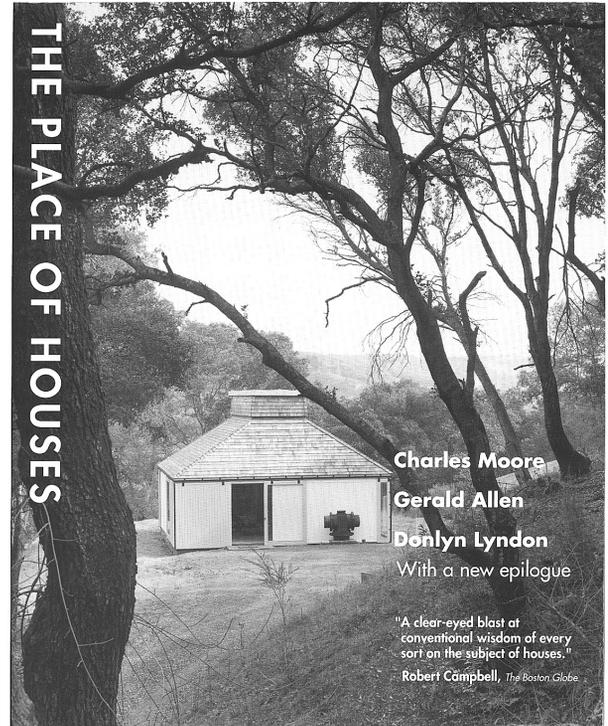
We posed these reciprocal terms as the basis for a conference last March at the Charles W. Moore Center for the Study of Place in Austin. We asked each of the participants—architects whose work has included significant houses or housing—to show and discuss current work. Since the conference coincided with the release of a new paperback version of *The Place of Houses*, authored by Charles W. Moore, Gerald Allen and myself in 1974 and now reissued with an epilogue, we also asked participants to use that book as a common basis for discussion.

During the course of the conference there were many spirited presentations of houses and the places of which they are a part. We present a collection of them here, selecting aspects of the work that suggest a set of design strategies for creating places, both private and public, that can enhance the lives of those who live in and among them.

“Dwelling” was explored in a series of presentations ranging from elaborate single-family homes on beautiful sites to a structure designed for very spare single-room occupancy in a neglected part of Las Vegas. Houses, though, both singly and in consort, need not only to provide for the personal acts of dwelling and nurturing concentration, but also to become part of larger domains, both physical and spiritual, that expand the scope of personal perception and create occasions for stimulation and challenge. “Outgoing,” a less familiar term for discussion, was explored in a variety of ways. Through

the presentations and responses, it became clear that the outgoings of which we must speak are not so physically bounded as Olmsted's discussion would imply. Nor, of course, are the actions required of an architect overtly divided into those which offer succor through dwelling and those which expand inhabitation in the outgoing, or between those which offer confirmation and those which stimulate curiosity. Our minds, that is to say, are more versatile than our bodies, and the construction of places also creates frameworks for mental exploration—outgoings for the imagination. The conference illustrated a number of ways in which imaginative energy and skill can be marshalled to support both dwelling and outgoing.

—Donlyn Lyndon



"Dwellings and Outgoings: The Prospects for Community" was the third annual symposium of The Charles W. Moore Center for the Study of Place. Established in 1994, the Center seeks to extend through its programs and preservation of the Moore/Andersson Compound the ideas and principles that were central to Moore's life. Each year in Austin, the symposium series brings together people interested in place-making issues for talks relating to the broader themes of Moore's architecture, organized in the spirit of pluralism, spirited exchange and collaboration. For last year's symposium, participants sought to convey through their current projects one of the central themes of *The Place of Houses*: that houses, beyond providing a "center" for their inhabitants, can also become instruments of "connection." Might good houses, as a consequence, provide better prospects for community?

This issue of *Places* presents excerpts of the presentations that took place at the symposium, clustered around themes that coalesced from the presentations, articulated here by Donlyn Lyndon. The papers were organized and edited by Kevin Keim, director of the Moore Center, and the editors of *Places*.

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