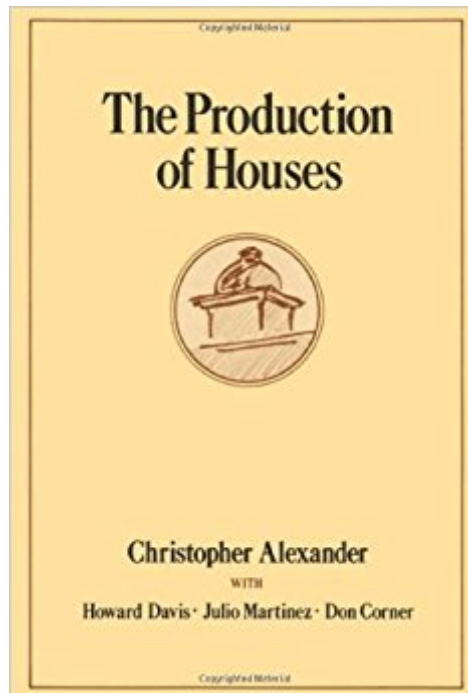




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The Production Of Houses (Center For Environmental Structure)



Synopsis

As an innovative thinker about building and planning, Christopher Alexander has attracted a devoted following. His seminal books--The Timeless Way of Building, A Pattern Language, and The Oregon Experiment--defined a radical and fundamentally new process of environmental design. Alexander now gives us the latest book in his series--a book that puts his theories to the test and shows what sort of production system can create the kind of environment he has envisioned. The Production of Houses centers around a group of buildings which Alexander and his associates built in 1976 in northern Mexico. Each house is different and the book explains how each family helped to lay out and construct its own home according to the family's own needs and in the framework of the pattern language. Numerous diagrams and tables as well as a variety of anecdotes make the day-to-day process clear. The Mexican project, however, is only the starting point for a comprehensive theory of housing production. The Production of Houses describes seven principles which apply to any system of production in any part of the world for housing of any cost in any climate or culture or at any density. In the last part of the book, "The Shift of Paradigm," Alexander describes, in detail, the devastating nature of the revolution in world view which is contained in his proposal for housing construction, and its overall implications for deep-seated cultural change.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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Christopher Alexander is a builder, craftsman, general contractor, architect, painter, and teacher. He taught from 1963 to 2002 as Professor of Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, and is now Professor Emeritus. He has spent his life running construction projects, experimenting with new building methods and materials, and crafting carefully articulated buildings--all to advance the idea that people can build environments in which they will thrive. Acting on his deeply-held conviction that, as a society, we must recover the means by which we can build and maintain healthy living environments, he has lived and worked in many cultures, and built buildings all over the world. Making neighborhoods, building-complexes, building, balustrades, columns, ceilings, windows, tiles, ornaments, models and mockups, paintings, furniture, castings and carvings--all this has been his passion, and is the cornerstone from which his paradigm-changing principles have been derived.

If, after reading Christopher Alexander's earlier books, you were wondering if he ever actually built a house in the real world, here's your answer. Yes, he did. Yes, the people owning the houses love the results. Yes, they feel the special connection with their homes that is the hallmark of Alexander's ideas. No, the powers that be, who agreed to temporarily suspend building codes for his project, were not happy with the results. Why? Because they look funny, and because he built five homes instead of five hundred. Well, if they'd read his other books, they would not have been surprised. Our intrepid hero is quite unsparing of himself - you can see his delight as his ideas work, and his horror when they don't. I believe that Christopher Alexander is dead on in saying that the system he created is a better way to build homes, indeed a far superior way to do so. However, I can't say the official reaction to this project is encouraging. After the first five homes were built, the bureaucrats came in, stopped the project and sent our intrepid hero packing. You can tell from the ending of the book that this reaction spooked Alexander, and I can't blame him. A revolutionary system of construction, he says, antagonizes pretty much everyone. But it will triumph, he proclaims! It looks like it didn't, but I see increasing awareness of his ideas in more recent architectural books, so hopefully all is not lost. Despite the ultimate outcome, this is a brilliant book from an inspired thinker. You probably want to start with *The Timeless Way of Building* and *A Pattern Language* before

tackling this one, but if you liked his earlier works, this is an excellent, real-world counterpoint.

Livro excelente e superou as minhas expectativas. As ilustrações são ótimas. Leitura indispensável para arquitetos e engenheiros que se interessam em produzir de moradia em larga escala sem menosprezar a participação da comunidade e da sabedoria popular. Foi entregue na data certa.

I bought this for my brother who is a contractor and he found it very interesting

this is a great series of books by Christopher Alexander

FIRST published in 1985 it is the fourth volume of a series. It tells of a Mexican project, and like its pre-published volumes, discusses a philosophy as well as management and construction issues. While costs may have dated over the past 27 years it remains relevant to any younger Architect interested in the genuine search for function and beauty.

I bought this book at Oxford Too in Atlanta when I was a teenager and it still affects my thinking about building and community space twenty five years later. A great companion to The Oregon Experiment.

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