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Author

Lyndon, Donlyn

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Caring for Places: Knowledge that Informs

With this issue of *Places* we initiate Volume 15. Over the years, we have explored many forms of interaction between person and place—searching for models of thought, analysis and representation that can inform the creation of places.

We present here twelve examples that can be instructive, the winning entries in our Place Design, Place Planning and Place Research Awards programs for 2001 and 2002. *Places* sponsors this program jointly with the Environmental Design Research Association as a means of uncovering good examples of how to learn about and how to make places that will yield enduring satisfactions.

The awards juries sought to indicate exemplary approaches to the use and development of knowledge about places. They sought to understand how research and design interact. Planners and designers, people doing research and people who sponsor projects can benefit from knowing more about what processes are most effective and what information really helps.

Of course, the conduct of verifiable research is different from the practice of planning or creating real, tangible places. These processes have overlapped and often blended into each other, yet they require differing forms of attention and have developed institutional support structures that value and reward differing characteristics. Publication and peer review verification are central to research. Regulatory review and political acceptance are essential for planning. Investment by private and/or public clients (as well as engagement with some components of the buildings industry) are preconditions for the design and creation of real places that can be assessed in terms of user satisfaction and cultural import. Accordingly, judgments of merit vary, sometimes in ways that may seem contradictory. The point is that the projects in this issue have been conducted with enough spirit, invention and care to be noticed, and with enough rigor and attention to human consequence to reward our careful examination.

Together, the projects that have been commended convey a marvelous range of concerns, an agenda for environmental design and research that has public scope. They show that the collective energies and skills of the professions can rise to pressing challenges of our time: to accommodate a diversifying set of social and cultural patterns, to find an order of making that embodies intelligent use of resources and has a close symbiotic connection with the natural world, and to invest new interest and care in places whose purposes are changing.

These premiated projects demonstrate the benefits of planning and designing in ways that engage the full complexities of place. These projects are all socially engaged; they involve the people as well as the places in which they are set. These projects and research studies are all generative, in the sense that they show how to draw energies through a place or they identify processes and possibilities that can inform the development of many places. They all have consequence beyond their immediate task.

We are pleased to be able to present these projects and to be a part of an awards program in which research, planning and design share center stage. We hope this will be generative, helping to foster mutual respect and interest among professionals and agencies whose working cultures vary. We hope to bring to wide attention the good places that can result from interweaving our disparate and our common ways of thinking into an expansive, patient and creative search.

—Donlyn Lyndon