People & Places

Connections between the Inner and Outer Landscape

By John R. Myer FAIA, Professor Emeritus, Head of Department of Architecture Emeritus MIT and Margaret H. Myer, LICSW, Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Emerita, Tufts University School of Medicine, and Lecturer on Psychology, Emerita, Harvard Medical School

• For urban planners, architects, landscape artists, builders, and students
• Connects the fields of architecture and psychology
• More than 150 illustrations
• Design process of award-winning architect explored

This book explores the connections between people and places. The unique perspective that arises out of the co-authors’ separate backgrounds as architect and social worker provides a groundbreaking treatise on the effects of place on people.

Through the study of what makes a person, drawing on Erik H. Erikson’s work, the book explores our early and lifelong needs and then relates these needs to places. It shows how places and people are tied together by describing the design process of three different types of places. Finally, it looks to the present state of place making, its precedents from the past, and the rapid cultural changes that leave us without precedents for the postindustrial electronic age. The Myers suggest that, as we look to the future, we need to value the past so we can make harmonious and continuous communities that are places for people in the future.

This book was written for those engaged in making places — urban planners, housewives, architects, politicians, builders, students, or simply those people who want to understand their deep connection to a place or places.

About The Authors

John R. Myer was born in Boston, Massachusetts. After serving in the Air Force, he entered Massachusetts Institute of Technology, graduating in 1952 with a bachelor’s degree in architecture. From 1952 to 1954 John and his wife Margaret, studied and worked in Italy. Upon returning to the United States, John combined the starting of his own firm with the teaching of architecture at MIT. His firm eventually became Arrowsstreet Inc., and in time he became department head of architecture at MIT. Notable among his many buildings are the Boston Architectural Center and the Library at Marlboro College; John was co-head, with Kevin Lynch of the design team for Boston’s Government Center and the Boston waterfront. More recently, he designed the Massachusetts State Archives.

Margaret H. Myer was born in New Haven, Connecticut, and graduated from Wellesley College in 1950. She received her master’s degree in social work and worked in child psychiatry at Tufts New England Medical Center, where she was Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry. She became a lecturer on psychology at Harvard Medical School while working at Cambridge Hospital and developing a private practice. The Myers retired to New Hampshire in 1996, built a house and barn, and began collaborating on this book.

Media inquiries please contact: Deidre Randall, Blueline Publicity, Peter E. Randall Publisher LLC. Phone: (603) 203-0552, (603) 431-5667, FAX: (603) 431-3566, E-mail: deidre@perpublisher.com

Distribution: Biblio Distribution/NBN, 4501 Forbes Blvd., Suite 200, Lanham, MD 20706
Tel: 800-462-6420 / http://www.bibliodistribution.com
Advance Praise for

People & Places

Connections between the Inner and Outer Landscape

By John R. Myer FAIA, Professor Emeritus, Head of Department of Architecture Emeritus MIT and Margaret H. Myer, LICSW, Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Emerita, Tufts University School of Medicine, and Lecturer on Psychology, Emerita, Harvard Medical School

“It is a lovely book. I found myself thinking about places as I read it and I found myself seeing them in a new way. Interestingly enough, I also began to see myself in a new way.”

Margaret DePopolo, Head Librarian, Rotch Library for Architecture and Urban Studies Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge

“This beautiful and provocative book helped me to see people and places in a new light. The mark of the Myers’ creativity is that they make you view your ordinary surroundings in a new and extraordinary way.”

Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Dean Emeritus, Kennedy School, Harvard University, Cambridge

“Psychiatric social worker and architect bring two diverse lives to bear on one subject: the connections between the inner and outer space. These connections we may have felt intuitively, but have never seen expressed. The ages of man and womankind, the struggle to mature, the rewards of growing up, all these are magically brought to bear on our habitat, our earth and dwelling place.

This is a very personal work by two people of passion and intelligence. It will touch the hearts and the minds of a great variety of readers and reach a broad mainstream audience.”

Rebecca Sinkler, Editor Emerita, The New York Times Book Review

“It is an exciting piece of work, a journey of the hero that conceptualizes personal experience with a subtext of search for community. The authors lead us through Erik Erikson's stages of maturation to tease out how a work of architecture transmits its message. They show Erikson's stages superimposed on each other synchronically in the spatial presence of the work and the sense of place that it creates. These individually based impressions also create a hunger for community.”

Professor Thomas Vietorisz, Urban Planning Program, Columbia University, New York

Media inquiries please contact: Deidre Randall, Blueline Publicity, Peter E. Randall Publisher LLC.
Phone: (603) 205-0552, (603) 431-5667, FAX: (603) 431-3566, E-mail: deidre@perpublisher.com

Distribution: Biblio Distribution/NBN, 4501 Forbes Blvd., Suite 200, Lanham, MD 20706
Tel: 800-462-6420 / http://www.bibliodistribution.com
People & Places

Connections between the Inner and Outer Landscape

By John R. Myer FAIA, Professor Emeritus, Head of Department of Architecture Emeritus MIT
and Margaret H. Myer, LICSW, Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Emerita, Tufts University School of Medicine, and Lecturer on Psychology, Emerita, Harvard Medical School

If you could describe the essence of this work in one sentence, what would it be?
Jack: The profound importance that places have for people whether they realize it or not.
Marty: People and Places explores how we react to places and suggests that our reactions stem from very early childhood needs.

When did you first begin to envision this book?
Jack: It began at a talk with Michael Pollan about his book A Place of My Own. After that talk we realized we could write a book about places given all the exchanges we had had in our lives about them. Our ideas on the relationship between place and people had roots farther back. We had received a Fulbright to go to study architecture in Italy. We found ourselves there in Fiesole, outside Florence, at the same time as Kevin Lynch who was there studying the form of cities. An effort, which would result in Lynch’s groundbreaking work called the Image of the City. We found ourselves collaborating with Kevin in this work, which got us thinking about places and parts of cities. When we returned to Cambridge to practice architecture and teach at MIT, we continued our closeness and friendship with Kevin.

Marty: Jack was teaching at MIT in the department of architecture. He wanted his students to have a different relationship with him than the usual one -- where the student learned from the Master. To get them to think independently he asked them to think about a place that was special for them and to share their findings with their fellow students. One evening he brought the class to our home and asked me to comment on the “analogues “. The students had beautiful visual presentations but they found it hard to talk about them. I felt it was because of very early subconscious feelings. That started Jack and I talking and we began to explore the relationships between our early needs and our reactions to places. This in turn led us to set up a seminar where architects and psychiatrists and psychologists got together to explore and comment on our findings.

When did you first realize that this was a groundbreaking idea? Are there other writers whose work inspired you in writing People & Places?
Jack: Kevin Lynch, an urban planner and teacher at MIT, inspired us. We realized that this was truly a new idea, when we began researching other titles for background material.
Marty: We had trouble finding any written material on the connections that we were making. There were three books that were important to us; Kevin Lynch’s The Image of the City, Bloomer and Moore’s Body, Memory and Architecture, and Bachelard’s The Poetics of Space. Critics like The New York Times, Muschamp and The Boston Globe’s Campbell often touched on some of our conclusions. There are others, but none made quite the approach that we did—which stemmed from our discussions.

(Continued on next page)
Connections between the Inner and Outer Landscape

By John R. Myer and Margaret H. Myer

(Continued from previous page)

What was it like to collaborate with your spouse, especially given that you are both from different fields of study? Have you ever written together before?

Jack: As an architect in practice, I found myself every so often turning to Marty for opinion about a place I was designing for her psychological sense for it: Was it too big? Too complex? Too something? Her answers were always insightful and the exchanges enjoyable!

Marty: We had great fun collaborating. We helped each other write -- neither of us had written much and never before together.

I had written many diagnostic reports, which turned out to be helpful. Jack’s experience was in teaching and giving lectures, which was very different but added a great deal.

You state that People & Places offers the information needed to encourage architects, planners, politicians, and designers to expand their idea of what place means to people. How do you think this idea will be received? How about by the fields of social work, and psychology? Do you expect it will influence change within those fields?

Jack: With respect to architecture, it is hard to say. There are many diverse routes into architecture. Certainly not all, maybe only a few, will be open at first to these ideas. There is a part of the field, which makes use of the tools of user consultancy with respect to place design for the satisfaction of the places’ users, even though many do not. User consultancy was first introduced in our field in the early 60’s by my firm. The architectural schools may be the most likely source of change in the practices of architecture, but some firms may also be open to it!

Marty: We hope it will open up a dialogue between the fields. Psychiatrists, psychologists and to a lesser degree social workers are used to working on a one to one basis, but it is our hope that they will think of their clients in a new light and realize that since places are vital to people, their input is needed by the architectural community.

What was the most challenging part of writing People & Places?

Jack: First in finding time to do it! After full career lives for both of us, and parenting three energetic kids, we finally found ourselves in Tamworth, NH with time to write the book! Second, in the exploring how we were to think about people, Marty came up with the idea that Erik Erikson’s work in describing the ages of man might serve us. Thru that lens we could focus on the differing experiences we have in each age, starting in the womb and running to the end of life. This was a great conceptual step for us!

Marty: Writing down our ideas and getting images to match the content was challenging.