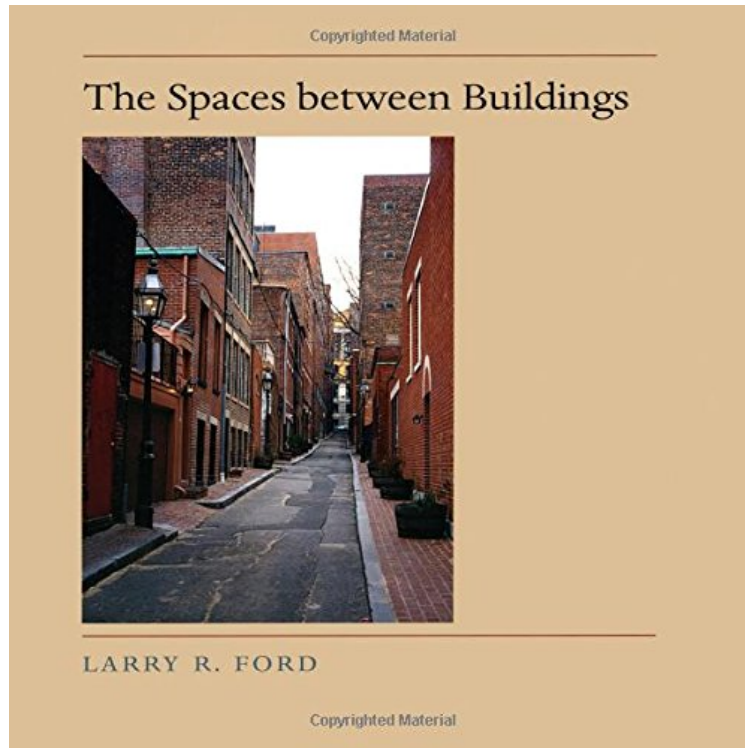


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Larry R. Ford

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Larry R. Ford : The Spaces between Buildings (Center Books on Space, Place, and Time) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Spaces between Buildings (Center Books on Space, Place, and Time):

14 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Easy read introduction into american urban landscapes By A Customer This is really a nice book. It reads very well and gives a good introduction over major landscape elements in urban and suburban. It also includes background information about the historical development of these landscape elements. That makes it quite easy to understand the urban and suburban landscape in the U.S.. It is one of these books that you read and think "aah, that's why...". A good and cheap present for landscape architects and students (nice paper, layout and format, too).

Gates and fences, sidewalks and driveways, alleys and parking lotsthese ordinary features have an important architectural impact, influencing how a building relates to the spaces around it. As geographer Larry R. Ford argues, architectural histories and guidebooks tell us surprisingly little about the character of American cities because they concentrate on buildings taken out of context, buildings divorced from space. In *The Spaces between Buildings*, Ford focuses on the neglected "nooks and crannies" between structures, supplementing his analysis with three photographic essays. Long before Ford knew anything about geography or architecture, he was a connoisseur of front porches,

alleys, and loading docks. As a kid in Columbus, Ohio, he knew where to find coal chutes to play in, which rooftops and fire escapes were ideally suited for watching parades, and which stoops were perfect for waiting for a bus. To him the spaces between buildings seemed wonderfully integrated and connected. *The Spaces between Buildings* is the result of Ford's preoccupation with the relationship of buildings to one another and how their means of access and boundaries organize the areas around us. As Ford observes, a city with friendly, permeable facades and a great variety of street-level doors is more conducive to civic life than a city characterized by fortresslike structures with blank walls and invisible doors. Life on the street is defined and guided by the nature of the surrounding buildings. Similarly, a residential neighborhood with front porches, small lawns or gardens, and houses with lots of windows and architectural details presents a more walkable and gregarious setting than a neighborhood where public space is surrounded by walls, three-car garage doors, blank facades, and concrete driveways. Ford begins by looking at the growth of four urban places, each representing a historical era as much as a geographic location: the Islamic Medina; the city shaped by the Spanish Renaissance; the nineteenth-century North American city; and the twentieth-century American city. His first essay also discusses the evolution of the free-standing structure as a basic urban building type and the problems encountered in beautifying the often work-a-day back and side yards that have helped to create the image of the untidy American city. The second essay examines the urban trend toward viewing lawns, gardens, hedges, and trees as an essential adjunct to architecture. The final essay focuses on pedestrian and vehicular spaces. Here the author includes the landscape of the garage, sidewalks, streets, and alleys. In its exploration of how spaces become places, *The Spaces between Buildings* invites readers to see anew the spaces they encounter every day and often take for granted.

"The lively work of a geographer who has spent years exploring cities... His explorations range across a broad spectrum, from the form and character of building skins to the effects of zoning and building codes on urban design. There is similar breadth to the temporal sweep of his work, which focuses primarily on contemporary American cities but is comfortable reaching back to nineteenth-century or earlier antecedents to explain contemporary urban forms and patterns... [Ford] addresses and integrates an enormous range of issues of contemporary urban form that lie under our noses but to which, all too often, we find it beneath our dignity to pay attention. Ford pays attention. In one cogent comment after another, he reminds us of the importance of examining and thinking about our daily living and working environments." (Iain Robertson *Landscape Journal*) "The clarity and scope of Ford's survey make the book engaging and informative not only for planners and designers, but also for readers generally interested in the shape of our cities." (Evelyn Soriano Ibarra *Urban Ecology*) "Easily accessible and useful to anyone interested in the pattern of our cities." (Dick Farley *Bloomsbury*) "Through description and photography, Ford offers a guide to the qualities of design, architecture, and ornamentation that create the character of urban spaces. The book is both interesting and illuminating—people will see cities differently after reading it." (Edward K. Muller, University of Pittsburgh) "This book creeps up on you, like the plot of a good novel or movie that starts with an ordinary situation but, with twists and turns, forces you to look at things in new ways." (Clare Cooper Marcus *Landscape Architecture*) "Ford's colourful and accessible essays are likely to stimulate a deeper interest in understanding the spaces of the city. Perhaps then the spaces where most individuals spend most of their time would no longer be taken for granted. Which is precisely Ford's point: because we do not question our own acceptance of the American city as we know it today, the spaces of our cities have no meaning." (Raymond Isaacs *Journal of Urban Design*) "Through description and photography, Ford offers a guide to the qualities of design, architecture, and ornamentation that create the character of urban spaces. The book is both interesting and illuminating -- people will see cities differently after reading it." -- Edward K. Muller, University of Pittsburgh

About the Author
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