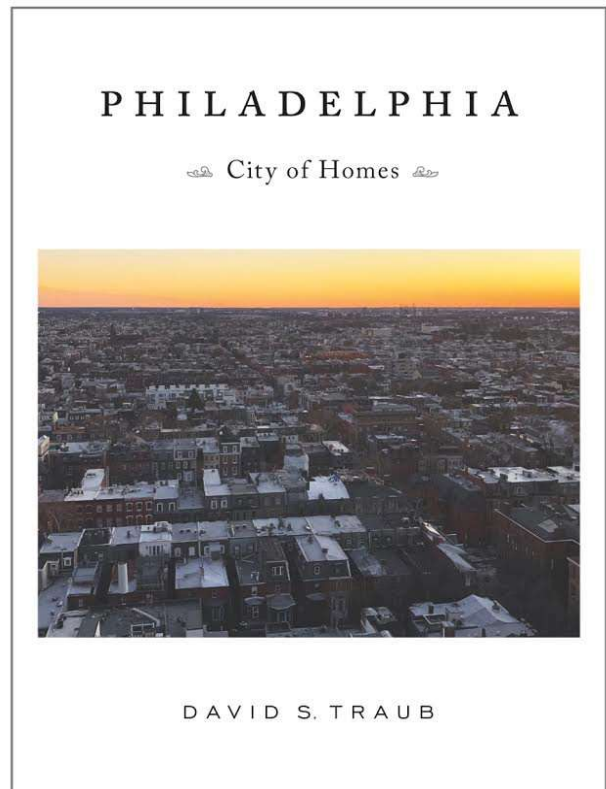


Philadelphia: City of Homes

David S. Traub

In the simplest terms, cities are places for great numbers of people to gather together for a common good, both economic and social. Obviously, these people must have shelter of one kind or another, and in Philadelphia it is the single-family house that largely provides for that need. The single-family home is found everywhere, lining the streets and courtyards throughout the city, providing habitation for the people who perform the myriad occupations sustaining urban life. Even in the downtown of the original city planned by William Penn, two- and three-story houses are still found set down amidst high-rise buildings.



Compared to other large urban centers such as New York and Chicago, Philadelphia has relatively few apartment buildings. Of course, there have always been some, and in recent years more have been built. But the single house or house-like structure still prevails in the city's architectural profile.

Philadelphians want to live in a house. That is the thesis of this book. Philadelphians like to open their front door and step out onto a sidewalk along a street. It is a characteristic embedded in their urban genes. The resultant low-built spread of single-family homes provides Philadelphia with a sense of livability that should inspire the envy of other American cities.

Nevertheless, the single-family house does not take exactly the same form and style. This book identifies seven house forms: rowhouses which predominate, but also twins, courtyard and walkway houses, detached houses, mansions, unusual houses, and modern houses. Seven chapters illustrate these various house types in a range of historic styles, from early colonial to modern, but also as built in a wide spectrum of neighborhoods across the entire city. Ranging from Somerton in the far corner of the Northeast to Eastwick at the extreme edge of the Southwest, and from Chestnut Hill in the Northwest to Packer Park in South Philadelphia, a selection of the city's houses appear here in color photographs.