

## BOOK REVIEW

R. CAMOUS and D. WATSON: *L'Habitat Bio-climatique*  
L'Étincelle, Montréal, Quebec, 1983. 189 pp.

D. WATSON: *Le Livre des Maisons Solaires*  
L'Étincelle, Montréal, Quebec, 1983. 270 pp.

Two valuable handbook-like works have been lately received for reviewing. One of the authors is Roger Camous, head of the Department for Industrial Planning of the Montreal University, the other is Donald Watson, professor of the Yale University widely known as being dedicated to the utilization of sun energy and to bio-climatic architecture.

The book "Habitat Bio-climatique" was published first in English at the Yale University with the contribution of Kenneth Labs. This book is a good comprehension of all the tendencies of the last decade known as bioclimatic, natural or climate-conscious architecture and which — due to the almost unlimited technical possibilities of the 50s and 60s — have nearly been forgotten. At that time the building, heating and cooling technologies, as well as the unexpensive energy supply permitted the neglect of local peculiarities. The excessive choice of forms and building materials resulted, however, in tedious and colorless, or sometime chaotic townscapes, but also, with the increased energy demand, in the threatening danger of exhausting the earth's raw material reserves and in the environmental pollution risking the survival of mankind. The energy crisis and increased energy prices turned the attention to the good old rules on whose basis the architects of the preindustrial epoch and even still our grandfathers had designed buildings. These old rules involved the possible best acclimatisation to conditions changing place by place, time by time. And these days, we are not in the position to neglect these points of view. Of course, the research of this subject has started in such countries, where the increased energy costs had to be borne by the consumers. The concepts of bioclimatic architecture and the list of the lately realized buildings are completed by an English and French bibliography.

Watson's book entitled "Design and Building a Solar House" issued by Garden Way Publishing in 1977 deals with the climate-conscious, active and passive solar building; includes 400 photos and several figures. This book has been translated to French by Roger Camous. The experimental buildings designed and realized in the frigid, temperate, warm humid and dry tropical zones of the United States are presented and completed by the translator with examples from Canada and France. It is regrettable that except to large buildings, only isolated family houses are included. All the more it is, since France gave the most exciting examples just for the economic rehabilitation of the centrally operated building estates.

These days the energy-conscious design considering the passive utilization of sun energy is obligatory for all the architects exacting with themselves. For the active utilization of the sun energy convincing examples are available only in cases of buildings covering a total surface exceeding 20 thousands m<sup>2</sup>. It is, however, undoubted that these two books and several examples have basically altered our views and claims against design. Our interest has returned to the rural and folk design again, when other reasons also prompted us to reconsider our architectural concepts.

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