Architectural Conservation: Principles and Practice

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This book is an introductory text on architectural conservation and is divided into two parts: Part 1, Theory and Principles (Chapters 1–4) and Part 2, Principles into Practice (Chapters 5–8) with conclusion on conservation in the future, glossary, bibliography and comprehensive index.

Architectural conservation is a science, and practitioners involved in study and safeguarding our cultural heritage should make use of all scientific disciplines, which can contribute to the conservation and preservation of our cultural heritage.

Part 1 of the book deals with theory and principles including legislation, policy and guidance both at national and international level.

Architectural conservation seeks to study the interrelationships of the internal environment created by the interactions of building architecture, materials, structures, services, contents, decorations and occupants with their external environments.

The second part of this volume focuses on the holistic multidisciplinary understanding of the total environmental performance of the building and in the development of environmental monitoring and control programmes for long-term sustainable conservation solutions. This includes practical aspects of these issues, including managing conservation, environmental issues and conservation of materials including earth structure, thatching, timber, stone, bricks, tiles, metals, glass and concrete.

In every aspect of historic building conservation, diagnostic non-destructive environmental investigation plays a key role and Chapter 5 on managing conservation highlights nondestructive investigation techniques and instrumentation.

The information on causes of decay (Chapter 6) and conservation of materials (Chapter 7) is very limited and provides an introductory guide for students studying conservation and must not be used in preparing specification for conservation work.

I was disappointed to read on page 149 the last paragraph ‘The replacement of part of a timber member is often carried out by cutting out a rotten or defective section. Cutting out rotten wood must ensure that traces of fungal attack are removed with a reasonable safety margin to ensure that no active attack remains in the timber and all new timber must be treated’. It has long been accepted by English Heritage and conservation bodies that environmental control of infestation and decay is by far the best way for conservation of timber in historic buildings rather than belt and braces remedial chemical treatments, which destroy what is intended to be preserved.

The book serves an excellent introductory book for all those involved in the conservation of historic buildings.

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