DVD review

Mike Parrett's Guide to Building Pathology

Title: Mike Parrett's Guide to Building Pathology	Authors: Mike Parrett
Publisher: Limelite Media Productions	Publication Date: (May 2006)
ISBN: NA	Details: 6 DVD disks
List Price: £359.99	Best price: 6 DVD set £69.99 individually (from Limelite Media productions: www.buildingpathology.net and RICS Books)
Value for money: Reasonable	Audience: Students, Practitioners
Jurisdiction: Most case studies relate to typical UK construction but some references to constructions in Hong Kong and the United States of America	

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The box set contains six DVDs entitled Roofs, Walls, Floors and Basements, Drainage and Services, Flooding, Law and Litigation, which can also be purchased individually. Each DVD has clear, stand-alone chapters with straightforward and logical navigation. This navigation and structure allows the viewer to access any particular chapter of interest anywhere on the disk. There is also a booklet that accompanies the box set which acts as the overall set index.

All the topics are narrated and presented by Mike Parrett in a clear straightforward style with good graphical aids and production standards. Each topic has a historical element to it, setting out the early process of construction with some examples of where these forms can still be found. Many of the topic areas are based on case studies Mike has encountered; the emphasis is to demonstrate a hands-on holistic approach and as such the set is not intended to be a rigorous academic delivery of the subject. While the approach is general and at times basic, Mike's experience and expertise is clearly demonstrated with finely tuned observations and comprehensive explanations of the major defects, their consequences, potential misdiagnosis and appropriate methods of investigation and remedial work. The result is a well-produced, holistic and measured guide to Building Pathology.

The range of property types and periods of construction are dispersed throughout the box set and there is a competent thought process behind each of the case studies which allows for an adequate demonstration of the typical types of defects a UK-based surveyor would encounter (The exception for UK surveyors is the over-emphasised section on the

analysis of a Northern American domestic timber frame system.) The selection of build types spread across the six disks does make it difficult to ascertain whether the purchase of a single disk would cover a particular build type the viewer might be interested in, with the chapter headings giving little or no additional information as to the specific build types used in the case studies. This lack of precision in topic description reiterates the productions remit to be a guide rather than a concise reference and, as a guide, the set accomplishes its remit well.

The Legal and Litigation DVD mainly centres on an interview with Martin Hodgson QC. This may not be of particular relevance to surveyors other than those engaged as expert witnesses but is a good introduction to legal cases and precedent and the need to understand court processes, evidence collation and analysis. There is a re-enactment of a legal case which, while of general interest, adds little to the topic.

Throughout the presentation, brand placement is used for most suggested remedial work and references to surveying equipment. This is on the one hand useful and on the other limiting as the full range of equipment and services available is not given equal measure. It is however refreshing for a production to directly refer to readily available products for pathologists to associate with particular types of investigation even if this may date the publication's relevance in later years.

The price for the box set is high and the limited number of retail outlets reduces the opportunity for price competition; however, each disk can be bought separately to break down the initial expense. Overall Mike Parrett's Guide to Building Pathology is a good investment for the larger practice or property organisation and a valuable training resource for the graduate surveyor.

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