Understanding Historic Building Conservation

Title: Understanding Historic Building Conservation

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This publication takes the form of a number of academic papers written by practitioners and academics working in the field of building conservation. The disciplines covered by the contributing authors include Building Surveying, Quantity Surveying, Archaeology, Architecture, Planning, Heritage Management as well as full-time academics. Each individual paper covers a different element of conservation philosophy, practice and legislation, and how this topic impacts upon decisions made in the development and care of historic sites. The topics covered reflect the whole spectrum of historic building conservation debate from basic introductions to areas of philosophy and legislation, through procurement issues to specialist requirements for particular categories of historic site. The individual papers very much reflect the discipline of the author, and provide the work with diversity, but also make it less suitable for the practitioner who may desire a more standardised approach or greater individual depth. However, it is a good book for anyone seeking an introduction to a previously alien conservation issue, or an insight into the role and perspective of another professional discipline.

This publication is part of a series of books that will extend to cover more practical and technical conservation methodology, and perhaps should be judged as part of that series. The stated aim of this work is to provide a snapshot of a number of individual conservation-related topics that afford concise and up-to-date information without requiring recourse to reading the many fuller volumes available. In this aim the book is mostly successful, with many of the chapters providing that concise but valid appraisal of the chosen topic. The depth of content varies between chapters from basic information to thought-provoking discussion. This is indicative of the variety of disciplines from the authors, and does meet the stated objective of reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of conservation work.

To summarise, while at £45.00 this book is quite expensive for any other than serious students and practitioners of historic building conservation, it does meet its stated objectives of providing an insight into the interdisciplinary nature of conservation, and it does provide a concise introduction to a number of philosophical and legislative areas of conservation practice. I would therefore recommend it to the target audience of students of building conservation, academics and those practitioners seeking an insight from outside of their discipline.

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