**MAGMILLAN
DICTIONARY OF
BUILDING**

MACMILLAN DICTIONARY OF BUILDING

Randall McMullan

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MACMILLAN
REFERENCE
BOOKS

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Preface

The words in the dictionary have been chosen from the written material used in current building practice. Modern specifications, technical standards, reports and product literature cover a surprisingly wide range of disciplines, many of them new. The age-old activities of building have meanwhile left a rich store of words.

New terms have displaced some older words: it is hoped that their omission from this dictionary has been by design rather than by accident or oversight. Many classical architectural terms have been excluded: only those commonly employed in modern construction or maintenance appear. Words that describe specialized aspects of trades and professions are also restricted to those in general use. Trades with long histories, such as masonry and carpentry, have accumulated a rich variety of terms which deserve complete books of their own.

The geographical spread of building terms within the English-speaking world is also complex. The use of a word can vary between areas such as the North and South of Britain, or the East Coast and West Coast of North America. Meanings can vary or even be reversed within relatively small areas, with most local users happily ignorant of other meanings. Entries in this dictionary are therefore cautious in indicating the geographical origin of words, though they do list different meanings where a word has more than one. The context will usually indicate which meaning is involved and at least some of the other possibilities for ambiguity will be known. Despite some differences between countries, there is more agreement about words than one might expect: an encouraging trend for an industry with multinational links and projects.

London
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How to use the Dictionary

Headings to entries appear in alphabetical order, disregarding breaks between words. In other words, entries will appear in the order:

fir
fire alarm
fireback
fire extinguishing equipment
fireplace
fire resistance
firing

and not:

fir
fire alarm
fire extinguishing equipment
fire resistance
fireback
fireplace
firing

Words appearing in small capitals (e.g. BRICK) indicate that there is an entry on that subject elsewhere in the dictionary. The instruction *See* tells the reader that information on the topic he or she has looked up is to be found under another heading. The instructions *See also* and *Compare* at the end of an entry tell the reader of other entries in the dictionary that may be of relevance.

The tags (*UK*) or (*USA*) after a heading, are as the Preface explains, only rough guides as to usage: (*UK*) should be taken to mean 'most of the British Isles', and (*USA*) 'most of North America'.

The following abbreviations are also used:

abbr. abbreviation
adj. adjectival
pl. plural
vb. verb