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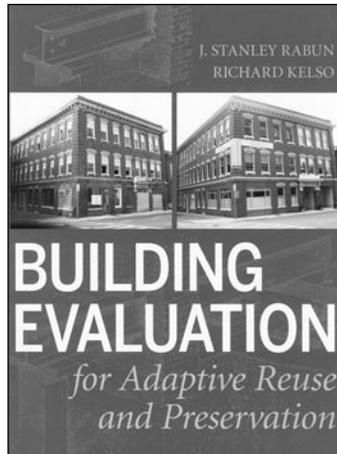
# **Preservation Education & Research**

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J. Stanley Rabun and Richard Kelso. ***Building Evaluation for Adaptive Reuse and Preservation***. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009, 240 pp., 189 photographs and illustrations, cloth, \$115.00, ISBN 978-0-470-10879-6.

When planning the preservation or reuse of a historic building, owners, architects, engineers, and preservation professionals are often confronted by the challenge of carrying out a thorough evaluation of a structure's existing conditions. The fact that older and historic buildings were constructed with materials and technologies that are not commonly seen today can complicate the task. An accurate evaluation of these buildings demands that project teams become familiar with the building's structure, systems, and materials in order to make sound design and, most importantly, financial decisions.

*Building Evaluation for Adaptive Reuse and Preservation* provides guidance to professionals who work with older commercial and residential buildings. While there are numerous, highly-detailed books on historic materials and construction methods (e.g., post-and-beam framing or cast-iron storefronts), few provide the reader with a broad survey of common building systems and methods for evaluating the building as a whole. Rabun and Kelso do just that.

The authors are veterans in building evaluation. Dr. Rabun is an architect and engineer who has designed many historic rehabilitation projects. He is the author of *Structural Analysis of Historic Buildings: Restoration,*

*Preservation and Adaptive Reuse Applications for Architects and Engineers* (2000). Mr. Kelso is a mechanical engineer with a wealth of experience in historic building systems. They present their expertise in a way that is easily applied in the field.

Each of the book's chapters addresses one element of historic construction. For those new to the subject, an early chapter is devoted to an overview of architectural styles commonly found in the U.S. There is a separate chapter on the testing and analysis of particular building materials, such as masonry, metals, concrete, and wood. Another useful and interesting chapter focuses on *pro forma* analysis as an integral part of the project design process. This discussion makes the vital connection between the designer's assessment of a building as a resource and the owner/developer's financial performance. In the field, these two are inextricably linked – and Rabun and Kelso allow the reader to be part of the solution. In a sign of the times, there is a chapter dedicated to sustainability and its role in project design for preservation and reuse projects.

The heart and soul of the book is the chapter entitled "Survey of Existing Conditions." It contains suggestions on conducting exterior and interior inspections and assessments, along with a practical list of tools and materials needed for the job. It also identifies various historical construction types and demonstrates their evolution over time. All chapters have a generous number of illustrations from period trade and design publications, as well as photographs from actual evaluation projects.

Detailed chapters provide necessary information on crucial systems, such as electrical, mechanical, and plumbing. In each, the authors provide a clear methodology for evaluation and a historical context to guide the user through the decision-making process. For each system, the authors organize the information into four categories: 1) its historical evolution, 2) the information and methods needed to identify and evaluate the system, 3) guidance on how to evaluate its suitability for reuse, and 4) a thorough explanation for common systems failures, with possible methods for rehabilitation or for the selection of new systems, if the historical materials cannot be reused.

*Building Evaluation for Adaptive Reuse and Preservation* is an excellent resource for preservationists, design professionals, and property owners who want a practical field guide to identifying and evaluating historic buildings. For professionals who are expert in historic materials and building technologies, this book will not be new, but it can serve as a basic, well-organized template for assessment. However, for architects and engineers who are not specially trained or experienced in historic buildings, this book should be the starting point for building evaluation and decision making. For instructional courses on historic building technology, assessment, and evaluation, it is a very complete text.

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