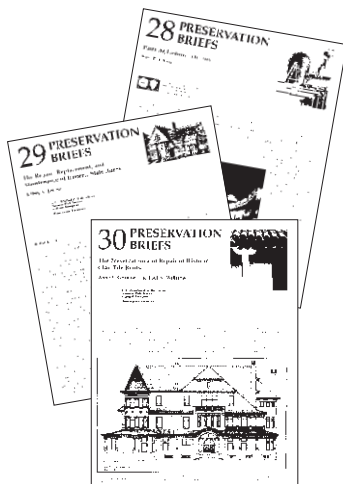


Historic Preservation Briefs

by Sal Alfano



Painting Historic Interiors by Sara B. Chase.
The Repair, Replacement, and Maintenance of Historic Slate Roofs by Jeffrey S. Levine.
The Preservation and Repair of Historic Clay Tile Roofs by Anne E. Grimmer and Paul K. Williams.

One consequence of the National Preservation Act of 1966 is the Preservation Briefs series published by the Preservation Assistance Division of the National Park Service. Cur-

rently there are 30 publications in the series, each of which provides a wealth of information on a single topic having to do with some aspect of preserving historic buildings. The three most recent additions to the series extend this tradition into the realm of interior painting (volume 28), and the repair, replacement, and maintenance of slate and clay tile roofs (volumes 29 and 30).

The booklets are short — usually no more than 10 or 15 pages — but there is no shortage of information. As you would expect, the *Briefs* do an especially good job of tracing the materials and methods of earlier times. *PB 28 Painting Historic Interiors*, for example, explains the ingredients of historic paints, outlines early manufacturing methods, and explains the influence of modern developments, such as stenciling and the paint can. Each volume also discusses traditional detailing and design elements, as well as important modern trends where appropriate.

But there is also a great deal of hard, hands-on information in these little booklets. The *Painting* brief explains how to investigate paint in

historic structures, offers advice on choosing a treatment, and gives step-by-step instructions on surface preparation, scraping and sanding, patching and repair, and the application of modern finish coats. A sidebar on the hazards of lead in paint and VOCs in paint stripper brings everything up to date.

The two new briefs on roof coverings, *PB 29 The Repair, Replacement, and Maintenance of Historic Slate Roofs* and *PB 30 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Clay Tile Roofs*, are equally thorough. *Slate Roofs* uses numerous photos to illustrate typical slate types and detailing, and to document the causes of deterioration and the tools, materials, and methods used to make repairs. *Clay Tile Roofs* follows a similar pattern in tracing the history of clay tile as a roofing material, using both photos and illustrations to present common patterns and installation details, to identify common failures, and to explain proper repair and replacement procedures.

If a half-hour's reading merely whets your appetite, the briefs usually contain sources for more information and lists of organizations and manufacturers who can help you learn more about the subject. And while most volumes have just a single author, the series is a group effort that brings together prominent experts and tradespeople in the appropriate fields. This makes for well-rounded treatments that draw on scholarly research as well as practical experience.

All of this is available at a very reasonable price. Volumes 1-14 of the *Historic Buildings Preservation Briefs* are available as a set for \$9. They cover a range of topics, including cleaning and waterproofing historic masonry buildings, using aluminum and vinyl siding to resurface wood frame buildings, repairing historic wood windows, and preserving historic adobe buildings, to name a few. The second set, volumes 15-23, costs \$8 and covers concrete, wood shingle roofs, flat wall plaster, and stucco, among other topics. The remaining volumes can be ordered individually at \$1 each (volumes 29 and 30 are \$1.25). You can order *Preservation Briefs* from the U.S. Government Printing Office (202/783-3238). For more information, call the National Park Service (202/343-9578) and ask for the free 1992-94 *Catalog of Historic Preservation*. ■

— Sal Alfano is a senior editor at The Journal of Light Construction.

Footnotes

If you're confused about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you may find help in *The ADA Answer Book: Answers to the 146 Most Critical Questions About the ADA, Title III* (\$60, \$35 to members). Published by the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), this 82-page book answers questions about liability, enforcement, and interpretation of Title III. For more information, contact BOMA International, 1201 New York Ave., N.W., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005; 202/408-2662.

To hungry builders looking for advice on establishing and running their offices, *Builder's Office Manual* by Michael C. Thomsett (Craftsman, 1987, 800/829-8123, \$15.50) offers little help. The lengthy discussions in early chapters of office floor plans

are useless to small builders, while the section on working at home is too brief. Things pick up in the next six chapters. There are tips on letter-writing, complete with right-way and wrong-way examples, and advice on keeping daily logs and developing a procedures manual, illustrated again with examples. There's also a good chapter on form design and paperwork flow, despite an extraneous section on micro-filming. And the four chapters on hiring practices, personnel policies, office supervision, and time management make up what is probably the strongest part of the book.

But the downhill slide begins again with five chapters on computers and data management, in which the author seems oblivious to the vast number of businesses using desktop PCs. My advice is to look elsewhere.

— Sal Alfano