



Scaled-Down Graphic Standards

Architectural Graphic Standards: Residential and Light Construction, James Ambrose, ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1991). Abridged from the Eighth Edition, 448 pages. Hardcover, 9x12. \$85.

Architectural Graphic Standards: Student Edition, Stephen Kliment, ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1989). Abridged from the Seventh Edition, 489 pages. Quality softcover, 9x12. \$54.95.

Building Construction Illustrated: Second Edition by Francis D. K. Ching, with Cassandra Adams (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1991). 339 pages. Paperback, 8 1/2x11. \$24.95.

For almost 60 years, *Architectural Graphic Standards* has been the bible of design professionals. Pioneered in 1932 by George Ramsey and Harold Sleeper, it has since gone through seven revisions, culminating in the 854-page 8th edition (the original was a mere 233 pages). Each succeeding version has increased in size and cost (the latest edition is \$160), and so has the amount of information that is useful only to a limited segment of readers. Many small builders are unwilling to lay out so much money for a reference work that contains a lot of information they will never use, such as the proper dimensions for a football stadium or parking garage. The two abridged editions presumably solve this problem by targeting the residential, light construction, and student markets.

For those unfamiliar with *Graphic Standards*, it is a compilation of generic information on all aspects of construction. It includes just about everything from ergonomic design data to elevator systems. The information is presented graphically, with extensive captions and occasional bits of explanatory text. If, for example, you want a state-of-the-art detail for construction of a custom concealed gutter and information on how to size it for specific roof areas and expected rainfall, this is the place to go — if you can afford it.

James Ambrose, whose excellent book on structural mechanics I have

reviewed previously (*JLC*, 4/89), has edited the *Residential* edition to a little over half the size of its parent. The *Student* edition, produced by an advisory board through a process involving architectural students and professors, is a few pages larger than the *Residential* version, but still costs less than the original. Both cover the same, basic material, organized in almost identical fashion.

So, assuming you're economy-minded, which do you choose? Personally, I'd select the *Student* edition, despite the fact that my work is exclusively residential. It costs less and I think it contains more information on each subject. But we're not exactly comparing apples to apples here. Not only is there a difference in the age of the parent editions, but each volume contains some information that the other doesn't. For instance, in Chapter 6 of both books, you'll find typical framing details for stud wall construction, floors, roofs, sheathing, trusses, plank-and-beam framing, and the like. But the *Residential* version also has information on typical cabinet construction, molding, trim, and paneling, while the *Student* edition includes discussions of the economy of wood framing, where to put insulation, log construction, and wood siding.

There is, however, an alternative to either of the above, especially if cost is a factor. For years, I've used Francis D. K. Ching's *Building Construction Illustrated* as a textbook for the house-building classes I teach. It's one of my favorite references, both for its handwritten text and illustrations, and in the amount of information it provides. Now there's a new, expanded edition to replace your old, worn-out copy (I still have the original, oversized version), or as a stand-in for the more expensive books cited above.

Ching organizes his material by structural systems, taking pains to point out and cross-reference related components and to explain how the points under discussion combine to form architecture (as opposed to

"building"). He examines different materials and structural methods, enumerates the factors that should be considered in their selection, and expounds upon how those choices influence the building and its relationship to the site.

Each chapter opens with an overview of the system under consideration and factors to consider in its design and construction. Ching's detailed drawings cover virtually every type of construction you might encounter. The section on floor systems, for example, includes wood joists, plank and beam, floor trusses, beams and girders, steel framing, reinforced concrete structural slabs, and precast units. Not only will you find typical details, but you'll be presented with information — like typical connections and span tables — that will enable you to make informed decisions about construction. All of this is presented in a package that's a pleasure to look at and read.

Personally I've got both, but I think of *Graphic Standards* as a sort of Dodge Pickup, while Ching's book is more like a '57 Chevy. Both of them will get you there; one will do it in style.

— Paul Hanke

Free & Cheap

Management Tools and Tips: Basic Construction Management: The Superintendent's Job, a 62-page book from National Association of Home Builders, gives the reader advice for managing schedule, budget, and quality in the field. Various sample inspection checklists are included, as well as other forms and guidelines such as self-evaluation forms, site reports, and schedule control charts. Cost is \$16.80 for members, \$21 for nonmembers. Write to: NAHB, Home Builder Press, 15th and M Streets NW, Washington, DC 20005; 800/223-2665.

Energy-Saving House Plans: The U.S. Department of Energy's Conservation and Renewable Energy Inquiry and Referral Service (CAREIRS) publishes many free fact sheets. One such publication is *Sources of Solar and Energy-Efficient House Plans*, a two-page listing of books, periodicals, and brochures. Although not comprehensive in just two pages, the fact sheet is a good starting point. To obtain a copy, contact CAREIRS, P.O. Box 8900, Silver Spring, MD 20907; 800/523-2929. Request publication SS101.

Radon Resistance Resource: A 41-page handbook that provides radon information for the trades is offered by National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) for \$12. *Radon Handbook for the Building Industry* covers current, cost-effective materials and methods in construction of radon-resistant buildings. Background information about radon in general, as well as issues around post-construction mitigation, radon in water, and liability are also included. Drawings illustrate specific details. To order, write to: NAHB, 400 Prince Georges Blvd., Upper Marlboro, MD 20772; 301/249-4000.

— Josie Masterson-Glen

