

Save That House



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As high interest rates and periods of excessive inflation push new home casts out of reach, many Americans are turning to alternatives. One of the most popular choices is the purchase and restoration of a "fixer-upper." The end result can be an economical and satisfying experience, or an absolute disaster. Much of tile outcome depends on how well we understand what we are getting into. The trick is to find out what s wrong with the house, and then decide if its problems can be corrected at a reasonable price.

Of course that assumes we are working with a knowledge base that allows us to correctly evaluate the building s condition. Yet most of us are a bit deficient when it

comes to passing judgement on the condition of a house. We are also at some disadvantage when it comes to recognizing design and construction errors that can allow even new buildings to deteriorate.

For me, upgrading that deficient knowledge base was a long, laborious, and frustrating experience because finding the information was difficult. The question to be answered was: "What makes some buildings vulnerable to insect attack and decay, while others seem to stand forever?" I found the book stores and local libraries stuffed with how-to-do-it information on carpentry, plumbing, and landscaping, but very little material on the root causes of wooden building deterioration.

So the information in the following chapters was dug from the bowels of university libraries, and extracted from the minds of professors, contractors, county extension agents, exterminators, lumber industry executives, and home remodeling experts. And this text intends to arm homeowners with more facts than are normally available on how insects and decay destroy wooden buildings.

This book should also increase the value of your do-it-yourself library collection because it solves many of the mysteries introduced by more technical books on carpentry, remodeling, plumbing, insulation, roofing, and landscaping.

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