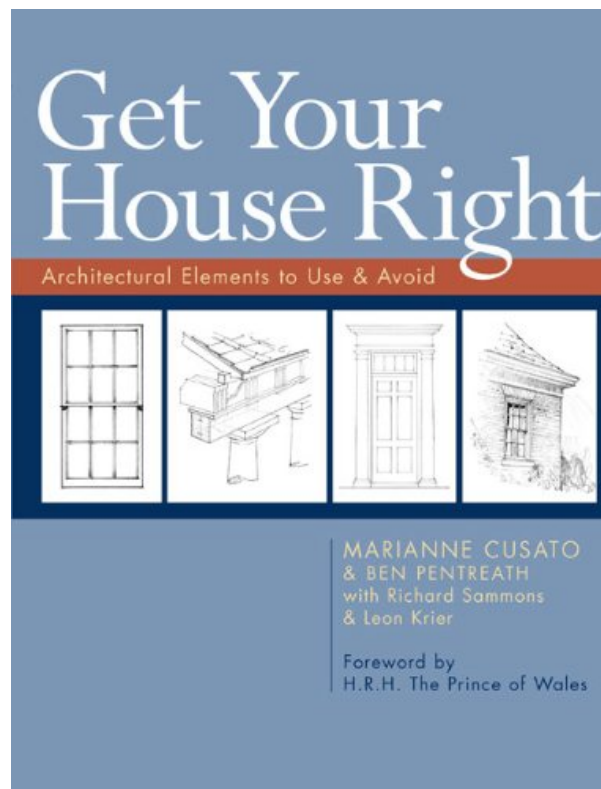


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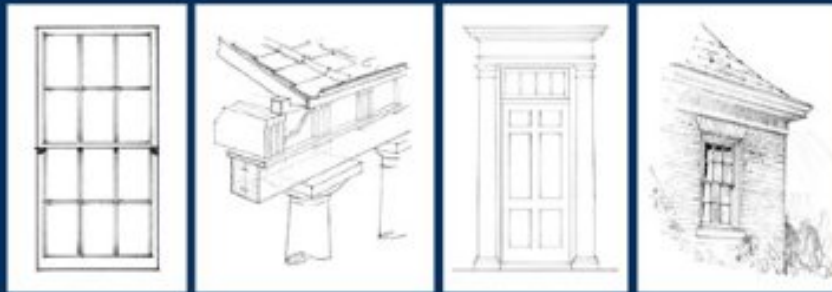


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Get Your House Right

Architectural Elements to Use & Avoid



MARIANNE CUSATO
& BEN PENTREATH
with Richard Sammons
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Foreword by
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“Marianne Cusato translates architectural language into the vernacular and, by doing so, into the reach of the average consumer, where such knowledge is guaranteed to do the most good....this 'Rosetta stone' of design will guarantee Cusato a place in the history of twenty-first century American architecture.”-- *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

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About the Author

Marianne Cusato has received international attention for her design of the Katrina Cottages: affordable, durable home kits created as an alternative to FEMA trailer housing to help the Gulf Coast rebuild. The cottage won the Cooper-Hewitt People's Design Award and has been written up in magazines and newspapers across the country, from *Architectural Record* and *Cottage Living* to *Time* and *Forbes*. She is the principal of Cusato Cottages, LLC, a New York-based firm specializing in traditional architectural design.

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Sick of McMansions? Marianne Cusato, creator of the award-winning Katrina Cottages, is a champion of traditional architectural principles: structural common sense, aesthetics of form, appropriateness to a neighborhood, and sustainability. She presents the definitive guide to what makes houses look and feel right, revealing the dos and don'ts of livable home design. Hundreds of elegant line drawings--rendering the varieties of architectural features and displaying "avoid" and "use" versions of the same elements side by side--make this an indispensable resource for designing and building a timelessly beautiful home.

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Most helpful customer reviews

56 of 57 people found the following review helpful.

Perfect while incomplete

By J. Zeman

This is an easy book to understand. If you are looking to emulate a style pre-1900 (e.g. Greek Revival), it is perfect. It describes in great detail, not only the right way, but also the wrong. I can't complain. The rub is what the author considers architecture and not. The forward describes the "scourge" of modern architecture. Some of the best architecture out there is modern, although there is a lot of bad modern style. A book like this wouldn't work for modern, but there is 80 years or so between the end of the author's view of high architecture and the "scourge" of modern and it is severely lacking. Arts & Crafts, Craftsman, Bungalow, Prairie, etc. are all styles that have rules that need to be followed and quite honestly, I am shocked there is not one page mentioning them. The book keeps mentioning the need for vertical lines (important to styles pre-1840 or so) and specifically noting to avoid horizontal lines (the most important factor for Prairie). Bottom line: if you want a traditional style, this is a great book. If you want a style post-Queen Anne, not only is this book not helpful, it would actually discourage it.

35 of 39 people found the following review helpful.

Just what the doctor ordered

By Brize Books

I have struggled for years with design issues in the buildings I renovate and (sometimes) modify. It is the "just doesn't look right" syndrome where you spend money and time on what you think is a good idea, but when it's done you can tell it looks goofy, or backwards, or convoluted or something.

Well this book is exactly addressed to people like me - indoctrinating the reader to the (seemingly) rigid rules of traditional architecture that have evolved over the centuries since we emerged from caves. It's like getting an abbreviated overview of the lessons learned by earlier generations of builders, condensed into a readable book. Probably the most notable lesson I gleaned from it is the importance of details on the overall look and feel of a building.

I know I'm not going to necessarily follow every rule on every decision I make - economics play an important role too - but at least now I have a little better understanding of where I can cut corners, and where spending a little more on the right details will be crucial. It's like having the wisdom of the ages at your back when making design decisions.

One thing that attracts me to traditional architecture is that it comes from times where buildings were much more monumental accomplishments than they are today. With our concrete and steel, equipment and technological advances, buildings go up in a matter of days rather than years, and will be replaced just as quickly if we decide we don't like them. Sometimes the way they look reflects this lack of thought necessary for their construction.

If you follow the guidance provided by this book, your building will at least look like an accomplishment worth celebrating.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

AKA - What not to do - and why

By A. Boynton

Ever drive down a beautiful street of houses, and then see one house that just doesn't fit? The first question we usually ask is "why would they do that here?" I can think of a few houses in some of my town's historic streets where people ask this question all the time. Often some small changes of just smaller windows, proper window panes, or appropriate styling for the neighborhood would help make this work. This book helps put us all down this path - and teaches us about the details we often intuitively see as wrong, but do not

understand or "see" why they don't fit. I learned quite a bit about design, style and an understanding of not only the reasons why the pre-fabricated house in town does not fit in, but how the design could have been changed - and the house could likely have been built at the same cost, yet fit into the streetscape. If you are building a house, restoring a house joining a historic Commission, planning board, or anything that has authority over buildings, you should read this book...

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