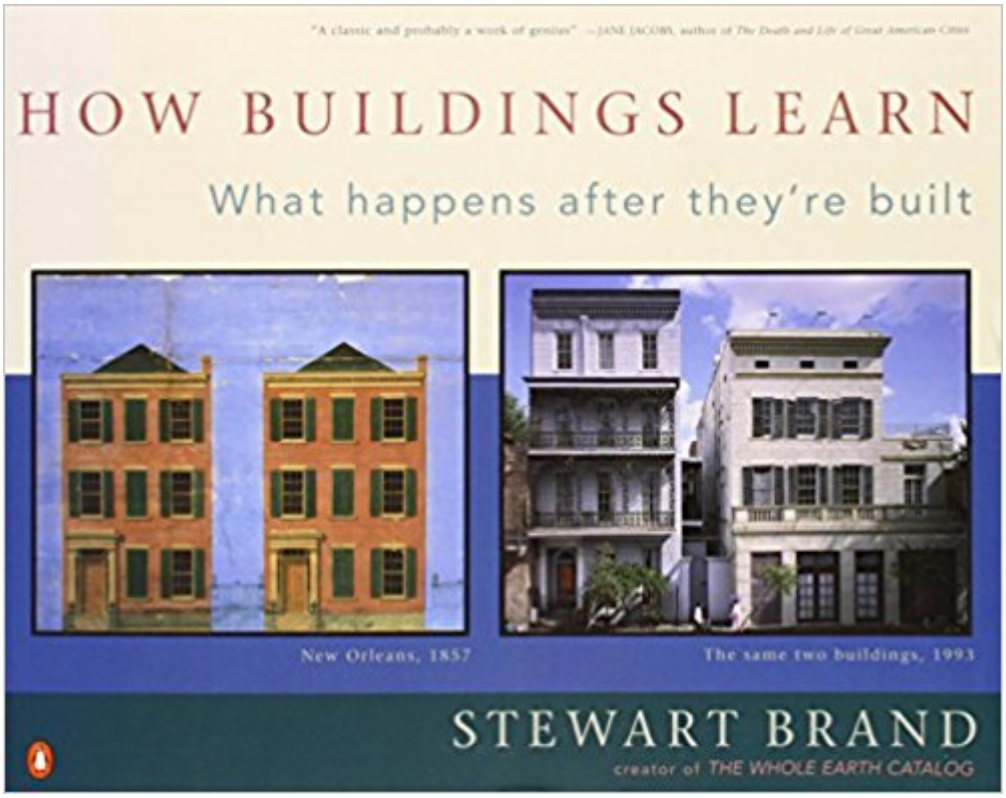
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How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built



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Synopsis

Buildings have often been studies whole in space, but never before have they been studied whole in time. How Buildings Learn is a masterful new synthesis that proposes that buildings adapt best when constantly refined and reshaped by their occupants, and that architects can mature from being artists of space to becoming artists of time.From the connected farmhouses of New England to I.M. Pei’s Media Lab, from "satisficing" to "form follows funding," from the evolution of bungalows to the invention of Santa Fe Style, from Low Road military surplus buildings to a High Road English classic like Chatsworth—this is a far-ranging survey of unexplored essential territory.More than any other human artifacts, buildings improve with time—if they’re allowed to. How Buildings Learn shows how to work with time rather than against it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

All buildings are forced to adapt over time because of physical deterioration, changing surroundings and the life within--yet very few buildings adapt gracefully, according to Brand. Houses, he notes, respond to families’ tastes, ideas, annoyance and growth; and institutional buildings change with expensive reluctance and delay; while commercial structures have to adapt quickly because of intense competitive pressures. Creator of The Whole Earth Catalog and founder of CoEvolution Quarterly (now Whole Earth Review), Brand splices a conversational text with hundreds of extensively captioned photographs and drawings juxtaposing buildings that age well with those that age poorly. He buttresses his critique with insights gleaned from facilities managers, planners, preservationists, building historians and futurists. This informative, innovative handbook sets forth a

strategy for constructing adaptive buildings that incorporates a conservationist approach to design, use of traditional materials, attention to local vernacular styles and budgeting to allow for continuous adjustment and maintenance. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Brand founder of The Whole Earth Catalog and CoEvolution Quarterly, launches a populist attack on rarefied architectural conventions. A hippy elder statesman (once one of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters), Brand argues that a building can ``grow'' and should be treated as a ``Darwinian mechanism,'' something that adapts over time to meet certain changing needs. His humanistic insights grew out of a university seminar he taught in 1988. Catchy anti- establishment phrases abound: ``Function reforms form, perpetually,'' or ``Form follows funding.'' Thomas Jefferson, a ``high road'' builder, is shown to have tinkered his Monticello into a masterpiece over a lifetime. Commercial structures, Brand says, are ``forever metamorphic,'' as a garage-turned-boutique demonstrates. Photo spreads with smart and chatty captions trace the evolutions of buildings as they adopt new ``skins.'' Pointedly, architects Sir Richard Rogers (designer of the Pompidou Centre in Paris) and I.M. Pei (the Wiesner Building, aka the Media Lab at MIT) are taken to task for designing monumental flops that deny occupants' needs. Later sections track the social meanings of preservationism and celebrate vernacular traditions worldwide (e.g., the Malay house of Malaysia; pueblo architecture; the 18th- century Cape Cod House). Brand also documents his own unique habitats. He lives with his wife in a converted tugboat and houses his library in a metal self-storage container. Here, as throughout, Brand's self-reliant voice rings true--that of an engaging, intellectual crank. Brand makes a case for letting people shape their own environments. His crunchy-granola insights bristle with an undeniable pragmatism. -- Copyright Ã Â©1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Brand opens the door to the history of renovations, adjustments, and satisficing we do with our buildings. We built the building -- but what if it doesn't fit? What if the halls are too narrow, the atrium too echoey, and the lecture halls tucked out of the way? Why does the roof leak? What happens when technology changes and you have to retrofit data connections into a 300 year old building? Ever try to make a 300 year old building ADA compliant? Brand explores the history of building design, the changes owners make to their buildings, the strategies buildings take in longevity (flexible vs historic monument), and the 6 layers that make up a facility: Site, Structure, Services, Space Plan, Stuff, and Skin. An excellent and enjoyable study in how buildings are designed and

how they change.

Stewart Brand is a very smart man and his premise is interesting, but as one who has spent most of a lifetime in and around the construction business (electrician and engineer) I don’t think that buildings, which are inanimate objects, "learn. It is the people that use them, design them and build them that learn. Buildings change, sometimes for better; sometimes not so much. Also, the book, published in 1996 is quite dated. Much of it is not relevant to the building industry today. A moderately interesting read, but I wouldn’t buy it again.

As a graduate architecture student i can honestly say this book and insight have shaped the way I think about buildings and the projects I work. The different mindset the author presents in this book really can change the built enviorment we work and live in.

Can’t describe how much this book still impresses me. It’s clever, sustains interest, perfectly logical and perfectly illustrated. A meaningful topic, treated with grace and humor--a work of genius. The perfect balance of learning something new while enjoying every square centimeter of print.

Stewart Brand has a well-deserved reputation as a visionary iconoclast. The founder of the Whole Earth Catalog has been challenging our preconceptions for many, many years. With "How Buildings Learn" he turns his finely-honed analytical and futurist abilities on architecture and construction.This book is primarily synthetic in its focus. There aren’t any brand-new ideas here, but there are many powerful methods and ways of thinking from other disciplines that Brand has brought to bear on the problem of making buildings that stand the test of time. Those whose backgrounds are not as diverse as Brand’s (and whose is, really?), will be exposed to many unconventional ways of thinking about buildings. The reader will come away with a powerful sense of possibility and a deeper understanding of the built environment.Whether you’re an expert or simply have an interest in the structures we build around ourselves, you’ll find much to admire in this thought-provoking exploration of buildings through time. It’s every bit as relevant and ground-breaking today as it was when it was published.

An eye opening to building project.This book has opened my eyes to many hidden realities about home building.I am soon starting a bungalow at my farm,I am glad to be reading this book.All new home builders should read this book before taking on a major construction project.

I am an acoustical and systems design consultant who specializes in worship and performing arts facilities, and use this book regularly in my practice. I have found no better resource for introducing the facility planning "layperson" to the enormous blind-spot that many in the architectural design and construction profession have regarding the relevance of buildings to the functional needs that should define their design, as well as the ongoing process of maintaining this relevance over time.While highly specialized rooms such as auditoria do not usually lend themselves to significant modification over time, or to strategies such as "loose fit," Brand’s advice about the risk of architectural experimentation in the fundamental form of most buildings is spot on. This book is an extremely engaging read, and also serves as an excellent introduction to other key literature on architectural programming, scenario planning, the evolution of the architectural profession, and so forth.As other reviewers have suggested, anyone who lives or works in a building can profit from reading this book. I would add that anyone who works in the construction or facility management industries, or who expects to be involved in planning a building project from the perspective of the owner or user, has a duty to seek out the sort of education that this book provides.

This book is incredible! Timeless, well researched, fascinating throughout.

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