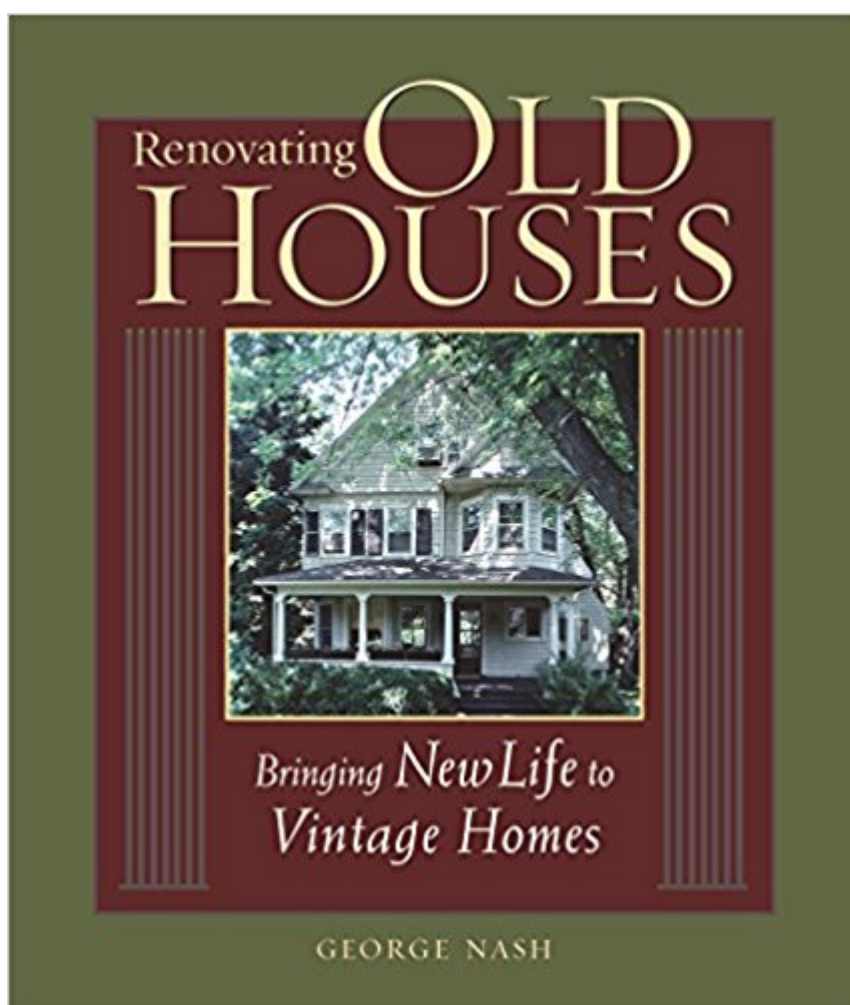


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# Renovating Old Houses: Bringing New Life To Vintage Homes (For Pros By Pros)



## Synopsis

The definitive book on how to bring an old house back to life -- without destroying its spirit -- is now updated with all new color photography in *Renovating Old Houses*. Experienced contractor George Nash covers everything -- from replacing foundation walls to repairing old windows, including how to save what's irreplaceable, where to use the best materials, when it's necessary to update (and when it's not), and how to make repairs that will endure. This revised edition also contains a new chapter on preventive maintenance plus a resource guide. Throughout the book, Nash balances an abiding love of old houses with a common-sense understanding of modern-day needs. Whether you already live in an older home or are contemplating buying one, this hearty book gives you detailed, professional-level information you can't find elsewhere.

## Book Information

Series: For Pros By Pros

Paperback: 410 pages

Publisher: Taunton Press (November 1, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1561585351

ISBN-13: 978-1561585359

Product Dimensions: 9.2 x 0.9 x 10.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 103 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #113,485 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #57 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home Improvements > Home Repair #64 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home Improvements > Carpentry #88 in Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > Buildings > Residential

## Customer Reviews

This is a reincarnation of Nash's out-of-print classic, *Old House: A Rebuilder's Manual* ( LJ 1/15/80), substantially rewritten and reorganized. The focus is the major defects of old houses: the heaved foundation walls, defunct mechanical systems, rotted structural timbers, damaged roofs, and broken staircases. Nash is both an artful writer and a knowledgeable renovation specialist. He writes with poetic grace about the unique character and hidden beauty of old houses, yet he's remarkably clearheaded and resourceful when dealing with their often maddening irregularities. There isn't a

better sourcebook on the larger structural challenges of renovation. Most libraries should have this as a companion volume to Michael Litchfield's *Renovation: A Complete Guide* ( LJ 8/90. rev. ed.).- Bill Demo, Tompkins Cortland Community Coll., Dryden, N.Y. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Plain talk for restorers, from soup to nuts (and bolts). Here's thorough, practical advice that's sensitive to both history and budget." (Old House Journal)

I love this book. My mother-in-law bought it for me two years ago and it has been foundational for me. The author is a man intent on doing right by old houses; no shortcuts that will ultimately compromise the structure of the house, favored by so many contractors today. The writing is clear enough to be understood by laymen but not lacking in sufficient detail to pull off the discussed repairs. Here you will learn how to appreciate your old house as a whole system, rather than a collection of aging parts, and make repairs accordingly. Moreover, this book full of solutions does a lot to dispel myths about old houses being lost causes - there aren't too many problems that the author suggests are insurmountable, and he shows readers how to address the major ones. A few minor things. Preservation technologies and useful materials are always evolving, so though this edition isn't that old, some information in book is already not quite up to date. Artificial slate roofing material has evolved quite a bit in the past few years, for example. Additionally, the book contains a lot of information invaluable to anyone restoring an old home, but it will be most useful to those who have frame houses. This is the building technology with which the New England-based author is most familiar, so most of his advice and examples reflect this. In Pennsylvania we have many old stone houses and many old log houses, and brick surpassed stone in popularity throughout most of PA by the mid-19th century. I know early brick is even more common south of the Mason-Dixon, and log buildings are plentiful in many parts of the country. Restorers of such buildings will learn a lot of useful things from this book, but they will need to look elsewhere for certain other issues. Finally, I feel that some more photos - vs diagrams - would be a very good addition to any future edition of this book. Seeing how a system looks in the abstract is all fine and dandy, but sometimes being able to see a real-world example would go even further towards helping readers understand the parts of a system and how they fit together. I found myself craving a photograph at many points during this book. All in all, a fantastic work essential to anyone about to embark on an old house restoration journey. I think it's so valuable that I bought a copy for our local library system.

I recommend this book to anyone who has purchased or is looking to purchase an older home. I purchased an older home (built in 1890) after the home inspectors told me it was in excellent condition. The first year I was in the house I had to replace the plumbing, electric, heating system and have the roof braced (I have to question the integrity of the home inspectors). I am a single woman and know nothing about construction, electric, plumbing, etc., I found this book to provide an excellent reference for repairs I can attempt to make myself or to contract out. When I decide to contract repairs out, I now know if the repairs are being accomplished correctly, thanks to this book. I just wish I had purchased this book before I purchased the house, I would have been able to see the problems and probably would not have purchased the house.

I bought this book because I recently purchased a house built in the 1800's. My partner is a handy person, but I found I wanted to have a better idea of what to expect as we start renovating the home. While there are many great renovation books, I was happy to find one geared specifically at much older home. This book is overflowing with useful information and that information is broken down chapter by chapter with lots of pictures. The author is a lover of old houses, and if you are looking to completely modernize and change the house, this may not be what you are looking for. The author writes about keeping the character of an old house if the house is one of the remaining few of it's kind. I looked through this book at a local book store, and it was well worth the \$45 price tag however with all books, I was pleased to find a used copy for a better price.

Lots of good information for repairing and renovating an old house. Replacing with brand new is not always better and this book helps you decide whether to replace or repair. Once the decision to repair is made, it helps you with the information needed to make a complete, well done and long lasting repair. There is a lot of information on many different components and systems in an old house. It helps us understand our 103 year old house and how to maintain and repair it instead of gutting and replacing.

Great information. Just bought a renovated 1901 Victorian style craftsman that still needs some work. Great resource!

First things first.... This is not a fix-it book for the average homeowner. It is a renovation guide for older homes and covers everything from stone foundations to slate roofs and provides whole slew of major structural repair information. So if you are wanting to learn simple home repairs, like fixing a

leaky faucet or quieting a squeaky floor you would do better to look elsewhere. My first house was built in the 1890s and because I was very young and didn't know anything about how old houses were constructed, the construction behind those plaster walls, in the basement and attic looked shoddy to my uneducated eyes but it didn't matter to me, I was just grateful to be a home owner. My father told me this is how real craftsmen built homes during that era. He added: "Son, this house will be around and doing just fine LONG after you are gone!" Even though I sold that old house a long time ago, when I saw this book I knew I just had to have it. It takes a look behind the scenes of old houses and shows how they are brought back to their past glory no matter how much neglect they have suffered. Whether you currently own an old house, previously owned an old house or just have an interest in construction methods of eras long ago, this book is perfect for your bookshelf!

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