Book Review

Cost Studies of Buildings

Ashworth, A. and Perera, S. (2015). *Cost Studies of Buildings*. 6th Ed. London: Routledge. 570 pages. ISBN 978-1-138-0735-1.

Cost Studies of Buildings is a comprehensive text that imparts critical knowledge and skills, relating to the understanding and application of costs to building and other structures. This book will appeal to readers with wide-ranging professional backgrounds and is a great resource specifically to cost planners and estimators.

The book is organized into twenty-five chapters, divided into three sections. It is structured in a manner to progressively intensify concepts relating 'costing,' from historical, theoretical and practical perspectives. The structure provides an elegant way to narrate to both readers who are beginners and ones with some pre-existing knowledge.

Section 1 - 'Cost control': Three chapters in this section provide a narrative into the history of costing and overview of the construction industry. This section provides a solid introduction to readers who are starting in this area of study.

Section 2 - 'Cost information': Nine chapters in this section pool (a) the relevant theoretical principles underpinning costing and (b) the costing information (e.g. cost databases, guidelines, rules, etc.). The chapters relating to theoretical principles include design economics, the economic aspects of quality, procurement methods and research/innovation. The chapters relating to costing information include sources of costs data, cost indices/trends, rules of measurement, cost analysis and taxation/incentives. This section delicately introduces the theoretical and informational aspects of costing.

Section 3 – 'Cost Practice': Thirteen chapters in this section combine practical aspects related to costing. This section includes (a) appropriate tools/techniques used in different stages of the procurement/project (e.g. pretender cost estimating, post contract cost control, and building in use costing during facilities management, and (b) emergent issues impacting the cost practice. The discussion on the tools and techniques, including development appraisal (feasibility studies), cost planning and modeling, whole life costing, value management and risk analysis, provides an excellent context for applications in practice. The discussion about the emerging issues such as developments in Information Communication Technologies (ICT), economics of sustainability, and future directions of cost studies are intricately woven into the costing practice.

The two new chapters, Chapter 23 - 'Information Communication technology in construction' and Chapter 24- 'Economics of sustainability and carbon estimating', in the sixth edition provides valuable additions to the previous edition, reflecting the changes in the UK and the International industry environment impacting costing principles and practice. Chapter 23 highlights the developments in ICT tools (e.g. e-business platforms, Building Information Modeling, social media, etc.) that are providing greater opportunities for data sourcing and integration (e.g. integrating design data/libraries, functional data and cost data) and collaborative ways of working. This chapter provides a perspective into how new emergent technologies/platforms (e.g. cloud computing) transform existing costing practices (e.g.

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measurement, tendering process, data sourcing, pricing process, etc.). It alludes to how ICT technologies could impact the way costing professionals behave/practice and evolving factors that could impact on the cost building (such as overheads).

Chapter 24 discusses the economics of sustainability, governed by regulations or market mechanisms, becoming an integral part of building costs in many countries. Sustainability related decisions require careful understanding of the social, economic and environmental dimensions of the supply chain operations (from manufacturing to end users). Moreover, the emerging focus on resilience in the built environment due to climate change and other vulnerabilities is also addressed in this chapter. This leads to the discourse into greenhouse gases and carbon estimating.

The authors have carefully structured the book to cover very complex principles, techniques, processes and practices with future directions relating to 'Cost Studies of Buildings.' This book is a recommend read for practitioners, academics and students in construction management and quantity surveying domains.

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