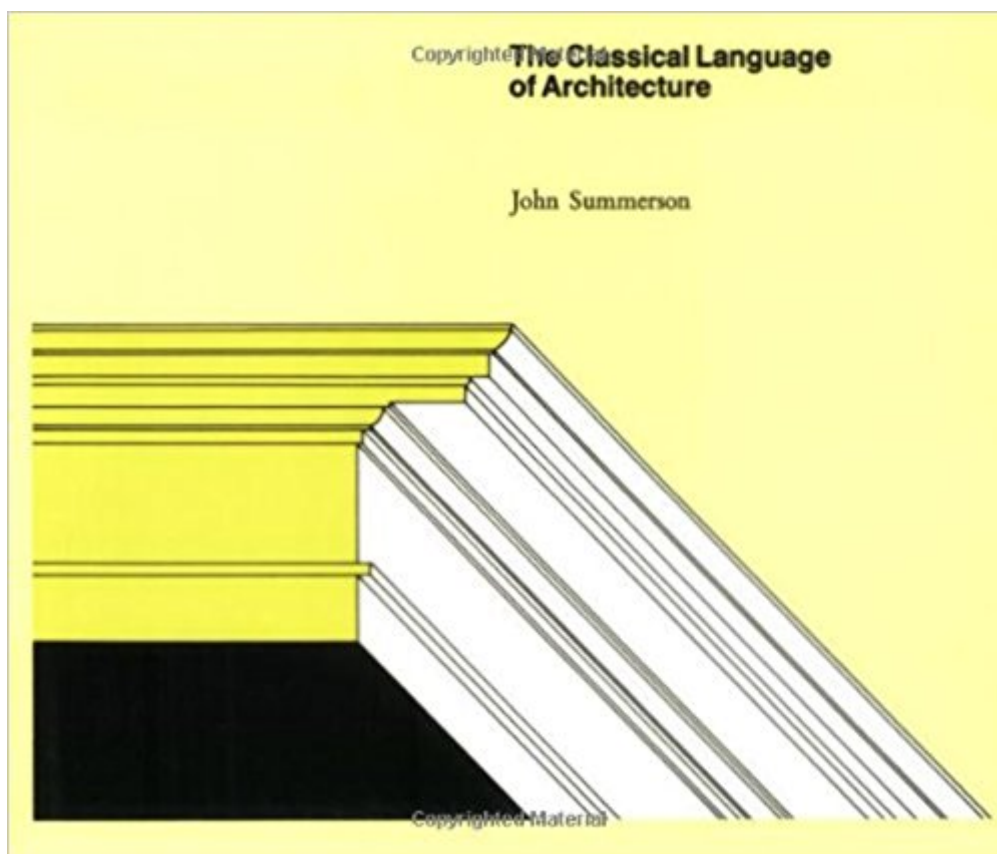


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# The Classical Language Of Architecture



## Synopsis

Classical architecture is a visual "language" and like any other language has its own grammatical rules. Classical buildings as widely spaced in time as a Roman temple, an Italian Renaissance palace and a Regency house all show an awareness of these rules even if they vary them, break them or poetically contradict them. Sir Christopher Wren described them as the "Latin" of architecture and the analogy is almost exact. There is the difference, however, that whereas the learning of Latin is a slow and difficult business, the language of classical architecture is relatively simple. It is still, to a great extent, the mode of expression of our urban surroundings, since classical architecture was the common language of the western world till comparatively recent times. Anybody to whom architecture makes a strong appeal has probably already discovered something of its grammar for himself. In this book, the author's purpose is to set out as simply and vividly as possible the exact grammatical workings of this architectural language. He is less concerned with its development in Greece and Rome than with its expansion and use in the centuries since the Renaissance. He explains the vigorous discipline of "the orders" and the scope of "rustication"; the dramatic deviations of the Baroque and, in the last chapter, the relationship between the classical tradition and the "modern" architecture of today. The book is intended for anybody who cares for architecture but more specifically for students beginning a course in the history of architecture, to whom a guide to the classical rules will be an essential companion.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

John Summerson (25 November 1904 – 10 November 1992) was one of the leading British

architectural historians of the 20th century. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Although the case for classical architecture is not as simplified as Mr. Summerson makes it seem in this book, it is a wonderful introduction to this world of art. His prose is lucid and fulfills the artistic need to see associations across various works while also going deeper into a few main issues. For the price, this book cannot be beat. Highly recommended.

This small book gives by far the best, clearest, and most easy to understand analysis of how classical architecture was adapted to and grew through the Renaissance, that I've ever seen. It ought to be taught in every architecture school.

Worth it.

Cheaply produced. Very muddy photographs that don't clearly show the details. There's a glossary included, but without any illustrations. Not useful.

I don't recall a "preview" being an option prior to selection/purchasing. Book is ancient history of classic orders of Architecture (Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders). My bad. Thought that, as pictured on the front cover, the book was more diagrammatic/pictorial in nature relating to molding details, not classical/ancient pediments and friezes. Well written Ancient History of the Classic Orders though.

I was hoping for more of a design guide than this turned out to be. This is more of a historical text book. If you want a design guide for classical principles, I would highly recommend "Get Your House Right".

In about 50 pages, Summerson manages to give the reader incredible insight and understanding of the history and evolution of Western Architecture. Although I studied set design and have a broad knowledge of design, I had never formally studied architecture before reading this very short book (recommended to me by a professor or architecture) and it gave me the added knowledge to create an introductory course in the history of architecture for University theatre design students using this book as both structure and text. As a result, students left the course considering going to

Architecture school for graduate degrees! It was a life saver - and I will never look at buildings the same way again.

This is the best way to learn about the classical sensibility in architecture -- as well as art and sculpture. Based on Summerson's radio lectures, this book has itself reached the status of being a classic! I assigned it for years, and students never failed to appreciate its brevity, insight and immediacy. Very much worth the price of admission because it will forever open your eyes to the world of architectural forms and designs which refer to our common humanity. A necessary antidote to today's corrosive, diversity-oriented mentality.

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