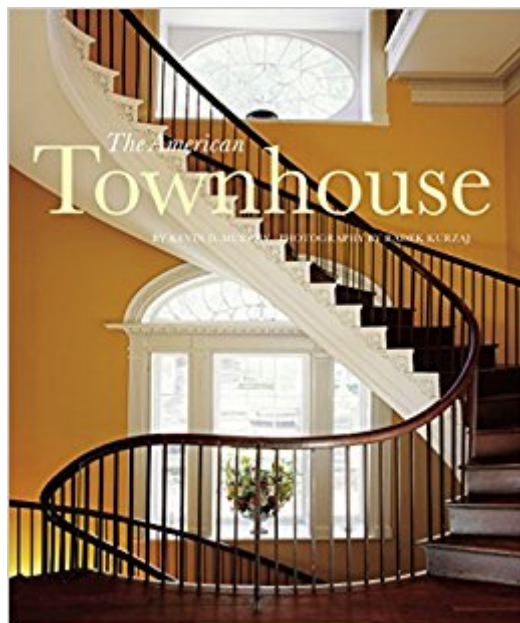


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The American Townhouse



Synopsis

The American townhouse is one of the most popular house types in urban America. This comprehensive volume tours the reader through 25 stunning examples of townhouses and rowhouses from Boston to Brooklyn, St. Louis to San Francisco. Radek Kurzaj's striking photographs complement a fascinating text by nationally recognized historic-house expert Kevin Murphy about the townhouse as cultural phenomena, as well as the unique design peculiarities, construction records, and ownership histories of these 25. Included are some of the country's finest townhouses, including the famed Nathaniel Russell House in Charleston; Teddy Roosevelt's New York birth house; the Payne and Helen Hay Whitney House in New York; and the Glenn and Ida Moore House in Rancho Santa Fe. An important book for townhouse dwellers and a captivating read for anyone interested in the history of how we live in America, this book will be widely regarded as a primary reference on this important subject.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"...a pleasing illustrated history of...the evolution of what New Yorker's insist on calling brownstones." -- New York Times Book Review, December 4, 2005
"Here's a gorgeous coffee-table book that's also a great read...It's full of rich regional and architectural history." -- Washington Post, September 8, 2005
"The book...offers an engaging history along with stunning photographs of each building...Murphy's book is an interesting read." -- Boston Globe, September 11, 2005
Anyone who wishes to better understand the potential of the American townhouse need look no further than this

superb book. -- Period Homes (Jan. 2006)

Kevin D. Murphy has been researching and writing about 19th- and 20th-century architecture for more than 20 years. He taught architectural history at the University of Virginia and is currently Associate Professor of Art History at the Graduate Center of The City University of New York and Brooklyn College. Murphy is the author of several books and his essays have appeared in numerous scholarly publications. Radek Kurzaj's architectural photographs have appeared in numerous international magazines and several books, including Abrams' *Cottages by the Sea*, *Living Large in Small Spaces*, *Colonial Houses*, *Treehouses of the World*, and *The Abrams Guide to American House Styles*. He resides in Szczecin, Poland, and New York.

Kevin Murphy's book, "The American Townhouse," aims to give an overview of this building type through a historical essay and a short survey of various exemplary townhouses across the country. The essay is good, and is recommended to anyone who wants to learn about townhouses in a concise but fairly thorough essay. The essay hits all the high points with great historic photographs (mostly from the Historic American Buildings Survey/HABS) of extant and demolished buildings as reinforcement. Where the book falls short is in the 25 selected townhouses profiled after the essay. Perhaps the author had difficulty getting homeowners who wanted their houses in this book. That is the only logical explanation for the odd choices made of which houses to include in "The American Townhouse." Classic houses such as the Nathaniel Russell House in Charleston, the Merchant's House in New York City, and the Gibson House in Boston are included, but so are very poor examples such as the Theodore Roosevelt "Birthplace" in New York City (a replica of the demolished Gothic/Italianate Brownstone constructed in the 1920s), the John Ryan House in San Francisco (a one-story cottage turned into a faux, two-story San Francisco Victorian in the 2000s), and the Glenn and Ida Moore House in Rancho Santa Fe, California (a small bungalow extensively added on to in 2004 with most of the book's photographs being of the additions). Other houses included are puzzling but not egregious as they are not the best examples of that style in that city but are still actual historic townhouses (the Robert Alexander House in Washington, D.C. and the Francis Stone House in Savannah, among others, fall into this category). The photographs, a key feature in such an illustration-heavy book, vacillate between good quality and poor quality in both composition and technical proficiency (specifically in the low resolution of some photographs). The odd selection and scattershot quality ruins this book as a serious examination of the townhouse form, which is a shame since Kevin Murphy's introductory essay and texts describing the 25

townhouses are good. They are what keeps this book from having a one-star rating.

The Townhouse is a classic American urban building style. This volume follows the history of the American Townhouse from its Colonial roots on the Eastern Seaboard to the style's highpoint in the Row Houses and Brownstones of the late Nineteenth Century. Featured in this book are twenty five beautifully photographed homes. The chapters chronicle the styles evolution from the Colonial and Federal periods to the Greek Revival, Italianate, Brownstone and Queen Anne periods. For those interested in the history of the style, the first two chapters do an excellent job of placing the Townhouse in its proper historical context. However, the heart of the book are the photographs of the twenty five Townhouses. Most of these homes have been restored and are now museums. Rader Kurazj is a skilled architectural photographer and there are many wonderful photographs of both building facades and interiors. This book is recommended for all those interested in learning more about an important American architectural style.

This is a very well put together book, the text is well researched and the images are crisp. It's very interesting to see all the different architectural styles. These houses are all furnished beautifully and the photographs really capture the details and craftsmanship of these amazing townhouses. When you visit Boston or New York you can't help but be enchanted at the rows and rows of these houses, whether it's New York's Upper East Side or Greenwich Village or Boston's Beacon Hill. The houses in this book are from all over the country, from Savannah to San Francisco and each one is at least as interesting as the last. If you have any interest in townhouses or beautiful books in general, then I believe you will enjoy this book.

This book is shockingly terrible. I am not one for online reviews. . . .but I could not help myself here. The color images are low resolution, the data on the buildings partial and incomplete. Many buildings featured are much apart of public record and one might find more from a design blog. Other than that, many are totally tacky. . . other books are available on the topic and I would say lean towards them.

super photos great for design ideas and research... also helpful in historic renovation projects...

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