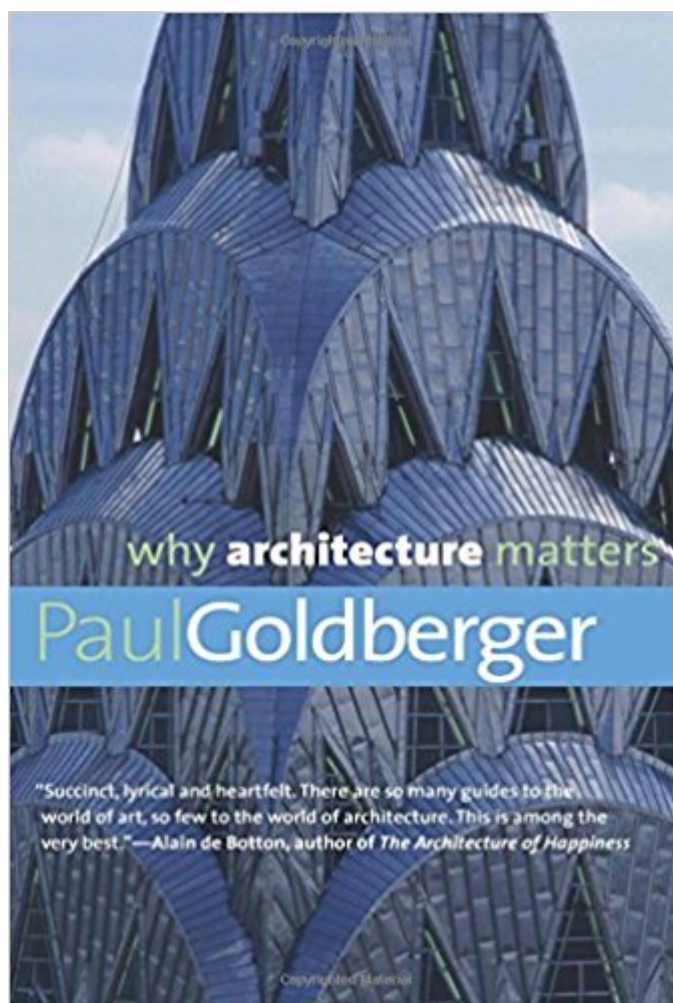


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# Why Architecture Matters (Why X Matters Series)



## Synopsis

Why Architecture Matters is not a work of architectural history or a guide to the styles or an architectural dictionary, though it contains elements of all three. The purpose of Why Architecture Matters is to “come to grips with how things feel to us when we stand before them, with how architecture affects us emotionally as well as intellectually with its impact on our lives. “Architecture begins to matter,” writes Paul Goldberger, “when it brings delight and sadness and perplexity and awe along with a roof over our heads. He shows us how that works in examples ranging from a small Cape Cod cottage to the vast, flowing Prairie houses of Frank Lloyd Wright, from the Lincoln Memorial to the highly sculptural Guggenheim Bilbao and the Church of Sant’Ilvo in Rome, where “simple geometries . . . create a work of architecture that embraces the deepest complexities of human imagination. Based on decades of looking at buildings and thinking about how we experience them, the distinguished critic raises our awareness of fundamental things like proportion, scale, space, texture, materials, shapes, light, and memory. Upon completing this remarkable architectural journey, readers will enjoy a wonderfully rewarding new way of seeing and experiencing every aspect of the built world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

With a broad topic and a deep reach, this collection of work from New Yorker architecture critic Goldberger reflects on the meanings and effects of architecture, both in the abstract and in

everyday life. From specific places like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. ("may be one of the few great architectural works anywhere whose approach is marked only by directional signs, not by a glimpse of the thing itself") to discussion of individual architects (Saarinen, Lloyd Wright, etc.), Goldberger is clear and direct throughout, occasionally addressing readers directly with questions and thought experiments ("For the next few pages ... think only in terms of what a building looks like when you stand before it") that help recreate the architectural thought process. Sometimes focused too narrowly on the author's own experience (breathlessly recounted memories of architectural epiphany can fall flat), Goldberger occasionally risks alienating readers who lack his enthusiasm. For students and fans of architecture, however, this makes an elegant but energetic tour of building design, aesthetics, construction and inspiration that should encourage new ways of viewing one's surroundings. 55 b & w illustrations. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"The ever-lucid New Yorker critic offers a nuanced exploration of architecture's allure, how buildings both modest and regal are vital for the making of place, and the making of memory." — John King, The San Francisco Chronicle (Holiday Gift Guide: Architecture Books) "Best of all, Goldberger combines forensic analysis of the architectural art with a sense of wonder." — Jonathan Wright, Scottish Sunday Herald "Paul Goldberger is America's preeminent public critic of architecture, and his wise, compassionate *Why Architecture Matters* sums up a lifetime spent exploring, reflecting and writing. . . . Goldberger does not prescribe solutions but argues passionately that architecture must continue to define our place in the world in a way that startles us and comforts us at the same time." — Kirk Savage, The Washington Post "[A] little gem of a book. . . wise, concise, and utterly devoid of the ideological snark that infects the profession." — Inga Saffron, The Philadelphia Inquirer ("Good books, good gifts") "[One] of the most revelatory appreciations of architecture I've come across is New Yorker critic Paul Goldberger's new book, called *Why Architecture Matters*. This isn't a history of architecture, but rather something more elusive. . . . Goldberger roams from classic masterpieces like the Pantheon to the architecture of memory, like the modest two-family house of his childhood in New Jersey." — Maureen Corrigan, NPR.org (Originally aired on WHYY) "But just tick off the social issues that are intimately connected to architectural design and land use policy—affordability, sustainability, conservation, historic preservation, and mobility leading the list—and it becomes pretty clear: Society at large is desperately in need of the vision,

insight, and know-how of architects, teachers of architects, people who write about architecture, and people who believe that architecture does indeed matter to everyone." Carole Rifkind, The East Hampton Star

Goldberger writes in a broadbrush, aphoristic style honed as the New Yorker magazine's Sky Line columnist. His insights are riveting." David Minthorn, The Associated Press

Placing on display the most public of all the arts can be astonishing. Paul Goldberger, collecting his thoughts on architecture over 40 years, does this. His book, Why Architecture Matters, could be said to be a portable architectural museum that, by turns, astonishes, intrigues, explains and entrances." Architecture Bulletin

Despite the breadth of the subject, Goldberger effectively satisfies the challenge he lays out for himself in the ambitious title: explaining why good architecture matters, in a clear and unpretentious manner that should satisfy those who design buildings, and those who use them." George Beane, Metropolis Magazine

Drawing on many writers' works, from ancient to modern, [Goldberger] offers strong challenging opinions with his judgments and emotional responses to buildings. The book features wonderful descriptions of both buildings and sites. . . . Highly recommended." W. L. Whitwell, Choice

Why Architecture Matters is a good introduction to a fascinating subject that should indeed very much matter to everyone." Mobile, AL Press-Register

This generously illustrated volume anchors its speculations in brief discussions of buildings that manage this hard-won equilibrium." Brian Sholis, The Virginia Quarterly Review

Paul Goldberger is America's foremost interpreter of public architecture. . . .

Tracy Kidder

Why Architecture Matters reminds us that in a democratic capitalist society, the only sure guarantee that we will get good architecture is if we shake off our ignorance and start to take a personal interest in the design of our neighborhoods. Here is a succinct, lyrical and heartfelt book that celebrates the best works of architecture and points the way to being able to build more of it in the world today. There are so many guides to the world of art, so few to the world of architecture. This is among the very best." Alain de Botton, author of The Architecture of Happiness

A beautifully written and generous meditation on the art of building that every aspiring architect should read." Witold Rybczynski, author of The Perfect House

bought it for an Architecture class, we all lost interest and stopped reading it, even the professor. Its not written by an architect, simply an architectural journalist. This doesn't mean his opinions are invalid but he was asked by Why X Matters to write this book, and it seems like he's just looking for things to say. Each chapter repeats itself for about 40 pages, when he probably could have made

his point in 10 pages.

Sensing a possible connection with some of my recent thoughts on the subject, I ordered a copy of *Why Architecture Matters* by Paul Goldberger. My radar was working perfectly. What I found was a gem of a book, written for those not necessarily possessing a degree in architecture yet somehow drawn to the world of buildings, that sharply brings into focus our relationship to those buildings - and, of course, why those buildings matter. Written with a passion for the things we build to give us shelter, deeply insightful, this important book gives coherent shape to previously scattered thoughts I've had regarding the value architecture has for us all. I highly recommend it to any of you who want to penetrate the veil of mystery surrounding the subject and reality of architecture and its vital relevance in our lives. Taken from my post at [...]

This discussion of the built world around us is thought-provoking but I felt it could have been better focused. In some sections I wondered just what the author was trying to say. Paul Goldberger left me with greater appreciation for the mundane: a reflection of changing times and outlooks as well as expressions of design. I enjoyed it.

The first half of the book is full of valuable critics, but the last part is too much about New York, not about the rest of US.

Awesome book!

excellent book, finds a balance between being intellectual and accessible, I recommend it for students of spatial/architectural design as it will help them frame their own critiques

I had worked with Architects for years on projects and wish I had been schooled on their impact much earlier. Very unbiased and easily understood for the layman.

This is a book for everybody, a book for citizens and politicians. A book for the architects clients , for patrons. I strongly suggest the editor to publish it in spanish and other global languages. Eugenio Aguinaga Architect (Madrid)

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