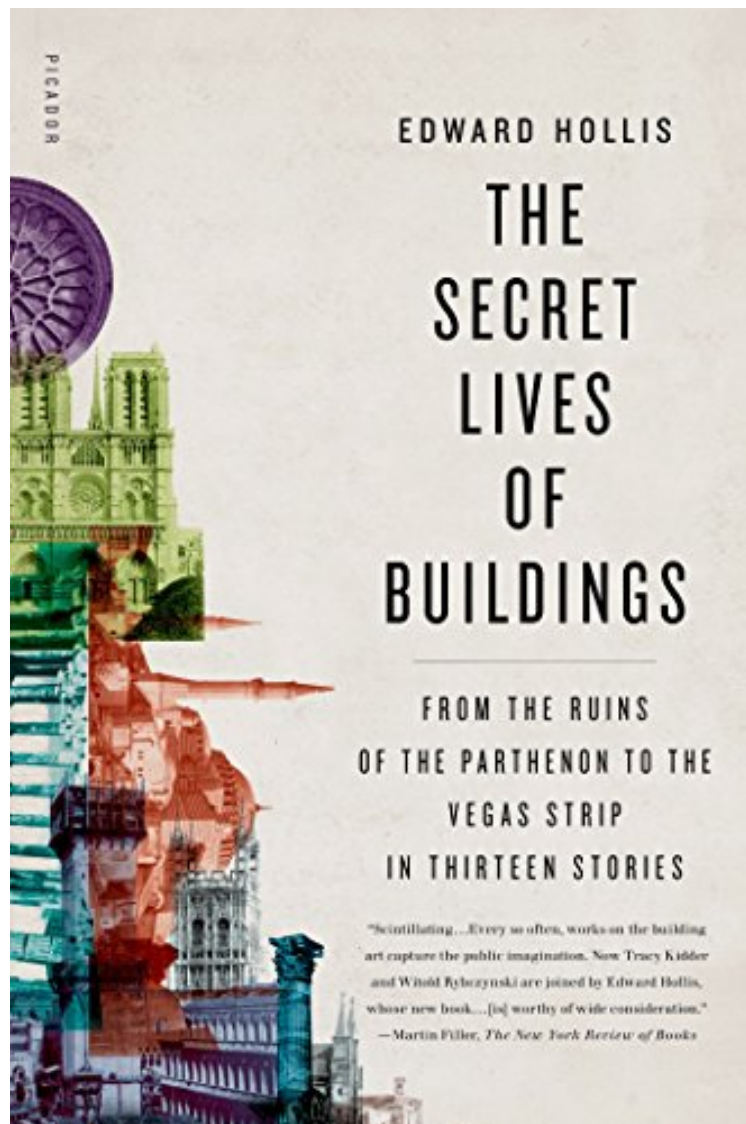


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The Secret Lives of Buildings: From the Ruins of the Parthenon to the Vegas Strip in Thirteen Stories

Edward Hollis

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A strikingly original, beautifully narrated history of Western architecture and the cultural transformations that it represents. Concrete, marble, steel, brick: little else made by human hands seems as stable, as immutable, as a building. Yet the life of any structure is neither fixed nor timeless. Outliving their original contexts and purposes, buildings are forced to adapt to each succeeding age. To survive, they must become shape-shifters. In an inspired refashioning of architectural history, Edward Hollis recounts more than a dozen stories of such metamorphosis, highlighting the way in which even the most familiar structures all change over time into "something rich and strange." The Parthenon, that epitome of a ruined temple, was for centuries a working church and then a mosque; the cathedral of Notre Dame was "restored" to a design that none of its original makers would have recognized. Remains of the Berlin Wall, meanwhile, which was once gleefully smashed and bulldozed, are now treated as precious relics. With *The Secret Lives of Buildings*, Edward Hollis recounts the most enthralling of these metamorphoses and shows how buildings have come to embody the history of Western culture.