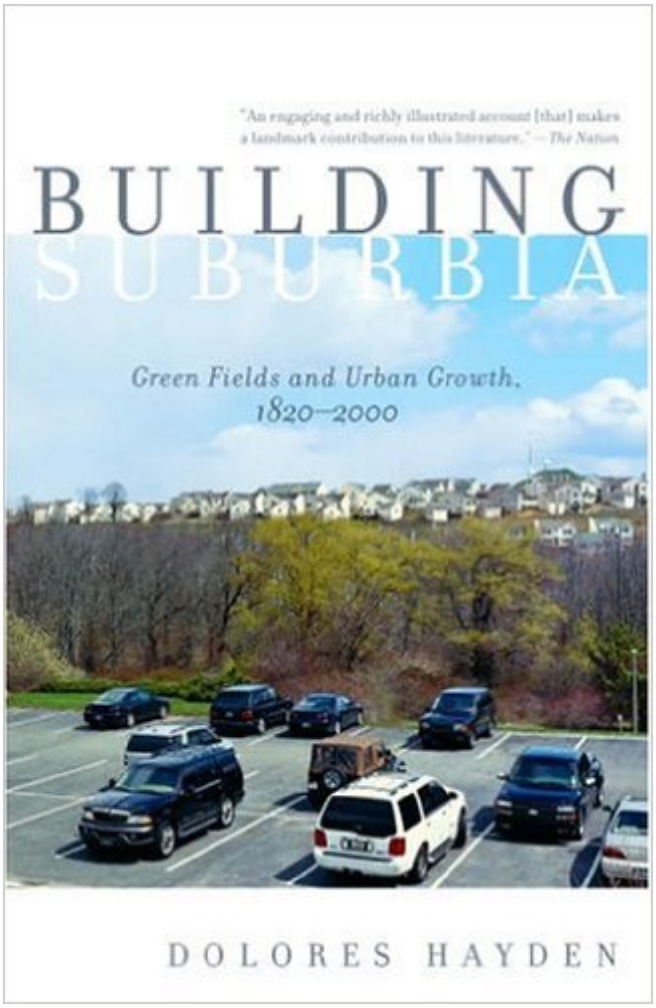
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Building Suburbia: Green Fields And Urban Growth, 1820-2000



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Synopsis

A lively and provocative history of the contested landscapes where the majority of Americans now live. From rustic cottages reached by steamboat to big box stores at the exit ramps of eight-lane highways, Dolores Hayden defines seven eras of suburban development since 1820. An urban historian and architect, she portrays housewives and politicians as well as designers and builders making the decisions that have generated AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s diverse suburbs. Residents have sought home, nature, and community in suburbia. Developers have cherished different dreams, seeking profit from economies of scale and increased suburban densities, while lobbying local and federal government to reduce the risk of real estate speculation. Encompassing environmental controversies as well as the complexities of race, gender, and class, HaydenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s fascinating account will forever alter how we think about the communities we build and inhabit.

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Customer Reviews

Praise for Dolores HaydenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Building SuburbiaÃ¢â ¬Å“An engaging and richly illustrated account [that] makes a landmark contribution to this literature.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •The NationÃ¢â ¬Å“Important. . . . Inviting and lucid. . . . [Hayden] shows us that it was not inevitable that our space turned out quite this way.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •NewsweekÃ¢â ¬Å“Provocative. . . . Well worth reading.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Detroit Free PressÃ¢â ¬Å“A rich and rewarding book with new and original material and surprising insights. . . . Beautiful and accessible writing . . . fascinating historical narratives. . . . Unlike most commentators, Hayden goes beyond analysis to propose

solutions. . . . A welcome and significant addition.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •ConstructsÃ¢â ¬Å“A lively and informative overview of the American mania for suburban living. . . . Fascinating.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •Audubon Naturalist NewsÃ¢â ¬Å“A fascinating book, as well as an important one.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •Tulsa World

A lively history of the contested landscapes where the majority of Americans now live, "Building Suburbia chronicles two centuries in the birth and development of America's metropolitan regions. From rustic cottages reached by steamboat to big box stores at the exit ramps of eight-lane highways, Dolores Hayden defines seven eras of suburban development since 1820. An urban historian and architect, she portrays housewives and politicians as well as designers and builders making the decisions that have generated America's diverse suburbs. Residents have sought home, nature, and community in suburbia. Developers have cherished different dreams, seeking profit from economies of scale and increased suburban densities, while lobbying local and federal government to reduce the risk of real estate speculation. Encompassing environmental controversies as well as the complexities of race, gender, and class, Hayden's fascinating account will forever alter how we think about the communities we build and inhabit.

This is a readable and enlightening history of the American phenomena of suburbia, from the mid-1800s to the 1970s. It clearly shows how the government and communities subsidized builders and developers, who, in turn, left it up to taxpayers to support the cost of new streets, sewers, schools, and all the other infrastructure needed to support ever-expanding suburbs. The book could have done a more thorough job of explaining how the funds that went to suburbs ended up leaving cities impoverished, with the result that schools, security, and infrastructure suffered. Also, the author could have described the terrible environmental toll as thousands of square miles of McMansion ghettos devoured farms, deserts and forests. The housing orgy of the 2000-2007 era was an extreme manifestation of the trend that has been ongoing since the 1800s.

Super easy read, even if you're not studying the history of American suburbanization. It's written for both a popular and academic audience, though it's not the most academic text I've read on the matter. Hayden draws some great conclusions at the end and pulls the narrative to present day American housing habits. Overall, it's a great text if you're building a body of work on housing, urbanization, and suburban culture.

Cheap and good.

one of the best introductions and explanations of the field.

a+

Building Suburbia is a capable synthesis of historical and recent scholarship on the development of the suburbs in America. Hayden, a professor of architecture and urbanism and professor of American Studies at Yale, knows what she is talking about. It was clear to me that this book is written for a general, rather then specialized audience.Hayden’s writting style is easy to understand, and she provides multiple in text illustrations and photographs to illuminate the text. The book tracks the historical development of suburbs in time (the subtitle is "Green Fields and Urban Growth 1820-2000.) She starts with "Borderlands", then covers "Picturesque Enclaves", "Streetcar Buildouts", "Mail-Order and Self-Built Suburbs", "Sitcom Subrurbs", "Edge Nodes" and "Rural Fringes". This historical approach is book ended by an introduction with two chapters and a conclusion with two chapters.Hayden includes excellent end notes and a selected bibliography that is worthwhile to have on your shelf. Since this book was written in 2003, the bibliography is chock full of RECENT books on urban studies that allow the student or casual reader to follow up in any number of directions.Worth checking out.

The author did in an excellent job in presenting a variety of issues. In my opinion though, her stronger suit is the historical aspect rather than some of later subjects she delves into in the text. It was refreshing to have a feminist critique, but this is more developed in the first part of the text and less interesting or less confined to the latter chapters. Paraphrasing another reviewer, there are parts of the text which begin to feel mechanical, again the latter part of the text.Despite stylistic critiques, I believe the text to be very good and importantly, recent in scope.

especially now when hurricane sandy has destroyed so many homes and lives, it is important to remember who planned what, how and why. This non-fiction book gives a blow by blow of how the developers acquired the land, who they worked with in government, and how inadequately it was developed. Homes without piping for gas or water lines-- and building bungalows in flood prone areas are just some of the issues explored.

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