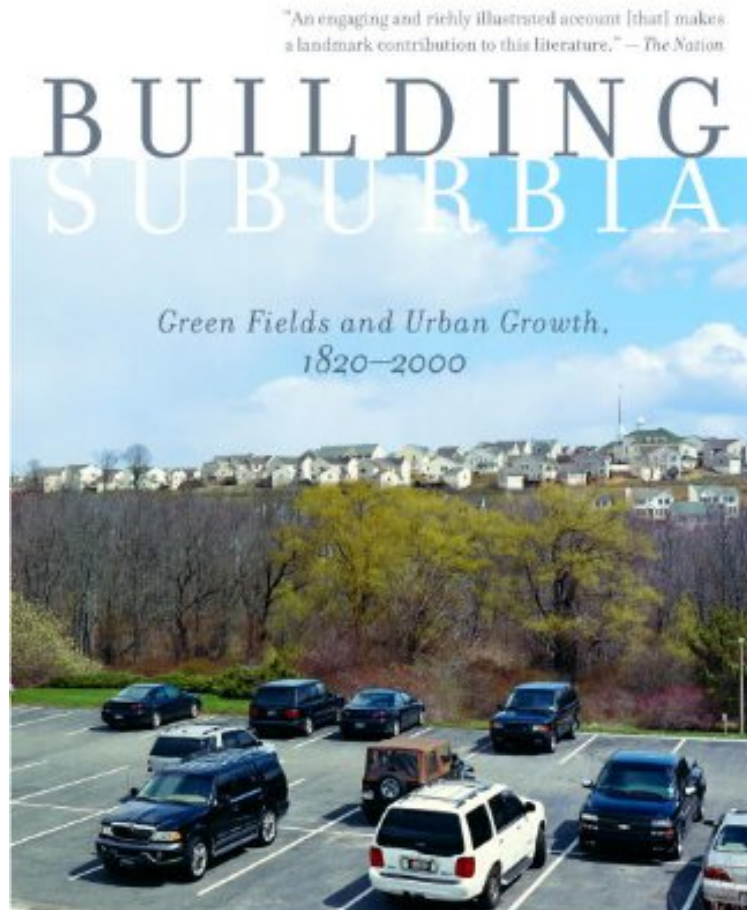


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Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000

Dolores Hayden

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Dolores Hayden : Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. The sordid story of American suburbiaBy The KodachromeguyThis 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. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great text on the subject By Anna K 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. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Customer Cheap and good.

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 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.

"Building Suburbia will become the standard work on the suburban landscape in the United States." –Ann Forsyth, author of *Constructing Suburbs* "Provocative. . . . Well worth reading." –Detroit Free Press "Important. . . . More than a necessary read. . . . Inviting and lucid. . . . Often surprising. . . . [Hayden] shows us that it was not inevitable that our space turned out quite this way." –Adrian Nicole LeBlanc, Newsweek.com "Hayden tours us through the familiar landscape of American suburbia and, with great verve, makes it more foreign—much more diverse, complex, and important." –Lizabeth Cohen, author of *A Consumers' Republic* "A lively and informative overview of the American mania for suburban living. . . . Fascinating." –Audubon Naturalist News "Compelling and beautifully written. . . . It reads like a novel and at the same time offers an insightful social and political history of the rise of the suburbs in the United States. Hayden redefines the American Dream and critiques the rise of segregated housing and the isolated communities characteristic of the suburban landscape. There is no other book quite like this one because of its accessibility and breadth of scholarship." –Setha M. Low, author of *Behind the Gates: Life, Security, and the Pursuit of Happiness in Fortress America* "Readable and revealing. . . . Insightful reading." –Cape Cod Times "Wonderful—a great combination of human reaction and scholarly insight." –Virginia McAlester, author of *A Field Guide to American Houses* "A rich and rewarding book with new and original material and surprising insights. . . . Beautiful and accessible writing . . . fascinating historical narratives. . . . Unlike most com... From the Inside Flap For almost two centuries Americans have been moving to the suburbs in search of affordable family housing, unspoiled nature, and small-town sociability?only to find that their leafy new neighborhoods are part of the growing metropolitan sprawl. It is to this contested cultural landscape, where most Americans now live, that Dolores Hayden draws our attention. From nineteenth-century utopian communities and elite picturesque enclaves to early twentieth-century streetcar subdivisions and owner-built tracts to the vast postwar sitcom suburbs and the subsidized malls and office parks that followed (on a scale that earlier builders could never have imagined), Hayden reveals the cultural and economic patterns that have brought us to the present. She explores the interplay of natural and built environments, the complex antagonisms between real-estate developers and suburban residents, the hidden role of federal government, and the religious and ideological overtones of the 'American dream' embedded in the suburbs. Hayden asks hard questions about who has benefited from the suburban building process and about 'smart' growth and 'green' building. And she makes a strong case for the revitalization of existing neighborhoods in place of unchecked new growth on rural fringes. Few readers will see our ubiquitous suburbs in the same way again. From the Back Cover "Dolores Hayden is a unique urban pathfinder. She hunts down the relationships among popular aspirations, big urban players, and the everyday experience of domestic life. In this book she traces the history of our suburban metropolises, guiding the reader through seven easily recognized on-the-street patterns. The end of the history is the now when the government and private corporations anxiously push to maintain our cities of consumption. And yes, she has found a way leading from this dead end." --Sam Bass Warner, Jr., author of *Streetcar Suburbs* "Building Suburbia embraces the human desires that underlie two centuries of American suburban landscapes, even as it explains the myriad problems that ensued. It is only with this complex understanding that we, like Hayden herself, can imagine better patterns of suburban development, more equitable, sustainable, congenial, and beautiful." --Gwendolyn Wright, author of *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* "We think of suburbs as standardized places. Dolores Hayden shows us, for the first time, the remarkable diversity of suburban environments that Americans have produced over

two centuries. Lucid, original, and abundantly illustrated, *Building Suburbia* is that delightful rarity: a scholarly book with a critical perspective and wide appeal."--Richard Harris, author of *Unplanned Suburbs: Toronto's American Tragedy, 1900-1950* "Building Suburbia is compelling and beautifully written. It reads like a novel and at the same time offers an insightful social and political history of the rise of the suburbs in the United States. Hayden redefines the American Dream and critiques the rise of segregated housing and the isolated communities characteristic of the suburban landscape. There is no other book quite like this one because of its accessibility and breadth of scholarship. It will attract a wide audience as well as academic acclaim. Great work."--Setha Low, author of *Behind the Gates: Life, Security, and the Pursuit of Happiness in Fortress America* "Bringing together several decades of research on suburban development, including Hayden's own, *Building Suburbia* will become the standard work on the suburban landscape the United States. At a time when debates about suburbia are dominated by smart growth and new urbanism, Hayden's important book provides both a much needed historical perspective and a vision of a future in which the suburbs are reused and not abandoned."--Ann Forsyth, author of *Constructing Suburbs: Competing Voices in a Debate Over Urban Growth* "With its wealth of illustrations and combined scholarly and anecdotal writing, Dolores Hayden's *Building Suburbia* not only provides a brilliant a new understanding of suburban form--past, present and future--but also treats the reader to a delightfully opinionated assessment of today's housing arrangements. Hayden's persuasive plea for preserving and improving existing suburbs is right on target for the 21st century" --Eugenie L. Birch, Dept. of City and Regional Planning, Graduate School of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania "Whereas most successful guides make the foreign more familiar, Dolores Hayden tours us through the familiar landscape of American suburbia and, with great verve, makes it more foreign--much more diverse, complex, and important. Ordinary suburban homes, neighborhoods, and communities suddenly yield new insights into our past values--and future possibilities."--Lizabeth Cohen, author of *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*