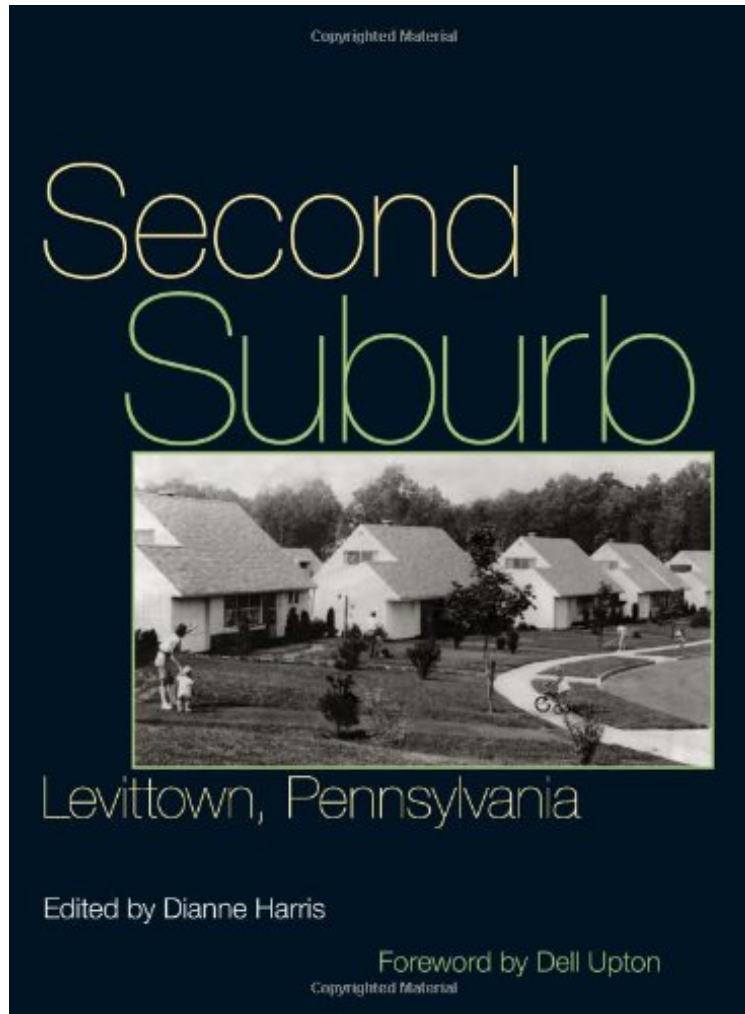


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Second Suburb: Levittown, Pennsylvania (Culture Politics the Built Environment)

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From Brand: University of Pittsburgh Press : Second Suburb: Levittown, Pennsylvania (Culture Politics the Built Environment) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Second Suburb: Levittown, Pennsylvania (Culture Politics the Built Environment):

Carved from eight square miles of Bucks County farmland northeast of Philadelphia, Levittown, Pennsylvania, is a symbol of postwar suburbia and the fulfillment of the American dream. Begun in 1952, after the completion of an identically named community on Long Island, the second Levittown soon eclipsed its New York counterpart in scale

and ambition, yet it continues to live in the shadow of its better-known sister and has received limited scholarly attention. *Second Suburb* uncovers the unique story of Levittown, Pennsylvania, and its significance to American social, architectural, environmental, and political history. The volume offers a fascinating profile of this planned community in two parts. The first examines Levittown from the inside, including oral histories of residents recalling how Levittown shaped their lives. One such reminiscence is by Daisy Myers, whose family were the first African Americans to move to the community, only to become the targets of a race riot that would receive international publicity. The book also includes selections from the syndicated comic strip *Zippy the Pinhead*, in which Bill Griffith reflects on the angst-ridden trials of growing up in a Levittown, and an extensive photo essay of neighborhood homes, schools, churches, parks, and swimming pools, collected by Dianne Harris. The second part of the book views Levittown from the outside. Contributors consider the community's place in planning and architectural history and the Levitts strategies for the mass production of housing. Other chapters address the class stratification of neighborhood sections through price structuring; individual attempts to personalize a home's form and space as a representation of class and identity; the builders' focus on the kitchen as the centerpiece of the home and its greatest selling point; the community's environmental and ecological legacy; racist and exclusionary sales policies; resident activism during the gas riots of 1979; and America's lost Eden. "Bringing together some of the top scholars in architectural history, American studies, and landscape studies, *Second Suburb* explores the surprisingly rich interplay of design, technology, and social response that marks the emergence and maturation of an exceptionally potent rendition of the American Dream.

Superb study . . . Dell Upton's foreword, recounting his parents' experiences in a Levittown-like development, is the perfect set-up, recounting some of the idiosyncratic twistings and turnings [that] lie behind the received story of suburbanization and white flight. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*