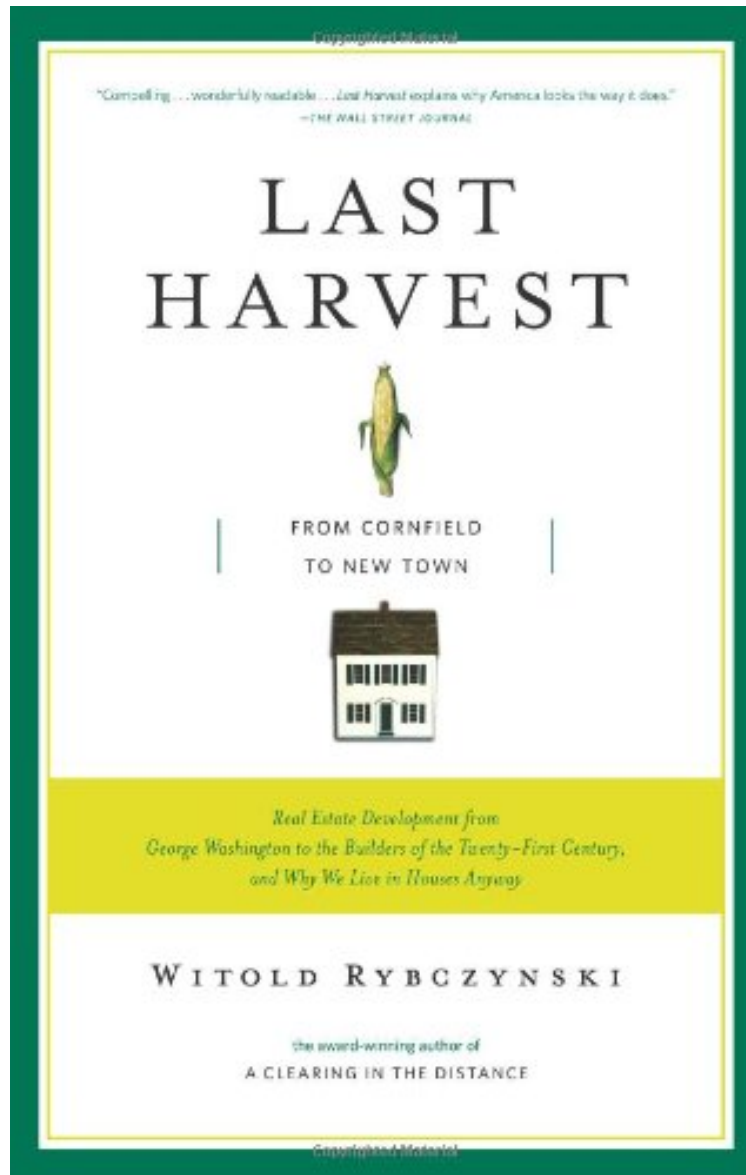



[Free read ebook] Last Harvest: From Cornfield to New Town: Real Estate Development from George Washington to the Builders of the Twenty-First Century, and Why We Live in Houses Anyway

# Last Harvest: From Cornfield to New Town: Real Estate Development from George Washington to the Builders of the Twenty-First Century, and Why We Live in Houses Anyway

Witold Rybczynski

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Witold Rybczynski : Last Harvest: From Cornfield to New Town: Real Estate Development from George Washington to the Builders of the Twenty-First Century, and Why We Live in Houses Anyway before

purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Last Harvest: From Cornfield to New Town: Real Estate Development from George Washington to the Builders of the Twenty-First Century, and Why We Live in Houses Anyway*:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Behind the scenes in real estate development  
By G. A. Dean  
If you work in a field related to real estate development, this is a great book to read. The author tracks the development of a small subdivision from initial planning to government permitting to final sales. All the while, he provides insight into the evolution of residential real estate sales in the US, and the varying perspectives of the main characters in the process. This is a great read for urban (and not-so-urban) planners. I highly recommend the book.  
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. easy read for technical info.  
By Customer  
I've only read 6 chapters. it is a book that a professor required us to read. it reads like a novel, even though it is full of information regarding (sub)urban planning.  
easy read for technical info. looking forward to other chapters.  
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By Toritseju Fregene  
awesome and timely delivery

When Witold Rybczynski first heard about New Daleville, it was only a developer's idea, attached to ninety acres of cornfield an hour and a half west of Philadelphia. Over the course of five years, Rybczynski met and talked to everyone involved in the building of this residential subdivision -- from the developers to the township leaders, whose approval they needed, to the home builders and engineers and, ultimately, the first families who moved in. Always eloquent and illuminating, the award-winning author of *Now I Sit Me Down* looks at this "neotraditional" project, with its houses built close together to encourage a sense of intimacy and community, and explains the trends in American domestic architecture -- from where we place our kitchens and fences to why our bathrooms get larger every year. *Last Harvest* was voted one of the ten best books of 2008 by the editors of *Planetizen*, and as *Publishers Weekly* said, "Rybczynski provides historical and cultural perspectives in a style reminiscent of Malcolm Gladwell, debunking the myth of urban sprawl and explaining American homeowners' preference for single-family dwellings."

From *Publishers Weekly*  
Architecture critic Rybczynski spent four and a half years observing the progress of New Daleville, a residential subdivision designed by one of his former students in a "neotraditional" style that builds houses close together on smaller-than-usual lots in order to foster a stronger sense of community. He is there to witness every stage of development, from the purchase of a large tract of land in rural Pennsylvania through meetings with local community leaders to get planning approval, to the moment when a family moves into one of the first completed units. The account is forthright about the difficulties New Daleville's creators face in making the project work, but Rybczynski (*A Clearing in the Distance*, etc.) remains optimistic that "the small lots [and] narrow streets... will all make sense" in the future. Occasionally, he provides historical and cultural perspective in a style reminiscent of Malcolm Gladwell, debunking the myth of urban sprawl and explaining American homeowners' preference for single-family dwellings. But Rybczynski also excels at the "close-up," John McPhee's method of reporting, where every interview reads like an intimate conversation, and a simple walk down neighborhood sidewalks can reveal a wealth of history. This charming mixture of reportage and social criticism fits comfortably on the shelf next to David Brooks's *On Paradise Drive*. (Apr.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.  
From *Booklist*  
Residential real estate development seems like an unlikely topic for a gripping read, and certainly Rybczynski can't be said to have produced a page-turner. But the author of *The Perfect House* (2002), among other books, and an architecture critic, most recently for *Slate*, brings considerable stores of knowledge, curiosity, and writing skill to this readable and at times even suspenseful book about a developer's process of building an exurban subdivision in rural Pennsylvania. In a style that is both digressive (he reviews land development patterns as far back as George Washington's day) and leisurely (including long quotes from sources in the manner of Tracy Kidder), Rybczynski follows the project through its conceptual stages, the politically tricky zoning permits process, and community approvals, to, finally, its finished state as a neotraditional "village" community. Along the way, we learn how land gets developed in the era of the new urbanism and pro- and anti-growth debates, and why so many Americans choose to live in suburbs (as opposed to denser city centers) despite often lengthy commutes. Donna Seaman  
Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Compelling...wonderfully readable...*Last Harvest* explains why America looks the way it does." - *The Wall Street Journal*"Terrific...Steeped in historical knowledge." - *USA Today*"A rich history of U.S. development, from the Founding Fathers to the dreamers who conceived the first automobile suburbs in the early part of the last century and on to today's foot soldiers in the movement called New Urbanism." - *BusinessWeek*"Understanding the business of real estate requires an appreciation of its many aesthetic, economic, historical, physical, political, psychological, structural, and countless other aspects, and *Last Harvest* is a primer on them all." - Henry Petroski, author of *Success through Failure: The Paradox of Design*"From the initial planning to the home construction to the selling of properties, the five-year project was a challenge for everyone involved, and the author was there every step of the way. Woven into his story are reflections on how American architectural tastes have changed throughout history and how we balance our

individuality with [the] need for community." - Jennifer Caesar, New York Post "Entertaining and frequently enlightening." - Penelope Green, The New York Times Book "Rybczynski is a graceful, personable writer whose considerable erudition is in service to his storyteller's curiosity." - Lloyd Rose, The Washington Post "Rybczynski has written about the world of American architecture with a simple, rare clarity." - Annie Dawid, The Oregonian "Rybczynski has a prose style so well designed, even dry bits of design history are as absorbing as a down-filled sofa." - David Colman, The New York Times "Rybczynski provides historical and cultural perspectives in a style reminiscent of Malcolm Gladwell, debunking the myth of urban sprawl and explaining American homeowners' preference for single-family dwellings." - Publishers Weekly