

DESIGN GUIDELINES
FOR
DOWNTOWN SHOPPING CENTERS

BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on urban design issues germane to downtown shopping center design. The underlying concept is that, all new downtown shopping centers should attempt to build upon the existing fabric in such a way as to become an integral part of the city.

This study first examines the nature of retail districts, the shopping center as a building type, and the recent emergence of the downtown shopping center. Two recently constructed downtown centers will be reviewed, to uncover urban design concerns that are pertinent to the conceptual design of shopping centers in the context of downtowns.

The intent of this study is to formulate design guidelines that address the problems of implementing this suburban retail model in the context of a downtown. These guidelines are then applied to a specific site in the form of a sketch problem.

This study concludes with an evaluation of the guidelines and some recommendations for designing shopping places that are conceived as an integral part of the city.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title Page	1
Abstract	3
Table of Contents	5
Acknowledgements	6
Introduction	7
Section One _____	Overview
Chapter	
1 The Nature of Retail Districts in Urban Centers	11
2 Shopping Centers as a building type	19
3 The Recent Emergence of the Downtown Shopping Centers	37
Section Two _____	Study and Theory
4 Case Studies: A look at downtown Plazas and Places	45
5 Urban design guidelines for downtown shopping centers	61
Section Three _____	Analysis
6 Sketch Problem: Galleria West	75
7 Evaluation	87
Conclusions	89
Bibliography	91
Credits	93

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To my creator
To my parents

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INTRODUCTION

The shopping center, developed for the suburbs, provided a shopping environment for those who desired a large variety of merchandise and retailers. With large available tracts of land, an increasing target market, developers began establishing retail centers that recreated the role and function of inner city retail cores. Soon downtown retailers began following homeowners and developers to rural areas where land cost and utilities were less expensive. Pretty soon inner city retail districts began losing their popularity and clientele. Buildings and streets began to deteriorate, and the level and sophistication of the retailers that remained failed to attract a sufficient number affluent shoppers. Inner city retail districts were underutilized and showing signs of deterioration.

In hopes of revitalizing inner city centers planning and public/private development groups have advocated the rebuilding of their cities' retail cores. In many cases these new revitalization projects have taken the form of urban shopping centers. Besides providing a new opportunity for developers, urban shopping centers can be and/are also used as impetuses for much larger more intensive office, hotel, and residential development projects. In the past many developers in some cases insisted upon importing the traditional monolithic suburban inward focusing shopping center model. In some cases, small gestures have been made to modify this suburban model to "fit" into the dense urban retail fabric. Whether these centers are successful in addressing important urban design issues that enrich the built environment is questionable. In the United States, a few examples, exist where developers and design groups have made

substantial changes to the typical model in an attempt to make the new retail addition a well-knit element of the urban fabric. Such design approaches respond to the contextual quality of the street edge, with pedestrian entrances, circulation patterns, vehicular routing, servicing locations, and appropriate building volume and use of materials.

This thesis shall first look at the nature of retail districts, the shopping center as a building type, and the recent emergence of downtown shopping centers. Two recently completed downtown shopping centers will be reviewed, in Section Two, to uncover urban design issues that should be addressed in downtown shopping center design. The goal is to generate urban design guidelines that ensure a proper fit between a suburban building type, and the urban context. The guidelines presented in this study assumes a contextual approach to building in downtown cities. This approach respects the components of the built environment that retain the character and flavor of a particular district. Elements such as: street patterns, building heights, fenestration approaches, and massing are all integral to a sense of place, and should be retained when the buildings themselves become obsolete. This study also follows the thought that urban shopping centers should be conceived as public shopping spaces instead of inward focussing concentrated retail systems.

The urban design guidelines generated in Section Two will be applied to a specific site in the form of a sketch problem. The thesis will conclude with an evaluation of the guidelines, and some recommendations about the design of future downtown shopping centers.

OVERVIEW.....

CHAPTER ONE

THE NATURE OF RETAIL DISTRICTS IN URBAN CENTERS

Urban centers have at least one major retail district, which is usually located along highly travelled routes that connect different parts of the city, or near transportation nodes or interchanges. Urban retail districts cater to central business district workers, inner city dwellers, entertainment seekers, and tourist. Within these districts are other services that also seek proximity to various modes of transportation and a high pedestrian volume. In this chapter we shall discuss the form of retail districts, the retailer, some historical forms of shopping places, development of the shopping center, and a few modes of shopping.

The Form of Retail Districts

The heart of many downtown retail districts lies at the intersection of two major movement paths, one of which is the major commercial street of the city. American examples include Washington and Winter/Summer streets in Boston, State and Madison streets in Chicago. One can easily detect the major shopping street by its' number of department stores. Retailers located on major movement paths take advantage of the volume of shoppers that pass, as well as, the critical retail mass created by the number of clustered businesses. Also along these commercial paths are usually restaurants, hotels, offices, and other service

related businesses, which in some circumstances take on the role of the department store magnet, each drawing upon the clientele of the other.

Adjacent to retail districts are usually business districts that house office and service functions of the city. Like retailers they too want close proximity to transportation routes and nodes, to take advantage of other facilities in the area which draw clients and employees to their place of business. It is mostly daytime office workers that downtown retailers rely upon for their market, but they also rely upon inner city dwellers, downtown residents, tourist, and business related visitors.

The architectural form of these streets tend to be individual low with mid-rise buildings not exceeding 12 stories. The ground floor storefronts are well articulated and mostly glass. The main objective behind storefront design is to attract the potential customer's attention, and create an image that invites one to inquire and participate inside. These storefronts can be and usually are accentuated by canopies, exterior lobbies, creative displays, and signage, etc., all of which are strategies that help the retailer gain the shoppers' attention and hopefully her patronage.

The retailer or shop owner is primarily concerned with providing commodities to the shopper, storing, displaying merchandise, and stimulating a demand for a particular item or type of merchandise e.g., jewelry, housewares, clothes, shoes, etc. To increase his chances of attracting interest and possibly making a sale, a retailer needs an enticing storefront, display, as well as a constant pedestrian flow past his shop. Therefore retailers wish to locate themselves along heavily travelled vehicular and/or pedestrian circulation routes. In Designing To Sell, A Complete Guide to Retail Store Planning and Design, the author states " Unless your are told otherwise by your client, the main objective of the storefront is to

vacuum or funnel shoppers into the store. This is true for stores in just about any price range. The owner is paying a premium for frontage on a busy street, highway, or mall because that is where the pedestrian and vehicular traffic is. Traffic means action, and profit." (1) Smaller retailers prefer to be surrounded by other established retailers, particularly large department stores. Because of their size and reputation, department stores tend to draw, much like a magnet, large volumes of shoppers. The concept here is that shoppers enroute to or from these larger establishments represent a potential customer to any smaller retailer along that path.

Historical Forms of Shopping Places

Primitive retailing took the form of individual shops in neighborhoods where shop owners supplied a particular demand. As cities grew, retailers began to cluster and form temporary areas and streets devoted to selling and trading food and merchandise. Soon these market areas became permanently established sections of the city. Retailers benefited from creating a grouping or mass that attracted buyers. Flourishing during the industrial revolution was the arcade. Historically the arcade was one of the most efficient means of concentrating retailers along a single street. In many cases the most effective arcades were passages that connected two highly travelled streets. (see fig. 1.1 and 1.2) . Most arcades were covered, and some were lit from above by skylights. One notable example is the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan. (see fig. 1.3a, 1.3b, and 1.3c) The Galleria was part of revitalization of the inner city which established a link between the Piazza della Scala and the Piazza del Duomo (the cathedral), both very important urban spaces. The retailers along that path benefitted from the flow of people between the two piazzas. Today

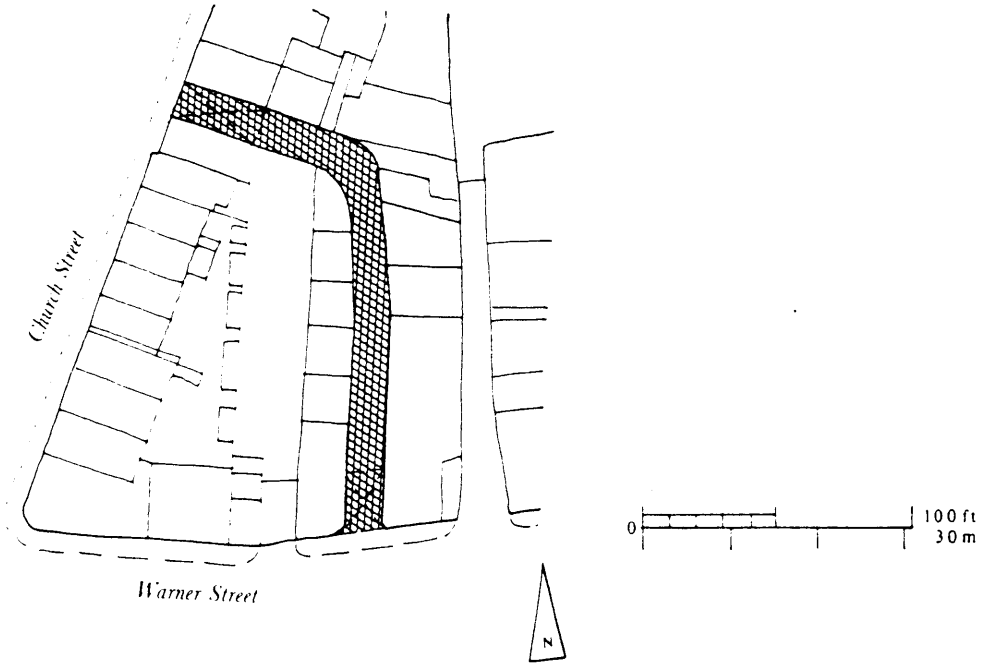


Figure 1.1 Church/Warner Street Arcade

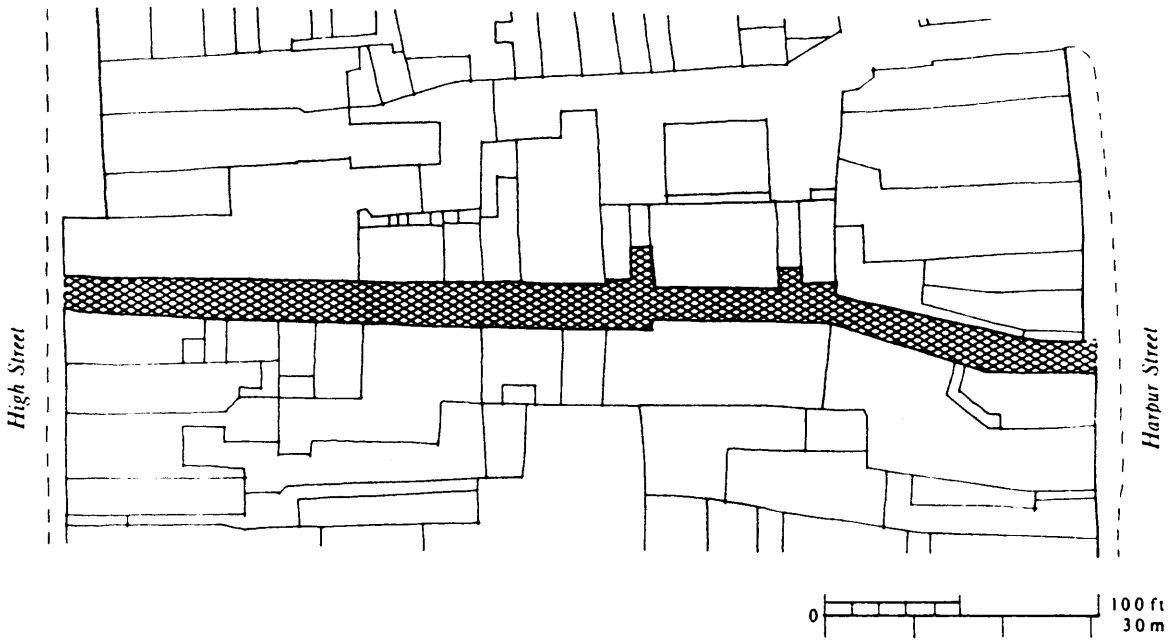


Figure 1.2 High/Harpar Street Arcade

the Galleria houses small shops, cafes, and restaurants on the ground floor and offices above. In addition to providing protection from inclement weather, the vaulted skylight also encloses and defines the space, as well as, provides natural light.

Similar to the arcade concept is the shopping mall. As a diagram, the shopping mall established a major retailer at the end of a shop-lined path. The mall does not necessarily need to tap into an established pedestrian flow, but as a center in themselves, generate their own flow. Some feel that shopping centers provide a setting for social interaction and communication, much like urban public spaces. The Urban Land Institute Shopping Center Development Handbook states that, " The shopping center is a mature land use and real estate form, which has been widely accepted as the best means of providing retailing to communities. The shopping center has evolved from a simple concept into a full community activity center, including not only retailing but also entertainment, services, and community facilities. Further, it is rapidly evolving into a component in a mixed-use development that integrates retailing and other land uses into an urban complex—even when set in suburban and exurban locations." (2)

Modes of Shopping

There are several modes of shopping. Some shoppers venture into stores and malls to purchase a particular item, service, or good. Others may only participate in comparison shopping in which the actual purchase may take place at some later time or date. Comparison shoppers travel from store to store looking for the best purchase for the least price. There is still another group of shoppers who venture to shopping centers for the sport or sake of the

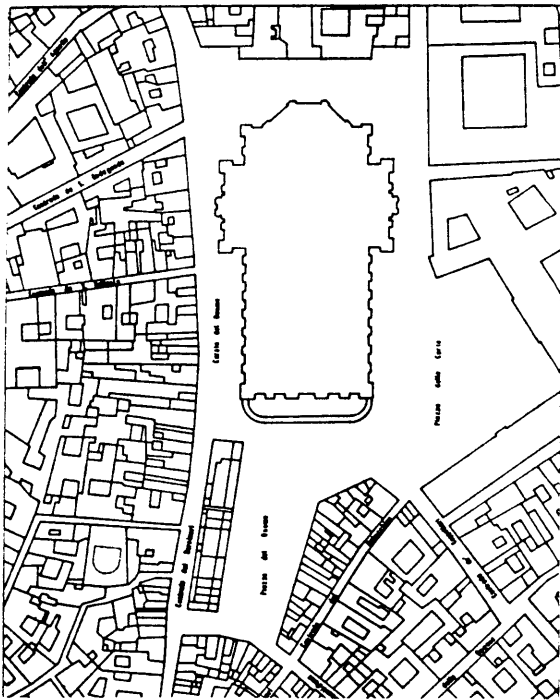


Figure 1.3a Piazza del Duomo before 1850

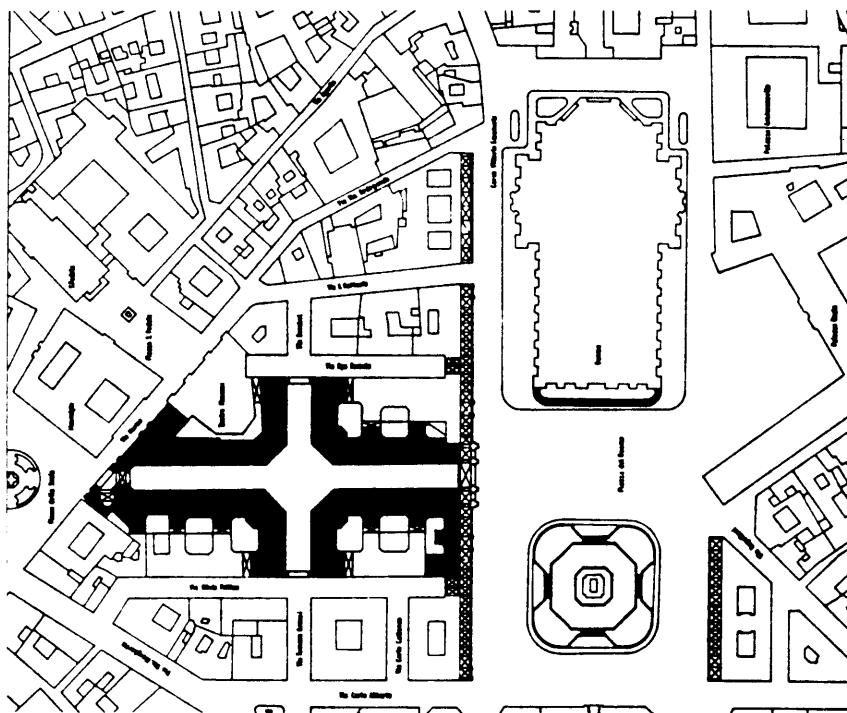


Figure 1.3b Galleria Vittorio, plan 1900

activity itself. The actual activity, shopping, consists of promenading, watching people, and being watched. This particular notion suggests that the purchase of merchandise is not the drawing force behind the trip, but it provides the potential shopper with the opportunity to travel into another world filled with images and vignettes of other times and places. In this mode, many impulse purchases are made, something retailers thrive on. Impulse purchases are those created not from a need or even a desire, but purchases that are suggested through marketing and display strategies. Well executed displays create the urge to buy. An impulse purchase to a retailer is an additional sale to a customer who will also purchase the item or service that brought her to the store. Sales are made not because the shopper made a trip to the store particularly for this item, but because of the method and positioning of the display and the aura of the environment.

Shopping centers are fertile grounds for impulse purchasing and leisure activity. As an established place of commerce, the shopping center, being more compact than the arcade or shopping street, provides the opportunity to buy, even for those who are yet not in the mood or 'mode'.

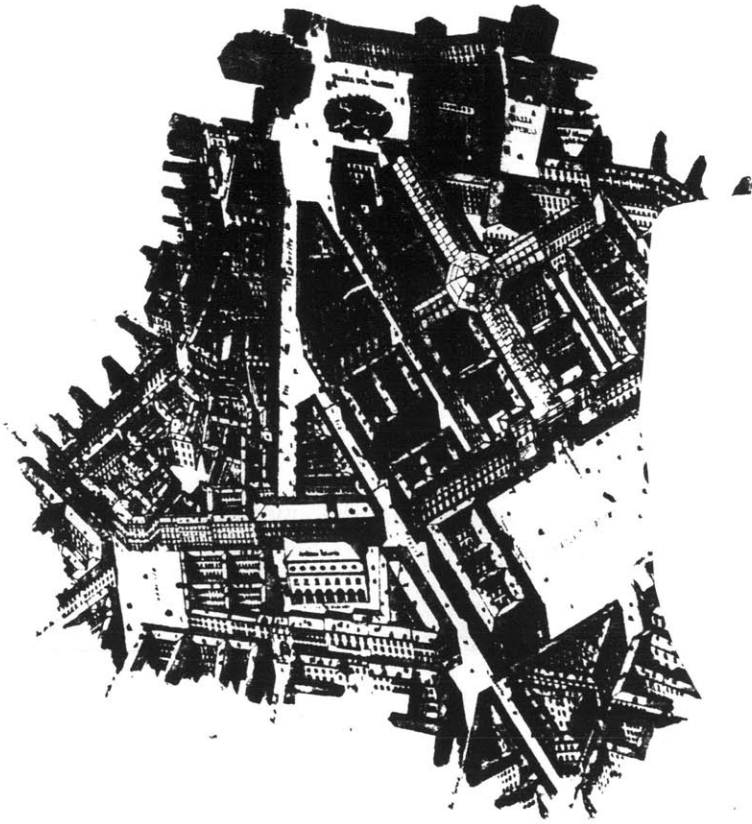


Figure 1.3c Galleria Vittorio, view

CHAPTER TWO

THE TYPOLOGY OF SHOPPING MALLS

There are two major types of shopping malls, the department store mall and the specialty mall. The former is characterized by the presence of one or more anchor tenants, and the latter consists of a group of smaller retailers, in the absence of a major anchor tenant.

The simplest department store model diagram is frequently called the "twin magnet or dumb-bell model" (3). The twin magnet model consists of an anchor tenant, usually a department store, at each end of a shop lined pedestrian path. (see fig. 2.1) The form of the dumb-bell model is extremely efficient, and is generated by the pedestrian circulation pattern. The smaller retailers along the pedestrian path, who pay a higher percentage of rent per square foot, benefit greatly from the flow of shoppers between magnets, much like those retailers in retail districts. There are numerous variations on the magnet model. These variations usually either shorten the walking distance between magnets, by introducing a third magnet, or establish additional concourses, all leading to either magnets or entrances/exits. The "L" scheme adds a third department store at a 90 degree angle from the main concourse. (see fig. 2.2) The "Y" scheme, in addition to adding a third magnet, creates a focal space at the intersection of the 3 legs. (see fig. 2.3)

The specialty mall is similar to the department store mall except that it lacks any large anchor tenant (department store). The Urban Land Institute (ULI) distinguishes the specialty mall from the department store mall by the "

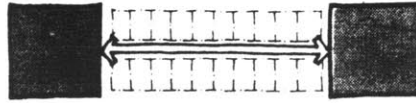


Figure 2.1 Twin-magnet diagram

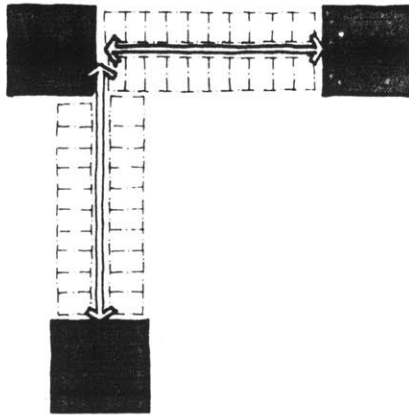


Figure 2.2 "L" scheme

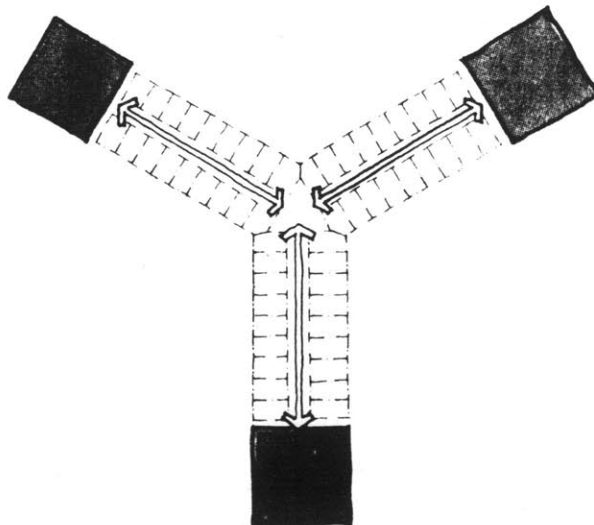


Figure 2.3 "Y" scheme

absence of a traditional anchor tenant." (4) They go on to speculate that, "The role of the anchor tenant might be played by another anchor type of tenant, or by a grouping of tenants that together might function as an anchor tenant."

(5) Recently specialty malls have taken on 'themes', what developers refer to as 'festival malls'. In most cases the theme dictates the architectural style used to house the retailer, which in turn reinforces the sense of place created by the specialization of the retail use type (restaurants, shops, boutiques), and tenant mix. Originally introduced by The Rouse Company, festival malls are common in or near downtowns areas and especially near waterfronts, and highlight some significant site specific feature. They depend heavily on the transient market which includes tourists, conventioners, and business related visitors. Some recent examples are Pickering Wharf, Salem, MA., Faneuil Hall Market Place, Boston, Harbor Place, Baltimore, and Ghirardelli Square, San Francisco. (see fig. 2.4a, 2.4b, 2.5a, 2.5b, 2.6a, 2.6b. and 2.7)

Mechanics of shopping centers

There are a number of functional or mechanical requirements that a downtown shopping mall must satisfy to operate profitably in the eyes of the developer, and conveniently in the eyes of the shopper. Location, access, pedestrian circulation, parking, and security are important elements and concerns that should be addressed in shopping center design.

Downtown shopping centers, in their site selection, usually shift the existing retail district. This is mostly a factor of availability of land parcels and the difficulty involved in relocation of exiting retailers while demolition and construction are going on. Faneuil Hall Market Place is one example of a new retail development that in essence attracted a portion of the market that frequented Downtown Crossing and the Boylston/Newberry retail districts. In

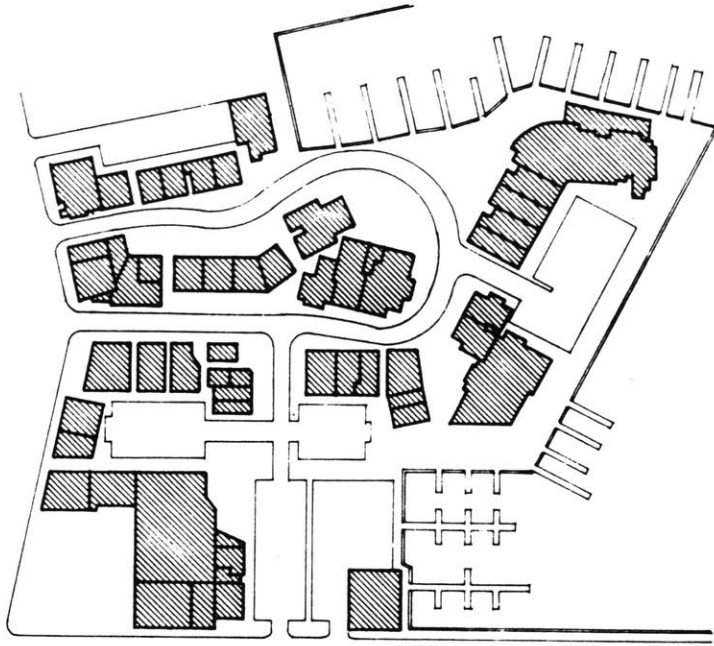


Figure 2.4a Pickering Wharf, plan

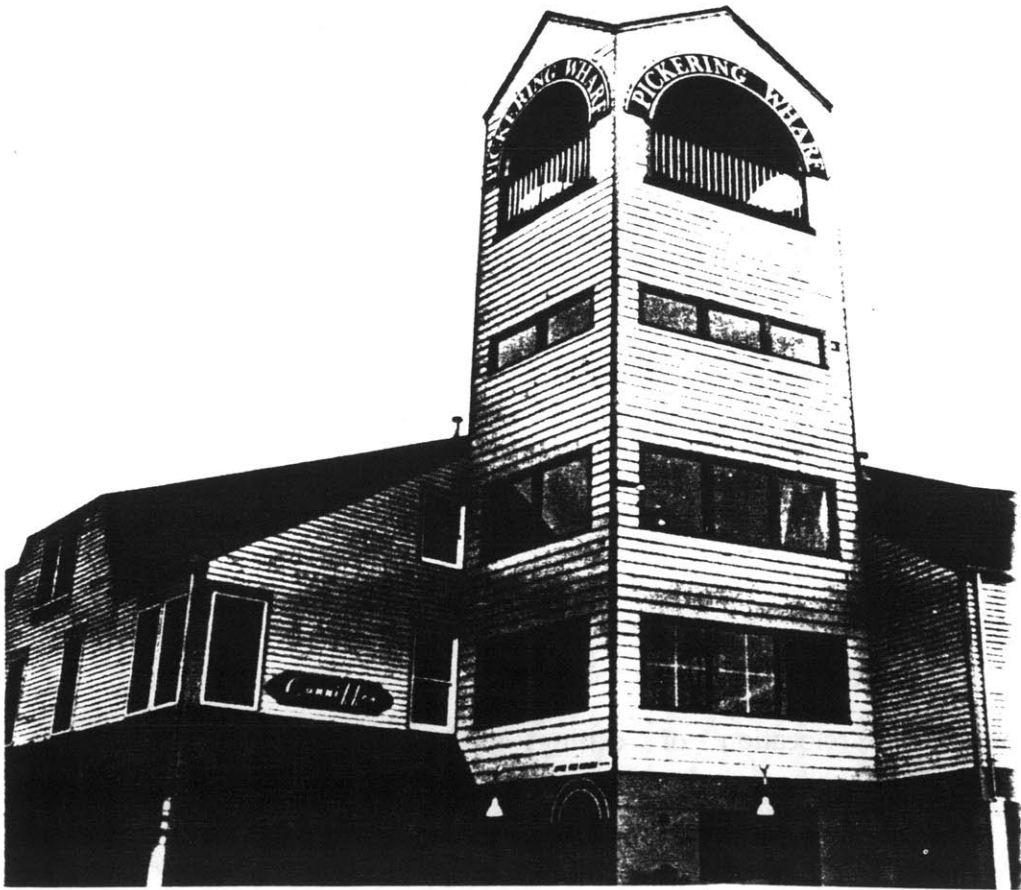


Figure 2.4b Pickering Wharf, view

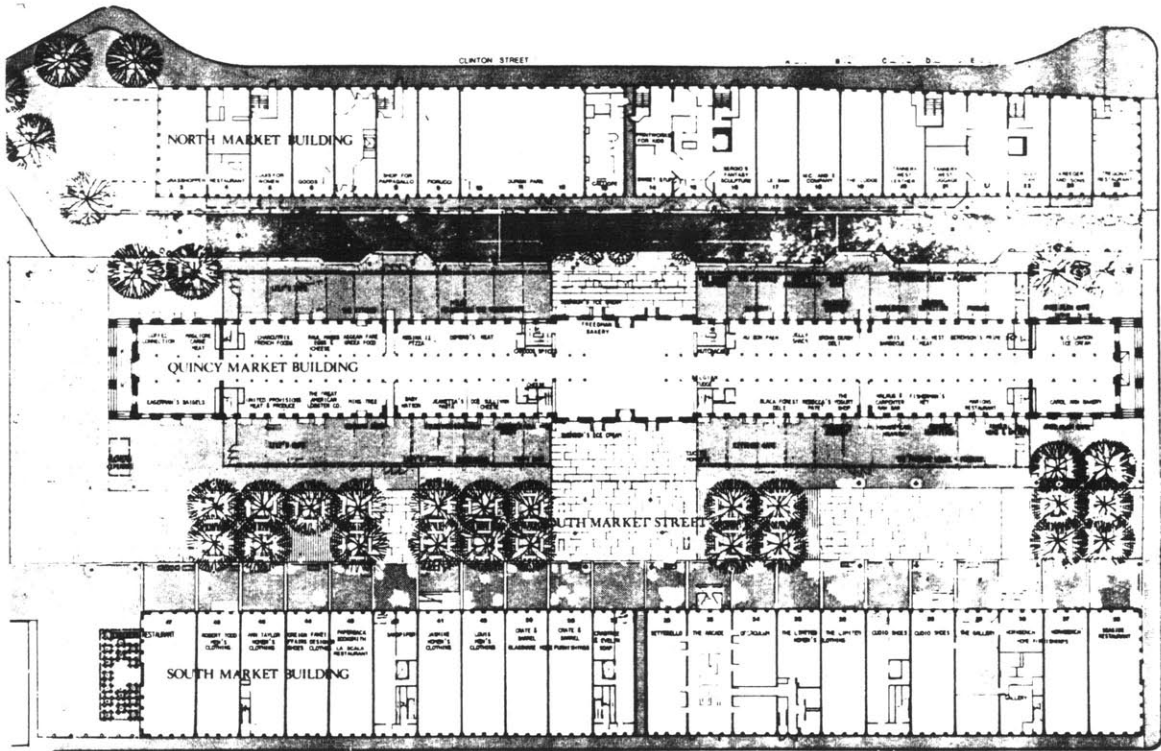


Figure 2.5a Faneuil Hall Market Place, plan

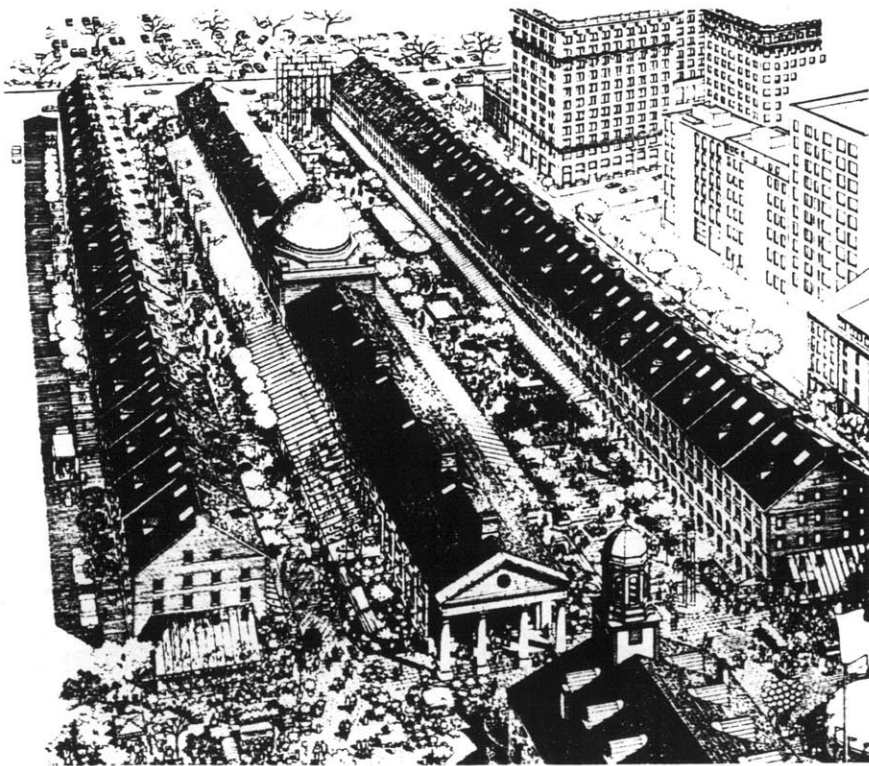


Figure 2.5b Faneuil Hall Market Place, view

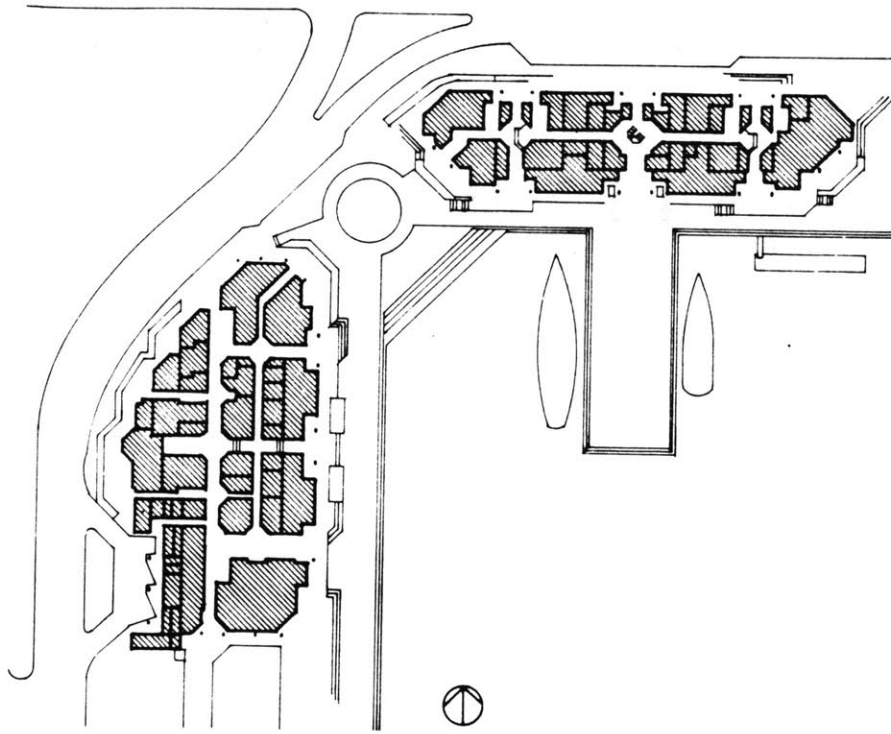


Figure 2.6a Harbor Place, plan

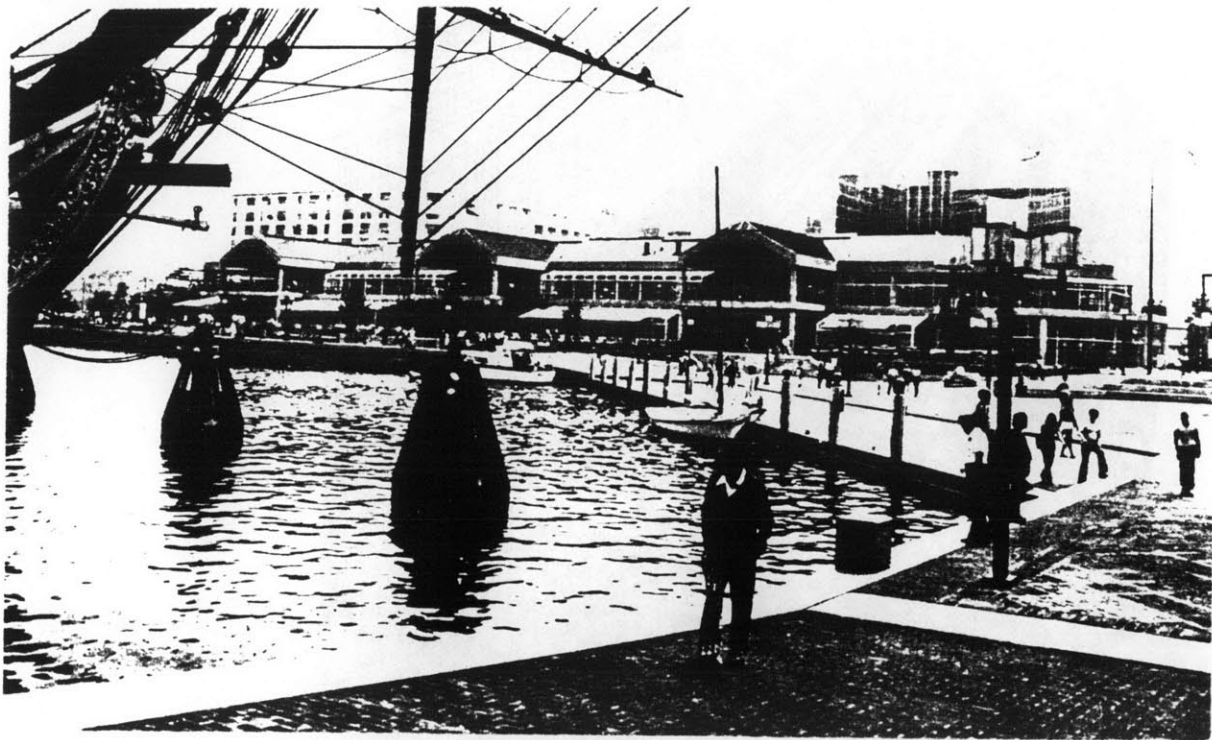


Figure 2.6b Harbor Place, view

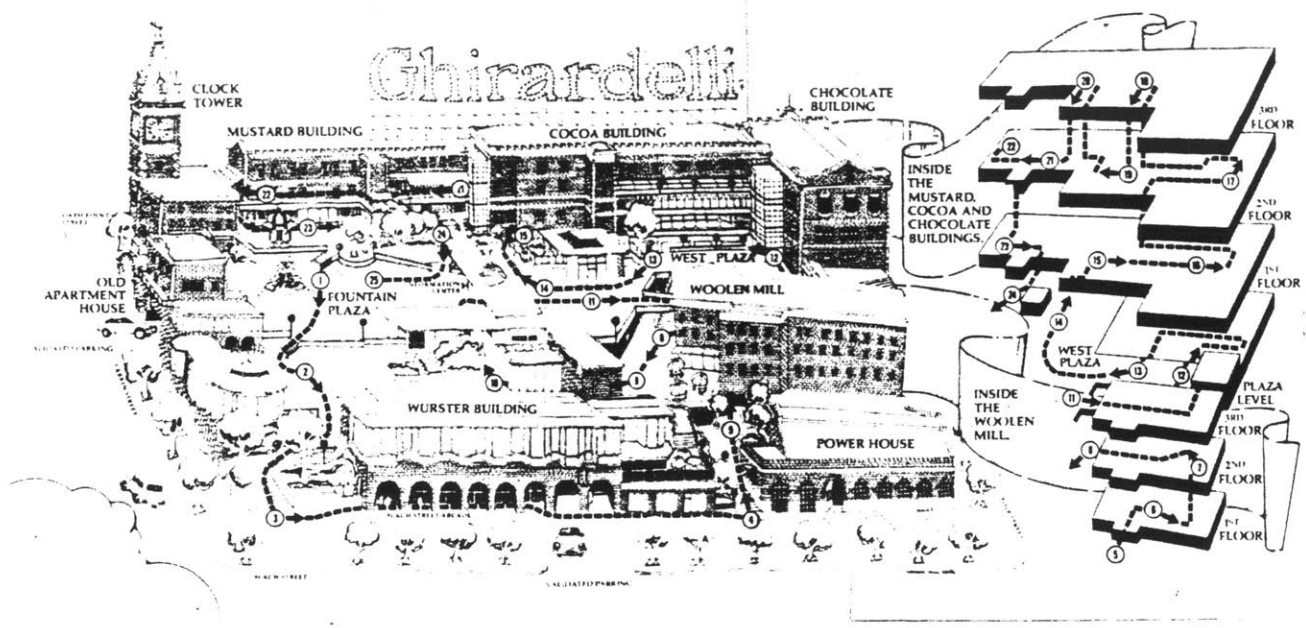


Figure 2.7 Ghirardelle Square,

situations where new retail development is underway in existing retail districts, very few retailers would agree to a temporary relocation proposal because of fear of losing their clientele and profits during the construction period.

Most shopping centers are easily accessible by vehicular routes, and in urban areas pedestrian means. Location in existing retail districts almost pre-supposes this notion in the sense that retail districts in cities are easily accessible by major thoroughfares, commuter train lines, and are aligned with pedestrian walking patterns. The site itself should allow several options of routing delivery trucks and servicing vehicles in and out of the center with minimum, if any, interruption of pedestrian movement.

One crucial consideration in downtown shopping centers is the amount and placement of customer parking. Customer parking should ideally be on site, and in downtown areas be structured, as opposed to surface level: preferably below ground. Shoppers, many of which will travel by car, often prefer easily accessible and cheap, if not free parking. Grand Avenue mall in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Copley Place in Boston, both have adjacent above ground parking structures that empty shoppers directly into stores and concourse levels.

Security can be divided into two basic categories; security aimed at protecting the shopper and security protecting the retailer. The shopper is mostly concerned with travelling safely from the shopping areas to his/her car, or some public transportation node. Well-lit, highly travelled areas, as well as, cleverly placed security personnel and/or monitors are deterrents to theft and vandalism. With mixed use developments, housing, late night and 24-hour uses, the design of pedestrian concourses should facilitate the securing of different areas of the mall that are not in use during late hours.

Recently downtown shopping centers have been designed in such a fashion that shops face both the concourse and the exterior retail street. We shall refer to this approach as double loading. Usually in suburban malls, perimeter building edges usually regress into windowless walls. From an urban design point of view, double loaded shops address the street edge by providing retail activity along the perimeter of the center. Retailers argue that this approach gives them the burden of monitoring two entrances/exits. One solution is to install electronic visual or audio monitoring devices that indicate egress through each entrance. Another solution would be to design the individual shop in such a way as to visually control both entrances.

Architectural Qualities

Shopping centers, in an attempt to invite and facilitate shopping, should be aesthetically appealing and not necessarily only an enclosure for a defined economic activity. Many centers develop architectural themes, be they historic water front villages, old town mainstreets, or high tech space odysseys. They create a special place and sense of time. Architecturally this is done through materials, entrance treatment, street furniture, shop-front decor, floor treatment, and lighting. But more than any of the above, the size and character of the main public space, referred to here as the major focal space, usually sets the theme for the entire mall.

Entrances in suburban centers are usually monumental, well-lit, and heavily detailed. They mark the transition from the everyday world to the world of leisure purchasing. Their size is a necessary criterion, because of the need of the entrance to be sighted and recognized from the road leading to the mall (in suburban sites). Shoppers generally enter through one of the department stores,

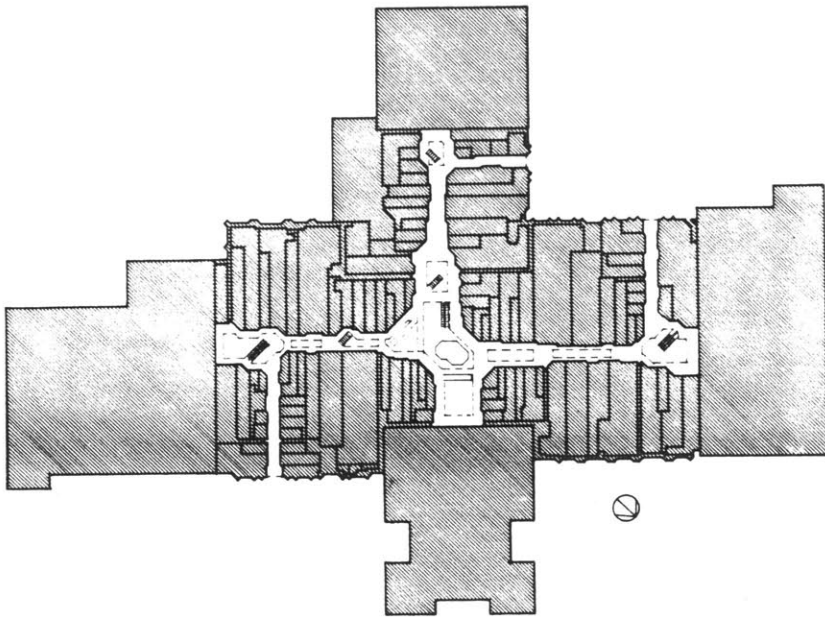


Figure 2.8a Woodfield Mall Shaumburg, Illinois, plan



Figure 2.8b Woodfield Mall Shaumburg, Illinois, view

or depending on where they are interested in shopping first, enter through one of the mall concourse entrances. These entrances tend to be largely glass, transmitting a glimpse of what's awaiting the shopper inside.

The exterior wall of most suburban shopping centers are usually blank. With the exception of some display areas near the department store entrances, the perimeter walls are usually only accentuated by exit doors or service loading bays. The reason is that, especially in suburban mall design, shops usually front the concourse on one end and service corridors on the rear. This allows delivery and servicing to occur out of sight and away from the customers. This method works well when all that is facing the perimeter is a sea of parked cars. In downtown site locations this forms a blank edge to the street, or any pedestrianized area. This approach disrupts the continuity of the street edge, visually as well as physically. In effect this produces sections and even entire blocks of frontage without activity along it's edge now, or in the future.

Pedestrian concourses in shopping centers are usually very straight forward. First and foremost they connect the anchor tenants, and secondly they connect the mall entrances to the major focal space. Circulation in shopping centers consist of entrances, concourses and one or more focal spaces. The focal spaces themselves may be an interim destination point, or a node that collects a series of intersecting concourses. (see fig. 2.8a and 2.8b) The main purpose of the concourse is to connect the major anchor tenants and provide a pleasant passage fronting the individual retailers. In some earlier examples seating and planting configurations are added within the concourse to provide places of rest along the long trek from 'Saks to Pennys'. Connected to the main concourse are mall entrances, which in very few cases appear as major events. They form shorter secondary links to the circulation system, and points of possible expansion.

Some malls expand by adding additional anchor tenants at the end of the secondary concourses. It is assumed that most shoppers enter through department stores and filter into the mall via their internal circulation paths.

The character of a shopping mall is that quality that makes it different from other malls. In urban sites, if designed contextually, character is influenced by the location and surrounding architecture. Character, especially in suburban centers, is primarily established by the selection of materials, street furniture, landscaping, lighting, and shopfronts.

Material selection encompasses at least three concerns: cost, appearance and durability. Granite, marble, and limestone, although they have a long lasting quality appearance, are rarely used because they are extremely expensive, and require added design effort in detailing joints and corners. Used in open or enclosed malls, they give a long-lasting quality and appearance reminiscent of architectural palazzos and public spaces. Less expensive materials such as, brick, pre-cast concrete, and wood have an enormous variety of colors, finishes, and textures, give a less elegant but more natural feel to the space. Reflective surfaces such as clear and mirrored glass, aluminum and stainless steel are moderately expensive and tend to give a more contemporary hard edged feel. Stucco and plaster, mostly used in warmer climates, are light and flexible. They too offer a wide variety of textures and colors. In shopping districts materials should be complementary. They should not only relate the interior with the exterior of the center, but should be contextual with the surrounding area.

Street furniture, sometimes referred to as 'hard landscaping' (6), such as: lamps, seating, floor treatments, handrails and balustrades, do much to establish the time of the place. Their selection and use in the public area of the mall should reinforce and complement the theme. 'Soft landscaping' (7) helps soften

the space by providing elements that change and grow. Trees, shrubs, plantings, and flowers in open or enclosed malls can also be used as a focal piece or point of interest.

Lighting is a very important element of the shopping mall. Natural lighting, effortless in open air malls, creates more of a street atmosphere. Natural lighting in enclosed malls can be cleverly handled by over head skylights, or clerestory windows. Malls are sometimes lit artificially when they do not have access to the sky. Underground arcades and centers in lower levels of mixed use projects are usually more expensive to operate and also have the disadvantage of creating a constant image, and no connection visually to the outside world. Natural light can also be used to direct pedestrians in a particular direction. A continuous illuminated path can control the direction and movement and is used in shopping mall design to direct pedestrians towards entrances, exits, and major focal spaces. Almost always natural light is an integral part of the character and image of any shopping mall. It allows the character of the mall to change with the time of day and to form a point of reference easily recognizable from the outside.

Shopfronts, although they display merchandise and make a personal statement about the individual retailer, also unify the interior mall frontage. Through similar configurations, selection of a color palette, regulated material use, and type and location of signage, shopfronts are important in emphasizing the mall theme. Some shopfronts protrude into the concourse, which increases the retailers leasable area, as well as increase the display area. While other shopfronts form small exterior lobbies which are neither inside the store nor part of the mall. There are also malls which have no shopfronts at all. These open-fronted shops lack any physical demarcation of public and private space

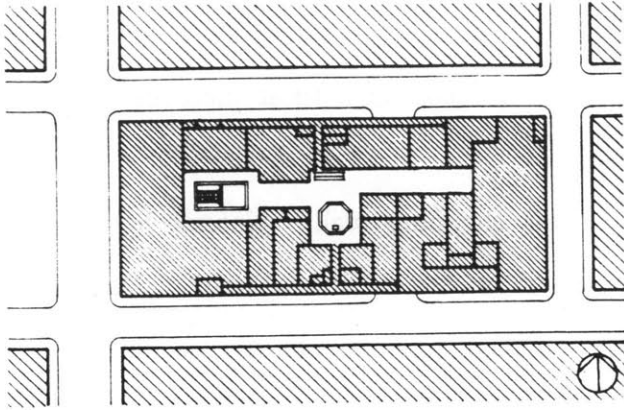


Figure 2.9a Water Tower Place, plan

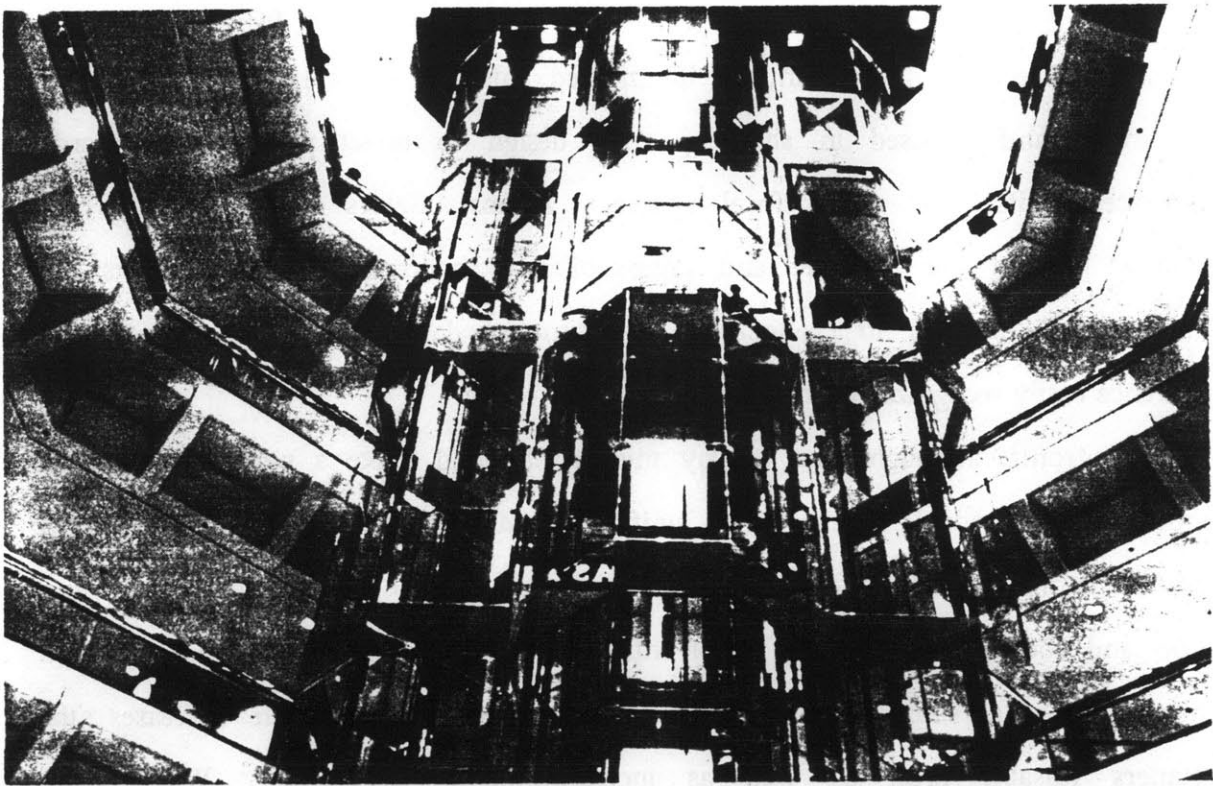


Figure 2.9b Water Tower Place, view

(other than change of materials) and make entry into the store almost effortless. Shopfront design guidelines which specify a range of materials, colors, general theme, and mall concept, allows the retailer to create and put forth his own image, but at the same time helps to establish and reinforce the mall character. Signage improperly handled in monotonous bands can visually deaden the center. On the other hand carefully studied height, placement, and general type of signage, can allow flexibility and at the same time variety.

The atmosphere, image, and/or theme of a shopping center is always firmly established in the major focal space. Focal spaces, especially in enclosed malls, besides being the intersection or midpoint of one or more circulation paths, tend to have architectural features such as, elaborate sky-lights, kinetic sculptures, and/or monumental fountains and statues. In multi-storied malls, focal spaces tend to be centered around escalators and sculptural elevator banks, as in the case of Water Tower Place in Chicago. (see fig. 2.9a and 2.9b) There has been a recent trend to create an activity oriented focal spaces. They include food courts, ice skating rinks, and small drama stages. Focal spaces in open-air malls tend to be defined, much like public squares, by multi-storied buildings. These spaces are usually oriented, like enclosed focal spaces, towards a visual element or a vantage point offering a dramatic view. This is especially true of waterfront centers.

The major focal space is the space that everyone will remember and return to again and again. Here the architect defines the type and image of the mall. This is also the place at which suburban shopping malls turns inward upon themselves: where that other world is created, maintained, and memorized. The

focal space is the public architectural center piece that encloses life and activity. This is what marketing groups promote and people travel hours to reach.

The Shopping Center Aura

Shopping centers began as a direct response to satisfying a demand created by suburban development. That demand established a retail system that provided a satellite retail core in close proximity. But more than that shopping centers have become activity centers, where people venture for entertainment and leisure activity. These centers have created an 'aura' about themselves that emits excitement. They have in a sense become 'shopping Disneylands' that recreate images, times, and places that have very little to do with shopping, but very much to do with city life. The colors, the character, the architectural themes form a world that recalls cherished urban spaces that were conceived and designed for the public e.g. the Greek Agora, the medieval market place, and the American main street. In essence, shopping centers have begun to unseat many urban spaces and become urban and suburban gathering spots. In recent times, many other uses have been added to the usual ingredients of shopping to form mixed use projects. Movie theaters, hotels, residential, and office uses have been added to create an environment that feeds itself.

The opportunity to interact with people, the notion of multiple activities inside and adjacent to malls, the urban context, the themes, the materials, and character all create this aura. A kind of aura particular to urban spaces and especially shopping centers because they replicate urban spaces. "The shopping

center is no longer merely a physical place where retail sales occur. It has become an integral part of the social structure of most communities and will continue to expand in that role in the future. " (8)

CHAPTER THREE

The Recent Emergence of Downtown Shopping Centers

During the last 15 years there has been a movement towards building regional shopping centers in downtowns. This movement was spurred mainly by federal urban policy and diminishing opportunities for suburban retail development. In the late 1950's and early 1960's, federal urban policy encouraged, if not directed, cities to initiate urban renewal development. Ideally these policies were intended to combat inner city "blighted" areas. Towards the end of the urban renewal era, city officials shrewdly began using federal monies to redevelop and improve city centers and transportation infrastructure. Thus began a form of urban development, later fueled by federal grant programs and tax incentives. Downtowns began to experience some notable growth, much of which was a factor of the expansion of downtown office districts, more efficient use of adjacent areas, and an increasing number of workers commuting to central business districts.

The seventies and eighties were marked by an increasing amount of downtown revitalization projects which took the form of pedestrian malls, shopping centers, and mixed-use developments with substantial retail components. During this same period, retail developers became less interested in suburban real estate development. Because suburban areas had been the recipient of a large amounts of development during the fifties, sixties, and early seventies, few desirable development opportunities remained. Much of the existing suburban retail real estate market demand had already been accounted for. At the same

time, suburban residents were becoming more and more conscientious and voiceful about unharnessed development in their communities. This was evident in new zoning and regulatory stipulations that governed and restricted large development. Bernard Frieden and Lynne Sagalyn, in their study on public/private development strategies in downtowns, pointed out that, "...retail development opportunities in the suburbs were no longer as promising as they had been. A network of regional shopping centers was already well established in the suburbs of most major cities, and finding good sites for more malls was getting harder all the time. Compounding the search for sites was a rapid build-up of suburban growth regulations during the early 1970's. Prompted in part by the environmental movement and in part by local opposition to further growth, suburbs across the country were putting into place a network of new and demanding review and permit requirements for proposed developments of all kinds. Further, the mood of local citizens and their representatives was turning increasingly hostile to developments, particularly in areas that had experienced high growth in the recent past. " (9) The Urban Land Institute, in their Shopping Center Development Handbook, points out that, " A major challenge to the shopping center and to its place in the economy occurred at the end of the decade. [1970's] In July 1979, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released a draft of 'A Regional Shopping Center Policy.' The principal objective of this policy was to control the development of regional shopping centers that would be detrimental to the retail areas of existing communities. The presumption was that urban revitalization objectives could not be achieved with out restricting competition." (10) Although this new policy was no longer enforced after the 1980 federal administration change over, it raised the awareness and concerns of many. _With this increase in public opposition,

coupled with a decrease in the availability of desirable development parcels, and a shallow demand market, developers were seeing suburbs as a diminishing development opportunity.

In turn developers began looking else where for new markets and opportunities. Downtown areas were an alternative to suburban retail development. Lower infrastructure cost and financing incentives, such as: Urban Development Action Grants (UDAG), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), industrial bonds, and tax increment financing, provided low-interest funding that offset the otherwise staggering cost of large retail revitalization projects. In urban centers utilities, roads, and site improvements (side walks, curbs, etc.) were already in place. In large suburban developments these costs were usually borne by the developer. In many cases where large infrastructure cost were encountered, city officials usually took on much of this responsibility. Carrying infrastructure costs, as well as, undertaking land assembly, and providing tax benefits to developers, were some of the incentives that city officials provided for many downtown developments in an effort to make them more attractive. Thus came an era of downtown building in which many projects resulted in retail or mixed-use developments.

In recent examples, downtown retail revitalization is approached in one of three ways: the reuse of existing building structures, the extension/connection of existing retailers, and total retail redevelopment. The re-use approach uses existing structures or clusters of buildings, and converts them to retail uses. The extension approach acknowledges existing department store tenants, and attempts to connect them via skyways or below ground passages, in addition to extending the retail district by adding more retailers in the form of an arcade.

The retail redevelopment approach, by far the most expensive and difficult to manage, involves the building of a new retail development that may or may not be connected to the existing retail pattern.

Faneuil Hall market place, Ghirardelli Square, South Street Seaport in New York, and The Pavilion (Old Post Office) in Washington, D.C. all share their reuse of existing building shells in common. This approach benefits the city and the developer in redeveloping existing urban structures with new uses. From an urban design standpoint, the reuse of existing structures leaves intact city fabric developed over time. This helps to maintain a strong architectural image and quality that newer projects rarely provide. In many instances, developers, especially in the rehabilitation of historic structures are subsidized by tax benefits, but are heavily restricted in the scope and extent of changes to historic structures.

Extension/connection approaches involves the reuse of existing retail establishments and structures. Grand Avenue mall in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, begins by connecting existing department stores with skywalks and a shop lined concourses. Other more ambitious approaches consider enclosing entire retail streets to facilitate ease of shopping and the establishment of a new image for an existing shopping area. This approach is successful in the sense that existing retailers are not required to relocate, but can operate during the construction process. Another advantage is that few retailers are uprooted and the existing retailing system is still intact, but hopefully made better.

The third approach, also the most difficult to initiate, is the redeveloped site. This approach, likened to the urban renewal movement, requires the razing of the existing structures and the construction of a new shopping entity. Depending on the size of the site, redeveloped sites can be horizontally or

vertically oriented. Town Square in ST. Paul and Horton Plaza in San Diego, because of their larger sites spread out horizontally. Both are mixed use shopping centers which combine retail, hotel, and office use. Water Tower place in Chicago, and Harold Square in New York, because of the compactness of their sites and allowable floor area ratio (F.A.R.) expand vertically. They circulate pedestrians 'around and up' rather than just along a linear path. Given the urban context of these two highrise shopping centers, they seem to be fairly contextual. Redeveloped sites take on a the responsibility of meshing into the urban fabric a new entity that is of a scale and complexity not encountered frequently. Design teams must be conscious of the urban implications of development of such a scale. Because of the number of actors involved; the city, various planning and zoning boards, the developer, financing partners, major retailers, marketing consultants, and community groups, projects of this sort take from 5-10 years from conception to actual opening. The long process of land acquisition, design reviews, financial backing, and actual construction embarks on a development process that is far from being predictable and streamlined.

From an architectural design standpoint, downtown retail revitalization projects, because of their scale and impact, require careful study into urban design issues that dictate the rebuilding of cities. Architects and developers, are no longer building autonomous centers off turnpike entrances in seas of parked cars, but are building a significant part of the city's retail core. Downtown shopping centers take advantage of a enormous pool of daytime workers, tourist, business related visitors, and entertainment seekers. Their proximity to public transportation and accessibility, being part of the central business district, to highways, interstates, and major thoroughfares is often not obtainable by their suburban counterparts and represent a distinct advantage. For decaying inner

cities, shopping centers bring life and hope to depressed downtown areas, spur development interest, and help to establish a new vibrant image for many older obsolete retail districts. Retail use is one that promotes activity and interaction between public consumers and private enterprise. Much like the city is the most compact concentrated form of urban living, the shopping center is the most compact concentrated form of retail use.

..... **STUDY** and **THEORY**

CHAPTER FOUR

Case Studies: A Look at Downtown Plazas and Places

This case study section will look at two recently completed downtown shopping centers in existing retail districts. It is the intent to establish design concerns that should be addressed in downtown shopping center design. The first project, Horton Plaza completed in 1985 is located in San Diego California. The second case, Lafayette Place in Boston opened in 1984. The actual site and program for Lafayette Place shall be used later in chapter 6 as the basis for a sketch problem. Both Horton Plaza and Lafayette Place are recent examples of downtown shopping center developments, but were conceived in different manners: Horton Plaza being a collection of spaces along a pedestrian path, and Lafayette Place a circular concourse enclosing Lafayette Circle, an internal outdoor dining terrace.

The Horton Plaza revitalization project began as a proposal for development initiated by the Center City Development Corporation (CCDC) in 1972. The shopping center of the same name was the impetus for a major central business core revitalization that included new residential, office, hotel, and retail development. The shopping center and the revitalization project both take their name from a small palm tree lined park on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Broadway. (see fig. 4.1) The park named after Alonzo Horton, who owned a considerable amount of land in downtown San Diego, and the nine block site area, prior to the redevelopment, was rapidly deteriorating and had become a resting place for street dwellers. (11)

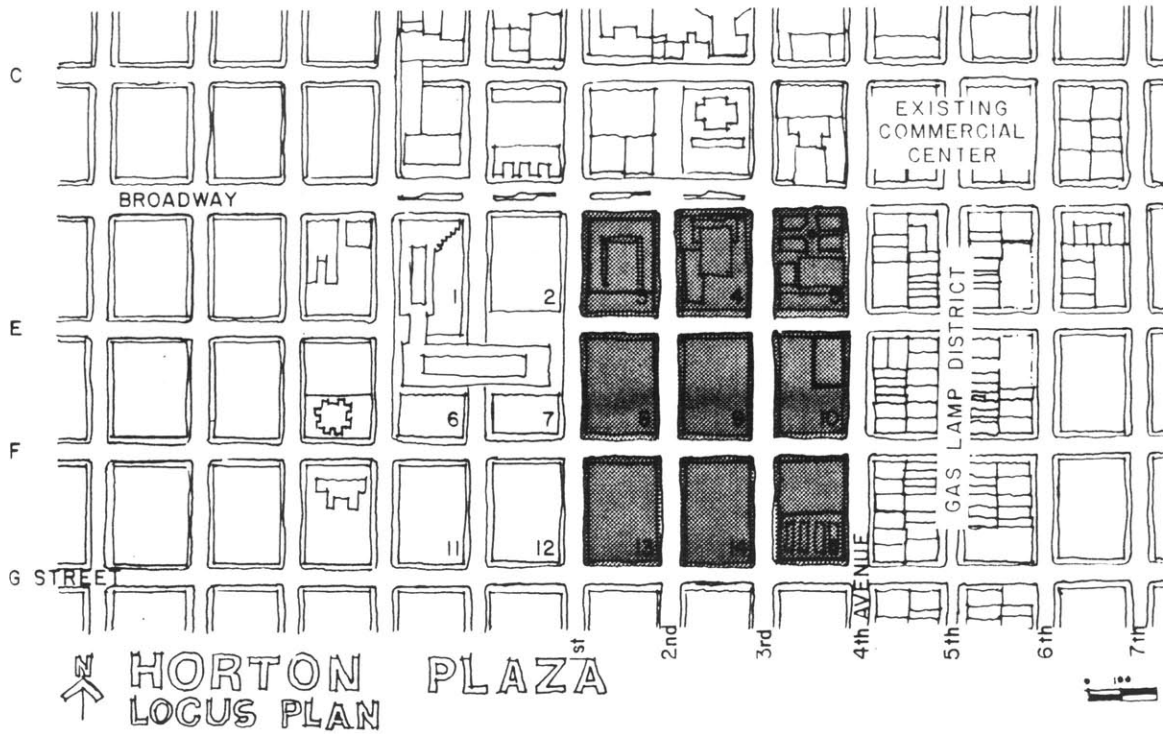


Figure 4.1 Horton Plaza Revitalization Locus Plan

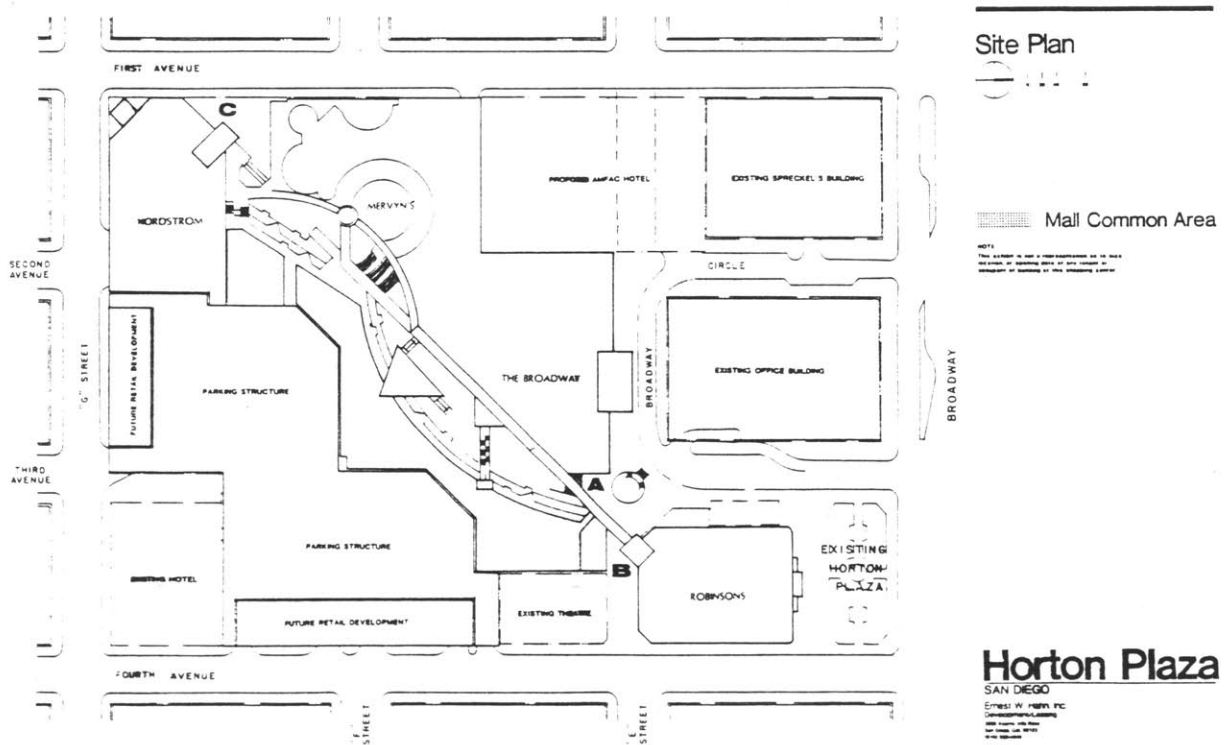
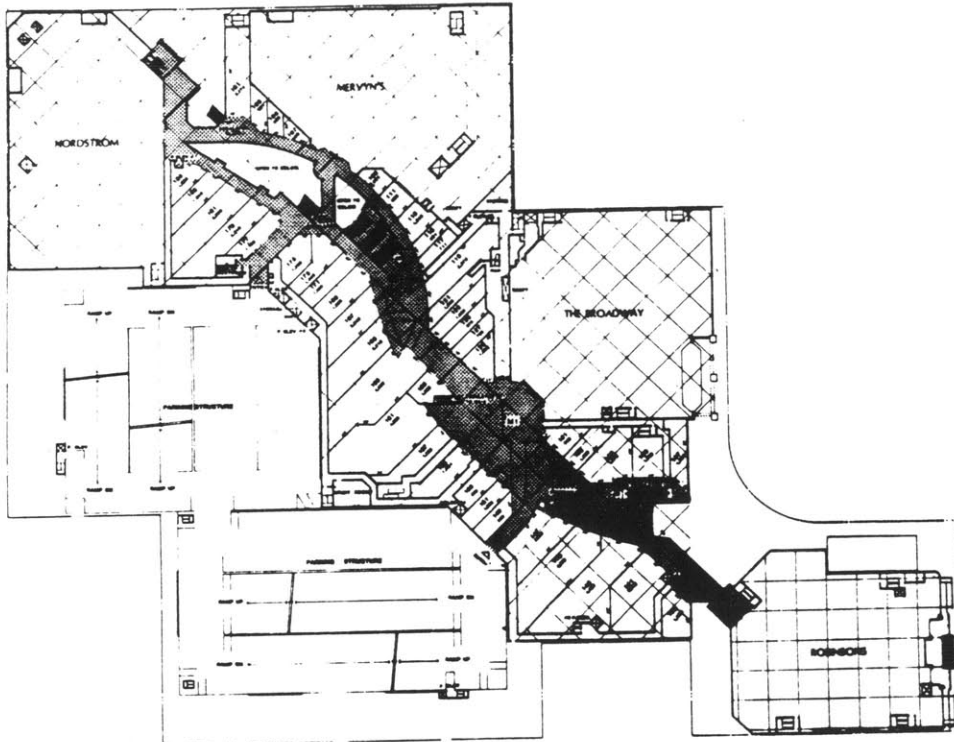


Figure 4.2 Horton Plaza, site plan

The Jerde Partnership, in their design for Horton Plaza, were conscious of the existing pedestrian and vehicular circulation along Broadway, a major thoroughfare, Fifth Avenue, and in the adjacent Gas Lamp district patterns. The design strove to continue the retail life at the street edge, alluded to the suggestion of incremental growth with a "collage" approach, and concentrated not on making the shopping center focus only upon itself, but instead on forming urban spaces in which shopping takes place. The compactness of the design results from the placing of the the mechanics of the center, loading, parking, and servicing, deep inside the complex. The major concourse cleverly connects the rest of the city by view corridors and vistas that allow visual dialogue to exist between the city and the mall. Pedestrians can enter the Horton Plaza's main concourse level through one of the four department stores or one of the three concourse entrances A, B, or C. (see fig. 4.2) The major entrance, at the imaginary intersection of " E " Street and Third Avenue, is marked by an obelisk and a sunken circular court that serves as the entrance to the repertory theatre located on the lower level. Pedestrian circulation along " E " Street is acknowledged and allowed to penetrate under an second story arcade and to flow onto steps that lead to the main concourse. A visual right of way to the waterfront is retained along " E " Street past the arcaded department store entrance and through a portal incorporated in the hotel portion of the center. Third Street, which terminates in the eastern leg of Broadway Circle, also culminates at the sunken court. Here the architect draws one, step by step, up into the concourse. The concourse itself has three levels and runs diagonally through the 6.5 block site. (12) Between the sunken court and the plaza along First Avenue, where the concourse ends, is a series of inter-connected courts, plazas, and terraces. On the main concourse the path, between the major



Level M1

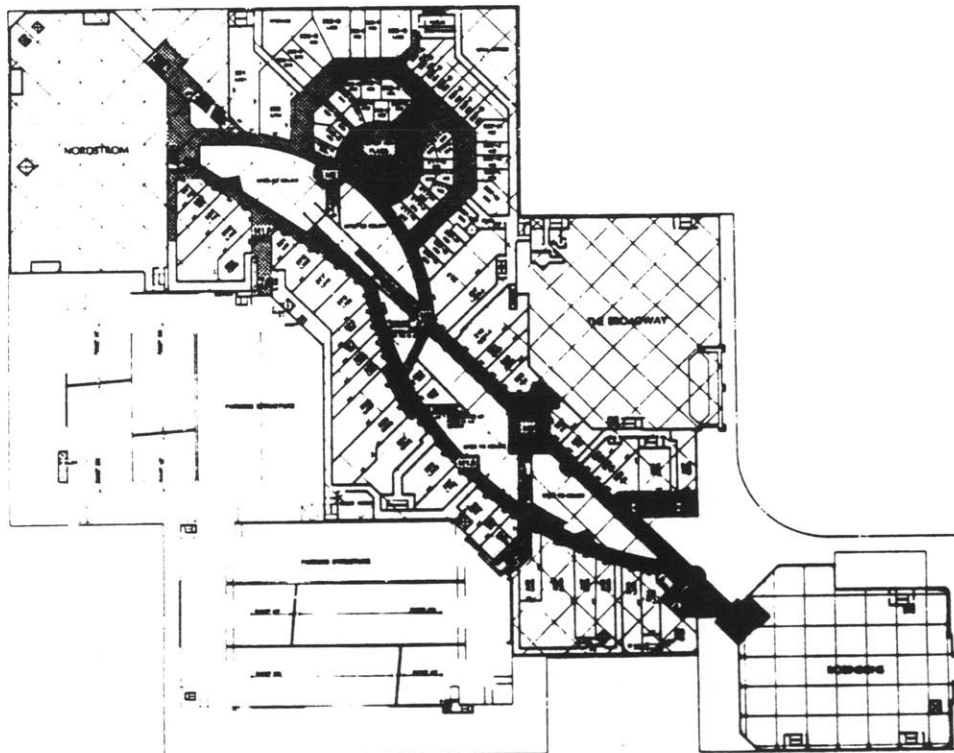


Mail Common Area

Horton Plaza
SAN DIEGO

Ernest W. Horn, Inc.
Construction Planning
1000 La Jolla Village Drive
San Diego, CA 92161
Tel: 619/594-1100

Figure 4.3a Horton Plaza, plan M-1



Level M2



Mail Common Area

Horton Plaza
SAN DIEGO

Ernest W. Horn, Inc.
Construction Planning
1000 La Jolla Village Drive
San Diego, CA 92161
Tel: 619/594-1100

Figure 4.3b Horton Plaza, plan M-2

department stores is lined with retail shops in an single loaded arcade fashion. (see fig. 4.3a) The physical form of the concourse in plan consists of two shallow arcs following a diagonal axis across the site, which is interrupted by ramps, stairs, and escalators, that vertically circulate the shopper. Two upper concourses link the department stores and retail shops. (see fig. 4.3b) The uppermost, open to the sky, is adorned with resting and seating areas, and houses food eateries. The non-linear pedestrian paths on each level are far from predictable. They constantly frame vistas of the concourse itself and the city beyond.

Vehicular traffic along " F " Street is forced to turn left onto Fourth Avenue or feed into the service entrance or one of the three parking entrances. A second major parking entrance/ exit location appears along " G " Street, at Third Avenue. With the exception of the minor parking entrance along First Avenue, the major parking entrance/exits feed into existing streets. The creation of Broadway Circle allows cars to penetrate into the development, and provides drop off points for both the theatre and the hotel, presently under construction.

The department stores, Robinsons, Mervyns, and The Broadway, coordinated by Jerde, were strategically placed at the edges of the site. Because of their size and flexibility in plan, they can front both the street edge and accommodate entrance points on the concourse. This approach, combined with incorporating into the existing hotel on Fourth Avenue, the existing Balboa Theatre, and the Bradley building into the design give the project a image of being developed incrementally, and at the same time establishing a retail edge at the ground level. This approach is even strengthened by placement of new lowrise retail buildings along " G " Street and Fourth Avenue.

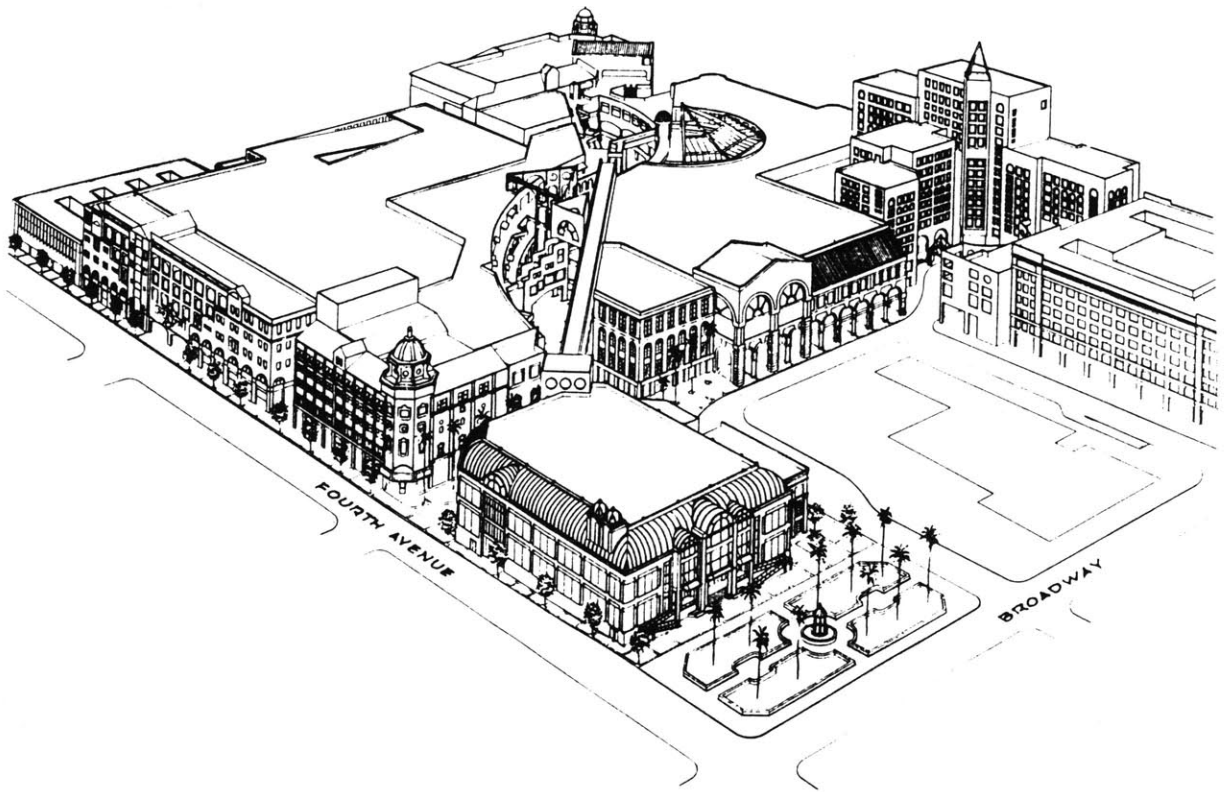
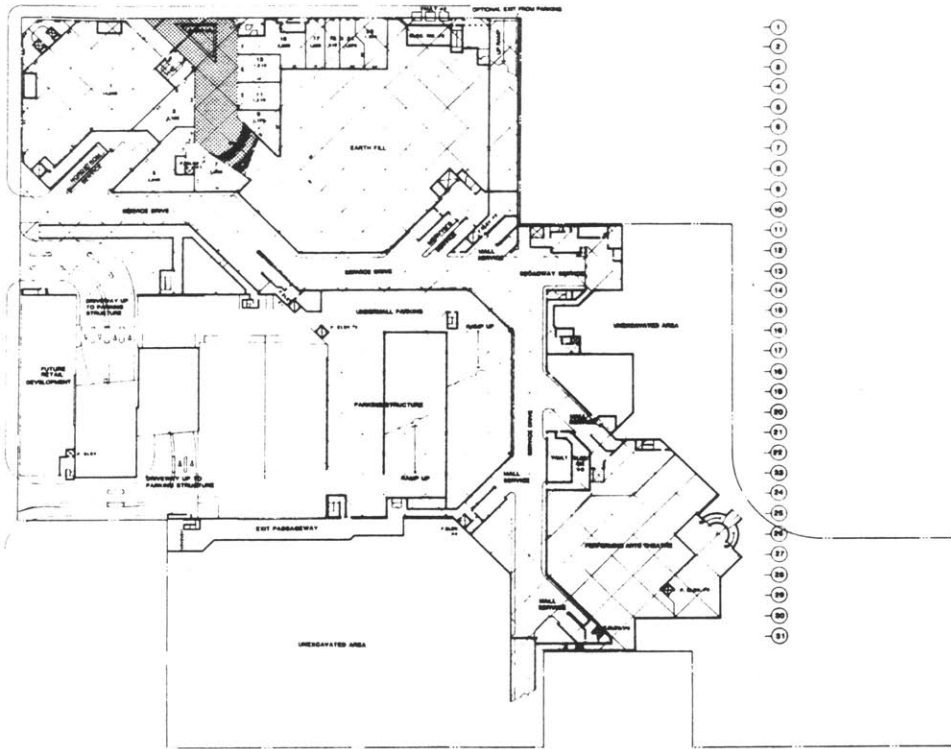


Figure 4.3c Horton Plaza, exterior view

The variation of the heights, shapes, styles, and materials used in Horton Plaza reinforces the incremental growth image, (see fig. 4.3c) which contrasts sharply with the monolithic treatment of other inner city malls, ie. Copley Place in Boston. Jerde, in his design, seems to approach each building component as a separate piece that fits into a connected pedestrian circulation network, (much like a small italian hill-town) instead of considering the center as one unit contained in a seamless monolithic skin. The scale, architectural character of the storefronts, and edge conditions resemble and take design cues from the surrounding retail district.

The major thrust of the plan makes a noticeable attempt to create a diagonal relationship across the site. Horton Plaza dose not, however form a clear extension of the San Diego, retail district. The pedestrian and view corridors along " E " Street acknowledges the Gas Lamp District and Fifth avenue, but because of the parallel relationship of the Gas Lamp district and the Horton Plaza site, a direct extension would be a bit tricky. West of the site is a series of taller office buildings and new high density residential developments that forms a use boundary, and contrasts greatly with the older lowrise retail use to the east. In massing, Horton Plaza, acts as a transition element between the two use areas.

Loading, servicing, and parking are cleverly concealed by imbedding them within the complex. Major loading and servicing are handled on the P-1 level under the main concourse. (see fig. 4.3d and 4.3e) The loading entrance and service drive are sandwiched between the lower level of the parking structure and the rear of the ground level shops. This " out of sight " approach utilizes the interior of the site that has no retail edge or special natural lighting requirements.



Level P1



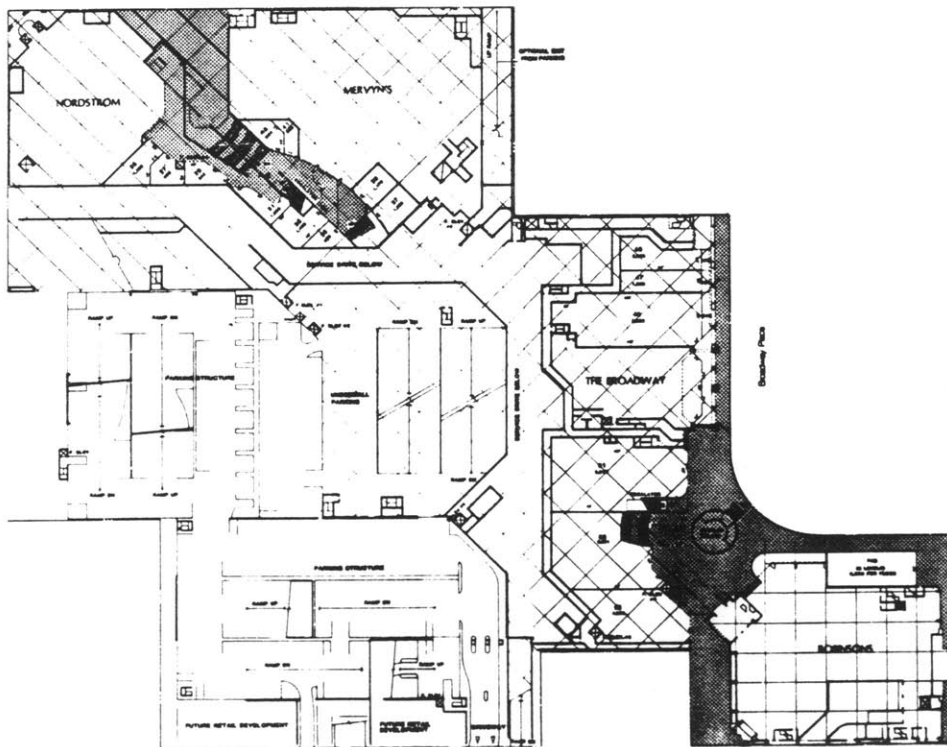
Mall Common Area

NOTE
This symbol is not a representation of the area
location of existing walls or the location of
location of existing walls or the location of
location of existing walls or the location of

Horton Plaza
SAN DIEGO

Ernst W. Horn, Inc.
Development/Architecture
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San Diego, CA 92161
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Figure 4.3d Horton Plaza, plan p-1



Level P2



Mall Common Area

NOTE
This symbol is not a representation of the area
location of existing walls or the location of
location of existing walls or the location of
location of existing walls or the location of

Horton Plaza
SAN DIEGO

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Figure 4.3e Horton Plaza, plan p-2

The servicing corridors of the retail levels are also double loaded: one side facing the closed edge of the department store and the other facing the rear of the individual shops. Each corridor is vertically connected by service elevators.

Two above-ground parking structures are accessed through strategically located points along the perimeter on Fourth Avenue and " G " Street. Each parking level has direct access to a corresponding concourse level.

The delivery and unloading of merchandise, the servicing of the department stores and shops, and massive parking structures are all inter-connected and located in the interior of the site. This approach of internalizing the mechanics of the center frees the exterior edge from unsightly uses. In Horton Plazas' case the depth of the site was a great advantage to the design and not a common situation in all urban shopping center developments.

In many cases, new developments, in deteriorating areas tend to be inward focussing as not to invite participation or allow views of the blighted areas. The promise of new residential and office development adjacent to the Horton Plaza parcels contributed to the openness of the design to the adjacent areas.

The second case study, Lafayette Place, in Boston, is a 3.5 acre private retail/hotel development located just south of Downtown Crossing along Washington Street. Adjacent to Jordan Marsh, one of the two major department store anchors in the retail area, Lafayette Place houses 150 shops, a 500 room hotel, and a 1300 underground parking garage. (see fig. 4.4)

In plan, including the Jordan Marsh store, Lafayette Place creates a larger superblock which encloses Lafayette Circle, a 3000 square foot circular dining court. (see fig.4.5a and 4.5b) The design intent, from a circulation point of view, seems to be twofold. One intention was to draw pedestrians from the subway kiosk on Summer Street through the Jordan Marsh store in into the main

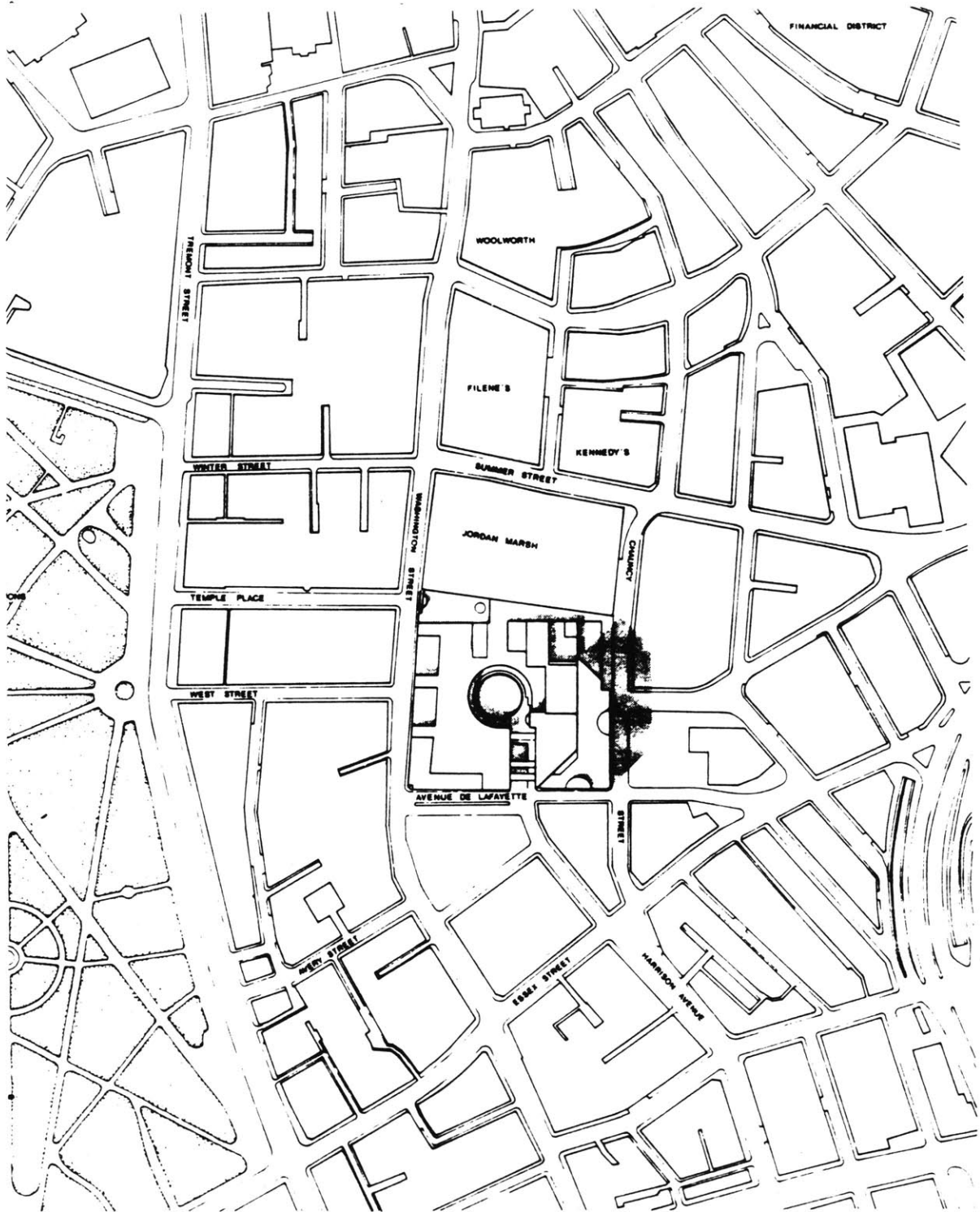
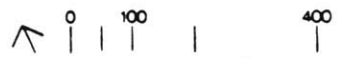


Figure 4.4 Lafayette Place, site plan



circulation concourse. It was hoped that some pedestrian flow would come from Washington Street, as well as, along Temple street, originating at the Park subway station on Tremont. The second intention appears to be to gather shoppers from the Temple Place entrance and the two interior Jordan Marsh mall entrances, and engage them into a circular loop. As a diagram, Jordan Marsh takes on the role of the anchor tenant magnet and the concourse forming pedestrian path looped back around to its' origin, the anchor tenant. No attempt is made to connect Chauncy Street or Place de Lafayette into the pedestrian circulation path. From Place de Lafayette pedestrians receive little indication that the circular dining court or the interior concourse exists.

Mitchell/Guirgola, the architects, in the actual built plan makes some attempts to double load the individual retail shops along Washington Street, with entrances both on the street and the interior concourse. Little effort is made to enliven the street edge, on Chauncy and Place de Lafayette except for a few display cases. The upper zone of the facades are, in general, uneventful and are speckled with ventilation ducts.

The width of the side walks along the edges of the development are inadequate and provide little room for viewing into the shops or passing other pedestrians. This is evident on the Place de Lafayette frontage where the planted trees, not even mature, have already grown against the building. (see fig. 4.6) The existing Jordan Marsh building creates additional sidewalk width at the street level by setting the glass line back creating a overhang. This cue was not taken advantage of in the design of Lafayette Place.

The height of Lafayette Place, as a massing volume, (with the exception of the hotel tower) appears appropriate. The architects created a monolithic base. The tower probably located in the most unobtrusive location, does little to

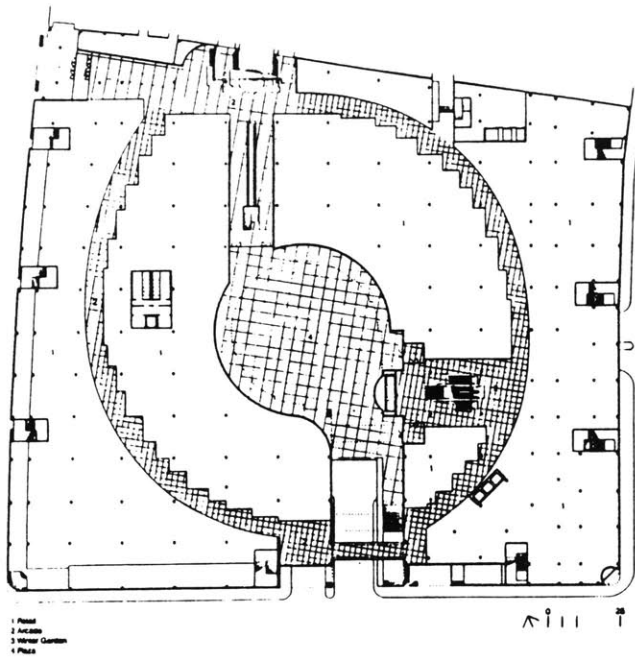


Figure 4.5a Lafayette Place, plan level +1

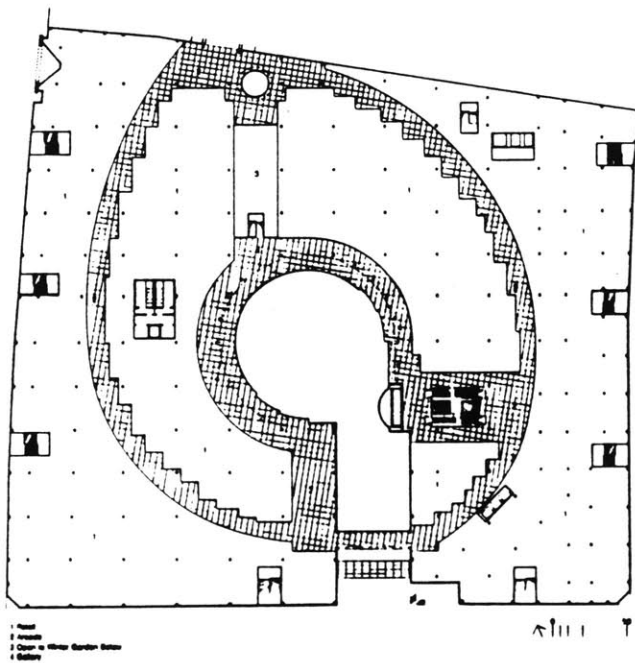


Figure 4.5b Lafayette Place, plan level +2

physically reduce, by means of setbacks or material changes, the mass as it comes down to the street. (see fig 4.7) Although the materials are contextual, in the sense that they are brick, the color and the subtle change in tones of grey do very little to match the earth tones of Jordan Marsh building or any other surrounding building.

The architectural vocabulary of the Washington Street facade, pilaster lanterns, and shallow fake canopies do very little to blend in with the character of the Washington Street district, which mostly consist of individual exterior entrance lobbies, large glass display panels, canopies, overhangs, and signage. Instead Lafayette Place attempts to convey/create an image that is foreign to the immediate district. Architecturally, like the suburban shopping center model, Lafayette Place treats itself as a single building. It creates its own internalized function that relies very little on what surrounds it, which may be an attitude carried over from earlier suburban shopping center models.

Loading is shared with the Jordan Marsh store, and occurs on the third basement level. Each retail floor is vertically connected by freight elevators in the northeast corner of the building. Some merchandise delivery must come through the concourse area, and is no doubt limited to early hours before the mall is open to the public.

The parking garage is conveniently placed underground with one entrance/exit on Chauncy Street and one on Place de Lafayette. The entrance/exit along Chauncy Street feeds directly onto Bedford to the west of the site. (see fig. 4.7) The second entrance/exit point feeds uneasily onto Harrison Avenue. This required a street alignment change, the creation of Place de Lafayette, to accommodate a vehicular connection from the central artery to Washington Street.

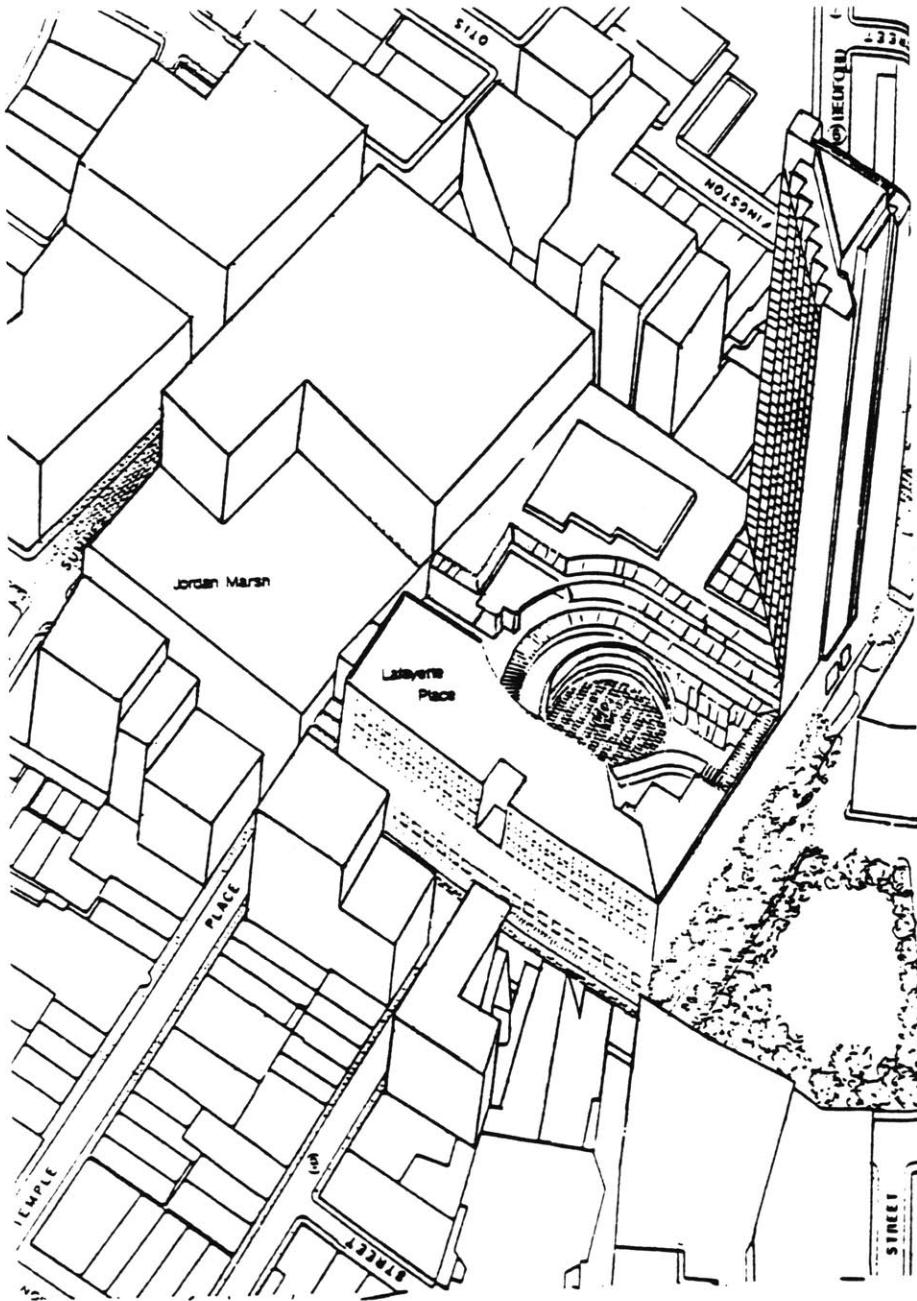


Figure 4.6 Lafayette Place, view

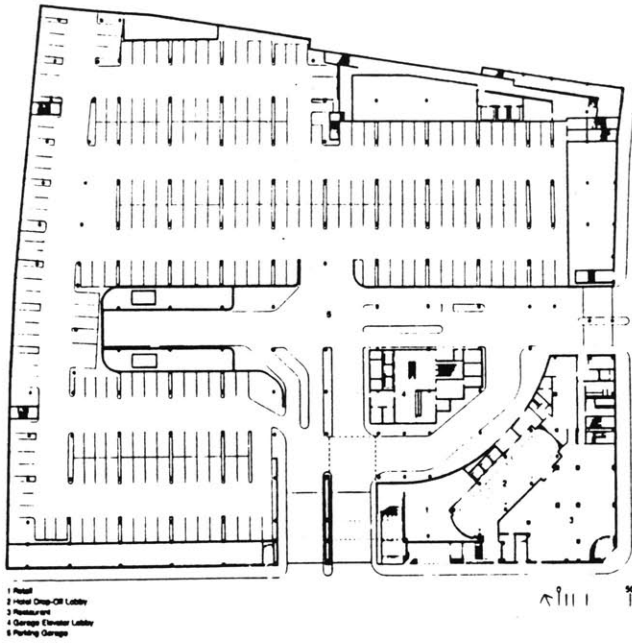


Figure 4.7 Lafayette Place, plan level -1

Loading and servicing seems to be handled successfully, but the parking exit/entrance along Place de Lafayette seems a bit awkward and does little to reinforce this notion of a grand tree lined boulevard. Place de Lafayette has little street activity, or fenestration, and is hampered by the vehicular traffic in an out of the parking structure. Lafayette Circle, designed to be the major focal space, is almost undetectable from the street or even the mall itself. The small entrance off of Place de Lafayette seems hidden and uneventful. The development, like many of the suburban shopping center models, is inward focusing, and barely interacts with the existing retail district.

Like Horton Plaza, Lafayette place conceptually was thought of as an impetus for further development of a deteriorating urban district, which one might suspect by noting the poor condition of the area to the south. Unlike Horton Plaza, Lafayette Place in conceptual design could have addressed the exterior of the site in a better manner, and been more contextual in its color, materials, and general attitude about its relationship to the street and the surrounding district.

CHAPTER FIVE

Urban Design Guidelines for Downtown Shopping Centers

In establishing these guidelines, the main objective is to view downtown shopping centers as traditional public spaces, contrary to the evolution of the sub-urban model and its origins. The underlying concept is that the downtown shopping center should be conceived of first and foremost as a public space that is conducive to merchandising, and which also satisfies the requirements of the city, the area's use, and the developer. Theoretically this objective can be reached by approaching the design of a downtown shopping center as an urban design problem, not as a single use building.

Like all urban design projects the downtown shopping center can responsively address the retail district by paying close attention to pedestrian circulation patterns, points of egress, permeation of the center edge, provisions for pedestrian activity along those edges, concealment of basic service requirements, dictation of the building form that relates positively to the urban context, orientation of the center in such a way as to connect it to the existing retail district, and totally integrating the center's heart (the major focal space) into the urban fabric of the city.

As with any urban design project, the analytical stage is most important in accessing the site and determining its opportunities and constraints. It is from this that responsive urban design approaches are conceived. The opportunity and constraint analysis, along with the design guidelines relating specifically to

downtown shopping centers, should establish responsive approaches to the site which attempt to build upon or rebuild parts of the downtown fabric, in addition to acknowledging the opportunities of the particular site and utilizing them.

Urban Design Guidelines

1. Downtown shopping center pedestrian entrances and circulation patterns should be clear, logical, and connected with the existing patterns in that district.

In establishing pedestrian circulation paths, the origin, direction of movement, and destination must be acknowledged in the design. Pedestrian paths in shopping centers should tap this flow and redirect it along the center's concourse, and /or redistribute it logically. The concourse should establish a pedestrian volume along the storefront edges. This natural volume can be increased by movement, as we saw with the arcade and dumb-bell model, between the department store magnets, or destination point, two piazzas etc. In other words, the path should not necessarily be arbitrarily determined , but be functional, in the sense that it occurs along some natural pre-existing pedestrian movement route that connects two spaces or generators of pedestrian flow. Entrances to these downtown shopping centers should be located in such a way as to form a portal into an environment that feeds off the pedestrian volume. Ideally downtown shopping centers should not only be thought of as destination points in themselves that generate their own flow, but also as nets that catch natural currents.

2. The shopping center perimeter edge should be visually and physically permeated by the use inside and provide opportunities for pedestrian activity along that edge.

The suburban shopping center model is typified by blank perimeter walls behind which lie service corridors and stock areas of individual retailers. In the transplanted urban model, this placement of service areas, because of the need for physical and visual activity along the street, is no longer acceptable.

The suburban center model concentrates on establishing a world inside the center which contrasts with the unappealing sea of parked cars that lie just beyond the walls. Because of the differences of context between suburbia and downtowns, this organizational approach is no longer valid.

It is important that, where possible, a visual connection through street display windows into the actual concourse area be established. Downtown shopping center edges should resemble traditional downtown department stores that incorporate large street level display windows that entice the shopper by giving a glimpse of what lay inside. Some display windows could alternate as portals that provide a view of the shopping center concourse through the store, and sufficiently deep display cases that advertise merchandise. Some individual shop entrances along the shopping center perimeter walls should exist to allow pedestrian activity to remain along the retail street. Obviously every shop cannot have a street entrance, but perhaps larger double loaded tenant spaces, if marketed properly, could be leased to larger national chain tenants who would to generate the pedestrian volume to justify dual entrances.

By enlivening the perimeter of downtown shopping center complexes via visual and physical connections to the retail street edges, the suburban shopping

center model can actually become a contributing component of the retail district. These new city shopping centers could not only contribute to the character and retail function of the street, but also maintain the character and cohesiveness of the shop-lined concourse inside.

3. The basic shopping center mechanics such as: loading, refuse disposal, merchandise distribution, maintenance stations, and parking should be compact, functional, and handled out of sight.

In suburban shopping models, these functions are usually located on the edges of the center itself. It is not uncommon to observe loading and maintenance areas carefully tucked and sometimes concealed behind centers. In urban areas especially in the central business district, perimeter location of these services must be avoided. A few cases exist, especially in specialty centers, where the visual experience of loading and unloading merchandise is integral to the character of the center. Places like Pike's Place Market in Seattle, encourage the visibility of fish delivery (to give the impression of fresh fish delivered daily) to reinforce the theme and marketing character of the center.

Loading and refuse disposal, in central business district shopping centers, should be handled below ground. Some centers provide straight forward routes from the street to underground loading docks, via long and cumbersome ramps. Recent technology has provided truck lifts, and rotating platforms that reduce the required ramp length and turn-around area needed to maneuver large tractor trailer vehicles in and out of centers. Vehicular loading routes and/or areas should be carefully concealed from the shopper, but at the same time be located

as to facilitate ease of access and distribution of merchandise. Brunel Center in Swidon Britain , establishes a loading dock three stories above the ground floor. (see fig. 5.1) For low rise districts, this seems to be an acceptable solution, but for mid-rise communities or high-rise central business districts, this solution is as unsightly as a street level location. Other downtown commercial developments utilize available rear alleys, and secondary streets to provide low profile locations for such tasks. An ideal solution would be to establish a below grade service drive that services entire blocks and districts. To implement this approach into the existing fabric with minimal construction would be almost impossible, but in large scale redevelopment projects this approach deserves some consideration. Service corridors can be used for merchandise distribution and also provide a second means of egress into the individual shops, which satisfies some emergency exit requirements. In early suburban models these corridors were placed along the perimeter of the center forming an enclosing ring. Recent approaches, like the one used in Horton Plaza, 'sandwich' service areas and corridors between retail units, and department stores. Vertical service shafts, elevators and stairs, penetrate each floor and branch out to connect individual units. These corridors then penetrate through to the pedestrian concourse to facilitate ease of maintenance.

4. The building form, including the selection and use of materials, the height and volume of the new addition, and the architectural expression, should relate to the make up of the existing district.

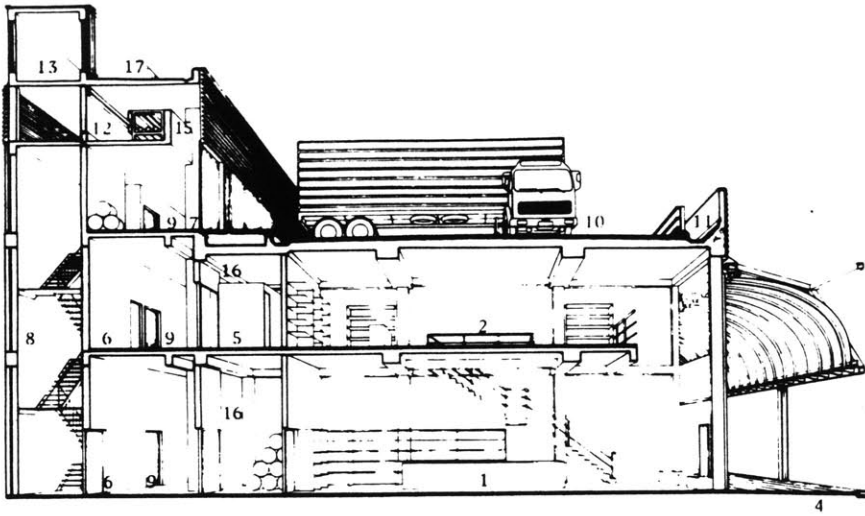


Figure 5.1 Brunel Center, section

The new city shopping center should appear and function as part of the retail district. This requires a careful examination of the characteristics that establish a sense of urban place, including a contextual sense of use and type of material, as well as the color and texture of the facade. The Chicago school of architecture known for its tri-partite elevational division of the facade into the base, the mid-section, and the cornice. Some Bostonian retail facades, especially on the north and south market buildings, that make up Quincy Market, express a repetitive rhythm and fenestration arrangement that is repeated and recognized as something particular to Boston and the market area. Washington Street has a character that express incremental growth of individual shopfront buildings aligned along a narrow street edge. These groupings are unified by their use of materials, terra cotta, and their fenestration sizes and proportions, their heights, and their tri-partite and rhythmical make up.

Established building heights, cornice and base lines should be acknowledged in an effort to join the new in line with it's context. To expand a cabbage patch you would not plant carrots, but you may plant lettuce. The volume of new retail additions should be carefully addressed as to be compatible. In areas typified by narrow vertically oriented buildings, one would not want to propose one mammoth monolithic structure that dwarfs and takes respect from the small scale character of the existing buildings.

Real estate development pressures often dictate building to the maximum floor area ratio (F.A.R.) allowable. This is a function of the value of land, the price paid, and the notion of maximizing value creation. Setbacks, concentration of the bulk of the building in the middle of the site, and utilization of space below grade all contribute to satisfying the allowable area requirements, but can also avoid the visual impact of being out of scale and context.

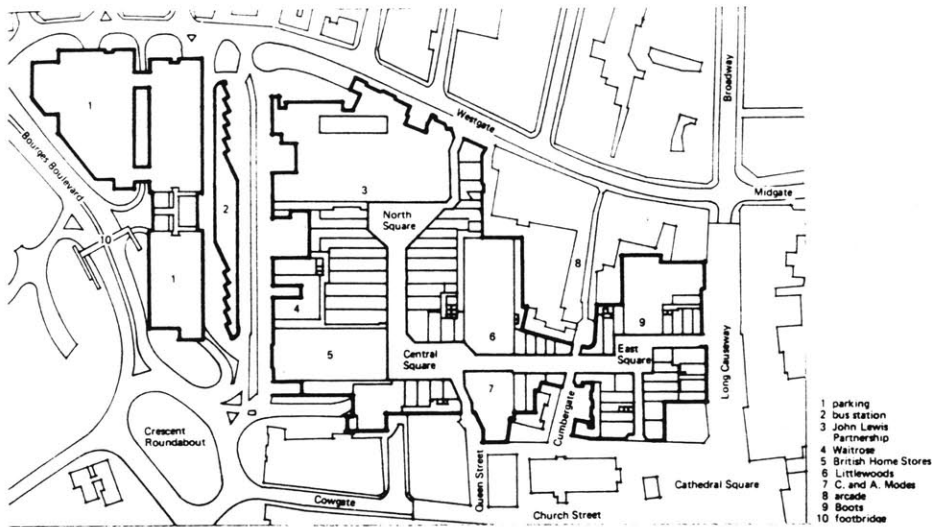


Figure 5.2a Queensgate Center, ground floor plan

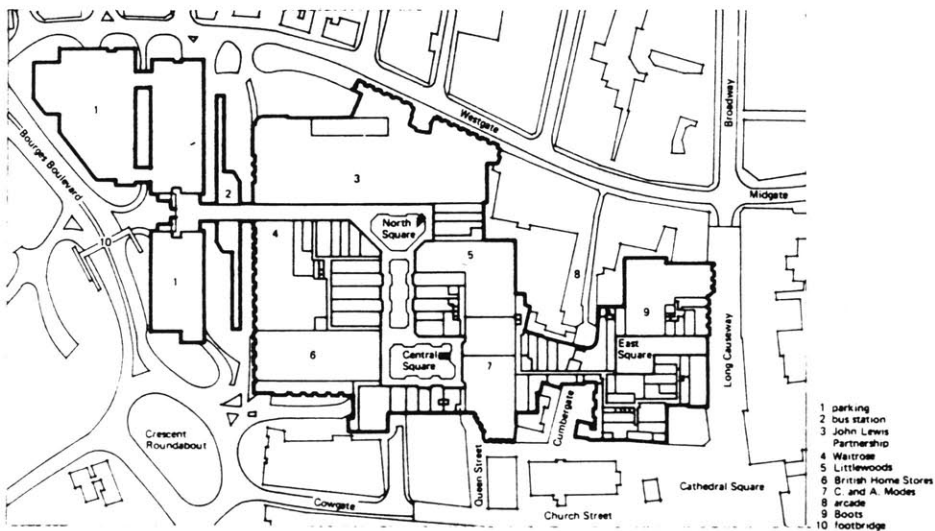


Figure 5.2b Queensgate Center, upper ground floor plan

The selection of architectural vocabulary (although this may vary from architect to architect) can be approached by assessing the context and searching for design cues, rather than arbitrarily establishing a palette of materials, colors, and textures. Cues may include material uses, window proportions, fenestration patterns, and shopfront configurations on existing buildings that would allow the new design to reinforce the sense of place and time established by the surrounding buildings.

One design approach involves the preservation or re-use of several key existing buildings. At Horton Plaza, the hotel at Fourth Avenue and G Street, the Balboa theater, and the Bradley building were, at the request of local citizens groups, required to be incorporated into the design. At Queensgate Center in Peterborough, United Kingdom, the center was developed around key buildings. (see fig. 5.2a and 5.2b) In addition to retaining the actual architecture, this approach also sets the stage for decisions regarding the overall scale, materials, and architectural vocabulary used in the new construction. This "design around" approach also reinforces the notion of incremental growth by the direct adjacency of the old with the new.

Determining and establishing the building form, if done properly, reinforces the unity and cohesiveness of an existing district. By extracting the immediate area's characteristics (the materials, massing, facade treatment, and fenestration patterns) retail districts can be expanded and revitalized instead of implanting entities that neither look like, nor function like anything that surrounds it.

5. The main focal space should be integrated into the urban fabric, and become a public space visible and accessible from the street.

Public spaces designed for people include plazas, market, gardens, courts, avenues, and squares. These spaces, varying in their size, shape, orientation, and enclosure, create rooms for interaction and communication. They are usually located along paths, and in many cases are origins or destination points of pedestrians. Shopping center focal spaces form public areas within private entities. In urban settings these spaces should be designed as part of the urban fabric, and should relate to it as such. They should be located along a path, or serve as an intermediate destination point. Much like Quincy Market can be considered to be an intermediate destination point between City Hall and the waterfront, so should focal spaces of ideally integrated new city shopping centers. This approach has the advantage of tapping into an existing flow and not trying to generate that flow by some artificial means. The approach of using the centers as an intermediate destination point may be valid, as long as it is a supplementary draw, and not the primary source of pedestrian volume. Much like the earlier arcades that tapped the pedestrian flow between two heavily travelled streets, the new city shopping center, as an urban design approach, should follow that rationale.

The underlying concept that each of the design guidelines strives to establish is that the new city shopping center model should not be oriented upon itself, but should be conceptually conceived and developed, first and foremost, as a vibrant public space that facilitates shopping. The guidelines are directed at the design issues incorporated in establishing a shopping center and all its necessary components into the downtown context. The suburban shopping center

model is the epitome of compact, condensed retail use, and functions well in that respect. But the suburban model does not satisfy the contextual requirements of the city. The inner city's needs are vastly different from the decentralized, expansive, vehicular-orientated metropolitan area. To impose a model that is antithetical to the nature of cities and retail districts is absurd. However, with some modification this suburban model could be molded to respond to the downtown's needs.

ANALYSIS.....

CHAPTER SIX

Sketch Problem: Galleria West

Given the guidelines from the previous chapter this section proposes to apply these standards to the Lafayette Place site in the form of a sketch problem. The sketch problem assumes that the shopping center has not yet been built and the city has called for a proposal for development. The basic program will be altered and the same environmental conditions assumed, including the available parcels and street alignments. This chapter will start with a site analysis, and continue with a conceptual design indicating the orientation and layout of the development, description of the major spaces, and general massing. The aim is to test the feasibility of the guidelines. An evaluation of the guidelines themselves, and insights and recommendations for downtown shopping center design will be discussed in the conclusions.

The Context

The original Lafayette Place site is bounded on the west by Washington Street, the north by Avon Street. Chauncy Street forms the eastern edge, and Exeter and Rowe Places the southern boundaries. (see fig 6.1)

North of the site is Downtown Crossing at the intersection of Washington and Winter/Summer Streets. Filenes and Jordan Marsh, two department store magnets, occupy the north east and south east corners respectively, and also generate a large pedestrian volume. This intersection, in 1982 was responsible for \$373 million dollars worth of sales annually (13), and is served by major bus lines and underground public transportation. West of Washington along Tremont Street is the Boston Common, the major green of the city. Two secondary

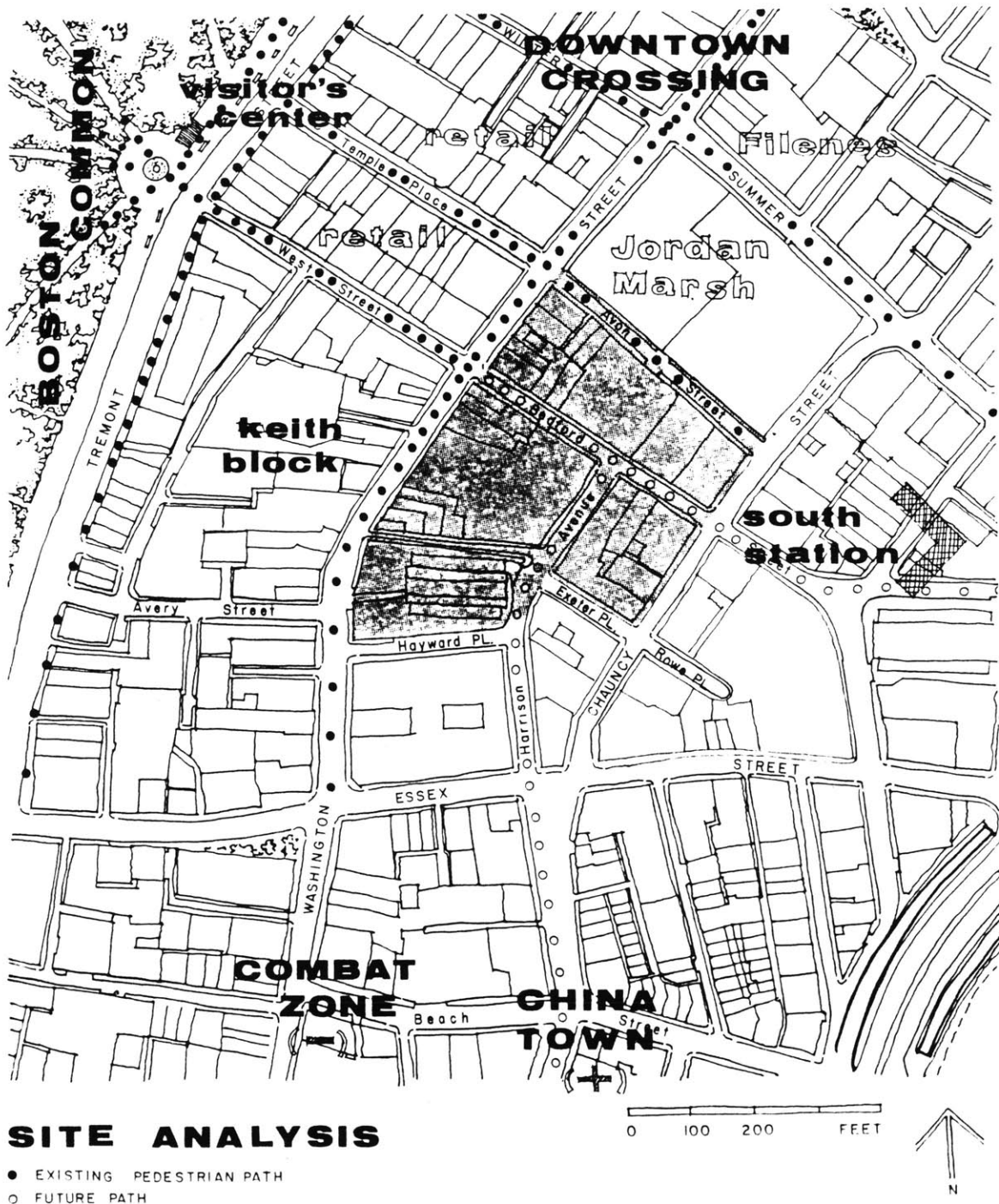


Figure 6.1 Galleria West Site Analysis

streets, Temple Place and West Street provide access to Tremont, as well as to views to the Common. Temple Place feeds directly into Avon, and West Street into Bedford. On axis with West and Bedford Streets at Tremont, is a major public fountain. Being a focal piece in the Common, and also the culmination of a series of individual park paths, the fountain is adjacent to the Boston visitors center, an origin of a potential pedestrian flow of visitors. West of the site, between Tremont and Washington Streets, is the Keith Block a cluster of deteriorating theaters, commercial, and office space. Although the buildings are in poor condition, many of which are on the National Registry of Historic Places and could be returned to their original splendor. The average height of each building is seventy five feet (approx six to seven stories). Directly south of the site is the Hayward Street Essex building. The one hundred foot structure, formerly housing the Keith Essex Theater, provides an excellent opportunity for reuse.

On the other side of Essex Street is the Chinatown district which houses ethnic oriented restaurants, shops, and service related businesses. A definite asset to the lower Washington street district, the themed environment provides a desirable source of evening and late night entertainment, much needed in the area. Adjacent to Chinatown is the Combat zone, a collection of adult book stores, and pornography houses. It is also known of as a place of heavy drug trafficking and prostitution. Undesirable as a use, the Combat Zone is and has been the target of a series of revitalization efforts. Ideally new development adjacent to the Combat Zone should attempt to positively address the area instead of turning its back and avoiding it totally.

The buildings surrounding the Lafayette Place site are poorly maintained and in desperate need of rehabilitation. During the design and development of Lafayette Place, revitalization efforts aimed at the lower Washington Street area were being discussed, and are slowly being implemented. The buildings themselves provide an excellent source of inspiration for the height, massing, and architectural expression of the new development. They also could contribute to the theme and sense of place so very important in shopping center development.

The Site

The strongest asset of the site is its frontage along Washington Street, and its adjacency to the Jordan Marsh store, both a source of pedestrian volume. Washington Street also provides the needed high traffic frontage to satisfy marketing and real estate concerns of the development team. The proximity to the Boston Common and the axial relationship along west street with the fountain and visitors center are assets that the existing design failed to take advantage of.

The original program called for approximately 300,000 square feet of retail space, a 500-suite hotel, and provisions for a 1300 car parking facility. The program used in the sketch design retains the retail space requirement, but reduces the hotel requirement 25% and substitutes approx 250 units of market rate housing. To encourage late evening and late night attraction a movie cinemaplex and a fitness center were added. A Downtown Crossing economic strategy study indicated an available market for residential use in the area, as well as a need for late night entertainment uses. (14) The residential

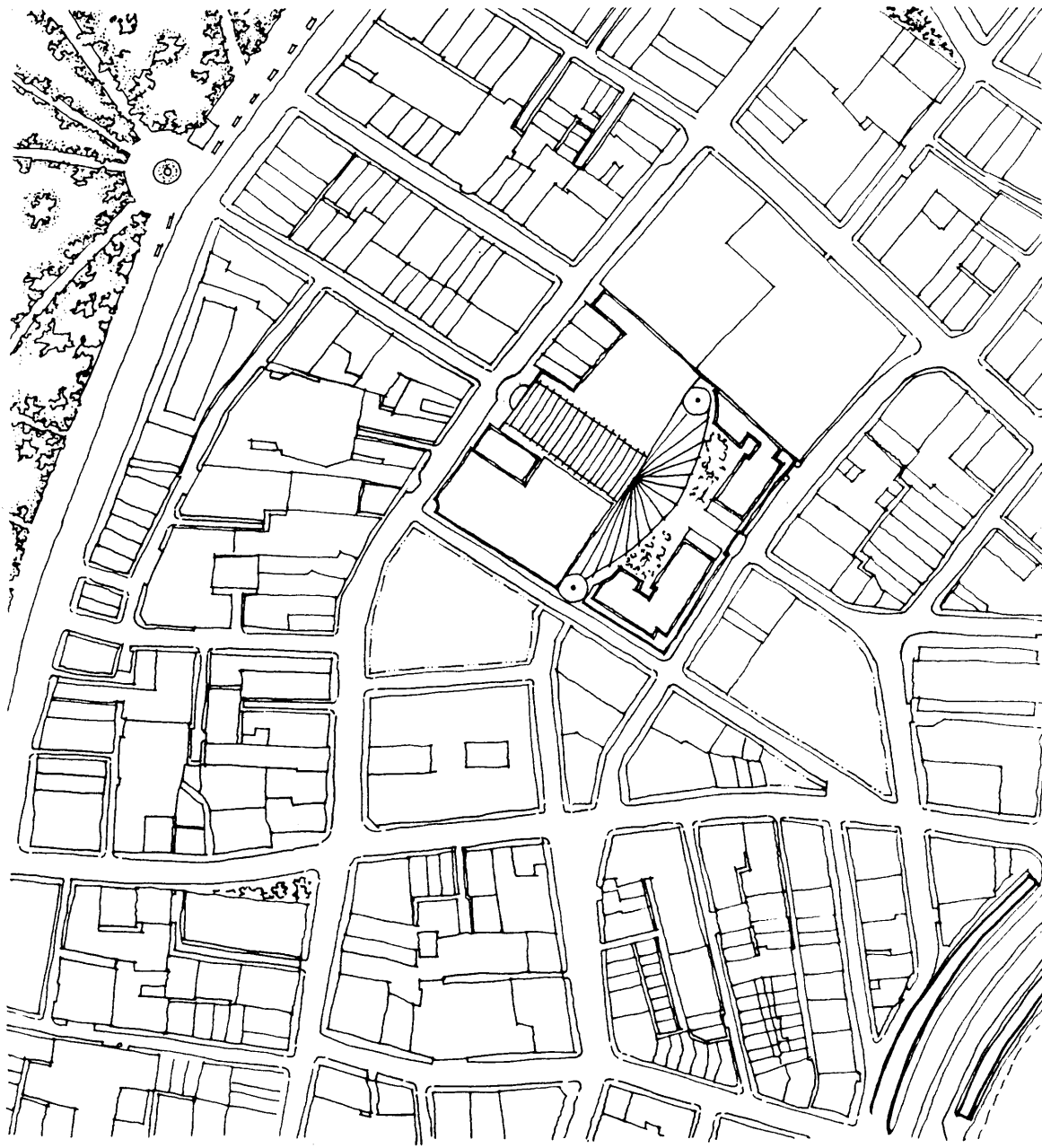
units, cinemaplex, and the fitness center would provide an additional source of pedestrian volume at the less active end of the site and encourage further development and reuse in the immediate area.

The Sketch

The sketch design, influenced by the design guidelines, attempts to respect the existing patterns in the retail district, and suggest phasing the development, and perhaps selecting more than one architect to design different components. To insure a contextual relationship between the old and the new, several existing buildings along Washington Street were kept to frame the major entrance and set the stage for the character of the development. (see fig. 6.2)

In plan, the sketch design, Galleria West, takes advantage of the axial relationship beginning at the Boston Common fountain and visitors center and continuing along West and Bedford Streets to the Kingston Street fork. This approach retains the view corridor between the Park and the developing area east of the site. The design also attempts to benefit from the natural pedestrian patterns along that path. South Station, a planned transportation node, is another possible pedestrian origin and destination point that would further support this pedestrian alignment. (see fig. 6.3a and 6.3b)

Along this path is a three story arcaded space in addition to a lower level concourse open to grade. The arcade is enclosed by a barrel vaulted skylight above that emits natural light and forms identifiable references recognizable from the outside. (see fig. 6.4) The semi-circular entrance plaza creates a spatial relief along Washington Street, and provides a prominent major entry into the center. The major entrance also recalls some notions of the fountain at the other end of West Street.



SITE PLAN

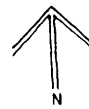
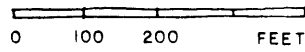


Figure 6.2 Galleria West, site plan

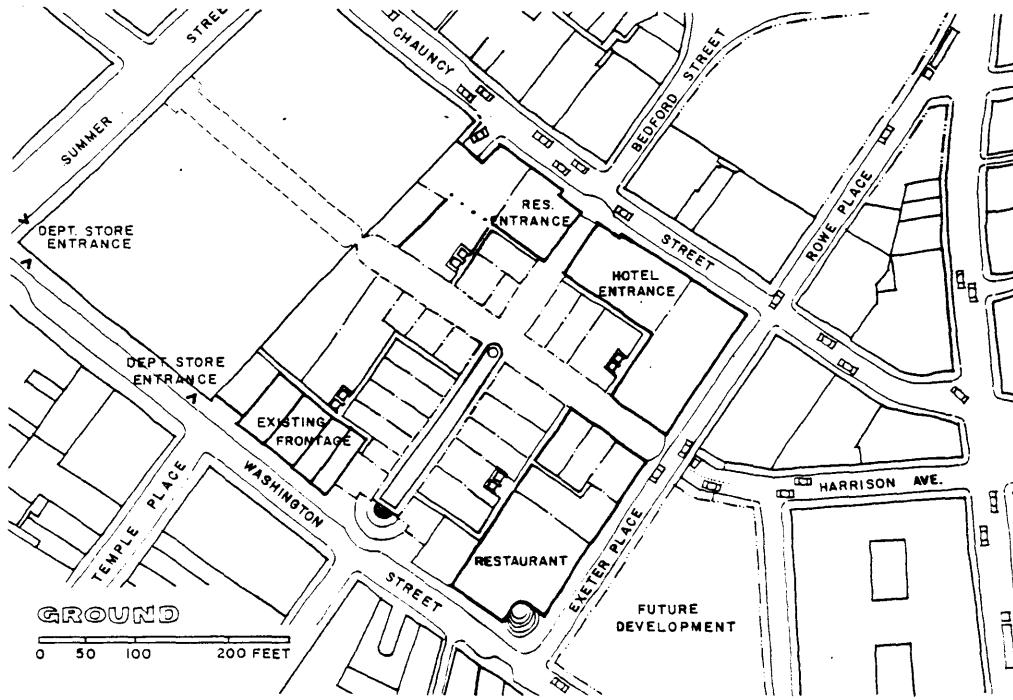


Figure 6.3a Galleria West, ground plan

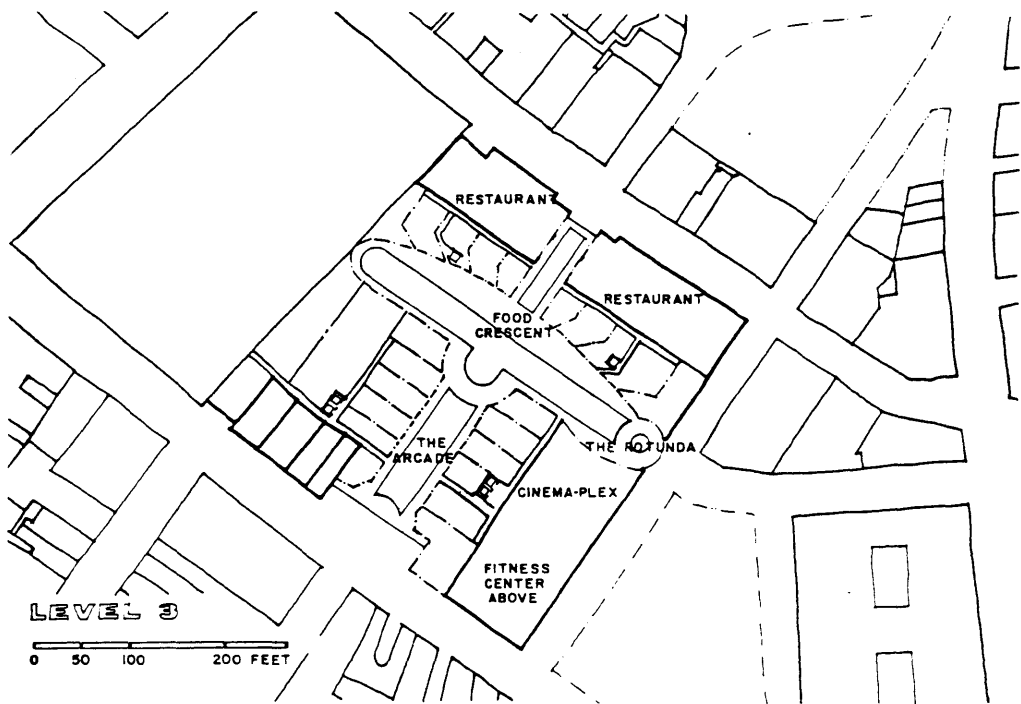


Figure 6.3b Galleria West, level 3 plan

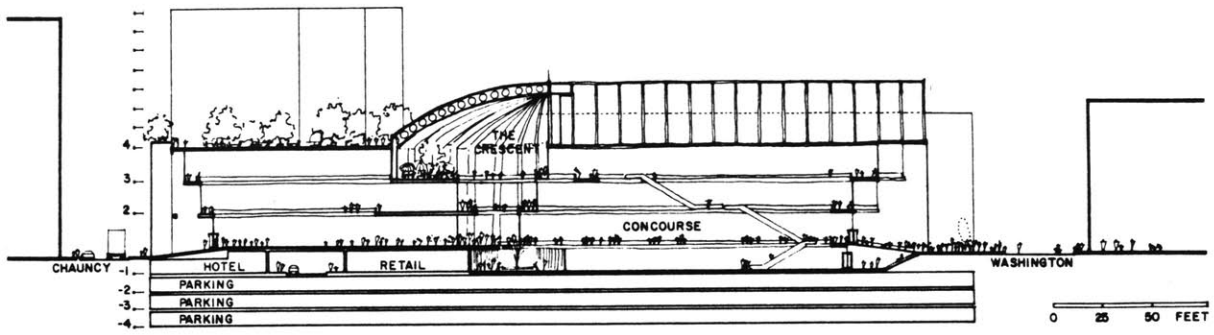


Figure 6.4 Galleria West, section

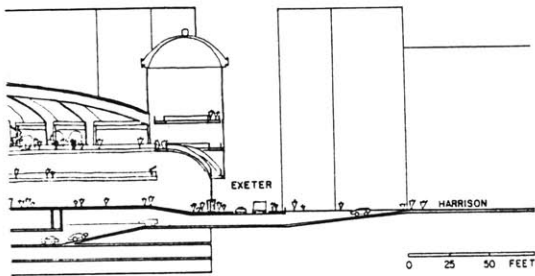


Figure 6.5 Galleria West, section

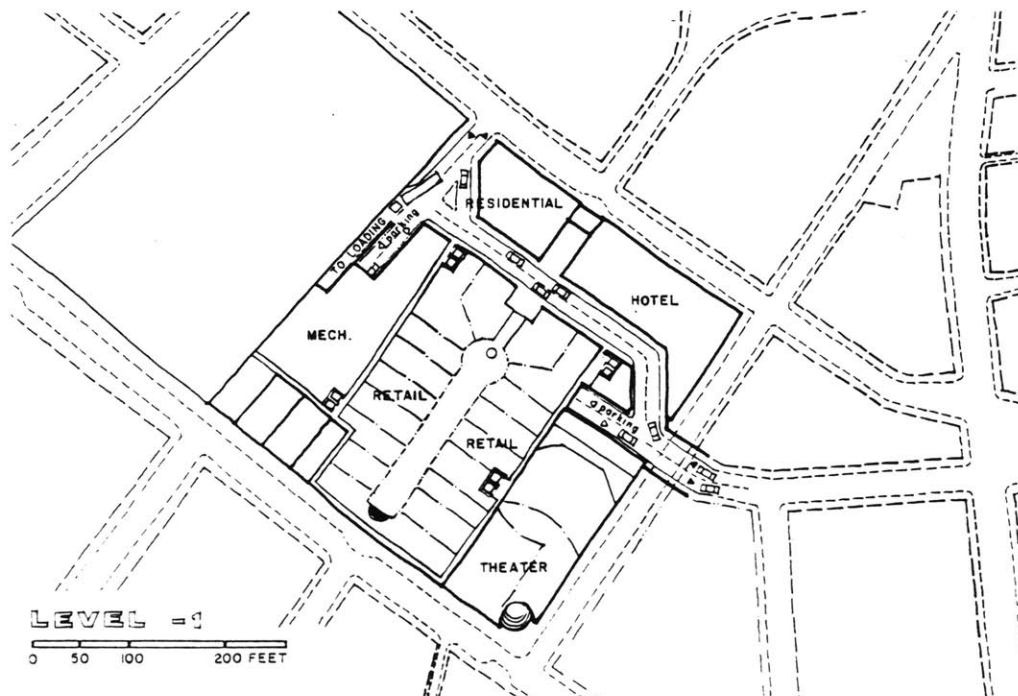


Figure 6.6 Galleria West, level -1 plan

The secondary emphasis was to extend Harrison Avenue past Bedford as a pedestrian street which intersects the Jordan Marsh store. The major vehicular approach to the site happens along Harrison Avenue, but feeds into the lower level beneath the Exeter/Rowe Place extension. (see fig. 6.5 and 6.6) This relieves the pedestrian/vehicular congestion problem in the Lafayette Place scheme, but also takes advantage of access from the Boyleston/Essex and Stuart/Kneeland corridors to the south. From the lower level vehicular entrance automobiles can either enter the parking facility or drop off guest or residents to the hotel or residential components.

The first two Harrison Avenue arcade levels religiously respect the street patterns. At the third level a crescent shaped food court extends from the new Jordan Marsh mall entrance to the glass rotunda, and marks the Essex Place, Harrison Avenue mall entrance. The food crescent accentuates, by contrast, the axiality enhanced by the terrace above, and creates a spatial experience that emphasizes movement from the Exeter Place entrance to the Bedford arcade, and on to the department store. Enclosed by a corresponding configured skylight, the food crescent provides a people oriented space emphasizing views, as well as, variety and excitement.

Forming 'L' configurations along Chauncy Street, are the hotel and the residential components. Set back from the street and increasing in height from south to north, they respect the one hundred and twenty five foot heights of the Exeter Place, Harrison, and Chauncy Street block, and continue to form a taller mass next to the one hundred and forty foot Jordan Marsh building. A fourth level, over looking the arcade and the activity below, forms an outdoor terrace that serves the hotel and residential units.

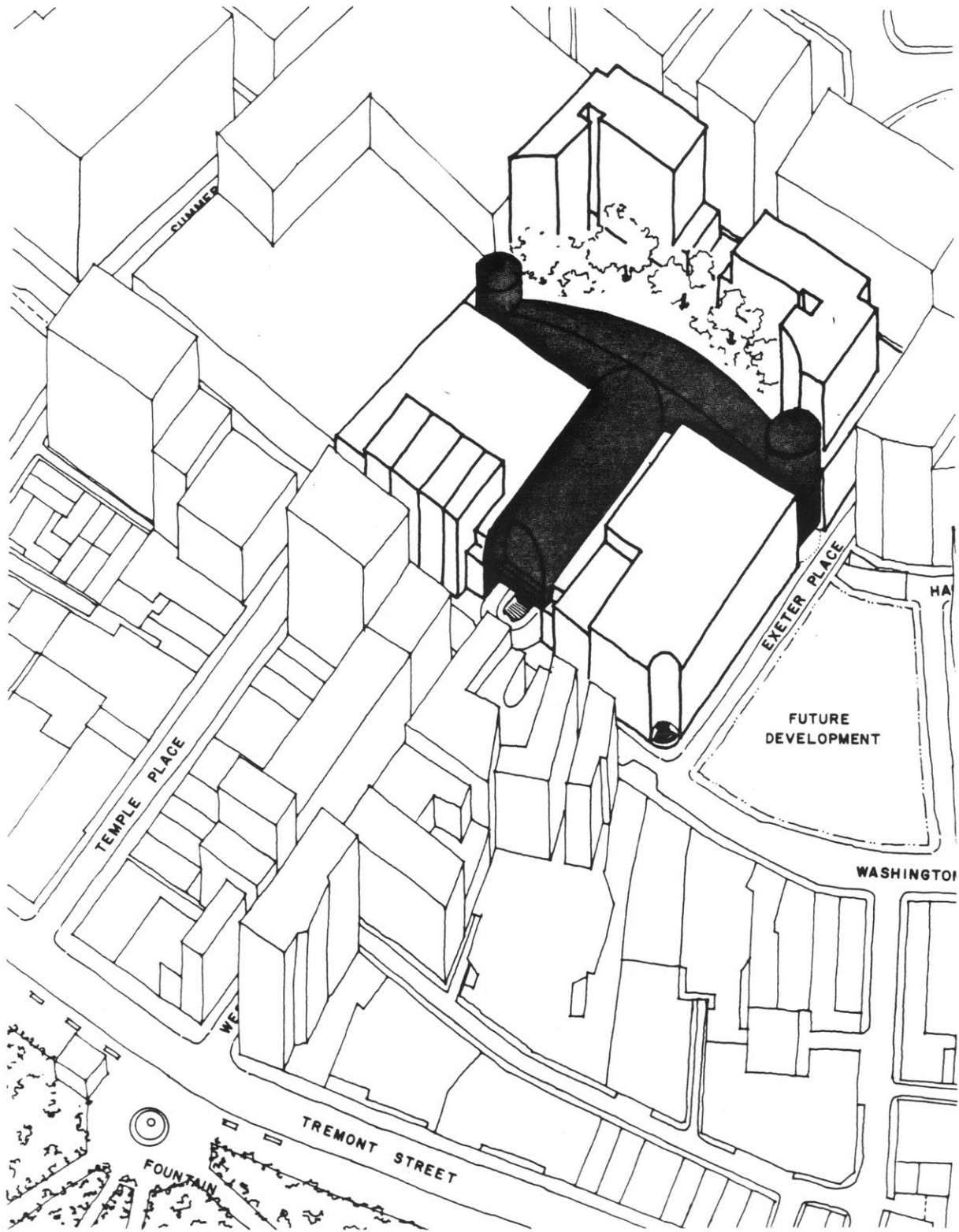


Figure 6.7 Galleria West, view

The two parcels along Washington Street, the cinemplex building, and the hotel residential block along Chauncy, are treated as individual developments, and should be phased. The intent is to allude to an incremental growth approach, and to avoid the monolithic enclosed system all too common in mixed use and shopping center development. (see fig 6.7)

Loading is handled, as in the Lafayette Place scheme, on the third lower level and is accessed via a ramp along what used to be Avon street. From that point merchandise delivery is brought up to the first lower level and distributed to the appropriate service elevator banks. A secondary parking entrance/exit uses the same street entrance as the loading ramp, but branches off to enter one of the three individual lower parking levels. Servicing on the upper retail levels is "sandwiched" between the phased sections of the development and attempts not to interrupt the concourse frontage at prominent points.

Along Chauncy are a few double-loaded shops fronting both the street and the concourse. Because of the depth of the block between Washington Street and the Harrison Avenue concourse, double loaded shops fronting Washington Street were not feasible. The perimeter edge, although not addressed in the sketch problem should consist mostly of shop entrances, true windows, and display cases which provide views and activity along the street edge on Washington, Exeter Place, as well as Chauncy Street. The double-loaded shops along Chauncy should provide views into the individual shops, as well as the concourse. The materials used in the exterior and interior concourse facades should relate to the brick and terra cotta facades found in the district and on the buildings retained on Washington Street. Careful attention should be given to the facade configuration, base heights, cornice treatment, and fenestration configuration.

The design as a whole is very respectful of the retail district, assuming that the decision to build a shopping center is a given (determined by attempting to satisfy the profit/investment requirements for making development a rewarding venture). The new design, in a sense, caps the extension of the retail use in the area. However, it remains open to the adjacent area by providing circulation and views through to other areas of the city. A major effort was made not to focus inward, but to open up as much as possible to the surrounding areas.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EVALUATION

The guidelines were an attempt to systematically modify the shopping center model to convert it to an urban public space. Places like the Galleria in Milan, and other market places slowly developed over time, and became public spaces of commerce. The effectiveness of the guidelines is dependent on the site itself. This follows the assumption that each downtown shopping center is a site specific problem, more so than the suburban model, and therefore no two centers can be alike.

Of the five guidelines the last one concerning the integration of the focal space into the urban fabric seems to be the most important and the most difficult. One approach would be to place the focal space on Washington Street. This would integrate the focal space directly into the urban fabric, but the remainder of the center would be lacking. At best the, if one focal space is used, it should be clearly visible from the street frontage. This can be accommodated with little difficulty.

Another alternative would be the creation of multiple focal spaces connected in some manner spatially, and/or architecturally. Horton plaza, in essence, is an series of connected open spaces, where pedestrians sample outdoor rooms that create that shopping aura described earlier in Chapter One. As a design, Horton Plaza does a very good job of connecting the old with the new, and framing views of the concourse and of the city beyond. The design owes much of its success to the large and flexible site, as well as the warm climate

which makes an open air mall feasible. The moderate climate eliminates the need to enclose the space, and also allows the use of a variety of materials and finishes that would not weather well in harsh climates.

The sketch problem was very useful in understanding the actual mechanics of design and the location of uses. It was very helpful in understanding the aspects of shopping center development not easily attained strictly through research. The ability to visualize one solution to a set of problems and to compare that with an already existing one was useful in assessing design options, and actual consequences of particular approaches. Of course design is to a large extent an individualistic endeavor that like site specificity, changes the end product, but with the adherence to design guidelines almost guarantees a product that regardless of the particular style satisfies necessary urban design criteria.

The downtown shopping center will no doubt be absorbed into large mixed use projects which combine compatible uses including office, hotel, and housing. At the moment attention is being directed to inner cities, underutilized and vacant parcels, and buildings. The major emphasis should be to utilize as much of the old that is feasible and blend that with the new.

The urban design guidelines established in this study transcend stylistic notions of individual creativity. They establish an agenda that can be satisfied in a number of ways, but attempts to address a series of issues that are important in rebuilding cities. Although these guidelines focus on shopping centers, they can focus on other types of large scale development in downtown areas and serve the same purpose of integrating a new entity into the urban fabric of the city.

CONCLUSIONS

This study began as an attempt to understand why downtown shopping centers tend to turn their backs on the city. To analyze this phenomenon, this thesis began with an inquiry into the nature of retail districts, the retailers themselves, the shopper, and the shopping center model itself. These findings were juxtaposed with the patterns of an established organism, the city. The question now becomes, How does one responsively "fit" a complex retail system, the shopping center, into a downtown ? The approach that this study recommends is that like all other large scale developments in urban areas, the urban shopping center should satisfy urban design agenda that respects and builds upon the existing patterns of a city. Patterns, which include established pedestrian and vehicular routes, view corridors, volume and massing proportions, pedestrian oriented activity along the center edges, and a contextual articulation of the facade, that established a city's character. This agenda can be meet by requiring that the new development follow urban design design guidelines established for large scale downtown projects.

In cases where the surrounding area is deteriorating and undesirable for investment, developers and marketing groups (being the clients) tend to avoid areas that were "unmarketable". This prejudice affects the design and orientation of any development. It also seems to reinforce the inward focussing design approach common in shopping centers. The physical manifestation of this attitude has been to totally avoid the undesirable areas by not providing clear points of egress from or views to the marginal areas. The Horton Plaza project however, was part of a much larger revitalization effort that encompassed much

of the undesirable area that surrounded the actual shopping center. Adjacent parcels were either being simultaneously developed, or were part of a soon to be realized development plan.

This study also recommends that city planning and zoning officials with downtown shopping center developments should have had a broad revitalization or development plan that incorporates the areas adjacent to the new shopping centers to encourage an open design attitude.

In addition to the urban design guidelines and the recommendations concerning large scale development plans, this study also recommends that development teams should be convinced that good design markets better, leases faster, and retains its value long after the newness and glamour has worn off, much like the great urban spaces such as the Galleria in Milan. In short real estate professionals should be educated on the long term approaches of city building.

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