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THE LIFE AND DEATH OF AN AMERICAN ARCHETYPE

THE SHOPPING MALL AND THE SUBURBS

A Thesis in

Architecture

By

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Abstract

The original intent of the shopping mall was to organize American suburban development. However, fifty years after the advent of the mall suburban sprawl a central talking point of architects and urban planners. This thesis aims to examine the affects the shopping mall has had on suburban development and if it aided or combated the chaos of suburbia.

In today's suburbia the shopping mall is dead.

The mall set out to be a place in suburbia. However due to new technologies and an overproduction of the mall archetype the shopping mall quickly lost its individuality and uniqueness. Newer malls took away consumers from older malls and eventually led to their failure. The Internet and e-commerce has also hurt the mall. By performing the actions of the mall more effectively the Internet acts as a filter of "artificial place". This allows the mall to be removed from our built environment after its time has passed.

Now that the life of the shopping mall is over it allows architects and planners to look back and examine its effect on suburbia. It also presents the opportunity to start over on these greyfield sites. This is the chance to address the changing needs of suburbia on these sites. Shifts in housing desires can be addressed through redevelopment of dead malls. By addressing the needs of the community the site can be transformed into a true place for suburbanites instead of an artificial place that will need replacing after just a short life span.

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“Killing the mall, paradoxically, has allowed it to become what Gruen once intended it to be – a city center. Death has allowed the mall to fulfill its original promise” – Daniel Herman, Mall.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter one is meant to provide an outline of the underlying terms, theories and basic knowledge that is necessary to properly portray the intent of this thesis. This chapter illustrates the conceptual theories examining the meaning of place in architecture, provides definitions for terminology used throughout the thesis, states the objectives, and finally explains the methodology used to answer the overarching questions this thesis seeks to answer.

1.1.0: Thesis Overview: Conceptual Theories

This thesis examines the effects of the shopping mall on the development of the suburban landscape. It analyzes the 'place-making' attempt by Victor Gruen and other designers from the middle of the twentieth century. It looks at how the mall evolved and how our latest technological developments are affecting it as an archetype.

Providing a closer examination of the concept of place through the lens of Martin Heidegger and Christian Norberg-Schulz helps develop a clear understanding of what is meant by place. This understanding of the term place in architecture proves that the shopping mall was never the place that Gruen intended to form. Instead it is merely an 'artificial place' or an architectural location that gives the appearance of a place, but does not strike a cord with users in terms of meaning that a true place does.

The theoretical works of William Mitchell and Jean Baudrillard discuss the dilution in meaning of physical objects through reproduction, replication, and dematerialization. These actions led to the artificiality of the shopping mall. By creating an archetype that is so highly reproducible the entity of location is lost.

1.2.0 Central Themes: Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this thesis and the intended meaning is expanded on in the sections below. The clarifications explained here are meant to carry through the entirety of this thesis.

1.2.1 Definition of Shopping Mall

The term shopping mall can define a vast array of architectures. In this thesis the term shopping mall is meant to look at the definitions that the International Council for Shopping Centers states as a 'regional mall' and 'super-regional mall'. This is defined as an "enclosed [mall] with inward-facing stores connected by a common walkway. Parking surrounds the outside perimeter" The site for regional malls range between 40 and 100 acres and serve a shopping base within a 15 mile radius. Super-regional malls are situated on sites ranging from 60-120 acres and serve a shopper base within a 25-mile radius. As of October 2014 there are 1360 malls in the United States that fall in these categories.

1.2.2 Definition of Place

The understanding of place is further explained in Chapter 2, but in simpler terms the concept of place can be described as a physical construction in a site that is concerned with identity and context.

1.2.3 Definition of Artificial Place

Branching off of the definition of place, Artificial Place is an architectural attempt at place-making that never fully embraces the

spirit of the site and its true locality. Therefore these are the types of architectures that are replaced with placeless buildings as their meaningfulness is transferred to the virtual world. This concept is illustrated throughout this thesis with the shopping mall being representative of an artificial place.

1.2.4 Definition of True Place

True place is the subcategory of place that is an architecture that captures the essence, or *genius loci*, of the location as described by Heidegger and Norberg-Schulz.

1.2.3 Definition of Non-Place

The non-place is an architecture of service rather than one of meaning. With the proliferation of the Internet into our lives there has been a rise in the archetypes that fall under the category of non-place as aspects of our daily lives shift from taking place in physical space to virtual space. The non-place is still a physical construction in the environment, however is not concerned with identity in the sense that a place is.

1.2.4 Definition of Place-Making

Place making is the architectural exercise of attempting to create place through design. The outcomes of this practice falls under the categories of artificial place and true place.

1.2.5 Definition of Dead Mall

Real estate experts have come up with a four-tier system explaining the status of a commercial shopping mall. A mall that has a 40% or greater vacancy rate is considered to be dying or dead.

1.2.6 Definition of Reinhabitation

Reinhabitation is a method of rehabilitating a failed site by inserting atypical tenants with limited modifications to the physical structure. Typically these clients are enticed to lease space with rental rates that are far below market average. An example of reinhabitation at work can be seen at Crestwood Plaza where the developer invited local artists to lease space in a dead mall.

1.2.8 Definition of Redevelopment

Redevelopment is a method of rehabilitating a greyfield site by demolishing the existing structures and starting over. The process of redevelopment is more timely and costly, but it allows greater control by the architect of the new product.

1.2.9 Definition of Greyfield

Greyfield is a term developed by the Congress for the New Urbanism that is meant to reference the immense amount of asphalt parking separating a shopping mall from the rest of suburbia. They are essentially large swaths of land that offer redevelopment opportunities without the pollution that is found on

brownfield sites and without constructing on undeveloped lands or greenfields (Sobel 2002).

1.3.0 Objectives

This thesis spawned off of the failed-mall phenomenon currently facing the nation. The initial study examined the causes behind the generation of the mall archetype, the effect of this archetype on culture, community, and development, and finally what led to the 'death' of the mall.

The aim of this study is to examine the effect of the mall on the development of suburban America. The overarching objective is to answer the question: Did the shopping mall fail? To answer this the original objectives of the mall are presented and examined in a closer light.

The removal of artificial place from our built environment allows architects, planners, and other designers to focus on the design and creation of meaningful places for suburbanites. Dead mall sites provide a viable option for redevelopment opportunities and allow for the construction of sites that now apply to current suburbanites. However, current redevelopment strategies are not necessarily taking the changing demographics of suburbia into consideration when they are being designed.

In order to build a better suburban landscape we, as designers, must consider the longevity, flexibility, and sustainability of the buildings and communities we are designing. The failure of the shopping mall across the nation provides us with the opportunity to do just that. This thesis aims to suggest a systematic solution that

can be adapted and applied to various dead mall, or other greyfield sites, in order to better serve the suburban resident. Creating place in suburbia is not out of reach.

1.4.0: Research Methodology

The research of this thesis is divided into three sections. The first is a theoretical overview on the notion of place and architectural developments. This is followed by an overview of the shopping mall as an archetype, which includes a brief history of the shopping mall, the original goals of mall designers, the evolution of the mall design, and its eventual downfall.

There is an examination of two case studies that have taken the fallen archetype of the mall and rehabilitated the site into something new and exciting. These studies represent a second attempt at place making on the same site. The case study approach allows the researcher to focus on studying a particular phenomenon embedded in a real life setting (Wang 2013, p 421). Each case study represents a different method for injecting a sense of community within the context.

The first case is representative of an expansive redevelopment project where the previous shopping mall is completely demolished and a new urban node is born. It allows the architect and planners to work closely together to create a new project that is intertwined with its setting. These projects require an intensive site analysis to be successful and present the opportunity to inject a mix of uses on the site after learning the downfalls of a single-use retail site.

The second case is an example of a project that reprogrammed the mall with little to no intervention. Reinhabitation projects can range

in the amount of intervention that happens within the confines of the mall, but the main objective is to inject the structure with new life. By performing an analysis on what the local community is lacking the programmatic elements of the project can be determined.

In each case there is an overview of the site context, an identification of deficiencies in the original shopping mall design, and finally documentation on the rehabilitation technique performed in the given situation. The site context includes documentation and demographics of the original design and items in the immediate vicinity that may have an affect on the life of the mall. The section on deficiencies provides a narrative on the life of the mall and its downfall. It is meant to analyze the missteps that the original architects and planners made with the power of hindsight. It also examines how future development may have led to the downfall of the shopping center. The final section is meant to closely examine the rehabilitation technique completed on each site. Drawings, photographs, and public response are included here.

After the examination of the example cases a comparative section examines the two studies. This is meant to explore which rehabilitation method is ideal for a given situation and look at each case side by side.

Chapter 2

Defining Place

Chapter 2: Defining Place

The question of place is a topic that has come up in architectural theory throughout the 20th century. One thing to note is that there is a distinct difference between space and place. According to Lineu Castello, “Certain spaces stand out within the greater Space in which people circulate and, **by standing out**, are perceived differently... Thus it can be said that these spaces are perceived as places by their users” (Castello 2010, p 48). This notion of standing out is one of the clearest ways to determine what the difference between place and space is. The architectures that evokes is that of a place. Those that fall short of standing out become placeless. The mall set out to be a place within the confines of suburbia, but due to its continuous replication and disconnect with the site its identity as an artificial place is revealed.

2.1.0 Enclosure and Place

The concept of 'place' in built form is essential to understanding the success of an architectural project. 'Place' stems from human interaction with the physical environment and is typically understood in a phenomenological manner as "a location experienced as meaningful within a larger spatial context" (Dovey 2001, p16). Victor Gruen set out to create place in suburbia with his vision for the shopping mall. By exploring the work of philosopher Martin Heidegger the understanding of 'place' and its relation to architecture becomes clear. This understanding enables the analysis of the place-making attempt by Gruen with the mall.

Heidegger's essay, *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, explores the meaning of 'place' and 'dwelling' in the greater context of the environment. Through his eyes there is a clear difference in the types of buildings we inhabit and those that we dwell within. In Heidegger's terms, the physical concept of place evolves through the "presencing" of things. In his essay the explanation is that a "boundary is not that at which something stops but, is that from which something begins its presencing." Place receives its meaning through the presence of objects, or things, in the site. As humans interact with these objects site develops meaning and becomes a *place*.

In the text Heidegger uses the example of a bridge crossing a stream to illustrate the making of 'true place'. The bridge itself is built as an object in space and with the construction of the bridge a specific site is identified. By building the bridge presencing begins.

As humans interact with the bridge *places* develop with the context of the bridge, landscape, and nature. The construction of the bridge creates a place that did not exist prior to its building. The relationship between the user, the object and the site is what now makes the location of the bridge significant and a place.

As we continue to interact the relationship between man, nature, and object becomes symbiotic. The intimate relationship between people and place culminates in dwelling. The identity of place comes to light in the revealing of the 'genius loci'. Norberg-Schulz recognizes the genius as a being's 'guardian spirit' and that ancient man "recognized that it is of great existential importance to come to terms with the *genius* of the locality where his life takes place" (1977). By bringing the spirit of place to the forefront dwelling becomes a symbiotic relationship with man.

Norberg-Schulz goes onto argue "identification and orientation are primary aspects of man's being-in-the-world" (Norberg-Schulz 1977). Thus 'place' provides man with an identifier and a means to orient oneself in relation to other sites. It brings together the site and men through the "concretization" of the genius loci.

The typical shopping mall does not capture the genius loci into a physical construction. They are typically a mass produced architecture that do not take locality into consideration with the design of the mall. The majority of stores within the confines of the mall are national brands that are constructed using a prototypical set of drawings that are slightly adapted for the dimensions of their

leased space. A consumer can expect to see a similar design of stores and layouts whether they are in a mall in New Jersey or in California.



Figure 1 Progression from Place to Dwelling in Physical Form

While artificial place typically attempts to create a gathering space for social activity the fact that it is not entrenched in one of these categories of place allows for easy reproduction. As the unique characteristics are reproduced the structure generally loses meaning. Again, this became a symptom of the shopping mall. Through the repetitive construction and proliferation of the archetype throughout suburbia the shopping mall lost its novelty. Since the shopping mall was generally conceived as a place of commerce and not one with strong community ties it falls under the category of artificial place.

2.2.0 Replication and Dematerialization

Communication and imaging has always transferred meaning from human to human via non-architectural or face-to-face means. With the invention of the printing press texts could easily be reproduced in order to distribute meaningful passages quickly and efficiently. The various communicative networks that have risen throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century further the emphasis of meaning on the dematerialized. As we continue to increase our connectivity to the virtual humans have furthered the focus of meaning on the virtual rather than the physical. Signs and billboards gained the focus of architectural critics and theorists in the end of the twentieth century. However, by furthering the rise of the digital screen and our constant state of connectivity signs and symbols of the Internet are penetrating our built environment like never before. The ability of these signs to respond to personal users transfers this idea of dwelling to the virtual.

Jean Baudrillard, a notable theorist of the late twentieth century thoroughly examined the relationship between reality and virtual reality to the experience of human living. In his work of *Simulacra and Simulation* there is a beginning evaluation of what happens as human lives become transferred from reality to virtual reality. In applying the work of Baudrillard to the products and effects of the Internet a better understanding is gained of virtual living and the changing of reality to what he coins the hyperreality.

Dematerialization is one of the key developments from our living in the virtual. Meaning has transferred from the physical artifact to a digital representation of such an artifact. This miniaturization and dematerialization is the first step of to dwelling in the virtual realm.

“The real is produced from miniaturized cells, matrices, and memory banks, models of control – and it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times from these... It is no longer anything but operational... It is hyperreal” – Jean Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulation

In William Mitchell’s book *Me++: The Cyborg Self and The Networked City*, he provides examples of dematerialization in the form of text, music, pictures, movies, and money. The objects of shopping have become dematerialized as well when we shop online. We no longer travel to the mall to purchase these items that have been dematerialized. Instead of going to Barnes and Nobles we download e-books. Instead of browsing music at F.Y.E. we open up iTunes. Instead of renting a DVD from Blockbuster we stream Netflix.

The second stage to ‘dwelling’ in the virtual is the notion of simulation. Baudrillard uses the example of the TV Show *Filming an American Family* and the subjection of the Loud Family to constant filming and the viewing into their private lives. Baudrillard says that, “more interesting[ly] is the illusion of filming the Louds as if TV weren’t there” (28). He argues that the constant filming created an absurd paradox between “as if we were not there” equaling “as if

you were there". The pleasure of seeing and being seen is what caused thousands of families to apply for the American family to be filmed as well as fascinating the twenty million viewers the show captured.

Prior to the advent of virtual dwelling humans would engage places to capture the pleasure from seeing and being seen. Traditionally this is one of the main draws of a place, a park, a shopping mall, a bank, and main street. The virtual social network replicates these pleasures of 'place'. In the case of the Louds and TV "You no longer watch TV, it is TV that watches you (live)" (Baudrillard 1994, p 130). In today's world of constant connectivity and uploading of digital images of life: you no longer view social media, it is social media that views you.

In a study performed by Therese F. Tierney for the book *The Public Space of Social Media* a survey was performed to understand how society was using social media. The survey was performed twice, once in 2009 and again in 2012, and from this the growth of social media can be observed. For instance, in 2009 only 17% of respondents spent an hour or more on social media sites, however when the follow up survey was performed in 2012 the percentage of respondents who spent over an hour on social media jumped to 36%. Another interesting statistic is that only 22% of respondents believe that their virtual profile accurately represents them, while 41% responded saying that it shows just a small piece of them.

As the amount of time we spend online continues to increase the

amount of time we are spending engaged in the physical space that we occupy will correspondingly decrease. The online identity of ones self is the new reality. It is how others see us, how others interact with us, and through which how we interact with others. In terms of the pleasures previously found in place, those of seeing and being seen, we are now seen by others through the lens of our online profile and we see others through the same lens. Many of the roles of traditional place are being replaced through interactions occurring via social media.

Society is on the cusp of the 'hyperreal'; the symbiotic culmination of the virtual and the human spirit. It is no longer a simulation of the world we live in, but the creation of a "new social reality." If we accept Baudrillard's definition of reality as "that for which it is possible to provide an equivalent representation" the hyperreal is the culmination of this process.

"Hyperrealism is something like their mutual fulfillment [reality and art] and overflowing into one another through an exchange at the level of simulation of their respective foundational privileges and prejudices. Hyperrealism is only beyond representation because it functions entirely within the realm of simulation" (Baudrillard 146).

In Baudrillard's work there is a discussion of the rise of the hypermarket and he alludes to this as the shopping center. However, the identity of the hypermarket described by Baudrillard can be better seen in the rise and proliferation of electronic

commerce; the digital simulation of shopping. Advertising and mass media for product consumption is everywhere and “These billboards, in fact, observe and surveil you as well, or as badly, as the ‘policing’ television.” (Baudrillard 1994, 76). The digital billboards that consume our computer monitors, cell phones, and tablet displays are targeted at each specific user’s previous searches and digital actions. The physical architecture of electronic commerce, massive distribution centers largely devoid of human presence, represent an architecture that our virtual selves travel to, but physically we are never there. This is the rise of the non-place.

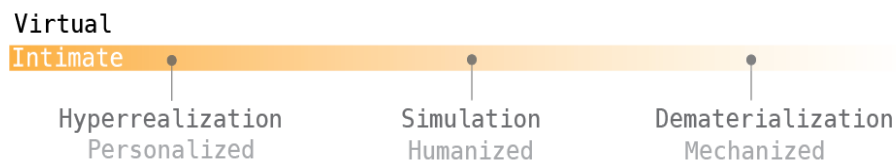


Figure 2 Virtual Intimacy

2.3.0 Rise of Non Place

Through the rise of the Internet and the transition of meaning and human activity from physical to virtual there has been an architectural boom of the non-place. Auge describes this new typology by stating, “If a place can be defined as relational, historical, and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place” (Auge 1995, 14). He argues that ‘non-places’ are places of temporary human occupation and includes freeways, supermarkets, hotel rooms, and shopping malls.

Non-place is still a physical construction in the environment, however it is one that does not contain an identity. However, the relationship between human, construction, and environment is not significant. The human to building interaction is not a strong factor in the design of physical non-place. The function of the building is typically driven by other factors, which take prevalence over that of human interaction.

The ‘non-place’ is an architecture that is necessary to support functions that occur outside of itself. Virtual dwelling causes an increase in the amount of built ‘non-places’ due to the amount of infrastructure that is necessary to support our new digital lives. Architecture such as data centers, distribution centers, and other massive structures that support our digital lives can be added to the list of ‘non-places’ that Auge developed. These structures primarily house machines that power and support the new types of virtual human living. Despite not physically housing human life, these

structures are the centers in which our virtual beings dwell. This allows for the removal of artificial places, such as the mall, from our built environment.

The byproduct of the dematerialization of physical objects can be seen in the dematerialization of architectural 'place' that was meant to house these objects. Structures that existed as architectural attempts at 'place-making' have been replaced by archetypes of 'non-place'. William Mitchell explores the example of bank architecture and the alteration of its design in the world of dematerialized money. He states that, "As money has emancipated itself from the last vestiges of materiality, sits of accumulation and transfer - once prominent, architecturally celebrated urban elements - have waned into commodified electronic boxes, anonymous server farms, and out-of-sigh back offices." (Mitchell 96).

Other examples of this can be seen with the replacement of the shopping mall with that of e-commerce; the replacement of libraries with virtual databases; the replacement of post offices with e-mail clients; and the replacement of universities by online classrooms.

The shifting of meaning to the virtual and the transition of place to non-place splits the category of place into two distinct portions; that of artificial place and of true place. Artificial place is the architecture that can be replaced through dematerialization caused by the Internet. The architecture that tried to create place, such as the shopping center, but never fully connected with the *genius loci* are being replaced by their virtual reinterpretations. True place however

remains an important aspect of the physical environment.

Boundaries define the typical definitions of space and place, while networks occupy a space of links and flows. Through the advent of wireless networks and the connectivity of the Internet society is more dictated by a reliance on connections, networks, and flows as opposed to physical enclosures. We are less dependent on physical things being available at distinct physical locations and have developed into a more transient species. Just as money has “emancipated itself from the last vestiges of materiality” so to are humans freeing themselves. The Internet is freeing us from the control the physical world. Network access is liberating us from the confines of physical locations. No longer is it necessary to travel to a school to learn, an office to work, or a shopping center to shop. This allowance provides the freeing of the physical environment from artificial place, thus allowing us to spend more time in true place while still performing the necessary activities of every day life.

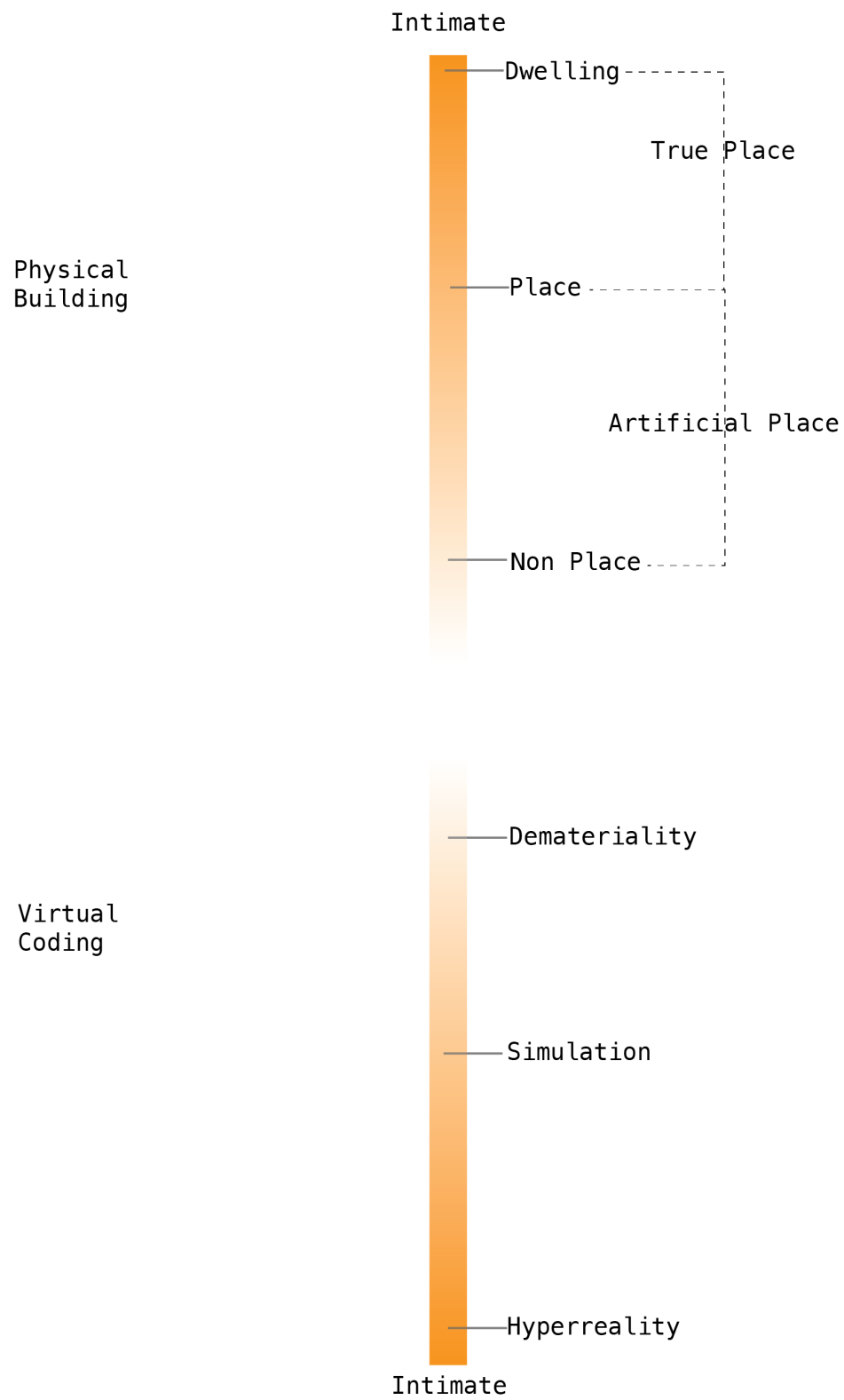


Figure 3 Artificial Place Graph

2.4.0 Physical Place in Virtual Life

Norberg-Schulz said “modern man for a long time believed that science and technology had freed him from a direct dependence on places. This belief has proved an illusion; pollution and environmental chaos have suddenly appeared as a frightening nemesis, and as a result the problem of place has regained its true importance” (1977). However, it does free humanity from the artificial place; the place that never truly was. Technology led to the both the rise and fall of the artificial place.

Technology led to the creation of the shopping mall archetype; enclosed by means of mechanical heating and ventilation systems, fed by the automobile and the Interstate Highway System, and traveled by means of vertical transportation systems. The shopping mall led to pollution and environmental chaos as described by Norberg-Schulz, but technology also allows for the removal of this archetype. Electronic commerce is reducing the number of viable shopping malls in the country and distribution centers can serve a much larger population than a typical shopping mall. Social media is occupying more of the populations free time and connects us with individuals all over the world as opposed to those just in our immediate vicinity.

Also, the transfer of human life to the Internet does not detract from place, but emphasizes the importance of place. Place is not something that can be the product of replication. Technology can effectively remove the architectures that provide function without

meaning [artificial place] and we are left with a built environment of meaning [true place].

As William Mitchell argues, digitalization of our lives and the increasing focus of our lives on the terms of access to the virtual network further emphasize the necessity of place. Place in the traditional sense cannot be an easily digital recreation. It cannot be copy and pasted in any location and has tremendously strong ties to its location and local culture. The harder it is for this place to become a digital replication the higher its value to humanity rises. Mitchell uses the example of a beach for place in his article *The Revenge of Place*. The beach, as he states, exists in a fixed quantity and fixed location. The users benefit from the beauty, climate, and recreational activities. In the age of the virtual network the beach is not necessarily a place of isolation, where the disconnect from society would diminish the value of the beach. He states that, "In a world where many distinctions among places are reduced, the particular value of the beach stands out even more vividly." (Mitchell 2008, p 5).

The importance of the genius loci comes to the forefront in the design of place because that spirit is not something that can be subjected to dematerialization, simulation, and thus hyperreality. The genius loci is entrenched in the meaning of true place and thus in the physical dwelling of humans in the physical environment. The mall has transferred from being a unique place at its initial creation to the hyperreal. It is overproduced. It is replicated. It is meaningless. The malls interior is a replascape of nature, of urban

streets, and of historical sites (Wyman 2001). It is no longer an attractor due to its uniqueness and it no longer has any connection with its surroundings.

Chapter 3

The Life and Death of the Mall

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The shopping mall represents the epitome of an artificial place. These behemoth structures offer a generic, singular experience that is easily reproduced and replicated. Older structures fail as newer structures are built with better features, better accessibility, and in line with the newest design trends. The mall was originally proposed as an organizing tool that would help prevent the further sprawling of the American suburbs, but currently is a regular scapegoat of suburban sprawl.

3.1.0: Advent of the Mall

The birth of the shopping mall as we know it occurred in the 1950s. The creation of the shopping mall is dependent on three major factors.

The birth of the mall can partially be attributed to the realization that urban densities can be simulated in suburbia vis-a-vis the automobile (Dovey 1999). As automobile use boomed and highway construction soared shopping malls sprouted up on the fringe of development. By simulating an urban density in a suburban context, urban shopping districts could be recreated for the suburban population. Simultaneously, this removed the need for a local main street and led to a development of suburban towns without typical main commercial sectors.

Technological advances during the previous decades allowed for the enclosing of the large space that a shopping mall required. First and foremost, the automobile allowed for the densities of people required to support the vast amount of retail. The provision of climate-controlled space for shopping was one of the many allures of the first shopping malls. Escalators allowed for ease of vertical circulation within large anchor stores and the interior mall corridors.

Finally, the birth of the shopping mall was largely a product of the extravagant growth of the suburbs in post-war America. By 1950 the “suburban growth rate was ten times that of central cities” (Gallagher 2013, 35). The growth was due to the end of World War

II, a strong economy, strong population growth, and a lack of housing in the United States.

3.1.1: US Highway System

At the 1957 American Planning and Civic Annual Conference the central topic was the US Interstate Highway System and its completion in 1969. Speakers discussed the effect of this new physical network on Main Street America and future suburban development. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 proposed the construction of 41,000 miles of interstate highway connecting cities throughout the country for the newly empowered motorist. At the conference C.D. Curtiss, the Commissioner of Public Roads for the U.S Department of Commerce, stated that the rapid additions to the highway system was imperative because "...synchronizes production, distribution, and consumption. It is as basic to our national defense as it is to our national economy" (Curtis 1957, p 68). From the beginning of this massive undertaking the interconnectivity of the system was fairly well understood. If the veins serving the main interstate arteries were not properly located or well maintained the entire system would flounder.

At the same conference in 1957 Victor Gruen spoke on the state of main street commercial districts in the age of the advent of the automobile. Gruen, an architect born and raised in Vienna is widely recognized as the father of the shopping mall and an outwardly spoken critic of the sprawling American suburb.

In response to the topic of Main Street 1969 at the conference Gruen opened his speech by saying, “The fact is that Main Street in the sense in which we have understood it to apply to our American towns and cities, has become an absurdity, an anachronism, and that it has no sound basis for existence today and much less in 1969” (Gruen 1957, p16). He frames the argument that the term Main Street can have two meanings. The first meaning is the traditional definition of a commercial main street within a town. The second interpretation would call the new interstate highway system the main street, as it becomes the primary method for connection points of high density with the automobile..

Traditional Main Street is a largely horizontal surface, meant for the movement of people, with structures on either side that house residential, commercial, and governmental functions. However, planners have contradicting views on how to treat the automobile and Main Street. Parking structures are built, but so are bypass roads that deter traffic and consumers from these established commercial districts. Gruen goes on to argue that we must start building differently and embrace the two different scales of the human and the machine. He states that our “first priority of action must go to the separating of flesh and machines — of people and mechanized traffic.” (Gruen 1957, p19). Gruen argues that buildings and commercial entities along highways are unusable for the human. Along with that, roadways passing through Main Streets are susceptible to major traffic backups due to the activity of humans. In order for either of these scales to accommodate the user successfully one must be removed.

Gruen's planning strategy involved an idea of pedestrian islands situated along the Interstate Highway System. The standard organizational method of a grid no longer applied. Instead the clusters would be built and based on the human scale. The in-between would be designed for the automobile. Although his built work focuses primarily on commerce, Gruen's original proposal includes human clusters for residential areas, health facilities, and offices that would all be structured in a logical order. These clusters would act as nodes along the Interstate Highway System. His strategy brought together his critique of the American suburb along with his proposal of the new 'main street'.

Each Gruen cluster would be designed on the means of walkability, a term that he describes as not only accounting for a basis of "time, but also of desirability, the pleasure of movement and though walkability varies with climate, geography, and purpose of the cluster, it will tend to define shape and size" (Leong 2001, 381). By enclosing the mall Gruen was able to control the climate and thus control one of the factors that helps create a walkable environment. The automobile acts as a transporter between the nodes, but not within the pedestrian zones.

3.1.2: Technology

The enclosed shopping mall would not have been possible without the invention of technologies that made large, enclosed, multi-level spaces comfortable for consumers to navigate. Air conditioning and

the escalator are the two primary inventions that allowed for the construction of the mall archetype.

Modern heating and cooling systems allow for the climate control of the massive enclosed spaces of the shopping mall. Consumer comfort is a key factor in mall design because shopper happiness equates to dollars spent. Suburban shopping destinations prior to Gruen were open air letting the consumer be exposed to the elements. By protecting the consumer from the elements shopping malls became year round destinations regardless of the weather.

The enclosed shopping mall could not exist without air conditioning. Climate control allows for the massive interior depths and windowless facades that came to define the mall archetype (Leong 2001). It gave the retailer control of air quality and temperature without the need to open windows and introduce dust into the shopping environment. The removal of windows and unnecessary connections to the outdoors removes an element of distraction from the consumer's task of shopping.

The invention of the escalator created a whole new way of moving customers throughout a space horizontally and vertically at the same time. As opposed to the elevator, where consumers would have to wait in order to move vertically throughout the space, the escalator continuously moves people while also exposing them to advertising and products. The relief in congestion is one of the main selling points of using an escalator in a shopping mall. Elevators are cheaper to run, faster, and can carry a wider variety of objects

than an escalator, however, they lack the visual connection that an escalator. While on an escalator the consumer's eyes are constantly drawn up, searching for new products and remaining in shopping mode throughout the journey (Darlow 1972). The grand staircase of department stores was now automated.

The escalator allows for physical flow as well as visual flow. It removes the need for the compartmentalization of the elevator and blurs the lines between floors and spaces (Weiss 2001). The spatial experience continues along the escalator as opposed to becoming disjointed with an elevator ride.

These two inventions are the primary physical technologies that allow for the architecture of the mall. The extreme depths and disconnect from the exterior are what Victor Gruen viewed as attractors that would create the ideal suburban place. As the suburbs grew Gruen believed that his massive climate controlled structures would become a destination for commerce and for important civic functions.

3.1.3: Suburban Explosion

The suburban explosion took off in post-war America although the beginnings can be traced back to the nineteenth century as an escape from urban grime. As merchants, lawyers, and professionals began to accumulate wealth they built larger homes on the outskirts of the urban core away from the pollution and overcrowding.

1945 saw a surge in homebuilding as soldiers began to return home from World War II and the economy began its rebound from the Great Depression. As the government began to back home loans and with the passing of the GI Bill in 1944 home ownership became the dream of many Americans. The jump in construction project starts is significant. In 1944 construction began on 142,000 homes and by 1950 that number was at nearly two million. Home ownership also soared from 44 percent in 1940 to 64.4 percent by 1980 (Gallagher 2013). As Americans dreamt of owning a single-family home sprawl continued to envelop the landscape around metropolitan areas.

William Levitt may be the most famous of the pioneer developers who began creating the suburban sprawl. Levitt created a simple, mass-producible, home that was affordable and attractive. The tract home that Levitt developed became the norm for the rest of the century.

The sprawling growth of the suburbs prompted urban planning proposals to organize suburbia. Victor Gruen's proposal for the mall was one of these proposals that's aim was to control the chaos that was suburban development.

3.2.0: Original Goals

Gruen's intent involved centering American suburbs with highly integrated and well planned shopping centers. He argued that, "From the time bartering was done under a tree the market has been a meeting place." Gruen's plans also involved one key concept, the design of shops and centers for the human scale and not the scale of the industrial revolution. The scale for the automobile and the scale of the consumer directly competed for the focus of the designer. By making the mall introverted the enclosed mall allows the exterior to be designed at the scale of the automobile and the interior corridors for the scale of the human.

With Gruen's experience based in Vienna he was extremely critical of the unplanned sprawling suburbia that was occurring in the United States during the 1950s. To him the American suburban landscape was chaos and the only way to combat chaos was with planning (Gladwell 2004). The mall was his experiment for suburbia where he "attempted to create urban clusters which could form a crystallization point for social, cultural and civic activities in sprawling suburbia" (Gruen 1962, p 97). His goal was to create a new form of urbanity.

3.2.1: Organizing Tool

Gruen's proposal of the shopping mall held the intention of being a tool for urban planning. His proposal aims to create small urban nodes along the Interstate Highway to organize further suburban growth.

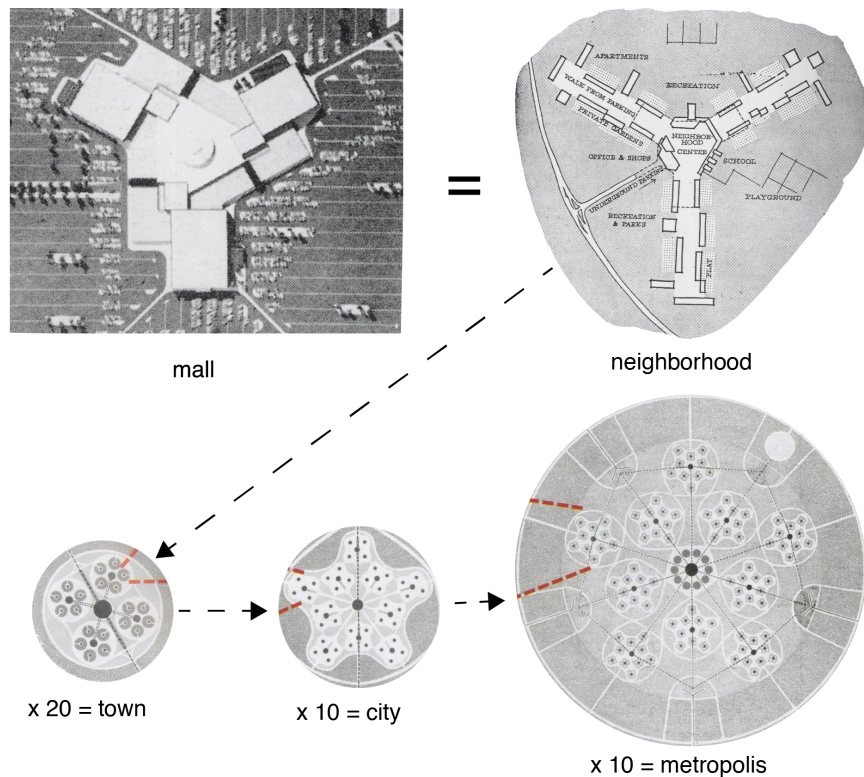


Figure 4: Planning Goals of Victor Gruen, Source: Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping

The idea was to use the module of the mall on the neighborhood scale and replicate its form to create new towns, cities, and metropolises. Gruen viewed the mall as a new city center containing civic services, housing, retail, and entertainment (Leong 2001, *Gruen Urbanism*). Highways would connect the modules, allowing individuals to travel between each center via their automobile.

The first enclosed mall of the United States was the Southdale Center in Edina, Minnesota. This project began to take shape in

June of 1952 and after Dayton's, a department store from Minneapolis, acquired 463 acres southwest of the city. Dayton's, which was the anchor department store of the project as well as the developer, set aside eighty-four acres for the new shopping center while the rest of the land would be developed on the basis of a master plan following Gruen's idea for a centralized suburban community. The goal was to create a place, by the definition stated earlier in this thesis, by bringing together commerce, culture, and civilians.

The master plan for Southdale included houses, apartment buildings, parks, a medical center, a lake, highways, and schools that would be entirely financed by Dayton's. The first stage of this plan was the construction of the enclosed shopping center. The mall contained seventy-two stores spread out over two floors and 810,000 square feet of retail. It additionally contained 5,200 parking spaces and a soaring indoor garden court that became a destination within itself. However, the rest of Gruen's plan was never constructed.

Gruen realized the delicate situation of the shopping center and the battle between design and economics in getting these structures constructed. The struggle between architect and economist starts as early as the shopping center itself. With Gruen as a strong proponent of the community center, there were others that would argue "every unit should be constructed with a eye to a maximum return, and that some architects get too fancy in their ideas" (Gruen 1956). The civic venues that Gruen proposed would not generate

the sales revenue that additional retail space would. This is why the majority of civic features never reached construction.

3.2.2: Third Place in Suburbia

One of the draws of malls at their peak was the embracing of them as a third place. A third place is a location that someone spends time at other than home and work or school. Malls especially lent themselves to a hangout location for teens in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Teenagers used the mall not as a way to purchase goods and spend money but as a way to simply pass time (Anthony 1985). Now, based on Therese F. Tierney's research, social media is becoming a more prominent way for individuals to pass time. As the time we spend online increases the time we spend elsewhere decreases.

Southdale captured many of Gruen's goals and ideas very successfully. Perhaps the most successful piece of his design, in capturing the essence of place and community, is the three-story-high garden court that became a central meeting place for the citizens of the town that was sparked by the development of the mall. The garden court was notorious for hosting important events for the region of Minneapolis including full symphony concerts, festivals, and dances. In addition to being a large indoor garden the space hosts an auditorium, post office, miniature zoo, children's nursery, along with other civic facilities.

The shopping mall as a place making and planning tool never reached the full potential that Gruen envisioned. In Southdale, unique features create a destination for suburbanites to travel to for an experience that cannot be seen elsewhere. The unique creation of the garden court became a one of a kind place that was not reproduced in other malls as the archetype became more and more prevalent throughout the country.

3.3.0: Evolution of Design

The two major players in shaping the design of the shopping mall are Victor Gruen and Jon Jerde. Victor Gruen was responsible for the beginning of the enclosed mall phenomena across the United States. During his career he was responsible for over 44.5 million square feet of retail space. Jon Jerde took the shopping mall to the next level. During his career thus far he has designed over 25.4 million square feet of retail space and has brought other experiences besides shopping to the mall including theaters, casinos, and theme parks.

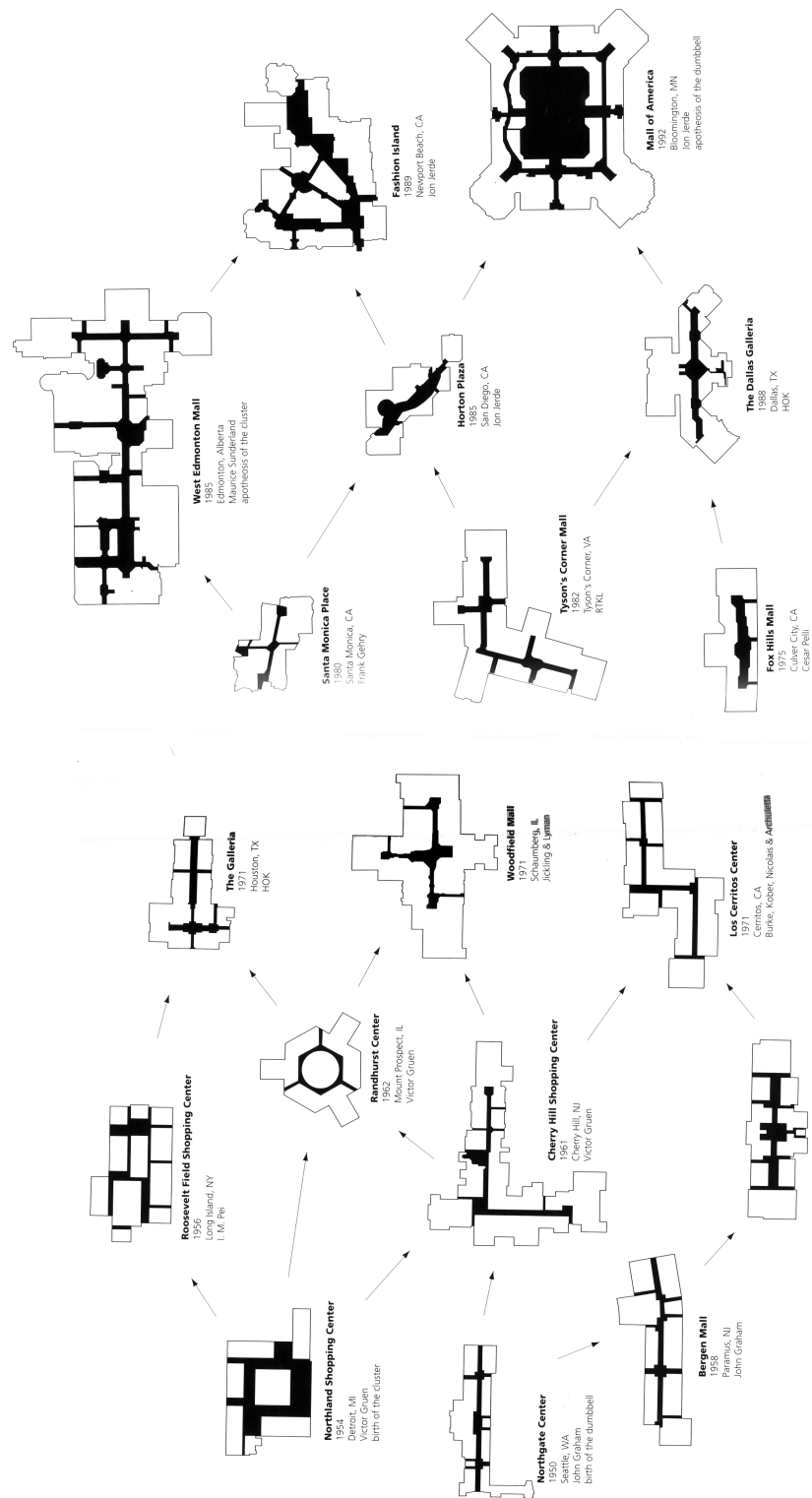


Figure 5: Mall Layouts. Source: Harvard Design Guide to Shopping

Mall design can be broken down into two layout categories; the dumbbell and the cluster (Herman 2001, *Mall*). The cluster layout culminates with the design of the West Edmonton Mall in 1985 by Maurice Sunderland and the barbell layout culminates with the construction of the Mall of America by Jon Jerde. The West Edmonton Mall is located in Edmonton, Alberta and contains 3,800,000 square feet of retail and entertainment space. The Mall of America contains 4,870,000 square feet and includes retail, entertainment, and hospitality components.

“What they wanted was four malls bolted end to end, so it was a piece of shit. [But] I went in opening day, and I went wait a minute this isn’t so bad. Not the design of it, it’s generic. This isn’t a shopping mall anymore. This is generically something else. This is a strange new animal here that, if you learn to do it right, could be off-the wall, I mean really fucking great.” –

Jon Jerde on West Edmonton

The Mall of America was Jon Jerde’s response to seeing the West Edmonton Mall. He recognized the mall as a generic creation that met the developers desires, but he also noticed that the sheer size of the structure made it no longer just a mall.

However, no matter the growth and expansion of the shopping mall the basic concept of layout design remains constant. The idea of generating high consumer density exists from the original barbell designs presented by Victor Gruen. The anchor stores act as the focal points in the design and draw consumers to them through the mall while passing smaller shops (Dovey 1999).

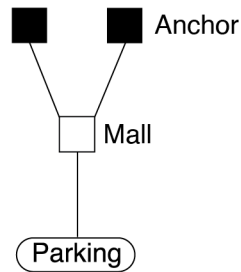


Figure 6 Shopping Mall Genotype. Source: Kim Dovey, Framing Places p.140

As shopping malls continue growing and changing in size (Figure 5) the dumbbell becomes more ambiguous, but the powerful anchor stores remain. The intersecting of dumbbell forms increases the chances of consumer exploration. Dovey explores the layout of three typical shopping malls (see Figure 6) that examine the still typical form and pathways from parking lots to shopping. Anchors in newer malls have evolved from department stores to include entertainment venues, food courts, and other attractions, but the lure remains the same.

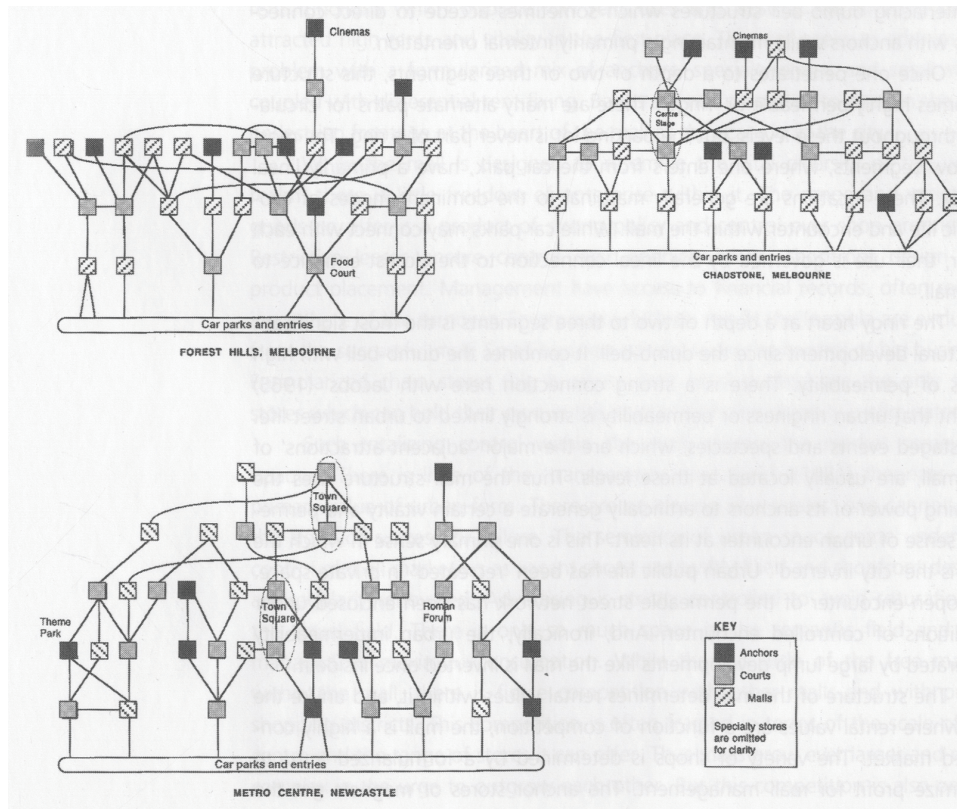


Figure 7 Three typical malls, Kim Dovey, Framing Places p. 141

The appeal of the anchor to consumers is crucial to the health of the mall. The goal of the design is to encourage the consumer to enter into the mall for access to the anchors. Pulling the consumers into the mall and forcing them to pass the smaller stores in the corridors ensure the economic viability of the entire mall structure. When anchor stores fail, or choose to leave a particular mall for a newer shopping center, the economic health of the first mall is at a much higher risk. This point is further explored in the case studies of Chapter 4.

Many of the newer and successful shopping malls implement a floor plan designed to encourage exploration along multiple paths,

whether it be throughout the mall or along smaller portions. By allowing consumers to walk different paths in order to get to the larger attractions, either entertainment venues or anchor stores, the shopper experiences exposure to different shopping opportunities on the walk to their destination and the walk back.

3.3.1 Present Mall Categories

Retail design continually evolves due to new technology and trends various architectural typologies have proliferated the industry. The International Council of Shopping Centers has broken the broad definition of shopping centers into different categorical titles in order to help organize the many different typologies.

US Shopping Center Categories				
Typology	Concept	Typ Sq. Ft / Typ Acres	Typ Number of Anchors	Radius Served (mi.)
Super-Regional Mall	Similar in concept to regional malls, but offering more variety and assortment.	+800,000 SF 60-120 Acres	+3	5-25 miles
Regional Mall	General merchandise or fashion-oriented offerings. Typically, enclosed with inward-facing stores connected by a common walkway. Parking surrounds the outside perimeter.	400,000-800,000 SF 40-100 Acres	+2	5-15 miles
Community Center	General merchandise or convenience- oriented offerings. Wider range of apparel and other soft goods offerings than neighborhood centers. The center is usually configured in a straight line as a strip, or may be laid out in an L or U shape, depending on the site and design.	125,000-400,000 SF 10-40 Acres	+2	3-6 miles
Power Center	Category-dominant anchors, including discount department stores, off-price stores, wholesale clubs, with only a few small tenants.	250,000-600,000 SF 25-80 Acres	+3	5-10 miles
Lifestyle	Upscale national-chain specialty stores with dining and entertainment in an outdoor setting.	150,000-500,000 SF 10-40 Acres	0-2	8-12 miles

Figure 8: Shopping Center Definitions. Source: ICSC 2014

This thesis focuses on an analysis on the categories of regional mall and super-regional mall, as well as the emergence and conversion of these older regional malls to power centers and lifestyle centers. Victor Gruen's work mainly falls under the category of regional malls.

Newer categories pose a threat to already established categories. As consumers are enticed by newer amenities the previous shopping centers are left behind. Currently super-regional malls, lifestyle centers, and outlet centers all pose a threat to the vitality of a regional enclosed mall.

3.4.0: Decline of the Mall

Greyfield malls are a growing trend of the suburban landscape. A typical greyfield mall is 32 years old with the last renovation roughly 13 years ago. Typically, there are 22 competing retail sites within five miles of a greyfield mall (CNU 2001). Greyfield malls exist for a variety of reasons including lack of maintenance, increase in local competition, to a change in retail trends.

Figure 9 illustrates the documented dead malls that currently exist throughout North America. The recession of 2008 profoundly affected mall segment. CoStar Group estimates that 80 percent of the 1,200 malls in the United States are healthy, however that is down from 94 percent of malls being healthy in 2006. And 3.4 percent of malls are over 40 percent vacant which represents nearly 30 million square feet of space (Schwartz 2015). As new categories of shopping and new technologies emerge it becomes a near impossible feat for a dying mall to recover without major interventions.

Dead Malls



Figure 9 Author's Illustration of Dead Malls in North America. Source: [deadmalls.com](https://www.deadmalls.com)

3.4.1: Overretailing

One of the major killers of malls in the United States is the sheer amount of retail focused developments and buildings within the country. American shopping malls provide 23 square feet of retail

space per citizen. This far surpasses any other nation with the world average of retail space per person at 4 square feet.

Retail Space per Person

	square feet per person		square feet per person		square feet per person
United States	31	Latin America	5	World	4
US Shopping Malls	23	Africa	.1		
Asia	2	Europe	4		
Japan	9	United Kingdom	10		
China	0.5	France	9		
South Korea	4	Spain	4		
Singapore	6	Greece	1		

Source: Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping

Figure 10 Retail Space per Person

The massive size of the average shopping mall makes it a challenge to keep filled with tenants and consumers. There are only so many retailers that a market can handle and as we build more vacancies will be a natural occurrence.

As newer, bigger, and more accessible retail centers are built older centers continue to suffer. Anchor stores tend to leave older centers for the newer centers. Without the anchor stores the older centers are destined to fail leaving their neighborhood with the blight of a large greyfield site. Gruen recognized early on that developers have been more concerned with generating sales than with “serving the needs of an established neighborhood... the belief was that if one could only build a shopping machine large and powerful enough it could be located almost anywhere, on the cheapest land available, and because of its gigantic scale people would flock to it even if they were forced to travel dozens of miles.” (Gruen 351). Although enclosed shopping malls are no longer being constructed at the pace they once were new categories of retail are being constructed.

Outlet and lifestyle centers continue the trend of being built further on the fringe of suburbia. This is still happening as new retail centers are built further and further from urban cores capitalizing on cheap land.

3.4.2: E-Commerce

Technology is playing the same role as it did with the downtown shopping districts in the mid-twentieth century. New inventions are what allowed the development of the enclosed mall as an archetype and threatened downtown department stores and main street commercial districts across the country. Now new technology, such as e-commerce, is posing threats to the mall archetype. Retailers that are able to adapt to the new trends are thriving and those that refuse to adapt are left behind.

The majority of people believe that e-commerce is a major culprit of the death of the mall. This is because the Internet provides an easier method of accomplishing the two tasks that the mall has been relegated to providing. The first is it was a more efficient machine for shopping. The mall relies on the network of roads and highways to transport consumers to its doors of commodity. The consumer would have to set aside a chunk of time, drive to the destination, locate a parking spot to deposit their car, and then fumble through the mall to search for the product they sought. Search came through the physical action of walking through department stores and mall corridors with the hopes of retailers being that the consumer would be enticed to make a spontaneous

purchase. On the other hand, e-commerce uses the network of the Internet and wireless communications to deliver the mall to our pockets or laptops. No longer do we physically need to travel to a location in order to access the goods that are stored in a centralized location. The act of searching for the product the consumer desires involves typing in keystrokes to a search box instead of walking through a maze of commodity. Due to the influx of big data on each individual consumer, the retailer is able to pelt our screens with more relevant advertisements, either based on current physical location or on our search history.

The other purpose that the mall was stripped of by the Internet was the human desire of seeing and being seen. Mall promenades are meant to allow the consumer to view retail stores that situate themselves along its path and to also see their fellow consumer purchasing goods throughout the day. It allows the consumer to flaunt their purchases to their fellow man. Social networking and social media has replaced the need to be seen physically with the need to share virtually.

The Internet has greatly changed our use of space and place, this being clearly exemplified through the archetype of the mall. The Internet, and wireless networks specifically, “deliver us from servitude to places and things and from those who control places.” (Mitchell 84). Geographic location has a subdued importance in comparison with access via wireless networks.

E-Commerce Percentage of Total Retail

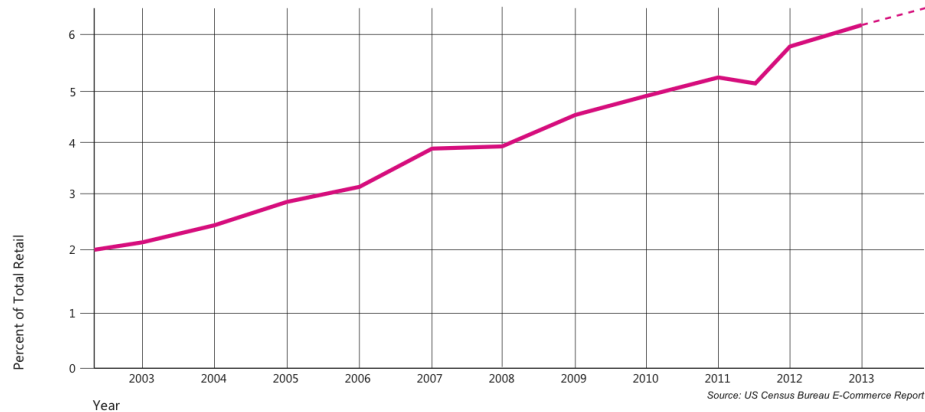


Figure 11 E-Commerce Percentage of Total Retail, source: US Census Bureau

However, e-commerce is killing the archetype of the mall and it is not killing physical retail. In fact, online shopping is hurting big box stores much more than the shopping mall. The clothing stores and specialty shops that are in malls are hit less drastically (Schwartz 2015). That does not mean that mall retailers are safe from e-commerce, but that they have the opportunity to adapt.

Retailers that are creating both a physical and digital presence are thriving. And those that are able to merge the two in new and creative ways are seeing significant returns. The proliferation of the Internet into the physical realm is not removing the brick-and-mortar store from existence, but it is changing its design. By completely removing shopping from the physical realm it removes us from the sensory stimulation that occurs by touching, examining, and testing a product (Zukin 2005). New forms of retail may see more showrooming techniques, smaller footprints, and rely on delivery options more, but they will not be completely removed from the physical realm.

3.4.3: Just a Thing

Malls have failed in their attempt at place-making for suburbia. The intentions of creating place through planning, networking, and mixed use may have been successful, but due to their non-realization the mall was set up to fail. They are the perfect example of artificial place. Easily replicated, easily reproduced, and easily forgotten.

At their onset malls were unique attention grabbers, but due to the replication and simplification of design malls have lost that initial appeal. The individual features of Gruen's early designs, such as the massive gardens in Southdale, have been lost in order to save on costs. The intent of creating a suburban civic center and recreating the town square of urban cities is lost through the

Daniel Herman states that most retail design is simply a search for "the next Big Thing". Retail architecture is one of constant change that is always searching for new ways to manipulate the consumer into spending more money and more time within its walls. This being the case, the shopping mall, or any other retail centric venue, cannot be anything besides an artificial place. Shopping malls led to big box stores. Big box stores led to power centers. Power centers led into lifestyle centers and these will lead to the next thing.

Herman states that the two essential qualities of the "Next Big Thing" are that it must be big and that it must in fact be a thing. To be a thing it must be replicable and thus, it cannot be a place. It

also must be big. In terms of shopping malls the bigger they are the better. As malls continue to increase in size their enormous mass becomes an attractor in itself.

Developers tend to look to the next 'thing' because it acts as a safe investment. It is what the people currently want, what they seek out, and where they will spend their money. However, as architects, designers, and really citizens of the world we must begin to wonder if this is a lifestyle that we can keep up? Continually building structures for consumption on Greenfield sites is slowly ruining our environment. Thus, we must begin to design solutions for the greyfield sites that exist which will provide an option for longevity and flexibility as our needs change.

3.5.0: Reasons to Rehabilitate

Rehabilitation allows us to combat problems of suburban sprawl that began to form after World War II. Post-war suburbs show the abandonment of a pedestrian neighborhood structure for a more auto-centric development pattern (Tachieva 2010). By rehabilitating greyfield sites throughout the suburbs it allows architects and planners to create complete communities and return to a neighborhood structure that is at the scale of the human and not of the automobile.

One of the major issues in architecture in the past decades is sustainability. Sustainability can be viewed in numerous ways and does not only include the construction of zero emission buildings. By redeveloping dead mall sites architects are able to remediate greyfield sites, which will allow for greenfield sites to remain unharmed by man. By remediating these sites the opportunity is given to us to correct the mistakes of our past. Designers can address the issues of the massive asphalt lots and accessibility to the site.

Also, the suburbs have drastically changed since the advent of the mall. Walkable towns are replacing the desires of driveways and garages. The growth of the suburbs through the twentieth century also shifted the location of many early shopping malls from being on the edge of suburbia to being in the center a dense residential area. The opportunity to redevelop presents the chance for architects to design a true city center for these areas that are

typically lacking one based on the design principles of their time period.

3.5.1 Greyfield Problems

The term greyfield was developed as a play on the terms greenfield and brownfield. Greyfields are former commercial or light-industrial properties that are not hindered by contamination. Vacant shopping malls, strip centers, and office parks are all examples of potential greyfield redevelopment sites. They pose ideal redevelopment opportunities for developers because the infrastructure is already in place, much site work has already been completed, and nearby developed communities can act as a built-in market for new businesses. Typically, they are also already accessible to existing roadways making these sites easy to get to.

Greyfield sites, like those of dead malls, pose many problems to the suburban communities that they are situated in. In existing communities greyfield sites represent a break in the urban continuity while providing less tax revenues for the town, unappealing visual aesthetics for suburbanites passing by, and a lack of services for local residents (Otto 2011). One of which is the employment opportunities that are lost for the community when a shopping mall closes its doors. Dead malls also provide a site that may become a hotbed for crime in a suburban community. Finally, the unsightliness can bring down property values for the entire area that is affected. This can be a significant issue as many older malls are now centralized within residential neighborhoods.

Regional shopping malls act as important employment suppliers to local communities. Shopping centers of all sizes provide over 12 million jobs for Americans, which equates to roughly 9.3% of the US labor force (Figure 12). When a mall fails in a community numerous individuals are left unemployed and forced to seek new employers.

Shopping Center Related Employment

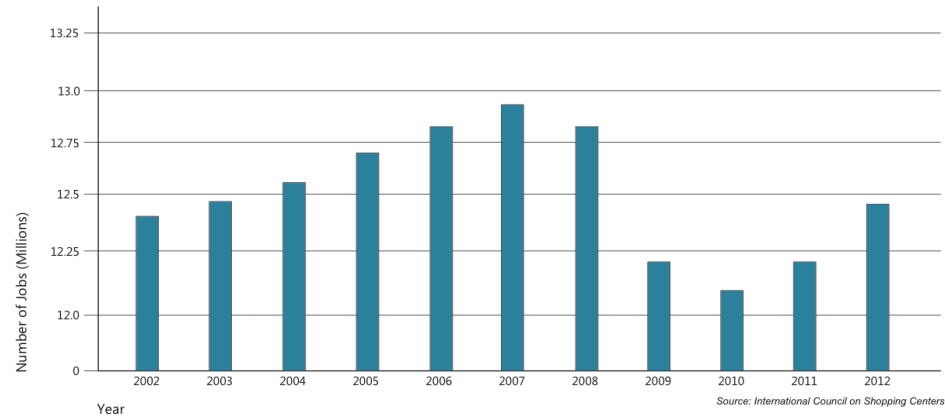


Figure 12 Shopping Center Related Employment Source: ICSC

Greyfield redevelopment provides architects, designers, planners, government officials, and engineers an opportunity to take a property with a singular use and turn it into a project that improves the quality of life for the inhabitants and increases the sustainability of the region. Will Fleissig, a partner for Continuum Partners out of Denver stated that, “These greyfield sites are the first wave of large landholdings that are in existing communities, near transit, with existing utilities and transportation systems, that are coming due for redevelopment” (CNU 2002, 12). These make them ideal contenders for new community development as much of the infrastructure is already in place.

By redeveloping these sites architects and planners can provide suburbanites with the things that are in the highest demand currently; a more urban lifestyle. Suburbanites are looking for options that will allow them to drive less, arriving at locations instead by walking or public transportation. Overall, by redeveloping these sites current needs can be met, while also creating sustainable communities.

3.5.2 Rehabilitation Strategies

Two of the major strategies exist for the rehabilitation of a greyfield mall site are reinhabitation and redevelopment. Both have been used extensively throughout the country with a high rate of success. The success of these projects remains with establishing a strong connection with the existing population. Depending on the needs of the community either method may prove to be a better solution for the greyfield site.

Choosing a rehabilitation method requires an understanding of the dead malls regional context. The solution for a mall that is embedded within a suburban residential area will be different than one that is located on the cusp of development. By closely examining the needs of the community and the malls location a proper method for rehabilitation can be established.

Reinhabitation is a strategy that keeps the structure of the mall intact and repurposes it with new program. This method takes advantage of the typically open structure of the mall and the flexible

interior spaces. It is essentially an effective band-aid that helps the owner keep the lights on and allows the government to collect marginal taxes, but does not address the majority of the problems of the original situation. Non-typical tenants may lease the space at rates far below that of national retailers. However, it can turn the mall into a structure that better serves its community.

A variety of examples exist that capture reinhabitation projects. By changing the use of the mall the site can better address local needs that have developed over time. Depending on the community the mall can be reused as classrooms for schools, offices for local companies, or provide a public use such as libraries and parks (Jones 2009). Because of their open and flexible design malls can easily hold uses that are more suitable for the community.



Figure 13 Conversion of St Louis Centre to Parking Garage Source: STL Today

The St. Louis Centre located in St. Louis was given a new use as a parking garage. The mall was located in the city center and was not able to compete with the other retail offerings in the area. However, being in the city center parking is always at high demand. The structure was deemed capable of supporting the weight of cars and was transformed into multi-level parking for the area.



Figure 14 Windsor Park Mall Source: Rackspace

Windsor Park Mall, located outside of San Antonio, was repurposed as the headquarters for Rackspace Hosting (Drummer 2012). By taking over the site Rackspace provides 3,000 jobs in its new headquarters and the area has seen various new construction. A Starbucks was built across the street from the office and a YMCA took over an abandoned Target big box store on the site.

Reinhabitation can provide a dead mall with a second life. However, in some cases a complete overhaul is the best way to address the needs of the local community. Redevelopment projects are much more costly than reinhabitation, but they allow designers and planners to address the needs of the new suburban population. These projects tend typically include housing and increase the density of the existing site. By including housing designers are creating nodes of walkable and sustainable communities within the sprawling suburbs.

Most malls share similar deficiencies in their original design. Typically, they are extremely large for a single use building and surrounded by a vast area of underutilized asphalt parking that is unappealing for pedestrian circulation (Tachieva 2010). These are the two major components that a redevelopment project tends to address.



Figure 15 Rendering of Belmar Proposal. Source: Elkus Manfredi Architects

One of these new urban nodes in suburbia is Belmar located in Lakewood, Colorado. The design of an urbanized community on the former site of Villa Italia shopping mall has met the desires of the new suburbanite. The new project creates a 104-acre walkable community with over a thousand housing units. Mike Rock, the Lakewood City Manager, says that the success of the project lies in the various activities that take place in the public plaza where you can see “Kids pushing the round ball that sits on the water, all the young people there on a Friday night outside the pub, in the winter you have people skating” (Jones 2009, p 161). The new community that lives there is able to use the space for its different needs as opposed to the single use of a mall corridor.

The case studies in the following chapter will take a more in depth look at an example of these two strategies.

Chapter 4

Case Studies

Chapter 4| Case Studies

The cases presented in this chapter show an exploration of two different rehabilitation techniques performed on greyfield shopping mall sites; reinhabitation and redevelopment.

The first case focuses on reinhabitation, which has proven itself as a quick and cheap way to inject fresh blood into a dying mall. This allows the mall owner to keep generating some income off of the property. Malls throughout the country have explored this method and have leased space to clients such as universities, local governing agencies, artists, and corporations as office space.

The option of redevelopment is the more costly and construction intensive method of site rehabilitation. Although it requires the most work, this method can also make sustainable solutions by creating new, dense, walkable neighborhoods. Redevelopment allows the designer to inject density into these new sites by adding housing types that are becoming more desirable for the suburbanite.

4.1.0 Crestwood Plaza

Crestwood Plaza, located outside of St. Louis, represents a case of a failed mall that was kept alive through the strategy of reinhabitation. This strategy relies on keeping the format of the mall relatively unchanged while inserting program that is not typically found in a shopping mall. In the case of Crestwood, spaces were leased out to local artists and art galleries. Other examples of this method include leasing space to offices, educational facilities, medical facilities, and parking structures. This method extended the life of the mall for roughly four years and was a completely private undertaking by mall owner Centrum Properties.

4.1.1 Site Context

Crestwood, Mo is approximately thirteen miles from the St. Louis City Center. The current population estimate shows a total of 12,000 people living in the town.

Construction began on Crestwood Plaza, one of the first shopping centers in the St. Louis region, in 1956. At its peak the mall contained over 90 stores and 3 anchor tenants that would feed the smaller stores. The mall was located on a 48-acre site and contained 1,034,494 square feet of retail space spread out over 1 floor. The anchor stores were built to either two or three stories.

The grand opening for the mall was held on March 21, 1957. At the time Crestwood contained 550,000 feet of leasable space with a

single level of retail and was anchored by a three-story Sears department store.

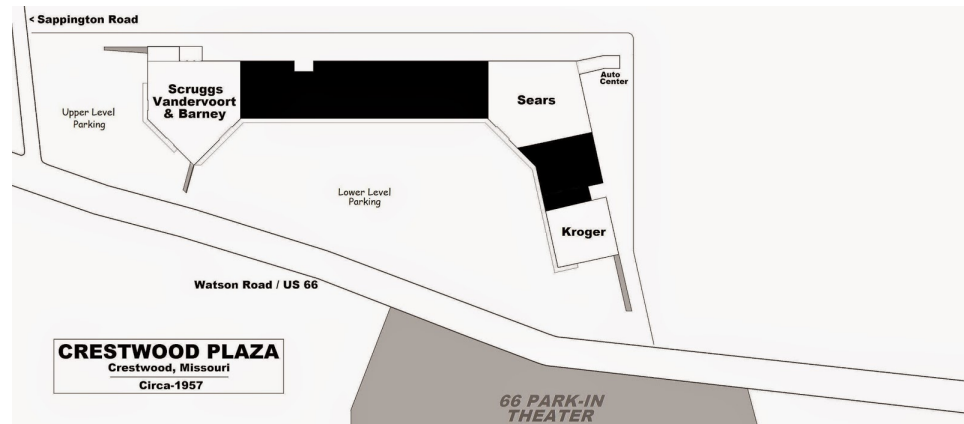


Figure 16 Original design of Crestwood.

The first renovation to the mall occurred in 1967 and added additional square footage while also enclosing the mall.

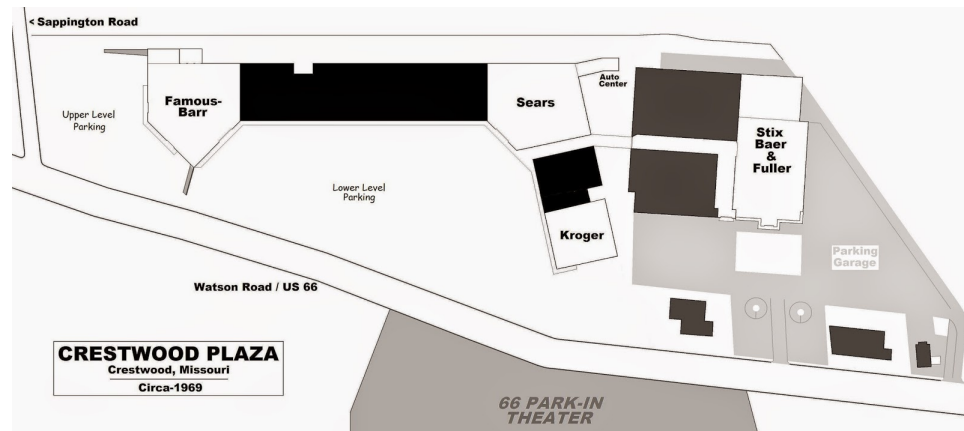


Figure 17 1967 renovation of Crestwood including enclosed walkway.

The mall became fully enclosed in 1984 becoming a modified barbell type mall. The mall now contained three anchor stores, one at each end of the barbell as well as the original three story Sears centrally located at the center of the mall. This renovation would be

the last major change to Crestwood and demonstrates the basic floor plan that currently exists.

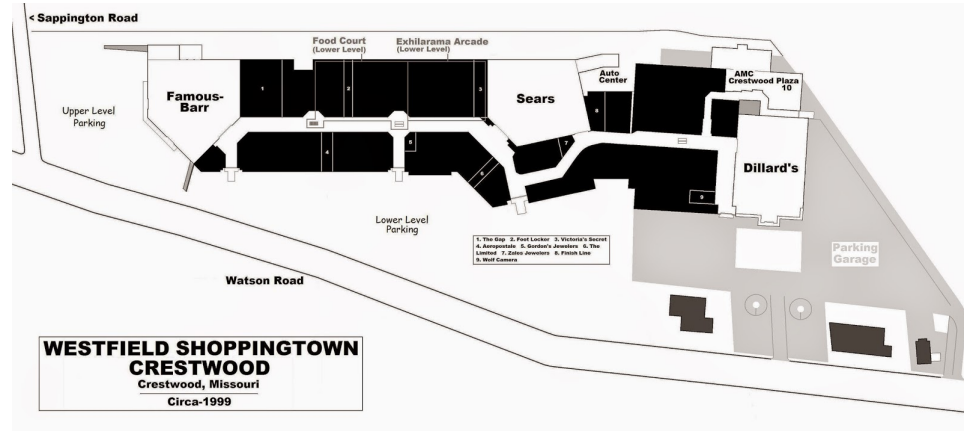


Figure 18 Development into a Barbell Mall.

The barbell design philosophy is successful at generating foot traffic to lesser-known stores by drawing consumers past them with the lure of the magnetic anchor store. However, the vitality of the entire mall is dependent on the vitality of the anchor stores.

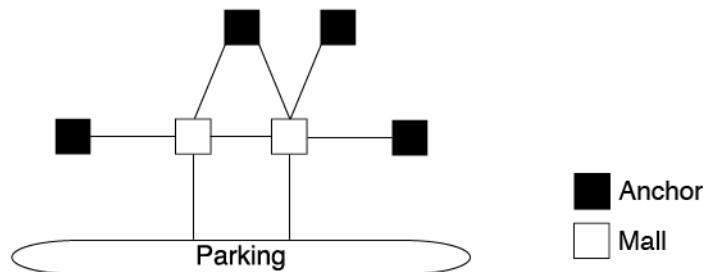


Figure 19 Spatial Diagram of Crestwood Plaza

Developing a spatial diagram, similar to the ones developed by Kim Dovey, helps express the simple layout principles seen in Crestwood Plaza. The strong dependence on the anchor stores is made evident through the diagramming process. Also, the parking

for the site does not necessarily encircle the structure like many typical shopping malls, which prevents having multiple points of entry from different directions.

4.1.2 Deficiencies

As one of the regions oldest shopping malls Crestwood Plaza could not compete with newer retail experiences, such as Chesterfield Mall (1976) and West County Mall (1969, 2002). As the experience of the mall was replicated and reproduced throughout the St. Louis area the uniqueness of Crestwood was lost and the shopping mall was exposed as an ‘artificial place’; easily replicated and replaced by newer experiences.

The main reason for failure was the loss of key anchor stores, which would result in an increase in vacancies throughout the rest of the mall. Starting in 2007 the three anchors plus the movie theater began to vacate the mall for the newer retail venues previously mentioned.

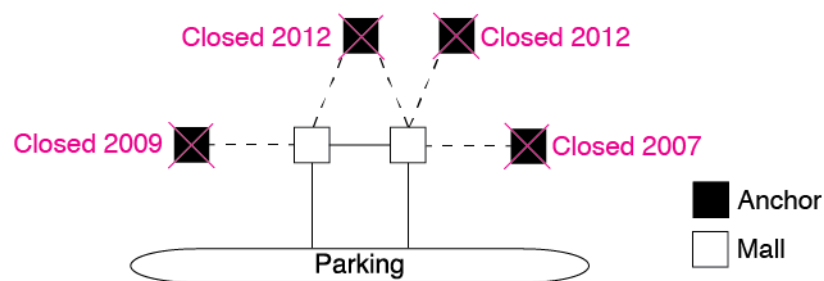


Figure 20 Failures of Anchors at Crestwood

Shown in Figure 20 are the dates of failure of each anchor store within Crestwood. With the failure of Sears and the AMC Movie

Theater in 2012 the mall officially shut its doors. With each closure the struggles of the stores along the mall corridor became worse. The dashed lines in the diagram represent the mall corridors that were negatively affected by the loss of the anchor stores. Because Crestwood Plaza was designed on the principles of a barbell mall once the anchor store left the property there was no reason for the consumer to travel down that corridor. Thus, foot traffic, clients, and business are all lost. The reliance on a singular entity for the vitality of numerous stores through spatial design is hardly appropriate for a field that is as volatile as retail.

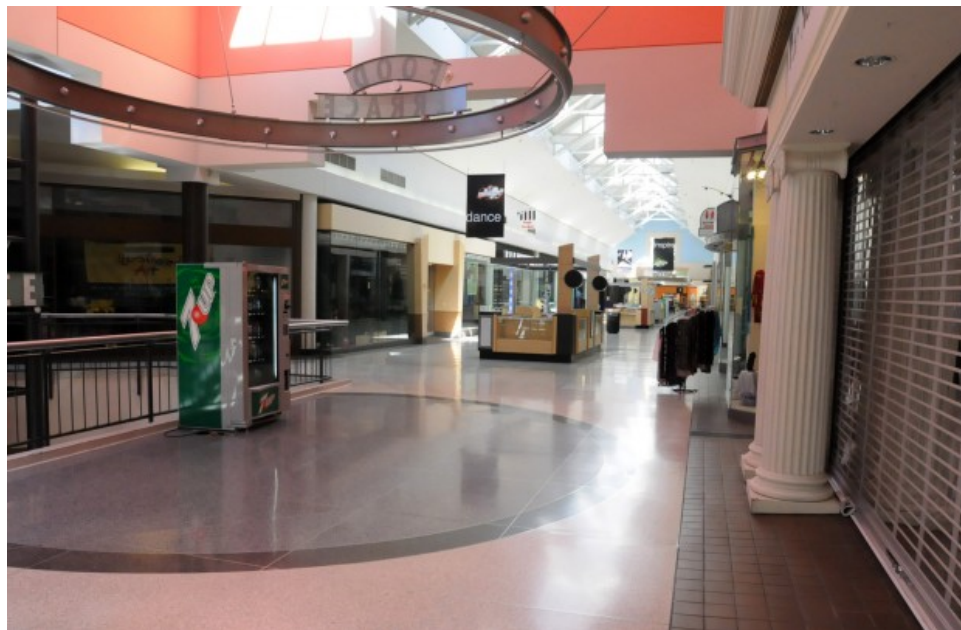


Figure 21 Interior of Crestwood Plaza. Source: STL Today

The barbell design does not allow the consumer to complete a circuit through the mall. The shopper has to travel back and forth along the same path. This layout strategy is also highly dependent on magnets at the ends of the barbell. The reliance on anchor

stores for the complete vitality of the mall is risky for the success of the mall. By spatially analyzing this mall layout with the diagramming method of Kim Dovey it is obvious that once one anchor leaves the mall the rest of the stores came crumbling down with it. However, when looking at redevelopment options dependence on a store to have staying power is a massive risk. Hence, these anchors should be flexible. They should host events. They should draw people to them without being a single entity.

Although large attractions such as anchor stores and entertainment venues will act as magnets to lure customers in designing the space of the entire mall around the anchors puts the rest of the smaller stores in jeopardy of failing. This is especially true in the standard barbell type malls where singular paths lead to and from the anchor stores. When the anchor at the end of that path fails there is no reason for a consumer to wander down that corridor.

Crestwood also suffered from not being as easily accessed from the Interstate Highway as its newer competition. Crestwood Plaza is located along Watson Road in Crestwood and is approximately a half of a mile off of Interstate 44. The lack of visual and physical connections with the highway were two major reasons for the downturn of Crestwood Plaza. Successful retail centers provide consumers with easily accessible parking from the major roadways that lead to them. This was one of the pivotal design features in the original proposals for the malls of Victor Gruen. By pampering the consumer with comfort and amenities they reward the retailers within the mall by spending more time in their stores and visiting more frequently.



Figure 22Crestwood Site Plan

4.1.3 Remediation

Centrum purchased the mall in 2008 with the intention to redevelop the defunct mall site into an outdoor entertainment complex with a mix of retail, restaurants, and other entertainment venues. Centrum proposed a creative solution in order to generate revenue at the site during the process of developing the redevelopment plans.

ArtSpace, the program developed by Centrum in 2008, provided low rental rates to artists, galleries, craft shops, and dance groups in order to fill the growing number of vacancies in the mall. Originally intended to last between 18 and 24 months was wildly successful and lasted for nearly three years providing opportunities to lease space that many would otherwise not be able to afford.

The low rent was possible for a couple of reasons. The first reason was Centrum's willingness to be creative in order to generate some revenue. As a developer the company was aware that they would not be able to lure top retail tenants to their defunct mall. By lowering their rents and leasing space to artists, Centrum was able to pull in a small profit while giving local artists a place of their own. Another factor was that the former anchor store Dillard's, which closed in 2007, was paying rent through 2012.

The owners of the mall originally stated that they would have been impressed if they got a dozen art tenants. However, at ArtSpace's peak Crestwood was the home for over 60 local artists. The program gave the opportunity to artists to get their work and name out in the public realm.



Figure 23: Jim Perigrin of Green Rugs in Artspace Source: STL Today

The mall's layout as a singular interior hallway on one level made it ideal for art gallery space. People who came to the mall could easily walk from one end to the other visiting the various artists' studios and galleries.

Artspace officially ended on February 28, 2012. Sears closed in April of 2012 and the only remaining retailer was LensCrafters. The mall concourses closed on July 11, 2013 and LensCrafters remained open until September 16, 2013 by using their exterior entrance. The mall was officially empty.

Although the reinhabitation method held off the end of the mall for a few years it still leads to the need for redevelopment. Centrum previously attempted to demolish a portion of the existing structure in order to complete a new entertainment and retail complex for an estimated \$124 million. The plan called for the demolition of the entire mall except for the previous Macy's store, which would be converted into a grocery store and subdivided into other tenants. However, these plans were scrapped when the town of Crestwood rejected \$34 million in tax financing. Jeff Schlink, the mayor of Crestwood at the time of the proposal was quoted saying that, "I think we were underwhelmed at first. It's difficult for people to understand that it's not going to be a traditional mall." (Bandle 2011).



Figure 24: Redevelopment Rendering of Centrum Proposal

UrbanStreet Group LLC purchased the mall via auction from Centrum in May of 2014 for \$3.6 million dollars. The group is acting as the owner and new developer of the site and is evaluating the proposal of a new mixed-use development on the 48-acre site. Experts such as Richard Ward, principal of the St. Louis based real estate consulting firm Ward Development Counsel do not believe having the new development centered on retail makes much sense. He is quoted believing saying that due to the immense of retail already nearby increasing the density of the site and adding multi-family housing makes the most sense for the redevelopment project (Bandle 2011).

The released images of proposals do not address some of the major problems with current redevelopment efforts. Figure 24 above still shows a tremendous sea of parking and essentially turns the mall into a glorified strip center.

Whatever the next step for Crestwood Plaza will be, rehabilitation merely acted as a patchwork solution. However, it gave a community group a home that did not previously exist. ArtSpace gave artists and designers a place to use as a business incubator and now they have used that experience to open shops full time in other locations (Kumar 2012). Even though Crestwood will need to redevelop the reinhabitation method was a successful way to both generate income and serve the needs of the community

4.2.0: Mizner Park

Mizner Park represents the first successful replacement of a dead mall with a town center mixed-use complex (Jones 2009). The new proposal introduced a sense of locality by combining elements of design originally used by Addison Mizner, a local architect in the 1920s, who helped shape many of the prominent buildings in the area, including the Boca Raton Resort and Club. By creating a development that connected locally sense of place was established as opposed to the typical suburban shopping mall.

4.2.1 Site Context

Mizner Park, formerly the Boca Raton Mall, is located in Boca Raton, Florida roughly 43 miles north of Miami. The US Census estimates that the 2013 population of Boca Raton to be at roughly 90,000 people.

Boca Raton consists of a fairly wealthy and educated population. Over 50% of adults have a college degree and the median household income is \$70,699. This compares well against the US averages of 25.5% college educated and a household income of \$53,046.

The site is located in a primarily residential area and is approximately three miles from the beach. Due to the focus of development on the beach, Boca Raton never developed a clear downtown area and instead used the enclosed mall as its source for retail shopping off of the coastline.

The original Boca Raton Mall was conceived in the 1970s as a typical enclosed suburban mall. It contained 430,000 square feet of retail space on a 28.7-acre site conveniently located along Federal Highway. The mall itself was surrounded with typical large array of asphalt parking on all sides.

The area contains various retail options including Mizner Park, Boynton Beach Mall, Town Center at Boca Raton, Promenade at Coconut Creek, and Pompano Citi Centre (Figure 25). After redevelopment Mizner Park is the only open air, mixed-use retail option in the area.

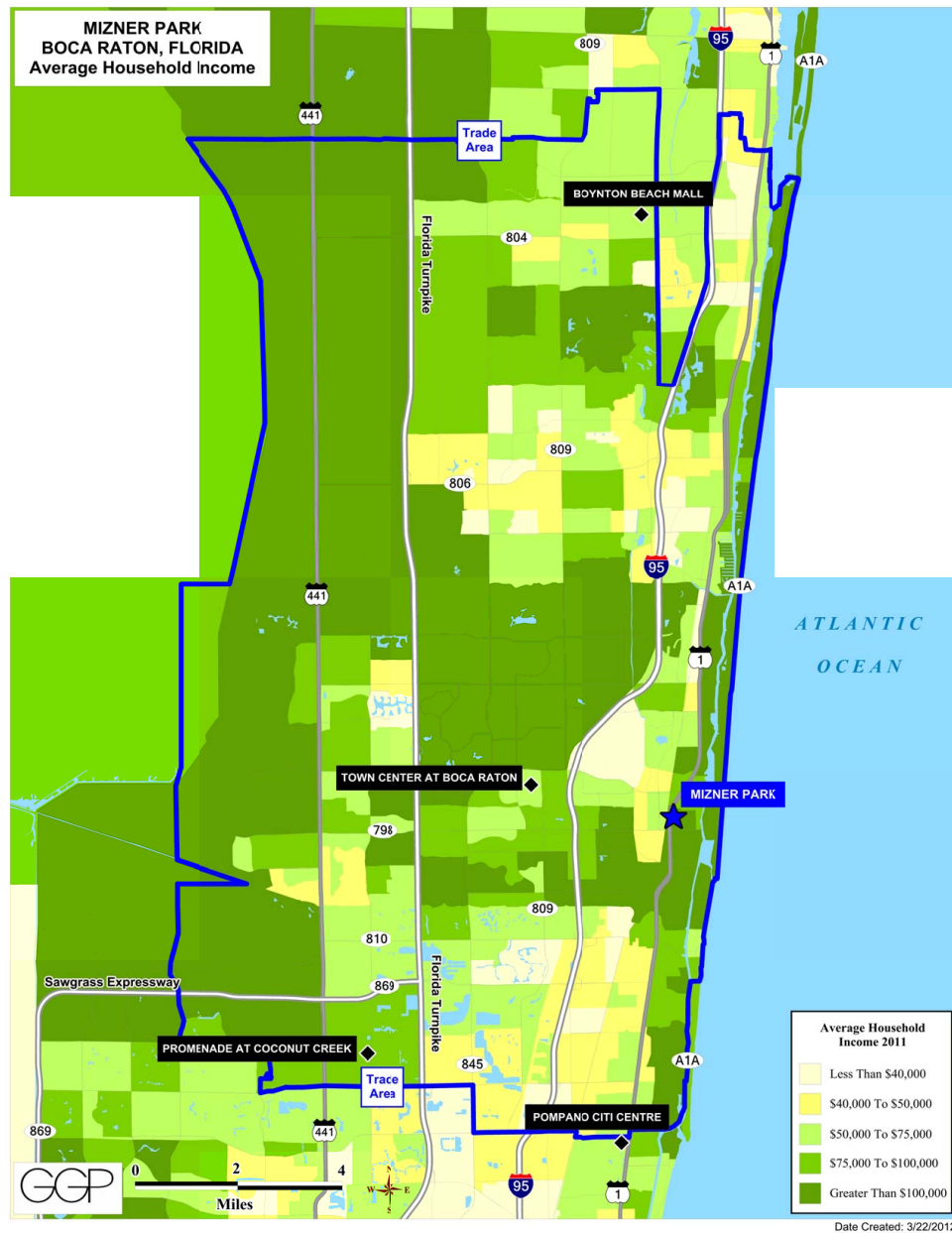


Figure 25 Boca Raton Income Map Source: General Growth Properties

4.2.2 Deficiencies

Boca Raton Mall was essentially dead before it was able to live. Overretailing was the main culprit of the death of the mall. Two miles south of the Boca Raton Mall is Pompano Fashion Square.

This mall was built four years earlier and already enjoyed a loyal consumer base by the opening of Boca Raton Mall in 1974. Pompano Fashion Square was larger and contained more anchor stores than Boca Raton Mall. In 1980 another shopping complex, the Town Center at Boca Raton, was constructed consisting of 1.3 million square feet just three miles west of the already struggling mall.

The mall continued its struggles throughout the 1980s despite the new residential developments that were built northwest of the mall. Even with the construction around the mall, consumers chose to go to the newer shopping centers. Since the mall was not a walkable destination, consumers would prefer to drive a little further for a better shopping experience. Many of the stores throughout the mall concourse either went out of business or decided to move to the newer mall in the area. By 1984, ten years after the opening of the mall, both anchor stores were left vacant. Throughout the decade various tenants occupied the anchor stores including a clearance outlet, IBM office administration, and a furniture store. The furniture store went out of business in 1989 and was the final attempt at leasing the anchor spaces.

1989 marked the end of the Boca Raton Mall. The entire mall was demolished in order to make way for the redevelopment plans. The enclosed mall lived for just fifteen years.

4.2.3 Remediation

The Boca Raton Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was

created in 1980 in order to begin the revitalization process of the struggling area. In 1987 the CRA recommended that the site be redeveloped as an art and cultural center after hearing input from residents, business leaders, and elected officials.

By 1989 demolition of the Boca Raton Mall began. Phase One of the development opened in December of 1990 with great success. At the time of opening the majority of retail and residential spaces were already leased. The project was completed in 1998.

The completed development contains 236,000 square feet of retail space, 267,000 square feet of office space, and 272 residential units. It maintains 2500 parking spaces located in four parking garages, one in each quadrant of the development.

Mizner Park is highly successful and has already outlived the enclosed mall that it replaced. The success of this project hinges on its attention to locality and the context of the surrounding site. By choosing to develop the architecture in the style of local architect Addison Mizner the project creates a sense of belonging that the typical regional shopping mall does not. The redevelopment also addresses the main deficiencies in typical mall design; large asphalt lots, excessive single use buildings, and isolation from the surrounding context.

The four parking garages address the issue of the sprawling asphalt parking lots that isolate many regional shopping malls from their context. The structures on the north side of the development

are adjacent to a residential neighborhood of single-family homes. In order to address this condition the architect of the project faced the garages with town homes in order to make the transition from the single-family home neighborhood more gradual and appealing.

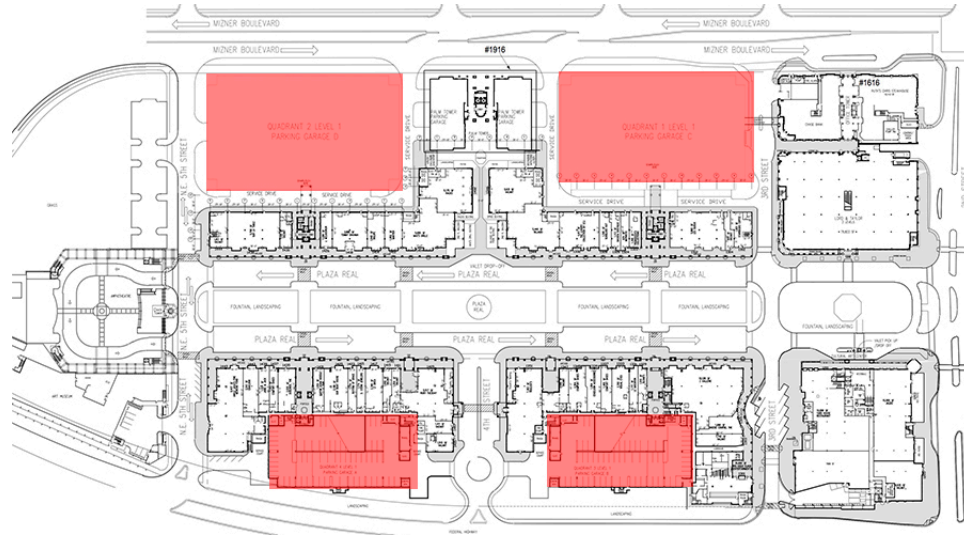


Figure 26 Parking at Mizner Park Source of Base Plan: GGP

Incorporating various uses is another success for Mizner Park. The site went from being only retail to incorporating housing, offices, and entertainment venues. Cultural venues, such as The Boca Raton Museum and a 1,800 seat concert hall, now call Mizner Park home. The housing added to the site was one of the largest risks for the developer, however it is also one of the greatest successes of the project. No rental housing market previously existed in the area.

One of the most successful features of the redevelopment was the creation of the large public space known as Plaza Real. This large open space is publically owned and maintained, unlike the pseudo public space that is a typical mall corridor. The boulevard is designed at a scale that is accommodating to both the automobile

and the pedestrian. One can comfortably stroll the plaza, which runs the length of the development, in the shade of the palm trees that line both sides. Fountains, gazebos, and benches act as places of rest and interaction for members of the community. The 120 foot wide Plaza Real terminates with an outdoor amphitheatre that hosts concerts and community events.

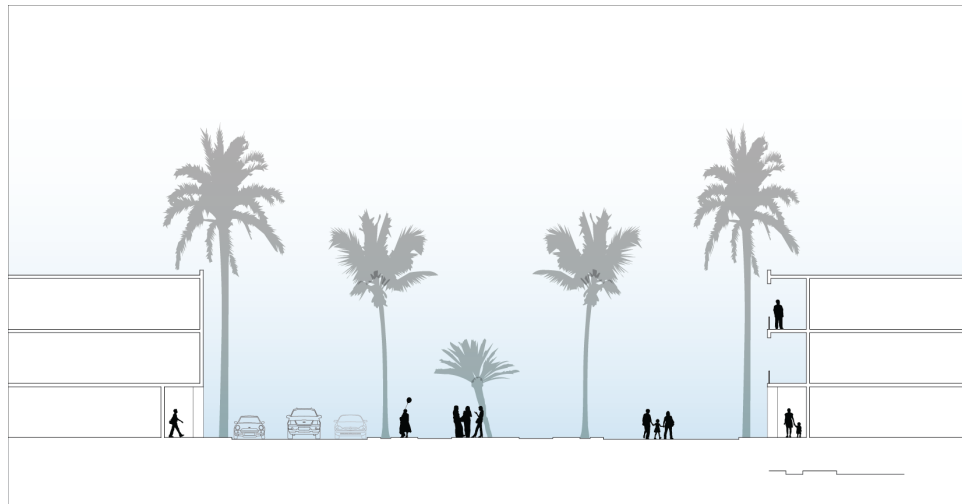


Figure 27 Section through Plaza Real

By treating the redevelopment of the site as a local project and not one where a generic archetype could be inserted the architect and developer were successful at creating a true place in Boca Raton. The style and colors used along Plaza Real represent a connection with the original buildings of Addison Mizner in Boca Raton and as development continues in the area, spawned by Mizner Park, this same style is becoming entrenched in the rest of the city.



Figure 28 Boca Raton Resort and Club by Addison Mizner Source: EDSA

4.3.0 Analysis of Cases

Both of the strategies illustrated in the case studies show effective methods for redeveloping failed sites by creating a sense of community. Although there is no single solution on how to repurpose a dead mall, a successful solution will take into account the local inhabitants and create an architecture that can foster community. Solutions vary into reinhabitation and redevelopment cases and which one is chosen is based on a particular set of characteristics. A particular solution relies on a precise analysis of both the local context and the health of the shopping mall that is being rehabilitated. Redevelopment is typically a more permanent solution and reinhabitation is a quicker and less costly effort to keep the mall function and the rents coming in.

	Mizner Park	Crestwood Plaza
Method of Rehab	Redevelopment	Reinhabitation
Original Size	430,000 SF	1,034,494 SF
Lifespan of Mall	15 years	55 years
Lifespan of Rehab	Ongoing	+/- 4 years
Residential Units	272	None
Agencies	Public & Private	Private

Typically all sites will go through redevelopment, but rehabilitation can be used in situations when the finances are not available at the time for a full tear down and new construction. It allows for the site to be providing a use to the community that is in greater demand than retail.

Both methods of rehabilitation for a greyfield site can prove effective. In each of these case studies the architectural intervention, or lack thereof, provided a new sense of community by connecting with a local aspect that the original mall did not acknowledge. Mizner Park uses the traditional architectural aesthetics generated by a local architect to connect with the community. The project adds housing and the flexible public space of the Plaza Real that creates the density and the dynamic urbanity that is felt in successful public spaces throughout history.

Mizner Park enhanced the former site of the Boca Raton Mall as well as the surrounding residential and commercial areas. Directly to the east of Mizner Park is a typical suburban community of single-family homes. After the redevelopment of the greyfield site these homes are now selling for ten percent above the county average and before they sold for well below the average (CNU 2002). The project's architectural style is now proliferating the rest of Boca Raton as the commercial sectors south and west of the site are being renovated in the style of Addison Mizner.

For a complete redevelopment to occur local government assistance is typically needed. For Mizner Park the city created a

Community Redevelopment Agency that invested \$50 million for infrastructure improvements. The public-private relationship developed between the CRA and Crocker and Company through the acquisition of the mall for \$30 million. For many developers these costs are too much for them to tackle single handedly and in those cases reinhabitation may pose a better solution.

In the case of the redevelopment of Crestwood Plaza the relationship between private developer and public government is not running as smoothly as the example in Boca Raton. Centrum repeatedly requested public subsidies for the \$121 million project, which has been continuously rejected. Mayor Schlink of Crestwood made clear at a Board of Aldermen Meeting in August of 2013 that al are in agreement that the mall needs to be undergo redevelopment, but there are disagreements in how to go about the project. The repeated rejections led to the architect and planner for the project, PGAV, to withdrawal their proposal. The architect no longer wants to be associated with the negative votes against the project.

Crestwood Plaza and ArtSpace gave a home to a community group that did not have an architectural setting for themselves. Despite the program initially only being planned to last eighteen to twenty-four months ArtSpace lasted for nearly four years.

4.3.1 A Prototype for Reinhabitation

Despite reinhabitation acting as just a temporary improvement, it is important due to the extended time period that redevelopment plans typically take to go from design to reality. Typically the tenants that would lease spaces at such a space would be those that cannot afford standard lease rates at malls, shopping centers, or offices. In the case of Crestwood Plaza these clients were artists seeking space to either work or display their art. Other clients of this nature could be sought in the form of small business owners and new startup companies seeking space to work outside of the home for lower leasable rates.

As malls continue to die rehabilitation is going to continue to act as a band-aid at these sites. Architects and designers have the opportunity to design a reusable and adaptable model that can be used in rehabilitation situations in order to alleviate the costs of renovating a space while providing clients with a well-designed space to produce and exhibit their work. These 'modules' should be able to be constructed, transported, erected, torn down, and reused in order to eliminate waste. Since it is a temporary fix the units can be transported from mall to mall as the sites are deemed to need the use of a rehabilitation strategy.

The unit described below, titled the 'micro-box' aims to meet the requirements listed above. A single module provides roughly 64 square feet of space for the client that can act as either a workspace or as an exhibit space. The unit consists of a steel

frame, a top cover that can be raised when the unit is in use, and brand panels that can be easily swapped out in order to accommodate easily switching the units between clients.

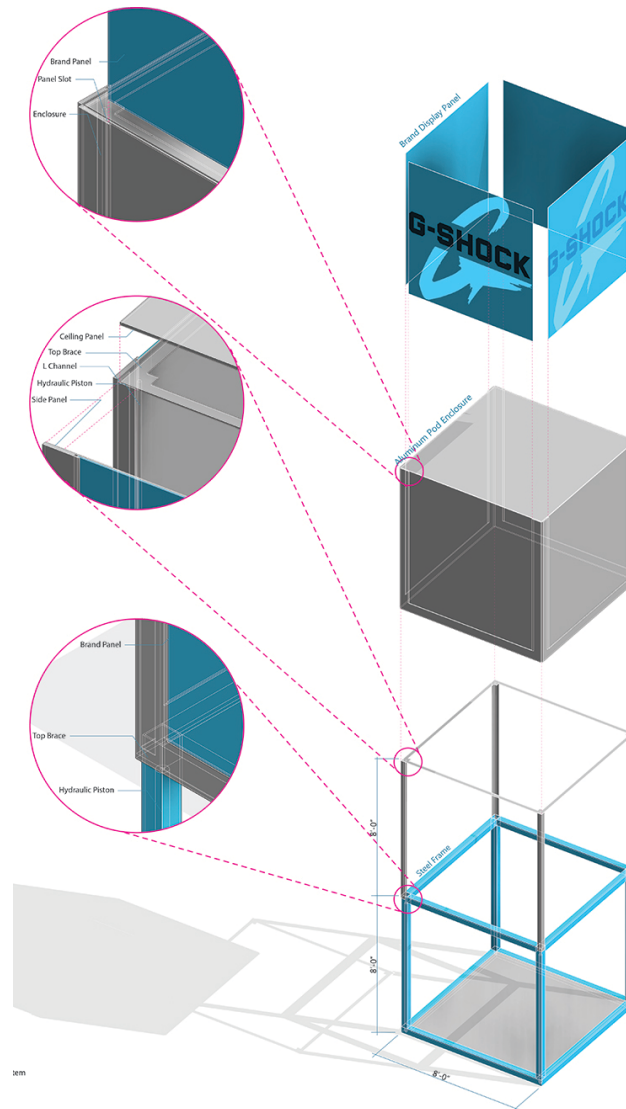


Figure 29 Author's Illustration of the Micro Box

The steel frame provides the unit with a strong skeleton in order to handle the process of transportation, which is essential to the success of this proposal.

The top cover, which moves upwards to raise the brand panels and create a presence for the shop, or downward in order to close the shop and protect the contents, would be able to be locked at the base.

Finally, the brand panels provide a quick and adaptable solution to the necessity of branding for any retail establishment. They are easily slid out of all four sides of the micro-box and provide a clear beacon to customers as to when the space is open for business. The panels allow for the micro-box to easily be changed for the next client without going through the expensive process of installing signage.

A successful reinhabitation attempt must be able to accommodate clients that require different sizes of space, from an individual artist who may only need one micro-box, to a more established startup who needs more than 64 square feet of space to exhibit their work. The idea behind the micro-box is that they can be attached to each other in order to form a larger workspace.

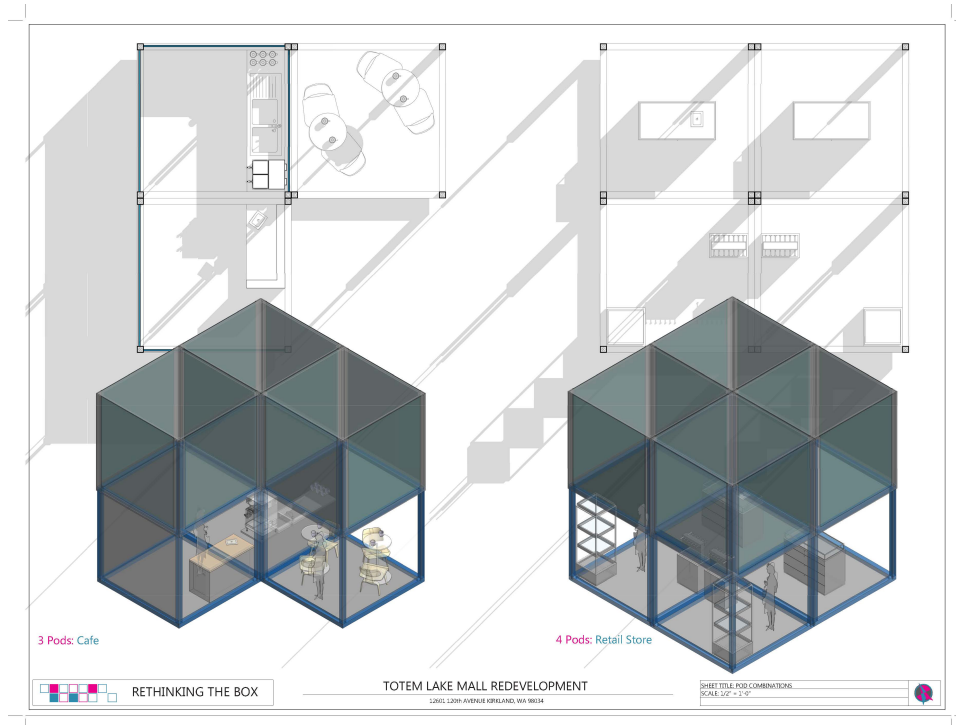


Figure 30 Illustration showing combination of the Micro Box

In addition to these traits the reinhabitation strategy must be transportable to other sites. Not only will this help lower costs of the reinhabitation renovations over time, it will also increase the sustainability by reusing the micro-boxes at various sites throughout the country. The eight-foot by eight-foot unit is designed to fit on the back of a standard flatbed trailer.

The micro-box can be used throughout dead mall sites. Not only can they be placed within the corridors and open spaces of malls, but they can also inhabit the vast asphalt lots that surround malls. Spontaneous outdoor festivals can happen inviting the public to join the local culture of the community. Creating a sense of community is essential to creating a dense suburban sense of place. Thus these festivals could attract the community to join in before, during,

and after the redevelopment of the site is complete in order to regenerate interest in the site.

Chapter 5 Obituary.

Chapter 5 | Obituary

After careful analysis of the mall as an archetype in the American suburbs the original question is brought back into the discussion; did the mall fail? Victor Gruen originally sought to combat suburban sprawl and help organize its chaos by providing a new form of town center. By examining the history of the shopping mall and its current state it is easy to say that as architecture the enclosed shopping mall is on its way out, but this does not mean that it failed at bringing structure to suburbia.

As architects and urban planners begin to understand the lifespan of the mall and its effects on the suburbs it is important to look to the future. The next archetype of consumerism is always around the corner. Statistics show that e-commerce is not a bigger threat to physical retail locations than overretailing in a specific region is. In fact, retailers that have both a physical and online presence are more successful than those with just one or the other. E-commerce will shape the next generation of retail architecture, but it will not replace it.

5.1.0 Did the Mall Fail?

The mall is dead. However, the mall did not fail. Victor Gruen originally set out to create a tool for urban planners in order to combat suburban sprawl. He envisioned neighborhoods that would regulate growth spawning out of a major metropolis. The malls were proposed as neighborhoods that would provide housing, commerce, civic services, medical services and so on. However, they became behemoth single use structures that enticed city dwellers and suburbanites alike with their immense amount of consumer goods. Gruen's goals were not met by the first iteration of the shopping mall, but an earlier proposal by Ebenezer Howard, in his book *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, outlines a planning strategy that the shopping mall is playing a crucial role in.

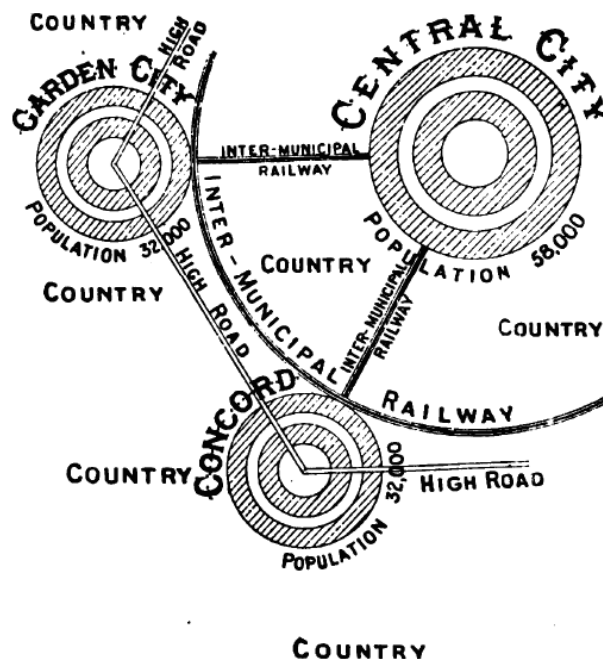


Figure 31 Howard's Garden City Proposal (Source: Garden Cities of To-Morrow)

Howards' plan sought to combat the overcrowding of urban cities in the early twentieth century and searched for solutions to disperse the population. Cities are described by Howard as magnets and he claims that "nothing short of the discovery of a method for constructing magnets of a great power ... can be effective for redistributing the population in a spontaneous and healthy manner" (Howard 1904, p 14). His proposal can be seen in Figure 31 and calls for a ring of 'Garden Cities' surrounding the larger metro areas. The Garden Cities were to have a population of approximately 32,000 and be separated from the Central City by a ring of open country. The Central City would be connected with the Garden Cities by a railway and the Garden Cities would be connected with what Howard termed a High Road.

The ring of Garden Cities has been translated into a ring of commerce in early suburbs surrounding metro areas. They represent the magnet Howard sought in order to disperse population from the metro areas. Our Interstate Highway System replaced the railway that aimed to connect the various nodes. As malls fail and are redeveloped the plan for the Garden City can be fulfilled. Howard saw his plan as a list of guidelines and knew that a formal interpretation of them would be dependent on the individual site.

The mall was not the community that Gruen envisioned, but it does succeed at being the magnet that Howard deemed necessary in his Garden City Proposal. The goal for Gruen of organizing the chaotic sprawl of suburbia may also be seen. The mall has acted as a

centralizing device. Malls in first ring suburbs were typically built away from existing downtowns with easy access to major roadways. The construction of a mall increased the land value of surrounding parcels. In turn, residential neighborhoods were built on the fringe of suburbia nearer to these shopping centers. As time progresses, these early malls in first ring suburbs see themselves being sited at a more central location and no longer as an element on the fringe.

New venues for shopping are built on the new fringe of suburbia. Outlet centers, power centers, and larger malls with newer and better features are erected further out from original city centers outperform the malls of the past killing them and leaving them behind. Overretailing is the number one reason that an older mall fails. As new retail trends are established new shopping centers are built as new magnets further out from the original metro center. Figure 32 illustrates this phenomenon, showing the growth of the St. Louis Metro area and the various iterations of shopping magnets within its suburban context.

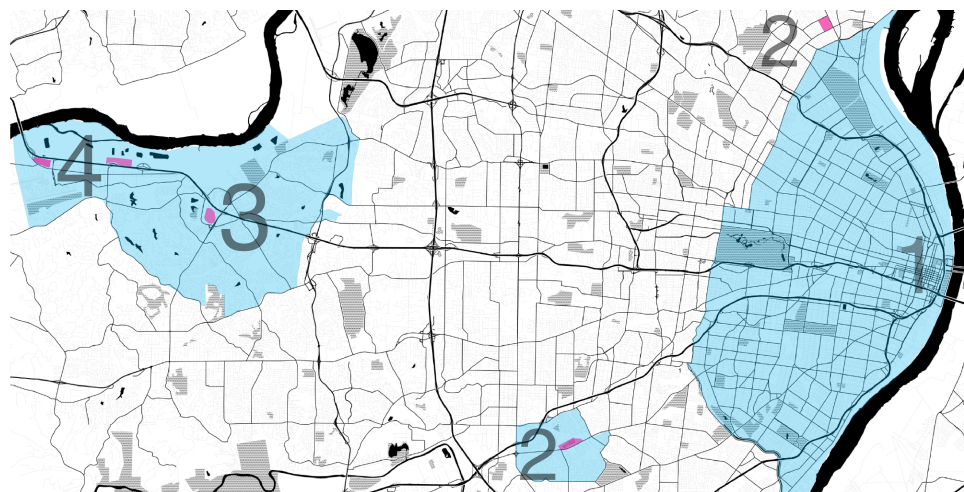


Figure 32 Explanation of Garden City Theory in St. Louis

The St. Louis urban center is labeled Number 1 and represents the original core of the Metro area. Number 2 represents the older malls that are located in first ring suburbs, Crestwood Plaza and the former site of River Roads Mall. Number 3 represents the Chesterfield Mall (1976) which is a newer and larger mall than either Crestwood Plaza or River Roads. It is still the same general format as the earlier malls, but it offered more retailers, better amenities, and easier access from the Interstate system.

The newest forms of retail in the region are the St. Louis Premium Outlets and the Taubman Prestige Outlets and are marked with a 4 on the map. These both take the format of a newer specialized outlet center as defined by the ICSC. These centers are in direct competition with each other as they were built just four miles apart. The Premium Outlets have already won over a larger customer base by offering more retailers and easier access from the major highway. These factors have played a role in mall success since the 1950s. The outlet center offers something that is not available through online retail and is a reason that these types of centers have thrived during the e-commerce era.

This trend will continue as new forms of retail are generated. The massive size of these construction projects requires a substantial amount of vacant and cheap land that is only available on the suburban fringe. After their completion these new retail centers will act as magnets to spawn future development.

As the older malls fade away and are left behind the sites are opened up to become the community centers that Gruen originally proposed. As “The Next Big Thing” draws customers further to the fringe of suburbia the shopping mall is left behind to fulfill its original goal. Mizner Park embodies the functions of both Gruen’s original proposal for the enclosed mall and the proposal for the Garden City by Howard. Mizner Park combines housing, shopping, and cultural services in one mixed-use complex. The large open space provides a flexible venue for various events to be held. The design follows the style of local architecture and is *not* a reproducible object that can be cloned and used at all dead mall sites. Mizner Park embodies the essence of place.

In the past decade there has been a shift in the demographics of suburbia and also in the desires of the typical American. The changing lifestyle in America shows that the stereotypical suburb of the twentieth century is no longer meeting our needs. Suburbs are designed with the nuclear family structure in mind, but recently the typical family structure has been changing. By 2025 it is estimated that families with children will represent just 25% of our population (Gallagher 2013). In addition, millennials, which there are roughly eighty million of in America, do not like the typical single-family suburban home. Seventy-seven percent of that population would prefer to live in an urbanized area.

As the desire for urbanity continues examples of redevelopment projects at dead mall sites capture this desire of suburbanites. Projects that create a true urban-like community can be seen at

Mizner Park in Boca Raton, Florida; Belmar in Lakewood, Colorado; Paseo Colorado in Pasadena, California; and Renaissance Towne Centre in Bountiful, Utah to name a few (CNU 2002, Jones 2009, Tachieva 2010). These projects are giving suburbanites the traits of urban lifestyles that they desire.

The key factors in these redevelopment efforts are connectivity, density, and the willingness for private and public entities to work together for the greater good of the community. The successful redevelopments do not rely on automobile access alone. Many, such as Mizner Park, supply their own consumer base through housing and are easily accessible by various transit options. By transforming these sites into hubs of transit and hubs of habitation rather than just hubs of retail a more dynamic development is created. These methods are key in ensuring the sites vitality for years to come.

5.2.0 The Next Big 'Magnet'

The mall, and the archetypes that succeed the mall, will continue to function as the magnet that Ebenezer Howard sought and successfully, with time, will centralize suburbia. After its success fades architects must be prepared to develop these greyfield sites into an architecture that fosters community and provides a physical location that captures the essence of the local population. For example, Mizner Park successfully creates a place in the community of Boca Raton that has outlived the artificial place of the Boca Raton Mall that used to sit on that site.

The 'Next Big Thing' will continue to be built, however it must continue to be on the fringe of suburbia allowing it to act as the magnet that Howard sought after. If we can recognize the correlation between shopping and centralizing suburbia ambitious urban planning ideas, like those of Gruen and Howard, may be attainable as our population continues to grow and people continue to seek housing in metropolitan areas. As an artificial place 'The Next Big Thing' will continue to act as an attractor in suburbia that will serve its purpose and need replacement.

The enclosed shopping mall contributes to sprawling suburbia. These new retail constructions will also generate sprawl. However, after sprawl comes the act of centralizing. The Next Big Thing will generate development further on the fringe. New housing developments, schools, offices, and civic buildings will be constructed and a new community will form. Once The Next Big

Thing becomes vacant it will need to be redeveloped into a new node of urbanity in the suburban landscape.

We cannot develop 'The Next Big Thing' without understanding what happens when its time has passed. Daniel Herman describes The Next Big Thing as having three distinct characteristics; it must be new, it must be big, and it must be a reproducible item. By understanding that it is not meant to last forever and it is merely a reproducible artificial place architects can be prepared to design the places that suburbia needs. When the time has passed on the next retail environment, architecture will need to provide community for this now vacant, but centralized suburban site.

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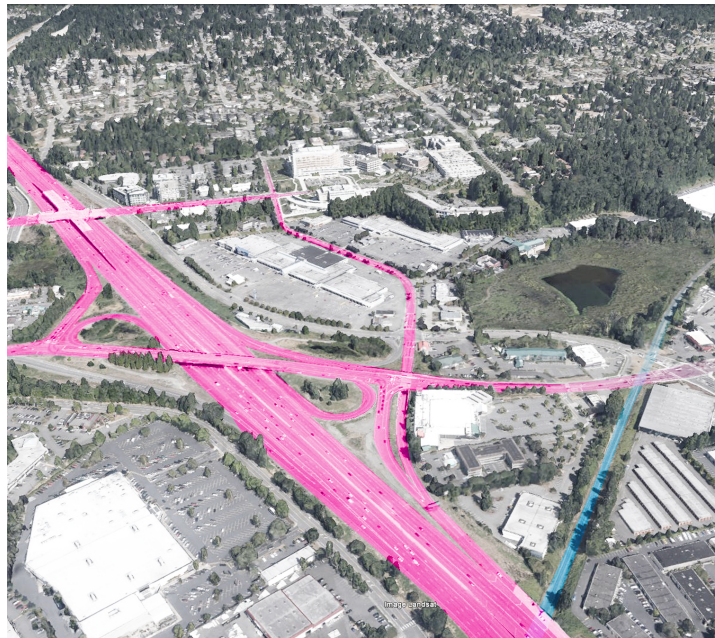
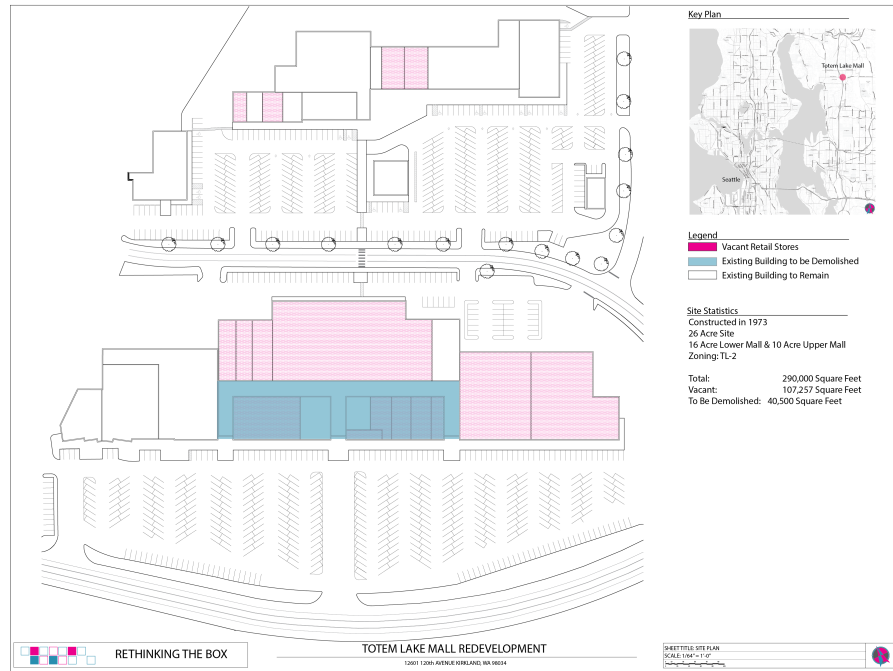
Appendices

Appendix A



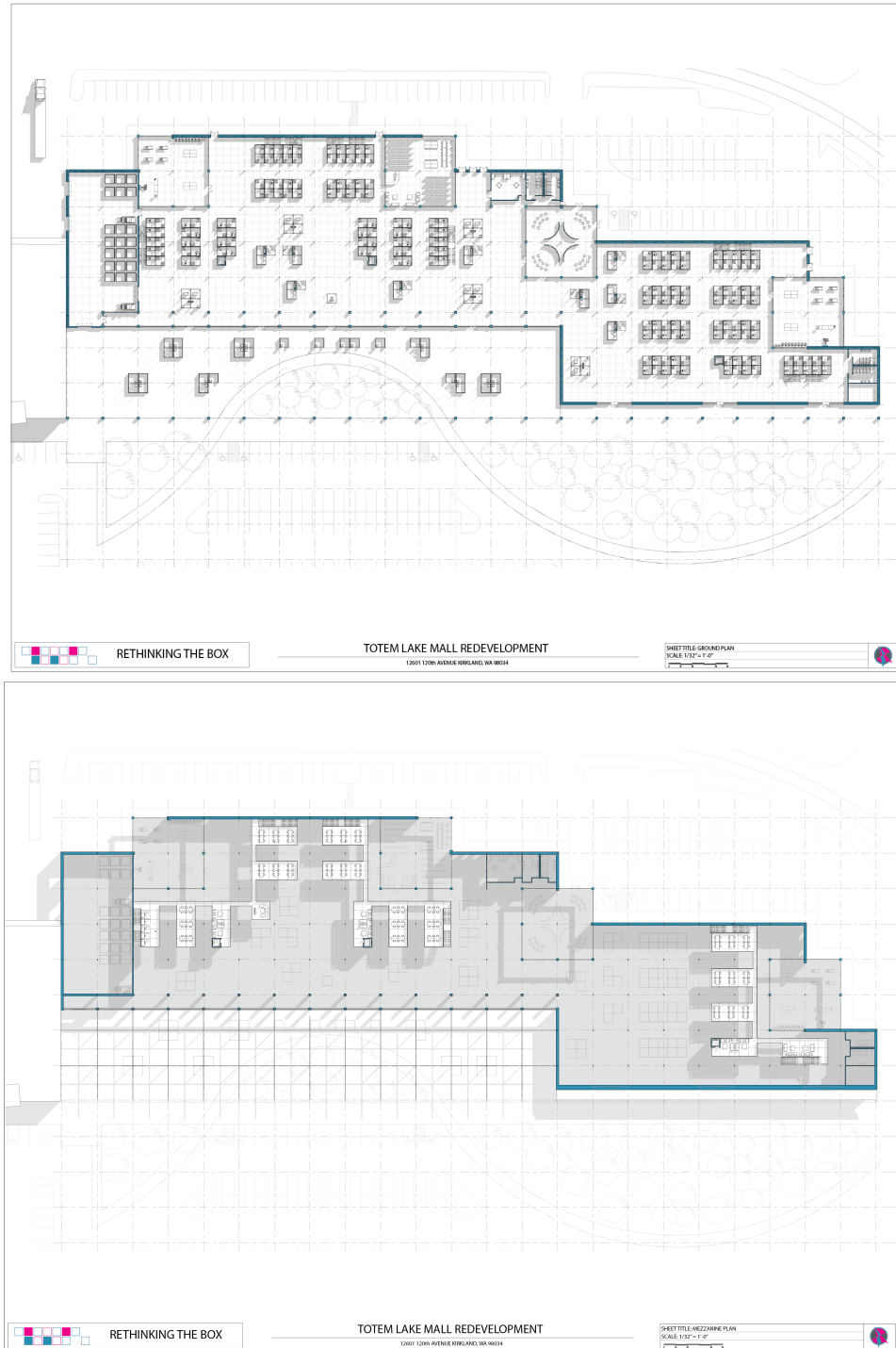
Appendix A: Photos of Totem Lake Mall in Kirkland, Washington. This is the proposed site for rehabilitation through the use of the micro-box.

Appendix B



Appendix B: Site plan and aerial photo of Totem Lake Mall in Kirkland, Washington (Source: Google Earth).

Appendix C



Appendix C: Floor plans of Totem Lake Mall in Kirkland, Washington with proposed rehabilitation through use of the micro-box.

Appendix D



Appendix D: Interior and exterior views of Totem Lake Mall in Kirkland, Washington with proposed rehabilitation through use of the micro-box.