After a century of evolution, shopping malls are now urban centers, with post offices, hotels, counseling centers, and even amusement parks—all in a weather-protected, safe, clean place. Now signs of real life are starting to appear

THE NEW DOWNTOWNS

BY WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI

EVERY TWO OR THREE WEEKS I GO TO THE MALL. I drive, of course, and leave my car in the large lot. I don't dislike parking lots except at night, when they feel spooky, although not as spooky as underground parking garages: thanks to the movies, an underground garage always makes me think of echoing footsteps, screaming tires, gunshots. I read the bumper stickers and look at what people display on the rear-window shelf. There are rarely any interesting-looking cars: the mall I go to is patronized by small-town folk and farmers who tend to drive pickup trucks and Japanese compacts.

Inside the mall the atmosphere is enlivened by families eating lunch in the food court, excited teenagers swarming at the video arcade, young parents trailing children on the way to the movie theater. I suppose that my academic colleagues would find this unsophisticated version of urbanity depressing (although you can get a reasonable espresso here), and would probably refer darkly to "hyperconsumerism" and "artificial reality." But I am more encouraged than depressed. People are walking, they are rubbing shoulders, they are in a shared space.

Among urban sophisticates references to malls are invariably accompanied by a smirk or a sigh, but for most Americans shopping malls are an accepted part of everyday life, just like freeway commuting, fast food, garage sales, and backyard barbecues. Like these institutions, malls are resolutely middlebrow. Although there are plenty of upscale malls that cater to the rich, the classic mall is not an effete oasis of luxury—nor is it the utilitarian strip of the poor neighborhood. It's the so-called regional mall, generally defined as having more than 400,000 square feet of retail space and at least one department store—the equivalent of a fair-sized downtown shopping area. According to the National Research Bureau, at the end of last year the country contained 38,966 operating shopping centers, of which 1,835 were large regional malls.

Exemplary Models

CRITICS OF SHOPPING MALLS TALK ABOUT THE "malling of America" as if it were a sudden phenomenon, but it has taken almost a hundred years for the mall to become a feature of both the urban and the suburban landscape. Harvey Rabinowitz, who teaches in the school of architecture and urban planning of the University of Wisconsin, in Milwaukee, cites the shopping mall in explaining how changes often occur in building. According to Rabinowitz, in free-market societies new ideas about how to organize the urban environment are frequently introduced not by city planners or architects but by individual businessmen in the private sector. If these ideas are popular with the public, they become what he calls exemplary models, and go on to be widely imitated. In the past such urban models have included the English housing terrace, popularized in the eighteenth century by the Bath architect-developer John Wood the Elder, and quickly copied by speculative builders across Georgian Britain. Other examples: the department store, originated by Parisian entrepreneurs in the 1860s and popularized throughout Europe and America after millions of foreigners visited Paris for the great exhibitions of the late 1800s; and the high-rise business district. This last model began to appear in the 1880s in Chicago, the product of technological invention (steel-frame construction, the elevator), land speculation, and the desire for architectural splendor. So powerful was the image of the downtown skyline that it was quickly reproduced across the continent and finally around the world.

Exemplary models originate in response to economic and social forces in the marketplace, but their success is also due to refinement and modification during their later evolution. The history of the shopping mall is replete with experimentation and a host of small inventions. The shopping cart, for example, introduced in the 1930s, greatly facilitated the operation of supermarkets, which were a prominent feature of early shopping centers. The food court is the convivial focus of many contemporary malls; its successful introduction in the early 1970s by The Rouse Company and The Pyramid Companies was a milestone of shopping-center design.

The shopping center emerged in the early 1900s in the suburbs that encircled American cities. Suburbs of the time tended to be chiefly residential and to depend on the traditional downtown for shopping. The first suburban commercial centers had three identifiable features: they consisted of a number of stores built and leased by a single developer, they were usually situated at an important intersection, and they provided plenty of free, off-street parking. Roland Park Shopping Center, which opened at

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the turn of the century, about five miles north of downtown Baltimore, is listed by the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the first shopping center; it had only six establishments. It was followed by Market Square in Lake Forest, near Chicago (1916), and Country Club Plaza, which opened in 1925 in Kansas City, and became well known thanks to its proselytizing owner, Jesse Clyde Nichols. These "shopping villages" consciously recalled small-town shopping districts, both in their architecture, which was carefully traditional, and in their layout, which integrated them into the surrounding neighborhood—the stores faced the street and the parking lots were usually in the rear.

Some Depression-era shopping villages, such as Highland Park, in suburban Dallas (1931), and the Farmers Market chain, in California, did include stores oriented to a private pedestrian walkway, which presaged the inward-looking shopping centers of the future. Highland Park combined a variety of commercial tenants, not only retail stores but also a pharmacy, a bank, a beauty salon, a barbershop, a theater, and offices. Farmers Markets were the 1930s equivalents of today's discount warehouses, and to keep prices low they were built on cheap land at the edges of cities; since most people drove to go shopping, the peripheral location was not an inconvenience. This did not escape the attention of developers, who understood that with almost universal car ownership the pool of potential customers for any single shopping center—those who lived within a five-minute drive, say, rather than within a five-minute walk—had grown very large.

SAN DIEGO'S HORTON PLAZA (ABOVE) RECALLS ELEMENTS OF KANSAS CITY'S MOORISH COUNTRY CLUB PLAZA (BELOW)

J. C. NICHOLS COMPANY

The spread of shopping centers was slowed by the Depression and the Second World War. According to Kenneth T. Jackson, a Columbia University professor and the author of *Crabgrass Frontier*, a history of American suburbanization, in 1946 there were still only eight shopping centers in the entire United States. What was needed was an exemplary model, and it arrived in the form of the regional shopping center. It is generally agreed that the first such shopping center was Northgate, which opened on the outskirts of Seattle in 1950. The architect, John Graham Jr., devised a long open-air pedestrian way that was a sort of carless street, lined with a department store and a number of smaller stores. The idea was that the department store, which is called an anchor, would attract people, who would then walk—and shop—along the way. In addition to stores, Northgate included several freestanding structures: a gas station, a drive-in bank, and a movie theater. Like all future suburban shopping centers, it was built next to a highway. The inward-oriented buildings were surrounded by a 4,000-car parking lot that took up about three quarters of the fifty-acre site.

The convenience of "one-stop shopping" appealed to many people, and during the 1950s the construction of shopping centers, in tandem with the expansion of suburbs, began in earnest; the total went from about a hundred centers nationwide in 1950 to about 3,700 a decade later. Not only were there more centers but also they were bigger. One of the largest was Northland, in Detroit, which opened in 1954 and provided more than a million square feet of rentable space and parking for 7,400 cars. The 250-acre area around the center was planned to accommodate a host of nonretail buildings, including offices, research laboratories, apartments, a hospital, and a hotel. This made Northland probably the first example of what the *Washington Post* reporter Joel Garreau would later call an "edge city," in his book of the same title.

A New Way to Shop

THE RAPID PROLIFERATION OF SHOPPING CENTERS was not just a function of suburban growth. It also signified a change in the shopping habits of Americans. These new shopping places were competing directly with the traditional downtown shopping district, and in most cases they were winning. According to Bernard Frieden and Lynne Sagalyn, professors of urban studies and the authors of *Downtown, Inc.: How America Rebuilds Cities* (1989), from 1948 to 1954, in the midst of a nationwide economic boom, the downtown share of retailing fell by a fourth in thirteen of the largest metropolitan areas, and the profit margins of downtown department stores sank lower than they had been even in the Depression.

In 1960 Buckminster Fuller proposed the construction of a huge dome that would cover a fifty-block area in midtown Manhattan. Fuller pointed out that such a dome would prevent snow and rain from falling on the protected area, and would control the quality of the air. Most people dismissed the outlandish idea—like many of Fuller's inventions, it was part in earnest, part publicity stunt. Perhaps they shouldn't have. Indeed, Fuller's vision of urban life taking place in an artificially controlled environment had been realized several years before.

In 1956 a shopping center that would become the exemplary model for the next three decades opened in Edina, a suburb of Minneapolis. Southdale (the early centers all seem to have been named after compass points) was not particularly large, just over half a million square feet of retail space, and it followed the usual pattern of buildings surrounded by parking lots. But it included a striking innovation: the public walking areas were not outdoors but indoors, air-conditioned in the summer and heated in the winter. The architect, Victor Gruen, a transplanted Viennese and a prolific designer of shopping centers (he had been the architect of Northland), cited the glass-roofed nineteenth-century gallerias of Milan and Naples as his inspiration, even if the bland, modernistic interior of Southdale did not much resemble its Italian antecedents. Indoor shopping streets are attractive anywhere the climate is marked by hot, humid summers or harsh winters or both, and enclosed shopping malls began to appear in the cold Midwest and Northeast, in the South and Southwest, in hot southern California, and in the wet Northwest—that is, everywhere.

From 1960 to 1970 more than 8,000 new shopping centers opened in the United States—twice as many as in the previous decade. The great majority of the regional centers followed the example of Southdale and provided enclosed walking areas. To optimize this extra investment, the new centers were built on two or even three levels (this idea, too, had been introduced at Southdale), which meant that walking distances were reduced and shopping centers could house even more stores. In 1970 the Galleria in suburban Houston, which did recall its Italian namesakes, opened with more than 1.5 million square feet of retail and commercial space; the following year Woodfield, outside Chicago, provided two million square feet of shopping under one roof. During the 1980s malls got even larger: the Del Amo Fashion Center, in Torrance, California, enclosed three million square feet, and the mother of all malls—the Ghermezian brothers' West Edmonton Mall, in Alberta—covers 5.2 million square feet. In all, from 1970 to 1990 about 25,000 new shopping centers were built in the United States: every seven hours during that period a new shopping mall opened its doors to the public.

And the mall was not only a suburban phenomenon. It became a key ingredient of the urban revitalization that was taking place throughout the seventies and eighties. Charleston; Stamford, Connecticut; White Plains, New York; Salt Lake City; Minneapolis; Philadelphia; and

Chicago were all sites of large downtown malls. In Boston, Baltimore, and New York, The Rouse Company, a major shopping-center developer, built so-called festival marketplaces, which were really shopping malls in waterfront settings; they were often shoehorned into rehabilitated dockside buildings.

The Galleria, in Houston, whose centerpiece was a year-round ice-skating rink, added yet another ingredient to the exemplary model. The developer, Gerald Hines, incorporated a variety of nonretail uses not in separate buildings, as had been done before, but within the mall. The lobbies of the hotel and office buildings, for example, could be entered directly from the enclosed space. This was not as dramatic as roofing over public spaces, but its effect on the environment was just as great. Both developers and the public began to think of malls not merely as shopping conveniences but as urban places in which someone could enjoy spending several hours. Although retail functions continued to dominate, mall developers added recreation facilities like health and athletic clubs and were also able to attract banks, brokerage houses, and medical centers. It has become increasingly common for malls to fulfill civic functions, with public libraries (Saint John, New Brunswick, and Tucson, Arizona), the USO (Hampton, Virginia), a city-hall branch office (Everett, Washington), and federal and state agencies. The Sports Museum of New England, in East Cambridge, Massachusetts, is housed in a mall, and so is a children's museum in Ogden, Utah. The Board of Education of Ottawa has been operating a storefront classroom in a shopping mall since November of 1987, and a local high school recently opened a counseling center in the West Edmonton Mall. Just as noncommercial spaces are showing up in shopping malls, malls are popping up in unexpected places: York University, in suburban Toronto, recently added a shopping mall to its campus, and Pittsburgh's new airport includes a mall with more than a hundred stores, three food courts, and, appropriately enough, a chiropractor.

H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS

EASTCOTT/MOMATIUK/W. CAMP

ITALIAN GALLERIAS (AS IN NAPLES, ABOVE) INSPIRED MANY OF TODAY'S MALLS (SUCH AS WEST EDMONTON, BELOW)

Private Property or Public Forum?

THE APPEARANCE of noncommercial tenants in shopping malls has made them even more like traditional downtowns, but it has also raised the issue of public access. Are malls private property, as many mall owners have always maintained, or have they become, as the American Civil Liberties Union has argued, public places that should be obliged to observe the principles of free speech—to allow unlimited access to community groups, including petitioners and political demonstrators? Understandably, mall owners have not been keen on the idea of having abortion groups arguing their cases in the food court, or of hosting a violent altercation between the Ku Klux Klan and its opponents (this actually happened, in a Connecticut mall in the mid-1980s). Such altercations are just the sort of thing that mall shoppers want to get away from. In a 1990 Gallup poll 73 percent of respondents said that shopping centers shouldn't have to allow political gatherings. It is disingenuous, however, for developers to argue that they are merely merchants. They have become city builders, and as such should be prepared to take the bad—or at least the awkward—with the good.

In 1968 the U.S. Supreme

Court ruled that shopping malls could not interfere with individuals' exercise of their First Amendment rights. But in a 1972 ruling (*Lloyd Corp.* v. *Tanner et al.*) the court reversed itself and held that the First Amendment did not require shopping centers to allow the distribution of war-related leaflets. So matters stood until 1980, when a unanimous ruling on a public-access case concerning a mall in California held that the state constitution granted greater free-speech rights than the U.S. Constitution, which effectively made public access a state issue. So far other states have tended to support the notion that malls are private property; ten state supreme courts have ruled against public access. Only five states have supported it, and then only in fairly limited forms—to groups soliciting signatures for a state initiative, for example, or to candidates seeking signatures to qualify for a place on the ballot.

But the example of California malls may in the long run be influential. If large regional malls want to be a part of the community and attract a broad cross-section of the population, it is in their interest to allow access to local nonprofit groups. Although not legally required to do so, a small number of mall owners are beginning to do exactly that. The Rouse Company provides a booth for community activities in its mall in Columbia, Maryland, and encourages its mall managers elsewhere to make similar accommodations; so does The Edward J. DeBartolo Corporation, of Youngstown, Ohio, the nation's largest shopping-center developer and manager.

Another reason that mall owners may eventually support the idea of public access is that since the California ruling the state's access requirements have proved to be neither troublesome nor expensive, despite the fears of some developers. In 1991 the giant Hahn Company, which owns and operates thirty malls in California, signed an agreement with the ACLU which permits leafleting and canvassing in designated locations in most of its malls. Robert L. Sorensen, the vice-president of Hahn, told *Shopping Centers Today*, an industry monthly, "We haven't seen expenses rise because of it, and I don't think it's costing us shoppers."

A Place to Play

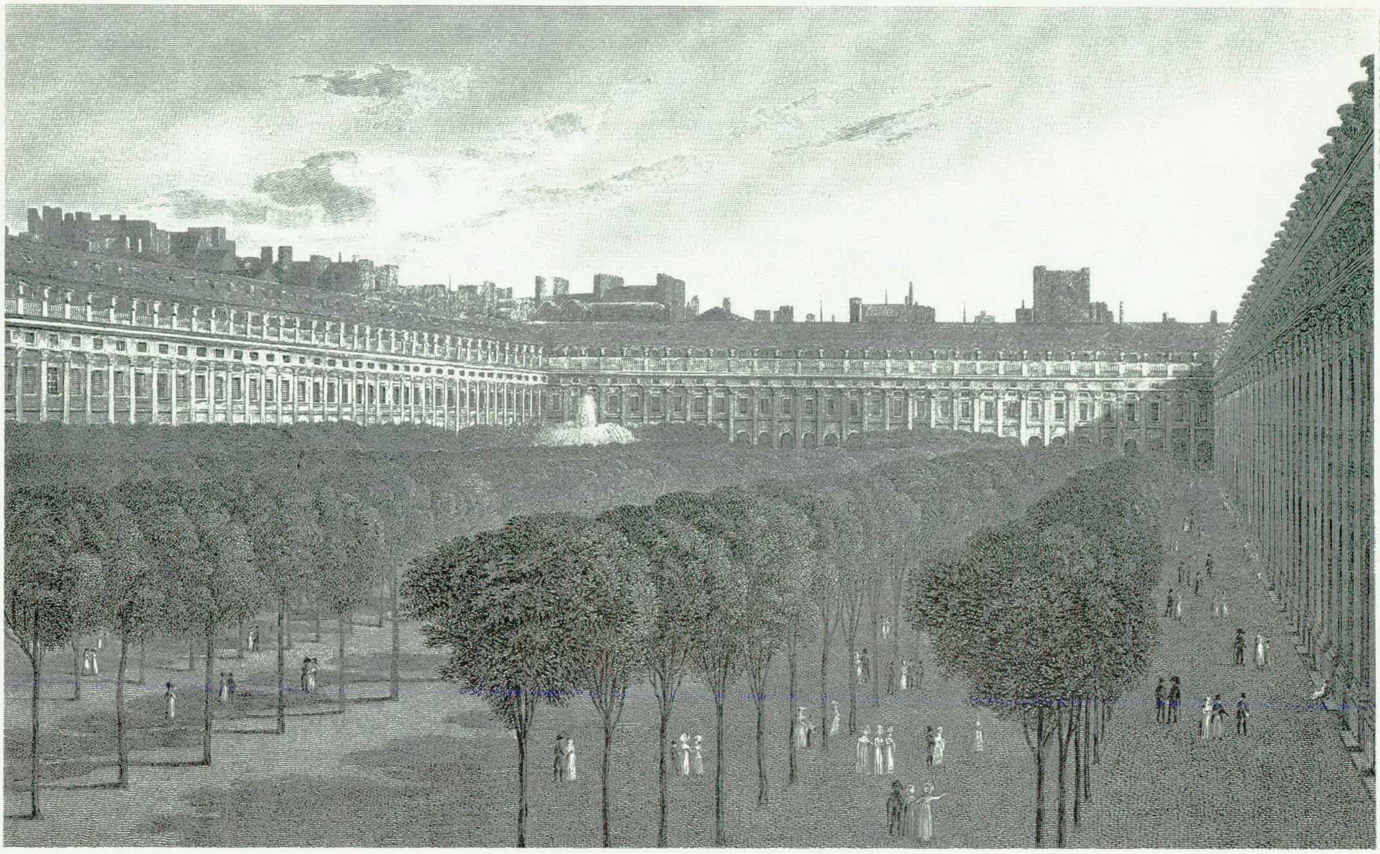
WORK AND PLAY, SHOPPING AND RECREATION, community promotion and public protest—the mall now houses more and more of the activities of the traditional downtown, including that newest of urban industries, tourism. With its skating rink and glass-roofed promenade, Houston's Galleria quickly became a tourist attraction. The builders of the West Edmonton Mall provided not only a skating rink but also an amusement park, an aviary, a dolphin pool, an artificial lagoon with a submarine ride, a floating replica of the *Santa Maria*, and the world's largest indoor water park, complete with an artificial beach and rolling surf—all calculated to draw vacationers in addition to shoppers.

"We expect that a third of our visitors will be tourists coming from more than a hundred and fifty miles away," says Michael Dorsey, a spokesman for the Mall of America, the recently opened 4.2-million-square-foot mall in Bloomington, Minnesota, outside Minneapolis. The Mall of America expects to attract an average of about 100,000 people a day when it is fully operational; during the first three months after its opening, last August, nearly a million people a week visited the mall. Indeed, according to the owners, the Mall of America is expected to draw more visitors than Walt Disney World or the Grand Canyon.

The Mall of America is an extremely large shopping mall—four department stores, about 360 specialty stores to date, more than forty restaurants and food outlets—but the three-level retail area is not particularly remarkable, only bigger than most. What is unusual is the fact that the stores are grouped around a huge (seven-acre) glass-roofed courtyard containing an amusement park with twenty-three rides, two theaters, and dozens of smaller attractions. Although the courtyard is usually described as a theme park (it's called Camp Snoopy), anyone looking for the technological theatricality and sophisticated gimmickry of a Walt Disney World will be disappointed. The attendants are dressed like camp counselors (at first I mistook them for fundraising Boy Scouts), but otherwise there is little attempt at simulation; the rides are tame and the atmosphere is unpretentious, almost homely. At night the sparkling lights, hurdy-gurdy music of the merry-go-round, excited children, and screams of the riders on the roller coaster that races overhead recall the gaiety of a carnival midway at a county fair.

The layout of the Mall of America is reminiscent of what was probably the world's first building to combine shopping and recreation—the eighteenth-century incarnation of the Palais Royal, in Paris. The developer of that project was the Duc de Chartres, whose family home in Paris, beside the Louvre, had an extremely large garden. The duke, chronically short of funds, engaged the architect Victor Louis to design a pleasure garden *à l'anglaise* that also included commercial spaces and apartments for rent. The Palais Royal opened in 1784 to immediate accolades, and it dominated Parisian social life for fifty years. Like many developers since, the duke did not reap the profits of his brilliant idea. Financially ruined by the heavy investment, he was forced to sell off most of the project.

The Palais Royal (which still exists, although today it is a quiet place) consisted of a five-story arcaded building on three sides of a large landscaped courtyard about 100 yards by 300 yards; the fourth side, which was never completed, was closed by wooden stalls. At the ground level were glass-fronted shops along the two-story arcade, but



THE GRANGER COLLECTION

ARISTOCRATS AND BOURGEOISIE RUBBED SHOULDERS IN THE COURTYARD AND SHOPS OF THE PALAIS ROYAL, IN PARIS

there were also a variety of other establishments: cafés, eating places, social clubs, gambling rooms, music rooms, auction rooms, a puppet show, a silhouette show, a waxworks, several small hotels, a Turkish bath, and a theater (which later became the home of the Comédie Française). The upper floors contained apartments and rooms, many rented by the high-priced prostitutes for which the Palais became famous. The central courtyard was not merely a pleasure garden; it also contained a circular roofed amphitheater—the Cirque Royal—for public performances, concerts, and balls.

Most of the establishments of the Palais were luxurious and could be afforded only by the rich—or by army officers on a spree—but the arcades and the garden were open to all except the poorest classes (who were invited in on only three special days of the year), and they were places where aristocrat and bourgeois mixed. The Palais Royal merged shopping with entertainment and pleasure with leisure. "Should an American savage come to the Palais Royal," the Russian novelist Nikolai Karamzin wrote, "in half an hour he would be most beautifully attired and would have a richly furnished house, a carriage, many servants, twenty courses on the table, and, if he wished, a blooming Laïs who each moment would die for love of him."

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Clearly, the Mall of America has a ways to go. In its own middle-American way, though, it too aspires to be a "place for fun in your life," as its theme song puts it. This ambition is evident in the nightclub area, which shares the fourth level of the mall with a fourteen-screen cineplex that includes a 4,000-seat theater. Although the stores in the mall close at 10:00 P.M., the nightclubs, which include a sports bar, a comedy club, and a country-and-western supper club, stay open until 1:00 A.M. Combine neon, nighttime, loud music, alcohol, and cruising singles, and the resulting atmosphere (it reminded me of a sort of midwestern Times Square—there was a whiff, but only a whiff, of sin) is not what one usually associates with shopping malls.

PHIL MUELLER

AT THE MALL OF AMERICA, OUTSIDE MINNEAPOLIS, THE ENCLOSED COURTYARD INCLUDES AN AMUSEMENT PARK

Re-creating Downtowns

NOT EVERYONE AGREES THAT MALLS COULD become a new version of the old Main Street. Kenneth Jackson observes in *Crabgrass Frontier* that because they are so self-contained and so uniform, shopping malls in fact represent almost the opposite of downtown areas: "They cater exclusively to middle-class tastes and contain no unsavory bars or pornography shops, no threatening-looking characters, no litter, no rain, and no excessive heat or cold."

In fact large malls do cater to a variety of tastes—they have to. The Mall of America has the usual array of fast-food outlets arranged around two food courts, several "family" restaurants (with occasional live entertainment), an assortment of inexpensive steakhouses, several mainstream Italian eateries, an upscale restaurant serving California cuisine, and a Wolfgang Puck pizza and pasta emporium, the first one outside California.

PHIL MUELLER

Admittedly, that is less than could be found in a comparable area of Manhattan, but it does represent greater diversity than one would encounter in most small cities.

The idea that malls cater to only one taste in shopping is likewise unsupported by the evidence: the Mall of America contains Bloomingdale's and The Gap, Brooks Brothers and Sam Goody, Godiva Chocolatier and Radio Shack, Brookstone and video arcades. The number of stores may be greater than at other malls, but their variety is typical. There are even, arguably, pornography shops, in the form of video stores, and plenty of threatening-looking (to me, at least) teenagers—but no panhandlers, which is of course why people like to go to malls. It is true that malls are clean, but the notion that urbanity is somehow represented by litter is surely more a sad comment on the miserable state of most American downtowns (Parisian streets are virtually litter-free) than it is a serious criticism.

Because people in malls are protected from rain and from extremes of heat and cold, does that really disqualify malls as urban? The first completely enclosed shopping spaces, or *passages,* emerged in the center of Paris in the early 1800s (many still exist and are well worth a visit). These glass-roofed arcades were widely imitated across the Continent and in England. Nineteenth-century London and Paris also had shopping bazaars, and Milan its famous gallerias; these were large, often multilevel shopping arcades with independent stalls, covered by impressive roofs constructed of cast iron and glass. One of the few surviving examples of a shopping-bazaar building is the splendid GUM department store in Moscow, completed in 1893. Beside the highblown, extravagant interiors of the Victorian shopping bazaars and department stores, which celebrated shopping and consumerism on a scale unrivaled before or since, the architecture of most contemporary shopping malls appears downright modest.

Still, Jackson does have a point. Downtown areas are made up of open as well as enclosed public spaces—Central Park as well as the concourse of Grand Central Station—and most developers, in their rush to enclose malls completely, may have missed an important opportunity to provide a greater diversity of experience. At least one major mall offers an alternative exemplary model: Horton Plaza, opened by The Hahn Company in downtown San Diego in 1985. The architect, Jon Jerde, turned the tables on the now-traditional enclosed mall and put all the public areas outdoors. Horton Plaza is unorthodox in other ways: it is the most colorful shopping center built since 1925, when Jesse Clyde Nichols included a tower imitating Seville's Giralda in his Spanish-Moorish–style Country Club Plaza, in Kansas City. Jerde also designed the Mall of America, but whereas that is architecturally unadventurous, Horton Plaza is a *tour de force* that includes bits and pieces of almost every stylistic period in history—Egyptian, Renaissance, Moorish, Art Deco, Victorian, Mediterranean. The result resembles a Cecil B. De Mille backlot. It is, needless to say, a popular success.

Horton Plaza is in southern California, but the example of festival marketplaces like Boston's Faneuil Hall Marketplace and Baltimore's Harborplace demonstrates that the use of outdoor spaces is a good idea: it makes shopping malls more stimulating, more pleasurable, and more traditionally urban. Maurice Sunderland, the Calgary-based architect who designed the West Edmonton Mall and prepared the preliminary plans for the Mall of America, is currently working on several large malls that will combine indoor and outdoor areas. I recently asked him whether he thought that malls could eventually become mini-cities. "They haven't reached that stage yet," he answered, "but they could."

One thing that is required to make malls more truly urban is the introduction of some form of permanent housing, which would provide a resident population in addition to shoppers. Housing for the elderly would seem particularly appropriate, not only because of the proximity to shops and indoor promenades but also because malls in many cities are well served by mass transportation.

In the past, developers resisted the use of malls for noncommercial purposes, including housing. Today this has changed. Increasingly, large urban malls are being built with the co-sponsorship of city governments. In half of the thirty-nine downtown shopping-mall projects studied by Bernard Frieden and Lynne Sagalyn, the public share was between 20 and 50 percent of total development cost. In the case of Horton Plaza, the city of San Diego contributed $33 million. As cities become active partners in mall development, social considerations come into play. Cities have already negotiated with mall developers for additional public spaces, mass-transit facilities, and civic spaces such as theaters. Housing should be next.

Power Centers

THE CHIEF OBSTACLE TO THE FURTHER SOCIALizing of the shopping mall may be a new, competitive form of shopping center—what developers call the power center. Power centers are usually moderate in size (about 200,000–400,000 square feet); instead of an assortment of small stores anchored by a department store, they include only two or three deep-discount, or "category-killer," stores—enormous self-service specialty stores with large inventories and low prices. But bargains are not the only attraction. These streamlined centers reflect the desire of many consumers to devote less time to shopping. According to Keith Foxe, of the International Council of Shopping Centers, the average visitor to a power center spends only forty-five to fifty minutes there, as compared with an average of three hours in a regional mall (or more than four hours in the Mall of America). The same desire accounts for the popularity of huge general-merchandise warehouses, which resemble department stores with shopping carts and which are designed to shorten, not prolong, shopping time. Not surprisingly, power centers and discount warehouses, unlike malls, don't have extensive public spaces for strolling. Indeed, in many of them the only public domain is the parking lot. Although some power centers do include nonretail businesses, such as day-care centers and coffee shops, they do not seem likely to develop the same semi-public character as the regional mall, or at least not soon.

The power center is a poor substitute for the shopping mall, which is poised to become a real urban place. The mall is beginning to integrate a variety of commercial and noncommercial functions, to deal with the thorny issue of public access, and to find an architectural balance between enclosed and open public space. In many cases part-public ownership is also changing its character. And it remains, for most Americans, the chief place to meet fellow citizens in a noncombative environment—not behind the wheel of a car but on foot, malling about. □