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# The Development of the New Thai Shopping Center from a Blending of American and Thai Influences

Amornrut Chaiwanichkit  
amornrut\_c@yahoo.com

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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW THAI SHOPPING CENTER FROM  
A BLENDING OF AMERICAN & THAI INFLUENCES**

by **AMORNROT CHAIWANICHKIT**

Approved :

[Redacted]

Thesis Advisor

[Redacted]

Thesis Reader

[Redacted]

Graduate Coordinator

Approved :

[Redacted]

Department Chairman

[Redacted]

Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies

[Redacted]

Dean of the School of the Arts

[Redacted]

Dean of the Graduate School

Date 8/19/96

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FROM A BLENDING OF AMERICAN AND THAI INFLUENCES**

by **AMORNROT CHAIWANICHKIT**

Bachelor of Architecture in Interior Architecture  
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology, Ladkrabang  
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The study focuses on how American and Thai shopping centers have evolved and concludes with an example for future Thai retailing: the one-stop shopping center, which is currently enjoying much success in the United States, but which has not yet been introduced to Thailand.

The information about the history and development of American and Thai shopping centers, including types and trends, provides directions for a new Thai shopping center development. In addition to the history, Thai and American cultural and social issues must be considered as well. The study looks at American consumers and their behavior reflected in the space and organization of the American mall as a model for designing Thai shopping centers with respect for Thai culture. In addition, this study reviews the major features of American retail design and their interpretation for Thailand.

American contributions (such as one-stop shopping concept, code applications, and technology) and Thai conditions (location, trends, Thai cultural and social issues) are incorporated into the final design of the one-stop home furnishings shopping center, located in Bangkok, Thailand.

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# CHAPTER 1

## *Introduction* ■

*Introduction* ■

*Methodology* ■

*Significance* ■

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## **Introduction**

This study focuses on how American and Thai Shopping Centers have evolved, and concludes with an example for future Thai retailing: the one-stop shopping center, which is currently enjoying much success in the United States, but which has not yet been introduced to Thailand. This study presents an overview of retailing and shopping centers in the United States: the principles of the design of the shopping center, American customer behavior, trends, and technologies. The results of this study will help to predict the future development of shopping places in Thailand, answering questions concerning which type of center will be successful, where the best locations are, which products are in demand, and what features will attract customers to the center.

Thailand has experienced rapid economic growth, which has increased buying power and in turn, has led to increased development of shopping centers over the past ten years. The influence of Western cultures has spread to many Asian countries, including Thailand, and the Thai shopping center has evolved based on solutions developed in Western countries, especially the United States. Therefore, integral to this study is research into the American shopping center, to learn what attributes might apply to Thai shopping centers in general, and, to one-stop shopping centers in particular. The study includes history, types, and trends for both American and Thai retailing.

The United States has been a major center for the development of shopping center design; shown here will be the progression which defines the movement, and, from this, provides predictions for the future. The standards of retail design have been established in the United States for many years and serve as a resource model for other countries. For example, as a developing nation, Thailand does not yet have the sophisticated code applications that protect customers in the United States. Code applications that meet current American standards are applied in this project.

The design of shopping centers is becoming more complex with the growing interest in customer value. The purpose of this study is to find the best way to design a shopping place for a target audience. This target audience is the Thai consumer, and the design study will be based on the needs, wants, behavior, and culture of this audience.

### **Methodology**

#### Literature review

The literature review includes articles, books, dissertations, and master theses, from resources in the United States and Thailand and include the University libraries, computer networks, and current published books and magazines. The research topics include:

- Retail design both in The United States and Thailand  
general study of history, present situation, and trends.
- American consumer  
study of consumer behavior in the shopping center, American social and economic issues.
- Thai consumer  
research on culture in general, focus on retail design, social and economic issues.
- Thai architecture and design elements  
study of Thai traditional styles and contemporary styles.
- The principles of retail design  
design issues which include Site/Location, Planning and circulation, Regulation requirements, Fixtures/Color/Lighting, Graphics and Technology.

### Site survey

Site surveys were used to support the evaluation of the research. They were conducted after the information from literature review provided the direction of the new Thai shopping center. They include:

- Building survey and site analysis
  - survey to find the appropriate building for the new Thai shopping center, concerning location, size, interior space, and the possibility for renovation.
- Thai shopping centers:
  - Seri Center, Bangkok
  - Seacon Square, Bangkok
  - Central Plaza, Ladprao branch, Bangkok
- Thai furniture shopping places:
  - Home Decoration Fair 1996, Bangkok
  - Parawood Furniture Store, Seacon Square branch, Bangkok
  - Modernform Tower, Bangkok
- American furniture stores:
  - North Carolina Company, Richmond, VA
  - Virginia Wayside, Richmond, VA
  - Jack Thompson, Richmond, VA
  - IKEA, Potomac Mills, VA

The study analyzes the current situation of the Thai shopping center and Thai culture to identify the best design approaches for a specialized shopping center to attract Thai customers. The design integrates traditional Thai cultural symbols into contemporary design elements within an existing building in Bangkok. It is based on the developing trend that presents related products within a single center. It also capitalizes on the concept of entertainment as an important element in the shopping experience.

This design for the development of the One-Stop Home Furnishings Shopping Center in Thailand results from research into American shopping centers, including factors of history, types of shopping centers, trends, and customers to determine what is appropriate to apply to the Thai shopping center. Also, research into the current state of Thai shopping places, culture, and attitudes toward shopping supports the study. This study reveals the current level of development of the shopping center in Thailand, and will look at the future of retailing, based on trends and cultural changes occurring in Thailand.

### Significance

- *Image*: Many typical Thai shopping centers use the design themes from Western influences. This study develops a personal Thai style based on adaptation of traditional Thai forms.
- *Thai culture and people*: Although shopping centers in Thailand pay attention primarily to design, customer preferences and behavior have not been appropriately studied. The final design from this thesis, therefore, is not only concerned with aesthetics, but also with the culture and the people.
- *Code applications*: In Thailand, code applications are not applied universally as in the United States; this study proposes American codes as a model and applies them to the Thai shopping design example.
- *Space and function*: The shopping center has been a new concept for Thai life style during the past ten years. Thai retail planners still have a lot to learn from the country which has developed it for a long time, the United States. The design of space and function will be studied from the American contribution and the Thai situation.

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- *Sales System:* Research into American shopping centers reveals a new system to apply to Thailand, the specialty center and the self-service system with computer assistance.
  - *Special services:* American shopping centers usually offer services which make shopping more convenient such as child care and consultants or customer service centers. These kinds of services have not been introduced much in Thai shopping centers.
  - *Technology:* The shopping center needs to attract customers and make shopping quicker and more convenient. The technology is developing to meet those needs. This includes computer systems which can be used for entertainment features and for inventory control throughout the store.

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## CHAPTER 2

### *History and Development of Retailing and the Shopping Center ■ In the United States and Thailand*

*American shopping center ■*

*Thai shopping center ■*



Traditional retailing in Thailand is delivered by small stores, generally comprised of one or more shopholders, with their relatives working as employees, serving customers who live in the area. Although the great bulk of retailing is still the small store, larger stores, such as department stores and shopping centers, are becoming more viable. Part of the Western cultural influence, these larger retail outlets provide more convenience to the customer by bringing many shops and merchandise types into a central location and addressing a much larger customer group. Less than a decade ago, people in Thailand, even in Bangkok, did their basic shopping strictly at small neighborhood shops. Now, shoppers look increasingly to modern shopping centers for their retail needs (Laowakul, Aug. 1994, p. 27; Chulasai, Dec.1994, p. 204).

Asian cultures have been influenced by Western cultures over the past 100 years, and these influences have been adapted to regional conditions. Asian urban cultures seem to be swept away by global economic pressures, which have already brought not only western cultural attributes to Asian cultures, but also all other elements of the Western city, such as business systems, retailing, and architecture. Singapore, for example, was developed in the typical dualistic pattern of a colonial city, with a European segment and a native segment. However, many corporations now are finding it increasingly necessary to adapt themselves to the particular demands of local consumers. This means accommodating their activities and production lines to suit local cultures as well as other regional factors (Abel, 1994, p. 5).

As with other Asian countries, Thai retailing has been influenced by Western countries. The American shopping center has made a great impact on Thai shopping centers. Elements of Western retailing found in Thailand include the move toward large air-conditioned buildings and selling a variety of products in one setting. Many Thai shopping centers are studying American shopping center models or hiring American designers to develop their centers ("The mall, the merrier", 1994, p. 59; Sharima, 1994, p. 115). Examples include Seacon Square, Bangkok, codesigned by RTKL,

an American firm (see Appendix A) and Lotus, a Thai superstore modeled on America's Walmart (Sripapai, 1995, p. 104).

The development of the Thai shopping center shares its history with the American shopping center. This chapter provides information about the history and development of American and Thai shopping centers, including types and trends which provide directions for a new Thai shopping center development.

### **American shopping center**

The history of the American shopping center dates from the 1920s. Retailing spaces developed from individual shops toward the concept of operating stores in larger groups. Making shopping quicker, more convenient, and comfortable became more important for attracting customers. The department store provided the solution ("1925/1934 roaring...", 1994, p. 48-49). After World War II American cities expanded rapidly and the suburbs developed. With the movement to suburbia the two car family became the norm and the numbers of automobiles increased dramatically. As the years progressed, parking became a major challenge, which partly accounted for the growth of suburban shopping centers surrounded by acres of parking lots. The suburban shopping center enjoyed a development boom between 1955 and 1964 at a cost to the downtown centers. The bigger and more attractive regional malls were built in suburbia. Meanwhile, downtowns went into serious decline before struggling to make a comeback in late 1960s and in the 1970s. Downtown areas reacted by creating renovation projects for shopping centers and by developing more parking, building underground garages and above-ground parking decks ("1955/1964: cold war...", 1994, p. 66-67.) The shopping center faced a decline in the late 1970s because of a weak economy in the United States but entered a recovery in the 1980s ("1975/1984: economy...", 1994, p. 78). Since that time, stores of many types have been built and found great success in meeting customers' needs. Discount stores like Kmart and Walmart, outlet centers, warehouse clubs, and home centers



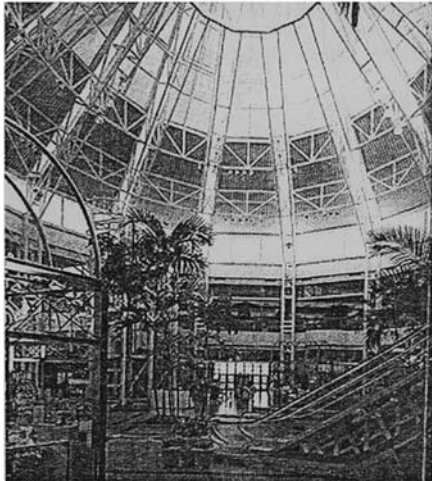
gained in popularity and sales because these stores provide price value (“1985/1994: flying...”, 1994, p. 84). Shopping habits are dynamic, and change to meet the demands of convenience and specialized needs (Euromonitor, 1992, p. 63). The value of convenience, such as saving time and providing new payment methods (like credit cards) will be the major factor in the next decade as the increase of home teleshopping, mail-order shopping, and specialty shops impact shopping habits (Fitch and Knobel, 1990, p. 24, and Euromonitor, 1992, p. 962).

The American shopping center has evolved into a variety of types. Classifying these types is complicated, and there are many ways to do so. They are characterized here by location, tenant mix, retail techniques, and physical form (Maitland, 1990, p. 11-12).

- **Location:** There are suburban and downtown shopping centers. At the present time, they are developing most often in suburbia.
- **Catchment area:** The size of the population establishes a hierarchy of centers which include regional centers, serving a large population within a regional area, district centers, and local centers, serving people in local areas.
- **Tenant mix:** The shopping centers are classified by the kinds of shops in the centers. For example, there are centers with many shops but which lack a dominant anchor store (usually a major department store). These include the festival marketplaces such as Baltimore’s Harborplace and New York City’s South Street Seaport. There are also centers with retail shops and dominant anchors such as the Watertown Place, Chicago, and Pentagon City in Washington D.C.
- **Style of retailing or management:** This type can be defined by lifestyle segmentation and has developed specialization in a particular product range or style of marketing. It might be a specialty center which operates in a form similar to a regional center; for example, IKEA, a furniture store, is a shop-



*Arcade shopping center, Burlington Mall, Massachusetts*  
 Source: I. M. Tao, *American Shopping Center*, 1989, p. 166



*Atrium Center, Vista Ridge Mall, Lewisville, Texas.*  
 Source: I. M. Tao, *American Shopping Centers*, 1989, p. 74

ping center which uses the retailing strategy of selling specific product lines. It might be an outlet center which sells the same products as other shopping centers but employs a different strategy of operation; for example, Potomac Mills, an outlet center in northern Virginia, operates similarly to other regional shopping centers, combining retail stores with dominant anchors, but uses a lower price strategy. The stand-alone department store and the power center, consisting of retail stores and department stores, seem to be declining, whereas the discount or outlet center, such as Potomac Mills and Franklin Mills; the specialty center, such as Toys R Us, IKEA, and Staples; and the convenience store are increasing. Home shopping and mail ordering is also increasing.

**Physical form** : Shopping centers can be classified by physical form:

- Open or enclosed centers
- Vertical centers, based on vertical circulation
- Arcade and, on a larger scale, galleria centers, in which a central space is a dominant feature
- Atrium centers, built around a dominant centralized space

Today, most American shopping centers have an "open mall" structure, with shops along the aisle surrounding the atrium under a skylight. Using landscape in the center is also an important design concern (Tao, 1989, p. 13; Jordan, Aug. 1990, p. 82).

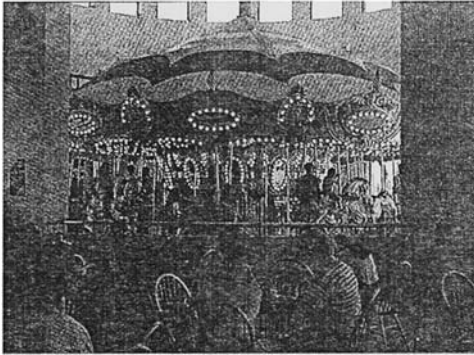
When designing a shopping center, retail developers have to consider these factors as part of the feasibility study to determine which are best for the location, the population, the targeted retail strategy, and the design of the center. A shopping center may use a specific style of retailing. It can be a suburban or downtown shopping center which depends on its location, while a regional, district, or local center depends on the size of population served. In terms of the tenant mix, it can be a shopping center with retail shops and dominant anchor stores, or an anchor store alone. Because there are many shopping centers in the United States, American shopping centers are designed

with consideration for each purpose and factor. In Thailand, shopping centers are designed using a common format throughout the country, so the design may not seem obvious in terms of physical form, location, or catchment area. However, Thai customers are familiar with the classifying of shopping centers in terms of style of management, which will be discussed in the history and development of the Thai shopping center.

Changes in society, economy, and technology provide visible indicators for the future of American retailing. The most important issues address consumers' needs. The consumer is the most important element in retailing (Levy and Weitz, 1992, p. 117). New forms of retailing, such as mail order and teleshopping, have developed to further satisfy consumers' needs and to compete with on-site shopping. However, more traditional retailing, in the form of shopping centers, will not disappear, but will require increased design awareness to address the new forms of shopping (Fitch and Knobel, 1990, p. 25). Design is used in shopping centers to create high quality environments that make shopping an easier, more pleasant experience.

During the past ten years, many shopping centers have been built in the United States. The trends indicate that franchise businesses, specialty stores, and warehouse retailing are enjoying a period of rapid growth, and that department stores and variety stores will continue to see a loss of market share to these new retail approaches (Euromonitor, 1992, p. 953-4).

Technological trends reveal that retailers are investing more in computerized systems to manage inventory control and purchase order production. Electronic funds transfer provides convenience and faster service for busy customers. In addition, customer purchasing data, accessed through store-owned cards, can be used in target marketing (Euromonitor, 1992, p. 960-2).



*Carousel, an entertainment feature in American Shopping center, Superstition Springs Center, Mesa, Arizona.  
Source : I. M. Tao, American Shopping Centers, 1989, p. 72*

The trend toward providing entertainment for customers is also increasing. The mall provides a place for leisure and entertainment, which has become fully integrated into the American social life. By mixing merchandising with entertaining, shopping centers are able to create an individual identity (Shillingburg, Aug. 1994, p. 82). To retain as many shoppers in the mall for as long as possible, some shopping centers have added movie theaters, food courts and even mini-theme parks (Jordan, Aug. 1990, p. 83). We can also see these trends prevalent in the renovation of malls. Some aging American shopping centers have reached the point where the mall design requires updating. This often includes the addition of seating areas, skylights, interior landscaping and new signage, as well as the removal of display windows that separate stores from a center's main walkway. Introducing nature and creating a new image of the store is of significant importance for the interior atmosphere of the mall (Jordan, Aug. 1990, p. 82).

### The Thal shopping center



*Children's play area, entertainment feature in American Shopping center, Superstition Springs Center, Mesa, Arizona.  
Source : I. M. Tao, American Shopping Centers, 1989, p. 72*

Traditionally, shopping centers in Thailand are outdoor markets surrounded by small stores. The form of contemporary Thai shopping centers has developed from this model, but it has also been significantly influenced by the American example. The first Thai shopping center was built in the early 1950s in the form of the department store. During 1960s-1970s, many department stores were built and the first complex shopping centers, combining retail stores and the department store, were introduced. Shopping centers have moved inside large-air conditioned buildings and the merchandise has been divided into categories. Since the 1980s, due to high competition, activity centers such as theaters, concert halls, and exhibition galleries have been added to the malls as magnets and as entertainment features (Chulasai, Dec. 1994, p. 207).

Bangkok is the center of business and development for retailing in Thailand. Trends develop here and spread out to other regions of the country. To speak of present-day shopping centers in Thailand essentially means to speak of urban shopping centers, especially in Bangkok. Due to high competition, shopping centers in Thailand are attempting to find new ways to attract and retain customers. Today there are many types of shopping centers which may be identified in a variety of ways, such as by location (suburban and downtown shopping centers), by customer group (high income, middle income, and low income), or by management type (department stores, complex shopping centers, and specialty stores). However, classifying Thai shopping center retailing is generally done by management type rather than by location or physical form, which is more common in the United States (Laowakul, Aug. 1994, p. 27; Taungrattanapan, Oct. 1993, p. 24-5)

- **Department store:** This category refers to stand-alone department stores which have existed from the first period of the shopping center development in Thailand.
- **Complex shopping center :** Rising competition has led to the concept of the complex shopping center, mixing individual stores with department stores and adding entertainment or activities.
- **Super market:** Typically, food selling in Thailand takes place in markets. The supermarket concept, influenced from Western countries, is being instituted in air-conditioned buildings with customer self-service aspects included.
- **Superstore:** This store is the department store with a self-service supermarket concept. It differs from the department store in the presentation of goods not in the variety and the quality of merchandise. This type includes Lotus, Macro, and Big C in Thailand, and Kmart and Walmart in the United States.
- **Convenience store:** This refers to the small store selling convenience goods and fast food with self service such as 7-11.



Traditional shopping center in Thailand, Bangkok.  
 Source : "The shopping center...", Arch & Idea, 16, Dec. 1994,  
 p. 46



*Thai department store from the first period, Bangkok.*  
 Source: "The shopping center...", *Arch & Idea*, 16, Dec. 1994, p. 48



*A department store in Bangkok.*  
 Source: "The shopping center...", *Arch & Idea*, 16, Dec. 1994, p. 48

- **Hypermarket and Outlet Center:** These stores are managed under the concept of "High Variety Low-price" with the self-service system. They combine the warehouse store and the retail outlet or discount stores together in a single package. Examples are Potomac Mills, VA and Franklin Mills, PA.
- **Specialty Center:** This type of store is sometimes called the "Category Killer." It is the store selling a single brand of product or single product line. Small specialty stores existed previously in Thailand, but not in large air-conditioned buildings like specialty stores in the United States, which include Toys R Us, Circuit City, Home Depot, and IKEA. The large specialty store is a new concept in Thailand.

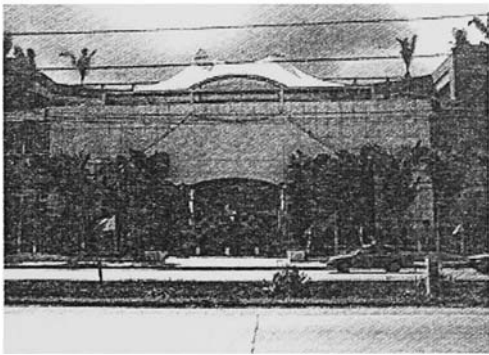
The shopping center types in Thailand appear to be similar to those in the United States; however, some types have just recently been introduced in Thailand, such as the specialty center and outlet center. The typical form and best-known types of retail outlets for Thai customers are the department store and complex shopping center. Self-service systems such as those found in supermarkets, hypermarkets, convenience store, and discount stores are just now developing in Thailand, as a result of the influence of the American shopping center. The specialty center is a new trend in Thailand with a new presentation, in large air conditioned buildings, offering a single product line in variety or by brand product.

At present, the mall size is a key factor in attracting Thai customers, and larger centers provide a greater variety of products and entertainment diversions. The stand-alone department store which used to fulfill customers' needs is not enough in this decade. The mixing of entertaining with merchandising, borrowed from the United States, has become a popular strategy in Thai shopping center design today (Sriprapai, June 1995, p. 98). Many Thai shopping centers are competing by incorporating theaters, mini theme parks, and very large food courts ("New Magnets in Shopping Centers", Sept. 16, 1994, p. 29). However, the products and shops are the same in most shopping centers. Introducing the specialty store will provide a way to attract customers in the future.

Another key factor is price. Many centers are using the discount strategy to attract customers. Most Thai shopping centers have not yet created a unique presence, and none has achieved a distinguishable position apart from others. This has led to price wars which are forcing Thai retailers to develop new strategies. Also, because of the price factor, which is of great importance to customers in decision-making, the discount store, superstore, and hypermarket are growing stronger in Thailand ("Special Issue: Thai customer in year 2000", June 1995, p. 24-25).

Location is another key trend. Many Thai shopping centers have been built in suburbia in recent years in addition to downtown development. The suburban shopping centers have been successful, but they are going to be in oversupply. Even with the high cost of downtown Bangkok, research by JLW Thailand Company, Ltd. shows that the next period will see the return of the downtown shopping center and a decline in the suburban shopping center ("The possibility...", Aug. 1994, p. 33). The reasons are that the downtown remains a large retail market and draws higher quality consumers. It is accessible to people from many areas. The downtown shopping center will return in smaller size and will focus on target markets or special products.

Although size and price are the key factors for contemporary Thai shopping centers, the next decade will hold many changes, such as reducing size of shopping centers, concentrating on providing specific product lines, moving back to downtown areas, and avoiding price wars by finding new styles. Trends for shopping center types in Thailand indicate the growth of specialty stores. The specialty center supports the concept of segmentation and target marketing. Due to the disadvantage of limited selection in each category of merchandise in the complex shopping centers, the specialty store is succeeding with Thai customers because it provides complete selection within a limited range of products. Focusing on one special product line, the specialty store can also provide detailed information and give consultation to customers.



*A complex shopping center, Seri Center, Bangkok. (author)*

The future of Thai marketing will see more intense competition in character, quality of merchandise, and service over that of price. Better educated consumers are the major impetus for sales promotion. They want more information about merchandise before making decisions. For example, they may want to know how a product's versatility, technology, and image differ from others (The Armed Forces Information Office, 1993, p. 80).

Other elements such as safety systems, code applications, and barrier-free design are significant concerns for new shopping centers. Because these concepts are relatively new to Thailand when compared to the United States, which has been building the shopping centers since the 1920s, building standards and requirements are not completely established. In the United States, the movements of universal design and the rights of disabled people are taken seriously in public spaces. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has been in force since 1990 (Wilkoff and Abed, 1994, p.8). At the present time, most shopping centers and public buildings in Thailand are not accessible for people with disabilities. For example, many buildings do not have ramps, elevators, or toilets accessible to disabled people.

The graphic or wayfinding systems in Thai retail facilities are also an important area for improvement in the next decade. Because these are significant elements of American shopping centers, new Thai shopping centers can copy this model for the graphic design of their facilities.



### *Social and Cultural Issues In the United States and Thailand* ■

*The American consumer* ■

*The Thai consumer* ■

*Similarities and differences* ■

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Asian cities may look superficially similar to modern Western cities, but in fact they function very differently, because cultural attitudes engender different views and behavior. Although Thai shopping centers have borrowed form and design from the American shopping centers, Thai culture and customer behavior must be considered to make these centers successful. This chapter looks at American consumers and their behavior reflected in the space and organization of the American mall as a model for designing Thai shopping centers with respect for Thai culture.

### **The American Consumer**

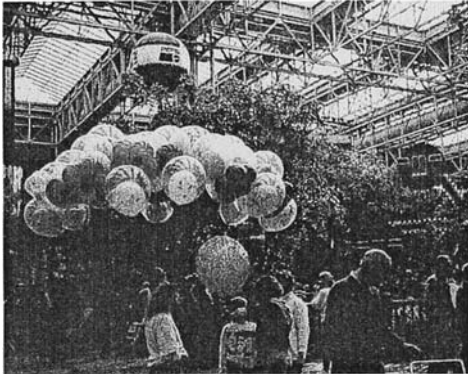
Understanding customer behavior is essential to the design of a successful shopping center. Malls are a major element of the American lifestyle. Surveys indicate that 75 percent of Americans go to a mall at least once a month. They spend more time in shopping malls than anywhere else outside of home and work (Bloch, Ridgeway, and Dawson, 1994, p. 24).

There are many reasons why American people go to a shopping center. A survey of the shopping mall as consumer habitat from the "Journal of Retailing" by Bloch, Ridgeway, and Dawson reveals that American people choose to go to or spend time at a shopping center based on the following six factors:

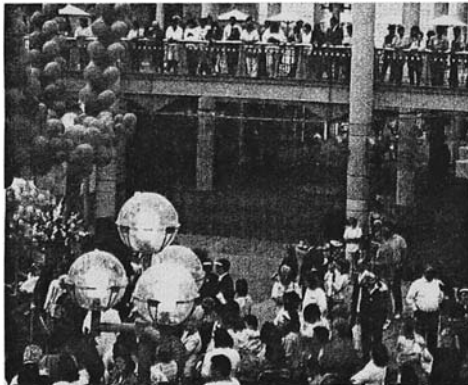
- **Aesthetics** reflects an appreciation of the physical design or appearance of the mall habitat which may serve as an attraction for those customers who notice and enjoy attractive spaces.
- **Escape** refers to malls as a relief from boredom and an escape from routine. For many individuals, malls may serve as highly accessible, low-cost sites for diversion.
- **Exploration** related to the perceived enjoyment of exploring for new products or stores while in the mall. The mall fulfills customers' desires for variety or novelty.



*American consumer : the mall as a relief from boredom, Sawgrass Mills, Sunrise , Florida.  
Source : I. M. Tao, American Shopping Centers, 1989, p. 144*



American consumers, Mall of America.  
 Source : RDD Inc., Process : Architecture, Design for Gathering People, 1993, p. 31



American Consumers, Chula Vista Center, California.  
 Source : I.M. Tao, American Shopping Centers, 1989, p. 63

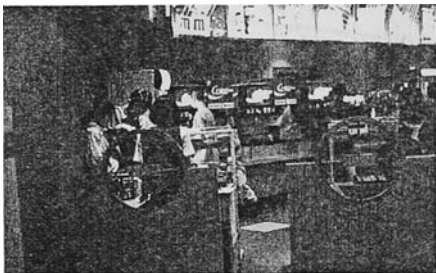
- **Flow experiences** refer to a pleasurable state of absorption that is associated with losing track of time. If the consumption activity is sufficiently pleasant, the hours may glide by unnoticed.
- **Epistemic** refers to the receipt of information about new stores and new products. Whereas Exploration focuses on the pleasure of novelty seeking, Epistemic addresses benefits inherent in new information.
- **Social:** Malls offer opportunities to socialize with others. The presence of open spaces, seating areas, and food courts increase this value of this factor (Bloch, Ridgeway, and Dawson, 1994, p. 24-25).

Consumers will vary in the way they behave in a shopping center and in the perceived benefits that draw them to it. Some shopping centers provide all the factors of a beautiful design, relief from boredom, exploring or getting new information, and socialization, while other centers provide fewer of these attributes. The aesthetically designed shopping center targets customers who view the physical appearance of the store as an important factor in choosing a shopping place. On the contrary, the design of a warehouse store does not strongly consider the design quality or decorative environment of the store because it is not expected by the customer. Price or the arrangement of products will be more important in this type of store. When designing a shopping center, the designers have to determine the target or actual customers that are to be served, because each group of customers views the benefits of the mall in a different way. These factors determine the reasons why Americans choose their shopping environments and serve as indicators to be considered for Thai malls. Thais may behave differently due to cultural and social influences, and so the design of the shopping center must reflect these differences.

### The Thai consumer

At the present time, there are two major types of retailers in the Thai market. They are shopping centers, managed by Thai retailers, using Western and Thai strategies, and shopping centers managed by Japanese retailers, using the Japanese approach. Thai-owned shopping centers are generally more successful than Japanese shopping centers in Thailand. That is because Japanese retailers use Japanese strategies without adapting to differences in the Thai culture and lifestyle. Although cultures are similar among Asian countries, there are individual characteristics which make retail business in each of the Asian countries different. It is not necessarily true that a successful form of the shopping center in one Asian country will succeed in another. For example, Yaohan, a Japanese department store, uses subdued design, and its service is too personal for Thai customers--- approaching and greeting customers when they come in to the store instead of letting them browse and giving help when wanted. These methods are not successful in Thai retailing because the majority of Thai customers, in middle to high incomes, like spirited design, and view closer service to be for the upper-income customers. (This will be discussed in greater detail in this chapter.)

To understand Thai customers, it is necessary to understand cultural and social values which directly affect their personalities. The Thai sense of territoriality and personal space behavior is strongly developed. There is little privacy in the Thai family because of the extended family form, but in public spaces, Thais desire more privacy and open space. They believe that social harmony is best maintained by avoiding any unnecessary friction in their contacts with others. Thai designers should consider this issue when designing public spaces. Other characteristics associated with Thai customers' behavior are those of a fun-loving and consumption oriented culture. (Seartho, 1993, p. 79 and p. 128)



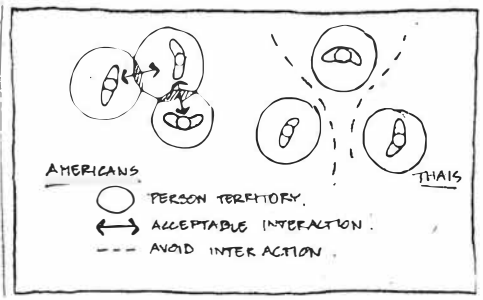
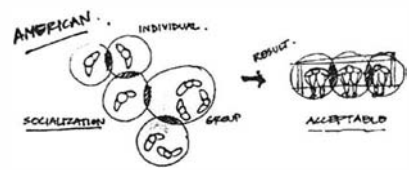
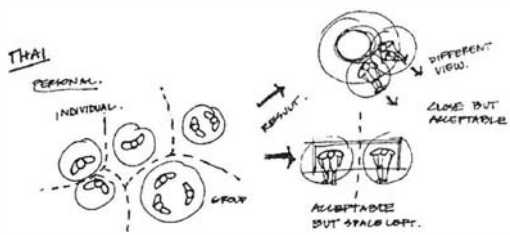
*Thai consumers : Snack areas and food courts are an important part in Thai shopping centers today.  
Source: "The shopping center...", Arch & Idea, 16, Dec. 1994, p. 54-55*



*Traffic jams impact the busy life style of people in Bangkok.*  
 Source: "The shopping center", Arch & Idea, 16, Dec. 1994,  
 p. 56

Thailand is a land of rich resources. It has never been a colony to European powers, and its people have lived with little struggle when compared to other Asian countries such as Japan and the Philippines. In the past, Thai people had many celebrations and festivals. Today, constantly in search of fun, the Thais seize every opportunity to organize celebrations. The Thai calendar is punctuated with numerous holidays, ceremonies, and festivals. This aspect of Thai culture also affects the design of the shopping center. Thais prefer centers with spirited design, which create the feeling of movement and entertainment. Thai shopping centers with these characteristics, such as Central Plaza and Seacon Square (see Appendix A), attract many shoppers. As stated earlier, the shopping centers with subdued design attract fewer Thai customers. These include Seri Center (see Appendix A), even though it is located near Seacon Square, and other Japanese shopping centers such as Thai Daimaru and Yaohan. Thais are also easy-going and not as strict about time as Western people. as can be seen in their behavior of enjoying and eating food all day. There are numerous restaurants in and around Bangkok and hawkers along many streets. Many Thai shopping centers have added food courts and snack areas as an important factor in attracting customers.

Studies reveal that family households, especially the extended family, are common and make up the majority of Thai society. Nearly all men become the head of a household. In the coming decades the number of households will grow rapidly, but will have fewer members (Mason and Campbell, 1993, p. 5). Thais do not establish households at a young age, and for the foreseeable future, indications are that the greatest spending power will come from middle-aged households, with members 35-49 years old (Mason and Campbell, 1993, p. 26). These demographic characteristics influence retailers' determination of target markets. Economic growth and the accompanying improved standard of living will allow Thai people to shift spending patterns from solely basic essentials toward more luxury goods and services (Euromonitor, 1995, Vol.3, p.1072).



Comparison of Thai and American consumer

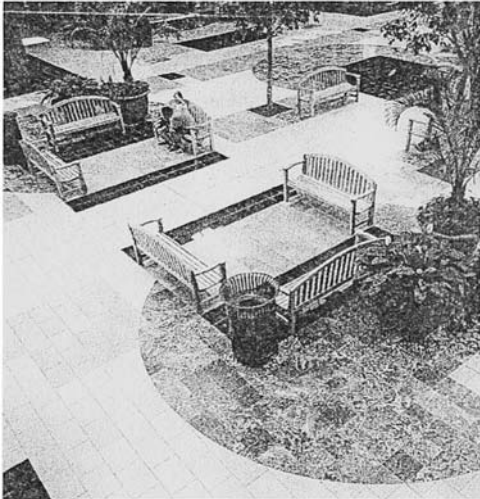
Lifestyle changes in Thailand, especially in Bangkok, have led to a new way of living, including smaller families and busy lifestyles that bring the need for more convenience. These factors affect retail business attitudes. Thai customers want to shop at one location to find what they need rather than shop around in many places. The busy lifestyle of the urban area leads to less time for all activities, and the stresses of city life make time for leisure activities vital. Knowledge of these social and cultural issues assists the retailer in understanding customer behavior. If properly applied, this contributes to success in the market place.

### Similarities and differences

Currently, the types of shopping centers in Thailand and the United States are very similar because most Thai shopping centers have used the American shopping center as a model. Trends in America tend to be trends in Thailand. However, Thai shopping centers are still centered in urban areas, whereas American shopping centers serve both suburban and urban areas. In Thailand, the city is still the living center for higher income people as well as the center of business. Also, due to public transportation systems, the downtown shopping center is more easily accessible to the majority of Thai customers. Bangkok is current building an underground and an elevated transportation system that will greatly improve the public transportation system. In contrast to Thailand, higher-income Americans have tended to move out of town, and businesses have also extended into suburbia; these factors have led to the increased development of suburban shopping centers in the United States.

Many of differences between Thai consumers and American consumers have become blurred because of the influences of Western countries, including the United States, on Thai people. As previously discussed, American customers choose to go to a mall based on the six factors of Aesthetics, Escape, Exploration, Flow experiences, Epistemic, and Social elements. These factors are also used as strategies for

attracting Thai customers. Many Thai shopping centers have offered beautiful design, escape from work or routine, and good entertainment and events for exploration. Thai customers tend to act similarly to Americans except for the Social factor, which differs because of the Thai cultural concern about personal space. For example, some Americans go to a mall to socialize with people in general (Bloch, Ridgeway, and Dawson, 1994, p. 35), but Thais go to a mall specifically to meet their friends. Also, Thais require more physical space to satisfy their need for personal space than do Americans. This is a significant cultural difference (see page 18).



*Seating arrangement in an American shopping center that offers little privacy due to seats facing each other, Washington Square Shopping Center, Tigard, OR*  
 Source : Michale Janicek, *Presence of Mall, LA+A*, Sept. 1995, p. 25

In the next decade the American "baby boom" generation, reaching 50 years of age, will be the major spending group in American households and the major customers in the market. They will spend a great deal on health products (Popcorn, 1992, p.56). In Thailand, the middle-aged group, from 35 to 49 years old, who head households, will be the major customer group. These middle-aged customers are involved in the buying process of the high-involvement, high cost or high decision-making products, such as cars, houses, furniture, and computers (Mason, Woramontri, and Kleinbaum, 1993, p. 169).

Currently, significant differences exist between the Thai and American shopping centers in the application of technology, safety concerns, code applications, and barrier free design. Because Thai shopping centers have just commenced their period of growth, the development of laws and the need for enforcement of regulations has not yet been fully addressed by governing authorities. Whereas people with disabilities are an important factor in the design of American shopping centers, only a few Thai shopping centers have taken the barrier-free problem into the design consideration of their centers.

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## CHAPTER 4

### *Principles of the Design* ■

*Site / Access /Service* ■

*Entrance* ■

*Planning and circulation* ■

*Regulation requirements* ■

*Fixtures / Color / Lighting* ■

*Graphics* ■

*Technology* ■



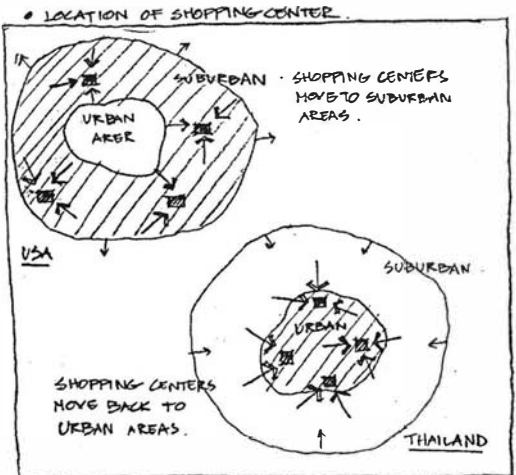
This chapter reviews the major features of American retail design and their interpretation for Thailand. As stated in the introduction, the primary goal of retail design is to connect people and products. In retail planning, image and environment are important elements in the design process. The design characteristics of the space project product image and thereby influence the customer. Retail design must consider many factors, such as circulation and traffic patterns, furniture design and layout, wayfinding and graphics, and store information systems (Fitch and Knobel, 1990, p. 34). Code applications and new technologies are important considerations. The design also encompasses the factors which create the customers' positive feelings about the space. Color and material choices, lighting design, and the activities or entertainment features brought into the space all contribute to make the environment more inviting.

Factors to be considered in retail design are the customers, customer behavior, the products, the character of these goods, and the environment in which these goods will be sold. These factors will determine the interior design concept developed for the space. Some of these important considerations include: site/access/service, entrance, planning and circulation, regulation requirements, fixtures/color/lighting, graphics, and technology.

**Site / Access / Service**

Retailers must analyze the accessibility of the store site. Customers who come to buy must find it easy to get to the site by whatever mode of transportation they most frequently use, whether they travel by foot, by public transportation, or by private car.

Market analysts divide the customer base surrounding a retail center into time belts or zones. These are called "trading areas." Populations within each trading area provide potential customers with differing merchandise classifications (Dunne, Lusch, Gable, and Gebhardt, 1992, p. 170). For example, people want to buy products they



Comparison of location trend of shopping centers in Thailand and in the United States.

need daily at a store close to them, a neighborhood shopping center, or a community shopping center, but they may expect to travel longer and farther to buy high-involvement products, such as furniture, for which they expect to spend several hundreds of dollars and which they will buy only occasionally. This is practical in the United States, where shopping centers are abundant, with different sizes and purposes, and where most Americans own a car, which allows for easy accessibility. In Thailand, especially in Bangkok, the easy accessibility is to the city

In the United States, suburbs are developing more rapidly than cities, largely because land is cheaper and road systems provide easy access. Suburbia is being urbanized, as satellite cities grow outside the major metropolitan areas. The construction of office parks, shopping centers, and entertainment districts is creating suburban downtowns. American shopping centers are developing in the suburbs (Cetron, 1990, p. 2). In Thailand, the urban area is the crucial site for doing business because of its accessibility to the majority of Thai customers. In Bangkok, downtown had been the best choice for shopping center sites before the increasing importance of suburban sites a few years ago. However, the traffic problems have made suburban shopping centers less successful than expected. Because of busy lifestyles, Thai customers do not want to travel too far or spend too much time getting to the shopping center. This has seen the downtown shopping center become the shopping destination of choice for Thais.

The mall is no longer along the route, but is a destination for many Americans (Maitland, 1990, p. 25). In Thailand, it is often a place for releasing stress and meeting friends after work. This contributes to the importance of the downtown location for the mall.

Thai retailers predict that the next decade will see a stronger development of downtown shopping centers because they address more needs and offer easy accessibil-

ity. The site should be accessible for all types of customers, traveling by different transportation modes. Service access and loading facilities should also be considered; they must not compete with or interfere with customer traffic. The site must allow for pedestrians, vehicles and delivery traffic to be kept separate (Novak, 1977, p. 58). Another key for site evaluation is the degree to which surrounding, non-competitive retailers complement the projected new store. This is a significant consideration and common to both American and Thai retailers. The center surrounded by many competitors will have difficulty being successful because they all offer the same products and share the same group of customers in the trading area. In non-competitive surroundings, retailers will have a better chance to gain customers, and they may even support each other if they have associated merchandise (Novak, 1977, p. 12).

### **Entrance**

The entrance to the shopping center is where the customer is introduced to the environment, to the stores and to the merchandise. Entrances are becoming increasingly important in terms of their visibility and for the placement of retail classifications adjacent to them. The entrance design should emphasize the location of access. As with the approach to the site, the entrance should be visible and well defined. It also should be convenient for all customers, properly illuminated for night visibility, and have good signage (Novak, 1977, p. 60-62). It also should actively facilitate the flow of customers into and out of the building. It must protect and shelter, it must appeal to its own target customers, and it must differentiate itself from the competition and stand out (Israel, 1994, p. 95).

### **Planning and circulation**

Good planning ensures that every part of the center is of an appropriate, functional shape and the circulation leads traffic to every part of the center. All of this must be

accomplished and, in addition, it must generate a visual excitement as the customer is led through the spaces, creating pleasing views and opportunities for compelling display. The circulation in the shopping center leads from the entrance to the aisles, the retail spaces, and the merchandise. The aisles must provide visual as well as actual physical access to all parts, and they must do this in a balanced way so that no part is short-circuited or dead-ended (Israel, 1994, p. 80).

The entrance affects positioning of stairways and escalators. These should not be located adjacent to an entrance, so that the entering customer has an opportunity to browse through the merchandise. This means that the trip should not be short-circuited going to and from an escalator that is located too near the entrance. The escalator should be seen by the public, and customers will be aware of its location to move from floor to floor (Novak, 1977, p. 175).

The selling areas are established by the following criteria: Impulse versus demand selling; associated, or life-style merchandising zones; and customer convenience and expectations. Impulse merchandise should be positioned in the heaviest points of traffic. Generally, they are placed near major entrances and central escalators. In contrast, demand merchandise will generate customer traffic by its nature, advertisements, promotion, and the principle that the customer selection process is made at home. Its location is accordingly of secondary importance. Associated merchandise should be placed near each other to stimulate non-planned buying (Israel, 1994, p. 81).

The permanent building functional components, such as fire and service stairs and toilets, should be placed in secondary areas and the central areas should be retained for selling areas and entertainment features (Israel, 1994, p. 99).



*Thai shopping center : Entrance without ramps.*

*Source: "The shopping center", Arch & Idea, 16\_Dec. 1994, p. 57*

### Regulation Requirements

In the United States today, retail code regulations have been developed at national, state, regional, county, and city levels, and are strictly enforced. The regulation requirements include public health and welfare, and cover emergency exit provisions, fire protection, and barrier-free access for people with disabilities. Codes application in Thailand has not been developed to this level and is not applied completely and widely. This study uses American codes as a model and these code requirements will be applied to the Thai shopping design example.

### Fixtures / Color / Lighting

All possible merchandising combinations must be anticipated by the designer, since goods are moved from time to time, reflecting the season, or as selling and presentation techniques change. Forms, style, materials, and colors are as variable as the designer's imagination. While they should reflect each department or classification of merchandise in a special way to reinforce multiple images in the department, they should also be compatible with one another in a variety of arrangements. The materials and finishes must harmonize with and enhance the merchandise being presented. They must be distinctive and help identify a brand name or classification (Israel, 1994, p. 166).

**Flooring** : Change of floor materials in the shopping center can define aisle circulation and differentiate the aisle from the sales areas (Novak, 1977, p. 123). Ease of maintenance of the material should be considered because of public use and heavy traffic. The aisles should have hard, easy-cleaned material, such as marble, granite, or tile, and should avoid carpet, which may be used better in selling areas.

**Ceiling:** Ceilings that once were basically treated as flat surface planes with uniform lighting systems are now being considered as an important design element of the interior space. Variations of height and a variety of lighting effects reflect the functions and identities of the different parts of the space (Israel,1994, p. 149).

**Materials and colors:** The use of materials and colors in the shopping center is dependent on the image and concept. Intense, bold, and contrasting colors tend to project a popular quality appropriate to mass merchandising. Muted, grayed, and harmonic colors have become traditionally associated with up-scale merchandising. However, today the color trend is to use not only harmonic colors but also intense colors, such as in the graphics and decorative elements (Israel, 1994, p. 161).

Color in the mall is also conditional to location. Regional and national traditions of design have a far-reaching impact. A successful color scheme in New York would look and feel out of place in Florida, Paris, Singapore, or Bangkok. In New York, the retail spaces use many luxury materials such as granite and marble, along with harmonic colors. In Florida and California, the spaces more often present tiles and bright color schemes. In Thailand, the shopping centers with luxury materials attract only Thai upper-income customers, whereas the majority of customers are from middle and middle-high income group. The materials used and color schemes in Thai shopping spaces are more closely related to the Floridian and Californian styles. To attract most customers, some Thai shopping centers have copied the California themes and color styles, and even include palm trees in the centers. This approach does not take into account local culture and preferences.

Materials used in the design of today's American retail environment include combinations of materials such as wood, glass, plastic and metal in fixture



Graphics in American shopping center : (Top) The Citadel, City of Commerce, California, (Lower) Chula Vista Center, California.

Source : I.M. Tao, *American Shopping Center*, 1989, p. 43, 63

designs. Consideration of the green movement, concern for the environment, makes use of recycled or recyclable materials, such as metal fixtures (Whalen,1994, p. 75-76). Wood is still the major material used and is followed by metal, glass, and some synthetic materials. Today, the materials used in Thai retailing vary and include metal, glass, and laminates incorporating Western and American technology. Sometimes imported materials such as marble and plastic laminates are used.

**Lighting:** As the ceiling and floor materials help define the circulation of the space, the lighting also helps to achieve that objective through different light levels and fixture types. Lighting design in the retail environment includes minimum light and low energy levels for energy efficiency. Dramatic lighting focuses attention on special features (Isarel, 1994, p. 187). In the United States, the principles of retailing discouraged natural light and encouraged windowless buildings, but today shopping centers try to open spaces for natural light and bring exterior themes into interiors by adding skylights, fountains, plants, and trees. (Tao, 1989, p. 25)

### Graphics

Graphics in retail design reveal the store's identity to the customers and also instruct, lead, and help customers to find their way. The graphic design is a significant part of the image and personality; the design should enhance the character and complement or agree with the other elements of the mall's interior (Israel, 1994, p. 192). There are three types of information that people need to know in unfamiliar settings:

- Overview of the building, such as floor plans and maps.
- The designated route to a destination, such as arrow signs or language descriptions involving destination finding.
- The destination graphics, such as department and store signs (Athur and Passini, 1992, p. 143).

Graphics in the mall include signs for service areas and general information, such as promotional signs and advertising. New shopping centers and renovations in Thailand are integrating the graphics into the overall design statement.

### **Technology**

Computer systems and building and material technology play an important role in American retail design today. Adapting American technology, Thai shopping centers can introduce new features to customers. Big screen television monitors, theaters with computerized reservation systems and computer information systems can give customers store and product locations. In addition, computers for inventory control, such as bar-code systems, are being introduced in Thailand. In building technology, Thai retail design has developed the application of metal and synthetic materials which have enabled new construction methods, such as metal truss construction, and have facilitated the application of new materials, such as laminates and metal sheets. Today, Thai shopping centers are introducing these technologies to make shopping easier, more attractive and safer for customers.



### *The One-stop Shopping Center as a New Direction In Thailand* ■

★ *The need for one-stop shopping center in Thailand* ■

*Case Study: The furniture and household goods store* ■

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The study of American and Thai shopping centers reveals that Thai shopping centers have followed the trends in American retailing from the stand-alone department stores of the past to the complex shopping centers of the present. Current trends in American retailing address new forms of shopping, such as mail order and teleshopping. Current Thai retailing includes complex shopping centers, discount stores, supermarkets with self-service systems, and the predicted growth of specialty one-stop shopping centers which has already occurred in the United States. The one-stop shopping center is predicted to attract customers in Thailand as it has in the United States. Also, introducing the one-stop shopping center will reduce price wars, which occur among Thai shopping centers, as this new style of retailing moves beyond competing with others by price (see chapter 2). It also makes the center unique from others and aims at market segmentation.

### **The need for the one-stop shopping center in Thailand**

The concept of the one-stop shopping center provides an answer to the shopping problems created by the busy lifestyle by bringing everything related to a particular lifestyle activity into one place for the customer. People tend to have less time for shopping and are able to find all related products in one place. This solution also helps to address traffic and parking problems, as one does not have to travel from place to place while seeking related products.

As previously established, changes in lifestyle make clear the need for addressing convenience and saving time in the design of the shopping process. Current design has to respond to these trends, listen to what customers want, and provide what customers need. The one-stop shopping center concept offers an answer to these needs. It offers specific product lines and a variety of products, and can even provide professional consultants to advise the customer on installation and coordination all in one location. Many product lines can be developed based on this concept.

### Case Study : The furniture and household goods store

The furniture and household goods store was selected based on a study of social and economic conditions in Thailand, concentrated in Bangkok where shopping centers are primarily located. As the population grows and changes in composition, and as existing housing wears out or is destroyed, Thais will require the construction of new dwellings. Residential construction forecasts include greater land area to be absorbed for housing, an increased infrastructure necessary to service the additional housing, and an increasing market for household furnishings and appliances (Campbell, Poapongsakorn, 1993, p. 269). Improvements in the quality of life also leads to more spending for luxury purposes. People want better living environments, so they tend to spend more on furnishings and other housing appointments (Mason, Woramontri, and Kleinbaum, 1993, p.144)

Trends indicate the growth of specialty stores which use the strategy of market segmentation. The home furnishings store, as a specialty center, can target those who have just built or bought a house or who are upgrading their existing home. Statistics indicate that these customers form a large portion of the Thai market (Mason, Woramontri, and Kleinbaum, 1993, p. 166).

In recent years, many sources for furniture have been available in Bangkok (see Appendix B). They include furniture sections in the department store, furniture stores in the shopping mall, individual furniture stores located around the city, and furniture trade fairs ("Furniture trends...", Jan. 5-11, 1996, p. 20). The original source of furniture was individual stores, until the department store was introduced with its variety of merchandise. The Thai need for home improvement has made furniture an important section in the department store as a demand product, generally located on the top floor of the department store. Since the furniture sections in department stores often lack variety due to limited space, furniture retailers have sought new ways to offer their products to customers, such as bringing furniture stores into the mall and introducing the furniture and home trade fair.

Furniture trade fairs have been very popular in Bangkok. Five major companies have managed furniture trade fairs, which target customers who are finding furniture for their houses. The advantage of these fairs is that the customers get convenience and save time, since many furniture manufacturers are in one place. These fairs are becoming more popular every year, which indicates that shopping places for specific product lines such as furniture and household goods are highly desired ("Home exhibitions...", Dec. 29, 1995-Jan. 4, 1996, p. 10-11). Nevertheless, there are some inconveniences with the trade fair model. With the temporary nature of these furniture trade fairs, the customers have to find and follow the advertisements for the places and dates. Although introducing individual furniture stores in the mall solves the problem of location permanency and provides more convenience, it does not offer the range and variety of the larger setting, and customers still have to deal with service from each individual store.

The one-stop shopping center for furniture and households goods proposes the same convenience as the furniture trade fair, bringing everything in one place. Beyond that it also offers a permanent shopping center site, so that customers can shop whenever they want.

### *Design of the Thal One-stop Home Furnishings Shopping Center* ■

*Project summary* ■

*Location and site analysis* ■

*Building / Existing structure* ■

*Design concept* ■

*Design development* ■

*Final presentation* ■

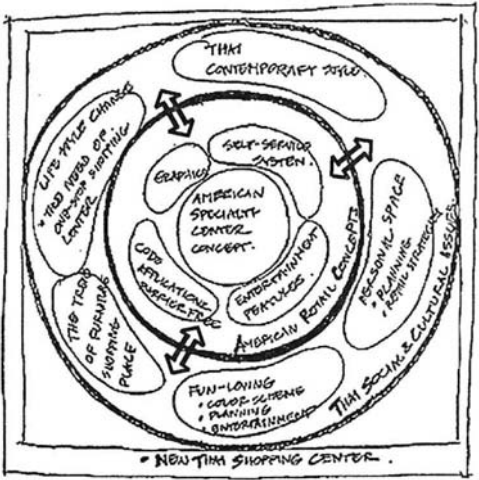
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### Project summary

Based on the research into American and Thai shopping centers, including types of shopping centers, site analysis, consumer profiles, and cultural considerations, distinct similarities and differences between the two countries have been revealed. The findings will be incorporated into the design of the one stop home furnishings shopping center, located in Bangkok, Thailand. The proposal design of the Thai shopping center will incorporate research on the American shopping centers and include (1) one-stop shopping center; (2) American technology (computer systems for inventory control and entertainment); (3) Code application (especially barrier-free and the American with Disabilities Act); (4) and space planning, (such as the furniture department planning, learned from American furniture stores). The design also considers (1) appropriate site/location for the Thai shopping center, (2) creating a theme from Thai culture and customer preference, and (3) concern for Thai customer behavior reflected in the design concepts.

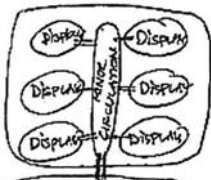
The following concepts incorporate research on American shopping center development and Thai cultural considerations in the design of the one-stop shopping center for Bangkok.

- American contributions
  - Incorporate the concept of one-stop shopping center with a selected product line .
  - Include the self-service system, the typical American style of retailing today.
  - Develop spatial layout and circulation from the study of American shopping centers and furniture stores, adjusted to the Thai condition.
  - Provide barrier-free design based on American shopping centers.
  - Provide entertainment features as found in today's American shopping center.
  - Use American technology such as computer systems for inventory control, and computer, audio, and video entertainment.

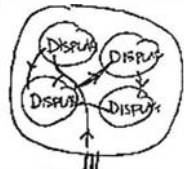


- Create graphics and identity based on the study of American shopping centers.
- Thai conditions
  - Location for the Thai shopping center is in downtown (as described in chapter 2, page 14 and chapter 3, page 20).
  - Integrate knowledge of Thai culture into the design concept; for example, deriving the theme of the center from the traditional Thai festival, Thai space, and decorative elements.
  - Thai consumer behavior and preference will affect the schematic design of the center; for example, the color scheme, space planning and other entertainment features will reflect the "fun-loving" Thai consumers.
  - The "personal space" issue will affect (1) the merchandise arrangement (see diagram below) such as having minor circulation between displays, (2) seating arrangement in central area, and (3) the service system, such as offering service with more freedom (using self-service computer information system and supported by helping from sales representative).

The new Thai shopping center : The integration from American and Thai Influences.



THAI : HAS MORE PERSONAL SPACE .



AMERICAN .

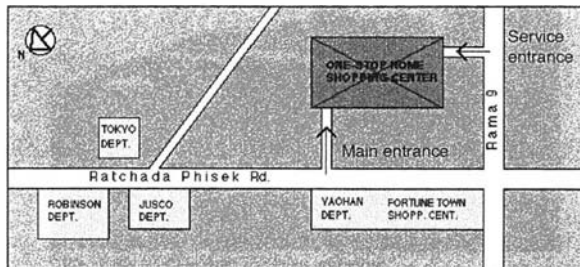
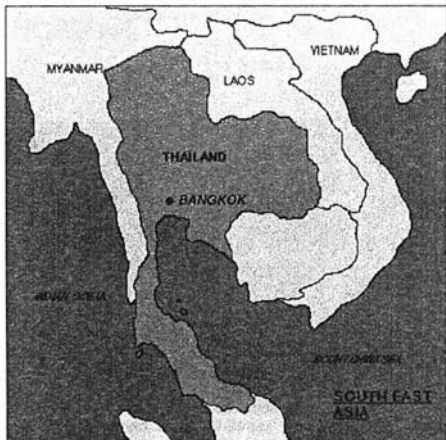
Diagrams that result from comparison of Thai and American personal space; they affect the product arrangement and circulation of each department . The American furniture stores tend to have people wandering around, but Thai ones have clear circulation. (see Appendix)

• **Location and Site Analysis**

Location: Ratchada Phisek Street, Bangkok, Thailand

Recognizing the importance of the downtown shopping center, the location for the projected one-stop home shopping center is in new downtown Bangkok. While parking is a problem in the downtown, the center itself provides enough parking space for its customers on its own site.

The center is located back from the main street, but it can be seen distinctly. This location can be accessed by buses and cars. There are many surrounding office buildings, which will provide many customers for the center. Although there are many department stores and shopping centers in this area which use different retailing strategies and sell many product lines, the home shopping center will set itself apart from the competition by focusing on one product line.





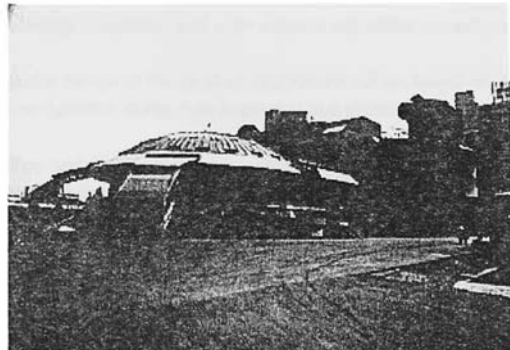
• **Building / Existing structure**

The building selected is an existing amphitheater structure. Its space and size allow for a shopping center. It has architectural features such as a dome which can be opened for a skylight and provides an atrium which may be used for an entertainment area. Also there are two entrances from the streets; these can be separated into a customer entrance and a service entrance.

The building style is contemporary, with two domes connected to each other. It consists of a basement and a three-story atrium. There are different floor levels, which may be considered as a barrier, and will be solved by adding ramps and elevators at the entrance and at necessary areas in the building to serve disabled people. Other conditions that will be changed include fire exits, which may use existing stairs but convert them to open to the outside, and adding escalators and elevators for retail purposes.

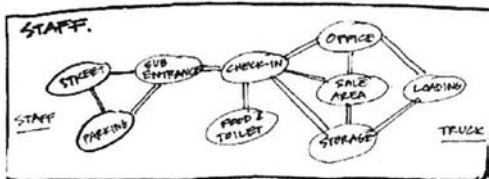
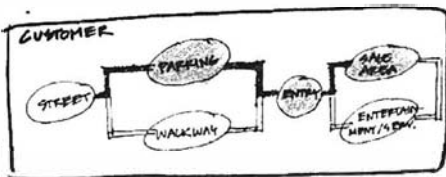
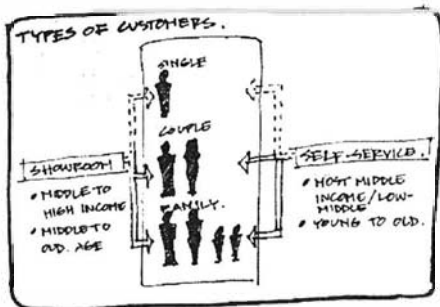


*View from the south, Ramav9 Street: the back of the building and the service entrance (the left corner)/parking area at the front of the building (the right corner).*



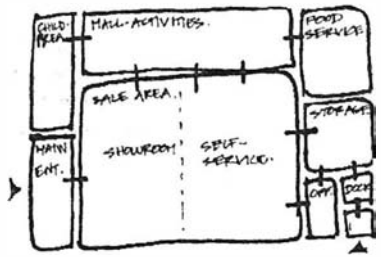
*View of the building from the main entrance.*

### Design concept



- The center divides into two quality level of products, the first are displayed in showrooms (medium to high price) on the first, second, and third floors and a self-service area in the basement.
- The showroom concept is developed based on the plan of a house. This means that customers will first see the social area with living and dining furniture in the center as they will see a living room first in a house. Then they will see private areas: the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom.
- The Thai contemporary style will be applied to reflect Thai culture and contemporary influences.
- The design identity of the center will be presented by creating the theme of the center from the "traditional Thai festival".
- The planning, circulation, and color scheme will reflect fun and excitement.
- The spatial design of the product department will be based on the study of American furniture stores (see Appendix) and shopping centers.
- The office and storage areas are located on the back of the basement which is convenient for loading and for separating the staff entrance from the customer entrance.

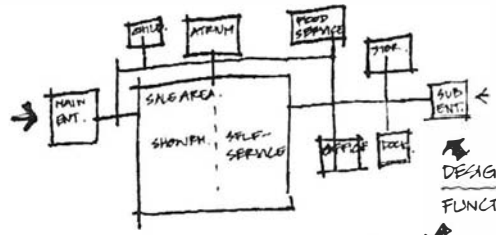
- Basement • self-service area
- lower price and knock-down furniture
  - accessories
  - office and storage



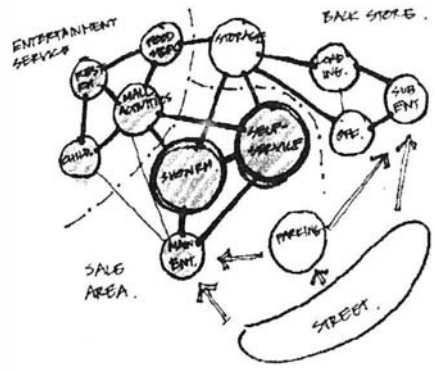
- First floor • customer entrance
- displays
  - reception
  - directory
- showroom
- living, dining, and home office furniture
  - outdoor furniture
  - accessories
- food court
- children playland

- Second floor • showroom
- kitchen and accessories

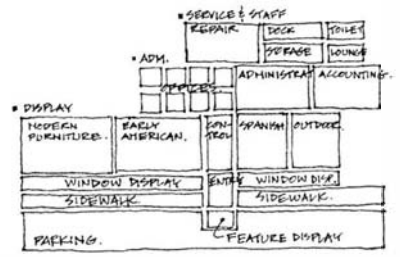
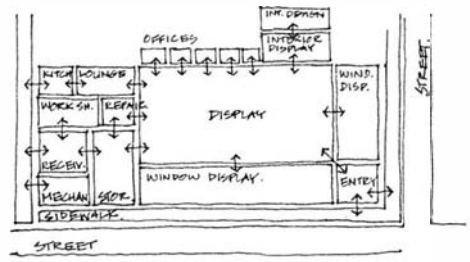
- Third floor • showroom
- bedroom, bathroom, and accessories
  - design center
  - design consultant
  - material and sample selection



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT  
FUNCTIONAL ZONING.



TYPICAL FURNITURE ►  
STORE: FUNCTIONAL  
GROUPING AND  
ZONING.  
SOURCE: WHITE, T.E.,  
CONCEPT SOURCE BOOK,  
P. 36, 39.



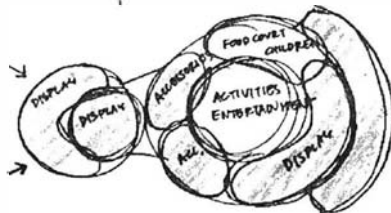
## Design development: Spatial organization

Planning was approached in two ways. First, an experiment of using axes, based on the symmetry of the existing building was made. The result shows a formal feeling which contrasts with the informal, fun concept desired. The second experiment, using different angles, diagonals, and less consideration for the existing axes and shape, gave more dynamic results. Creating new axes and diagonals give the space a more exciting and "fun" feeling for the customers.

The direction of circulation from the entrance to the atrium with the sculpture on axis in the atrium creates the focal point to draw people into the space

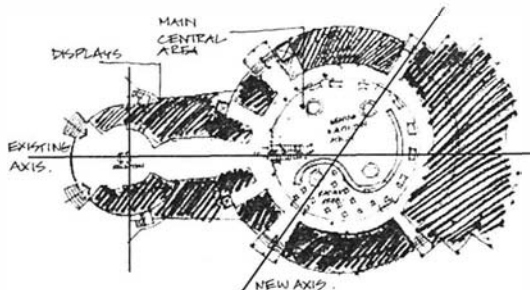
Following the trend of bringing natural light inside, a skylight is created in the dome of the atrium.

*The first experiment was developed from the existing axes which run from the entrance through the centers of the domes. It created the symmetrical formal feeling, and good control of circulation at the entrance. It has more informal plan at the back area, but it does not inject enough excitement and fun. Customers will not experience a new spatial environment.*

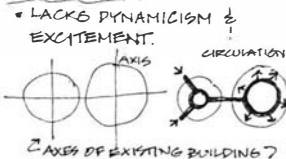


■ CONCEPT OF FUN AND EXCITEMENT PLANNED INTO THE DESIGN.

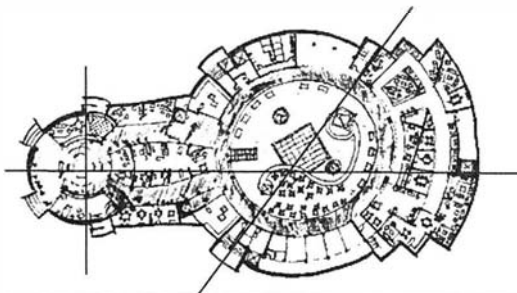
- APPLY FUNCTIONAL ZONING INTO THE REAL SPACE.
- SPACE PLANNING CONSISTS OF
  - SEASONAL DISPLAY AREA AT THE ENTRANCE.
  - ACTIVITIES AND ENTERTAINMENT AT THE ATRIUM.
  - DISPLAYS ARE THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING FROM THE FRONT TO THE BACK.
  - THE ACCESSORY AREAS ARE PLANNED ADJACENT TO DISPLAYS.



### FORMAL



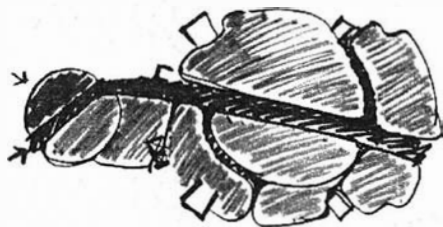
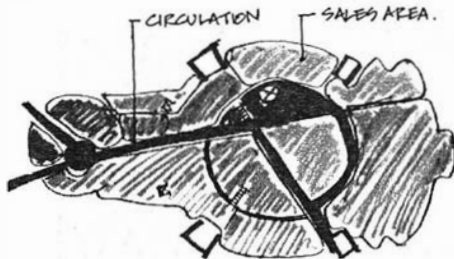
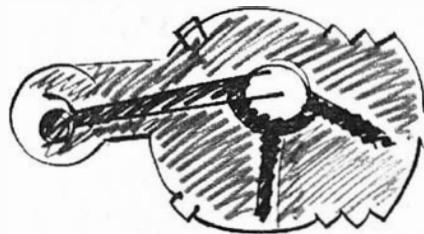
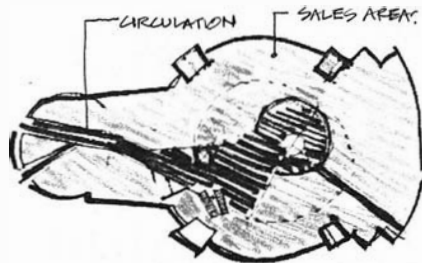
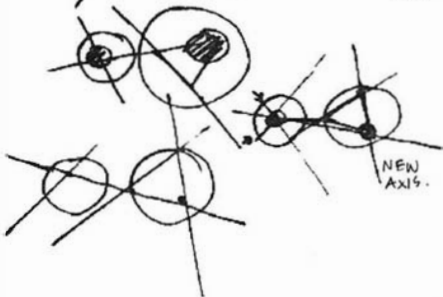
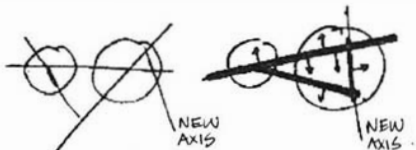
- LACKS DYNAMICISM & EXCITEMENT.
- THE DISPLAYS WERE LOCATED AROUND THE BUILDING AND THE CENTRAL AREA WAS RETAINED FOR ACTIVITIES.
- THE CIRCULATION FLOW MOVED FROM THE ENTRANCE TO THE BACK.
- DEVELOPED FROM THE ABOVE PLAN AND ATTEMPTED TO BREAK THE EXISTING STRUCTURE RIGIDITY (CIRCLE & CURVED WITH DIAGONAL AXIS.



- THE SECOND APPROACH ATTEMPTED TO CREATE MORE EXCITEMENT AND DYNAMIC FEELING.
- THE SPACE PLANNING AND CIRCULATION WERE CREATED WITH LESS ADHERENCE TO EXISTING BUILDING AXES.
- THE PRELIMINARY IDEA WAS EXPANDED BY ADDING NEW AXES AND BREAKING SYMMETRICAL PLAN OF THE EXISTING FORM.

**INFORMAL.**

- MORE INTERESTING
- FUN.

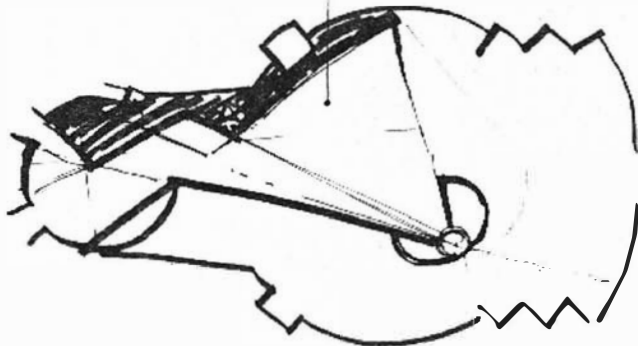


The second experiment shows the different angles of axes. They give an informal feeling which is more interesting and fun.

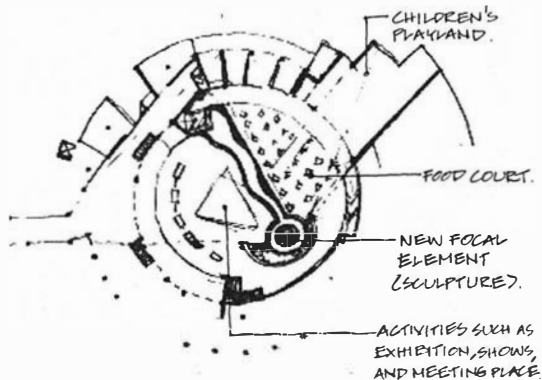
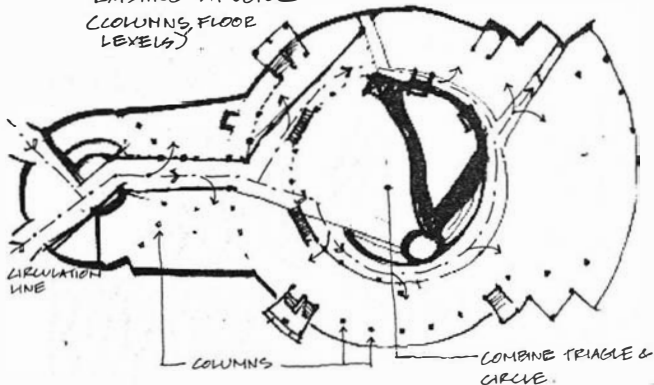
**Design development: First floor plan**

- THE FINAL DESIGN EVOLVED INTO A COMBINATION OF NEW FORMS (TRIANGLE) INTEGRATED INTO THE OLD (EXISTING) FORM (CIRCLE)
- ASSYMETRIC PLANNING OF NEW AXES AND FORMS.
- THE NEW WALLS AND NEW ELEMENTS WERE PLACED ALONG THE DIAGONAL LINES TO DIVIDE THIS LARGE SPACE FOR DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES.

OVERLAPPING SPACE FOR MAIN ACTIVITY AREA AND CENTRAL AREA WHICH CONNECTS TO ALL PARTS OF THE CENTER.

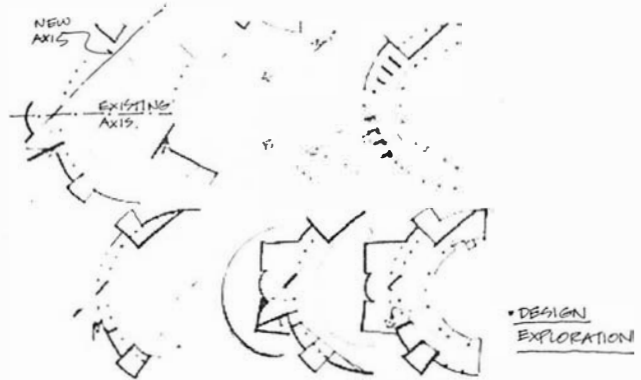
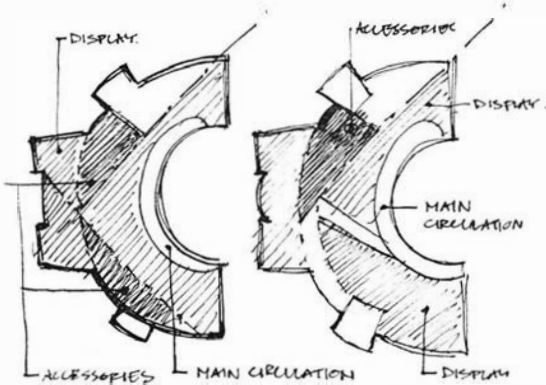
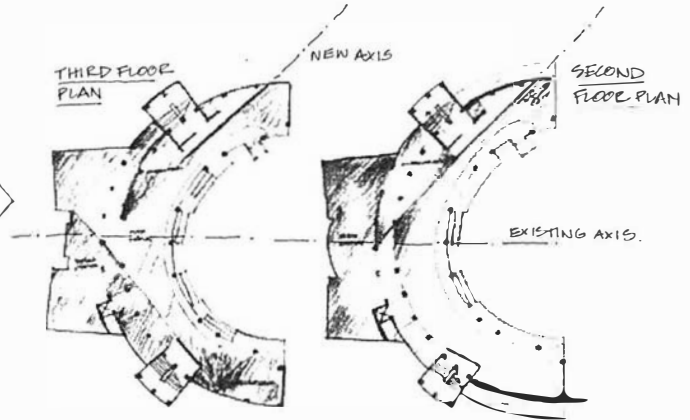


- CONCEPT ADJUSTED TO CONFORM THE EXISTING STRUCTURE (COLUMNS, FLOOR LEVELS)



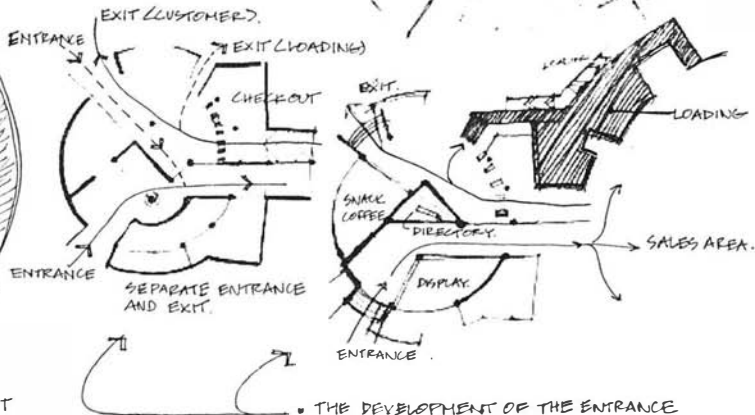
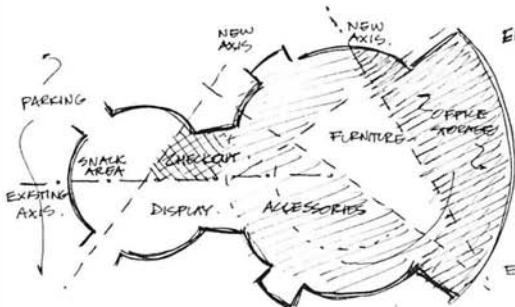
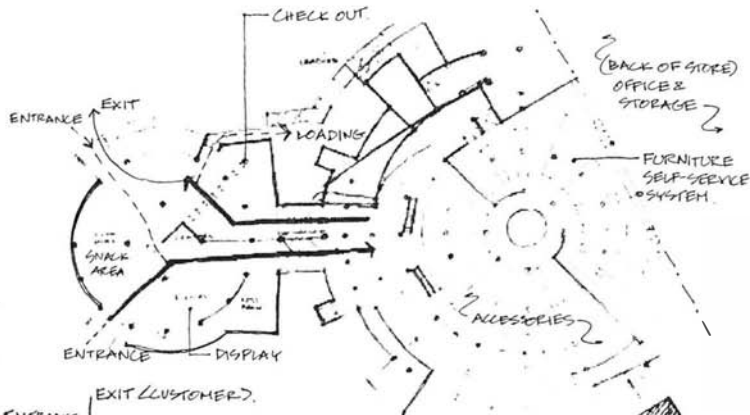
**Design Development: Second and Third floor plan**

- TO TIE ALL THE CENTER TOGETHER A COMMON DESIGN THEME, SECOND FLOOR AND THIRD FLOOR WERE DEVELOPED. USING THE SAME CONCEPT AS FIRST FLOOR.
- THE NEW AXES (DIAGONAL) HELP DIVIDE THE SPACE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES.



**Design development: Basement floor plan**

- BASEMENT FLOOR IS DESIGNATED FOR SELF-SERVICE SYSTEM.
- THE SEPARATION OF ENTRANCE AND EXITS WAS CREATED TO CONTROL THE CIRCULATION FOR SELF-SERVICE PURPOSES AND CONVENIENCE.
- ALTHOUGH SEPARATED, ENTRANCE AND EXITS ARE STILL LOCATED ON THE SAME SIDE, SO THAT CUSTOMER WILL COME OUT THE BUILDING CLOSE TO POINT OF ENTRY TO THE BUILDING



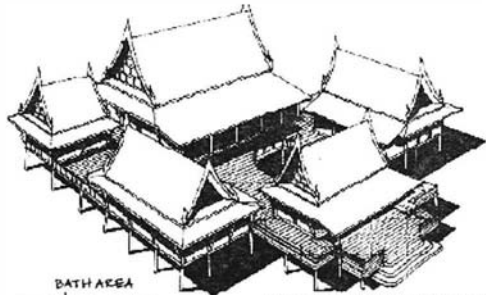
- THE NEW AXES WERE COMBINED WITH OLD AXIS WITH EXISTING CIRCLE SHAPE TO BREAK AND DIVIDE SPACE FOR FUNCTION AND TO ADD MORE EXCITEMENT & FUN.

- THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENTRANCE CIRCULATION.

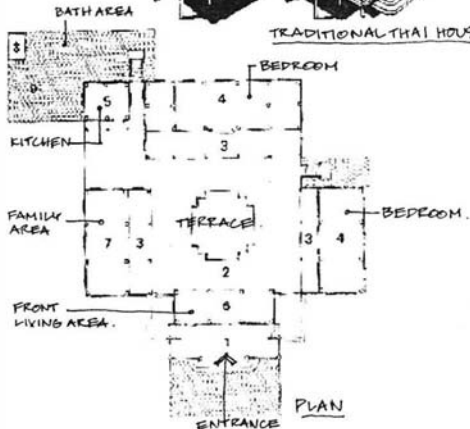


Design Development: design elements

▪ SIMPLIFIED TRADITIONAL STYLE WAS USED TO DEVELOP DESIGN FORM.



TRADITIONAL THAI HOUSE



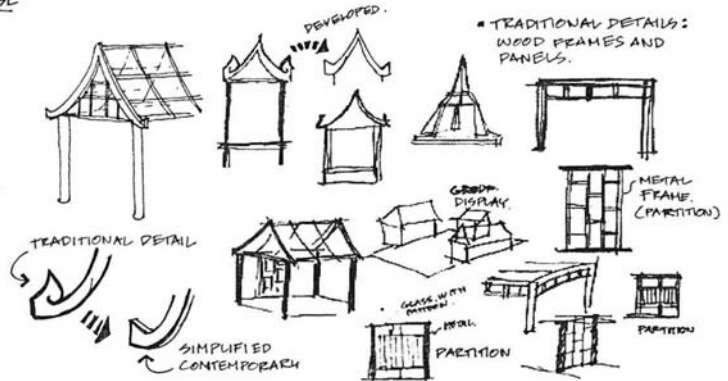
PLAN



▪ THE TRADITIONAL SPACE (RECTANGULAR SHAPE) WAS APPLIED FOR THE ENTRANCE AREA OF THE BUILDING (CIRCLE SHAPE)



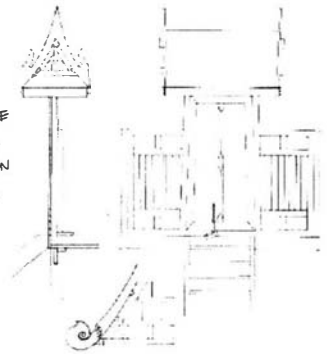
• Traditional Thai space



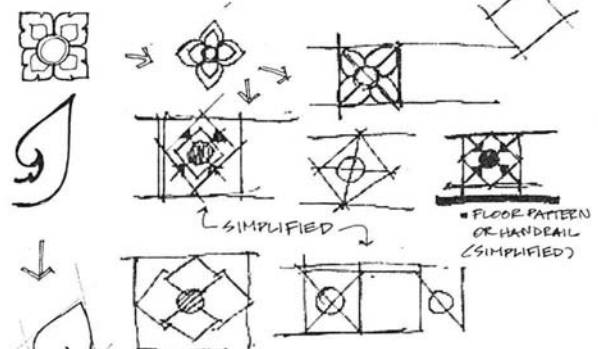
- Traditional Thai house : SOURCE - THAI STYLE 1990, P. 217
- PLAN WAS USED FOR THE CENTRAL, SEASONAL DISPLAY (HOUSE-LIKE DISPLAY) OR GROUP DISPLAY

- Development : DISPLAY AREAS / FOOD KIOSKS / PARTITIONS.
- DEVELOPED THE TRADITIONAL STYLE INTO CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION / USE ONLY FORMS (SHOW CONSTRUCTION), SIMPLIFY DETAIL, INTRODUCE OTHER MATERIALS (SUCH AS METAL) BESIDES WOOD (TRADITIONAL MATERIAL).

• DOOR ENTRANCE  
DETAIL / FENCE  
PROVIDE DESIGN  
INSPIRATION.

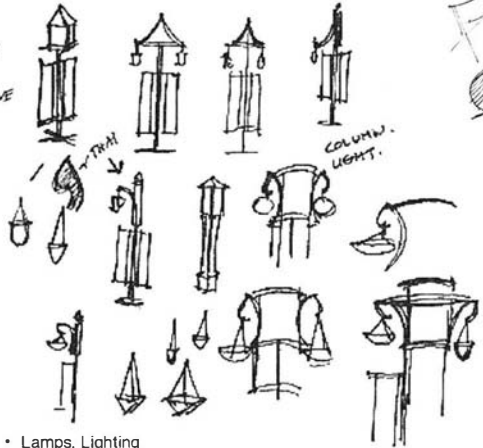


• TRADITIONAL THAI DECORATIVE ELEMENTS

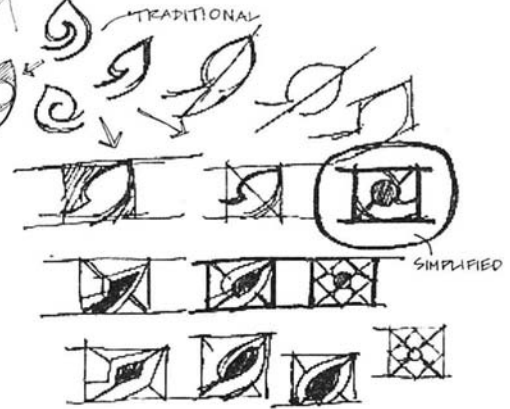


• Traditional Thai Decorative Elements  
SOURCE : THAI STYLE, 1994, P.220.

• SIMPLIFIED  
FORMS WERE  
DEVELOPED  
FOR DECORATIVE  
ELEMENTS  
SUCH AS  
LAMPS.



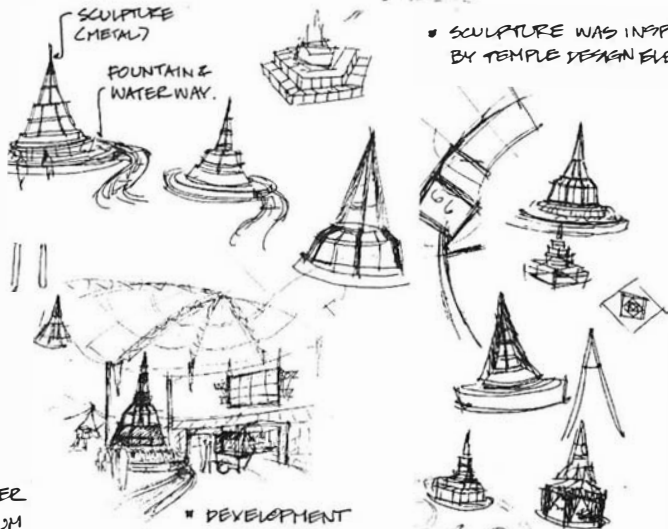
• Lamps, Lighting



• Development: Graphics/Signs/Handrail

**Design Development: design theme**

- TO CREATE AN IDENTITY OF THE CENTER, THE TRADITIONAL THAI FESTIVAL WAS SELECTED BECAUSE IT REFLECTED THAI CULTURE.
- THE ATRIUM IN THE SHOPPING CENTER BECOMES A THAI VILLAGE AT FESTIVAL TIME.
- THE DEVELOPMENT TRANSLATED TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ENVIRONMENT TO THE NEW CENTER; FOR EXAMPLE, MOVIE SCREEN TO T.V. MONITOR / SCREEN, TEMPLE TO SCULPTURE, FLAGS TO BANNERS, AND THE RIVER (MAIN PART OF THAI VILLAGE) TO WATER WAY.
- REFER TO THE STUDY OF CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR IN CHAPTER 3.
  - THE DESIGN REFLECT THE AESTHETICS.
  - ENTERTAINMENT AND SERVICES REFLECT ESCAPE, EXPLORATION, AND EPSTEMIC
  - THE SPACE PLANNING AND FUNCTION PROVIDE FLOW EXPERIENCES SUCH AS THE ROOM GET DISPLAY AND THE SEASONAL DISPLAY REFLECTING THE PLAN OF A HOUSE.
  - THAI SOCIALIZE WITH THEIR FRIENDS RATHER THAN WITH OTHERS. THE CENTER PROVIDES AN ACTIVITY AREA AT THE ATRIUM FOR SOCIAL PURPOSE.

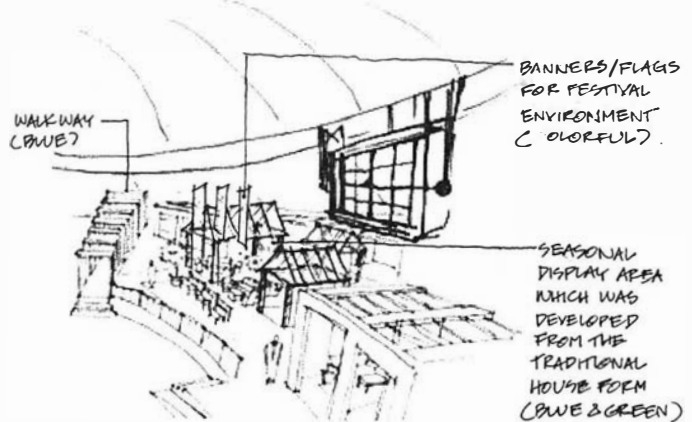
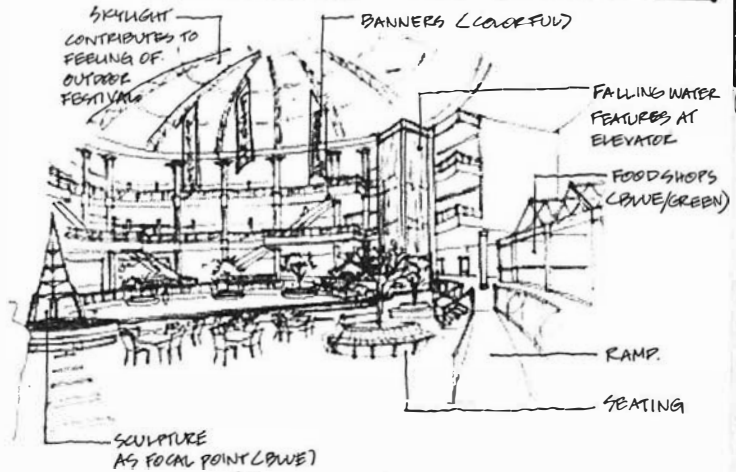


■ SCULPTURE WAS INPIRED BY TEMPLE DESIGN ELEMENTS.

■ DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTER.

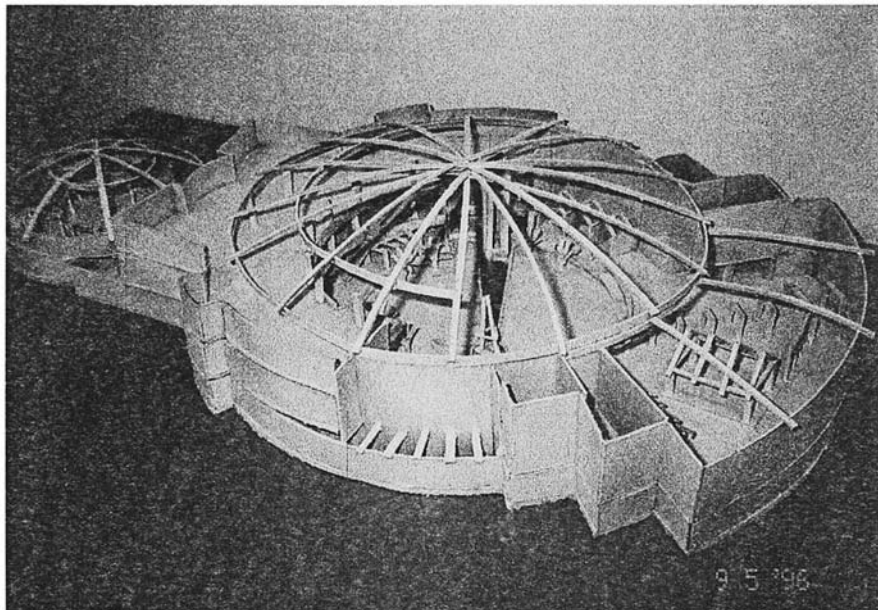
**Design Development:** sketches for final design

- COLOR SCHEME IS FROM THAT CUSTOMER'S PREFERENCE WHICH REFLECTS THE "FUN-LOVING". THE OVERALL IS BLUE AND GREEN, APPLIED AT THE MAIN ELEMENTS SUCH AS COLUMNS, SCULPTURE, GRAPHIC SIGNS, AND CARPET AT THE SALES AREAS. OTHER COLORS SUCH AS RED, PURPLE AND YELLOW ARE USED AT ACCENT ITEMS, BANNERS AND FLAGS.
- MATERIALS USED ARE WOOD AT THE MAIN CIRCULATION TO GIVE WARM FEELING, CARPETS AT THE SALES AREAS, AND TILES AT THE ATRIUM (THE OUTDOOR FEELING). THE DIFFERENCES OF MATERIAL DEFINE SPACE FUNCTIONS.
- AMERICAN CODE APPLICATIONS INCLUDE THE AMERICAN WITH DISABILITY ACT (RAMPS AND ELEVATORS ARE INCLUDED) THE AISLES ARE WIDER AND DISPLAY ARRANGEMENTS SUPPORT THIS CONCEPT (SEPARATION CIRCULATION & DISPLAY)



## Final presentation

- Study Model
- Board #1 -- Project Statement and Location / Site Analysis
- Board #2 -- Design Development
- Board #3 -- Design Development / Schematic Design
- Board #4 -- Perspective : Atrium
- Board #5 -- Basement Plan
- Board #6 -- First Floor Plan
- Board #7 -- Second Floor Plan
- Board #8 -- Third Floor Plan
- Board #9 -- Entrance Plan
- Board #10 -- Perspective and Details : Entrance
- Board #11 -- Sales Area Plan
- Board #12 -- Perspective and Details : Sales Area
- Board #13 -- Reflected Ceiling Plan : Entry & Sales Area, First Floor
- Board #14 -- Materials Chart

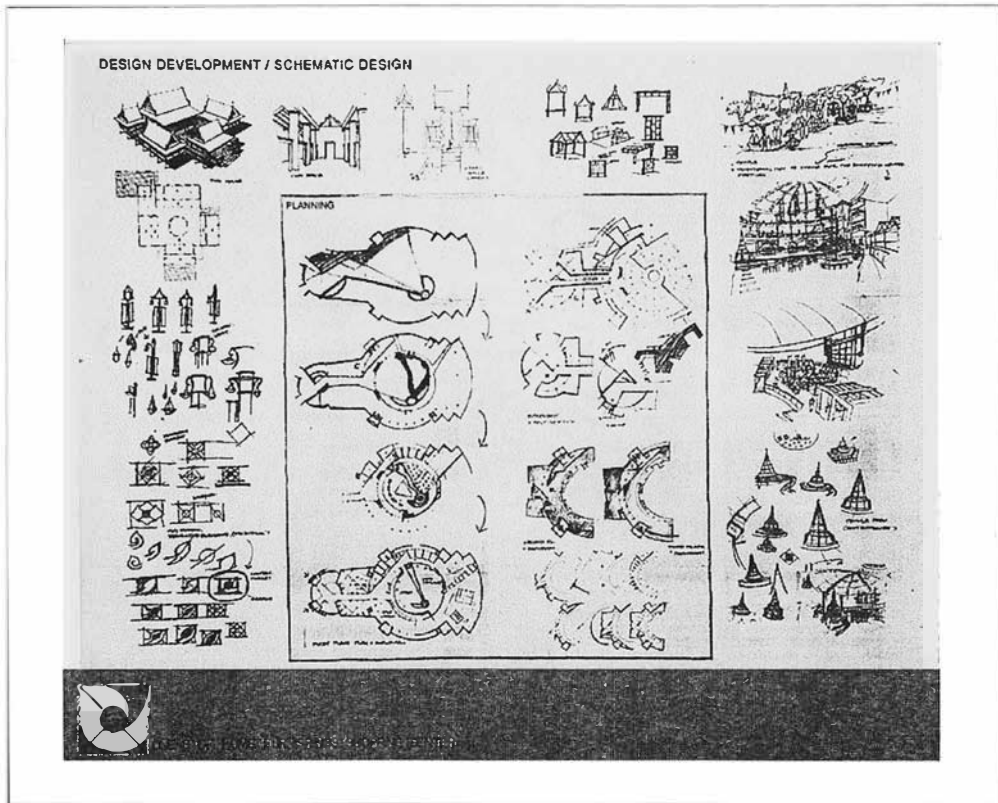


ONE-STOP HOME FURNISHINGS SHOPPING CENTER

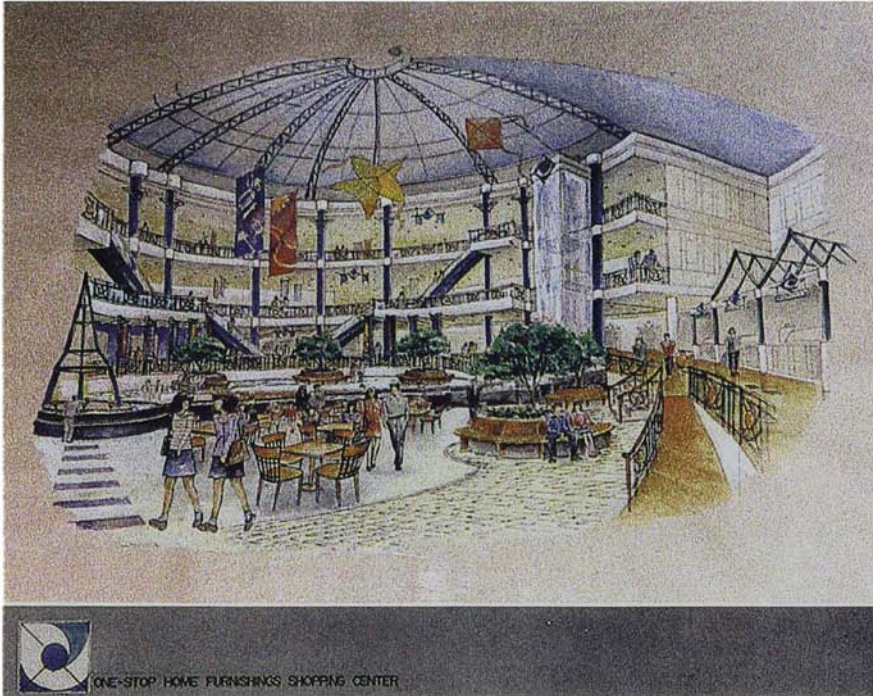




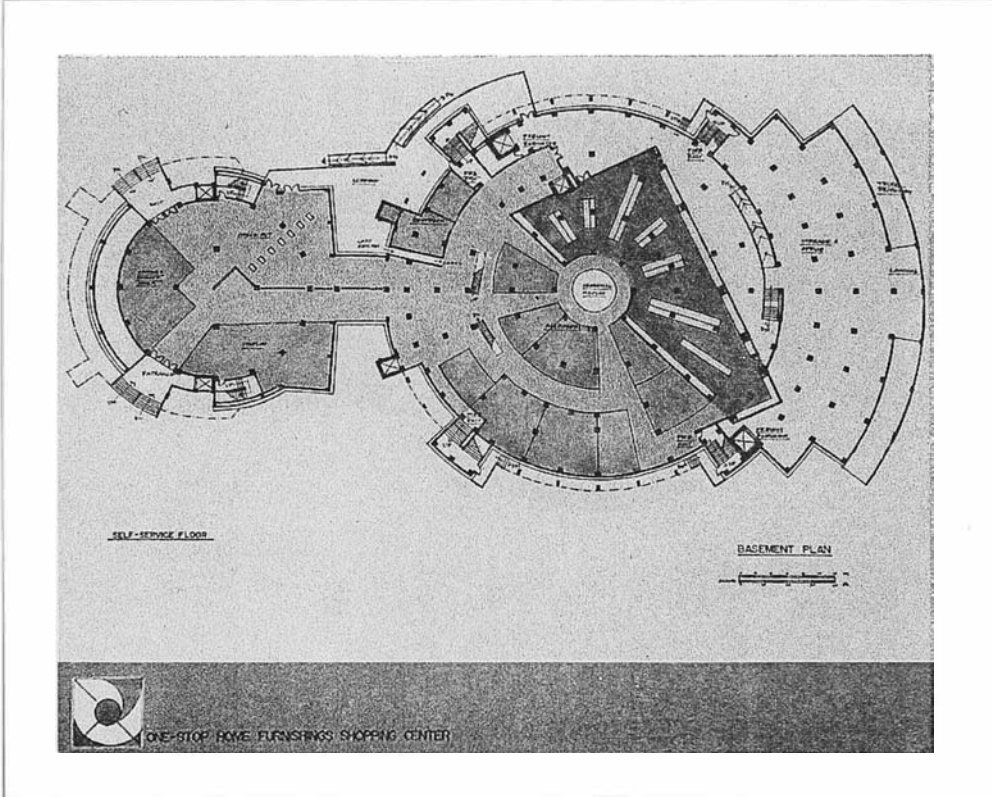




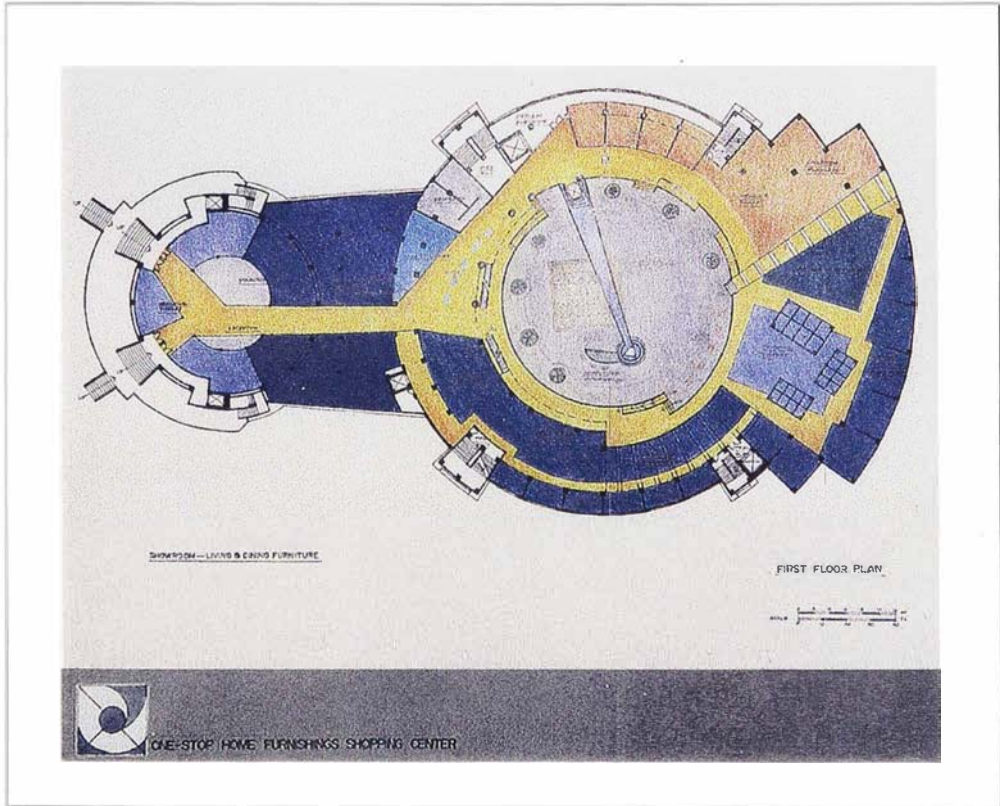
BOARD #3



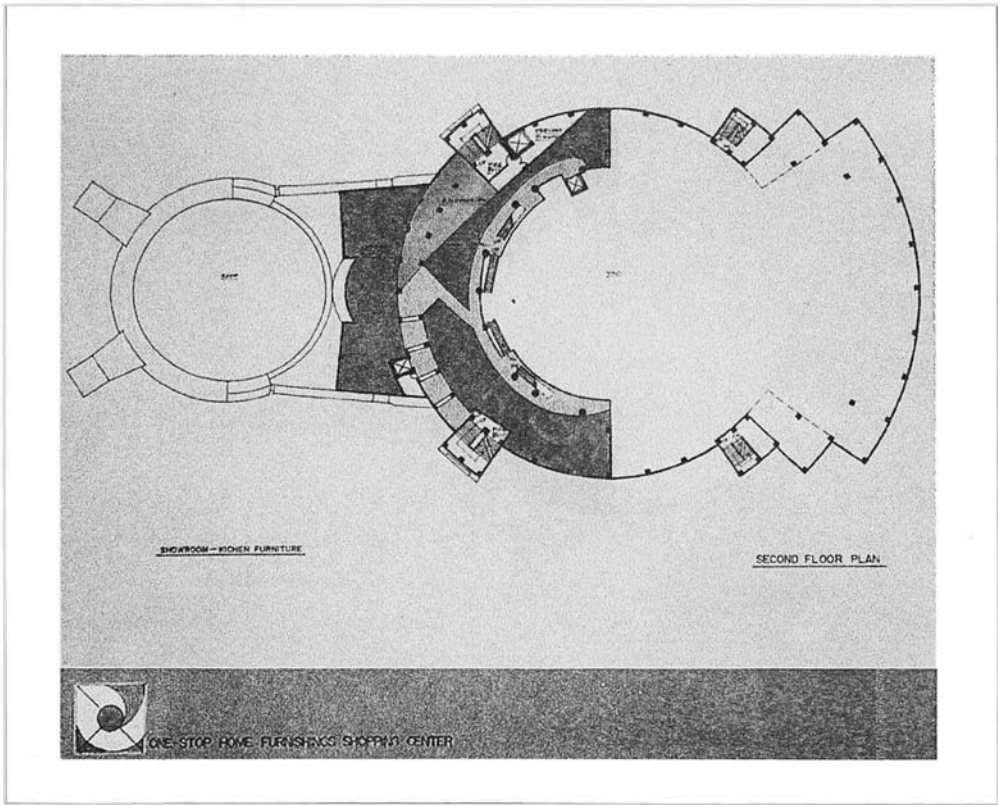
BOARD #4



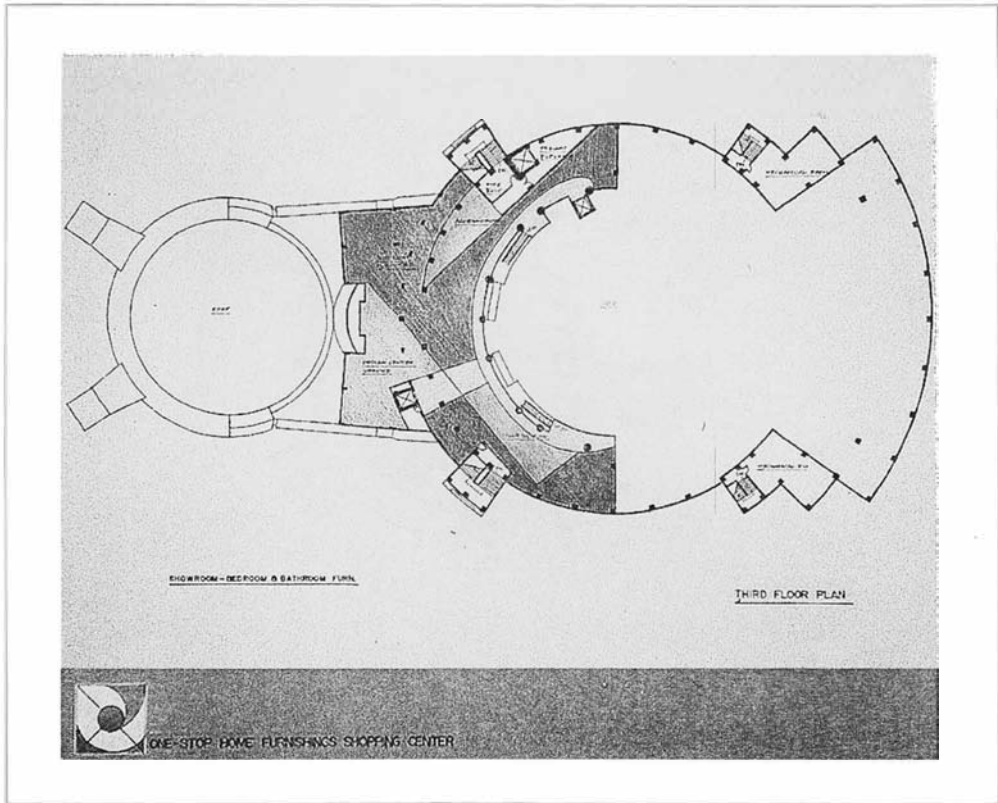
BOARD #5



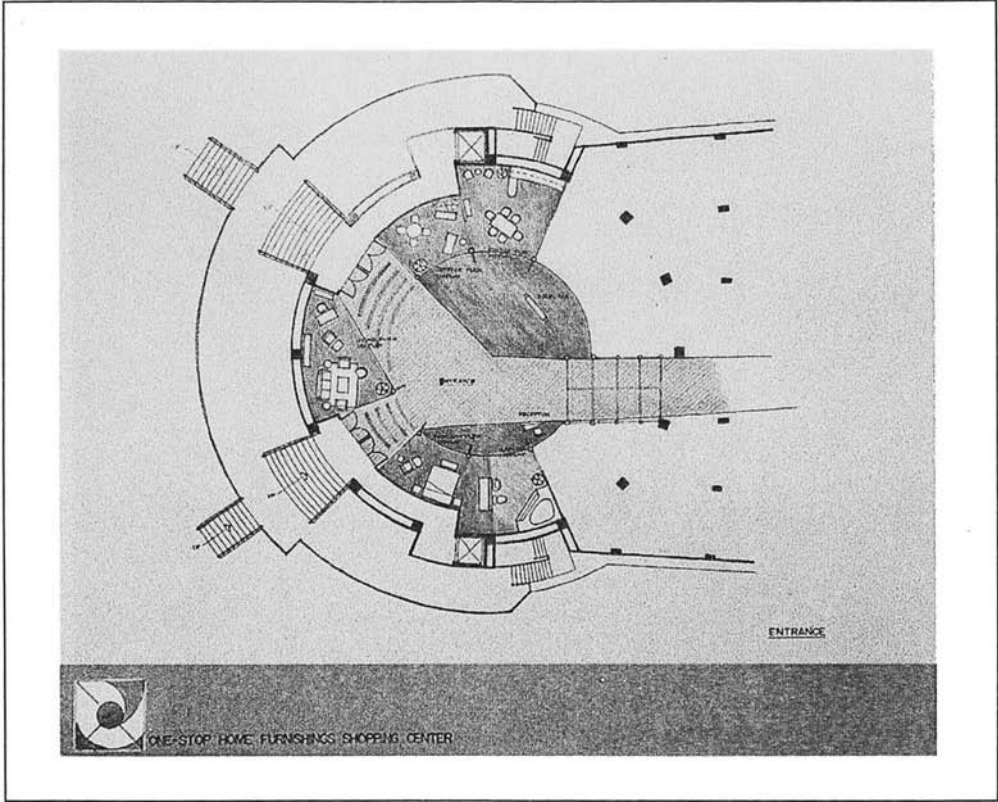
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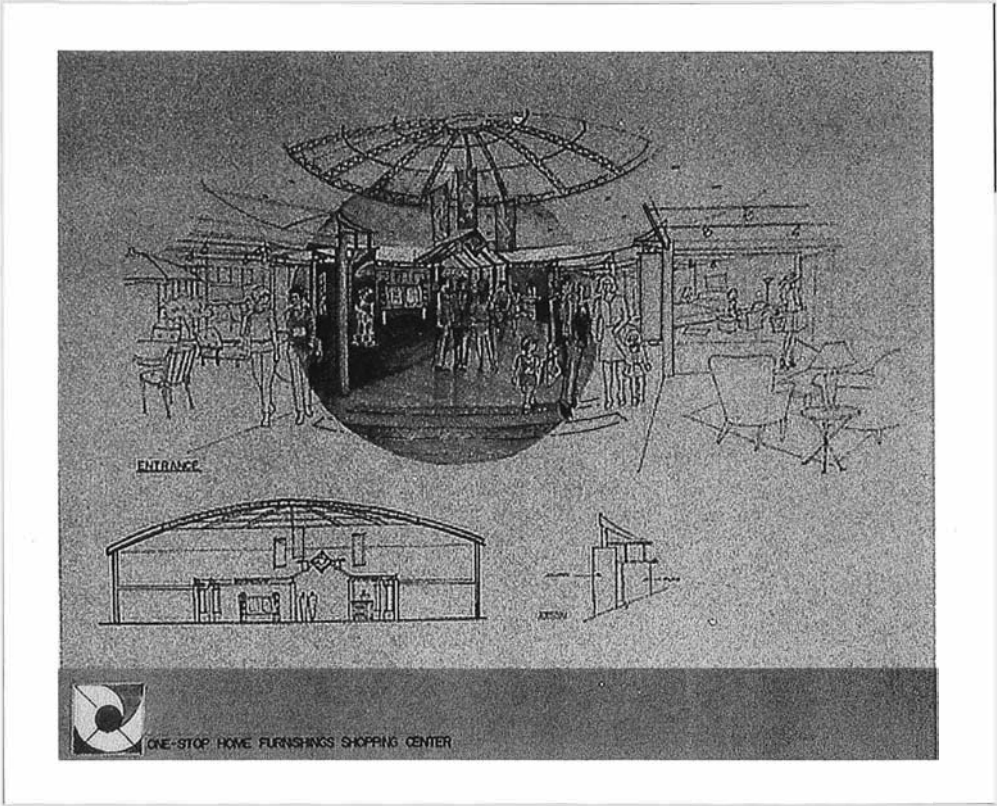
BOARD #7



BOARD #8

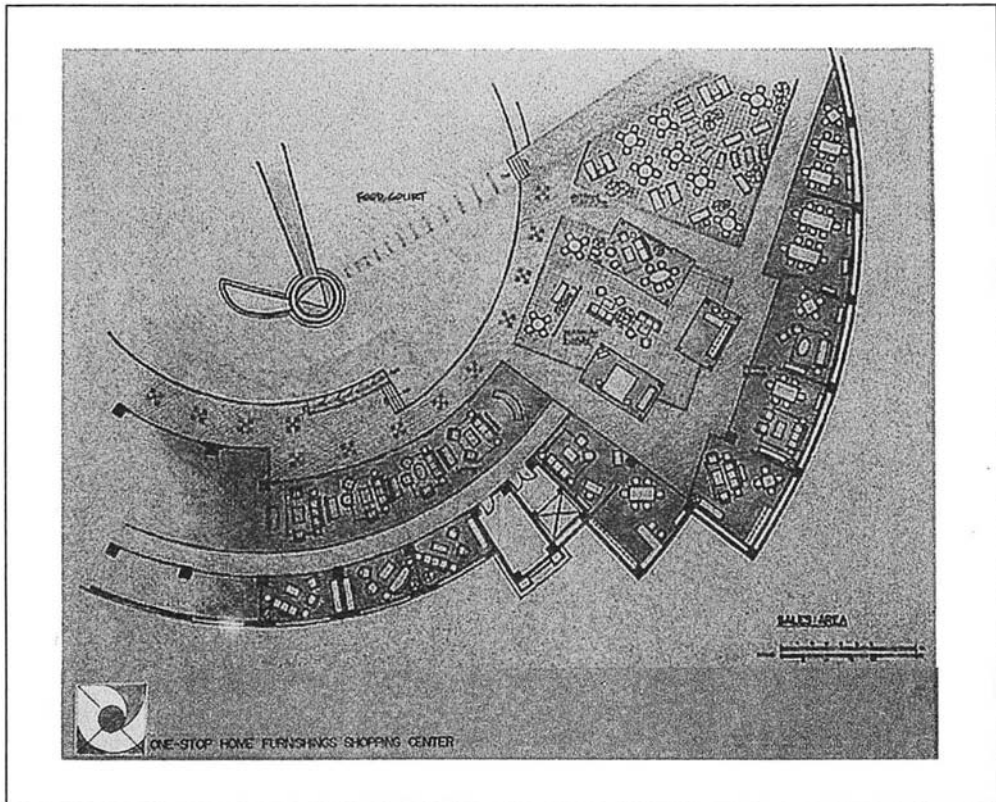


BOARD #9

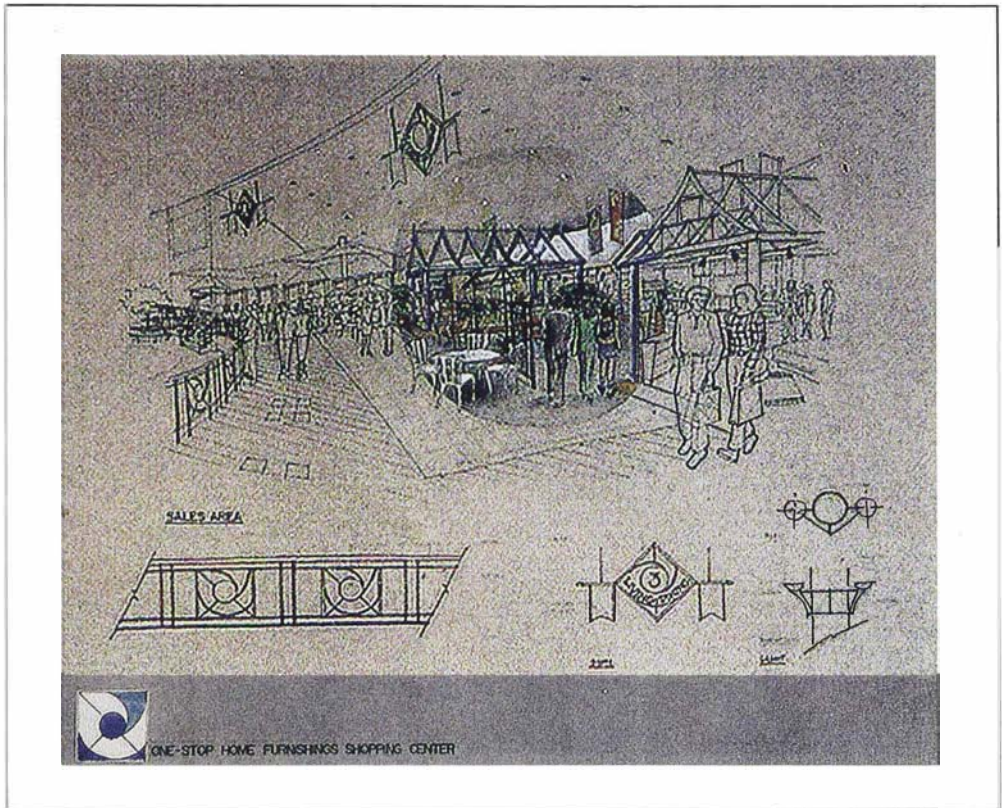


BOARD #10

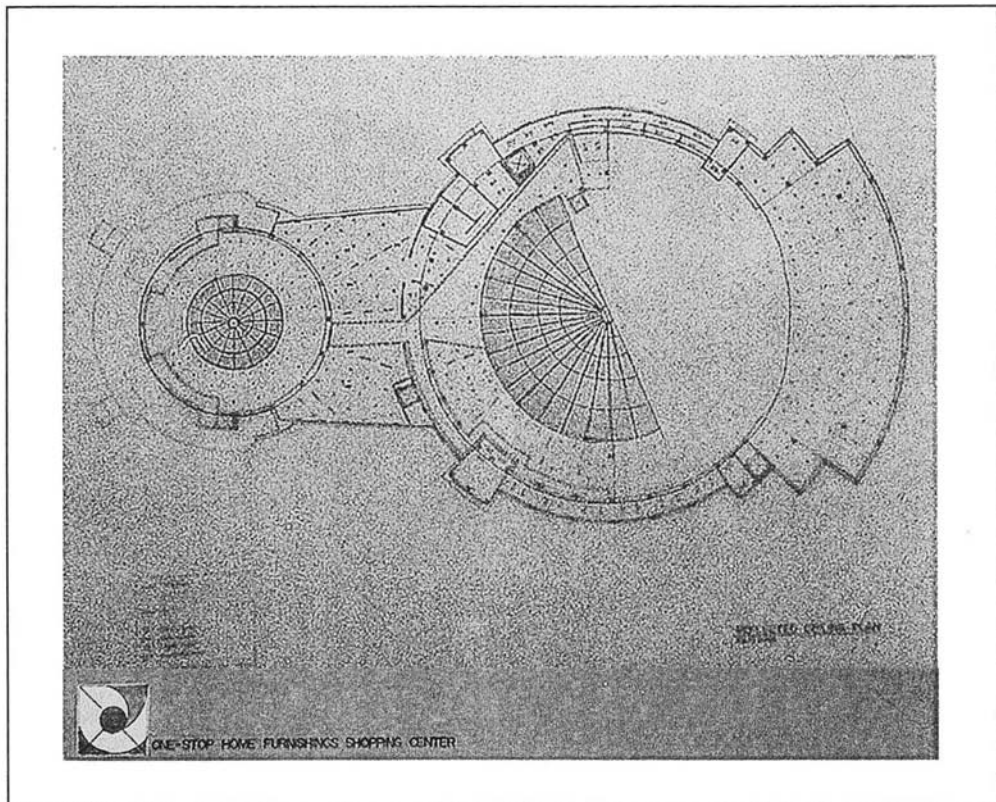




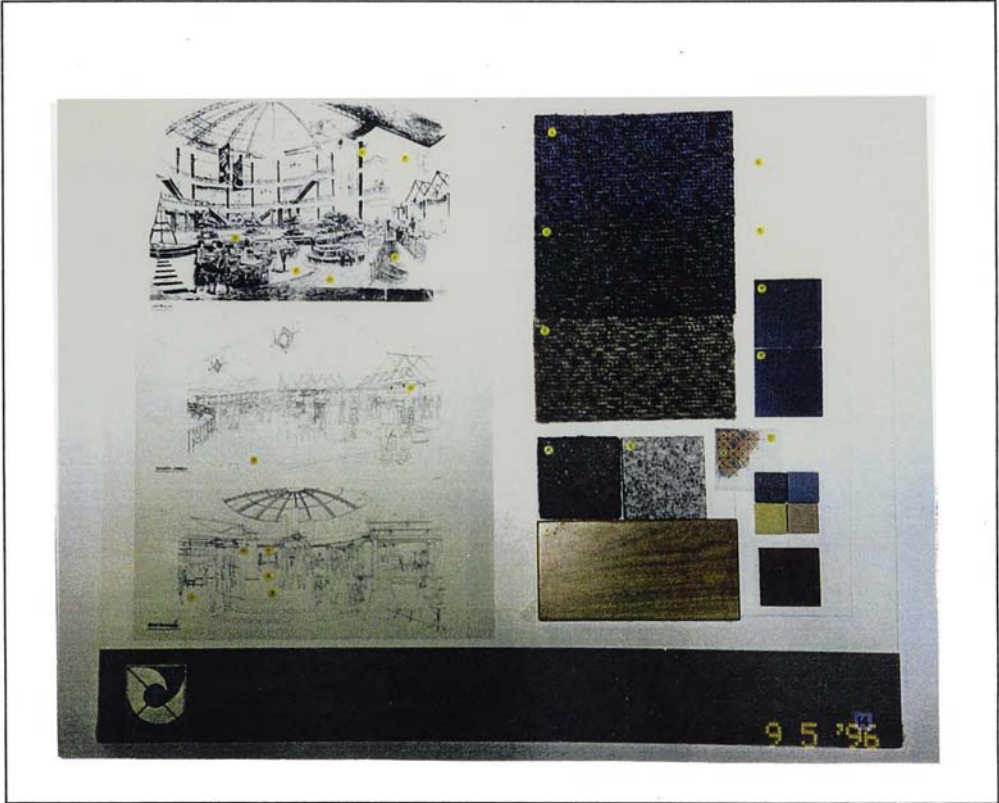
BOARD #11



BOARD #12



BOARD #13



BOARD #14

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## APPENDIX

- (A) Case studies : Thai shopping centers ■
- (B) Case studies : Thai furniture shopping places
- (C) Case studies : Furniture stores in the United States



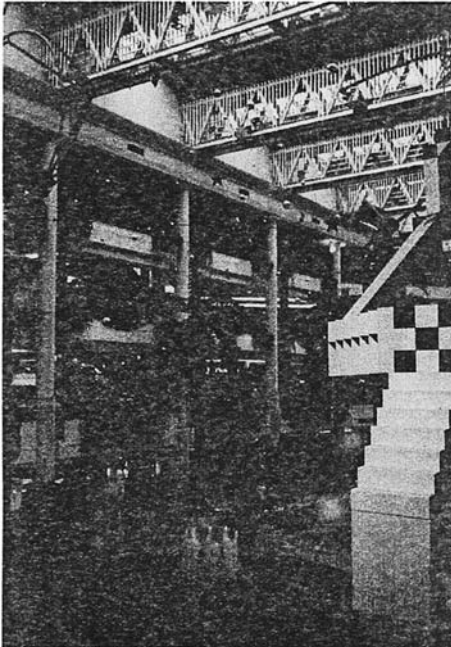
**Seacon Square** : Srinakarin Street, Bangkok, Thailand

Seacon Square is the largest shopping and entertainment complex center in Thailand and one of the five largest shopping centers in the world, with an area of 500,000 sqm. It consists of the following:

- Robinson department store
- Lotus supercenter
- 14 movie theaters
- large indoor amusement park
- food court (2,500 seating)
- 400 retail shops
- mini golf course

The overall design of the center, especially at the main atrium, which is the main area for activities such as meeting, relaxing, and exhibition, is bright and fun filled with a skylight, a fountain, and colorful sculpture and clock tower. Also, trees and plants are added to create a lively environment. Other areas are designed with themes, city zones and nature zones.

The center attracts all ages of customers: teenagers and couples with children. It is planned with the entertainment features on the top floor to draw customers from the downstairs to upstairs. Customers will have the opportunity to walk through retail shops before reaching the food court, theaters, amusement park and other entertainment features. Customer here are seeking entertainment as well as shopping.



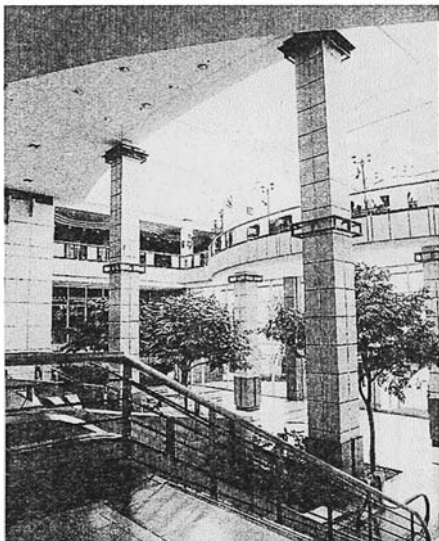
Interior : at the main atrium

**Seri Center:** Srinakarin Street, Bangkok, Thailand

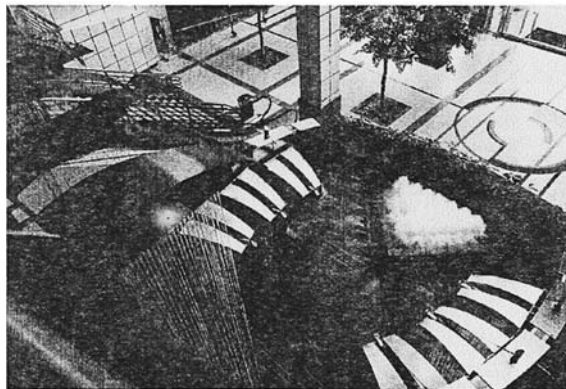
Seri Center is a Thai shopping center with an area of 120,000 sqm.. There are two anchor stores, Thai Daimaru and Printemps; 200 retail shops; an amusement park; 6 multiplex movie theaters; and a food court.

The design of the center emphasizes simplicity, and contemporary design. The color scheme is white and uses material such as aluminum, glass, laminate, and granite. It allows the natural light to enter from an open-well fabric roof. There is a wall of falling water at the entrance to make the space more comfortable and interesting. The theme "Under the Sea" is used on the fourth floor, which is an amusement park.

Seri Center is located not far from Seacon Square. They are competitors which provide the similar retail management, the complex shopping center with a theme park. Although Seri Center is designed beautifully, it does not attract many customers because its design is focused on higher income customers which are in the minority.



*Interior : Main entrance*



*Falling water at the entrance*

### Central Plaza, Ladprao branch : Phahonyothin Street, Bangkok, Thailand

Central Plaza is a popular shopping center, although it is smaller in size than the others with only one anchor store, more than 100 retail shops, a food court, 4 mini theaters, and a supermarket. The center was renovated in 1993 from an out-of-date design to an updated, more exciting, bright, and cheerful design. The color scheme is off-white and green. The new design added natural elements such as palm trees and daylight from a skylight, and introduced new graphics to create identity for the center.

The new design emphasizes activity and entertainment. The central area, for relaxing and activities, was added with a fountain, clock tower, and kiosks. The entertainment features such as mini theaters were also added to attract customers.



Interior: the main activity area, filled with a fountain, palm trees and plants



Interior : Main activity area



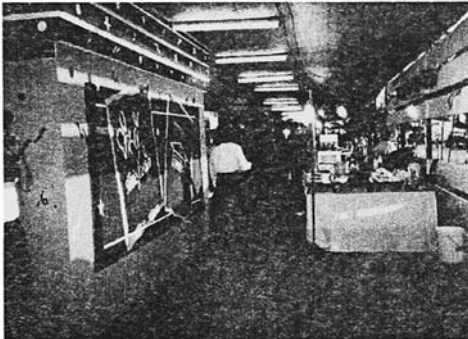


*Exterior : entrance*

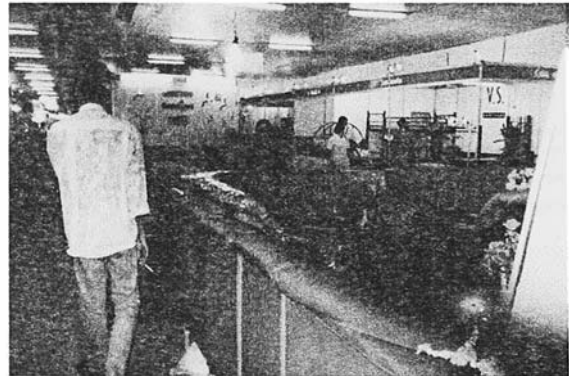
**Furniture Trade Fair : Home Decoration Fair 1996:** Ratchadaphisek Street, Bangkok

The "Home Decoration Fair," operated annually, is a furniture trade fair in Bangkok. It presents furniture and home decorating products from many retailers in a temporary one-story building. It also provides a food service area in the building.

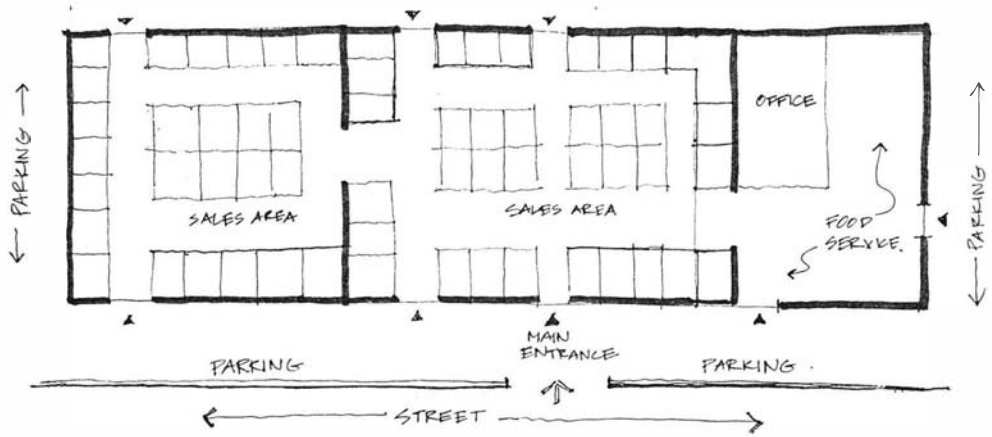
Customers come here for the purpose of purchasing home furnishings because it provides the many selections of furniture and product lines. Most customers spend much time here , so the center adds a food service area for convenience.



*Food service area*



*Sales area*



▪ SPATIAL LAYOUT.  
HOME DECORATION FAIR 1996,  
RATCHADAPHISEK STREET,  
BANGKOK, THAILAND



*Storefront*

### **Parawood Furniture Store: Seacon Square, Bangkok**

Parawood is a furniture store located on the fourth floor, with most furniture stores and home appliance stores, in Seacon Square shopping center. Most of the customers here are young to middle aged couples. The stores are planned in zones: living room, dining room, bedroom, and accessories.

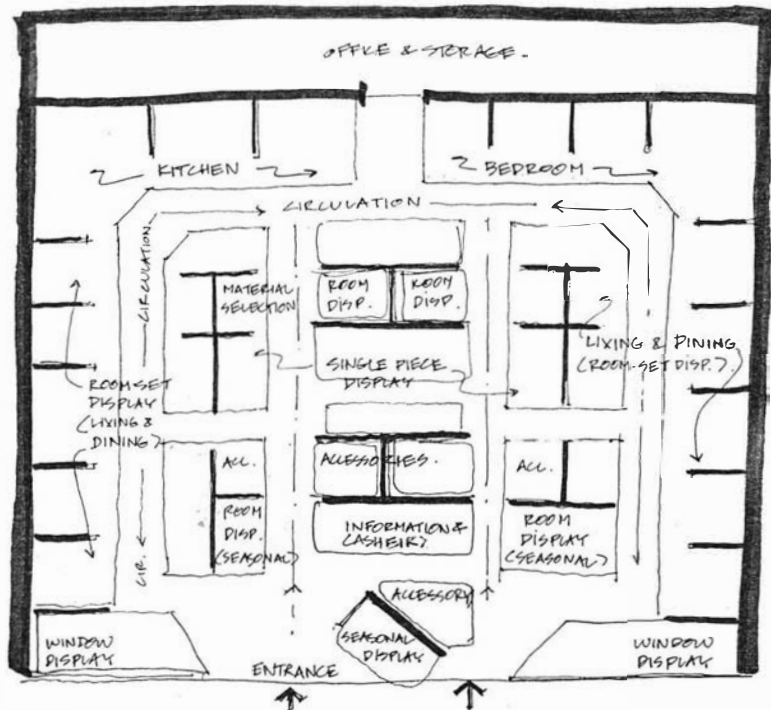
Space planning has clear circulation and displays to identify the zones. This allows customers to walk along the aisles and they can step into the displays away from traffic. The room displays are set around the walls; the display furniture pieces and accessories are in the central area.



*Interior*



*Interior*

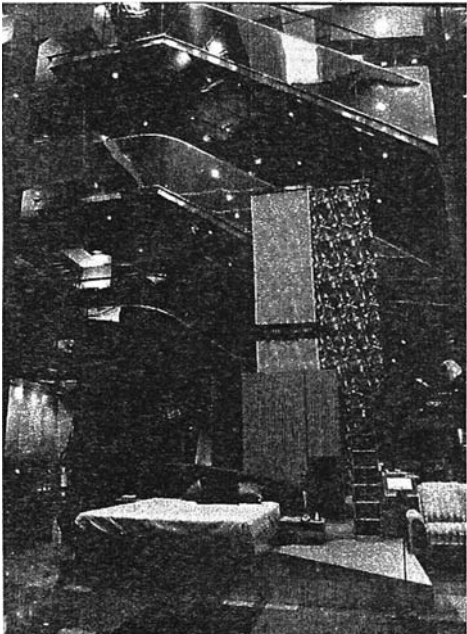


- \* SPATIAL LAYOUT:  
PACAWOOD FURNITURE STORE,  
SEACON SQUARE BRANCH,  
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

**Modernform Tower** : Bangkok, Thailand

This is a furniture shopping center with its own brands and manufacturers, Modernform, Klasse and Moflex. It also sells imported brands such as Steelcase and Casa Bella. The furniture available in the center is primarily contemporary. The design of the center is also modern and luxurious. Besides the sales areas, it provides a small coffee corner and playground for children. The center is divided by furniture types and prices. The first through third floors are all its own brands. Living room, dining room, and bedroom furniture are on every floor and are divided by price; the most expensive pieces are on the first floor. The kitchen furniture is on the first and second floors, with the price range dividing them as well. Accessories are on the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth floors, separated from the other sales areas by five floors of offices. This confuses customers, because it isolates the merchandise flow.

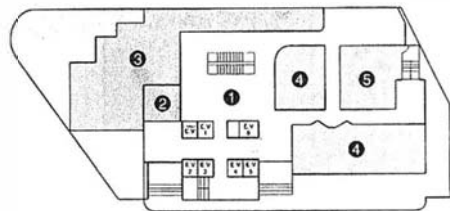
Most of the displays are model room-sets which are planned individually along large aisles. The center is subdued. The coffee corner has been included for relaxing and the playground is provided to customers who come with children.



Seasonal display at the entrance hall

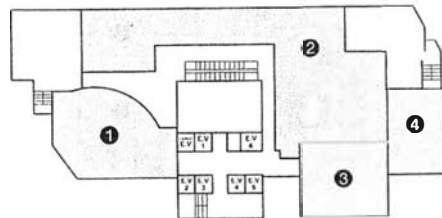


Sales area



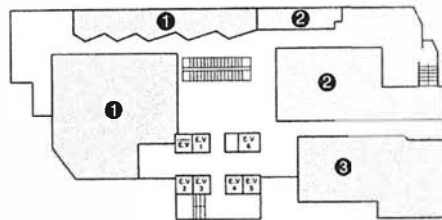
**First Floor**

1. Lobby Hall
2. Information Center
3. Moflex
4. Klasse
5. Kitchen



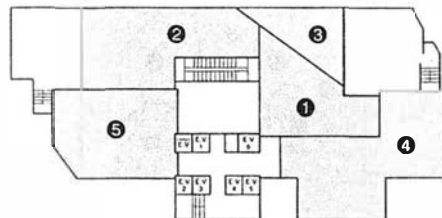
**Third Floor**

1. Modernform OA
2. Klasse
3. Coffee Corner
4. Playground



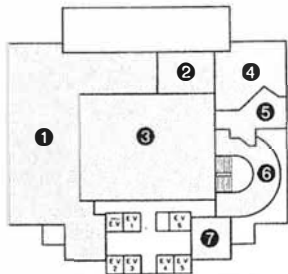
**Second Floor**

1. Moflex
2. Klasse
3. Kitchen



**Fourth Floor**

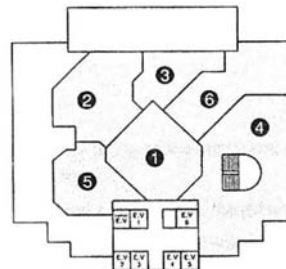
1. Steelcase
2. Metro/Brayton
3. Klobler
4. Casa Bella
5. Export Showroom

**Tenth Floor**

1. Garden Selection
2. Table Linen
3. Tableware
4. Kitchenware
5. Glassware
6. Gifts & Clocks
7. Stationery

**Eleventh Floor**

1. Bedding
2. Bath Rooms
3. Occasional Furniture
4. Lamps & Pictures
5. Posters & Prints
6. Mirrors
7. Storage Units

**Twelfth Floor**

1. Real Life Display
2. Floor Coverings
3. Wall Coverings
4. Window Coverings
5. Cushions & Bedspreads
6. Interior Contract Service

**North Carolina Company: Richmond, VA:**

**Interviewed Mr. George Nichalaou, BFA, Sales Representative**

*Customer profile*

- middle-aged/most women and couples
- average to above-average income
- 2-3 visits and 3-4 hours/visit
- spend \$3,000-\$4,000
- mostly buy a set of furniture
- weekends and weekdays in the evening are busiest

*Image*

- exclusive, somewhat expensive (there is little discounted furniture), and subdued.

*Spatial Organization*

- mostly use room set displays / divide by collections, manufacturers, and fabrics.

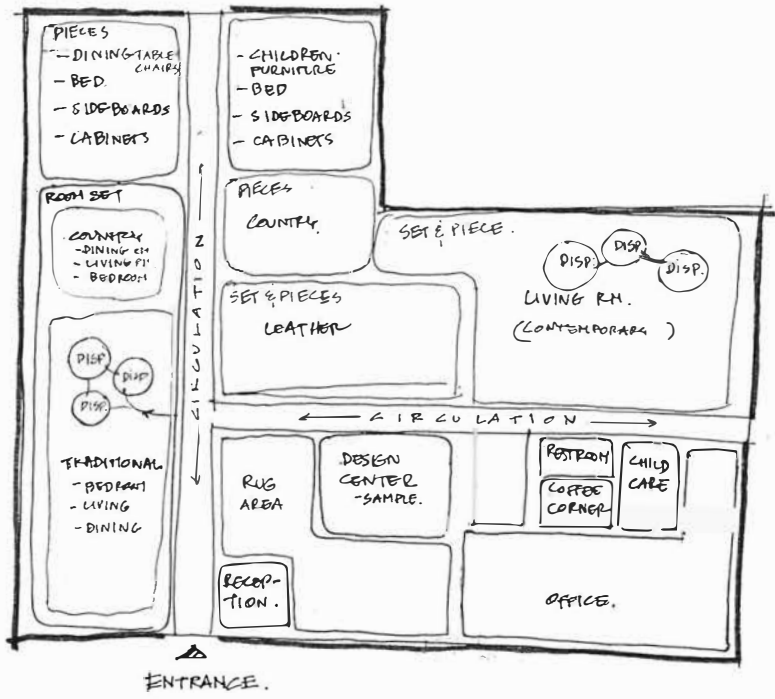
*Lighting*

- soft light (mostly incandescent /track lights and some fluorescent).

*Visual communication*

- use small signs at the merchandise to tell about product information.
- decorated signs identify the different merchandise departments, such as Leather, Hickory Chair, and Carpet.

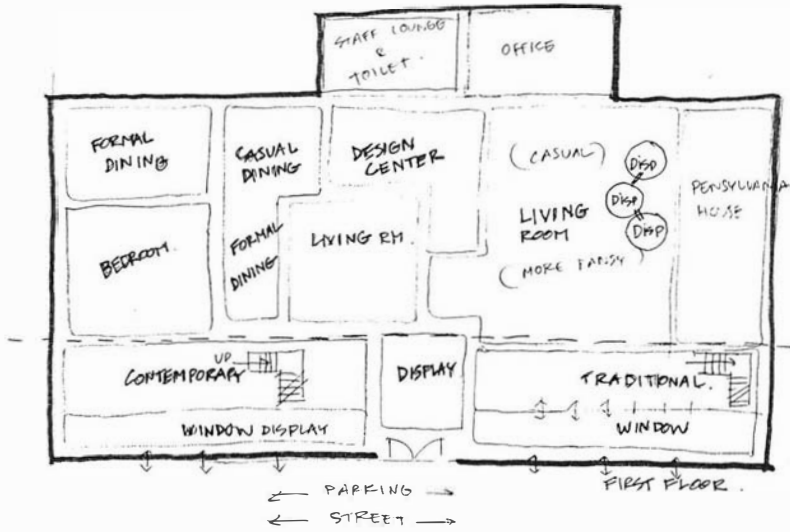




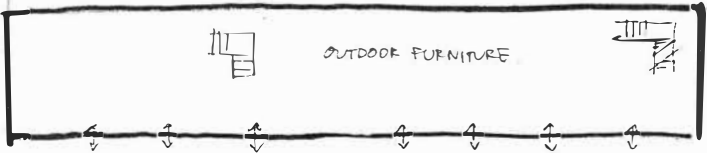
\* SPATIAL LAYOUT:  
 NORTH CAROLINA  
 COMPANY  
 RICHMOND, VA.

**Virginia Wayside: 10500 Patterson Avenue, Richmond, VA :**  
**Interviewed Ms. Monica Ragsdale, BFA, Sales Representative**

- Customer Profile*
- middle-aged, men and women
  - about 2 visits and 3-4 hours/visit
  - average spending \$4000
  - weekends are busiest
- Image*
- exclusive, expensive, traditional, and subdued
- Spatial organization*
- mostly use room set displays, divided by styles and collections.
- Lighting*
- soft light ( incandescent/ track light)
- Visual communication*
- small signs at each product giving merchandise information (manufacturer, and fabrics used).



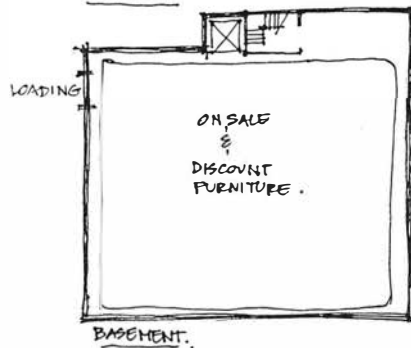
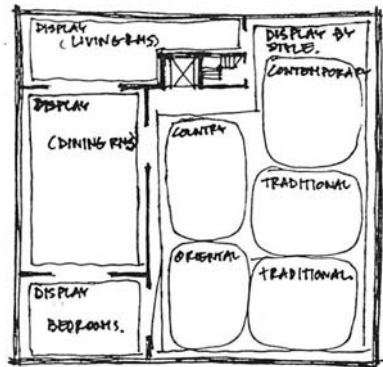
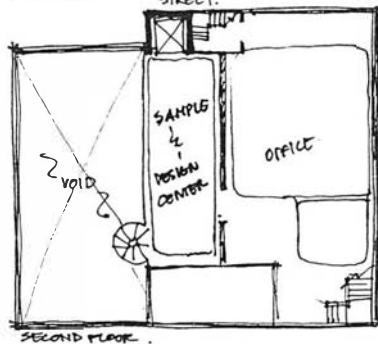
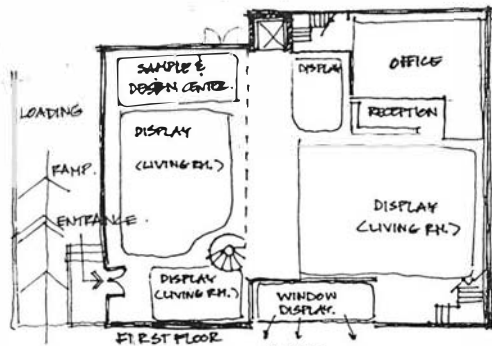
MEZZANINE.



\* SPATIAL LAYOUT  
 VIRGINIA WAYSIDE,  
 RICHMOND, VA.



\* SPATIAL LAYOUT : JACK THOMPSON.

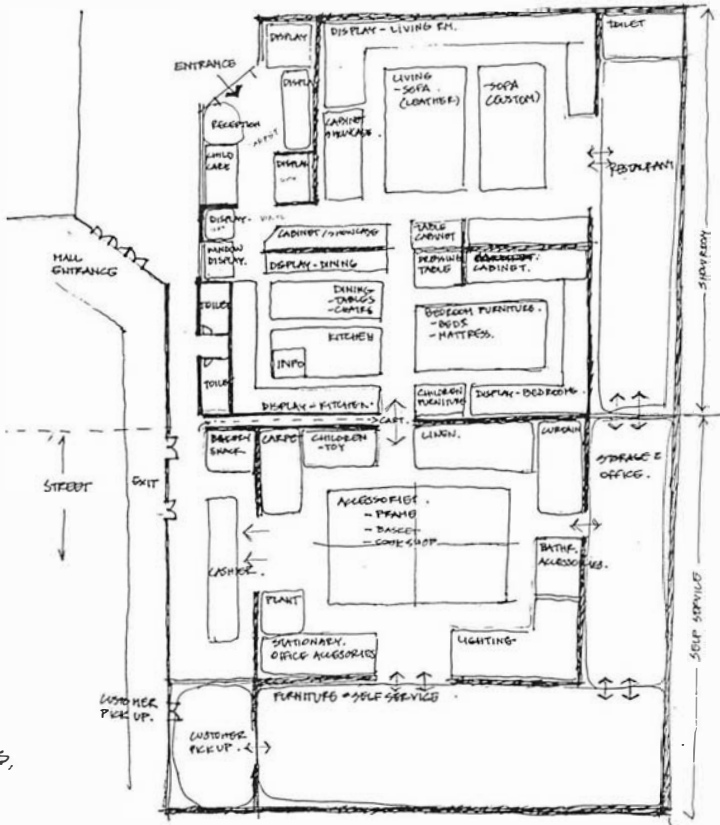


### ***IKEA : Potomac Mills, VA***

IKEA is a furniture store which is divided in two areas, showroom and self-service area. The store separates the entrance and the check-out area. Once inside the entrance, an information desk provides guidance on the IKEA catalog, its products and store services. Customers will pass the showroom before entering the self-service area. There is a child care center near the entrance and the food service is located at the rear of the store.

In the showroom area, the merchandise is displayed using room sets at the perimeter and with the single merchandise pieces displayed in the center of the space. The lighting is designed with fluorescent for general ambient use and spotlights to highlight merchandise. The self-service area is warehouse/factory-like with ceiling, ducts and services exposed.

Ordering desks, linked into the computer system, are located in all areas to give customers information and for placing orders. Merchandise can be ordered in the store, paid for at the check-out area and picked up at the loading area, or smaller items carried by hand and paid through the check-out area.



▪ SPATIAL LAYOUT  
 IKEA, POTOMAC MILLS,  
 VIRGINIA.







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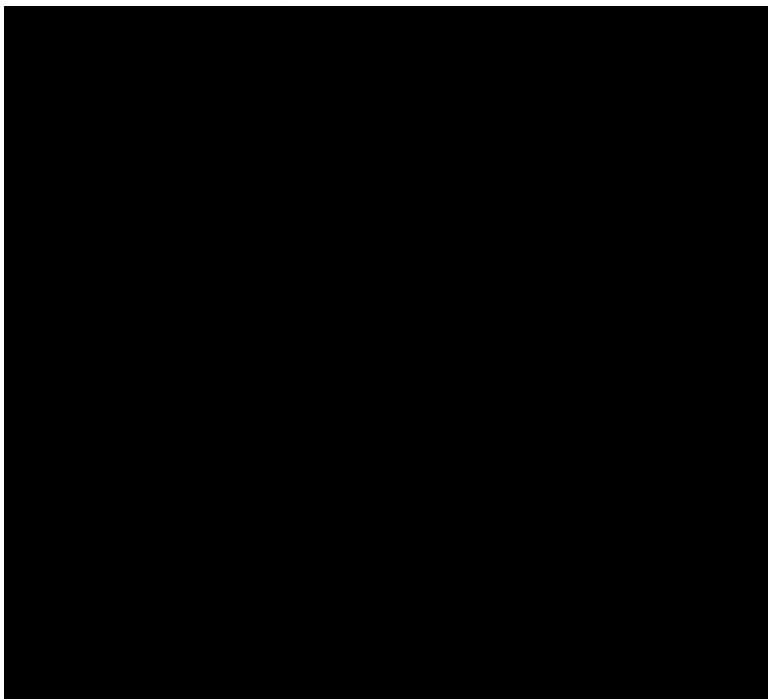
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**Slides**

- Study Model
- No. 1 -- Project Statement and Location / Site Analysis
- No. 2 -- Design Development
- No. 3 -- Design Development / Schematic Design
- No. 4 -- Perspective : Atrium
- No. 5 -- Basement Plan
- No. 6 -- First Floor Plan
- No. 7 -- Second Floor Plan
- No. 8 -- Third Floor Plan
- No. 9 -- Entrance Plan
- No. 10 -- Perspective and Details : Entrance
- No. 11 -- Sales Area Plan
- No. 12 -- Perspective and Details : Sales Area
- No. 13 -- Reflected Ceiling Plan : Entry & Sales Area, First Floor
- No. 14 -- Materials Chart