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**MANAGING THE SHOPPING CENTRE AS A CONSUMPTION SITE.
CREATING APPEALING ENVIRONMENTS FOR VISITORS; SOME
AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND EXAMPLES.**

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The Strand Arcade, central Sydney.

Source: Salisbury (1990) *The Strand Arcade - a history*.

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ABSTRACT.

The position occupied by retailing within the production - consumption debate is the subject of dispute. As neither sphere can be fully analysed in isolation such argument may be somewhat irrelevant. The need to conceptualise the two spheres together, therefore, has informed this research on the created environments of shopping centres.

Planned and managed shopping centres are a ubiquitous part of the built environment in 'advanced capitalist' nations. There has been a tendency, however, for researchers to focus upon exceptional centres rather than everyday examples of this particular consumption site. They have concentrated upon how shopping centre environments appear to be created and the appeal researchers assume they may have for an observer. My research for this thesis, however, has been concerned with how managers create shopping centre environments and how they are designed so as to appeal to their centres' perceived markets. This was done by conducting semi - structured interviews with a number of centre managers in Australia and New Zealand.

The unified ownership and management structure of shopping centres makes it easier for their created environments to be controlled. Shopping centre researchers and those who have attempted to read the built environment as if it were a text have tended to assume that the architectural styles used will reflect dominant ideologies and that they are powerless to interpret or alter them in any other than the manner intended by the designers, developers and owners. Many of the managers recognised, however, that shoppers cannot be forced to visit nor can they be made to purchase. Research was therefore commissioned by management as a way of gaining socio - economic information on the individuals in their catchments, their 'needs' and desires.

Selecting tenants which would appeal to their markets and arranging them in a manner which reflected the way people liked to shop was thought to be paramount to the success or otherwise of a centre. Some managers, for example, claimed that there was a difference between 'doing' the shopping (which is a chore) and 'going' shopping (which is enjoyable) and that this needed to be kept in mind when they positioned retailers within their centres.

Consumption does not only involve the purchase of commodities for their use and/ or sign value but is also concerned with experience. Managers attempted to provide their shoppers with an enjoyable experience when they visited their centres by, for

example, the creation of an appealing ambience and by either suggesting or insisting, respectively, that the common areas and leased spaces be regularly refurbished.

PROLOGUE.

The geography discipline is broadly concerned with the physical environment, the created environment and society. While there is debate as to whether the 'natural' is socially constructed, those spaces that have been influenced directly by the behaviour of individuals are referred to as created environments (Johnston, 1993). During the last decade there has been a revival of interest amongst human geographers in the created environment as an object of investigation. This thesis examines a particular form of the created environment, that is, the planned and managed shopping centre in the 'advanced capitalist' economies of Australia and New Zealand.

The circulation of capital has an extraordinary influence on the built environment in capitalist nations. In this research its importance has not been rejected but rather I have extended this existing body of knowledge by examining shopping centres as sites of consumption. Capitalist societies are believed to operate through the interaction of three interdependent spheres, that is, the state, the sphere of capitalist production and the sphere of struggle. The sphere of struggle which is also referred to as Civil Society '*... comprises the linked spheres of circulation and reproduction*' (Johnston, 1991, 98). It is within the sphere of circulation that exchange occurs. Exchange involves the '*... buying and selling of all commodities (including labour power)*' (Johnston, 1991, 98). Within the sphere of reproduction, society is reproduced

'... both biologically and culturally; the commodities that are bought with the money earned in the sphere of production are used for subsistence and for meeting the created 'needs' and 'wants' of individuals' (Johnston, 1991, 98; emphasis in original).

The underlying unity of production and consumption has, however, been put to one side by researchers who have chosen to examine the production sphere as if it were autonomous. In this thesis the production - consumption dialectic is explored but it is consumption which is focused upon in depth. Shopping centres are spaces of circulation and reproduction, but such spaces are also produced. Shopping centre managers attempt to create appealing environments for their visitors. Although purchasing (the exchange of capital for a product) and using commodities are important within Civil Society, the experiences associated with looking, selecting and even displaying goods maybe equally or even more important to the consumer.

Within capitalist societies space is commodified, that is, it has an exchange value. If it is privately owned it may be bought and sold. Space is not only exchanged for its

use value. It can also be 'sold' or 'rented' (and this applies to both public and privately owned places) to consumers for the experience (or experiences) associated with occupying the space (Sack, 1992). Shopping centres contain a number of retail outlets in which shoppers can browse. When visitors go to a shopping centre they not only look at and perhaps purchase commodities they are also consuming and producing the created environment of the centre. Shopping centres provide space for commodities (a place where commodities can be displayed) and are themselves commodities in space.

'Commodities, stores, and clusters of stores become landscapes which advertise both particular goods and consumption in general. Because sales are enhanced by window - shopping, browsing, and exposure to an environment that titillates the senses, the landscapes not only contain commodities that can be consumed, but the landscape itself is being consumed' (Sack, 1992, 135).

The frequency and ease with which capital can (now) be shifted from one type of investment or region to another, as well as between nations is reflected within the created environment, simultaneously producing places of both economic boom and decline. Shopping centre managers, try to respond to these changing conditions by producing environments which they believe will attract visitors to their centres and ultimately make a profit. Agents must encourage their visitors to become purchasers and attempt to cope with the impermanence of any organisational solution to these changing conditions. In order to do this the developers, owners and on a daily basis the managers of shopping centres, attempt to discover what individuals in their centres' catchments 'need' and want.

The extent of a state's authority is demarcated by political boundaries. Within these boundaries a number of other local authorities, groups and individuals have their own areas over which they attempt to exercise control. Such control occurs within public as well as private spaces. Shopping centre managers demonstrate territoriality (that is, '*... the geographical exercise of power*' (Sack, 1992, 42)) over the created environments of their centres by, for example, the selection and positioning of their retail tenants, the choice of particular marketing campaigns and by moderating the behaviour of visitors. As well as complying with national and local government legislation, retailers and visitors in shopping centres also have to conform with the restrictions placed upon them by centre management. Centre managements' area of authority not only includes the interior of their centres but can also extend to their exterior environments - centre car parking areas are an example of this.

All studies are affected by the position occupied by the researcher. The created environments of shopping centres can be interpreted in a number of different ways.

Rather than focusing on how the circulation of capital within 'advanced capitalist' societies manifests itself in the form of the consumption fund and in particular within the built environment for consumption (Harvey, 1985a, 1985b, 1989), I have emphasised how centre managers attempt to create and re - create appealing environments for shoppers within the constraints of the capitalist economic system. This is important. Although planned and managed shopping centre are a ubiquitous part of the urban built environment in 'advanced capitalist' nations, how they are managed so as to appeal to shoppers has not been examined by geographical researchers.

PREFACE.

Retailing is more than a purely economic transaction between retailers (or retail paid workers) and purchasers. A 'visit to the shops' requires a certain amount of social interaction between the parties. It also concerns the creation and re - creation of environments which will appeal to and involve shoppers. Consumers are not simply acted upon but also act. Shopping is an experience which may be, but is not always, associated with purchasing.

Until the early 1990s, theoretically informed analyses of retailing were all but non - existent within the social sciences and in particular within the geography discipline. One notable exception, however, was Ducatel and Blomley's (1990) article on 'Rethinking retail capital' which examined the position of retailing with respect to the circulation of capital.

This thesis originally stemmed from the frustration felt while completing my Masterate thesis, in 1991, entitled 'Retail Change and the Impact of these Changes on 'High Street' with reference to Palmerston North', due to the dearth of articles available on retailing within the academic and professional journals. Except for those who concentrated upon housing (Johnston et al, 1994) the studies conducted by geographers tended to be production - based, that is, researchers focused upon production while ignoring consumption.

The exact position occupied by retailing within the consumption - production debate is disputed but as the sector had been ignored within the productionist literature, I decided at the beginning of my review of the literature for this thesis, in 1992, to search for conceptual analyses of consumption within the broad framework of the social sciences. While finding useful insights into consumption, I increasingly began to question the appropriateness of examining either consumption or production as if they were separate entities and came to agree with Morris (1988) that the spheres should not be conceptualised in this manner. Although this research is informed by the need to analyse consumption and production together, it is not, however, its central concern.

Since 1992 the number of articles within the journals which focus on consumption has steadily begun to increase. Fine (1993), for example, has stated that consumption should be studied by examining the production - consumption chains of commodities while Glennie and Thrift (1993) argue that the conceptual approach a researcher interested in consumption should take is to an extent dependent upon the focus of their study. Glennie and Thrift's (1993) stance is more flexible and their

interest in consumption includes the consumer as well as the commodities. Place and context, they claim, influence consumer practice.

As my research topic became more defined, the decision to focus upon a particular retail format, that is, shopping centres, was stumbled upon almost by accident. Shopping centres which are a common feature of the urban environment in 'advanced capitalist' nations often appear to be able to attract a large number of visitors. I wanted to find out how these particular created environments were managed so as to appeal to the shoppers.

The shopping centre phenomenon which essentially started in the United States of America after the Second World War spread to Australia and New Zealand between the late 1950s and early 1960s. Although the industry began later in Australasia, its growth and development in these countries has not simply reflected a diffusion of ideas from North America. There are similarities between centres built in the United States and those operating in Australia and New Zealand but there are also some important differences. Shopping centres in Australia and New Zealand (except for those built in the inner city), for example, tend to be food based, that is, they have at least one supermarket as an anchor tenant whereas this is not such an important feature of the industry in the United States.

This thesis, examines, using some Australian and New Zealand examples, how managers try and create appealing shopping centre environments and what they perceive makes a centre attractive to their visitors.

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CHAPTER ONE CONCEPTUALISING CONSUMPTION: NEW DIRECTIONS IN RETAIL GEOGRAPHY.

The experience associated with purchasing commodities is familiar to nearly every individual in 'advanced capitalist' nations and the retailing sector is a very visible part of the built environment in these countries. The recently extended¹ *Chadstone* shopping centre in Melbourne, for example, has a gross lettable area of 88,700 square metres, 331 tenancies and has an estimated value of \$A600 million (Press Releases 7 July, 1995; personal communication with Centre Sales Manager, Chadstone Shopping Centre). Visiting a shop or a shopping centre is also increasingly regarded as a leisure activity. The shopping centre, for example, was identified as the most popular leisure facility amongst participants in the *Life in New Zealand* survey conducted in 1990 (Wilson et al, 1990). Until recently, however, retailing has failed to capture the attention of researchers. Those who have examined the sector have tended to describe, rather than attempt to explain, the changes which have occurred. The predominance of production based theories in the social sciences and within that the discipline of geography, has led until recently, to a lack of theoretically informed analyses on retailing, even the position occupied by the sector, that is, is it part of the production or the consumption sphere is the subject of dispute. This study which focuses upon how the managers of planned and managed shopping centres try and create (and re - create) an environment which will appeal to their centres' visitors is informed by the need to examine consumption and production together but the emphasis is placed upon the evolving consumption theoretical approaches.

Production has often been regarded as the predominant moment within the circuit of capital, with respect to distribution, exchange and consumption. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx, however, provides contradictory statements on the relationship between these moments.

'Production predominates not only over itself, in the antithetical definition of production but also over all other moments as well [but] ... in its one - sided form, production is in itself determined by the other moments' (Marx, 1973, 96 cited in Clarke and Purvis, 1994, 1092 [emphasis in original]).

¹ This latest extension- Chadstone corner- which was built at the cost of approximately \$30 million Australian dollars was opened on July 10, 1995. It added a further 8,700 square metres gross lettable area to the centre and increased the number of tenancies from 311 to 331 (Press Releases, 7 July, 1995).

Although it has been understood that there is a need to consider the whole circuit of capital there has been a tendency not to consider consumption in any other than in its one dimensional form. In the past the consumption sphere has been considered to be unproblematic. Any changes in the operation of the production sphere were thought to be matched by subsequent readjustments in the consumption sphere. This has begun to change with some researchers attempting to rework this part of Marxian theory while others have moved away from Marxism altogether (Clarke and Purvis, 1994). The recent upsurge in interest in consumption which is partly due to the '*... identification of the new post - modern epoch*' (Glennie and Thrift, 1992, 423) has meant that it is no longer possible, as it was during the mid 1980s, to claim that there is little geographical research on consumption.

The need to choose a singular approach or to analyse consumption in isolation from production is brought into question in this thesis on the created environment of planned shopping centres. Rather than choosing the horizontal or the vertical approach to consumption (Fine, 1993) or using either a political economy or post - structuralist theoretical framework (Clarke and Purvis, 1994) the various insights that each of these perspectives can provide are considered. The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is not to develop a grand theory of consumption (even if this were possible) but rather to demonstrate how the available conceptualisations on consumption can be used to analyse the created environments of planned shopping centres. It emphasised that there is no 'one' theory of consumption and that production and consumption need to be examined together. Information was gathered from shopping centre managers who attempt to create appealing environments for their visitors on a daily basis. It is their constructions of these created environments that have been presented. The realist position occupied by this causal group as intermediaries between the owners and the consumers informed the interview process (Sayer, 1992). From the information gathered a distinction has been made between 'doing' and 'going' shopping.

The decision to conduct research informed by examining both the consumption and production spheres in tandem does not, however, mean that the dominance of production based research is immediately removed. The language that is in every day use as well as much of the language used within the discipline, not to mention the jargon, has been derived from Christian, sometimes puritan ideas, and Marxian based research. The importance of these philosophical points of view means that consuming is considered by many to reflect the weakness of the human condition or the buying off of the work force to stop them rising up in revolt against the capitalist system. Collecting material possessions has been regarded as avarice and the

consumption, but not the production of such, a dangerous waste of finite resources. As the language available to researchers is also derived from these philosophical positions and every day practices such views tend to be reinforced. Consumption is referred to as a 'sphere' or a 'circuit', for example, terms which are commonly used by researchers to refer to production.

There is no unanimity about a definition for the term consumption. Those involved in analysing the consumption sphere have had to do so without the guidance of clearly defined boundaries. Consensus opinion and available studies do not provide researchers with guidance on what is being referred to when the phrase 'consumption sphere' is used. For some researchers consumption occurs in the privacy of people's homes and has in some instances been equated with the reproduction of the work force while for others consumption begins with the purchase of commodities. A visit to the shops and the purchase of commodities, however, involves more than simply an economic transaction between the retailer and the purchaser. The retailer also has to be able to provide people with the commodities that they want to buy and to display them in a manner which the visitors will find attractive.

Shopping is work. The selection of certain commodities while many others are rejected requires a certain amount of thought by the purchaser. In large shopping centres, in particular, walking from one end of a mall to the other also involves physical effort. In spite of the physical exertion, shopping is also an important leisure activity for large numbers of people - the increased involvement of male participants in certain forms of shopping activity has made shopping for leisure a more acceptable past time (Chapman, 1988; Reekie, 1993). Not all shoppers are purchasers. A visit to the shops can provide individuals with the commodities which they 'need' and want but may also provide an opportunity for social contact and interaction with the retailers and other visitors even if they are not known by name.

In the work place individuals may be separated from each other due to their relationship to the means of production. While people may be alienated in their place of work, there is a degree of equality associated with being a consumer (Saunders, 1988; Shields, 1992a), even if there is a lack of solidarity. Most people are free to take part and are not prevented from entering a shop although an individual's perception of an outlet may prevent them crossing the threshold. An ornate facade on a shop front, for example, may intimidate some individuals if they believe that it indicates that only highly priced commodities are offered for sale or only a certain style of commodity is being sold which may not reflect the image of themselves (that is, 'above' or 'below') which they want to promote.

Consumers are often portrayed as dupes by researchers examining the consumption sphere. The other less commonly subscribed to view is that the consumer is sovereign. Both these polarised points of view are too simple to be helpful. It is too easy to regard the purchasing of commodities as a demonstration of the duplicity of retailers who can persuade consumers to buy commodities which they do not need. Consumers cannot be forced to make purchases even if they are encouraged to do so by commodity displays in shop windows and by advertising (Douglas and Isherwood, 1978; Mort, 1988; see also Ewen, 1976; Gronmo, 1988). The opposing conceptualisation that consumers are sovereign is also questionable (Clarke, 1991; Crewe and Davenport, 1992; Douglas, 1992). It has been claimed that consuming commodities not only salves individuals' needs and wants but also that it provides people with a cultural identity. The commodities that they purchase and may display, indicate to other people how individuals see themselves and how they regard other people. Certain commodities, for example, a special dinner set, are only used on special occasions - the importance of the occasion is symbolised by the infrequently used crockery (Douglas, 1992; Glennie and Thrift, 1993). Commodities have a sign value as well as a use value.

Most commodities used by people in 'advanced capitalist' societies are mass produced. Consumers often cannot buy them directly from the manufacturers (or producers) but rather need to purchase them from retailers. A very visible part of the urban environment and the retailing sector since the Second World War is the planned shopping centre. The popularity of these centres, particularly in suburban locations, has been at least partly responsible for the observed decline in the vitality of a number of inner city areas (Jacobs, 1984; Rogers, 1990; Gottdiener, 1986; Young, 1985; see also Jones and Clarke, 1994). Planned shopping centre complexes which are usually privately owned operate under the guidance of a formalised management structure. Although they have been referred to using phrases such as 'the new downtowns' or 'the new 'High Street' and have been compared to the market place of times past, the shopping centre environment is not all that it seems. Shopping centres appear to be public places but are instead privately owned. Because they are privately owned the behaviour of visitors and entertainers is controlled, individuals who behave in what mall management consider to be an inconvenient or unsavoury manner can be ejected by centre security, the temperature and humidity is controlled, the tenants and tenancy mix is determined by management and the seemingly spontaneous behaviour of entertainers within the centre requires the prior approval of management. As Goss (1992) claims the 'High Street' created by the developers, owners and managers of planned shopping centres is not like the real downtown areas of old but rather is like those pioneered in

Disneyland. Visitors are not subjected to political or religious speakers or recruiters and it is unusual to find second hand or repair shops within a centre. Like the commodities offered for sale, the owners and managers of most centres try and create an atmosphere of 'newness' (Fiske, 1989) or 'nowness' (Kowinski, 1985). Such buildings often receive constant maintenance and are refurbished on a regular basis as are the retail outlets within the centres. In some instances old buildings or landmarks are incorporated into centre design but the past is 're - written' to fit the desires of the developers and owners. A technique which when it is applied to housing has been called 'gentrification' and has also been referred to as 'quaintspace' with respect to post - modern townscapes (Relph, 1987).

In most research that employs theoretical concepts derived from Marxian analyses, the place of work or production is assumed to be physically separated from the place of consumption (Bondi, 1992a). In retailing this distinction cannot be sustained. Retailers are not involved in what has traditionally been thought of as production. Instead they may stock their own brands or offer commodities for resale after first purchasing them from the manufacturer and now less frequently from the wholesaler. But they are required to work by, for example, selecting the commodities that they will offer for sale and by serving customers which may also involve helping them to select purchases. Although retailers who are owner - operators or franchise owners may be regarded as members of the petty bourgeoisie a large number of individuals employed within retailing do not share in the profits of the outlet but are paid a wage or salary. For the retailers and those employed within the retailing sector, their place of work is also a consumption site for visitors to their shops and possibly for themselves as well if they choose to consume the experience of shopping in the outlet where they are also paid to work¹.

The location and processes involved in the production of the commodities offered for sale by retailers are either ignored or presented in a euphemistic manner. Visitors to most shopping centres are presented with commodities that are new and have no past. This fantasy is carried one step further in some planned shopping centres by management regulations which state that retailers cannot take delivery of commodities through visitor entrances during trading hours, instead the commodities appear displayed within the shops as if by magic.

¹ The owners of retail outlets may encourage their employees to make such decisions by, for example, offering them discount purchasing privileges.

Retailing involves more than a purely economic transaction between economically rational retailers and purchasers. A 'visit to the shops' is also an experience. The 'everydayness' as well as the diversity of our experiences associated with visiting planned shopping centres is very much part of their attraction according to Morris (1988). Their built form appears to be solid, unchanging and dependable but the experience associated with visiting them is also dependant upon the tenants, that is, the retailers, the environment created by the designers, owners and managers and the continuously shifting spectacle of centre entertainers and other visitors. In an analysis of planned shopping centres it is also difficult to sustain the capitalist - worker divide. Although shopping centre owners invest in property as a way of making a profit they are dependent upon the retailers to attract visitors to the centre. Visitors to a planned shopping centre expect, and have come to expect, that owners and managers will offer more than just a place where purchases can be made. Not all of the available space can therefore be leased to retailers whose rental payments provide the profit for the owners but is instead 'public space' which can be used for displays or for entertainment. While the owners of shopping centres want as many visitors as possible to walk throughout the complex, as reflected by the monitoring of pedestrian counts, visitors want to be able to move through a centre as easily as possible and to be entertained. Retailers too, want to maximise their profit levels by keeping their costs such as rent, operating expenses and wages as low as possible. Although owners, managers and retailers can encourage people to visit their shopping centre or outlet, visitors cannot be forced to enter nor can they be made to purchase.

The developers, owners and managers of shopping centres attempt to attract shoppers, whom they hope will become purchasers, to their centres. To gain an understanding as to how the shopping centre environment is created in Australia and New Zealand a qualitative research methodology has been adopted. It was decided that the shopping centre managers would be interviewed because they are involved in the day to day running of the centres. Semi - structured interviews were conducted to collect information from these individuals. This technique has not been extensively used in research involving members of elite groups, such as centre managers, but it was thought that it was the most useful way of collecting information on how they try to make a centre attractive to shoppers and how successful they think the developers' and owners' attempts to build such a centre have been. As the information collected involved centre managers' feelings and opinions, that is, qualitative information, it was felt that the data should be analysed and presented in this manner. Quantitative techniques, such as, statistical formulae and numerical notation have consequently been avoided as they were inappropriate to this inquiry.

The interview transcripts were analysed using coding and mapping techniques. The presentation of the research findings involves the extensive use of verbatim quotations to illustrate statements.

Rather than discussing 'my' research in a detached manner the first person pronouns 'I' and 'my' are often used in the sections of this thesis which specifically involve my original research and the decisions 'I' made while conducting it. This syntax was chosen as it recognises the interpretations and constructs that a researcher (in this case, myself) brings to any study. As a qualitative researcher I could not be detached from the research process (and I question the ability of any researcher to be totally removed from their research) nor the techniques used to collect the information. The way each centre manager appeared to react to me and my research project, as well as the way I reacted to them, impacted upon the information that could be gained at each interview and ultimately upon the research findings. As I was the only person who conducted and analysed the interviews my level of understanding as well as my attitudes and feelings have influenced (but not manipulated), the findings which have been presented in this final report.

This analysis of the created environment of the planned shopping centres in Australia and New Zealand is arranged as follows. The next chapter briefly describes the changes that have occurred in the retailing sector and examines the development of the shopping centre format. Some researchers have claimed that the built form may symbolise what is regarded as important within a society and can impact upon the behaviour of individuals. The created environment of planned shopping centres, for example, is thought to be influential to the success or otherwise of centres. These ideas form the basis of chapter three. The theoretical approaches used to inform this examination of the created environments of shopping centres in Australia and New Zealand and the research method and techniques adopted introduces my original research. Managers responses have been categorised and interpreted on the basis of where the centres were located. The decision to present the gathered information in four separate chapters was made after all the interviews had been coded and mapped. A discussion chapter which considers the findings of the research and the techniques used to collect the information concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO CONTEXT AND CHANGE IN RETAILING ENVIRONMENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

Retailing has been defined as *'The distribution process linking the producer to the consumer ...'* (Jones and Simmons, 1990, 1). The sector is worthy of analysis not only because of its importance due to the size of its labour force and its contribution to the Gross National Product in 'advanced capitalist' nations (Ducatel and Blomley, 1990) but also because it provides a link between the production and consumption spheres which have until recently been treated as if they were separate entities. The increased awareness of the importance of consumption (Glennie and Thrift, 1992; Gregson, 1995) has resulted in the development of consumption based theories and research focusing on specific consumption sites, especially shopping centres and in particular the West Edmonton Mall (Gregson, 1995).

In this thesis the created environment of shopping centres is examined. Some of the changes which have occurred within the retailing industry are introduced because they have had a formative role in the created environment of planned and managed shopping centres. The first part of this chapter provides an overview of how the retailing sector has developed. It has variously been controlled by the wholesalers, the manufacturers and at present by the retailers themselves. The predominance of multiple retailers which

'... offer a wide range of standardised products at competitive prices, ... [with] [e]ach store in the chain deliberately designed to look like any other so that customers become familiar with the company's corporate image' (O' Brien and Harris, 1991, 53)

is not only demonstrated by the power they have over the distribution of commodities but also by their ubiquitous presence within shopping centres. Department stores, too, are a common feature of centres. Because of their drawing power they are often used as anchor tenants at the end of malls containing specialty retailers. Like the centres which they now occupy, the development of the department store format revolutionised the retail industry.

To (re)gain some control over the industry, manufacturers have historically branded commodities which they have produced in an attempt to develop customer loyalty. This technique has also been used more recently by retailers, some of whom identify their outlets using the same name as appears on the merchandise they offer for sale. While there are a number of outlets which are recognised internationally, retailing

has been, essentially a localised industry. This has begun to change, with, for example, the increased use of the franchise format within retailing. It is expected that future technology advances will also enable retailers to micro - market (niche market) on a global scale.

Shopping has become a popular leisure activity. The attraction is at least partly due to the development of planned and managed shopping centres in which the experience is much more tightly controlled than on the retail street. The second part of this chapter concentrates upon the development of this particular consumption site from its origins in the United States of America, after the Second World War, to the development of specialty centres. While centre size has tended to increase, Jacobs' (1984) claims, that 'down sizing' is now a recognisable phenomenon within the industry.

The detrimental economic impact of shopping centres on downtown retailing areas has been well publicised but the social function which they may provide has received less attention. This chapter concludes with a brief examination of features of the shopping centre environment which may enable, and even encourage, visitors to socialise.

POWER RELATIONSHIP CHANGES IN THE RETAILING SECTOR.

The distribution of commodities has variously been controlled by the wholesalers, the manufacturers and increasingly now by the retailers. During the late nineteenth century wholesalers dominated the sector. Their importance declined, however, to such an extent that by the 1940s retailers predominantly sold the brand products of manufacturers. In more recent times the dominance of manufacturers has been reduced as the strength of the multiple retailers has increased. These multiple retailers are not only beginning to control the sector at the 'shop face' but are also beginning to exert their power over the distribution networks. Increasingly rather than holding large stock levels retailers are demanding that manufacturers supply them using the just - in - time method of production. Some retailers have their own warehouses and transport systems but because of the strength of their position in the market place many retailers have not needed to be vertically integrated (Davies and Brooks, 1989; Hallsworth, 1992).

'A number of leading retailers sell only own - label products; many have a significant number of such lines. Others act as the main or the sole outlet for individual manufacturers. Retailers who rely on the resale of manufacturers' brands as their sole basis for business are now the exception rather than the rule' (Davies and Brooks, 1989, 1).

THE DEPARTMENT STORE.

The development of the department store format in the nineteenth century in Britain was only possible due to the changes which had already occurred within production and distribution channels during the second half of that century (Chaney, 1983). The four main innovations associated with the department store were '*... scale, cheapness and efficiency; impersonality; and distinctiveness*' (Chaney, 1983, 23). The rise of these stores with their fixed pricing policies radically altered the relationship between the retailer and the customer. For the first time, in a department store, customers were free to choose goods (and to browse) without having to ask the assistant. This new form of retailing which necessarily demanded increased packaging of goods - a task often performed by the manufacturers or wholesalers along with weighing and even pricing - removed many of the skills, as well as some of the vagaries, which had previously been associated with the retailing profession. The first department stores were effectively a series of small shops within one building. The physical barriers between the departments were subsequently removed enabling customers to move freely throughout the different departments without having to go outside. For the first time visitors to a shop did not need to worry whether they had enough money to make a purchase as all the commodities were priced, or to feel pressured into purchasing. Instead the store could be used to provide social contact albeit limited, or as an 'escape hatch'. The first owners recognised that individuals sometimes did not visit their shops for the sole purpose of making purchases and so therefore tried to create a particular atmosphere within their stores.

'It has always been the role of the department stores to try to cultivate a characteristic atmosphere, even a certain glamour; ... 'You know why they come here?' remarked Gordon Selfridge watching the crowds trooping into his store. 'It's so much brighter than their own homes. This is not a shop - it's a community centre' (Pound, 1960, 107; cited Davis, 1966, 292 - 293).

The development of the department store, was made possible due to the tremendous growth in the number of individuals who, because of their occupation, have been categorised using the term 'middle class'. These customers could afford, and were prepared to purchase, mass produced commodities at a fixed price. Department stores also encouraged the introduction of credit facilities for consumers. Improvements in communication networks accompanied by suburbanisation saw the development of retail chains which meant that customers were able to purchase the same goods from the local branch store as they could in the flagship department stores on 'High Street' (Mc Cracken, 1988a).

The shopping centre, like department stores which now often act as their anchor tenants, is promoted as a singular entity and an attempt is made to create a particular type of atmosphere. The organisational structure of shopping centres and department stores, however, varies. Department stores are usually built on more than one level and consist of a number of separate departments under single ownership. While a shopping centre comprises a number of small shops often arranged into categories or precincts, for example, women's fashion and childrenswear sometimes on a number of floors. These retail units are rented from the shopping centre owners by a number of different retailers.

Department stores which have dominated the unplanned and planned shopping centres are no longer as successful as they once were. The reasons given for their demise and even their death, include their now somewhat passé format, increased segmentation in the market place and the development of discount shops (Sommers, 1986; Berman and Ellis, 1993). All types of retailing are subject to a process of change which has been described using the analogy of the ecological life cycle, that is, birth, growth and death. This model states that

'...retail operations grow from essentially price - led operations into higher cost, higher - margin operations. They then fall prey to newer, more competitive retailing concepts as they near the end of their life cycle' (Mc Nair and May, 1978; cited in Davies and Brooks, 1989, 32).

This model fails to recognise, however, that the developments which have occurred within retailing are not necessarily evolutionary. The development of the department store format did not result in the extinction of stand alone units, just as shopping centres have not totally replaced the department store. Instead of disappearing altogether recomposition of a retail format has sometimes occurred. Some of the department stores which have survived have done so by creating a unique image, for example, by positioning themselves at the relatively high end of the market and promoting themselves on the basis of the extra services they provide (such as *David Jones* and the *Myer* department stores in Australia and in New Zealand *Kirkcaldies and Stains* in Wellington, *Smith and Caughey* in Auckland and *Ballantynes* in Christchurch), or by becoming discount retailers promoting themselves on the basis of product and price. *The Warehouse* in New Zealand is an example of this although it originated as a discount retailer. Some department stores are carrying a smaller range of commodities but are offering more choice as well as 'in store merchandising' '*... which represents a store within a store concept*' (Berman and Ellis, 1993, no page numbers). Other department stores, such as *Marks and Spencer* have tried to lessen the risk associated with mass produced product lines which fail to sell by having their manufacturers produce commodities in smaller

production runs. If a commodity sells well, the manufacturer is contracted to produce more within a short time frame (Crewe and Davenport, 1992; Bowlby et al n. d.). In this example at least, it is the consumers who are dictating how many and what commodities should be produced, not the producers.

SIGN VALUE; THE IMPORTANCE OF BRANDING.

Branding first occurred in the United States of America over a century ago. Manufacturers saw it as a way of wresting control of commodity sales from the retailers (Biel, 1991). During the 1960s and 1970s retailers began selling commodities which were own - branded. Such commodities were normally lower cost versions of the brand leaders. Since this time, however, some retailers have begun to use their own brands to distinguish themselves from their competitors.

Brands package meaning. The image associated with a branded commodity consists of three contributing sub - images, according to Biel (1991). They are the image associated with the manufacturer and the retailer, the image of the commodity and the image of the consumer who uses it. The purchase of particular brands is believed to provide a customer with an identity. The familiarity and presence of brands in more than one place can also provide consumers with a feeling of reassurance (Biel, 1991).

To inject exclusivity into their product ranges some department stores and supermarkets use own - branding on their commodities. This also assists in promoting customer loyalty. The costs associated with own - branding usually have to be met by the manufacturers whose own commodities may receive less shelf space and less desirable positioning, for example, below eye - level, in the shops. Retailers also tend to promote their own brands more vigorously Foord et al (n. d.) claim, than the manufacturers' product lines. Manufacturers in Britain at least, are however, once again using own branding as a way of challenging the dominance of retailers (Foord et al n. d.).

Advertising in the retailing sector has two main roles. The first involves the promotion of particular commodities which is the only type of advertising available to manufacturers who use the retailers to sell their commodities. A more recent trend involves the promotion of retail outlets.

'Retailers, it is said have become very much like customer brands; they have their own individual personalities, their products are targeted at well - defined customer segments and they offer their patrons benefits over and above their functional value as the providers of products ...' (Davies, 1991, 191).

Some fashion retailers, for example the Australian - based *Country Road*, use the same brand name on their outlets as they do on all the commodities they sell - '*... arguably the brand image is influenced as much by the store image as the product ...*'. Advertisements for some retailers now stress store image, for example, *Levines* (in New Zealand), rather than price (Davies, 1991, 191). Manufacturers and advertising agencies attempt '*...to create or maintain 'business systems' or societies*' rather than trying to sell the product '(Verbecke, 1992, 2). Those firms that are able to achieve this are, it is believed, able to gain a competitive advantage (Verbecke, 1992).

Branding is also used in shopping centres. Chain store retailers and franchise operations whose brand names may be recognised in the local, national and even international marketplaces, are a common feature of the created environments of some centres. In Australia, the centres themselves were at times branded . Those centres owned by Westfield Holdings, for example, were identified and marketed using the phrase Westfield Shoppingtown and then the name of the centre was given. Corporate marketing campaigns are another way in which branding has been used in New Zealand and much more extensively in Australia.

THE LOCALISED RETAIL SECTOR.

The retailing sector is increasingly becoming internationalised with the presence of branded commodities and retail outlets, and by the use of similar architecture, in more than one country (Mulgan, 1989; see also Alexander, 1990; Clarke, 1991). Retailers, however, have shown a reluctance to move off - shore, particularly in the United States, and opinions are divided over the successfulness of selling standardised products in more than one country (Ozsomer et al, 1991; Clarke, 1991).

Retailing, unlike other sectors in the economy is, or has been dominated by local operators. The success of a retailing operation was, until recently, dependent upon the retailer knowing the demands of the customers in their particular area. Although there was a significant increase in world trade during the 1980s and internationalisation occurred in many industries, retailing, '*... remained relatively localised*' (Berman and Ellis, 1993, no page numbers). Recent policy changes which involve the integration of the economies of more than one nation, for example, in Australia and New Zealand under the auspices of the Closer Economic Trade Agreement (CER), will it is believed, lead to an erosion in the dominance of the local retailer (Berman and Ellis, 1993). Technological advances which Berman and Ellis (1993) claim will allow retailers to micro - market on a global scale may also enable

them to successfully expand on a global basis leading to considerable consolidation in the industry.

'We can therefore expect to see the retailing industry dominated by large organisations that invest in technologies that promote micro-marketing, reduce costs, and improve the efficiency of the distribution pipeline - on a global basis' (Berman and Ellis, 1993, no page numbers).

Under these conditions the successful retailer will be the one which is more specialised but offers a wider range of commodities for sale and is linked to suppliers on a global basis (Berman and Ellis, 1993). Accompanying the increased globalisation of the retailing sector is a change in the types of retail formats used. In 'advanced capitalist' nations the retail industry is moving towards increased specialisation which occurred in the United States during the 1980s. *'In Europe, specialty retailing is growing. Category killers¹ are now the favoured format in prime locations'* (Berman and Ellis, 1993, no page numbers).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPECIALIST RETAILER.

Technological advances, changing attitudes and different organisational possibilities have resulted in a variety of retail outlet forms. One of the more recent developments in retailing on 'High Street' has been the rise of the specialist retailer selling a limited range of products in comparatively small units. Specialists vary from simple merchandise specialisation to lifestyle marketing (Crewe and Davenport, 1992) *'... where the merchandise range carried is so tightly identified with the fascia that they are integral to each other'* (Sommers, 1986, 3).

Lifestyle marketing is an expensive option. Refurbishment of outlets needs to occur relatively frequently so that the environment and ambience of outlets is kept *'... in step with the merchandise'* (Sommers, 1986, 3; Crewe and Davenport, 1992). The need to regularly remodel the built environment of retail outlets is not a unique feature of specialist retailers, however, but is, according to Relph (1987), common to all commercial buildings.

Two relatively recent developments in specialist retailing in the United States of America have been identified using the terms 'high contact' and 'sensory'. In a high contact retail outlet there is considerable interaction between retailers and potential

¹ This type of retail outlet offers lower prices and wide selections (Rogers, 1990) of particular types of commodities. In Australia, for example, there are two Toy category killer outlets, that is, *World For Kids* and *Toys R Us*.

customers, so much so that the *'Service becomes part of the product ...'* (Berry and Barnes, 1987, 113). The sensory retailer attempts to appeal to visitors by sometimes using sound and smell for sensory stimulation but *'... their chief tool is the stunning visual effect - a collage of architectural and lighting effects, graphics, display techniques, and merchandise assortments - that makes the store unique'* (Berry and Barnes, 1987, 114).

High contact and sensory retail types are not mutually exclusive and shops displaying both forms are not uncommon. Fashion retailers, for example, often have sophisticated shop fit - outs which are combined with a high level of customer service. They try to *'... appeal to the consumer's senses and ego'* (Berry and Barnes, 1987, 114). Such developments are due to *consumption* becoming more heterogeneous rather than the *consumers*. Fragmentation of the mass market has occurred for *'... reasons that relate to both production and consumption changes'* (Crewe and Davenport, 1992, 186). High interest rates and 'the recession' resulting in consumers making fewer, more selective purchases, along with the ageing population, are given as two of the reasons for the recent changes in consumption.

The high contact and sensory retail forms cater for those consumers who have sufficient time to leisure shop whereas the 'time efficient retailer', which is another recent innovation within the sector in the United States (Berry and Barnes, 1987), are designed so that they can provide a time intensive rather than a time extensive experience for their shoppers. These retailers try and provide customers with commodities quickly so that the customers spend as little time as possible making purchases. They attempt to attract customers with limited available time, or those who want to spend little time, by being located in a position which enables people to travel quickly to the shop, and once inside by having design features which allow them to make purchases quickly. Another type of time efficient retailing is non - store retailing which can include mail order catalogues and teleshopping (Rogers, 1990).

THE SHOPPING CENTRE.

Changes within the retailing sector in terms of dominance and organisational structure have been accompanied since the Second World War, or at least since the 1950s, by the development of the planned shopping centre. Such centres which evolved in the United States of America are now an important part of the retailing industry in many 'advanced capitalist' nations.

A 'Shopping Centre' has been defined in the United States of America as

'A group of architecturally unified commercial establishments built on a site that is planned, developed, owned and managed as an operating unit related in its location, size, and type of shops to the trade area that it serves. The unit provides on site parking in definite relationship to the types and total size of the stores' (Urban Land Institute, 1985, 1).

For the purposes of the New Zealand Council of Shopping Centres 1993 Shopping Centre Directory¹, however, a shopping centre has been more broadly defined as *'... a group of commercial establishments, planned, developed, owned and managed as a unit'*. Amongst its classifications is the category 'City Centre'² which includes centres which may not always provide customer parking facilities. The first shopping centre in Australia, *Chermside*, was built near Brisbane in 1958 followed by centres at North Ryde in Sydney and Chadstone in Melbourne in the next two years (Game and Pringle, 1983). In New Zealand the first privately owned, planned shopping centre, was built in New Lynn in Auckland in 1963 (Aburn, 1977).

The ability to create an overall image due to their unified ownership and management structure is one of the most important distinguishing features of (planned) shopping centres in comparison to stand alone retail outlets and strip retailing (Urban Land Institute, 1985).

Like the department store that preceded it, the planned shopping centre has revolutionised the retail sector. Initially 'outdoor' (there were only three enclosed malls in the United States in 1959 (Lord, 1985)), the form of the planned shopping centre has developed into an enclosed environment. The rise of the planned shopping centre witnessed the development of 'out - of - town' or suburban retailing competing directly with 'High Street' retailers and extended the 'one - stop' shopping format of the department store, which were (and largely still are) used as anchor tenants to draw potential customers to the centres and past and possibly into, the smaller specialty retail units. While the early planned shopping centres were mostly located in suburban locations or on 'greenfield' sites, inner city centres are also now a feature of the shopping centre industry.

Although a variety of architectural designs have been used, planned indoor shopping centres usually display a number of commonalties as well which make it relatively

¹ Information supplied to me by the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) of Australia from their Shopping Centre Directories did not include a general definition of a shopping centre (Appendices 2 - 3).

² The 'City Centre' classification is also used in the Australian Shopping Centre Directories (Appendices 2 - 3).

easy for newcomers to a centre to find their way about. It is the anchor tenants, such as, department stores, discount department stores and supermarkets (to a lesser extent in the United States of America (Johnson, 1991)) located at the end points of malls, which primarily attract customers to a centre. The merchandise sold by these stores are often considered to be necessity goods and the specialty stores are located so that they can feed off the traffic generated by these anchor tenants. The specialty retailers try to tempt shoppers into making impulse purchases or into spending some of their discretionary incomes.

It is more usual for shopping centres to be designed on only one level but as some centres have been extended or erected in inner - city locations (where sites are often smaller and more expensive than greenfield or suburban sites), an increased number of multi - level centres have been built (Jacobs, 1984). Shopping centre lore, however, usually dictates that a centre can only successfully trade from three floors even though department stores operate from more levels (Marking, 1986).

The design of a shopping centre should not be too dominant. The circulation routes need to filter customers through the specialty shops rather than past them (Beddington, 1982; Goss, 1992). With their wide malls, for example, the earlier shopping centres provided too much common space (Marking, 1986) which enabled visitors to walk past, and not be tempted into, the specialty shops.

As the shopping centre form has developed, however, providing an environment which appeals to shoppers within the common areas, as well as inside the retail outlets, has become important. An attractive environment is not only created by the design features of a centre but also by its ambience. *'In any shopping centre there must be a feeling of bustle, excitement, sparkle, competition and variety, but also a sense of familiarity and of confidence in where to go and what to look for'* (Beddington, 1982, 1).

As *'Malls are designed and constructed with one major goal in mind - to make money ...'* materials which require minimal maintenance and are hard wearing such as brick, concrete, tiles, plastic, glass and stainless steel are often used in their construction (Jacobs, 1984, 6). The similarities in construction materials as well as the predominance of chain stores displaying and merchandising the same types of commodities have, however, removed some (or all) of the excitement of a visit to the shopping centre:

'... a certain standardisation, sameness, or gray - on gray quality that large indoor shopping malls seem to exhibit. There is a distinct sense of déjà vu, and one feels that one has seen it all or been there

before, no matter where the mall is located or its architectural design'
(Jacobs, 1984, 6).

The carefully controlled and isolated interiors of shopping centres is in sharp contrast to the exterior environment of the first centres. The early centres were often surrounded by large car parks which lacked or contained extremely limited landscaping so that customers would be directly channelled into the main entrances. The convivial atmosphere which mall developers, owners and managers now try to create inside a centre is being extended to include the environment outside (see also Jacobs, 1984):

'... it is now far more common to see car parking spaces interspersed with areas of hard and soft landscaping including cast iron bollards and lamp standards, flag stones, cobbles, brick paving, trees and shrubs' (O'Brien and Harris, 1991, 105).

While factors such as design, location, ease of access and the provision of adequate parking are considered to be important to the financial success of shopping centres the selection and positioning of the retail tenants is considered to be of even greater consequence (Jacobs, 1984).

'The vital factor in a successful centre is the carefully related, correct and convenient location of various traders, to encourage variety of choice and interest and maximum pedestrian flow' (Beddington, 1982, 10).

The selection of retail tenants and their positioning as well as the external and internal structure and fittings are all controlled within a shopping centre. Since their conception in the United States of America, the shopping centre format has developed with more attention now being paid to the common areas in the complexes and to their external environments. Initially built on one level on stand alone locations, multi - level centres are now not uncommon, some of which occupy inner city sites.

The specialty centre.

The shopping centre form is not static but is still developing (Beddington, 1982). Shopping centres tend to be generalists, that is, they serve the mass market, but this may change in the future (Marking, 1986). The Urban Land Institute (1985, 7), for

example, identifies so called 'specialty'¹ centres which unlike conventional centres do not have anchor tenants and 'theme' centres which have a '*.. special architectural character or flavour*'. It is claimed that with today's specialisation and market segmentation specialty centres can be more accurately described using qualifiers, such as, 'fashion' or 'off - price', that is, cheaper priced commodities, which reflect the particular market which they are designed to serve.

In numerical terms, the strongest increase in centre numbers in the United States of America is occurring in the so called 'strip centres' whose concepts include 'Power' and 'Off - price' centres². Power centres (which are similar to Retail Parks in Britain), are dominated by anchor tenants which often occupy up to 70 per cent of the leasable space (in comparison to conventional neighbourhood and community type shopping centres where they account for between 40 to 50 per cent of the space) and have lower occupancy costs. As Power centres are able to provide space for large specialty stores they can accommodate the so - called 'category killers'. These centres are often located close to the conventionally large regional centres so that they can feed '*... parasitically off the traffic generated ...*' by them (Rogers, 1990, 51). The 'Off - Price', 'Factory Outlet' or 'Value' shopping centres are usually larger than the Power centres, Rogers (1990) claims, and offer goods for sale at between 20 and 60 per cent below 'normal' retail prices depending upon the managerial mandate. These centres have been developed to

'... accommodate the retail outlets of manufacturers seeking to expand their distribution channels ... factory outlet stores were developed as a response to the decline of the department store industry and its defensive switch to private branding' (Rogers, 1990, 51).

Off - price outlets may also be operated by retailers who want to sell brand products, mostly clothes, at prices well below those found at conventional stores. The demand for such centres originated from both the demand and the supply side of the market. Outlet/ off - price centres are either purpose built, converted from an existing conventional shopping centre or are located in a renovated building which was built for a purpose other than retailing (Lord, 1985). They usually consist of factory

¹ By the end of 1995 all BOMA Australia Shopping Centre Directories will contain the specialist classification of 'Themed Centres'. For the purposes of the directories these are defined as '*A specialty shopping centre located primarily in resort areas to cater for specialist tourist needs, which does not normally include a supermarket*'. The 1993 BOMA produced New Zealand Shopping Centre Directory did not include specialist classifications (Appendices 1, 3).

² Rogers (1990) reported that there were approximately 4 800 'off-price' outlets operating in the United States in comparison to 1 400 in 1984.

outlets, off - price retail chains, conventional stores and stores which although operated by conventional retail tenants sell commodities below normal prices. The long term success of off - price centres is a matter of debate. Some commentators claim that the 'off - price' concept is a 'child' of the late 1970s and early 1980s recession (in the United States of America) while others view these centres as an important trend in retailing (Lord, 1985). It appears that the latter may be true as the number of these centres increased during the economic boom period of the mid 1980s.

Other variants to conventional shopping centre design include 'Mixed Use' or 'Festival' centres which tend to occupy inner city or water - front sites (Rogers, 1990). In Britain Mixed Use centres are characterised by a variety of uses which include along with retailing, hotels, office space and restaurants. Rogers (1990) claims that the importance of such centres to the shopping centre industry as a whole may have been exaggerated and the problems associated with such developments have, to a certain extent, been under - reported. He does, however, suggest that these centres may offer retailers more security because they cater for work or business related purchasing as well as home - based shopping trips.

Down sizing.

Although there has been a tendency for the size of shopping centres to increase, Clarke (1991, see also Jacobs, 1984), suggests that a size threshold will be and is being reached. Developers are thought to be interested in 'down sizing' their shopping centre developments due to a number of factors. These include the limited availability of large sites, high traffic densities in metropolitan areas (which make it easier for customers to use one of a number of smaller shopping centres¹ located within the region in comparison to one large centre), the incentives provided by some metropolitan authorities as a way of renovating downtown areas and as a result of social pressure to revitalise urban areas (Jacobs, 1984). Redeveloping inner city buildings for use as shopping centres is also thought to be due to a weakening in the attraction of the suburbs as a place to live (Jacobs, 1984).

Opinions vary as to whether 'urban' or 'suburban' shopping centres are, or will, be able to provide a higher level of return for investors and whether in fact inner - city centres are, or should be, trying to compete (or are directly competing) with

¹ The building of a number of smaller centres may also prevent a potential competitor developing a centre within an area.

suburban centres. Some researchers believe that downtown centres can be successful without anchor stores because they are able to draw customers from '*... hotels, offices, the nearby natural environment or other untraditional sources of population draw (Opsata, 1980)*' (cited in Jacobs, 1984, 48). Kowinski (1985, 318), however, claims that '*... while large suburban malls almost never fail, city ones can*'.

Impact of shopping centres.

The impact of a shopping centre on, for example, employment opportunities within an area or on 'High Street' may not be as great as expected. The building of a large shopping centre does not create a large number of new employment opportunities and many of the jobs which are available tend to be part time and poorly paid (Jacobs, 1984). The importance of shopping centres in terms of total retail sales varies between countries. In the United States of America planned shopping centres account for between 45 and 50¹ per cent of registered retail sales (Rogers, 1990), in comparison to Britain where 'High Street' and the traditional inner - city shopping areas still account for approximately 54 per cent of retail spending (a drop of two per cent in the last decade) (Jones and Clarke, 1994, 17). In Australia and New Zealand, shopping centres account for 30 and fifteen per cent of the total retail sales, respectively (*Manawatu Evening Standard*, 20 July, 1994).

Planned shopping centres have led to a decline in the economic viability of retailers in traditional 'High Street' locations which has been associated with central city decay. Jones and Clarke (1994) claim, however, that while out - of - town shopping centres pose a '*... challenge to those responsible for the management of traditional major shopping areas in town and city centres, it would be a mistake to write their obituary*' (Jones and Clarke (1994, 17). It is they suggest, the independently owned small shops within residential communities which have been most detrimentally affected by the development of planned shopping centres. Not all planned shopping centres are, however, financially successful. Rogers (1990, 49), for example, reports that there are a number of 'problem' centres in the United States which have an extensive number of tenancy vacancies. It has been estimated, for example, that approximately 23 per cent of all shopping centres in that country have a negative cash flow! He also suggests that malls are '*... proving to be expensive trading environments offering inconvenient parking arrangements. Increasingly they are no longer the scene of retail innovation and are becoming vulnerable*' (Rogers, 1990,

¹ The amount of retailing conducted in shopping centres in the United States of America was also given as 50 per cent (*Manawatu Evening Standard*, 20 July, 1994) and between 65 and 70 per cent ('In Business' supplement *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 23 August, 1993).

50). Instead it is the larger 'strip' shopping centres that are becoming the most innovative (Rogers, 1990).

CONCLUSION.

The power shifts in the distribution of commodities sector between the wholesalers, the manufacturers and the retailers have been accompanied by changes in the form of retail outlets. Such a process is not evolutionary, however, but rather involves new developments as well as a recomposition of formats which had previously been in vogue. Many of the changes witnessed in retailing have been reflected in the created environment of the shopping centres. Some shopping centre owners, for example, use the technique of branding to market their centres and contain a number of specialist retail outlets. Customers visit shops not only to purchase commodities but also to leisure shop. Owners of some shopping centres have attempted to take advantage of the increasing importance of shopping as leisure activity by trying to create environments which shoppers will find appealing so that they will want to spend considerable periods of time in them.

Although shopping centres are primarily built as a means of creating profit for the owners and investors they often have a social function as well (a factor which was not recognised by early mall developers who addressed their potential customers as '... *economic, and not social man [sic] ...*' (Jacobs, 1984, 37)), which is cultivated by taking over some of the features of the town square of times past in order to generate customer loyalty and a sense of community, and by the housing of public facilities such as libraries and post offices (Jacobs, 1984, 12) within the complexes.

The unified ownership and management structure of planned shopping centres means that unlike on the traditional retail street there can be consistency in the built form, tenant mix and in the standard of maintenance within a centre. As they are privately owned public spaces visitor behaviour can also be more strictly controlled than it is on the street. Although the shopping centre environment has been characterised using the phrase '... *"nothing unusual is happening"*' (Jacobs, 1984, 93), centres possibly provide the only presently available setting for social interaction.

Shopping centres are at this time an extremely important part of the urban environment but this may change in the future. In the literature it has been assumed that new retailing formats inevitably lead to the demise and death of existing types '... *like most things, malls too will pass; and the long range question is not "if" but "when?"*' (Jacobs, 1984, 16 [emphasis in original]). Although there has been a

marked reduction in the overall rate at which planned shopping centres are being built in 'advanced capitalist' countries it is '...*probably premature to predict that such centres 'will go the way of the dinosaur'* (Gruen, 1978, 9 cited in Goss, 1992, 168). The life cycle model fails to take into account how some retail outlets and shopping centres are continuously updated so that they always appear new or fashionable and ironically at the same time may, with their created environments, re - create retail formats of the past. In shopping centres this is accomplished by the regular up - grading of retail outlets and by refurbishment of the common areas which are conducted so as to retain the attractiveness of centres as investments. At the same time it is intended that such up - dating of the created environment will ensure that the centre remains highly profitable. Centre managers also try and make frequent smaller changes to the created environments of centres by, for example, using their common areas for display purposes and by the hosting of events and the provision of entertainment for visitors so that there is often something new or different happening in the centres.

CHAPTER THREE THE CREATED ENVIRONMENT OF THE SHOPPING CENTRE.

INTRODUCTION.

The built environment or landscape may be able to be read like a text to gather information on a society. (Duncan and Duncan, 1988). If this is so, it would be expected that the level of importance assigned by a society to the functions carried out within a building will be reflected in the built form. The larger and more elaborate buildings will be those in which the most important functions within a society are carried out. As the status of functions is not fixed, the most impressive buildings may vary between nations and within a society with time. In the past, some of the more substantial buildings in 'advanced capitalist' nations were the churches and cathedrals, for example, whereas today some of the most grand, if not expensive buildings, are those which are built for commercial functions (Jencks, 1987).

Planned Shopping Centres are a very visible part of the built environment in 'advanced capitalist' nations. Although they may be grand in terms of their size, the exterior of many centres (especially the earlier ones), was often very plain, if not bland. Shopping centres are often enclosed inward looking structures with few outward facing windows¹. An important part of the design and the charm of the built form of shopping centres is the abrupt transition from the 'uncontrolled' outside to the 'controlled' environment inside. Managers and owners are also, however, dependent upon visitors to the centres creating a pleasurable experience not only for themselves, but for other visitors as well.

Researchers who have focused upon shopping centres have tended to describe, or have attempted to interpret, features of their created environments from a position which is removed from that of the producers and the consumers of these complexes. This chapter begins with a brief introduction on how the built environment may be interpreted followed by a more detailed discussion that highlights the way in which researchers have examined the created environment of centres (which includes their built form) and what they believe the most important distinguishing features of shopping centres to be. Interpreting the created environments of centres from a position removed from those occupied by individuals involved in writing and reading these particular landscapes is an important omission. How we create or analyse a

¹ This architectural style is not, however, unique to shopping centres. The archetypal Spanish and Moslem designed house, for example, is constructed around an internal courtyard.

text will be dependent upon the position we occupy with respect to the production and consumption spheres as well as the social group of which we are a part.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

The built environment and landscapes (physical setting and activity) have no intrinsic meaning on their own but have social meaning which '*... arises out of social interaction and is conferred upon them by social groups*' (Duncan, 1976, 392). Although public places have a connotative meaning which may be shared across a wide range of social groups, the symbolic meanings of most landscapes, can vary.

'Communication between diverse social groups, however, does not appear to be particularly effective, for there is often a lack of shared meanings across the boundaries of social worlds except at the most fundamental level' (Duncan, 1976, 392).

Although there may be a globalising culture associated with the built environment, a similarity in form does not necessarily mean that the same meaning will be derived from the built environment both between, and within, different states due to cultural differences. As with all texts the built environment can be, and is, interpreted in a number of different ways. It may be both 'coercive' and 'rather indifferent'.

Architectural messages can either imply that you will live in a certain way or can be interpreted in an aberrant manner sometimes unknowingly (Eco, 1980). '*Architecture is a business...*' and as such needs to generate an income for the architects who have to insert themselves '*... into a given economy ... even when [they] would like to contest it*' (Eco, 1980, 42 [emphasis in original]). Dickens (1980; cited in Knox, 1987), however, believes that the built environment is affected by the idiosyncrasies and impulses of architects, their clients and the users which means that it is produced, to a certain extent, autonomously from the 'dominant social order'

'... architecture, like the other components of the social superstructure, is contingent rather than determined: a product of complex interactions between structure and human agency' (Gottdiener, 1985, cited in Knox, 1987, 364).

While appealing to the mass market architectural messages can also be '*... inventive and have heuristic aspects*' (Eco, 1980, 43). The meanings that can be derived from the built environment are not fixed but vary with time and space (Knox, 1987). The built environment and urban form do not just represent or reflect cultures, sub-cultures, and economic, social and political formations, but actually '*... constitute much of the social and cultural existence*' (King, 1990, 404). Built environments provide (as King, 1990, 405 believes they should) some information on the '*... nature and organisation of society and culture ...*'.

The architecture of buildings reflects what is important within a society (Jencks, 1987). *'Architecture is the will of the epoch translated into space'* (Mies van der Rohe, 1926, cited in Goss, 1992, 159 - 160). In pre - industrial times the temple, church, palace and country house were the most important buildings while today it is the commercial buildings which represent 'consumer values' that are attractive to investors (Jencks, 1987).

Urban design which involves the co - ordination of the design of a number of buildings is practised, usually by the state, by means of developmental controls. It is a way of protecting the collective interests of the capitalist class from the action of individual capitalists (King, 1988). The built form facilitates production, exchange, consumption and administration. The signification associated with individual buildings and the aggregate impacts of urban design *'... convey ideological contents which function to support the mode of production or exchange ...'* (King, 1988, 452). This occurs in three ways. Firstly it ensures that the structures of domination are made opaque. The antagonism between capital and labour is stifled by *'.. the myth of beneficence'* and thirdly it reifies the built environment with *'... the idea of permanence of spatial forms, to deny the 'mutable historical nature' of the capital - labour relationship'* (Knesl, 1984 cited in King, 1988, 452). A symbol King (1988, 458) claims is a

'... structure of signification "in which a direct, primary, literal meaning designates, in addition, another meaning which is indirect, secondary and figurative and which can be apprehended only through the first" (Giddens, 1979, cited in King, 1988, 458).

Bondi (1992b) claims the built environment has meaning but questions the validity of some of the approaches which are used to interpret it. Semiotic analyses, for example, emphasise the *'... internal lexicon of architectural design ...'* at the expense of the social context in which it occurs. The impact of human agency on the design, building, its use (and the alterations that are made by the users) and the meanings associated with the built environment are ignored (Bondi, 1992b, 158).

READINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CREATED ENVIRONMENTS OF SHOPPING CENTRES.

Shopping centres appear to be solid, dependable and unchanging. The environment and the behaviour of patrons is controlled. The owners and managers are, however, reliant upon visitors to create daily some of the shopping centre experience for themselves and for other shoppers as well. This dual quality is very much part of the seductiveness of shopping centres: *'The stirring tension between the mass stability*

of the structure and the continually shifting, ceaseless spectacle within and around the 'centre', ...' (Morris, 1988, 195).

Like the early department stores with which they are sometimes compared, planned and managed shopping centres have revolutionised the retailing sector by providing an extremely different environment for shoppers. Some architects have even re-used features of the early department stores or have purposively designed centres as spectacles, mimicking the spectacle of some of the early department stores (Ewen and Ewen, 1982). Such investments are not always commercially successful, however, with over accumulation a problem (Harvey, 1987).

The construction of commercial buildings and in particular shopping centres, has also been strongly influenced by the visual images provided by films and by television (Clarke, 1991; Relph, 1987; Kowinski, 1985).

'The unusual impositions and juxtapositions of unending spectacles already presuppose the habits of televieing in which rapid changes of spectacular disconnected images are the norm' (Langman, 1992, 49).

The need to always appear new is another design feature of shopping centres (Fiske, 1989). At the same time and seemingly contradictorily, use is sometimes made of older buildings or historical artefacts in an attempt to summon nostalgic images of the past creating *'... memories of neighbourhood and lost community, ...'* (Langman, 1992, 49).

The design and layout of a shopping centre is, according to Morris (1988, 194), *'... minimally readable ...'* to almost everyone in *'...Western suburban culture ...'*. The designers and owners associated with shopping centres however *'... operate a strategy of alternating surprise and confusion with familiarity and harmony; ...'* (Morris, 1988, 194) which can limit the ability of visitors to read the environment. (Not only do individuals interpret the built environment of shopping centres in different ways but an individual's reading of the centre is dependent upon their reason for visiting the centre. *'While the architecture and economic motivations of those who build the mall may remain fixed and dollar - specific, our experience of shopping malls is multiple'* (Williamson, 1992, 220). Ferguson (1992), for example, claims that they are designed so that shoppers and their shopping trolleys can move easily around the centres which provides the illusion of the rational shopper who freely chooses the commodities they wish to purchase. The ability of shoppers to select commodities is not, however, regarded as an illusion by all researchers. Consumers do not only choose to purchase commodities on the basis of their exchange and use

values but also on the basis of their sign values - what they represent and what a particular commodity says about the owner (Fiske, 1989; Langman, 1992).

Winchester (1992) in her analysis of the Wollongong City Mall and Shields (1989) in his study of the West Edmonton Mall¹ both examine the created environment of these two centres and claim that it influences the behaviour of visitors to the centres. The Wollongong City Mall reinforces patriarchy and capitalism, according to Winchester (1992), while Shields (1989) uses the term 'play structure' to describe the interior of the West Edmonton Mall where 'time' and 'space' or 'history' and 'geography' have been manipulated by the developers.

'It fragments conventional geographical space and historical time with its wild combination of interior settings; evoking disparate times and places while it seeks to impose its own stable order on the ensemble. At the turn of a corner, one is in a simulated 'New Orleans'. Another corner - 'Paris'' (Shields, 1989, 152).

Simulated places and history can only be successfully used as signs if the consumers are aware of what is being simulated. Although few shopping centres demonstrate the same degree of timelessness and placelessness as the West Edmonton Mall, the interiors of most centres are designed so that they are isolated from the outside world (Langman, 1992). With their blank outside walls and the controlled or protected environment inside, Gottdiener (1986, 296), sees similarities in the structure of the shopping centre and that of the Medieval Castle: *'... the experience within the mall is sheltered within blank fortresslike walls and by the auspices of its feudal - like proprietor, the mall management'*.

The manipulation of time and space, which may not be a recent development, according to Lefebvre (1991), has been referred to as the hyper - reality of the shopping centre environment, that is, where the *'... simulation of reality appears more real than real...'* (Moore, 1988, 180; Shields, 1989; Glennie and Thrift, 1992). Such an environment, may help consumers to escape the 'reality' of their lives (Butler, 1991; Hopkins, 1990).

'By adopting an alternative cosmology they can momentarily suspend their hinterland relationship to the difficult capitalist world of distant, abstract powers and indulge in a collective fantasy which produces the illusion of a different logic of space and a different capital logic' (Shields, 1989, 153).

¹ Butler (1991, 291), claims that the West Edmonton Mall is *'... virtually identical to other malls in its shopping role, [but] has been deliberately developed to break away from that trend through its non-shopping services and entertainments and the image of elsewhere'*.

In fact the whole retailing sector isolates itself from the production processes required to create the mass produced commodities offered for sale. Only very limited information is provided by retailers about the various processes required to produce the commodities and where these processes take place (Goss, 1992). Advertising of commodities does, however, sometimes euphemistically make selective use of the historical and geographical origins of commodities (Sack, 1988).

The unified ownership structure of shopping centres means that the built form and level of maintenance tends to be more standardised than that which is found on a shopping street. The tastes of the people that frequent a centre, that is, its catchment, can be matched with the commodities sold by the tenants and by the tenants themselves (Morris (1988, 204), however claims that shopping centres '*...do not automatically 'reflect' the composition of their immediate social environment*'). As a result of their organisational structure it also means that conflicting types of retail units are less likely to be positioned within proximity to each other in a centre than may occur in the street. The signing and advertising styles along with the appearance and maintenance of a planned shopping centre is much more uniform than the stand alone retail outlets of the traditional shopping street (Morris, 1988; Hopkins, 1991). Such standardisation may, however take away any 'local colour' (Jacobs, 1984; Kowinski, 1985; Hopkins, 1991).

The attraction of shopping centres is not only due to the controlled environment and the increased availability of credit through banks and store credit cards¹ which allows more people to take part in purchasing but also, and what is more important, to the social contact that a visit to a centre can provide. There is a degree of equality associated with just being at a centre. Shopping centre developers often try and include features that will allow visitors to socialise and take part in the spectacle of being part of a crowd. The shopping centre structure does not, however, determine that this will happen (Shields, 1992a).

Although shopping centres are privately owned, communities sometimes appropriate them. In other instances shopping centre owners have overtly attempted to extend the importance of the 'centre as a public place' feeling or the 'mall as community focus' theme by including swimming pools, medical and dental practices and even schools within their structure and by letting people use the centres for exercise, for example, mall walkers, before the centres begin trading for the day (Shields, 1989;

¹ This is not only limited to purchases that occur within a shopping centre . Store cards can sometimes be used in a variety of different outlets and may even be used as bank credit cards.

Jacobs, 1984; Hopkins, 1991; see also Hopkins, 1990). Involvement in community and special events during particular times of the year are other methods employed by the owners and managers in an attempt to foster community loyalty (Shields, 1992b).

Observing other people and being seen, is part of the 'retail drama' associated with shopping centres, according to Kowinski (1985) and Hopkins, (1990). It not only concerns the owners', managers' and retailers' attempts to entice visitors to spend money but also involves the shoppers creating some of the shopping centre experience for themselves and other visitors. '*... the customers are not only the audience they are the action and the actors. The mall environment gives them the script. All the mall's a stage, and they are but players in it*' (Kowinski, 1985, 77).

The most frequented public spaces in North America are the shopping centres. The practice of *flânerie* which is now more of a gender neutral activity than it was in the past, has become an almost universal pastime Shields (1989), claims. Strolling, along with window shopping, 'hanging out' and crowd onlooking have become, '*...established features of contemporary urban life ...*' (Shields, 1989, 149). Going shopping is regarded as a leisure activity by an increasing number of people and the shopping centre is often regarded as a leisure facility. Such places do not, however, necessarily constitute 'counter - space' (Lefebvre, 1991). They may be no less alienating than the mode of production as being at the centre exposes individuals to the observations and comments of others.

Shopping centres appear to be public spaces which anyone can visit but they are in fact private spaces, or public spaces which are privately owned, which means that in comparison to visiting stand alone retailers the shopping centre environment is much more tightly controlled.

'The shopping center appears to be everything that it is not. It contrives to be a public, civic place even though it is private and run for profit it offers a place to commune and recreate, while it seeks retail dollars;' (Goss, 1993, 40).

Researchers who have attempted to derive meaning from built structures and those who have analysed the created environment of shopping centres have done so from a position which is removed from that of the producers and the consumers of these environments. As analysts' interpretations of buildings are affected by their position with respect to the '*... production - consumption hierarchies ...*' (Goss, 1988, 398), to understand the built environment there is a need to collect information from '*... everyday people who may be "reading" or "writing" different languages in the built environment*' (Goss, 1988, 398 [emphasis in original]). In this research, therefore,

managers who are involved in attempting to produce an appealing centre for visitors on a daily basis were interviewed. Their actions were sometimes constrained by the existing created environments of their centres and by the consumers who may, either intentionally or unintentionally, misinterpret the intended meaning associated with the environments of the centres.

Planned shopping centres are only one of the many consumption sites which are now available to consumers. Other consumption sites include stand alone retail outlets, 'High Street', department stores and markets as well as those not wholly based on retailing such as leisure and fun parks. Because of the competition centres face from competing centres and other consumption sites, managers have to continuously try and create an environment which will appeal to visitors. The created environments of centres includes their built structure, the decor, the selection of tenants and their position within the centre, the ambience and their marketing campaigns. These 'features' are designed to appeal to visitors so they will want to go to the centres and so they will also spend money.

Organising consumption or a consumption site and experience can be difficult to achieve successfully. Managers of planned shopping centres have to try and orchestrate an environment which will return a profit to the investors of the centre but at the same time will be considered to be appealing by its visitors. This can be especially problematic as individuals may go to a centre for a number of different reasons. These may include the purchase of commodities which individuals perceive to be necessities, leisure shopping (which may involve purchasing), and taking pleasure in the created environment and meeting people which may not result in the visitors spending any money in the centres. There can be a clash therefore '*... between a consumption space which produces surplus value and one which produces only enjoyment - and is therefore 'unproductive' ...*' (Lefebvre, 1991, 359). Herein lies the dilemma for the managers of shopping centres. Not only do they need to create an environment which is perceived by the shoppers to be appealing whatever the purpose of their visit, but also they need to produce a centre which is financially successful for its investors. Certain features of the created environment may encourage shoppers to visit but as the financial return is indirect rather than direct their value may be difficult to define and to justify.

The created environments of shopping centres often demonstrate place and contradictorily placelessness. Centres are sometimes deliberately incorporated into their local environs by, for example, the use of design features or icons which reflect particular (either past and/ or present) characteristics of the area but at the same time often demonstrate architectural styles which are common to a number of other

centres, for example, malls built in a straight line fashion anchored by major tenants. Other places and/ or times may be simulated particularly within the interiors of centres. Such simulation only works, however, if the visitors have enough 'cultural capital' to at least minimally read the signs, so they can recognise what the environment is designed to connote.

Chain store retailers are a feature of the shopping centre environment. These retailers can provide consumers with a feeling of confidence because they recognise the frequently advertised brand names associated with the commodities but also add to a feeling of placelessness as they are part of the created environments of many centres.

CONCLUSION.

Winchester's (1992) and Shields' (1989) analyses of the created environments of the Wollongong City Mall and the West Edmonton Mall, respectively, were conducted from a position which was removed from that of the producers or the consumers of these centres. An individual's reading of the created environment of a shopping centre (which includes its built form) will, however, be influenced by their position with respect to the production and/ or consumption spheres and by the cultural and social groups to which they belong.

In this research, therefore, I interviewed centre managers who were involved in trying to produce environments which would appeal to the individuals who comprised their centres' catchments. The managers had to try and 'write' environments which would be 'read' and favourably interpreted by consumers who may occupy different positions from that of their own with respect to the production - consumption hierarchies. As well appealing to visitors the environments which were created also had to produce a profit for their investors.

The next chapter discusses the conceptual approaches which help to explain the consumption and the production which occurs within the created environments of shopping centres. Qualitative research and the technique of semi - structured interviews which were used to collect, interpret, analyse and present the information gathered from managers in this research are then discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR THE DIMENSIONS OF MY INVESTIGATIVE STRATEGY - RESEARCH THEORY, METHOD AND TECHNIQUES.

INTRODUCTION.

It has been assumed that the sites of production and consumption are physically separated within a capitalist economy. Such a division cannot be sustained with respect to a planned shopping centre where both production and consumption can occur. According to Fine (1993), consumption should be analysed using a 'systems of provision' approach where the vertical linkages between the production, distribution, marketing and consumption of commodities are examined. Glennie and Thrift (1993), however, state that consumption can be analysed in a variety of ways depending upon the focus of the study. They recognise that the place where consumption occurs may influence the actions of consumers. For example, an individual's spending patterns are likely to be different when they are abroad in comparison to when they are at home. The commodities purchased therefore, may be bought not only because of their use value but also because of what they represent, that is, their sign value.

Visitors to a shopping centre can take pleasure in shopping, which may involve the purchasing of commodities, as well as in the created environment. The enclosed nature of the space means that unlike the street retail environment, shoppers are protected from the climatic elements, political and religious speakers and the selection and arrangement of the retail tenants is often carefully organised in a manner which the owners and managers believe will appeal to shoppers. As well as being places where purchases can be made, visitors to a shopping centre sometimes also use them as a place in which they can leisure shop and watch or meet other people. The importance of shopping as a leisure activity has been further capitalised upon in some centres with the provision of overt leisure facilities, such as cinemas and carnival - like amusements and rides.

My research question was concerned with finding out how shopping centre managers attempted to create a distinctive environment which would appeal to their visitors. Rather than choosing a single theoretical framework I have made use of those conceptual ideas which appeared to give insight into the various aspects of the shopping centre experience. The nature of the research question meant that I needed to gather information on the feelings and/or opinions of the managers. Statistical data, such as the size of the centres and sales figures, would not have helped me to find out what managers believed appealed to visitors or to discover

how they tried to create an environment which would attract shoppers. In order to gather the required information it was necessary to use the qualitative research method.

'Unlike quantitative inquiry, with its prespecified intent, qualitative inquiry is evolutionary, ...' (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992, 6). The more flexible nature of the qualitative research process has been reflected in this chapter. I have therefore outlined the various options that were considered while I conducted this research project. My theoretical understanding of the attraction of shopping centres has influenced the whole research process. To highlight the importance of the conceptual framework to this study I have purposively discussed it within this chapter (although in a separate section for clarity) in which the method and techniques used to conduct my own research have also been presented.

THE PRODUCTION - CONSUMPTION DEBATE.

The position of retailing within the production - consumption debate is the subject of dispute. While Warde (1990) states that retailing is part of the production sphere, Ewen and Ewen (1982), Mc Cracken (1988a) and Cheal (1990) claim that it is part of the consumption sphere. Cheal (1990, 310), however, contends that consumption does not only occur where the market ends and that it *'... should not be equated with purchasing'*. The exact position of the retailing sector is somewhat ambiguous, however, as *'... Marx suggests, production and consumption are moments of one process'* (1973, p.94 cited in Saunders, 1988, 142). Until recently, the social sciences and within that the geography discipline have been dominated by production - based theories. On the few occasions that researchers considered consumption, they did so with the *'... conceptual baggage developed with a theoretical concern with production'* (Saunders, 1988,142). Such production - based examinations have tended to see the distribution of commodities to retailers as their end - point. Consumers were generally ignored. This has begun to change (Glennie and Thrift, 1992).

The predominance of neo - Marxian philosophies within the social sciences as well as the Christian, sometimes puritan¹ philosophies (Street, 1992) which still influence consensus opinion and are reflected in the every day language we use have affected, and continue to affect, the way consumption is viewed. While production

¹ Fine and Leopold (1990, 157), however, claim that the puritan ethic has too readily been seen as a *'...blanket ban on all consumption/ enjoyment rather than as a moral outrage at its unequal distribution'*.

has generally been regarded in a positive manner, consumption has been viewed very differently. The original definition of the word 'consume', for example, referred to '*... an act of pillage ... to "take up completely, devour, waste, spend"*' (Ewen and Ewen, 1982, 51).¹ Production and consumption have been treated as if they are polar opposites. The one good, that is production, the other evil - consumption. While those involved in production, are involved in productive occupations, are workers, male (numerically the paid work force is still dominated by men), and occupy a position in the public world, those who are predominantly involved in consumption are by association non - productive, non - workers, female (non - male) and are part of the private and therefore less important sphere. Although prevailing ideologies may make individuals feel guilty about consuming and taking pleasure from consumption, the production sphere would be thrown into crisis if there was no consumption.

It has been assumed that any changes in the production sphere are matched by readjustments in the consumption sphere. In this unproblematic scenario where production drives consumption, dupe - like individuals rush off to purchase the latest products that the producers tell them, sometimes with the aid of advertising, they need! (Douglas and Isherwood, 1978; Mort, 1988; Featherstone, 1990). The only time that consumption drives production is when the size of the marketplace expands thus causing the producer to increase production.

A number of researchers have recognised the inadequacies associated with trying to understand consumption, or sectors such as retailing which fall somewhere in between the production - consumption 'divide', by examining production. Their calls for other researchers to use consumption rather than production as their starting point have, until very recently, been unheeded. Although the idea of developing consumption - based theories is initially a very attractive one, it incorrectly assumes, or gives the impression that, while the consumption sphere is being analysed the production sphere somehow remains the same. The production and consumption spheres are not autonomous and therefore should not and cannot be examined in isolation (Morris, 1988). Some consumption researchers, such as, Fine (1993) and Glennie and Thrift (1993), are now advocating that consumption can be analysed by examining the production - consumption chains of commodities.

¹ Street (1992, 146), however, claims that the Latin root of consumption is ambiguous '*... it can mean, negatively, 'to use up', or more positively, 'to sum up'.*

'Consumption' theories.

The volume of social science literature that focuses on consumption has grown in recent years. An interdisciplinary approach to the study of consumption has not developed, however, because of the boundaries which exist between the disciplines (Fine, 1993). Instead most researchers have attempted to analyse the sphere using existing theories developed for some other purpose. The lack of an accepted approach towards the study of consumption not only occurs between the social science disciplines but also within them. There is a tension Clarke and Purvis (1994) claim, between the political economy and the post - structural accounts of consumption.

Marx's dialectical and contradictory statements about production and its interactions with other moments in the overall circuit of capital have often been misinterpreted. Production has been seen as the most important moment and Marxian based theoretical frameworks have tended to treat consumption as if it was one dimensional. Political economy analyses of consumption, for example, have examined the importance of the consumption sphere with respect to the overall circuit of capital but have ignored the sign - values associated with commodities.

'... consumption is treated in the abstract, only as an aspect of the circulation of capital. The nature of consumption as a signifying practice in people's everyday lives is ignored in a crude adherence to the base - superstructure metaphor' (Clarke, 1991, 89 [emphasis in original]).

A number of researchers have attempted to extend this area of Marxian theory but many have ended up moving away from it altogether. Recently researchers have, however, stated that consumption can be interpreted using the Marxian philosophy if the categories are re - worked.

'... some have tried to close off this alternative - for example, by using the past neglect of Marxism with respect to certain areas of concern as dubious evidence that Marxian theory cannot develop insights into new areas' (Clarke and Purvis, 1994, 1096).

Post - structuralist consumption researchers have tried to analyse the sphere by looking beyond the economic processes that create the commodities. Commodities are not only valued because of their use - value but also by what they may represent, that is, the *'... commodity now presents itself as a sign,...*' (Clarke and Purvis, 1994, 1098). The capitalist system from this philosophical view point therefore is in part *'... driven by a dynamic which follows a logic far removed from national economic*

processes and is instead imbued with uncontrollable cultural energies ...' (Clarke and Purvis, 1994, 1099).

Shields (1992b) is one researcher who has adopted this approach to the study of consumption. In his view consumption in these post - modern times and places is

'... increasingly embodying forms of sociality which act against, for instance, the separation of private and public spaces, thus opening up new forms of identification' (Clarke and Purvis, 1994, 1106).

Although consumption practices are part of the to capitalist production process they are not dominated by it and ultimately are beyond its control.

'... consumption, as a set of social practices tied to, yet ultimately beyond the complete control of capitalism's 'inner logic', presents us with a process destined to represent a fatal stress to that system' (Clarke and Purvis, 1994, 1106).

Two approaches to the study of consumption have been identified. They are the horizontal and the vertical approach. The first makes use of discipline specific factors which *'... apply across society and consumption as a whole'* (Fine, 1993, 599). The vertical or 'systems of provision' approach involves the examination of commodity - specific chains connecting

'... production, distribution, marketing, and consumption, and the material culture surrounding these elements. Each element along the system of provision is important but the role and significance of each are dependent upon the structure and processes taken as a whole. Thus horizontal factors are present within each system of provision but they are differently combined and have a different significance and role from one commodity to another' (Fine, 1993, 600).

Fine (1993, 600) argues that it is impossible to have a *'general, interdisciplinary theory of consumption ...'*. Studies which have used the horizontal approach are inappropriate to use in the development of a general theory, he claims, because they are *'... inevitably suspended from the necessary connection to specific items of consumption and their systems of provision'* (Fine, 1993, 600). The most appropriate approach, in his opinion, therefore, is the vertical approach in which it is recognised that these systems of provision have a *'... structure and history that are subject to contradictory forces and processes'* (Fine, 1993, 601).

Fine's (1993) view that consumption researchers have the choice of using either the vertical or the horizontal approach is not shared by Glennie and Thrift (1993). Many of the concepts which Fine (1993) regards as discipline specific, for example, symbolism and masculinity, maybe interdisciplinary (Glennie and Thrift, 1993). They do not believe that consumption can be adequately examined by analysing the

production - consumption chains of a number of different commodities as if they were isolated entities. The symbolic meanings associated with a commodity do not, they claim, arise solely from its system of provision but also from their relation to other goods, the signs attached to them by advertising agencies (some of which are applied to more than one commodity), or the occasion associated with their use, such as the use of a special dinner set to mark a particular event or special day. Individuals and groups of people also use their '*... consumption practices to construct meanings about themselves as people*' (Glennie and Thrift, 1993, 604).

Glennie and Thrift's (1993) interest in consumption therefore, includes the consumer as well as the commodities. They believe that the systems of provision approach to the study of consumption is a useful one but contend that the most appropriate method of inquiry for consumption researchers to use is dependent upon the focus of their study.

RESEARCH.

Like Glennie and Thrift (1993) I do not believe that consumption can only be analysed using the systems of provision approach. In this research the emphasis is on one place in which production and consumption occurs, that is, the planned and managed shopping centre (Gottdiener, 1986). Use is made of those conceptual ideas which appear to aid understanding and provide some form of explanation for the development and success (or otherwise) of the now ubiquitous planned and managed shopping centres in 'advanced capitalist' nations and in particular in Australia and New Zealand. The purpose of this thesis is not to provide a new grand theory which demonstrates how the production and consumption spheres are inter-related but rather to show how the two spheres are linked in this **particular environment**. In planned shopping centres the spatial separation of production and consumption cannot be sustained. Developers, owners and managers of shopping centres attempt to produce an environment which visitors will find appealing. Shoppers do not 'merely' consume but also must produce some of the experience for themselves. They must recognise the signs attached to commodities and the created environments of the shopping centres and what they signify in order to consume.

It is thought that the developers, owners and managers of shopping centres believe or know that place, context and setting can influence consumption practices. They attempt to create an environment which will put visitors into 'purchasing mood' by isolating and protecting them from everyday inconveniences and distractions. The purpose of mall design is to '*... disguise the exchange relation between producer and*

consumer, which is always to the former's benefit in a capitalist society' (Gottdiener, 1986, 293).

In a shopping centre a contrived experience is provided for the consumers (Jacobs, 1984; Kowinski, 1985). Deliveries are not made through front entrances but rather appear as if by magic, the weather is controlled and a constant temperature is maintained (Hopkins, 1991; Goss, 1992). A consumer's sense of time can be distorted, by the absence of time pieces (Goss, 1992) and in the case of West Edmonton Mall, history and space are rewritten to fit the desires of developers. Such manipulation is designed to provide a pleasurable experience for visitors by simulating sometimes a number of different places and/ or times which connote enjoyment and excitement free from the stresses and problems associated with everyday life. It is not only the shopping malls that demonstrate placelessness and timelessness but also the mass - produced commodities sold by the malls' retail tenants (and other retailers):

'Although in reality a typical product may be constructed of raw materials from specific places and may be assembled in many sites and stages and by many different people, it normally is presented to the masses of consumers in a highly abstracted light ... it appears fully - blown complete, and "new" often without a trace of its real origin or history' (Sack, 1988, 653).

The act of purchasing has traditionally been viewed as part of the private sphere and therefore predominantly 'women's work'. Increasingly however shopping, which may, but does not always involve purchasing (Shields, 1992b), is a gender - neutral activity. Ewen and Ewen (1982, 42, 51) note that the modern world in which we live is '*... defined by the retail (individualised) consumption of goods and services...*' and that '*Today, in the United States, people unselfconsciously refer to themselves as consumers*'. Goss (1993, 18), however, believes that '*there persists a high - cultural disdain for conspicuous mass consumption...*' which makes the consumer feel guilty about taking pleasure in consuming. Developers of shopping complexes have attempted to '*... assuage this collective guilt ...*' he feels '*... by designing into the retail built environment the means for a fantasised disassociation from the act of shopping*' (Goss, 1993, 19).

In a centre the experience of shopping is easier to control because the whole experience is managed. '*Everything from the appearance, products, and procedures ... to the weather and tenant mixture may be orchestrated ... in an attempt to heighten visitor satisfaction*' (Hopkins, 1991, 270). The act of shopping, (at the upper end of the shopping centre hierarchy at least) has become an experience (Jackson, 1991; Langman, 1992):

'... people become audiences who move through the spectacular imagery designed to connote sumptuousness and luxury, or to summon up connotations of desirable places and nostalgia for past emotional harmonies' (Featherstone, 1991, 103).

The links between shopping and leisure and shopping as a leisure activity have been capitalised upon. While smaller centres list among their retailers those associated with leisure - related activities, such as, sports shops, contain cinemas and provide coin - operated rides for small children the provision of *'... overt leisure and recreational facilities'* (Jackson, 1991, 281) is a new phenomenon. At the West Edmonton Mall, for example, which is one of the largest shopping complexes in the world, 60 per cent of the space is used for retailing while the remaining 40 per cent is for amusement (Shields, 1992b, 152). The amusement components of the mall include a

'... 2.5 - acre indoor lake stocked with dolphins ... grandly dubbed the "Deep Sea Adventure" [which] contains four minisubs ... which take tourists on tours of underwater aquaria ... a 10 - acre water park ... and a 100 000 ft² 13 - ride carnival midway, or funfair, with a 142 ft triple - loop roller coaster' (Shields, 1989, 150 - 151).

Such a development means that purchasing is only part (and possibly a subordinate part) of the attraction of these centres. People may visit these centres more for pleasure than the need to purchase (Shields, 1989; Chaney, 1990).

Individuals, however, do not only visit centres to make latent purchases but also to socialise. Unlike the workplace the shopping complex is open to all, resulting in a mixing of the social classes (Shields, 1992b), though with some definite limits. It has been argued for instance that some building facades and the 'crowd practice' may intimidate certain social groups, *'... one is present as part of the crowd, present for others and thus an object of their surveillance, scorn, commentary, co - operation, prejudice and so on'* (Shields, 1992b, 103).

As well as simple commodity exchange retailing within a shopping complex or in a stand - alone unit has always involved some form of social interaction between the retailer (whether this is the owner or an employee) and potential purchasers.

'Retail capital has always had a heavy burden of latent social functions' (Fowler, 1988) *which envelope the exchange of commodities in social practices and rituals of commensality for both vendor and buyer'* (Shields, 1992b, 101).

The special character of combining the crowd with the social functions associated with retailing has led to the development of shopping complexes as sites of social centrality. Social centrality is essential to the commercial success of modern - day shopping centres, which have moved away from convenience shopping, according to

Shields (1992b, 105), who suggests that '*... retail is one form of exchange among several. Perhaps exchange and consumption are latent forms of social centrality*'. This goes some way towards explaining why many shopping centres are able to attract large numbers of shoppers even though they list amongst their tenants a large number of chain stores and often contain similar types of tenants. It also questions the determinist notion that consumers can be duped into purchasing particular commodities and have their consumption experience defined for them by advertisers, centre developers, owners and managers (Ewen, 1976; Gronmo, 1988). Large numbers of visitors to a centre may not necessarily be reflected in its sales figures.

Although the behaviour of the consumers and (in some cases) the entertainment groups within a mall may appear to be spontaneous, consumer behaviour is moderated by soothing muzak which is supposed to put consumers into 'purchasing - mood' and by security staff who protect consumers and deter loiterers (Jacobs, 1984; Kowinski, 1985). '*Being in the tightly policed, semiprivate interior of a mall is quite different from being 'on the street'... Certain types of comportment are expected*' (Shields, 1989, 148 - 149). The controlled environments of the shopping complexes may ensure the safety and comfort of the consumers (Butler, 1991; Kowinski, 1985; Hopkins, 1990, 1991; Goss, 1992) but can also take away some of the unexpected that the street can provide. Shopping malls, therefore, are not so much a '*... new downtown as a version of the romanticised model of the 'Main Street' pioneered in Disneyland...*' (Goss, 1992, 167). They do not contain, for example, repair shops, laundromats and second hand shops which '*... remind us of the materiality of the commodity*' (Goss, 1992, 167).

Consumers are not completely powerless in this environment, however, and cannot be forced to make purchases. Window shopping, trying on clothes with no intention to buy, the use of the centre as a place to 'hang out' or as a place to observe or be observed are ways in which the desires of the mall owners may be thwarted. Those individuals who visit shopping centres on a frequent basis for purposes other than the purchase of commodities, for example, to socialise have variously been called '*... ani - malls*' or more formally, '*centerites*'... (Hopkins, 1990, 7).

The existing literature on shopping centres has predominantly been conducted by researchers from a position which is removed from those occupied by the producers and the consumers of these environments. This study focuses on consumption from the perspective of the shopping centre managers. Information was gathered from these agents who attempted to create appealing environments for their visitors on a daily basis using the qualitative technique of semi - structured interviews.

Research methods and techniques.

The selection of either the quantitative or the qualitative research method, or sometimes a combination of the two, is dependent upon the nature of the research question(s). *'If there is reason to believe that one strategy provides a more valid indicator of the variables under investigation, it should be given preference'* (Philliber et al, 1980, 93 - 94). Data collected using the quantitative research method can be used to make generalisations about the population as a whole. Qualitative researchers use techniques such as the semi - structured interview which enables them to gather more in - depth information about people's feelings, opinions and beliefs. Qualitative research techniques have most frequently been used in pilot studies for quantitative research projects and have rarely been used exclusively in research (Morton - Williams, 1985; Hakim, 1987).

When the quantitative research method is used to gather representative data from a population, participants are selected in a random manner (although this does not preclude selecting a stratified sample from a particular group in the population, for example, on the basis of age or gender, as long as this is acknowledged in the research results). The size of the sample and the confidence limits are calculated and expressed statistically before research begins. When qualitative techniques such as observation or interviewing are used to collect information, however, the selection process is usually non - random. Individuals are often chosen because of the similarities or relationships they share with other members of the participant group.

'Sample design in qualitative research is usually purposive; that is, rather than taking a random cross section of the population to be studied, small numbers of people with specific characteristics, behaviour or experience are selected to facilitate broad comparisons between certain groups that the researcher thinks likely to be important' (Morton - Williams, 1985, 31 [emphasis in original]).

The number of individuals involved in a qualitative study is usually much smaller than when a quantitative methodology is employed and much less important. In qualitative research the 'less is more' principle applies, that is, it is more important to focus upon a small number of people in depth than to study a larger number in a more superficial manner. Qualitative research offers *'... an opportunity to glimpse the complicated character, organisation, and logic of culture'* (Mc Cracken, 1988b, 17).

In order to gain an insight into how managers attempt to create shopping centres which appeal to visitors, I needed to gather material in the form of views and opinions, that is information, from the individuals concerned, which is best

understood qualitatively. Qualitative researchers have tended to use the techniques of observation or interviewing to collect data directly from participants. As I wanted the managers to tell me why and how they reacted in particular circumstances, interviewing was considered to be the more appropriate technique to use.

Wragg (n. d.) and May (1993) (see also Moser and Kalton, 1971 cited in Eyles, 1988), have identified two different interviewing techniques, that is, structured and informal interviews. In a structured interview the type of questions asked often require the interviewee to select a particular pre - determined category or to give short answer type responses. The format of a structured interview therefore is often similar to that of a written questionnaire (Wragg, n. d.). As each participant is asked the same questions in the same order and manner this method of research '*... is said to permit comparability between responses*' (May, 1993, 92 [emphasis in original]). Any differences in the answers given by the participants are thought to be '*... real ones and not the result of the interview situation itself*' (May, 1993, 92). There is a tendency amongst the researchers who use this technique to assume, that the participants will behave in the manner which they say they will, that is, there is an '*... unproblematic relation between words and deeds*' (Eyles, 1988, 7).

If a random sample of sufficient size is used to select the interviewees the results of such interviews can be used to make generalisations about the (particular) population as a whole (May, 1993). This technique of research is useful when the researcher wants to ask a large number of questions which do not need to be considered at length before participants feel able to give an answer with which they are satisfied. They should not feel that they are being forced into making a particular response or into identifying a category so as to fit with the predetermined structure of the investigator's questionnaire (Wragg, n. d.).

In semi - structured interviews the interviewer has a number of topic areas which they wish to discuss with the participant. This type of interview involves a more conversational type format than that which is associated with structured interviews. Interviewees are able to answer questions at length but this technique, '*... offers enough shape to prevent aimless rambling*' Wragg (n. d., 10). Although the researcher has a number of points which they want the participant to talk about, the order in which they are discussed and the manner in which they are introduced and the enquiries made, depend upon the responses and the responsiveness of the individual being interviewed (Eyles, 1988). The use of this technique enables the investigator to collect qualitative information by probing beneath the surface of the answers that are given to seek both '*... clarification and elaboration on the answers given*' (May, 1993, 93 [emphasis in original]; Eyles (1988). Its more flexible nature

means that the investigator can also adapt the phrasing of questions as well as the actual questions to suit the interviewee (Eyles, 1988). Even though the researcher often does not begin to conduct their interviews without prior knowledge on the subject under investigation, by way of a literature review, for example, the more fluid nature of this type of interview means that an unexpected response may lead to new fruitful areas of enquiry in subsequent interviews (Becker and Geer, 1982).

Wragg (n. d.) and May (1993) claim that informal interviews can either be 'semi - structured' or 'unstructured'. This latter distinction is, I believe, difficult to sustain. For a researcher to gain the information they seek the interview format has to be at least loosely structured, that is, the participant needs to be given some direction from the researcher as to what they want them to talk about.

Interviews conducted for the purposes of research (either quantitative or qualitative) require individuals (often) formerly unknown to each other to freely converse. In a formal interview participants need to be willing to answer a series of predetermined questions for the interview to be a success. When less formal techniques are employed, such as semi - structured interviewing, there is an even greater need for the participant to feel comfortable with the researcher so that they are willing to discuss at length, their actions and feelings with respect to the variables under investigation. In order to establish such a rapport with their participants, Philliber et al (1980 see also Dexter, 1970 cited in Moyser, 1988; Mc Cracken, 1988b) recommend that a researcher adopt a '*... friendly and neutral manner which expresses acceptance without being overly sympathetic or critical ...*' (Philliber et al 1980, 96 [emphasis in original]).

The use of terms familiar to the participant can also help to establish rapport provided that the researcher is comfortable using this kind of language (Philliber et al, 1980) and is aware of any informal meanings that the participant group may associate with their use. It is considered legitimate to 'probe' (Philliber et al, 1980) or to 'prompt' (Mc Cracken, 1988b) the participants to gain a fuller understanding of the topics under investigation but the researcher needs to ensure that their questions or comments are not phrased in such a way so as to influence the participants' responses.

If the participant does not provide contradictory information during an interview the researcher has to presume that they are being told the 'truth'. The semi - structured technique, however, does not ensure that participants will tell the researcher '*... the 'real' and the 'true' as they 'really' see it*' (Eyles, 1988, 8 [emphasis in original]) and a high degree of rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee may not prevent

the latter feeling that it is '*... the researcher who is talking, who is in control, who is intrusive*' (Eyles, 1988, 8).

There is no one correct way of conducting qualitative research, that is, there are '*... few if any general rules and principles to follow of the type characteristic of quantitative research*' (Sarantakos, 1993, 300). The differing aims and the various techniques used to collect information make it difficult as well as inappropriate for qualitative researchers to produce a binding set of guidelines for others to follow (Strauss, 1987). '*Each study is, of course unique; it is therefore impossible to draw up a blueprint that will apply to all*' (Morton - Williams, 1985, 27).

The qualitative research literature has concentrated on the various techniques researchers can use to collect information (Strauss, 1987), less attention has been spent on how it may be analysed or interpreted. The use of rudimentary mathematical applications, including counting, to analyse and present information, however, is the subject of dispute. Some researchers, for example, claim that information collected using qualitative research techniques cannot be used to make representative statements about the population as a whole (Strauss, 1987). Mc Cracken (1988b, 18) is adamant '*One cannot draw quantitative conclusions from qualitative work*'.

Analysing qualitative information using qualitative techniques is, according to Jones (1985, 56), a '*... highly personal activity*'. It involves

'... 'fracturing' data into 'lumps of meaning' (e.g. events, actions, acts, statements, concepts) and a subsequent restructuring, first by categorisation and then by developing relationships between categories' (Walker, 1985, 185; emphasis in original).

Researchers sometimes reduce or interpret their information by organising or structuring it in some way or by looking for similarities in behaviour or attitude amongst the participants or within the text. It is not

'... 'merely' a matter of discovering and describing what is there. The very process of deciding and describing 'what is', and what is relevant and significant [sic] in 'what is', involves selective interpretation and conceptualisation' (Jones, 1987, 57; emphasis in original).

The way the information is analysed is also dependent upon the aims of the research and the target audience (Jones, 1985).

The subjective nature of these techniques means that researchers will not necessarily interpret qualitative information in exactly the same way. '*... there are no*

definite rules to be followed by rote and by which, for example, two researchers can ensure that they reach identical conclusions about a set of data' (Jones, 1985, 56).

Coding and mapping are two techniques which have been used by qualitative researchers to analyse data. Coding involves summarising information by use of a single word or phrase enabling a researcher to categorise the information. Researchers can either decide upon their categories before they conduct their research or wait to see what 'emerges' from the information collected. Deciding upon the categories beforehand, as Jones (1985) claims, is quicker and easier but it may mean that the '*... data all too easily become structured within the a priori definitions of the researcher in precisely the ways that data collection methodology was intended to avoid'* (Jones, 1985, 58).

Qualitative researchers recognise that studies can never be objective. A researcher cannot conduct research, examine the data collected or decide upon the categories which they will use to interpret the information without using their prior understanding or preconceptions.

'We always know something already and this knowledge is intimately involved in what we come to know next, whether by observation or any other way. We see what we have reason of seeing' (Kaplan, 1964, 133 cited in Jones, 1985, 58).

Some researchers who interviewed participants have after the data has been coded used the mapping technique. This technique aids the researcher in the analytical process. It demonstrates in a diagrammatic form the relationships and interactions which the participants, not the researcher, believe occur between the different categories (or codes). '*In mapping we are listening for, and seeking to represent, persons' explanatory and predictive theories about those aspects of their world being described to us'* (Jones, 1985, 60). Being able to discover the interrelationships between events, feelings, opinions and beliefs according to the participants, as Hakim (1987) claims, is one of the strengths of qualitative research. '*The question 'why' often cannot be asked, or answered, directly and may involve a variety of circumstantial and contextual factors creating links between, apparently unrelated matters'* (Hakim, 1987, 28).

The information provided is by necessity interpreted by the researchers. The qualitative framework is not, however, a license to foist opinions onto others, but rather to present, or give voice to those of the participants.

Other techniques which have been used to categorise qualitative information in association with coding include using a sentence format which involves listening to

the interview tapes and writing down statements using different sheets of paper for each category, or writing the codes in the margin of each interview transcript and later cutting them out so that all the information which has been coded using the same category can be examined together (Jones, 1985). Computer software programmes such as 'Nudist', are sometimes also used by qualitative researchers to label and organise pieces of text.

Presenting the findings of a qualitative study in an appropriate manner is, as with the other stages of the research process, a subjective and personal decision which is made by the researcher. Findings are often presented using written text. Tables, matrices, figures and charts have also been used (Sarantakos, 1993). It is, however, debatable whether qualitative information can be adequately summarised using these techniques which were designed for quantitative data. Walker (1985), even goes so far as to state that such research cannot be adequately presented in the form of a written report but rather is much more usefully presented verbally and by way of a discussion.

'Qualitative material cannot be adequately summarised - there is no qualitative equivalent of descriptive statistics. ... a report must be selective ... the understanding acquired through the very personal, frequently interactive process of qualitative research is often best conveyed through verbal presentation and discussion' (Walker, 1985, 180).

The choice of language with which to present qualitative research is also problematic and dependent upon the extent to which the researcher believes that mathematical techniques can be used to analyse and present qualitative information. Terms such as 'significant', for example, may need to be avoided by those researchers who believe that mathematical formulae should not be applied to qualitative information because of the statistical meaning with which they are sometimes associated. Even the use of the most rudimentary mathematical techniques, such as, counting, are considered by some qualitative researchers to be inappropriate. Morton - Williams (1985), for example, states that researchers should identify and describe the diversity opinions and the behaviours of the participants rather than how many felt it and the strength of feeling. Rather than presenting their findings using numbers which can imply significance, Strauss (1987) and Morton - Williams (1985 see also Overholser, 1986 cited in Mc Cracken, 1988b), suggest that qualitative researchers use phrases such as 'around half' and 'a minority view was' when they are presenting the results of their research. Quantitative conclusions should not be drawn from qualitative information. Mc Cracken (1988b), however concedes that

'Quantitative standards have been so deeply embedded in the "culture" of the social sciences that it may be some time before we

are free of the tendency to judge qualitative methods by quantitative standards' (Mc Cracken, 1988b, 18).

The amount of raw data that researchers submit with their reports on the findings of qualitative research studies varies (and is dependent upon ethical considerations) as does the level of interpretation and explanation that accompanies it. Some researchers provide descriptive accounts of their research findings while others use the information to develop (grounded) theories. Researchers who have used either the interviewing or group discussion techniques to collect their information have sometimes provided edited interview or group discussion transcripts while others have made use of excerpts to demonstrate the range of views expressed by the participants. To illustrate the descriptions and explanations of their research findings other researchers have quoted their participants directly (Hakim, 1987; Walker, 1985).

THE CREATED ENVIRONMENT OF SHOPPING CENTRES IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

'Qualitative research is rarely tightly structured in advance. Progress, in terms of evolving hypotheses and design, is usually contingent upon what has been learnt before, so that in evaluating the final output it is valuable to know what avenues were followed and which were rejected and why' (Walker, 1985, 184).

In the early stages of this investigation¹ I realised that I did not want to use production - based theories in isolation to help explain the shopping centre phenomenon as other geographers who have mainly focused upon industry or agriculture have done. Rather than studying production and consumption as if they were separate entities and agonising over the exact position of retailing within this theoretical continuum I came to agree with Morris (1988) that production and consumption should not be studied in an autonomous manner. I also began to appreciate that consumption does not occur in a vacuum but rather in particular places and contexts which often impact upon the actions of the consumers.

'Satisfactory analyses of consumption practices will also need to recognise that features of place, context and setting are central to many types of consumption and shape consumers' practices' (Glennie and Thrift, 1993, 605).

¹ All research should be conducted in an ethical manner. The major ethical principles as listed in the 'Code of Ethical Conduct for Research and Teaching Involving Human Subjects [sic]' (Massey University, 1990), that is, informed consent, confidentiality, minimisation of harm, truthfulness and social sensitivity were interpreted and applied to this research.

I decided to examine shopping centres in three main cities and a tourist destination in both Australia and New Zealand rather than complexes in only one of these countries. This decision was made for a number of reasons. Originally, the Closer Economic Trade (CER) Agreement between the two countries which gave manufacturers in each country free access to each other's market place and the increased presence of, in particular Australian retailers such as *K Mart*, *Katies*, *Country Road* and *Just Jeans* in New Zealand, were seen as evidence of an industry in which there were links between the two countries. As the research progressed, it was found that the relationship between the two countries with respect to the planned shopping centre industry was even stronger than first thought. Some centres in Australia and New Zealand, for example, were owned by the same companies. *LynMall* in Auckland was owned by AMP Shopping Centre Propriety Limited along with a number of other centres in Australia (*AMP Annual Review*, 1988, 1989). The Lend Lease company in Australia also owned and managed centres in New Zealand through its subsidiary, Biron Properties, which it jointly owned with the New Zealand based, Challenge Properties (*Fletcher Challenge News*, July, 1988; *Fletcher Challenge Limited Annual Report*, 1988). Some of the centre managers had worked in both countries and the Building Owners and Managers (BOMA) devised management courses - the Certified Centre Manager (CCM) and the Certified Marketing Manager (CMM) - were the same in each country. These qualifications which consisted of study courses, that is, 'Management One' and 'Management Two', were not (in 1993) available in New Zealand. Management One could be completed in New Zealand but managers had to travel to Australia for 'Management Two' and certification [Interview with Chairperson New Zealand Council of Shopping Centres (NZCSC)].

By examining centres in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane in Australia and Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch in New Zealand as well as the tourist areas of the Gold Coast and Queenstown (Figures 4.1 - 4.2; Tables 4.1 - 4.2) a variety of centres in terms of scale, location and type, that is, inner city, neighbourhood, community and regional (Appendices 1 - 3) were able to be studied.

To answer the research question I realised that I had to gather qualitative information from my participants. The success of a centre is dependent upon creating an environment which is appealing to the particular catchment, that is, context and circumstance are important variables. Available statistical information or a quantitative study would not have helped me to discover why centres appeal to shoppers. It was initially felt that centre managers, owners, retailers and customers should be approached. The flexibility of the qualitative research method, however,

allowed me to narrow down the groups of participants so as to essentially involve research which focused upon the managers. On reflection I realised that gathering information from shoppers about what they liked and did not like about centres was less important than initially supposed. Visitors cannot be prevented from entering a centre nor can they be forced to make purchases. Provided they observe the centre's 'rules' and do not commit illegal acts they are able to act in the way they choose. Despite these apparent freedoms, however, shoppers in a centre react to the environment which has been created and is continually being created by the developers, owners, managers, retailers and by themselves for other shoppers.

Some managers were asked (at the conclusion of an interview), during the early stages of my study, if they would allow me to talk to some of the retailers within the centre as they are an essential component of any shopping centre environment. The managers' permission had to be gained due to the private nature of the space. For various reasons my request was sometimes turned down. One manager refused on the basis that he was not aware that this was one of the criteria of the research¹ while another said that if I wanted to speak to the retailers he would choose the retailers which I could speak to and inform them of my impending visit. Such conditions were necessary because he claimed, the retailers would not welcome me walking into their shops and asking them questions. He may also have been trying to protect the image of his company if he suspected that some of the retailers were disgruntled with the way it was managing the centre, that is, some managers may have wanted to ensure that it was their own view of the centre which was promoted.

This avenue of research was, after consideration, also abandoned not only because a number of managers turned down my request to talk to the retailers within their centres but also because I realised that the information which I was able to collect by talking to the people who worked in the shops was limited. Many of the individuals who were working in the shops were not involved in the decision making processes for the business. Interviewing the retailers and the retail workers in the shops while they were working also proved to be difficult. The best time to speak to retailers was when there were few or preferably no customers within the shops but even when these 'conditions' were met it was difficult, often impossible, to gather useful information on, for example, why they decided to open a business within a particular centre and what they thought made the centre and centres in general appealing to shoppers. Such information, it was found, could not be adequately collected from

¹ Information gathered from my interview with this centre manager has not been presented in this thesis because of the restrictions placed upon my use of it by the participant.

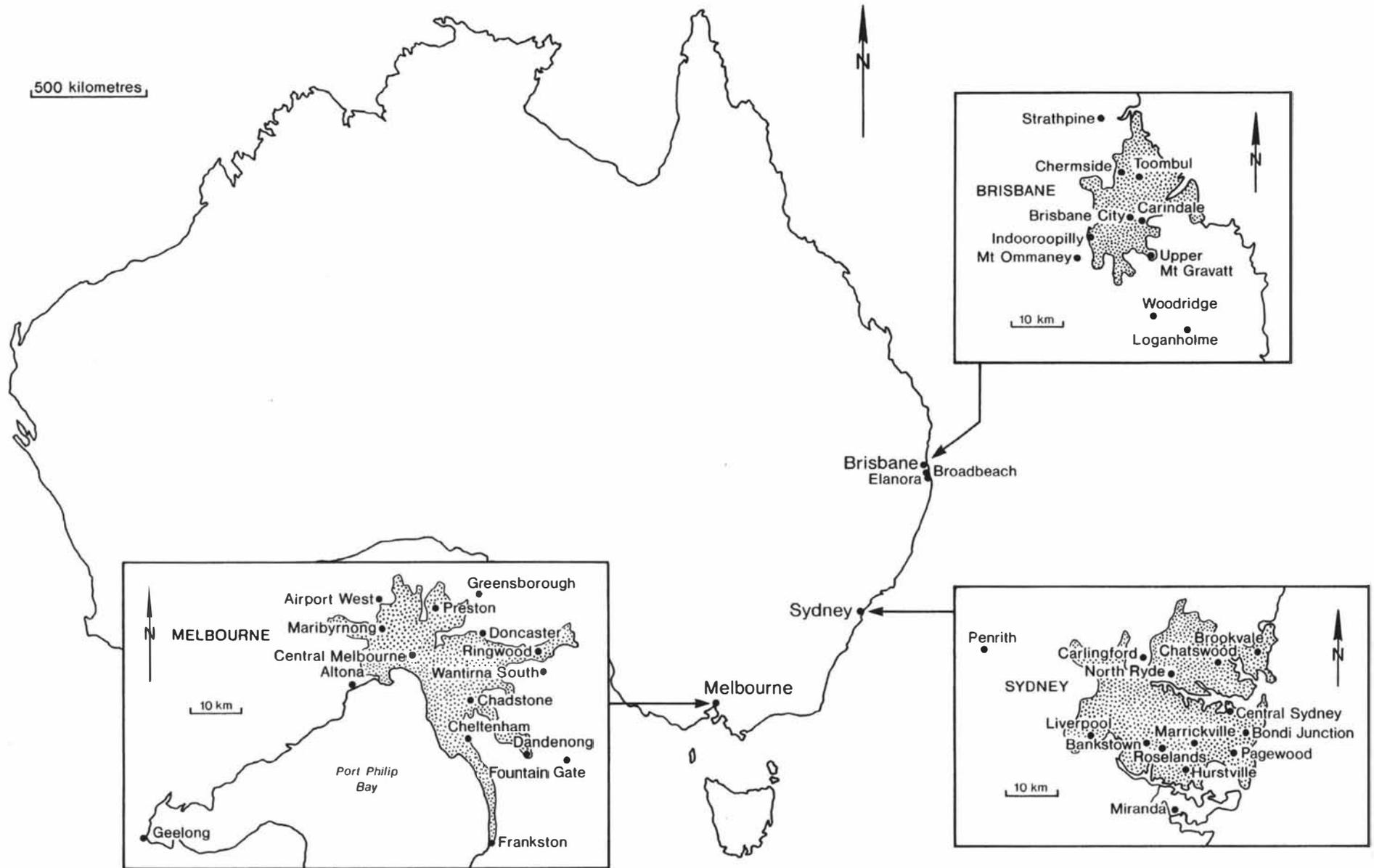


Figure 4.1 Location of Centres analysed in Australia.

QUEENSLAND	
Name of Centre	Location
Carindale	Carindale
Centenary	Mt. Ommaney
Chermside	Chermside
Garden City	Upper Mt. Gravatt
Indooroopilly	Indooroopilly
Logan Hyperdome	Loganholme
Myer Centre	Brisbane City
Pacific Fair	Broadbeach
The Pines	Elanora
Strathpine	Strathpine
Toombul	Toombul
Winter Garden	Central Brisbane
Woodridge Plaza	Woodridge

SYDNEY	
Name of Centre	Location
Bankstown Square	Bankstown
Bondi Junction Plaza	Bondi Junction
Carlingford Court	Carlingford
Centrepont	Central Sydney
Chatswood	Chatswood
Eastgardens	Pagewood
Hurstville	Hurstville
Liverpool	Liverpool
Macquarie	North Ryde
Marrickville	Marrickville
Miranda	Miranda
Penrith	Penrith
The Queen Victoria Building	Central Sydney
Roselands	Roselands
The Strand Arcade	Central Sydney
Warringah Mall	Brookvale

MELBOURNE	
Name of Centre	Location
Altona Gate	North Altona
Airport West	Airport West
Australia on Collins	Central Melbourne
Bay City Plaza	Geelong
Bayside	Frankston
Capital Centre	Dandenong
(The New) Chadstone	Chadstone
Collins Place	Central Melbourne
Corio Village	Corio, Geelong
Doncaster	Doncaster
Eastland	Ringwood
Fountain Gate	Fountain Gate
Highpoint	Maribyrnong
Knox City	Wantirna South
Melbourne Central	Central Melbourne
Northland	Preston
Southgate	South Melbourne
Southland	Cheltenham
Sportsgirl	Central Melbourne
Valley Central Greensborough	Greensborough

Table 4.1 Names and Locations of centres analysed in Australia.

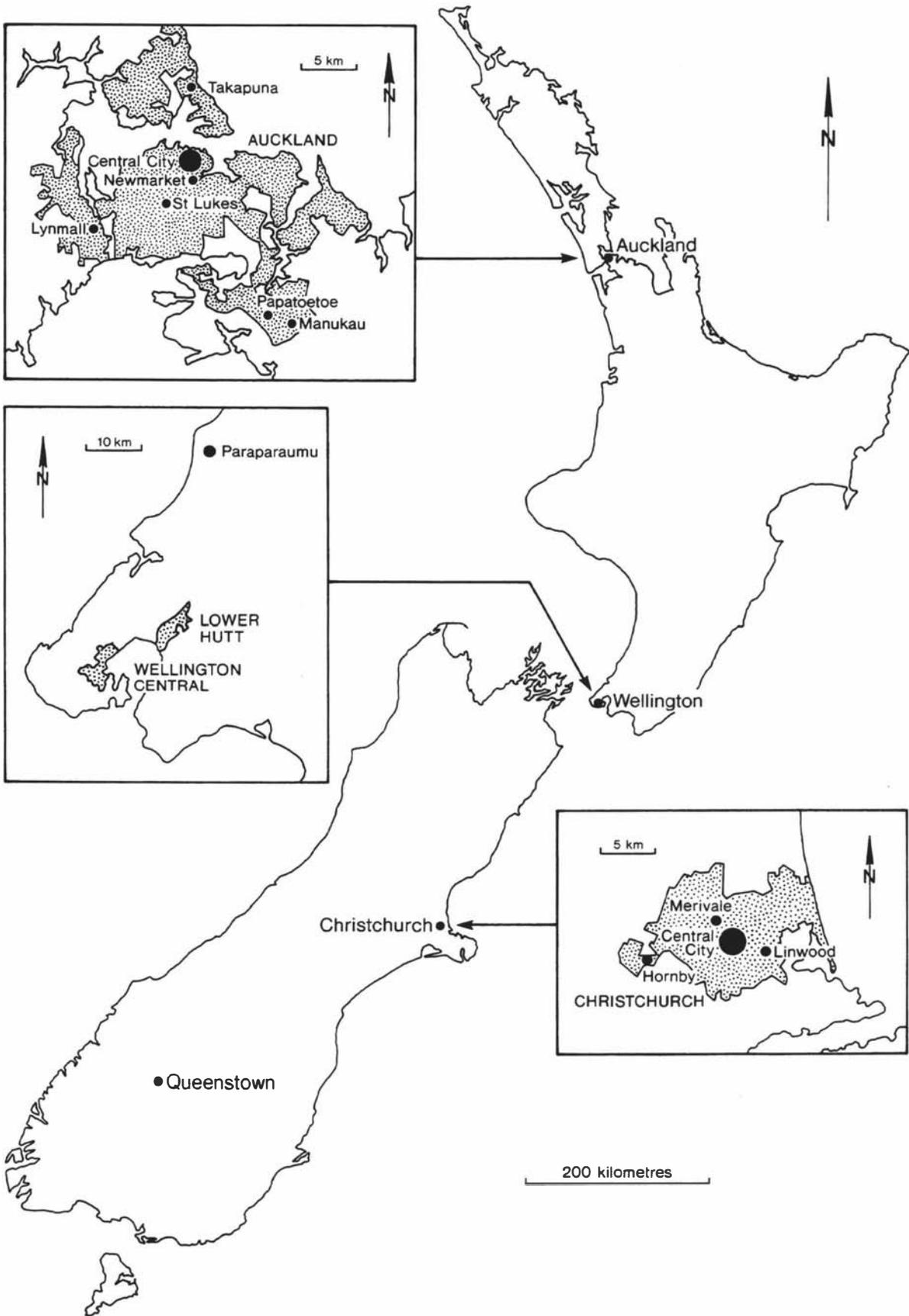


Figure 4.2 Location of Centres analysed in New Zealand.

AUCKLAND REGION	
Name of Centre	Location
Colonial Mutual Centre	Central Auckland
Countrywide Bank Centre	Central Auckland
Hunters Plaza	Papatoetoe
Lynmall City Shopping Centre	New Lynn
Manukau City Shopping Centre	Manukau City
Shore City Galleria	Takapuna
St Lukes	Mt Albert
Two Double Seven Broadway	Newmarket

WELLINGTON REGION	
Name of Centre	Location
Capital on the Quay	Central Wellington
Coastlands Shopping-town	Paraparaumu
Harbour City Centre	Central Wellington
Lambton Square	Central Wellington
Queensgate	Lower Hutt

CHRISTCHURCH/QUEENSTOWN	
Name of Centre	Location
Canterbury Centre	Central Christchurch
Hornby Mall	Hornby
Linwood City Mall	Linwood
Merivale Mall	Merivale
O'Connells Pavilion	Queenstown
Skyline Arcade	Queenstown

Table 4.2 Names and Locations of centres analysed In New Zealand.

the owners or operators of the retail outlets not only because of the necessarily short time available to interview them but rather because at least some of them, like the shoppers and the retail workers, were having to react to the environment which had been provided for them by the developers, owners and managers of the centres.

Some of the owners and the developers are not involved in running their shopping centres on a daily basis - unlike the managers. It was, therefore, eventually decided that the shopping centre managers would be approached. The managers also occupy an interesting position within the owner - manager - retail tenant relationship - a position, which is not always recognised or appreciated by the managers or by the retailers.

The managers were not selected in a random manner but rather were chosen on the basis of the location and size of the centres that they managed as it was felt that these variables may influence the type of shopping centre environment that the owners and managers tried to create. In New Zealand the managers were mainly selected on the basis of whether the centres were listed in the BOMA produced 1993 Shopping Centre Directory. This provided information on the size and the type (for example, 'neighbourhood', 'community' (Appendix 1)) of centre as well as listing the telephone and facsimile numbers (if applicable) of centre management. As it had been decided that the focus would be on a range of shopping centre types a further selection was then made on the basis of the location of the centre and how easy it was to travel to using public transport as this was how I had to get myself to a number of the centres. Managers of centres which were known to be under - going major extension/ redevelopment programmes were not contacted. This was because the created environments of these centres were being altered. I also felt that the managers would not welcome a request for information during such a busy period.

In the three main cities interviews with managers of both inner city and 'suburban' shopping centres were conducted. Although the current shopping centre directory was used it was found that some of the postal information was out of date. For the interviews that were arranged once this problem had become apparent, the selection criteria was also based upon whether the management office had a facsimile number. Thus if the number had been disconnected I would know almost instantaneously and could then decide whether to attempt to telephone the manager directly or to select another centre using the above mentioned criteria.

As well as introducing myself and my research briefly in the letters or facsimile messages sent to the managers, I also listed the themes (Appendix 4) which I hoped

to discuss with them. Managers approached earlier in my study had indicated that they wanted me to provide them with some information as to the type of questions I wanted to ask and the scope of my research.

In Australia the interviews were organised for me through Australian Mutual Provident (AMP, Australia) after an offer from the then chairperson of the NZCSC, Mr. Kevin Dell, who was working for AMP in New Zealand at the time. As my information on the shopping centres and where they were located in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Sydney and Melbourne, was extremely limited, having a third party with knowledge of the industry organise my interviews was, I considered, the best course of action. The arrangement worked very well in that I got to visit a large number of centres in a short period of time as well as a wide range of centres. In a small number of instances, however, I was unaware until after the completion of the interviews that the managers thought that I was employed, or had some connection with AMP. Their misunderstanding did not appear to have restricted the responses made by these managers to any great extent. There was, however, the occasional communication problem. Although I was provided with an interview schedule which listed the names and addresses of the centres and often the name of the manager, a small number of centre managers were either not aware of the time of my visit or even that I wanted to interview them! Sometimes the managers were able to see me but on other occasions when re - scheduling the interview was not possible it had to be abandoned. Because I did not personally organise the interviews I briefly introduced myself and the nature of my research at the beginning of my discussions with the managers in Australia.

Qualitative research methods have not been used extensively in studies involving elite groups such as shopping centre managers. As my research question involved trying to find out what the managers believed made centres appealing to shoppers this research method was, however, considered to be the more appropriate. Because the visitors to shopping centres have to react to the environment which has been created for them I decided that the centre managers were the most suitable group of people to approach as they were involved in trying to create an appealing environment for shoppers on a daily basis.

The more flexible nature of the semi - structured interview in comparison to the structured interview meant that although the 'conversations' which I had with the centre managers had a broadly similar framework (in that I often had the topic areas which I wanted to discuss written on a sheet of paper in front of me) there was enough flexibility for me to be able to alter the order in which the questions were asked and even the questions themselves, depending upon the responses and the

responsiveness of the managers. This was important. Before I conducted my own research I had completed a relatively thorough literature review. Although I realised that such action could impact upon my research, by influencing the questions asked and my analysis of the interview transcripts, as an outsider to the industry I believed that I would be able to gather more useful information if I had some knowledge as to how it was structured and organised. Many of the articles and books which focused upon the sector, however, were written from a North American or British perspective. I therefore felt that it was necessary for me to be able to adjust my enquiries to make them more suited to the Australian and New Zealand contexts. Employing the semi - structured interviewing technique allowed me to do this while I conducted my interviews.

The semi - structured interviews for this research had to be conducted in a shorter length of time, that is, between half an hour and two hours, than that which is often suggested in the literature as they occurred during the manager's working day. Only a minimal amount of time could therefore be devoted to attempting to make the participant feel at ease with me and for me to appear comfortable with them. The time restrictions did not prove to be a problem as I was always able to converse in sufficient detail with the managers to cover all my areas of interest. On the few occasions when I was informed that only a short period of the manager's time could be allocated to the interview I focused upon what I believed to be the more important topic areas so that they would be covered if the time restrictions were strictly adhered to. On each occasion, however, the interview ran for a longer period of time than I had initially been promised when the interview was arranged.

At the beginning of the interviews I usually asked the managers to give me a brief history and overview of their centre. Such an enquiry was not only found to be a useful 'ice breaker' but also provided me with some helpful background material on the centre and gave me some insight as to why the managers may have acted in the way in which they said they had and the constraints which limited their actions. A number of the managers touched upon topic areas which I had decided I wanted to discuss with them, thereby giving me a useful lead into my specific areas of enquiry.

Nearly all the interviews were recorded onto audio tapes and then later transcribed. This technique allowed me to use verbatim quotations in this report and provided me with a record of the interview. It also meant that the interviews could be conducted more quickly as the participant did not have to wait while I wrote notes. Such a technique did, however, rely upon me operating the equipment correctly and was dependent upon the managers allowing me to use the tape recorder. None of the managers refused to let me record their interview. Some were a little hesitant at first

but many of them appeared to feel more at ease or to forget about the recorder once the interview was under way. Recording the interviews allowed me to concentrate upon what the managers were saying without the distraction of taking notes. I did, however, have to remember what the participants had said earlier in the interview as I had no notes to refer to.

Although a researcher should not try and influence the responses made by a participant I question whether it is really possible, and in fact useful, for them to appear to be neutral (see also Philliber et al, 1980). Even if a researcher does not react to comments made by the participant in a verbal manner it may be difficult to avoid involuntary non - verbal forms of communication, for example, raising an eyebrow or an expression of surprise. It is also debatable whether two people can have a conversation if one of them gives little or no response to the other's expressions except by asking another question! To encourage someone to communicate freely there has to be some sort of interaction between the parties. A neutral manner may be interpreted as a lack of understanding, boredom or disinterest.

If the researcher who has conducted the interviews also transcribes them there is a danger that they will become too accustomed to the material. *'Investigators who transcribe their own interviews invite not only frustration but also a familiarity with the data that does not serve the later process of analysis'* (Mc Cracken, 1988b, 41 - 42). Although monetary considerations precluded me from considering employing anyone to transcribe my interviews, I do not believe that I became too familiar with the material. Analysing and interpreting what the participants have said is after all an essential component of the qualitative research process. In my opinion familiarity aids understanding and helps a researcher to interpret what a participant is saying and why they may be saying it.

After the interviews had been transcribed they were analysed using the techniques of coding and mapping. Coding the information which had been gathered was found to be a useful way of summarising the material. The mapping technique made it easier for me to see the similarities and the differences which existed with respect to the responses made by the managers. These diagrams highlighted the relationship between the codes, according to the managers, many of which were not immediately obvious from reading the transcripts (Figure 4.3).

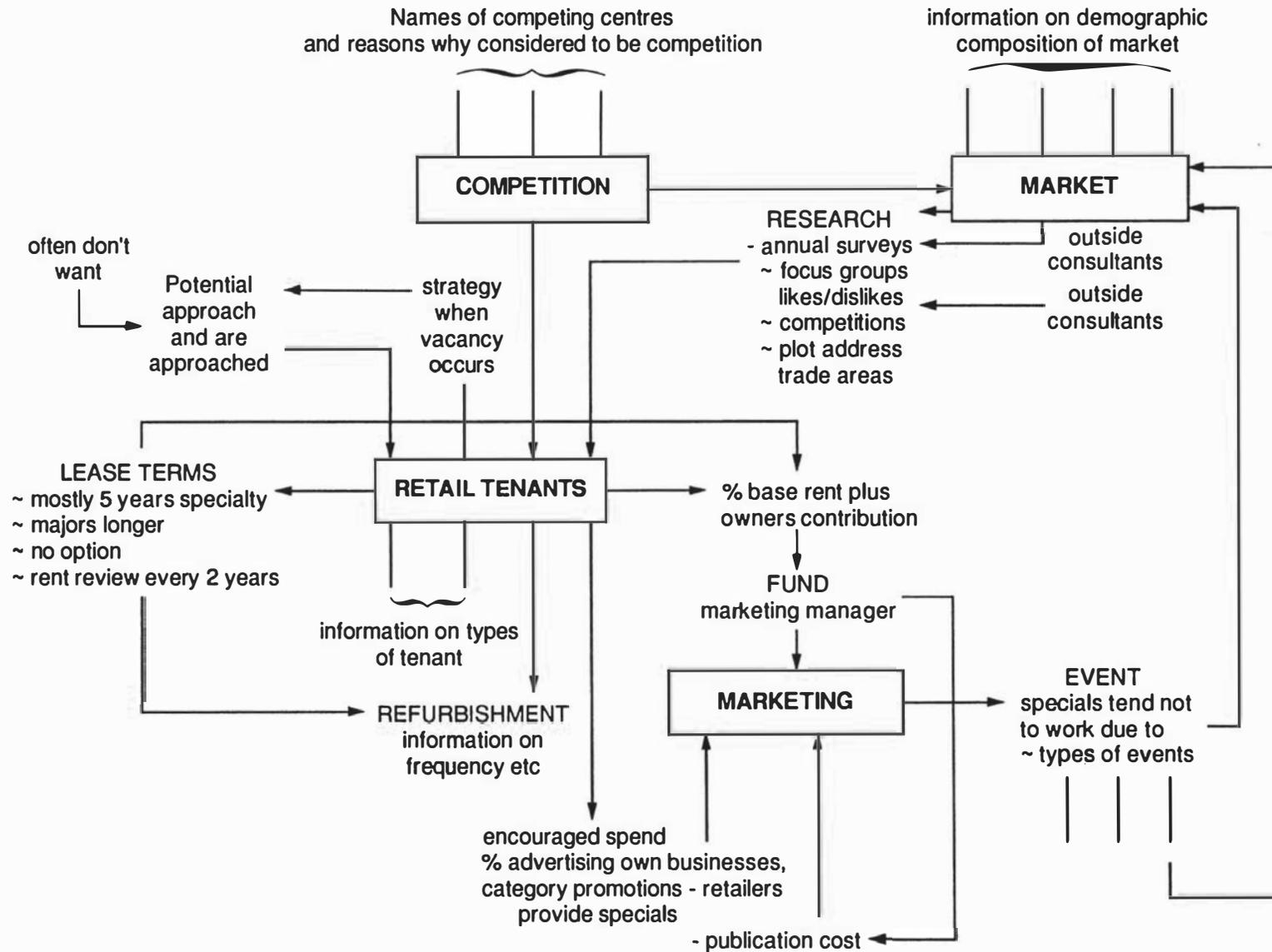


Figure 4.3 Stylised Map drawn from a Coded Transcript.

After each transcript had been coded and mapped a decision was then made on how to sort the interviews. In this instance the location of the centre (that is, was it located in the inner city?, on a stand alone site?, in a tourist area? or was it part of an established traditional shopping street?), was used to categorise the interviews because the location of each centre 'emerged' from the transcripts and maps as the most important site of difference between the centres. Such categorisation is at variance to that used in the BOMA produced shopping centre directories which fundamentally classify centres on the basis of size. Although both the Australian and New Zealand directories also used the *City Centre* classification which as the name suggests, referred to centres located in the central city or within a major central business district (Appendices 1 - 3). According to the managers, however, the created environments of their centres were affected more by location and from that the market which they were designed to appeal too, than by their size. Centres located on stand alone sites, for example, were primarily inward - looking structures with plain outward facing walls whereas those centres built on or near a commercial strip were both inward and outward facing complexes which were designed to appeal to those shoppers who specifically travelled to them as well as those individuals who may be in the area for some other purpose. Retail tenants positioned near the entrance ways and on sites visible from the street in these centres, therefore, often had large windows so a selection of merchandise was able to be seen by individuals as they walked past.

For each category of centre as defined by their location, combined maps were then drawn using the same coding system as was used to produce the maps from each interview transcript. Transferring this information into chapter form initially involved the use of codes as section headings. In some of the chapters more or different section headings were used, for example, in the inner city chapter the catchment which the centres are supposed to appeal to is discussed.

Although commonalities in the managers' responses were looked for many exceptions have also been included because to the manager or managers concerned, their own opinions and the circumstances which impact upon the type of environment that they can create are what matters. One of the advantages of the qualitative research method is that it allows researchers to gather information on each of the participants' circumstances so an understanding can be gained as to why they may react in certain ways or hold particular attitudes.

Throughout the research process I was very conscious that the raw data from my interviews would not be compared to that which is being reported in this thesis. I therefore tried to represent the opinions of the managers interviewed in an honest

and unambiguous manner. The need to present research in this way is not restricted to, or a particular short - coming associated with qualitative analyses, but also is applicable to research conducted in a quantitative manner.

Quotations have been used extensively and numerical and statistical notation and terms avoided. Rather than stating how many managers expressed similar feelings on a particular aspect of the created environment of shopping centres or giving this information as a proportion of the responses, phrases such as, 'it was felt that ...' or 'analysis revealed that ...' have been used. As the managers were chosen purposively and not in a random manner, the information collected could not be presented as if it were representative data gathered from centre managers in Australia and New Zealand. Reducing the collected material into numerical form would also have meant that much of its richness would have been lost.

The research process.

There does still appear to be a feeling amongst quantitative researchers that a qualitative study is an easy, or 'soft' option, for those who are illiterate in the use of statistical techniques and formulas! The two research methods should not, however, be crudely compared in terms of difficulty because they require researchers to have quite different skills, but rather should be assessed on the basis of whether the research method provided information which allowed the researcher to successfully answer their research question.

While a quantitative researcher can remain (at least to a certain extent) emotionally detached from the statistics or the empirical information which they examine even when it refers to people, a qualitative researcher is by necessity more personally involved with the participants. When semi - structured interviews are, for example, used to collect information the researcher has to try and make the participant feel at ease so they will be willing to converse with them at length. Even when the researcher is very good at doing this, there is no escape from the artificial nature of the process, that is, (usually) two complete strangers having to converse with each other at length, with one of them (the participant) being prepared to share with the researcher their feelings and opinions about the topics under examination.

Overall the shopping centre managers reacted favourably to my request (in New Zealand) for an interview and responded in detail to my questions to the extent that a small number provided me with confidential information which was not their intention. When this occurred I got the centre managers to tell me while the tape recorder was operating what information they considered to be confidential and if it could be used

in my report provided their centre was not identified. Several of the managers expressed their surprise that I was a geographer with a very small number giving the impression that they would have been more impressed if my background had been in one of the more applied business related disciplines or if I had previous work experience in the industry. The managers' responses to the value of my research varied from the enthusiastic to the almost dismissive - a manager in Australia, for example, made the light - hearted comment at the end of the interview that he knew I was really in Australia to see the cricket as the New Zealand side was touring the country at that time.

The power relations which existed between the centre managers and myself were quite different from those often referred to in the literature. Rather than having a dominant role, I conducted my research from a position of either equality or below that of the managers. I assumed that elite groups like the centre managers were used to talking to a variety of different people and so perceived that there was less need for an extended 'ice breaker' discussion period. I needed, however, to try and present myself by wearing 'business clothes', for example, and my research in as professional manner as possible. To allow me to do this, it was necessary, therefore, for me to have read about the industry and how it operated before I carried out my own research (Schoenberger, 1991, 1992; Mc Dowell, 1992; Healey and Rawlinson, 1993). In the literature it was sometimes stressed that there is a need for the researcher to try and make the participant feel as comfortable as possible. After conducting this research I believe there is also a need for the researcher to feel at ease with the situation and the equipment which they are using. On a couple of occasions during an interview, for example, when I (obviously) checked that the tape recorder was still working, the participants stopped talking and asked me if there was a problem with it, which did not help conversation flow!

I had to try and direct but not manipulate (by, for example, imposing my views onto the participants or by using loaded questions), the content and flow of each interview in a manner which would fulfil the aims of my research but would also allow a conversation to develop. Although I attempted to make the time spent with the managers more like a discussion than an interview, there did appear to be a feeling amongst some of the managers, as Eyles (1988) suggests can occur, that I was the one who was directing the conversation. At the conclusion of a small number of interviews, for example, the managers asked me if it was all right for them to ask me some questions now!

Unlike quantitative research there are no established rules that a researcher can, and perhaps must, follow to analyse the information which they collect. The variety

of techniques used to gather qualitative material means that each researcher needs to decide which is the best way of examining and presenting the information they collect. The lack of a qualitative equivalent to descriptive statistics makes it more difficult to summarise and therefore present the information. A problem which is added to if the researcher believes (as I do) that terms which have specific statistical meanings should be avoided where possible.

Although semi - structured interviews have not been used extensively in studies involving elite groups such as shopping centre managers, I believe that this technique did supply me with a rich information source which provided some examples of how centre managers (and sometimes by what they said, how the owners and developers) tried to make the centres appealing to shoppers. It also demonstrated the constraints which can limit the actions of a manager and how personal idiosyncrasies can impact upon the way a centre is managed even when there is an established corporate view.

The managers were asked questions about the created environment of their centres. While they sometimes felt strongly about what they believed was the best way of making a centre attractive to shoppers, there could also be a certain amount of personal detachment between the participant and myself, because I did not need to know personal details about their life situation. This probably made the interviews easier than some of those referred to in the literature because they were less emotionally taxing on both parties.

Research which requires individuals to either indicate or to discuss how they feel about different topics is dependent upon the participant supplying the researcher with their version of events. The centre managers may, however, have told me what they thought I wanted to hear, attempted to answer in a manner which made their actions appear, for example, more favourable or honourable or tried to shock or amuse. As well as the difficulties associated with interpreting what the managers said there were also problems attached to what they did not say. Information which was to the managers very obvious may, for example, not have been mentioned.

By using transcripts from audio tape recordings of the interviews I have only analysed and presented what the managers said, their non - verbal responses to the questions is, unfortunately, lost when this technique is used.

Separating the information into four categories on the basis of where the centres were located made it easier for me to analyse and present my material but may have influenced the information presented more than it was intended too. There were, for

example, some similarities between the managers' responses which were not exclusively dependent upon the location of the centres.

I intend to send all the managers who took part in this study a general summary of my findings. Although it does not affect my research, throughout the process, I have, however, been aware that the managers who participated and gave freely of their time may not find what I send them particularly useful.

CONCLUSION.

Our theoretical understanding of our research question(s) is part of, and influences, the entire research process. This has been highlighted by the positioning of my discussion on the research method and the techniques used within this chapter which also contains my theoretical analysis focusing upon the retailing sector with respect to the production or consumption sphere, the development of 'consumption' theories and the attraction of the created environment of the shopping centre.

No grand theory of consumption has been presented and it is debatable whether this would be possible or particularly useful. To help me to examine the relationship between production and consumption I chose to extend existing political economy theory in an attempt to understand how shopping centre managers attempted to create environments which would appeal to their visitors.

The created environment of a shopping centre may appeal to visitors for a number of different reasons which may differ depending upon their primary reason for going to it. Managers can never produce an environment which will be viewed favourably by all people in their centres' catchments all of the time. There are no right or wrong answers as context and circumstance will impact upon the decisions made by the owners and in particular in this research, the managers. Because of these factors the qualitative research method was considered to be more appropriate than the quantitative method.

The BOMA produced Shopping Centre Directories in both Australia and New Zealand classify the centres on the basis of size although they both used the *City Centre* category. By the end of 1995 all directories in Australia will, under the heading of Specialist Classifications, identify 'Themed Centres', which by definition are '*... located primarily in resort areas to cater for specialist tourist needs, ...*' (Facsimile message BOMA Australia (Appendix, 3)). The location of centres and by association their catchments, however, 'emerged' from the interview transcripts and maps as a more important influence on their created environments than their size. Combined maps were therefore drawn on the basis of the location of each centre

with four different location types being identified. The information gathered from managers on the created environment of centres in this research therefore, has been sorted, interpreted and presented on the basis of centre location. Because of the relatively large number of interviews conducted, separating the collected material in this manner made it easier for me to analyse and present the information. It may, however, mean that other variables which impacted upon the created environment of shopping centres may initially appear to be less important than the managers' claimed. To overcome this problem similarities in the managers' responses across the categories have, in the following chapters which focus upon my own research, been identified as well as those expressed views which are distinctive to each location category.

The next four chapters which focus on the findings of my research have purposively been arranged so that information gathered from managers of centres on stand alone sites is presented first followed by material collected from the managers of centres in tourist destinations, those located on or near a commercial strip and finally those in inner city areas. The categories were arranged in this manner because of the nature of their centres' catchments. Managers of centres on stand alone sites tried to make them appealing to individuals living within a certain radial distance of their centres. The created environments of centres in tourist destinations were designed to appeal to the permanent population within a certain distance of the centres as well as the tourists who visited these areas. Managers of shopping centres located on or near a retail strip attempted to attract individuals living within their centres' catchments, those who may be visiting other retail outlets and/ or professional offices positioned near their centres as well as those people who maybe in paid employment in the area. Centres constructed within the inner cities were located in areas where large numbers of people go each day of the 'working week' for paid employment. As these individuals represent an important component of these centres' catchments in terms of numbers and actual clientele, the managers did not have to encourage all their visitors to travel into the area specifically to visit their centres. Managers of stand alone centres had to encourage individuals in their catchment to make a conscious decision to visit their centres. Some of the shoppers who were attracted to centres located in tourist destinations and those located on or near a retail strip were primarily in these areas for some other purpose besides visiting a particular centre while inner city centres had the apparent advantage of being in areas where there was a large amount of foot traffic.

Arranging the centres in the above fashion also reflects the pattern of shopping centre growth. Many of the early shopping centres were located on stand alone

sites. The construction and management of centres in inner city locations is a more recent innovation. Such development is not evolutionary, however, as the inner city centres have not replaced the centres on stand alone sites.

CHAPTER FIVE CREATING A COMMUNITY OF CONSUMERS - SHOPPING CENTRES ON STAND ALONE SITES.

INTRODUCTION.

Planned and managed shopping centres on stand alone sites represent the archetypal shopping centre format. Many of the first centres built in the United States of America after the Second World War were built on so - called 'greenfield' sites. As shoppers were expected to travel to the centres (rather than the centres being built in areas where a number of people congregated) using privately owned transport they were built with large car parking areas surrounding them. Their structures were often enclosed with few outward facing windows. Stand Alone centres are believed to have had a major impact on 'strip' retailing and on the inner city shopping trip in terms of lost retail sales. Like all planned and managed shopping centres they have also altered the expectations and shopping behaviours of large numbers of consumers. Many shoppers now assume that they will be able to drive easily to a shopping centre where (free) car parking areas will be provided. Inside they expect to find a number of retail tenants which will enable them to make a 'one stop' shopping trip for 'necessity' items such as food, and depending upon the size of the centre, sufficient specialty retailers which may also allow them to comparison shop for the commodities which they desire.

Although stand alone shopping centres may be able to compete with inner city retailing in terms of convenience, as they are often easier and quicker to travel to especially if one has access to a car, they have to be appealing enough for people to make the decision to visit them. The visitors to these centres therefore go to them because they want to go shopping, avail themselves of the services located within the centre, or make use of the created environment. Unlike in the central city visitors are less likely to be in the area because it is their place of paid employment. The owners and in particular the managers of centres in this category therefore tried to encourage people to visit their centre rather than another one by way of; their tenant selection and the positioning of these retailers within the centre, their marketing campaigns, the provision of attractive retail units and common areas in terms of their built form and ambience, by supplying large car parking areas and in a number of instances through provisions made for those who travelled to their centres by public transport.



Plate 5.1 Aerial view of a centre on a stand alone site -
(The New) Chadstone, Chadstone,
Melbourne.
(photograph reproduced by kind permission of
centre management)

LOCATION; ACCESS TO CONSUMERS.

The location of some of these centres was perceived by the managers as a contributor to their financial success. A couple of managers, for example commented on how strategically placed their centres were in comparison to their competitors, or within the area in which they were located, while others admitted that the position of their centres had negatively impacted upon their ability to successfully attract shoppers. Locating the centre at a distance from a strip retail area was considered to be a negative attribute by a manager especially for certain categories of retailers. Visitors had to drive to the centre. The retailers in the centre therefore did not benefit from the custom of individuals who decided to visit the centre on impulse or who had some other reason for being in the area besides shopping. Another manager said that although his centre was located close to a highway it could not be seen by motorists as they travelled along the road - a problem which was compounded due to the restrictions which were placed upon the amount of signage that could be used. These difficulties would, however, eventually be offset, the manager claimed, because the centre was now located within a growth area.

'... didn't open very well - started behind the eight ball - this particular centre. It was not built in an advantageous position. We're not on a main highway, we're not on a main road - in fact we're hidden a little bit ... this is the area they [directors of the ownership company] looked at and identified as being a potentially good area - the potential is here, ... we're in a growth corridor ...' [S. A. 6].

Although all of his centre's competitors were located close to a railway station, another manager regarded the location of his centre in an ambivalent manner. Shoppers could not use the train to travel to the centre and the limited availability of public transport also made it harder for younger 'disruptive' people, without their own means of transport to use the centre as a place to congregate. This was not viewed as a negative feature; *'... in as far as it keeps a lot of the 'riffraff' out. We did extensive research and one of the big things that came out in the research was our customer feels a lot safer here...'* [S. A. 3].

COMPETITION; COMPETING FOR CONSUMERS.

The amount of competition posed by other shopping centres was dependent upon their proximity and their size. The building of a new centre as well as extension and refurbishment programmes tended have a negative impact upon other centres within the area. While a manager claimed, that if the proposed extension to a competing centre went ahead, the owners of the centre which he managed would approve plans to increase the size of their centre, another stated that for the first time, as a result of

the extension programmes undertaken in other centres in the area his centre would have a lot of competition. He, therefore, believed that the owners would refurbish the common areas within the next couple of years.

'.. if it does happen [competing centre's planned expansion] within five years this [planned extension to this centre] has to happen ... we have to convince our directors, or the directors I'm quite sure would be convinced enough because if we're going to have a shopping centre that is eight minutes away ... that's going to have 250 stores and the successful things that we have here, they're going to take and put over there ...' [S. A. 20].

Other methods employed by the managers of these centres in an attempt to compete with centres located within the same area included, offering higher levels of service by, for example, the management staff offering to take a shopper home, attempting to provide a more friendly place in which to shop and/ or by being more community oriented. In a centre, for example, there was a great deal of liaison with the local council and community groups. Such initiatives could however be quickly copied by the staff at other centres.

It was not only shopping centres of equal or greater size which were regarded as competition but smaller centres located within proximity were also sometimes considered to be a threat as were local strip retailing areas and free standing supermarkets. The managers of the larger centres said that these smaller centres primarily impacted upon their food retailers because they were, or were perceived by the shoppers to be, more convenient.

'... fresh food is a challenge not only to this centre but most regional centres because of the competition in the areas - free standing supermarkets are a problem to us because they trade six nights a week with better access' [S. A. 10].

The inner city shopping area was also considered to be a major competitor due to the breadth of its offer or for certain categories of retailers. According to a manager, the central shopping area was more competitive than it had been in the past. Although he believed that the tenancy mix contained within his centre, was superior to that available in the inner city area, it was difficult, he believed, for shopping centres to compete with the attraction people felt for going into the city centre. While the shopping centre environment is rather sterile, the inner city environment can be both bold and exciting.

'... but there is one intangible that we can't compete with and that is the traditional day in the city and that really means a lot to people. I mean we all grew up, I guess, with the excitement of going into town for the day ... and that's very special to a lot of people and that's where the city is remarketing itself: it's a day in the city; it's exciting; it's big; it's brassy; and while shopping centres have got that, they

still have the very clinical environment of being a suburban mall ...'
[S. A. 18].

Managers did not always feel that they were able to compete with the inner city shopping area on an equal basis because of the amount of ratepayers money which was sometimes spent on making the inner city environment a more attractive place in which to shop. In comparison, the owners of stand alone shopping centres had to pay for all of the improvements made to their centres from their own financial resources.

'... it's important that ... a city has a strong core. Because once you've got a strong core ... then you can develop out in the suburbs. There's only one problem with that - it's the council in their wisdom pump all their money into telling people that they've got to shop in the city ... and park in the car park so it's all the rate payers money going to that while we've got to stand alone and fight our own battles in the suburbs, but that's the price one pays. ...' [S. A. 28].

Legislation in some metropolitan areas which limited the hours during which stand alone centres could operate in comparison to the shops and shopping centres in the inner city area, was also thought to give 'the city' an unfair advantage.

SITUATED KNOWLEDGE; MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT.

Research involving a variety of surveying techniques had been conducted either by 'in house' personnel or by outside research consultants in these centres. Quantitative and qualitative research methodologies had been employed to survey known customers, competing centres' customers and sample groups from the population. Some managers also had access to demographic information collected in the census (which had been purchased) and received annual updates on this data. Research was usually conducted on a regular basis. The frequency of such studies varied between biannual or quarterly studies, to once every five years, and was dependent upon the scale of analysis being undertaken and whether the centre owners were planning to extend the size of their centre. Regular research programmes were considered to be very important by managers, several of whom commented that it would be their preference if surveying was carried out on a more frequent basis. Research was sometimes seen as a useful way of gathering information about how the centre was regarded and the way in which its campaigns were perceived.

'Every time you do something - like you're trundling along with a marketing plan and you've got the thoughts - yeah we're doing well in this, you know, we're patting ourselves on the back and then all of a sudden you go out and do one of these things [survey], the public tells you, you're 'r. s.' [sic] on it!' [S. A. 20].

Analysis revealed that the owners and managers of the centres in this category commissioned research for three main reasons. They wanted to find out about the composition of their centre's market, why people chose not to visit their centre and the retail tenants that people wanted to see within the centre. The type of demographic data collected and gathered included information on the location, age, gender, life cycle and income levels of the centres' markets. Where visitors were from, for example, was considered to be vitally important because it helped managers with their marketing campaigns. In a couple of centres management had used this data to market their centre to households within particular areas, that is, to 'target market'.

The owners' and managers' reliance upon their own understanding of the composition of the market and the needs and desires of their shoppers rather than on research results had sometimes negatively impacted upon the performance of centres. Using his centre as an example, a manager claimed that when it had been built the primary market was perceived to be predominantly a 'blue collar' area. In fact research has since revealed that there were only slightly more 'blue collar' workers than 'white collar' workers.

'Oh this is a blue collar area, it's all industrial, it's very low market, ... put in all the EI - cheapo shops and in fact they were wrong 'cos in those days they didn't do their research they went on gut feel ... assumed that blue collar was about 80 per cent of the demographic area and 20 per cent white collar and it turns out that it was like 52 per cent blue collar and 48 per cent white collar!' [S. A. 6].

Although research was regarded as a necessity, a manager felt that such analyses should only be conducted when there was a clearly identified need, '*... if you haven't got something to ask, don't ask it!*' [S. A. 15], even though research was on - going in the centre he managed! While another manager claimed, that they were rarely surprised by the results. '*... all it does is confirm what you should know if you're really close to your business ...*' [S. A. 12].

The techniques used by, or for, centre management varied depending upon what they wanted to find out. Statistical data, for example, was used to gain information on the demographic make - up of the market, while qualitative techniques such as focus groups, were sometimes used as a way of gathering attitudinal information from known customers and non customers alike.

Exit (and entry) surveys, telephone surveys and focus groups were the most frequently employed techniques used to collect information. Exit surveys, which involve the surveying of people as they leave (or enter) a centre were conducted by in - house personnel or by research consultants. Marketing companies were

sometimes also employed to gather information from shoppers visiting other centres in the area. Managers of competing centres sometimes also swapped information with each other.

'... where we can get away with it! ... if we want to get it from another centre, we go to one of the market research companies and pay a fee and have them do it for us, and they just go to the centre and pay them a fee for doing market research for whatever it may be, but they happen to do ours at the same time! ... it borders on industrial espionage, I guess, but everybody does it! We know they're doing it to us from time to time and they know we're doing it to them! The other thing is, I can ring up the centre manager of my major opposition ... and say, 'What's going on over there?', and they'll tell me ... just as I'll tell them within limits - we don't discuss confidential things about rental turnovers ... other than broad general terms, but there's a degree of ... comradeship going between most shopping centres anyway' [S. A. 6].

In centres where there were plans to increase the number of retail tenancies by extending the size of the centre, as well as in centres where managers were considering a re - mix and/ or were trying to limit the impact of competitors, research was used to help with tenancy mix decisions. This type of information was collected either from focus group discussions, customer feedback or suggestion cards, telephone surveying or from collated visitor enquires at the information booths contained within the larger centres.

'... we want to find out what people expect to find in a shopping centre and then if you don't ... follow up what you put in, then you're not doing your job. So ... you're doing the stuff pre - implementation and then finding out how it's working ...' [S. A. 16].

In a centre which had been extended the research results had been used to help select categories of tenants. All the tenant types suggested by visitors were put into the centre after expansion except for a hardware store, because the manager claimed, such a tenant was unable to afford to pay the rent charged within a managed shopping centre, unless it was specifically a hardware centre.

Hiring external consultants added to the cost of a research exercise. Some managers, however, thought that the findings from research conducted by an independent party were more useful. Consultants were, they believed, able to provide more meaningful results and could recognise extraneous information and remove it.

'... if you're talking to people about car parking - there's always a certain amount of white noise about that car parking issue, in other words there'll always be a percentage of people that no matter how good your car parks are, will say, 'The car park's no good!, I don't like it', ... you always need to bear those things in mind ...' [S. A. 12].

Their analysis of the data was also thought to be less biased. *'I think if you tend to keep it in house you tend to only read things that you want to read ...'* [S. A. 17].

Although regular formal research programmes were conducted in most of these centres managers sometimes said that they found it helpful to spend time walking through the centre covertly listening to the comments made by visitors about how they viewed the centre. Listening to the complaints made by shoppers or reading their comments on customer feedback cards were also considered useful ways of gathering information on how visitors felt about the centre. *'My way of surveying the customers is gut feel. Complaints - it's a great way ... using as a survey tool ...'* [S. A. 11].

SELECTING AND POSITIONING THE RETAILERS.

The need to give visitors what they wanted, to match retail tenants to the centres' markets, that is, so they reflected the demographic and socio - economic composition of the catchment and to position them 'correctly', were considered to be extremely important contributors to the financial success of centres. Not only were the retailers chosen so as to satisfy the everyday 'needs' of a centre's market but also for infrequent purchases as well. In a centre which was going to be extended in size, the manager, said that the retail tenants would still primarily cater for the middle market but that there would also be some up - market fashion retailers so that shoppers could 'treat' themselves.

Although they sometimes reflected the marketplace, discount retailers within the centres tended to down - grade them, managers claimed. In a centre where this had occurred, a planned redevelopment would, according to the manager, fix this 'problem', while another admitted that they tried not to let this happen and that the selection of tenants should not only reflect the market but should also be aiming to appeal to shoppers who either want to make purchases above their status or those who were from more wealthy socio - economic groups.

'Big ships turn slower unfortunately, the mix hasn't changed as quickly as we would have liked but it's getting that way. We're putting in more discount operations ... can tend to denigrate the centre to an extent because we're not still looking after the better end ...' [S. A. 10].

Of the managers who were asked about, or commented upon, the number of chain stores that operated within their centres many stated that they had a large number of chain store retailers, with some of them estimating that between 60 and 85 per cent of their tenancies were multiple retailers. A small number of managers, however, said that they, or their leasing agents, had found it difficult to attract chain store

retailers to their centres because a number of them were already tenants in a competing centre.

'... in this centre we have more individual merchants, especially on the fashion side than a normal centre. For example, when we were doing the redevelopment ... we said to the chains ... 'Why don't you come over ...?' They were already established at [a competing centre]. They said, 'No, we're not going to pick up, we're doing well ...' [S. A. 20].

Managers generally regarded chain stores as better tenants than owner - operators, that is, the 'Mum and Dad' retailers. It was felt that there was less risk associated with chain store tenants in comparison to independent retailers and that the chain operators were more professional retailers. The drawing power of chain stores - the customers wanted to find these operators within the centres - was one of the reasons given by managers for the high number of such tenants within their centres. There was also a feeling that in the present (1993 early 1994) economic climate chain store retailers were showing higher returns. Other explanations provided for the preference given to the operators of chain stores over independent retailers included the on - going changes that such tenants made to their shops' fit - outs, their tendency to widely advertise their shops, the strength of their buying power and the scarcity of 'good' retailers hence the perceived need for a large number of multiple retailers. The increased numbers of franchise operations (which was included within the chain store category by some managers) and the desire by many chain store owners to have outlets within a number of centres so as to maintain their market share were also given as reasons for the high number of chain store tenants within the centres.

'In large regional centres the national chains want to be here ... gravitate towards the larger centres and obviously if you have a quality tenant, ... and its financial standing is good then - they're a desirable tenant and they probably are preferred' [S. A. 5].

The manager of a centre where there had been difficulties associated with its location, design and the collapse of a former ownership company, stated that he would have liked to have had more chain stores within the tenancy mix. He was, however, unsure whether their standardised format would appeal to his centre's catchment.

'... but then again that's not to say they [chain stores] actually work in this sort of environment ... unless they adopt a different retailing approach or have staff that are conversant and they are able to have empathy for the ethnic mix of the area. ... This is where a few of them don't have that ability. This is where the individuals will be able to get in there, who know the community, who know the locals, who know what they're happy to pay and how they like to shop, this is where they do ... have a bit of an advantage over national chains ...' [S. A. 22].

Some managers were conscious of the large number of chain store retailers which they had in their centres and were therefore attempting not to 'over - chain'. In a centre where there was an extension planned the manager hoped to attract a number of independent retailers.

'I think that shopping centres today, and this is my opinion, ... have too much sameness and that's because we all go with Fred Smith's chain because we know they can pay the rent. I think it's totally wrong ... I really think that's got to be the way the smaller centres have got to go. ... we're here to put money into their tills and to put value on this property for the owner. ... The only way you can do that is give yourself a point of difference ... I will be pushing the point that I want as many owner - operators in this centre as I can get in because that will give us our point of difference' [S. A. 21].

The decision to have independent operators as part of the tenancy selection was often, however, regarded as a risk for the centre and sometimes for the individuals involved as well. But managers admitted such tenants, did, or could, provide some interesting points of difference in their centres.

In many of the stand alone shopping centres in Australia specialty tenants were offered leases of between three and six years duration while in New Zealand the duration of the lease agreements tended to be longer varying between six and eight (four plus four) years in length. In both countries the major or anchor tenants had longer term agreements than the specialty retailers. Some of the managers in Australia commented that legislation required them to offer first time specialty tenants a five year lease but at lease renewal they were able to offer shorter term leases to their tenants. Although they preferred shorter term lease agreements managers sometimes agreed to a five year lease if the tenant had carried out a major re - fit of their outlet. Shorter lease terms provided more opportunity to alter the position of retailers within centres. It also allowed retailers to shift into a different sized outlet, within a shorter time period, if the size requirements for their outlets, had changed. *'... whether you want to relocate ... gives you flexibility to alter to the tenants needs. They may have too much space or not enough space. ... so that you can control the environment that you're in ...' [S. A. 16].*

Within the lease terms the amount of rent paid was usually increased using either market rent reviews, consumer price index (CPI) increases or rent steps.

'In the days when CPI was quite high, the CPI factor worked for us but over the last few years it's actually worked against us because we're getting sort of 1.6, two per cent increases which is ... a little bit unrealistic in the way retail is going in ...' [S. A. 16].

Proposed amendments to legislation, in Queensland, which would make it difficult for there to be rent reviews during a lease term was another reason given by a manager for a preference for three year lease agreements.

The managers or leasing agents, usually did not provide specialty tenants with leasing options or right of renewal agreements. Offering leasing options was considered to be very one - sided in favour of the retailers. Some managers said that although they did not offer rights of renewal clauses to their tenants, they usually renewed their lease agreements. *'... as much as we rarely kick people out by keeping yourself to a five year lease at least if you've got to relocate them then you're minimising your costs'* [S. A. 21]. Shorter lease terms in comparison to the past, when the duration of leases could vary between 20 and 25 years was, along with the lack of a rights of renewal clause connected to lease agreements, a very good 'rule', according to a manager. Within five years, he claimed, the socio - economic composition of the market place can alter dramatically, the tenant may want to leave, or may no longer fit the tenancy mix. In his opinion, the major or anchor tenants should also have had shorter lease term agreements.

The ways in which the specialty retail tenants' rent was calculated within these centres varied, with similar numbers of centres charging their tenants either, a base rent, which was calculated on an area basis and a percentage of turnover, market value for the site, a base rent (the managers in these centres did not say how this was calculated) and a percentage of sales, or a rent which varied depending upon the retail category. Some of the managers claimed that they, or their leasing agents, not only considered the size of an outlet but also such factors as the location of the shop within the centre - was it, for example, adjacent to a high volume retailer, - the retailer's occupancy costs, the projected turnover for that type of retailer within the centre, the number of people that moved past the shop door and whether the amount charged was competitive with other centres, when they calculated how much rent they charged a tenant.

As part of their lease renewal negotiations specialty retail tenants in a number of these centres had to agree to refurbish their shops. In several centres there were clauses within the retailers' lease agreements which stated that the retailers could be asked to refurbish their outlet during a lease term. In one of the centres, where a re - fit was not a mandatory condition of a new lease, the manager stated that the shop front and fit - out always had to be in a good state of repair. As chain store tenants were often involved in making on - going changes to their shops, refurbishment was not a condition of a new lease in a couple of other centres.

'... you get back to the chain store and the Mum and Dad - somebody like 'Katies' or 'Just Jeans' might come in on 1st January 1994 and Mum and Dad Smith might come in on 1st January 1994 - they both do brand new fit - outs when they move in, they both do a fit - out similar in finishes ... what you find is the specialty store [chain] ... over the next five year period maybe once every eighteen months they change something as part of their corporate image ... the Mum and Dad on the other hand opens the door ... and hopes that even at the end of lease they're not going to have to touch it for maybe ten years! ...' [S. A. 3].

Some retailers approached management before lease expiry and offered to re - fit their stores in exchange for a longer lease agreement. The need for specialty retailers to refurbish their outlets on a regular basis was due, according to the managers, to the pace with which retailing was changing.

'The philosophy of having six year retail leases for specialty shops is the fact that shopping centres are places that change - people's needs and tastes change and so therefore as responsible managers we have to have the ability to make those changes so we keep on attracting people...' [S. A. 27].

A manager of an older centre stated that regular refurbishment by the retail tenants was also a necessary condition in order for his centre to remain competitive. *'It is the only way that you can have a 23 year old centre competing against a three year old centre'* [S. A. 15].

A variety of techniques were used to select retail tenants to either fill vacancies as they arose or to occupy the extra available space within centres after they had been extended in size. They included choosing retailers who would compliment and broaden the existing mix, 'gut feel' (with the managers mostly sourcing their own new tenants), choosing tenants so that they would reflect the market, by looking at the prospective tenants which the management company had on file and consideration of the direction with which management wished to take the centre. While some centre managers claimed that while they did not have any vacant retail outlets within the centres which they managed, or that they did not have any problems with vacancies, a small number said they had, or in the recent past had, one or two vacant retail units which they left unoccupied (or not permanently occupied), while they looked for the 'right', or a specific tenant.

'... probably once upon a time also if we got to a situation like this, things were tough and you had an empty shop you put in anyone you could get in there and take whatever rent you could get. We're a bit more mature, ... these days - we're desperate to fill those tenancies - we don't like them being empty 'cos we're loosing income but we would rather make sure that we get the right kind of tenant to suit the demographics of the area, who also pay a reasonable rent - so we don't have to give it away and who is likely to be a long term tenant ...' [S. A. 6].

Potential retail tenants were sometimes offered, or wanted to be provided with, incentives in exchange for opening a business within a centre,' ... *it was a difficult market to lease into because our retail sales were very flat. In this day and age you've got to provide incentives to a lot of retailers to ... get them into a development. We did that ...*' [S. A. 12]. Such 'buying' of tenants was a reasonably frequent occurrence in most centres, according to a manager, although not in the centre which he managed, where there was, he claimed, a waiting list of prospective retail tenants.

Positioning tenants correctly within centres was also considered to be vitally important. How this was actually accomplished, however, varied between the centres. In some, specialty tenants were arranged so as to compliment the major tenants. *'This is all the ideal ... where majors are dictate a hell of a lot, also your major entities ...'* [S. A. 20]. Fresh food, for example, was located next to the supermarkets while the fashion retailers were positioned outside the department store's fashion level. Not all the centres where a department store, or department stores were anchor tenants, however, arranged their fashion specialities in this manner. In a couple of centres, specialities were organised so that different budgets were catered for on the various levels .

There appeared to be two 'schools of thought' as to how the different categories of specialty tenants should be arranged within a centre. One of these involved positioning different types of retailers next to each other - the assumption being that shoppers would move throughout the centre looking for the commodities and retailers they wanted, and therefore past, and it was hoped into, as many retail outlets as possible. The other option, which was the one favoured by the managers, involved grouping the same category, or similar categories, of specialty retailers next to each other. This method was often referred to by the managers as 'precincting' and enabled visitors to comparison shop. Several of the managers commented that the financial success of their centres could be attributed to the arrangement of the specialty tenants into precincts. Others, however, conceded that it was not always possible to do this as the 'better' retailers sometimes demanded that they be positioned within proximity to each other (even when they were selling different types of commodities), or because at lease expiry they could not secure the retail tenants they wanted for their centres. A manager admitted that while tenancy mix was important, financial returns for the owners of the centre were even more important. *'... whilst tenancy mix is of paramount importance obviously rent is as well. So, unfortunately sometimes that mix may suffer in respect to insuring that the rental returns are gained ...'* [S. A. 7].

Some of the managers mentioned or alluded to a plan or formula that was used to position tenants within their centres. Others, however, claimed that the arrangement of tenants within their centres had evolved, that they had no plan, that it was a 'hit and miss' process or that it was logical that some categories of retailers should be put together while others should not.

'I come from a retail background ... and one of the great things that always intrigued me was, ... was this thing called tenancy mix and how it's worked out. And I thought there was something really scientific involved but there really isn't! It's really quite depressing when you find out! ... If you talk to other centre managers they might say there's something really scientific involved, but there really isn't!'
[S. A. 4].

The term 'shopping', was sometimes qualified by managers who claimed that 'doing the shopping' was work, and involved the purchase of 'necessary' commodities such as food, while 'going shopping' was a leisure activity. Shoppers may make separate shopping trips or visit a different centre depending upon the type of shopping they want to do. In some centres retailers were arranged so that the two types of shopping trip were catered for in different areas.

'Doing the shopping is a chore, which is traditionally the supermarket, once a week. Going shopping is a treat, and so you need to gear that into it as well. And that plays a part in what goes where. ... but they're two entirely separate visits and so you're in two entirely different mind sets when you do it. So, therefore, to cater for your needs, you are almost two people, and that has to enter into the design. If you're going to make it difficult to do the shopping, you're going to lose your customers - parking around the supermarkets, easy access in and out, trolley ramps, ... get the hell in, get the hell out. Going shopping is entirely different, ... you've got time, you're wandering, you have coffee shops in the middle of it to break the monotony, to encourage you to stay more. ... Where are your information booths? Where are your other customer service facilities? ... The whole thing - it's a different ball game all together'
[S. A. 15].

Like most retailers in managed shopping centres, the tenants of centres analysed within this category had to contribute to the centres' marketing costs. The amount paid by the tenants varied between the specialty and the anchor tenants and between the centres. In some, the amount of money each tenant contributed to the cost of marketing the centre was calculated as a percentage of their base rental while in others the levy was calculated on an outlet area basis. In almost all the centres the owners also contributed to the cost of marketing the centre. The size of their contribution varied but was usually calculated on the basis of a set percentage of the amount collected from the centres' retailers. A small number of managers said how much the owners of their centres contributed to the marketing fund. The figure varied between 25 and 43 per cent of that collected from the retailers.

Tenants, as part of their lease agreements, were sometimes meant to spend a certain amount of money advertising themselves over and above their marketing levy. Managers, however, said that this clause was difficult to enforce or that it was not strictly policed. Although they could make the retailers spend money advertising their businesses such action did not bode well for good relations between the tenants and the managers. *'... we'd like to see them do so, and most of the national merchants do ... local operators rarely do it, they just sit back and pay their rent and hope like hell everything else works ...'* [S. A. 24]. Several managers used comments like most retailers will advertise their businesses except for the 'Mum and Dad' retailers, or the 'good' retailers know they have to advertise.

'The good get better and the bad get worse! ... if you use the old 80 - 20 rule - in numbers 20 per cent of the people do 80 per cent of the advertising but with a lot of national chains and it helps, and there are few Mum and Dad operators left in here and those that are in here, we try and help them to at least formulate a plan so that they can come up with a marketing schedule' [S. A. 16].

None of the managers when asked about how their retailers received stock deliveries placed any restrictions on when these were made or felt that there were any problems with goods being moved through the centres. In some of the centres the retailers (or some of them) had rear access ways to their outlets through which their merchandise was delivered, and/ or there were loading docks, truck tunnels or delivery service lanes. Although he would like to be able to say that no stock was moved through the centre, one manager said that it was difficult to stop couriers using the public entrances to deliver parcels.

A small number of the managers were asked to comment on what their response would be if they had a retailer whose sales figures were falling. All the managers claimed that they would contact the retailer (if they had not already contacted them) and would discuss the problem to see if it could be resolved. In a couple of instances the managers said that they would either suggest they contact a retail consultant or they would pay for a professional to advise the retailer on their business. If the problem could not be resolved a replacement retailer was sometimes sought with a manager claiming that he had suggested to four or five retailers the year before (that is, in 1992), that they should vacate the centre. The general rule as to why a retailer's sales declined, according to this manager, was because the market was no longer demanding the commodities which they sold.

MARKETING; ENCOURAGING THE CONSUMERS TO VISIT.

The marketing of almost all of the centres in this category was planned and controlled by the Marketing Managers and/or the Centre Managers rather than

Merchants' Associations, and was paid for by contributions made to a marketing fund by both the retailers and the owners. A wide variety of media were used. The most commonly employed were radio, television, newspapers and the publication of centre catalogues and magazines.

Merchants' Associations which consisted of management personnel and retailer representatives who also had voting rights were often thought by the managers to be a less effective way of organising a centre's marketing campaigns than a fund. *'... just became a sounding board for all the gripes - never came up with a creative idea! Not in my experience anyway ...'* [S. A. 2]. Even in centres where Merchants' Associations still operated, however, managers sometimes claimed that they, often in association with a marketing manager, made the marketing decisions in their centres.

'... in theory they're the ones who decide on the marketing of the centre - in practice it doesn't happen that way ... we should never let it happen that way because, I suppose it sounds a little bit arrogant to say but, I would believe that we have better skills at being able to know how we should be marketing the centre than the retailers because they have certain vested interests in what they want ... we sort of advise them what's going on and we ... terrible word for it 'manipulate' the meeting in such a way that they believe they're part of it, but we're keeping them informed' [S. A. 4].

The managers held various opinions as to what was the most effective way of marketing their centres. Events were used in a number of centres to encourage people to visit. This marketing technique was once again gaining favour in some centres after largely been replaced, particularly in Australia, during the 1980s, by the technique of marketing the centre as a product.

'... through the '80's, lets market the place as a product and it seems that we're heading now back towards the entertainment and the promotions ... families are looking for free entertainment ... so the direction we're going is the promotion/ entertainment side ...' [S. A. 3].

Events were seen as a way of making a visit to a shopping centre an enjoyable leisure - like experience, or as a manager said in reference to the shows which were performed within his centre, they put the 'fun' back into retailing. The provision of entertainment by way of food fairs, fashion parades, merchandise events, shows and guest appearances by 'stars' and bands was heavily promoted in some of these centres to the extent that during school holiday periods rather than marketing the commodities which could be obtained from the retailers within a centre, it was promoted solely on the basis of the entertainment which was provided for visitors.

The difficulty with finding a cost effective way to market a shopping centre was emphasised by a manager, who claimed that in the past, it was relatively easy to have a promotion which would attract large numbers of people to a shopping centre, but now the hosting of events either fail to attract a crowd (because there are so many more shopping centres and there are other things for people to do) or there was no corresponding increase in sales returns to match the increased number of people who visited the centre. Not all the managers, however, judged the success of an event by increased sales. The impact of promotions and special events were difficult to judge according to another manager, who stated that a lot of marketing was intangible and that it was as much about 'positioning' as it was about selling. The expense associated with event marketing, however, was almost seen as prohibitive by a couple of managers of smaller centres (where there were fewer than 100 retail tenants). These centres were owned and managed by a corporation which made use of institutional marketing programmes and it appeared that the centres were, at least to a certain extent, committed to them. The relatively small size of their marketing budgets meant, however, that such a commitment hindered their ability to also run marketing campaigns, for occasions, such as, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day.

The manager of another small centre said that it would have been easier to market a regional - sized centre. Between 70 and 75 per cent of his centre's shoppers visited it, he claimed, because of the retail tenants. If the tenants were positioned correctly they would shop at the centre regardless of the marketing techniques used. He therefore felt that the marketing of the centre should concentrate on attracting the other 25 to 30 per cent of visitors who decided to visit the centre for reasons other than 'just' the retail offer. For a couple of managers marketing a centre also involved selecting the 'right' retail tenancies. One of these managers said that while marketing had in the past involved putting something on the stage, it was now, in the centre which he managed, concerned with the careful selection of retail tenants and customer surveying.

'... we've come over the years to redefine marketing. Once upon a time marketing a shopping centre was just putting something on stage and putting an ad. in the paper and that was it. Now it is market research, it's what kind of tenancies we need to satisfy the customers that are out there rather than trying to put in shops and then try and drag customers to satisfy those shops ...' [S. A. 6].

Marketing also involved 'positioning' the centre in the market place. Centres were sometimes deliberately positioned as 'up - market' centres. Management in a centre, for example, tried to make their visitors feel important by telling them they were shopping in an exceptionally good centre. Even if shoppers purchased their goods

from the discount operators and could not afford to make purchases from some of the specialty fashion tenants, visitors could, the manager claimed, still take pleasure in the environment of the centre.

'We never hold back in saying that we are the best shopping centre in this country and we have the best retailers ... some say that we alienate those people who are in the middle and lower end of the market because we're positioning ourselves so high - that hasn't been the case - if anything we have stronger appeal amongst those people 'cos they have aspirations as well. They know they can still buy their food from [name of a discount supermarket], ... but they still like to think they're pretty special ...' [S. A. 18].

Although he stated that the built form of the shopping centre and its ambience were very important, as demonstrated by the centre's friendly service and positioning campaigns and carnival type events such as street theatre and roving musicians, shoppers, the manager claimed, primarily decided to visit centres because of the retailers.

'... people don't come to a shopping centre because they're pretty places to go. They come because they've got fantastic retailers and it's the retail that's the exciting part of it ... the theatre of retailing ... we want to make it look exciting, sound special, make people feel important because they shop here ...' [S. A. 18].

Some campaigns specifically involved target marketing, so as to attract people from a particular area. The manager of one centre, for example, said that during the school holidays they target marketed to 20,000 homes within a competing centre's catchment by advertising attractions, such as cinemas, which were not available at the opposing centre. Product and price marketing was not a frequently used technique and only occurred in a small number of centres.

Research had sometimes been used to ascertain how successful a particular marketing campaign or technique had been. In one of these centres, press advertising had been extensively used. Research results had, however, demonstrated that it was not a successful marketing method. Management had therefore decided to use target market campaigns. In another centre, the retailers were asked to provide management with feedback on the impact of marketing campaigns on their own businesses.

A number of these centres were owned and managed by companies whom operated corporate or institutional marketing programmes. Increasingly, a manager claimed, decisions on marketing a centre are made by head office personnel rather than by the individual centre managers while another manager said that he basically followed corporate policy on the strategies that should be employed to promote food, fashion and general merchandise. *'... so really the marketing is decided upon by myself and*

the marketing manager, with some, increasingly more, direction from Head Office...' [S. A. 4].

Westfield Holdings, in Australia, brand their centres by referring to them as 'Westfield Shoppingtown' and then give the name of the centre, advertise as a group at the state and federal level and by having customer service initiatives which are common to all the Westfield centres. In some other centres a short phrase which followed the name of the centre was used in the centres' marketing campaigns. Centres owned and/or managed by other groups also used institutional advertising and established formulas to market their centres. Centres managed by Australian Mutual Provident (AMP) Shopping Centres Propriety Limited (in Australia), for example, were linked to the Walt Disney Corporation and had the sole rights to use the characters in shows performed within their centres.

The marketing funds were used to market the centres as a whole. Individual retailers were left to market their own businesses. Instead of using the marketing fund to finance staff training for the retailers, as it had been in the past in one centre, it was now used in an attempt to make retail and visiting the shopping centre more exciting.

'We used to spend a lot more time with actually working with the retailers to help them, that's still the approach of a lot of centres ... still have a [staff] training programme which we don't do it free anymore ... [gone away from that type of marketing and are now] putting the fun back into retail ...' [S. A. 9].

Managers sometimes expressed the view that they thought it was their job to attract visitors to the centres, but once they were there, it was the retailers responsibility to encourage these people into their shops.

In an attempt to foster community loyalty and involvement, in a couple of these centres, visitors were provided with information on the centres' extension programmes. Models and architectural drawings of how the centres would look at the completion of development were displayed along with the provision of viewing platforms and peep holes so that visitors could see the progress that was being made. Rather than apologising for the inconvenience that may have been caused to shoppers because of the development, the management in one of these centres promoted it positively, on the basis of what they were doing for their shoppers.

In a couple of other instances management had taken on the role of 'adviser' to their shoppers. In one centre, food tastings and the provision of recipes were very popular, while in another, catalogues were used not only to market the centre and the retail tenants but also to offer advice to shoppers on various products, that is,

management had taken on the role of consultant. *'... and that's important because our position in the market then becomes one of being a trusted adviser'* [S. A. 18].

CREATING AND RE - CREATING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT - ESTABLISHING AN AMBIENCE.

A number of the centres in this category were built using a 'gun barrel' design or had 'gun barrel malls'. Such a structure involved the positioning of anchor tenants at the end of each mall (or malls) which were built in a straight line fashion. Specialty tenants occupied the space between the major stores. It was assumed that the anchor tenants would attract people to the end of the malls and in so doing would require them to move past the specialty shops. In a larger centre, the malls were anchored in the middle as well as at the ends, presumably to encourage people to walk the greater distance between the end caps. The 'gun barrel' design worked, a manager said, because it encouraged a flow of people between the anchors and because of its simplicity.

'... it's just so straight forward and simple, ... people are like sheep ... these things have to be built in such a way that it's easy for them to move around ... as soon as you start putting bends and circles in, ... it's confusing and once you start confusing the average woman [sic] you're gone!' [S. A. 20].

Although the 'gun barrel' was the most favoured design, a small number of the centres had, what their managers described as, unique designs. The *Macquarie* centre, for example, had been built using a spiral design with anchor tenants at both the top and the bottom ends of the spiral, while *Garden City* had been built with three malls spreading out from the centre court area which were anchored by major tenants. A couple of other centres had been constructed around what had formerly been free - standing department or discount department stores. Several of these uniquely designed centres had worked very well. Not all the managers, however, felt that the initial design of the centre which they managed (which in a couple of centres had since been changed) had been a success. The structure of one centre, for example, allowed shoppers to do their food shopping and then leave the centre without moving past the specialty tenants. The manager considered this to be a disadvantage which contradicts the view expressed by some of the other managers who spoke about the benefits associated with positioning comparison specialty tenants and retailers selling 'necessity' commodities within different areas. Another claimed that poor sight lines due to the number of malls contained within the centre, that he managed, tended to split the number of people that retailers were exposed to, leading in some areas to a decline in the number of merchants.



Figure 5.1 An example of the 'Gun Barrel Mall' - Ground Level Floor plan of Westfield Shoppingtown Toombul, Toombul, Brisbane.
 Source: Westfield Shoppingtown Toombul Directory.

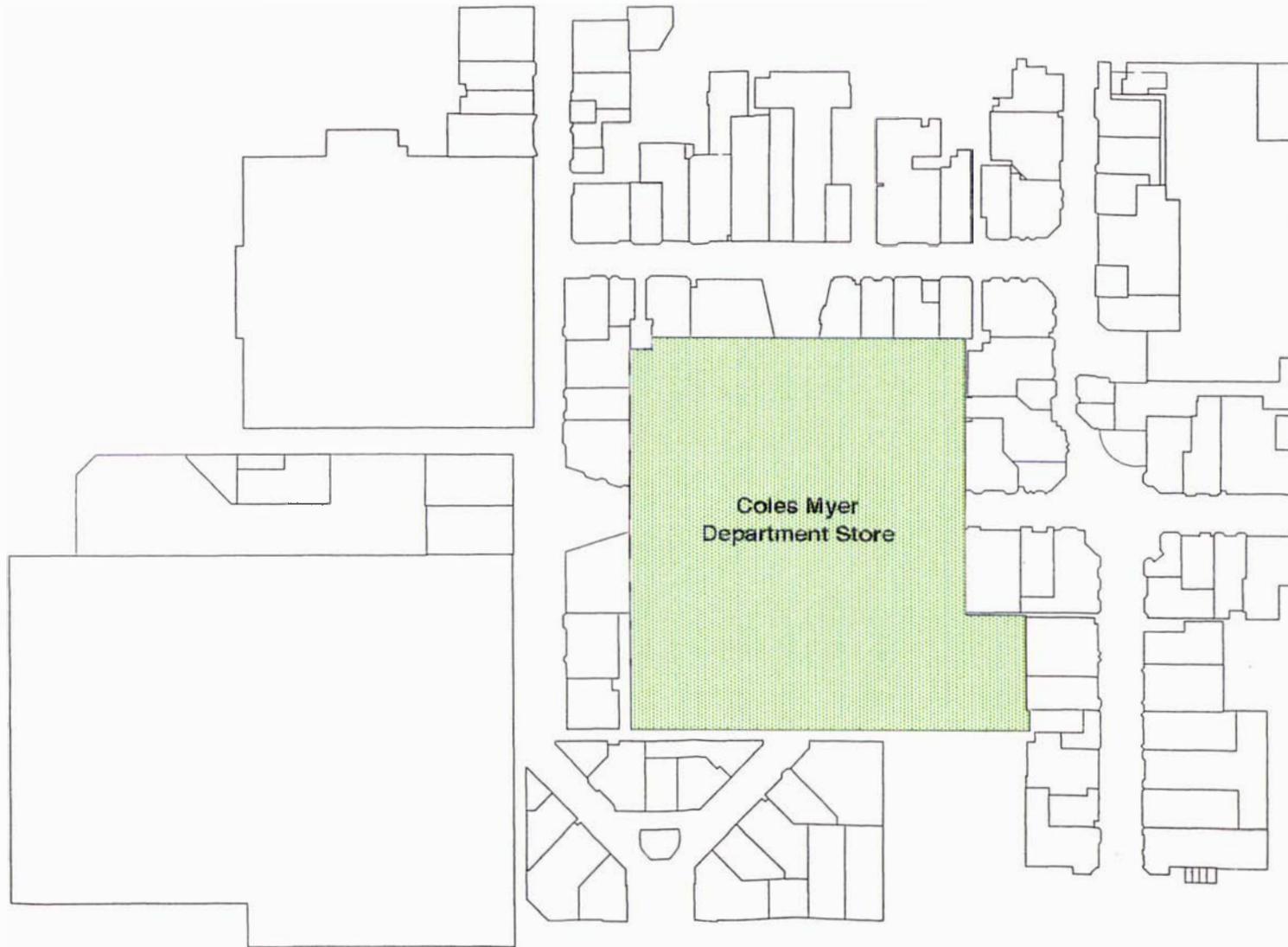


Figure 5.2 A more unusual design - the Chermide Centre in Chermide, Brisbane - which was built around a Myer Department Store. This centre also has the distinction of being the oldest shopping centre in Australia.
Source: Coles Myer Chermide Shopping Complex Composite Lease Plan for:- Coles Myer Properties Limited.



Plate 5.2 A more unusual design, the spiral structure of the Macquarie centre, North Ryde, Sydney.

It was not only the interior design of a shopping centre which was thought to contribute to the success or otherwise of a centre, several of the managers mentioned that the location and provision of car parking spaces was also important. In a couple of the multi - level centres, for example, parking was provided at each level (at one all around the centre) while in another parking spaces were positioned close to the majors.

Upgrading or refurbishing the common areas¹ of centres was considered to be necessary in order for them to maintain their competitiveness. The management structure of planned shopping centres in which there was a controlling body that dictated the way the centre looked was why, according to a manager, a centre could out perform a strip retailing area. The regularity with which the common areas of these centres were refurbished varied between the centres as did the managers' views as to how often they thought that it should be done. A manager, for example, said that he would like to see the common areas of his centre refurbished every four to five years while another claimed that refurbishment at this level frequency would only occur in an ideal world. *'In the ideal years one would like to think every four to five years there would be substantial changes to the centre generally. That hasn't happened ...'* [S. A. 10].

The managers' and owners' views on the need to upgrade a centre did not always coincide. A manager stated that the centre which he managed had been neglected before its recent expansion and redevelopment programme while another said although he had been recommending to head office that his centre needed to be refurbished this had not occurred.

'... unfortunately they get tired. What you try and do, if that happens is do something that stands out ... If we can think of something like that every year to do that will give it a lift then, that should be done almost on a yearly basis. But a fair refurbishment to the centre shouldn't ... go longer than about eight years' [S. A. 19].

The frequency with which the common areas of the centres had been refurbished varied between five and twelve years amongst the managers who put a time frame on it. Not all refurbishments, however, occurred in a cyclical manner. A manager stated, for example, that the owners upgraded the centre when necessary while another said that refurbishment of the common areas was determined by changes in taste.

¹ Maintenance of these areas occurred on a continuous basis.

'Again that's been a thing of changing philosophy in this country ... when shopping centres were first built here most of the developers thought you just build it and that's the end of story ... just a coat of paint here and there and look after it. It's only in the last ten years or so that we've come to realise that we really have to, not just refurbish in the sense of redecorate, but you really need to look at whether we change the whole style - the architectural style - every time you do it - and in most cases that's what we do now' [S. A. 6].

Because of the high costs involved, refurbishment of the common areas was often carried out, or was going to be carried out, at the same time as extensions to the centres.

'But what we do is we tend to wait until we've got an extension coming up and we'll use that as the opportunity to go right through and refurbish the whole building otherwise the costs involved in refurbishing if you're not adding any shops on, generating any extra income, the cost is just a pure capital cost. That makes it very expensive. So, it's more economical to do it when you've ... set aside x amount of millions of dollars to do an extension and it's all capital expense - better from a taxation point of view and everything else that works out better because at least you're going to get a return on your investment ...' [S. A. 6].

When a refurbishment accompanied an expansion programme the appearance of the centre was often made consistent, so that the old and new areas in a centre could not be identified by visitors on the basis of appearance alone. Refurbishment was considered to be a necessity by a couple of managers because of the competition that their centre faced. In one of these centres where a refurbishment of the interior as well as the exterior of the centre had been accompanied by an extension to the centre, the manager claimed that, the redevelopment had been needed because the centre was very old, it was not competitive and it was losing its market share. A couple of other managers said that their centres had undergone what they termed a 'tart up' which involved changes to the ceilings and the lighting. A 'tart up', as defined by another manager, however, involved the refurbishment of the existing centre to give it a 'new lease of life'.

Although stand alone shopping centres are purpose built structures, a number of the centre managers discussed the ways in which they, and the owners, tried to give their centres a certain ambience. Several of the centre managers wanted their centres to be regarded as comfortable and safe places in which to shop while others claimed that visitors to their centres' experienced a relaxed, leisure - oriented environment. Through the selection of tenants some managers said that they were trying to create a point of difference in comparison to other centres. The ambience of a shopping centre was, according to a manager, created by the physical environment, that is, the shop fit - out guidelines, internal planting, lighting, sound and character in association with unique specialty stores - he considered that it was



Figure 5.3 An example of the 'Gun Barrel Mall' design and of the specialty tenants arranged into 'precincts' in the refurbished (1990-1991) St Lukes Centre, Mt Albert, Auckland.
 Source: St Lukes Shopping Centre Directory.

important not to have too many chain store retailers as part of a centre's tenancy mix.

In one of the larger centres, and in another centre where there was an extension planned, the managers hoped to create, and wanted to maintain, respectively, a 'community feel' inside their centres. In the larger centre, this was attempted by way of promotions and by the hosting of local fund raising events. *'... the core life blood of this centre, in terms of getting the sales in, is immediate market ... you mustn't loose touch with being a very important part of the community ...'* [S. A. 2].

Smaller centres within this category could not compete with larger ones on the basis of the number or variety of retailers. Management in these centres, therefore, tried to promote, and to create, a convenient 'hassle free' environment in which to shop.

'People who come here do not comparison shop. They come into shop. They know what we've got. They know where it is ... We're never going to compete with the regionals ... don't have the specialty stores to back it up ... we've strengthened our customer base because we've marketed to a lot of the areas that people want convenience ... don't want the hustle and bustle ...' [S. A. 21].

Ironically, a small number of the centre managers commented about how, because of their centres' design features and/ or service facilities such as a library and/ or the entertainment provided, they attempted to re - create the atmosphere of the market square or town centre - the environment which shopping centres are supposed to have superseded! This was done, in a couple of the centres, by the use of a built structure which was designed so that people, as they can, or perhaps could, in the centre of town, parade. Instead of having to contend with the vagaries of the weather visitors to these centres can promenade in the comfort of a climate controlled environment which gave, by virtue of glass ceilings and plants, the impression of an open air venue.

'It's like an internal shopping village and everything's a streetscape and you have the town square, people promenade and you have to re - create underneath glass ... You have to replicate as far as possible this feeling that you were actually in a shopping strip, on a shopping streetscape ... and the square is where people meet and this is where you have events ...' [S. A. 27].

'... trying to create an open air feel, so, that, yes, it is a shopping centre, and let's face it most shopping centres aren't terribly different to one another, but this one's got an open air boulevard atmosphere about it and that's very important - that people can stroll up and down here and feel like they're promenading on High Street ... that's a definite design strategy ...' [S. A. 18].

The creation of a village square type environment not only provided a centre with a pleasant ambience but was also considered to be essential for the long term survival

of the shopping centre phenomenon, by a manager who claimed that shopping centres could not survive as purely commercial concerns but needed to provide space for community services such as libraries and medical suites. It was necessary, he said, for the management and owners of shopping centres to position them so that they would be regarded as the communities' centres. The owners were sometimes required to provide community services in order to gain development approval, but such facilities could also have positive benefits for the centres' sales figures as visitors tended to spend more time within the centres so there was more opportunity for them to spend money.

'... the only way that shopping centres are going to survive is not purely as a ... financial, commercial entity as cities get larger and decentralise ... it is more and more important that we cement ourselves as the community heart of the catchment area. Now, yes that has positive financial returns because you've been giving people other reasons to come and reasons to stay longer, but it's also giving back ... to the community. Now, you can do it in one of two ways. You can be forced by the local council to give back - you will not get your D. A.. [Development Approval] if you don't put in a library or a bus interchange - but I mean it makes commercial sense' [S. A. 15].

ENDURING CONTRADICTIONS.

The threat posed by the development of planned and managed shopping centres in out - of - town locations to inner city shopping areas has been well publicised (Jacobs, 1984; Rogers, 1990; Gottdiener, 1986; Young, 1985; see also Jones and Clarke, 1994). It is inferred that unless too many centres are built they will be successful and that all visitors travel to them by private car. Some of the managers in this category, however, believed that the location of their centres on public transport routes was an important contributor to their success. Not all the managers within this category, however, considered their centres to be successful, or as successful as they could be, in terms of sales figures, the amount of rent paid, the number of stores trading (with negligible vacancies), the general profit and viability of the centre and in the number of people which they managed to attract. Some even regarded inner city shopping areas as competition! In the larger shopping centres, managers also somewhat ironically, as it is often assumed that the building of a large shopping centre will be detrimental to a strip retail area, commented that their retailers faced strong opposition in particular commodity areas from those located in a strip retail environment and from the free standing supermarkets. On a per shop basis such outlets usually did not affect those located within the shopping centres, but collectively they were sometimes thought to have an important impact. For food at least, some of the managers of the larger centres, said that their retailers could not compete with the convenience of the strip or of the stand alone supermarket.



Plate 5.3 An open, outdoor feeling was created in, for example, the food court area of (The New) Chadstone, Chadstone, Melbourne, by the use of a high dome - shaped glass ceiling, palm trees, plants and a fountain.
(photograph reproduced by kind permission of centre management)

The location of these centres on stand alone sites meant that they had to be appealing and/or convenient enough for shoppers to make the decision to travel to them. Many had been built using the 'gun barrel' design. A small number were constructed using more unusual plans with varying degrees of success, according to the managers. At variance to other retail formats, the centres were regularly refurbished. The frequency with which this occurred, however, differed and sometimes coincided with an extension so that the created environment of the centre would appear consistent.

In order to meet the needs and desires of the people within their centres' catchments research was conducted on a regular basis by in - house personnel or consultants. Managers were most interested in gathering information on their market, the type of retailers which these people wanted to find within their centre, their perception of their centres' marketing campaigns and the reasons why individuals chose not to visit. The frequency with which research was carried out within centres in this category varied and depended upon the size of the centre and whether an extension was being planned.

Chain store retail tenants were generally preferred by the managers because they were professional and regularly upgraded their outlets. Too many chain stores in a centre was, however, considered to be problematic because of the 'sameness' they gave the created environments of centres.

As well as selecting tenants which would be able to cater for the needs and desires of their catchments (although too many discount retailers tended to denigrate a centre), the position of the retailers within the centres was also believed to be important. Specialty tenants were often arranged in precincts so visitors could comparison shop. The lease terms for the specialty tenants varied between three and eight years, with the managers favouring shorter lease terms because it allowed them to re - position tenants within a shorter time period. It also meant that retailers often had to upgrade their outlets on a more regular basis.

Managers identified two types of shopping trip, that is, 'doing' and 'going' shopping. Positioning the tenants who catered for each of these trips in different parts of the centres was sometimes thought to be a useful strategy.

Although it is claimed in the literature that merchandise appears in the shops as if by magic because it is not moved through the centres, deliveries were made in these centres during trading hours. Managers either did not think it was a problem or said it was difficult to stop when it involved couriers.

Individual retailers were responsible for marketing their own businesses. Sometimes, however, there were clauses in their lease agreements which stated the minimum amount of money which they had to spend doing this. Marketing of the centres was paid for by contributions from the retailers and the owners. It was organised either by the centre and/ or marketing managers or by Merchants' Associations. Events or marketing the centre as a product were used. Sometimes managers thought it was difficult to market the centres in a cost effective manner. Managers of smaller centres where corporate campaigns were in place, for example, commented upon their high cost which they said made it hard for them to market their centres for particular retail occasions such as Mothers' or Fathers' Day. As well as particular events or campaigns, marketing also involved 'positioning' the centres, service initiatives and tenant selection.

Providing a certain ambience was considered to be important. Sometimes this involved trying to re - create 'High Street' or taking over the functions formerly performed in the town square and providing nostalgic images of times past for visitors. Managers claimed that visitors not only purchased commodities but also used these centres as places where they could observe others and be observed, meet other people and even promenade as if they were on 'High Street'. Public services, such as, libraries were also features of some of these centres, not only because their provision may have been listed as a condition, before a local authority would give its approval for the owners to increase the size of their centres, but also because their presence may mean that shoppers will spend more time in the centre and therefore, have more opportunity to purchase commodities. Their presence was also another way of generating customer loyalty as identified by Shields (1992b). Managers talked about the various methods which they employed so that the local community would regard 'the' centre as 'their' centre or 'their community's' centre. While shoppers could be attracted to the nostalgic ambience of an idealised community centre environment, managers claimed that such an attribute was a necessary feature of a successful centre.

The popularity or attractiveness of a centre to visitors was not only due to the decisions made by the owners and managers of the centre in terms of its created environment but was also affected by the actions of competing centres' owners and managers. Where an opposing centre was either being built or was undergoing an extension programme the owners and managers of other centres in the area tried to make decisions, including increasing the size of their centres or more frequent refurbishments of the common areas, which would lessen the potentially negative

impact of such developments. Unlike a number of centres in the other categories centres on stand alone sites could often be extended in size.

While managers of these Stand Alone centres were attempting to generate customer loyalty amongst those individuals who lived within their catchment areas, the managers of shopping centres in tourist destinations which is the subject of the next chapter, not only tried to encourage permanent residents from their catchments to visit their centres but they also attempted to capture the transient tourist market.



Plate 5.4 The Highpoint centre, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, contains a tabaret, cinemas and a Toys R Us store - a toy 'category killer'.

CHAPTER SIX COMPROMISED BETWEEN LEISURE AND SHOPPING; SPECIALISATION AND ITS RISKS - SHOPPING CENTRES LOCATED IN TOURIST DESTINATIONS.

INTRODUCTION.

While the created environment of centres on stand alone sites are designed to appeal to the permanent population in their catchments, the shopping centres located in tourist destinations catered for several market groups, that is, a local population, national tourists and international travellers. The requirements of these market groups were quite distinct. Members of the local population wanted to be able to purchase everyday necessity items, such as, food, and less frequently, commodities such as, fashion clothing, which were still by - in - large, mass produced and designed to appeal to the mass market while tourists, especially international tourists, were generally more interested in purchasing momentos, gifts and commodities which they thought were unique to the area or country which they were visiting or in some way symbolised aspects of it. Such diversity in the market place meant that it could be difficult to build, manage and create centres with environments which would appeal to individuals in each group. While local shoppers may have wanted a centre in which it was easy for them to make their necessary and discretionary purchases and even a feeling of community, some members of the tourist market may be more interested in finding a centre which had an environment which was appealing enough for them to want to spend time wandering through, where there may even have been some interesting points of difference in the built form and which compared favourably to the other tourist activities which were offered within the area.

MANAGING MARKETS; CREATIVE RESPONSES TO A CREATED DILEMMA.

These centres were designed to cater for both the local and the tourist markets. The tourist market was sometimes divided into separate groups by the managers on the basis of where the visitors were from, by using the terms regional or state, national and international. The importance of each market group to the financial success of the centres, however, varied. A manager stated that local people represented over 75 per cent of the centre's visitors while another claimed that the centre was aimed '*... basically to visitors, both national and international*' [T. C. 3].

In a centre where a high proportion of the customers were from the local population the tenants mainly catered for the lower middle to upper middle market. According to the manager, however, the retailers collectively, offered merchandise for sale which



Plate 6.1 Part of a leadlight sculpture positioned in the arcade area of Pacific Fair, Broadbeach, Gold Coast, which helped to make its created environment different from many other shopping complexes.

was designed to appeal to all socio - economic groups. National and international tourists were also valuable components of this centre's market with school holidays identified as being particularly important.

In another centre where the tourists represented a large share of the market, the manager referred to the type of shopping which occurred within her centre as 'Destination Shopping', that is, it was regarded by the visitors as an enjoyable activity rather than a chore. This was reflected in the tenancy mix of the centre. There was not, for example, a supermarket. Such retail outlets were usually anchor tenants in centres on stand alone sites and in those centres located on or near a retail strip area.

Different strategies were used to try and encourage the local population and the tourists to visit the centres. In a centre where the number of retail tenancies had increased markedly the expanded centre was 'themed' so that it would appear less threatening to the local market, although the manager conceded that some of these people thought the extended centre was too big. The structure of one of the major tenants' outlets was designed in a unique manner so as to match the holiday feeling of the area but the overall design of the centre was not original. The tourist market was specifically catered for by the use of materials and finishes of a superior quality to those which were usually used in centres. The construction of part of the centre was also at variance to normal shopping centre structure with noticeably higher ceilings which were designed to provide more light and therefore a more open ambience.

'So, it had to be themed in a way that the local resident wouldn't feel uncomfortable and still continue to come here ... but at the same time you wanted it at a standard that would attract, as a tourist centre, to look at because it's different to anything else' [T. C. 1].

Attracting and satisfying visitors from the main market groups was considered difficult by the managers. As some, or many, of the retail tenants did not offer for sale commodities which a large section of the local community either felt they needed or desired.

'... we have heard from time to time that a lot of, particularly the older people, I guess, don't come in here from one year to the next, which we find a bit unfortunate but they have no reason to come in here. There's nothing here for them ... unless they've got grandchildren to buy for ...' [T. C. 3].

According to a manager, there was a lot of retail sales leakage from the area, that is, the local population tended to make at least some of their purchases elsewhere because of the limited choice, higher prices and lack of comparison shopping



Plates 6.2 - 6.5 A variety of architectural designs and styles were juxtaposed to denote different areas at the indoor - outdoor centre, Pacific Fair, Broadbeach, Gold Coast.

available. Permanent residents were, however, sometimes encouraged to visit the centre, by the staging of events such as craft shows as they were perceived as being an important part of the market and of the marketing of the centre. It was hoped that the local people would inform national tourists, who were sometimes regarded as the hardest to attract because they sometimes stayed in private accommodation, of the existence of the centre. By staying with family members or friends the national tourists were not exposed to the centre's marketing campaigns which were in place in the hotels and motels in the area.

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR CO - EXISTENCE.

The tenants paid rent on an area basis although a manager qualified this statement by saying that the base rental was 'theoretically' calculated on a rate per metre squared. The cost of renting a retail outlet in most of the centres also reflected the market value of the space and sometimes the area and the frontage were also taken into account as well as its position within the centre. For example, the rents charged for outlets on the ground and first floors in a centre were similar but the cost of leasing space on the second level was much lower. Independent valuers were often used to assist in the calculation of the value of an outlet. As with the specialty tenants in the other centre categories the lease terms usually varied between three and five years (although there were right of renewal clauses in some leases which was more unusual) and the major tenants had lease agreements for much longer periods of time. The tenants often did not, however, have to supply management with their monthly sales figures. In a centre where the manager had tried to encourage the retail tenants to do this, they had refused, as it was not a requirement of their lease agreements. The retail tenants paid operating expenses which was usually calculated on an area basis but in one centre it was calculated on the basis of the outlet's share of the gross rental although the size of the outlet was also taken into account. In most of the centres the retailers also paid a marketing levy.

As with the managers of centres on stand alone sites most of the managers in this category of centres did not consider the delivery of stock to their retailers during opening hours to be a problem. No restrictions were placed upon the times during which the tenants received their deliveries even though some had to be moved through the centres as not all the retail units had rear access ways. According to a manager, most of the retailers received their deliveries either early or late in the day. The long operating hours and seven day trading, in another centre, however, meant that those people making the deliveries refused to do so outside of the centre's opening hours. Although management tried to restrict when the stock arrived, it was

admitted that the centre was located in an area where there were delivery difficulties and that receiving orders on time could be a problem.

Retail tenants were chosen so that as a group, they would appeal to the local and to the tourist shoppers. Although these centres were often designed to attract visitors from a variety of market groups they were not necessarily protected from the negative impacts of local, national or international economic recessions. A manager claimed that the economic downturn associated with the 1987 share market crash which occurred just before her centre opened, for example, detrimentally impacted upon its financial performance. This, in association with a slump in tourist numbers and a number of ownership changes, led to what the manager described as the centre's 'chequered' history. Attracting tenants proved to be difficult. In an attempt to secure tenants for the food court, one of the former ownership companies had fitted out all the units and purchased the required equipment. Although prospective tenants did not have to finance themselves into the centre a number of them had to be replaced, some several times, because they could not afford to stay. *'They were put in there without having to invest a cent. Now I think that it was probably done a little hastily because all ten of those people went under, in fact some of the outlets went under two or three times ...'* [T. C. 3].

The number of prepared food outlets which operated in the centre had since been condensed and a well known fast food franchise had also opened. The landlord no longer contributed to the cost of fitting out a unit but as with some of the inner city shopping centres¹, they owned the shop frontages and did assist with the cost of upgrading them.

'We do not contribute now to any fit outs at all ... We go to the inside of the ceiling and the bottom of the floor and everything else is their problem. We do own some of the carpets in the premises though, which is flow over from landlord fit - out' [T. C. 3].

Tenants in this centre had to refurbish their outlets every five years. Their lease agreements listed the landlord's requirements with respect to the materials and types of signage used. In general terms they had to submit a fit - out plan which could be approved, rejected or altered. The manager, however, claimed that on the whole the plans were *'... pretty good'* [T. C. 3]. In another centre, the retailers did not have a clause in their lease agreements which stated the frequency of refurbishment

¹ Managers of centres Stand Alone sites and those located on or near a commercial strip did not mention whether the owners assisted the retailers in this manner. They sometimes said, however, that retailers had been 'paid' to become tenants.



Plate 6.6 Retail tenants were selected so that, collectively, they would appeal to the local and the tourist markets in this category of centres. The internationally recognised fast - food franchise Mc Donalds, for example, was one of the food court tenants in O' Connells Pavilion, Queenstown. The centre also contained some more exclusive specialty shops such as, the Action Downunder clothing store.

because the lease covered four walls and a bare floor, according to the manager. The local council, however, were placing restrictions on the type of materials and signage which could be used by the tenants.

As alluded to by some managers of centres in the other categories, making refurbishment of an outlet a condition of a new lease agreement was becoming more difficult from a legal point of view in Australia.

'... that is now getting complex as far as the law is concerned in Australia. They're starting to raise all sorts of queries as to whether that's going to continue to be permitted as part of the renewal, as to whether people can be forced to refurbish or not' [T. C. 1].

In a centre in Australia, however, the requirement to refurbish an outlet at the end of a lease term was at the time of my interview with the manager (October, 1993), dependent upon two factors. If the shop needed a refurbishment at lease expiry then it would be made a condition of the lease renewal agreement. If it did not need to be refurbished immediately but rather at some future date, then this was written into the new lease agreement.

The difficulty associated with securing tenancies during the period which another centre had opened led, the (present) manager believed, to a tenancy selection process in which the tenants were not carefully scrutinised and where there was not enough consideration of the centre's perceived market. *'... trying to get tenants for the place, it was a lot harder than they'd anticipated and ... people came in with very little thought ... and very little screening, I'd imagine' [T. C. 3].*

The retail tenancies were arranged so that retailers selling similar commodities were located close to each other in most of the centres. *'... we've got an up - market fashion area ... tried to pick like tenancies that would fit around this area and compliment each other in that up - market fashion area mix ...' [T. C. 1].*

As with the centres on stand alone sites and those located on or near a commercial strip a number of these centres contained a variety of chain as well as some more select retail tenancies. The largest centre in this category even contained anchor tenants similar, if not the same, as those found in the out - of - town centres, that is, department stores, a discount department store, a supermarket and a small discount food operation. In a couple of the other centres office or small business space was part of, or was linked to, the centre structure - a feature they shared with some of the centres which were located on, or near a commercial strip.

The selection criteria used to choose the tenants for these centres varied greatly. In a centre, for example, the manager said that there had been no strict formula while in

another which had been extended in size, some of the 'old' tenants had stayed where they were, while others had been re - positioned. A committee had put forward their ideas about who they thought should be in the tenancy mix and then an external leasing team informed the committee whom they believed should be given space within the centre. A balancing exercise was then conducted on the basis of what was missing from the tenancy mix and what was available in the market place.

'... end up ... probably 95 per cent of what you want, you get. The other five per cent is a bit messy and some of the people you mightn't of wanted to keep, you keep, because of political reasons you really can't do anything else and over a period of time it sorts itself out' [T. C. 1].

The applications for each outlet were evaluated by the committee on the basis of their suitability for the space and as a result of feasibility studies, *'... who can pay what rents ...'* [T. C. 1]. As occurred in other centres the tenants were positioned broadly in precincts with the success of these retailers being monitored once they had been given space. Having some tenants who offered a point of difference was also viewed favourably.

'... one of the things you try and do if you can is to get something that's here, preferably, but no where else in the same area ... you try and have some other retailers if you can, whether they be 'one - off' operators or whether they be smaller chains that might be interstate' [T. C. 1].

In another centre the first floor consisted of apparel retailers while the outlets on the other levels were filled with the intention of providing as much variety as possible. This centre mainly catered for visitors to the area. The manager, however, claimed that it also needed to appeal to at least some groups of individuals in the resident population. The food court tenants and some of the retailers on the second level, for example, attracted shoppers from this market. The retail tenants in this centre were to a certain extent selected on the basis of *'... gut reaction'* [T. C. 3]. Finding tenants for this multi - level centre had been difficult, particularly on the second level. This area had, however, become more successful with the opening of an outlet on this floor by an international company, the benefits of which had flowed through onto the rest of the level. When asked about the traffic flows through the centre, the manager said, that although the tenants on the second level claimed that shoppers did not make it onto that floor, other retailers in the centre sometimes held different views.

'I've had retailers from other floors, ... have sales upstairs in one of the vacant spaces and their opinion is that, yes, a good proportion of the people actually make their way up to the second floor ...' [T. C. 3].

It can probably be assumed, however, that shoppers will seek out a shop having a sale more eagerly than they would outlets offering full - priced commodities for purchase.

Events in the form of entertainment, promotions and displays were amongst the most popular techniques used to market these centres. Particular groups of retailers, for example, the food court tenants, were also sometimes promoted together.

'Now most shopping centres do specific promotion of specific areas. We do a lot of entertainment in this centre because of its open door activity and because of the type of place it is ... mainly we tell people what's happening in the centre, what the facilities are ... mainly institutional advertising of the centre ...' [T. C. 1].

Marketing was mostly organised by marketing managers or co - ordinators. Retail tenants contributed to a fund in a number of centres. In one centre a promotions committee which consisted of retailers, agreed upon the amount of money which should be collected from the tenants. Such an arrangement was not without its problems, according to the manager, however, as the retailers were reluctant to increase the charges they made to themselves.

'... obviously they're not going to put their own levies up unless ... there's a really good case for it and the levies in fact have been at the same level for four years ... we are trying, some of us are trying to push for an increase' [T. C. 3].

In this centre a market co - ordinator decided how much of the fund should be spent on trying to attract people from the various market groups, while in another a marketing manager designed and ran a marketing programme for the whole centre. Although there was a marketing advisory panel which consisted of retailer representatives, as with other centres, they did not make the decisions.

'... [the representatives] can voice opinions, make suggestions, ... have no say in the real spending of the money whatsoever and really don't have any control over - it's totally controlled at our discretion ...' [T. C. 1].

The small size and the diverse nature of the retailers in another centre, however, meant that there was no marketing fund and that it was not marketed as a single entity.

Newspaper advertising was sometimes used but the media of radio and television were more frequently employed. The tourist market was sometimes addressed separately by way of advertising on the television channels shown in hotels, a special bus service that travelled on a route past the hotels picking up people who wished to visit the centre, the provision of a lounge at a centre for tour parties and

'front liners' evenings where hotel receptionists, bank tellers and staff from an information centre were invited to social evenings at a centre during which they were shown around and provided with information so that they would be able to inform visitors about it.

As the tourist markets targeted by the managers of these centres were diverse, that is, they wanted to attract the regional or state, national and international tourists, different ways of marketing the centres were sometimes employed to encourage one particular group to the centre. The built form of one of the centre's, for example, was purposively designed so that it was noticeable from the main highway. It was hoped that people travelling, especially by car, in the area would see it and therefore decide to visit.

'The towers were designed to catch people ... [the lighting] runs to something like two o'clock in the morning - so, anyone driving up and down the highway will do nothing else but see it - it's a beautiful site - which doesn't look ... externally like a shopping centre' [T. C. 1].

While in another centre, the manager and marketing co - ordinator tried to encourage the local population to visit their centre so that they could inform friends and relations who may come into the area for a holiday about the centre.

'And while we do aim for visitors it's very narrow minded not to cater for locals as well because the locals are the ... bank tellers, the shop assistants, the receptionist at the hotels, so we have to appeal to those people as well to a certain extent because they are the one's that will pass the message onto the visitors should our advertising not reach them, of course' [T. C. 3].

As some of the international travellers stayed only a very short time in these areas, a manager claimed, that the centre's marketing campaigns had to capture these individuals' attention as soon as possible. The transient nature of this particular market group also meant that the marketing was an on - going and continuous process. The need to provide these shoppers with tenants selling good quality commodities was, however, also considered to be important.

'... and the international visitors we've got two days to catch them. And that's it. We never see them again. But they have friends at home ... So you're not trying to rip them off in those two days. We're really very conscious of value and quality because they will repeat that word of mouth to their relatives ...' [T. C. 3].

LEGAL RESTRICTIONS; IMPACT OF LEGISLATION ON MANAGERMENTS' ACTIONS.

As with the managed shopping centres located in the inner city, on stand alone sites and those located in proximity to a shopping street in an out - of - town location,

some of the actions and decisions made by the owners and the managers of shopping centres in tourist destinations are influenced, if not controlled by local, state or national legislation. It was (now) illegal, according to a manager, in most states in Australia, for example, for owners to force retailers to spend a certain amount of money advertising their businesses over and above their contribution to a marketing fund. There was also a possibility that legislation may be passed which would prevent shopping centre owners from requiring retailers to refurbish their outlets in order to secure a new lease agreement. Such a restriction, would, according to a manager, have a major impact upon the created environment of managed shopping centres as the frequent refurbishment of the retail tenancies and of the common areas of managed shopping centres is one of their biggest points of difference in comparison to strip retailing or the traditional retail street. *'If they make ... it was supposed to happen, ... that you cannot make refurbishment a condition of a new lease - now that will have a major impact on the quality of shopping centres'* [T. C. 1].

In another centre Local Body planning legislation had impacted upon the type and amount of signage which could be used. Such restrictions were a reflection of a 'town - twin' programme which was in place with a tourist town in the United States of America.

'...Council is just going through a bit of a phase at the moment about signage ... At the moment we're contemplating erecting a sign - board, directory type thing, some pillars at the front of the building ... but we're waiting for Council to ... make a decision on it ...' [T. C. 2].

A PERSISTENT DILEMMA; GETTING THE MARKETS TO COALESCE.

The planned and managed shopping centres in this category were designed to cater for the permanent residents and for tourists. The managers in some of these centres also perceived that the tourist market consisted of several distinct groups, that is, the regional or state, the national and the international tourist, all of which had varying requirements of a shopping centre. Such diversity in the market meant that it was sometimes difficult to make these centres attractive to individuals in all these groups particularly in terms of tenant selection and design. It was usually felt, however, that an attempt should be made to service the needs and desires that all these groups had of a shopping centre. Managers believed that the local market, in particular, should not be ignored because these people either represented a large proportion of the total number of visitors to the centres or because their knowledge of a centre could be passed onto tourists.

Neither the Gold Coast nor Queenstown attract tourists solely on the basis of their shopping centres. The Gold Coast is renowned for its warm climate and beaches while Queenstown is recognised as a place where the physical environment is very attractive. It is also located close to (mountain) ski fields. Shopping, therefore, is unlikely to be the primary motivation for tourists who visit these areas. The centres were but one of the tourist attractions within these areas which is probably also why some features of their created environments, for example, the tenancy selection and mix, were not always that different from those found in the centres on Stand Alone sites and those located on, or near a retail strip.



Plate 6.7 Legislation sometimes restricted the actions of the developers, owners and managers of shopping centres. The owners of the Skyline Arcade, Queenstown, for example, had to retain this frontage when they built their two storey arcade in 1984.



Figure 6.1 An example of 'Placelessness' - Pacific Fair (Ground Level only), Gold Coast, -an Indoor/Outdoor centre in which a number of architectural styles and place names have been used to connote different times and places.
 Source: Pacific Fair Shopping Centre Directory.

CHAPTER SEVEN PERMEABLE BOUNDARIES; MOVING BETWEEN 'INTERNAL' AND 'EXTERNAL' CREATED ENVIRONMENTS - SHOPPING CENTRES LOCATED ON OR NEAR A COMMERCIAL STREET.

INTRODUCTION.

The centres analysed under this category were (now) located on, or near, a traditional retail shopping strip and/or in proximity to office buildings. Like centres on stand alone sites, their visitors comprised individuals who made a deliberate decision to travel to the centre but it also contained people who may go into the area for other reasons as well, including, paid employment. Some of the retailers within these centres were therefore selected and/or positioned so that they could serve and attract shoppers from this market group who may choose to go to the centres during their lunch breaks and before and after work.

The retailers positioned on a traditional shopping street close to some of these centres sometimes competed with the centres' tenants for visitors and for sales. Collectively, however, the retailers in both these environments, comprised the total retail offer of an area. The need to work co - operatively with the stand alone retailers and with local government was alluded to by some of the managers by, for example, their involvement in the Main Street programmes that were operating, or which were going to be established within their areas.

THE EFFECTS OF CENTRE LOCATION.

Although all the centres analysed under this category were located on, or near a shopping street or offices, there was not a lot of commonalty between the managers with respect to their views on the location of their centres. A couple of them mentioned how close their centres were to the inner city;

'... we're close to the city, by having a department store that usually defines you as a regional centre - which we're not - we're small community - based centre ... so we're a confused semi - CBD/ sub - regional community - based centre. So, we don't have a strong identity with anything except the local community' [S. S. 10],

while others commented upon the problems which they had with security due to the presence of, for example, youth gangs, although one of these managers qualified this statement by claiming that most large shopping centres have a problem with car thefts. The location of some centres on public transport routes contributed to their financial success, according to the managers. *'It's extremely important in fact it's one of the disadvantages that our competitive centre, ... suffer, they aren't on a railway station and they aren't on a main thoroughfare for buses ...'* [S. S. 9].

In one centre, a large appliance store and several other smaller specialty shops were located in a building which was under separate ownership but was in such proximity to the centre that it appeared that the tenants may have been part of the centre. Although the centre and building were separately owned, the manager of the centre said that they worked reasonably closely with each other and that they would not, for example, have allowed a large appliance store to open in the centre in a position which was close to the existing outlet. *'No, no, we obviously work very close with and ... they wouldn't want us to put an appliance store directly opposite their show room! ...'* [S. S. 20].

COMPETING FOR CONSUMERS; COMPETITION POSED BY OTHER CENTRES AND OTHER RETAIL FORMATS.

As with the managers of the centres on stand alone sites, managers in this category considered other managed shopping centres, some of which were larger, and/ or were being refurbished and extended, as well as the construction of new centres within proximity to their own centres to be potential competitors or as competition. To combat such opposition a manager said that he hoped that the planned extension to his centre (which he claimed would be done any way) would be finished and operating before, or at the same time, as when a competing centre was due to open. Another said that management were considering a way of rewarding frequent shoppers so as to encourage customer loyalty which would coincide with a planned re - positioning campaign designed to get visitors back to the centre. A couple of the centres were under - going extension programmes themselves which would turn them into regional centres so that they would either be able to compete with other regional centres in the area or so that they could dominate it.

The building of 'Power' centres¹ within the same area was also thought to detrimentally impact upon the sales figures of centres. The level of presentation at a power centre which had been built within a short distance of a planned shopping centre was considered to be outstanding by the shopping centre manager. He believed that it was only because the power centre did not have fashion retailers as part of its tenancy mix that its impact had not been even more damaging on his own centre. *'No fashion. If they had fashion up there we'd be 'shot'...'* [S. S. 5]. In another instance construction of a power centre on an adjacent site to a shopping centre which was owned by the same ownership company was designed to act as an

¹ Power centres are dominated by anchor tenants which often occupy up to 70 per cent of the leasable space and have lower occupancy costs than 'conventional' shopping centres (see page 19 for fuller discussion).

added attraction for the shopping centre as well as competition. The shopping centre manager, however, claimed that it had neither negatively affected the centre which she managed, nor provided it with a huge boost but it may have detrimentally impacted upon the strip retail environment, on the same site which was also owned by the same company. It was also implied that the difficulty the owners were experiencing in getting planning permission for a pedestrian crossing between the two sites (the shopping centre/ strip retail area and the power centre site) may have affected the predicted success associated with positioning a power centre in proximity to a 'traditional' shopping centre.

Although she considered that her centre had no real competition, another manager, nevertheless believed that it needed to be better than it had been in the past because of the number of retail outlets which had been built in the area since the centre had opened. She was, however, enthusiastic about a Main Street development which was, at the time of the interview (February, 1994) being planned.

'As one [the shopping centre and the suburban shopping strip] we're a huge force but they don't have a promotions and marketing fund but they are doing this 'Main Street' ... That might help. Oh!, it'll be brilliant! If that comes in it'll be fantastic!' [S. S. 4].

It was somewhat ironic that a manager felt that her centre would benefit from such a programme as they are usually designed to enhance the traditional shopping street environment in an attempt to make them more competitive in response to the perceived and real threat posed by planned and managed shopping centres! The manager's enthusiasm for the planned Main Street programme is also at variance to the literature. Researchers who have analysed the created environment of shopping centres have focused upon the attractiveness of their interiors and have tended to dismiss their exterior environments by remarking upon their plainness, although O'Brien and Harris (1991), claim that centre car parking areas are now being made more appealing.

INVESTIGATING THE NEEDS AND DESIRES OF THE CONSUMERS AND THE RETAIL WORKERS.

The amount of research carried out within these centres varied greatly. A manager, for example, said that she did not think that any research had been conducted since the centre opened although she wanted to have some done, while another stated that research was mandatory for a shopping centre so that management could check that the tenancy mix suited the catchment and that the level of cleanliness within the centre as well as the service within the shops were viewed favourably.



Plate 7.1 With the car parking area in front, the Hornby Shopping Centre, Hornby, Christchurch, appears to be located on a stand alone site. It was, however, built within close proximity to an existing strip retailing area.



Plate 7.2 Part of the commercial strip which operates along side the Hornby shopping centre Hornby, Christchurch.

As with centres located on stand alone sites, the frequency with which research was carried out and the techniques which were employed varied between the centres and with the type of study conducted. Studies which were described as 'small scale' in a centre, for example, were conducted by in - house personnel and were undertaken every quarter while consultants were commissioned annually to conduct large scale research. In a centre where a psycho - graphic survey was going to be used for the first time (that is, gathering information on the income level and the demographic composition of the catchment as well as material on the social behaviours of the people in the area), the manager was at the time of the interview (February, 1994), considering whether consultants should be employed. A major research exercise had been undertaken in the past (before he was manager) but nothing had been done with the information and it failed, the manager claimed, to provide any meaningful information as to how the centre should in the near future operate and be managed. *'... the information that they gave us , I don't think told us anything, in what direction to take the centre'* [S. S. 3]. In another centre, the manager said that there was so much that consultants could be used for, but as most of the management company's personnel were ex - retailers she felt that they should be able to organise and manage research exercises without the assistance of 'experts' from outside the company.

The type of information collected, and or, used, varied from census data to assessments on the amount of retail spending in the area to focus groups, customer feedback cards and one on one discussions. In a couple of centres focus groups were about to be used for the first time. The managers were positive about the information which they expected to gain from such an exercise. A manager said that the focus group discussions would provide information on what attracted people to the centre as well as what they did not like while another felt that focus groups would provide attitudinal information about what the centre was missing in the market place enabling management to match the tenant mix with the market. *'... very useful in trying to get the product, which is basically the retail mix, matched to what the market wants and you can't really get that from just exit surveys and competitions ...'* [S. S. 16]. Not all the managers, however, appeared to be aware of the purpose and scope of focus groups as a research technique as the following comment indicates:

'Yeah it is useful although you just got to remember that you've just talked to groups of ten or twelve people and yet there's 20,000 people ... that they're speaking for. Yeah it is useful just to know what people think of the mall ... general perception of what we have and what the mall is or isn't. What they'd like to see - really important, really important ...' [S. S. 6].

In some of the other centres focus groups were used in association with either in - depth interviews or one on one discussions. Although the focus groups' participants predominantly consisted of shoppers and/ or people who lived within the centre's catchment, they were also sometimes used to gain information from the retail outlet staff as a way of discovering how they felt about the centre and what they were unhappy about or thought needed changing. It was assumed by centre management that if these people were satisfied with their working environment such a feeling would be passed onto the shoppers. *'... what can we do to keep the staff in the centre happy and if they're happy ... they're more likely to relate in a more friendly manner to the customers ...'* [S. S. 18].

In some of the centres relatively informal research methods were also used. Managers sometimes walked through their centres and would either 'chat' to shoppers or listen to what they said. One of these managers, for example, talked to shoppers in the centre (after first introducing himself) and asked them to name the retailers which they would like to see in the centre. Such a technique was not without its pitfalls, however, as he believed that people often told him the names of shops from where they would like to have been able to purchase goods, that is, the outlets to which they aspired. When the manager asked them how often they bought commodities from these stores, however, many would answer that they did not buy but rather that they liked to look. *'... '[we] feel good when we walk through those shops'. That doesn't pay the rent! We're being very cautious that we don't go too up - market ...'* [S. S. 13].

Information booth staff sometimes recorded the retail tenant requests made by shoppers while in another centre the cleaning and security staff were being trained to gain as much feedback as possible from visitors. Shoppers were also able to make comments using the customer feedback cards which were available in some centres. Not all the managers, however, were convinced of the benefits of such a system. Although the wording on the feedback cards had been changed in a centre, the manager still felt that the exercise tended to invite criticism.

'The problem is, with that, is we get very little praise. We actually changed the wording on it so that's why we put that in, we'd ... like a compliment as well! But ... it's still a negative thing to me. But then again we can't really dismiss that either, they've taken the bloody time to fill in the form, we should really listen to them - and ..., mind you, we ... get some beauties, we get some real rippers!' [S. S. 20].

While all the managers were interested in gaining at least some information about the people in their centres' catchments - where they lived, income level, their needs and desires, demographic and psycho - graphic information - they were also

sometimes interested in doing analyses on their centres' which allowed them to target market their competitors weaknesses and their own centres' strengths. '*... gone are the days where you just take a couple of pages in the local paper and just hope for the best ...*' [S. S. 8].

Although a large amount of information could be collected as a result of a research exercise or a competition (which in some centres were used as a way of gathering information) data bases were not extensively used. A data base had been considered in a centre. Due to a lack of resources, however, the information collected from the entry forms submitted for a major competition had not been put in one but rather was represented by 'dots on maps' in the management office which indicated where the visitors lived. In another centre the idea of setting up a database had been abandoned once it was discovered that many of the retailers had their own. The manager of a centre in New South Wales also said that they had to be very careful with the information which they collected from customers due to the Privacy Act¹.

'We were actually going to, but then we believe that most of the tenants here have their own database, customer base, and there's nothing worse than a customer of ... having something from the shopping centre as well. And they're very, very, what's the word?, ... they treat all of their customers like quite precious, and they don't want them bombarded with stuff from us' [S. S. 4].

APPEALING TO COMMITTED AND IMPULSE VISITORS; CHOOSING AND ARRANGING THE RETAIL TENANTS.

As with the centres on stand alone sites, the tenancy selection in these centres consisted of a number of chain store outlets as well as some 'Mum and Dad', or owner operated retail businesses. Chains stores were usually viewed favourably by the managers. They were perceived to be a lower risk than owner - operators with respect to their ability to pay their rent and they were thought to have higher standards of merchandise display, greater drawing power and sales performance. Their use of professional advertising and branding was also regarded as advantageous.

'... we have the core ..the 'Whitcoulls', the 'Hannahs', the 'London Books', the 'Farmers', the Foodtowns, the Big Freshers [sic] ... and that's the gut - that's the guts of our business ... the cash side of our business...' [S. S. 5].

¹ Centre managers in New Zealand did not mention any restrictions placed upon them with respect to the type of information they could collect, or in the way such material could be stored, due to the 1993 Privacy Act in this country.

Mum and Dad operators were viewed in a more ambivalent manner by the managers. Some said that owner - operators were good to have in a centre's mix because they generally provided a point of difference, a bit of flare, more service, or a uniqueness in comparison to the chain stores which were often ubiquitous to most shopping centres. On the negative side, however, managers said that owner - operators found it difficult to open seven days a week, often did not have the money for a quality fit out for their outlet, that they did not have the drawing or buying power that the national chains had and that they tended to rely on the centre's marketing campaigns to encourage people to visit the centre and they hoped their shops, rather than advertising their own businesses. While a manager stated that a centre comprised almost entirely of chains would be boring, others claimed that these stores were the retailers that shoppers wanted to find in a centre. One of these managers said that the customers wanted to buy the chain stores' 'product' while another claimed that visitors did not always like points of difference in the tenancy mix of shopping centres. The centre which he managed, was being extended in size. Approximately 80 per cent of the tenants would be generic retailers. The remaining fifteen to 20 per cent of retailers would be a little different but their merchandise would still be selected on the basis that it would appeal to a large number of people.

'We're talking about a major regional Shopping Centre catering to the mass market - the products that we sell have to be mass market stuff ... can get a little bit of variation, you can get certainly market niching within that ... in total it has to appeal to the mass market' [S. S. 12].

The amount of rent paid by specialty tenants was calculated in a variety of different ways. During a lease term the amount of rent paid by specialty tenants was either subjected to rent reviews or CPI increases on an annual or bi - annual basis. In a number of these centres tenants paid rent on the basis of a base rent and a percentage of turnover. Several managers, however, stated that their specialty tenants rarely reached the level of sales required for the percentage of turnover clause to apply either because of the economic situation, or as a result of the base rent being continually increased. Unlike the percentage of sales system of rent payment, the base rent method provided the owner or owners, with a known return.

'... whether or not any of them will reach that percentage point is another matter. We call that an Overage Point ... some of course never reach that point because we're cranking up the base rent the whole time ... base rent from our point of view is bankable and we cash flow for it ...' [S. S. 5].

The duration of the lease agreements for the specialty tenants (excluding temporary tenancies) varied between three years and seven years and a number of months. A

couple of managers said that lease terms of this length were important for their centres because they enabled the managers and/ or, owners to assess the successfulness or otherwise of a retailer (which may result in a termination of the agreement in a relatively short period of time) and also allowed them to relocate tenants within the centre. There were also relocation clauses and allowances in some lease agreements which gave management even more flexibility with respect to the position of tenants within the centres although one of the managers admitted that relocating tenants was a disruptive process.

'We don't give long leases ... 'cos we'll get tenants stuck there and it's very hard to shift them once they're there - you need some flexibility. We have relocations clauses in our lease too ... we have the ability to relocate tenants which is a pretty good thing to have - it's got some guts to move it around and ... do work around them ... that's obviously not the ideal situation 'cos you're going disrupt trading and that sort of thing' [S. S. 5].

A number of the managers said that they did not like to have right - of - renewal terms attached to the specialty tenants' lease agreements even though a manager claimed that they were generally happy to renew a retailer's lease. Powerful retailers sometimes insisted on options. If the retailers wanted to have a right of renewal term attached to their lease this was sometimes negotiated or management requested a longer lease term. *'... occasionally there are ... rights of renewal in there. Depends. We prefer not to give renewals ... a bargaining point these days we often give way on that' [S. S. 2].*

The lease terms for major tenants were for a longer period of time than the specialty tenants with several managers indicating that their lease terms varied between ten and 30 years. A small number of managers said that these anchor tenants predominantly paid their rent as a proportion of their sales figures.

As part of their lease agreements tenants in some centres were also required to spend a certain amount advertising themselves as well as contributing to the centre's marketing fund. Sometimes where the retailers had not fulfilled these obligations management either encouraged or 'bullied' them into doing so, made them donate the amount that they should have spent to the Merchants' Association or got them to advertise in the centre's catalogue.

'... which basically just covers us if they don't, do absolutely nothing to promote their business ... we have had to enforce that clause a couple of times and it's generally with the owner - operator the one or two stores they don't see the worth in it ...' [S. S. 18].

Although the chain store owners did advertise their businesses such campaigns did not always benefit the shopping centres as they tended to advertise their businesses

but not where their outlets were located. Their marketing campaigns often did not coincide with the shopping centres' and so it was sometimes difficult for them to take part in a marketing campaign organised by centre management.

In a number of the centres the retailers were required to refurbish their outlets at the end of each lease term and in several centres the managers were either encouraging their tenants to refurbish in an attempt to bring all the retail outlets up to the same level, or they could enforce a retailer to redecorate or refurbish during a lease term. Some of the managers, however, said that the professional retailers refurbished their shops long before they were required to do so by the centres' owners and management because they realised that they needed 'to get ahead', 'to set the direction', 'to keep up with the fads and trends'. Although the costs of refurbishing a retail outlet were high, the cost of doing nothing was considered to be much higher.

'...we can enforce an earlier re - fit like every three or four. The good stores are refurbishing every three or four years, particularly the fashion stores - they understand that they can't afford not to. The minute their store starts looking tired, drab, they'll loose market share ... it's merchandise driven but it's also image driven ...' [S. S. 18].

Tenants were often selected so that they would, or will in the future it was perceived, reflect the centres' market. In a centre, for example, which was being redeveloped and increased in size the number of tenants which would be required by the catchment in each retail category was being calculated by breaking down the amount of household spending in the last census, by mesh block and by category, to find out the size of the market for each commodity. This information was then going to be used to calculate the amount of floor space needed in the 'new' centre for each commodity group. Where there was an identifiable difference in average household income levels between the primary and secondary markets the managers sometimes felt that the retail tenants had to concentrate on attracting shoppers from the primary catchment. The retailers could not, according to a manager, expect to make enough money by drawing customers solely from the secondary market. In his centre, which had opened relatively recently, several of the retailers had 'down - marketed' so as to better reflect the centre's catchment while other outlets had been replaced because they were not considered to be right for the market. In another centre middle priced fashion sold well. If the planned extension programme went ahead the manager said that instead of inserting some higher priced fashion retailers the number of middle market fashion retailers would be increased as more expensive fashion retailers did not 'do very well' within the centre.

'... I've been here eighteen months and every time I put in a shop that's up above the middle range market level, they don't succeed extremely, they don't succeed. Oh, they survive, but they don't sort

of jump off the blocks and make a lot of money and its only because of the average purchase price is got to be lower here ...' [S. S. 3].

Tenants were not only chosen because they reflected the income level of the centres' catchments. They were sometimes selected for their ability to reflect the demographics or the social behaviours of the market. A prospective tenant's ability to fill any gaps within their existing tenancy mix was also considered to be important. In a centre which had undergone a recent redevelopment programme the young age structure of the market was now being catered for by a number of tenants who offered for sale leisure wear for young people and by the eatery where the emphasis was on children.

In a centre where there was a diverse range of income levels and an evolving polarisation in the age structure of the catchment, the manager was trying to attract more vertical retailers, that is, manufacturers with their own outlets, because of their ability to react more quickly to changes in demand. This was considered to be important because some of those who made up the centre's catchment regarded themselves as the 'trend setters', that is, they liked to be seen in the latest 'look' before anyone else in the metropolitan area. This desire was already being met by several women's fashion retailers (the centre was weak in men's fashion, according to the manager) who used the market as a 'trial area'. *'... just to try and make them that little bit different for this area because the people in the area like to see themselves as a little bit different'* [S. S. 10].

Although the age structure, social behaviours and income levels of a centre's catchment may be reflected in the selection of tenants and in the theming of the common areas, in a couple of centres where there were a large number of 'ethnic' (as termed by the centre managers) people in the catchment the tenants did not mirror this to any great extent. A manager, for example, said that 60 to 70 per cent of this population group in his centre's catchment, shop in a similar manner to the rest of the market in that they wanted to find budget retailers in the centre. *'... they essentially shop Australian and we've catered more for their price and value consciousness ...'* [S. S. 16]. Another manager conceded that they had tried to cater for this part of their market with their food tenants but that their endeavours had largely been unsuccessful as they needed to have four or five of these tenancies to make it work. In this centre, the food tenants were mainly selling 'mainstream' commodities and at least some of the market continued to think that the food that could be purchased from the shopping centre was highly priced in comparison to the markets.

'... most of our research indicates that they don't tend to shop here, for food especially, they shop at the markets ... even though we're very competitive on price, their culture is, they're used to the markets and taking the big boxes rather than buying it in bags. That's something that we've unsuccessfully tried to break down - the perception that the shopping centres are expensive ... they just like to buy in bulk, they spend a lot more money on food than probably the Anglo - Saxon families ...' [S. S. 18].

Although they liked to pick tenants that reflected their centre's catchment, managers believed that their choice was sometimes limited. A manager claimed that there were fewer retailers in comparison to the past, while the manager of a recently built centre which shared its catchment with a regional centre, said that many retailers were not available because they already had outlets in the larger centre. Good quality retailers were sometimes paid to become tenants because the market place was perceived to be 'pretty tough'. The securing of a few big name retailers, for example, in a centre had enabled management to attract smaller name retailers on the basis that the big names were going to be tenants as well.

Some of the managers were asked whether their retailers had to supply monthly sales figures. Several of the managers who said that they did, used the information to compare it with the previous year's figures for the individual retailers and for the centre as whole. In one of these centres management informed the retailers of their individual ranking in comparison to other retailers within the same category. Each month the shop which had the most improved sales figures in comparison to the previous year was awarded a prize. Such an award was said to give recognition to the retail staff as much as to the owners, as they were the ones who usually dealt directly with the shoppers by serving in the outlets. Unlike the inanimate parts of the outlets which could be orchestrated by regulations in the lease agreements, centre management had much less control over the standard of customer service in the shops. *'It's an incentive thing. It's recognising the staff as much as the owners, actually ... You've actually got to work with the staff as much as you have with the owners because they're the one's they're really doing their thing'* [S. S. 4]. In another centre chain store sales figures were used to identify trends because they had computerised cash tills and accounting systems. A manager said that there will in the near future be a clause in the leases which will allow centre management to have a computer link with each of the shops' cash registers so that management will know on a daily and even hourly basis, the sales figures for each retailer, and from that for the centre as a whole, so that any patterns in the sales figures can be deciphered.

'So, there will be a time, when we do our next lease, like when these leases expire ... we will be saying to them, we'll put something in our lease which says we will have a direct link up with your till so we will know on a monthly, weekly, daily, hourly basis what's going through

your till and ... I guess you'll be able to take whatever ... assumptions out of that information as you get - ... anything that will help you in what you are trying to do and try and establish a pattern. But in my experience ... the only pattern there is, is probably Christmas! It's very hard to judge' [S. S. 5].

The action taken by managers should a retailer's sales start to decline, varied. A couple of the managers said that they would sit down and talk to the tenant concerned. One of them said that she would consider whether there was anything that they could be done to help the retailer, or whether the 'writing was on the wall' and retailers selling those particular commodities in that particular way were moving into, or were in, the declining stages of their life cycle. 'Nine times out of ten', according to another manager, if a retailer was struggling it was because there was a problem with their stock. This was a particular problem with chain stores because the suppliers concentrated on supplying the shops in the (larger) regional centres, so that their outlets in the smaller centres (like the one he managed) ended up with the less appealing items rather than the stock which was widely advertised as being available. In instances like this the centre manager said he talked to the area or state manager of the chain store.

'... end up with the shit! It always makes it very difficult for the retailers trying to sell, because all right the company might do a big advertising campaign, people will ring up these stores and they haven't got it in stock - so straight away it kills them' [S. S. 15].

Sales consultants were used in another centre, or a replacement tenant was found, thereby releasing the incumbent retailer from their lease agreement before expiry date.

The specialty tenants were arranged so that retailers selling the same type of commodities were grouped together, that is, in precincts (in a centre this was done by grading the sites and then working out which type of retailers could afford to pay what rent), were positioned so that groups of commodities were on different floors, or they were arranged in a particular manner around an anchor tenant. The smaller size of some of these centres in comparison to a number of centres on stand alone sites also impacted upon the positioning and the selecting of retailers. There was not enough room for every type of retailer, in such a centre, according to a manager, while another claimed that because nearly all the tenants could be seen from any location within the centre, tenants selling different commodities could be mixed on the same level.

'... what decides our locations of the shops fairly much is actually the size of the shops ... Now upstairs is fashion, I wouldn't stick a food shop in the middle of upstairs somewhere ... downstairs is food, fashion, service and general! ...' [S. S. 10].

The arrangement of retailers within a centre was considered to be very important. It needed to reflect the desires of the shoppers as well as those of the centre owners and managers. For example, a manager said that people like to be able to comparison shop for food and fashion, while another said that when people are shopping for fashion they like to be able to stop for a coffee which needs to be taken into consideration when the tenants are being arranged. The positioning of tenants which should also encourage visitors to move throughout the centre, was considered to be a continuous process by some managers who said that they were always fine tuning the mix or continually changing it as the opportunity arose for them to get rid of poor performing retailers.

'A lot goes into ... planning where tenants are located in the centre, a great deal, not only on that sort of physical element of what the customer wants, secondly on are they gonna be trading the full sort of trading hours that we trade and thirdly ... there are some uses that are real destination uses - people will want to go and find them out...'
[S. S. 29].

The proximity of these centres to a retail street was also sometimes taken into account. In a centre, the banks and fast food outlets were located close to the street for the convenience of people walking along it, while in another, the manager claimed the retailers with shop fronts facing the street had to make a statement and that the retailers who were positioned between the street entrance and the centre court area had to be arranged in such a manner that visitors would look at the shop windows as they walked towards centre court.

The decisions about where to locate tenants within a centre were at times made by specialists. In some centres the managers said that they conducted research in an attempt to discover the 'needs' and desires of their catchments.

'Well it's decided on by a number of factors. Well obviously management have ... the final say on what type of store should be in the centre, that is dictated to by demand, from all our customers - what we do in our research' [S. S. 20].

Relocating retail tenants and making changes to the tenant mix within an existing centre could be quite a complicated process. In a centre thirteen changes to the tenancy mix required 46 renewals or new lease agreements. A couple of other managers said that they had to wait for at least one vacancy to occur within their centres before they could change the position of retailers. The expense associated with relocating tenants during a lease term could also act as deterrent. *'Sure we've got the right to move them during the term of their lease but ... the cost is on us ...'* [S. S. 2]. In another centre some of the retailers were swapping outlets but because

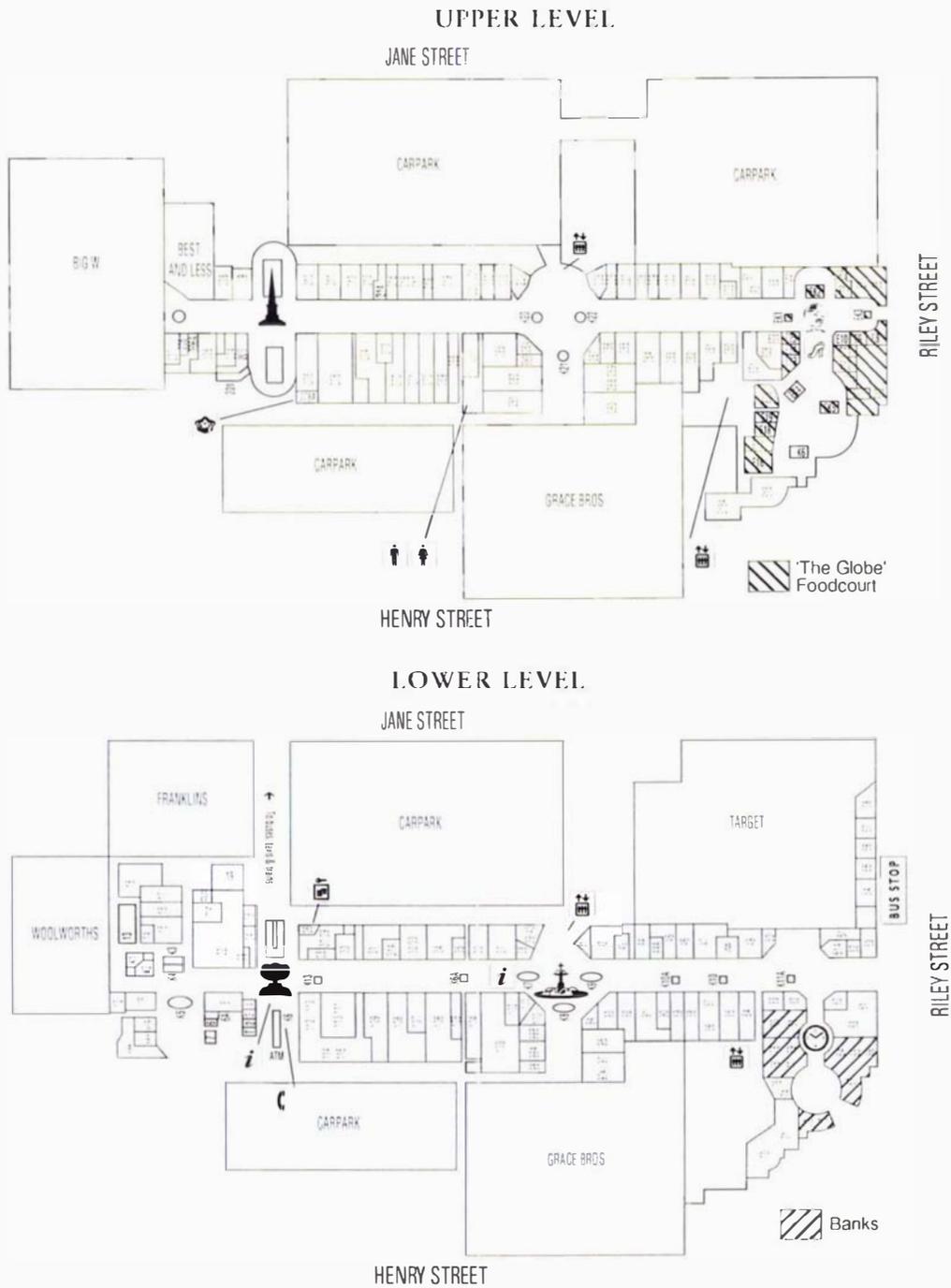


Figure 7.1 Arranging the tenants to suit the needs and desires of committed and impulse shoppers - Penrith Plaza, Penrith, Sydney - where the banks are positioned near the main (street) entrance with 'The Globe'/Fast Food area above.

Source: Penrith Plaza Directory.



Plate 7.3 The main entrance of the Queensgate shopping centre, Lower Hutt, Wellington, attracts impulse shoppers and those who have made a conscious decision to visit.



Plate 7.4 The window displays of Sportscraft on the left and Country Road on the right, at the front of the Bay City Plaza, Geelong, Melbourne, like those retailers on a commercial strip, were designed to catch the eye of those on the street.

this was only happening at the end of their lease terms there was sometimes a delay of between five and six years before this could occur.

'... we've got .. stores doing swaps ... they can't happen over night, we have to wait for leases to expire or they want help in refitting which we don't really subscribe to, so sometimes what might be on the cards can take five or at least maybe six years ...' [S. S. 18].

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS; 'PROMOTING' THE CENTRES AND A SENSE OF PLACE.

The tenants and the owners contributed to the cost of marketing in most of these centres. Tenants either contributed a percentage of their base rental or paid a set rate on an area basis. In most centres marketing was organised by a marketing manager¹ sometimes in association with an assistant marketing manager rather than by Merchants' Associations. Like their counterparts in the centres on stand alone sites, some of the managers viewed Merchants' Associations in a negative manner claiming that they could be hijacked by certain groups or certain types of retailers or that they were very ineffective. In order to meet their obligations under the lease agreements which they had with their tenants, management in some centres, however, had to let the Merchants' Associations remain in place.

In a number of centres marketing meetings were held for retailers or there was some sort of committee or panel of retailer representatives (or there was going to be) who discussed ideas with the marketing manager and provided feedback on past promotions. Unlike the Merchants' Associations, these committee members did not have any voting rights. Such panels were sometimes thought to be very beneficial because the retailers monitored each other and encouraged other retailers to take part in the centres' promotions. Although they could be 'really good', a manager said, they could also be very negative if a promotion or marketing campaign had not worked well.

Marketing of a centre did not involve the marketing of individual retailers but rather the centres were marketed as a product which is why several managers expressed the view that, the retailers were the experts on their own businesses but that centre management were the experts on shopping centres. *'They've all got their ideas and*

¹ A manager said that the marketing manager and assistant marketing managers' salaries were paid for from the marketing fund- a common practice in most centres according to another manager, who said that the centre which he managed was a bit different in this respect because the marketing manager's salary was not drawn from the fund.

they're all just thinking in a smaller box, our product is the shopping centre, their product is their merchandise... [S. S. 18].

Some centres were marketed on the basis of product and price.

'It's very difficult ... We really want to have promotions in here which ... are actually merchandising events - that actually help the retailer sell something. For example, coming up we're having a beauty week and we're involving, the pharmacies and stuff.. we're going to flog some product ...' [S. S. 5].

In other centres, however, the marketing was not designed to directly encourage people to purchase commodities but rather involved providing a pleasant and stimulating environment which people could identify with and would therefore want to revisit. *'We like to be known as the place where people within that area can come and be entertained and provide more of an all 'round value - added experience'* [S. S. 9].

Marketing also involved branding, hosting community events and 'imaging' which included a high standard of customer service and centre hygiene in several centres. *'... just service and more service, basically'* [S. S. 10]. Not all these methods were used in all of the centres, nor were they always employed in a mutually exclusive manner. In a centre where marketing was image oriented - an image incidentally which management had not sought - competitions and product and price promotions were not used.

'We're not a price and product centre. We don't have competitions. We don't have free cars, free give aways, mainly 'cos the tenants don't want them but there are tenants within here who have price product - 'Photo Island', the chemist, 'Woolworths', whatever' [S. S. 4].

In another centre, however, product and price promotions were employed along with a strong emphasis on image marketing.

'Very much an experience centre ... you should be able to buy everything you want ... again strategically on fashion, ... secondary strategy of food. Our image is one of a personable centre - clean, hygienic, ... good range of aggressive and attractive merchants' [S. S. 9].

The image or perceptions which people had about a centre or the area where it was located, were not always positive. A manager, for example, included the need to change people's perceptions, as part of the centre's marketing strategy. *'... [centre name] today is nothing like it was and what we're finding is the hardest thing to try and change perceptions of what [centre name] was to what it is today ...'* [S. S. 8].

Community based fund raising events were hosted and local schools and charities were supported. The centre court areas were used for displays and the staff on the information desk liaised with local community groups. In a couple of the regional - sized centres such events were used to develop or to maintain the feeling that the centres' owners and managers were sympathetic to the needs of the local community even though because of the size of these centres, they aimed to attract people from much further afield than just the local area. The hosting of community events was also thought to reflect the fact that shopping centres have taken the place of the market square of times past. *'...it's the old market place, it's expanded. The old centre square and now its called a shopping centre - it's just a modern day equivalent of it ...'*[S. S. 5].

In a couple of the centres 'Main Street' programmes were also supported. In one of these centres, where a 'Main Street' programme was still at the planning stage, a representative from the management company was on the planning committee while in the other where such a programme was already in operation, the centre's marketing campaigns were occasionally combined with those organised as part of the 'Main Street' programme.

The extent to which a centre was marketed varied not only with the time of year but was also dependent upon how recently it had been built, or redeveloped and extended, or whether it was about to undergo an expansion programme. During the opening period, or 'reopening' period, a lot of emphasis was placed upon marketing. A series of programmes or campaigns, were then used to either bind customer loyalty (or attempt to) after the initial high level of public interest or to keep the pressure on competing centres by target marketing, emphasising their weaknesses and the recently redeveloped and extended centre's strengths. Several of the centres were, or were about to be, extended and redeveloped. The time immediately prior to a refurbishment in any centre, according to a manager, was a quiet marketing period. Once a centre had been extended the marketing campaigns would target people from a much larger area. At the time of my interview with the manager (November, 1993), it was marketed to the primary and secondary areas of its catchment but at the completion of the expansion programme the tertiary market would also be targeted. The centre's fresh food offer would, however, continue to be marketed only to the local area as it was felt that people will not travel further than three to five kilometres in order to obtain these commodities.

THE CONTINUOUS CREATION AND RE - CREATION OF APPEALING INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR ENVIRONS.

Some of these centres had been built in a number of different stages with a couple of them originally built as two separate centres which had, or were being, linked together to form one larger centre. In several of the centres the actual size of the structure had not changed but internal alterations had been made which sometimes increased the number of retail tenants in the centre.

The general philosophy of running a shopping centre had changed. In the past, a manager said, the building and extending of shopping centres had been development - driven rather than customer and retailer - driven as it was now.

'... the way centres were developed in the old days ... no real thought to retail mix, no real thought to making it easy for the customer to shop in, so there were ... little areas sort of stuck all over the place and it was ... very much more development driven as opposed to ... [now] the needs of retailers and customer - driven ...' [S. S. 16].

Another said that when his centre was built, there was a belief that the shoppers should be kept in the centre for as long as possible and that they should leave minus their money. He claimed, however, that community type centres, such as the one which he managed, now have a different focus. They try and develop customer loyalty although there is still the view that the longer shoppers stay in a centre, the more times they will come back, the more money they will spend.

'When you build a shopping centre around, in the days that they built, ... to build a shopping centre with big walls around it and you get people in through the doors and you keep them in there as long as you can and then spit them out at the other end less all their money - that was how it was in those days. ... The community shopping centres have got a different focus. They focus on repeat clients and the longer the person stays in the centre the more times they'll come back and spend money' [S. S. 3].

The design of some of the centres analysed under this category, like a number of the centres on stand alone sites were described by the managers using the terms 'gun barrel' or 'dumb bell'. The major tenants were positioned so that they would draw shoppers through the centres.

'We have a supermarket, we have a discount department store ... we have 'Dress for Less'... which is another anchor and we have 'Radfords' furnisher store. So all the specialty shops feed off them, which is the philosophy of a shopping centre' [S. S. 20].

If the drawing power of an anchor declined, however, this could lead to a mall with a weaker end. In a centre where this had occurred as a result of one of the majors, a discount department store, losing market share due to increased competition, management had tried to counter this problem by positioning fashion specialty tenants around it in an attempt to bolster that end of a mall.

'So what we've done is to strengthen up that part of the centre by putting fashion around it and I don't know what we're going to do in the next move. The next move, would be I think, ... to down size [name of a discount department store] and put more fashion along side it ...' [S. S. 3].

In a couple of the shopping centres, recognised successful design features had either been ignored or were going to be challenged. In one centre the entrance was positioned above street level and could be accessed via an escalator. The centre had succeeded, the manager believed, because a large number of the shoppers entered it through the attached undercover car park rather than from the street. The entrance way, therefore, did not appear to be on a different level.

'Yes, it defies all logic! It should never have succeeded because it's up from the street, ... the entrance isn't fantastic and we actually don't know why it did, except for the car park. It's the fact of actually coming into the car park and then we have access into the place. So it didn't make it feel it was on another level' [S. S. 4].

In the other centre a food court was being built on the second level, because there was no where else to put it, even though the manager conceded, that they did not usually work above the ground level.

'It's an interesting concept because ... we've looked at all the shopping centres that have tried to do food courts above ground level and none have worked successfully! So we're up against all the odds ...' [S. S. 15].

In spite of this, it was hoped that the food court area would act as a 'trafficator' drawing visitors through the centre and onto the different levels. While the food court tenants were going to be common to other shopping centres in the state, the owners and the management were attempting to create a prestigious environment by insisting that the tenants used crockery with their outlets logo printed on it (instead of paper plates) and high quality plastic cutlery. The trimmings in this area were also designed to add to the 'uniqueness' of this environment with copper being used for the first time by the company. *'... very difficult to clean but that's to the extent that we go for the point of difference between any other shopping centre ...' [S. S. 15].*

Existing buildings also sometimes influenced the design of shopping centres in this category. In a centre which had been built around a department store, for example,



Plate 7.5 The presence of historical buildings sometimes restricted shopping centre design. In this instance the multi - deck car park for Bay City Plaza, Geelong, Melbourne, has been built behind a brick facade.

the historical building facades next to the centre had to be maintained but the interiors were able to be converted into a multi - level car park.

In another centre where two of the three majors were a discount department store and a supermarket who mainly attracted shoppers from the local market, a number of the specialty tenants were boutiques which drew visitors from a much larger catchment. The boutique - nature of the centre was reflected in the design. Although it was a regional centre in terms of size it was purposively designed so as to appear to be smaller than this. *'... to build a centre in such a way that you didn't feel you were in a major shopping centre ... because we didn't want people to feel they were in a major shopping centre even though they are ...'* [S. S. 11].

Like their colleagues in the centres on stand alone sites, managers did not always feel that their centres were successfully designed and constructed. For example, a centre which had been developed less than five years before, was at the time of my interview with the manager (November, 1993) under going a major redevelopment and extension programme. The centre, in the manager's opinion, had originally been built and designed very poorly. The floor was in some places unsafe to walk on and the general ambience and the finishes used within the centre were considered to be unattractive.

Although a couple of the centres were involved in Main Street programmes, the exterior of these centres could be rather bland as suggested in the literature.

'Looking at ... shopping centres I've seen overseas they're more or less the same - from the outside they don't look much at all ... They're surrounded by car parks, they're usually just a blob on the landscape, unfortunately. So, I see no different ... [here]' [S. S. 20].

As with the centres on stand alone sites, maintenance of the common areas was an on - going process in a number of these centres. The frequency with which these areas were refurbished also varied as did the centre managers' views as to how often they thought it should occur, with a manager stating that *'It's never as much as we would like'* [S. S. 2].

Refurbishment in these centres also sometimes accompanied an extension. Although a manager said that the appearance of a centre needed to be of a very high standard (*'We have to look the best ... it's not in our interest to let the centre in any shape or form decline in presentation ...'* [S. S. 11]), another claimed that it was sometimes easier to secure funds for an extension and refurbishment programme than it was to get a proposal involving a smaller financial outlay, such as for cosmetic changes which may prevent sales figures declining, approved by the owners.

'... got to keep up - dating the centre, like the shops have to keep up - dating, otherwise somebody else is going to do it before you and they're going to have more to offer than you do. You want to get rid of the old fashion feeling of things ...' [S. S. 10].

In a couple of centres, however, classical fittings and colours had, or would be used, in an attempt to lessen the expenditure associated with up - dating.

Regular refurbishments were considered to be necessary because they strengthened sales figures, or at least prevented them from declining, which could lead to higher rental returns. These were not the only motivating factors behind decisions to refurbish a centre, however, with a manager claiming that she did not think an increase in sales as a result of such an exercise was particularly important. Instead, she said it helped to make the centre appealing to visitors and protected the owner's investment. *'It looks after the building for the owner and it looks after the customer by keeping it sparkling ...'* [S. S. 4].

An appealing shopping centre environment was not only thought to involve the design, the materials used and the frequency of upgrades and/ or refurbishments and the selecting and positioning of tenants so as to reflect the needs and desires of the catchments, but also the creation of an ambience which visitors would find attractive. Sometimes this involved trying to re - create some of the feelings associated with the natural environment of the area. In a centre which was located close to a shore - line, for example, the manager said that they tried to give the shoppers what they wanted by exuding 'happy' and 'good' feelings by the use of natural light, water and palms to tie in with the physical features of the area.

'...it's got a good feel about the palms, ... give it a nice feel to it. Nice sort of beachy, happy ...that's all part of the subtly of it all. I mean there's a lot of 'art' in this business. Sure, there's some science ... we don't... put the escalators at the end of the car park .. because we want to make people walk around, obviously! And subtle things like that which you don't really think about. But there's no such thing as a perfect shopping centre...' [S. S. 5].

The need to create a relaxed, 'hassle - free' and comfortable environment was also considered to be important. This was sometimes done by the promotion of a community - like atmosphere.

'... the community is very important to us and we go out of our way to identify ourselves as [name] community ... a lot of our research shows us ... that people generally ... are loosing a little bit of the community spirit, ... and we're trying to pull them back in. We like to have personality in our shopping centres' [S. S. 9].

The atmosphere associated with a centre was also considered to be something that needed to be changed and up - dated as fashions altered. A manager, for example,

who stated that ambience involved the whole spectrum of senses, said there was a 1970s or early 1980s feeling associated with her centre and that this needed to be modernised. New lighting had been installed in the centre court area which she claimed, made you feel more relaxed, but other features in the centre had yet to be up - dated.

'What we're looking at currently is, - don't want to change or re - configure any of the malls at the present time - but needs an ambience. It's still got a 1970s early '80s tag to it ... regenerate some sort of modern atmosphere to the place. It's just got a little bit tired at the present time ...' [S. S. 29].

BOUNDARIES TO PURCHASING AND LEISURE.

The centres analysed in this category were all located on, or near a commercial strip and/ or had office space positioned close to, or as part of, their structures. Visitors to these centres, therefore, potentially at least, had other reasons for being in the area. In spite of this, when commenting on the location of their centres, managers remarked upon negative factors such as the presence of youth gangs or more positive features such as centres' proximity to public transport routes.

They did not talk about the competition posed by the retailers on the commercial strip to tenants within their centres but like the managers of centres on stand alone sites, the actions of other owners and/ or managers were sometimes considered to be detrimental to the financial success of their centres. This was particularly true when other centres were being extended and/ or refurbished. Some of the managers whose own centres were being extended in size said that it was intended that such developments would allow them to dominate the area by turning them into regional - sized complexes. More recent developments in the retailing industry such as 'Power' centres and the Main Street programmes which are usually associated with strip retailing areas, were also considered to impact upon the successfulness, either positively or negatively, of these centres.

As with the centres on stand alone sites, the 'gun barrel' or 'dumb bell' designed malls were also a feature of the shopping centres located on or near a commercial strip. Refurbishments too, which were conducted in an attempt to prevent a decline in the sales figures and to keep the built form up to date, were often associated with extension programmes. Successful design strategies had, or were about to be challenged in some centres where, for example, they were purposively constructed so as to reflect the market which the owners and managers were trying to attract. Managers also believed that their centres should appear to be pleasant and

comfortable so that visitors felt relaxed about visiting them. A nostalgic feeling of community was sometimes, therefore, promoted.

As with the centres on stand alone sites a variety of research techniques were used to gather information on the composition of these centres' catchments. Such information was used to assist in the tenant selection process. Retailers were chosen because of their ability to reflect the age structure, income level or desires but not the cultural differences of the centres' catchments, now and sometimes in the future as well. Chain store tenants were generally viewed in a favourable manner because they were considered to be more professional and had more drawing power than the 'Mum and Dads'. Their advertising campaigns, however, did not always coincide with those run by the centres and their outlets in smaller complexes sometimes did not receive the stock which was widely advertised as being available.

The position of the retailers within these centres as with those on stand alone sites was considered to be very important, by the managers. It often involved placing the same types of retailers, or those selling similar commodities near each other. Managers said that the position of tenants within their centres was something which they continuously worked upon in order to mirror the way they thought their visitors liked to shop. Making changes to the position of tenants within a centre was sometimes difficult to organise, however, and could take years to complete.

Marketing of these centres involved a wide variety of activities from product and price promotion, to the hosting and supporting of community events and charities and image promotion. As with their colleagues in Stand Alone centres, the managers generally thought that retailer panels and committees were more useful organisations to have assist them in the marketing of their centres than Merchants' Associations.

Managers of centres located on or near a retail strip measured the successfulness of their centres in similar ways to their counterparts in the centres on stand alone sites. Like them, they emphasised the importance of sales figures, with a manager claiming that *'How [a centre] looks at the end of the day doesn't really matter ...'* [S. S. 12]. Pedestrian counts were also sometimes used. Once again, some managers said they thought this measure did reflect centre sales figures while others said that higher visitor numbers did not always correspond to higher sales for their retailers. Growth in rental return, percentage of market share as well as sales on an area basis were also used to measure the successfulness of these centres.

The location of these centres on a commercial strip sometimes affected their created environments. In a centre, for example, which had been rebuilt and extended, banks and prepared food outlets were purposively positioned close to the street entrance ways in an attempt to attract people into the centre as they walked past. The created environments of these centres, therefore, were designed to be both inward and outward looking. Retail outlets located near the street, for example, often had large windows in their exterior as well as their interior walls so that their merchandise was displayed to both the people on the street and to the visitors within the centres. Management, in a couple of centres were also (or were going to be), involved in Main Street programmes.

Extending or altering the structure of these centres was, because of their location in relatively built up areas, either more difficult than it often was for centres on stand alone sites, or impossible.

Centres in this category shared many of the characteristics of centres on stand alone sites in that they usually had a department and/ or discount department stores and supermarkets as anchor tenants and provided large car parking areas for their visitors. There were also a number of similarities in their organisational structures and in the ways in which their created environments were managed. Inner city shopping centres which is the subject of the next chapter, however, sometimes had created environments which were markedly different from the centres on stand alone sites and from those located on or near a commercial strip.

CHAPTER EIGHT ENCLAVES OF EXCLUSIVITY - INNER CITY SHOPPING CENTRES.

INTRODUCTION.

Like the other categories of planned shopping centres, inner city shopping complexes contained a number of retail outlets within the same building or on a site which is owned and managed by the same company or companies. Their created environments are controlled even though they contained some shops which were accessible from the street, which is at variance to the completely enclosed environment of some centres on stand alone sites where shops can only be entered from within the centre. Inner City centres have the perceived advantage over the other centre categories of being positioned in areas where large numbers of people go for paid employment during the 'working' week. Many of the functions of inner city areas, that is, as meeting places and as important retailing areas, have however, been adopted by out - of - town planned and managed centres which are often easier and quicker to travel to, especially if one has access to a car.

There were similarities in the way in which the Inner City and the other categories of shopping centres were managed. The retail tenants, for example, were often required to re - fit their outlets on a regular basis and to contribute to a marketing fund, but there were also some fundamental differences in the operation of an inner city shopping centre in comparison to the other centre categories. Inner city shopping centres were usually smaller. Major or anchor tenants were not such a feature of their created environments although a group of tenants may together, represent an important attraction for a centre. A food court, for example, can simulate the effect of an anchor tenant.

Although all these centres were located within a short distance of the central city area, several managers of centres located within two to three blocks of the city centre, commented upon the difficulty which they faced convincing people to visit, particularly during their lunch breaks. In one centre, at least, it appeared that the weather - ironically one of the controlled features of most shopping centres - had such an impact on the centre's ability to attract visitors that some retailers were using long range weather forecasts to predict their staffing needs. If the forecast was for inclement weather their personnel requirements were substantially reduced.

'If the sun shines you've got people everywhere - it's so weather dependent. So you've got retailers working on four day weather forecasts, for example, ... for their staff ... if it's rainy one day you can

send three or four home because you simply don't have the clientele here' [I. C. 16].

As well as the problems associated with inclement weather conditions managers also remarked that although large numbers of people travel into the inner city areas for paid employment, many did not have enough time to make major purchases during the 'working week'.

A CAPTIVE MARKET?; THE COMPOSITION OF INNER CITY CENTRES' MARKETS.

Although many of the centres analysed in this category contained a small number of tenants in comparison to the centres on stand alone sites and those located on or near a retail strip, inner city shopping centre managers and owners often attempted to draw people from a much larger area. This was sometimes achieved by securing tenancies which were unique, or at least unique to that city or even that state, to their centres. The emphasis in some inner city shopping centres, therefore, was often on specialty retailers with only a very small number of the centres containing a department store. Several were, however, connected to department stores in proximity to their centres. A large supermarket (or large supermarkets) was not a feature of the inner city shopping centre environment as it was in the out - of - town centres. The food available in inner city centres was predominantly prepared food which could either be taken away or eaten on the premises. In addition to being connected to department stores some centres were attached to hotels. Where such linkages occurred, the arrangement of the tenants within the shopping centres was often complimentary, that is, the up - market fashion outlets were positioned on the same level as the more exclusive fashion floor of the department stores or where there was an internal entrance to the hotel.

Rather than referring to their primary, secondary and tertiary markets, which relates to the distance or drive - time to centres, as managers of stand alone centres and those on or near a commercial strip did, the inner city centre managers talked about the make up of their customer base. For all the centres in this category, the inner city worker was an important part of their market. Tourists were sometimes a substantial component with most of the managers trying to attract the 'day tripper' as well as the regional or state visitor, the national and even the international traveller.

The economic recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s was given as one of the reasons why some of the inner city shopping centres were not as financially successful as had been expected at the planning stage or as they had been in the past. The effects of the recession were often manifest by way of empty office space



Plate 8.1 Collins Place, central Melbourne, which contains a hotel, professional suites, two office towers, cinemas and a shopping centre.



Plate 8.2 Lambton Square shopping centre, central Wellington, with office tower above.



Figure 8.1 The Centrepoint Centre, central Sydney, which is linked by walkways to the David Jones and Grace Bros. Department Stores.
Source: Centrepoint Shopping Centre Directory.

within proximity to, or in some instances occupying tower blocks above, inner city shopping centres. '... I think the main problem is the commercial component - there's five and a half levels of unoccupied commercial component ...' [I. C. 5].

The subsequent decline in the number of inner city paid workers had also negatively impacted upon the centres' ability to attract, and to retain, desirable retail tenants and upon the sales figures of some of their tenants. '... I'm surprised that we're not doing worse than what we are! It's tough, very, very tough out there but they're [the retailers] still making money ...' [I. C. 4].

Nevertheless during the working week the inner city centres were exposed to a large number of people who came into the city for paid employment, some of whom sought the food and entertainment which the centres could provide before and after work and during their lunch breaks. Attracting the 'city worker' was considered to be necessary for the viability of the inner shopping centres as these people were identified as a major component of the customer base. The importance of the city based paid worker to the centres in central Melbourne, for example, was demonstrated by the recent (in 1993) collective decision to change the opening hours of the centres to better reflect the needs of this market. Instead of opening at 9 am. retailers in the inner city are now mainly open between 10 am. and 6 pm. during the 'working week' with a late night on Friday until 9.30 pm. Contradictorily, however, the city paid worker was also viewed in an ambivalent fashion. Although these people may purchase lunch and every day items during the week they were less likely to make large purchases during their limited available time. As many had to travel into the city for work it was felt that most of these people made their major purchases in out - of - town centres rather than travelling back into the city when they had more time, that is, during the weekends.

The lack, as well as the cost, of parking was identified as a deterrent to would - be shoppers. Even when car parking was provided, as was the case in a small number of centres, customers either appeared not to know of its existence or resented having to pay for it. Some shopping centres where parking was available ran schemes in which the costs of parking could be partly offset by evidence of a purchase within the centre. Such schemes were not only designed to make the idea of having to pay for car parking space more palatable for shoppers but also as a way of trying to prevent city workers parking in the car parks provided for shoppers.

In some instances, tourists also represented a considerable share of the market. Future tourist developments within more than one city were viewed positively and influenced the decisions which were being made concerning the types of tenants that

could best serve this potential market.'... *anything that I sign up now, unless I'm getting top dollar, I look at twelve month leasing, with no rights of renewal ...*' [I. C. 14]. Tourists were also often actively encouraged to visit centres by advertising in tourist magazines and on hotel television channels.

The composition of the perceived market was represented by the variety of retail outlets in the centres. In these multi level shopping centres retail tenants were sometimes arranged so that on the ground and/ or commuter levels a range of every day commodities such as take away food, volume fashion and newspapers and magazines were offered for sale. On the higher levels more exclusive purchases could be made such as designer clothing.

'...ground floor ... a mixture of impulse/ take away, fast food, fast service, buy off the rack ... the next floor [is] more creative and designed for people who want to buy ... or to look particularly terrific at the next thing they go to ... the floors above were then more for where you went and relaxed ... massage, hair ...' [I. C. 1].

Inner city shopping centre managers mainly identified the middle or middle to upper socio - economic group as their target market. Some centre managers were even more specific in that they identified women as their target market and sometimes 'professional' women or women without children (or those that did not bring them shopping with them) which was reflected in a lack of facilities for families and/ or by the absence of tenants selling children's items within the tenancy mix.

'The upper income bracket.. ...I'd say, women, in the 25 plus bracket - ... professional women. I mean that's where we've quite clearly pitched our selves as far as our marketing plan is concerned. ... We don't really have facilities for women with children to be here Most of our shops are not geared for children. We have one children's wear shop - but even that's not really geared for children' [I. C. 11].

COMPETITION; THE DRAWING POWER OF THE OUT - OF - TOWN CENTRES.

Many of the inner city shopping centre managers regarded the regional or sub - regional shopping centres, particularly during the weekend, and the inner city department stores (in Australia) as their main competitors. The suburban market was sometimes thought to be the hardest market from which to attract visitors. A centre manager claimed that this market needed to be 'educated' while another said that although some of these people may enjoy coming into the city they tended to spend their money at their 'local' shopping centre because many retailers had outlets in both inner city and suburban/ regional shopping centres. The location of the same retailers in both the inner city shopping centres and in the out - of - town shopping centres, as sometimes occurred, was seen a 'mistake' on the part of the retailers.

'Also what tends to happen here, and I think this is a general comment for all city shopping is they love to look, they like to browse and they'll see it and they'll think, 'Yes! that's great! Oh its a 'Portmans' store, I'll get that at my local regional shopping centre, they'll have it'. And this is where retailers in general have really blown it, they've lost the image of the flag ship store in the city. ...It's no longer unique, it's no longer exclusive ...' [l. C. 4].

Although the inner city department stores were in certain instances seen as competitors, a manager claimed that the sales figures for the inner city department stores had declined with the opening of their stores within shopping centres in locations outside of the inner city area.

' ... even people like 'Grace Brothers' and 'David Jones' are experiencing a change because now that their department stores are open in the suburbs there's no cause ... so what they need to do is stop those stores opening in the suburbs and keep the city ones alive, they don't want to miss out on their market share, so that's why ... they're looking at it from all angles, so they're prepared to wear the drop in sales here to hopefully gain them elsewhere' [l. C. 1].

Other centres within the inner city were also sometimes regarded as competition for both sales, sometimes within particular commodity categories, and even for tenants. The availability of retail space in some of the inner city areas meant that the managers or leasing agents of the shopping centres either did not have the luxury of being able to choose their tenants or sometimes felt that they were unable to insist, for example, that the retailers spend a certain amount advertising themselves or that they refurbish their premises because of the perceived risk of losing the tenant to another inner city shopping centre.

'... once again CBD is very different - it's very competitive, and it's very tough, and it's very difficult to impose upon your tenants when other landlords are willing to pay for your tenant to go from here over there, you can't be too hard on them because it's very easy for them to say, 'OK ... there's a guy up here who's going to fit me out and is going to give me six months rent free. Too hard, I'll go.' It has to be treated delicately' [l. C. 9].

A manager, however, said that he believed that both the leased and common areas of centres needed to be refurbished frequently so they were favourably perceived. If the fit - out of a particular outlet was detrimentally reflecting on the centre's created environment it was better if the tenant vacated the premises.

Retailers had been assisted into their outlets with the owners paying for their shop fronts (a not unusual occurrence, according to one manager), and there were sometimes clauses within the lease agreements which were designed to make them more attractive to prospective retailers. A manager (who was not involved at the time the centre was leased), for example, believed that to secure tenancies the

owners had 'helped them considerably' with rent free holidays and fit - out contributions. *'I think you need to, to get them in really ... give them rent free set up periods and fit - out contributions ...'* [I. C. 5].

A number of centre managers claimed that they had also tried to get at least some unique or 'one off' tenants, for example, fashion designers, to trade within their centres in an attempt to distinguish themselves from other inner city centres and in particular from the out - of - town centres. In some centres where chain stores occupied at least some of the tenancies the management and/ or leasing agents often attempted to secure tenancies which were not to be found in every shopping centre. In Australia, such tenants were sometimes located in another state. Central to the need to compete with out - of - town shopping centres was the belief that there was a need to first attract visitors back into the inner city and then offer them something that was different, that is, new, exclusive or unusual. *'... it's one of those situations where if people are not encouraged to come into the city they don't discover the 'one offs''* [I. C. 1].

Although regarded as competitors the managers of inner city centres sometimes worked together to encourage more people into the central city area, by for example, advertising as a group.

'... we [several centres in proximity] all work fairly closely together to try and ensure the traffic flow, or the predominant central core retailing in Melbourne CBD is at least moving away from the 'central area' ... we're trying to make sure it does shift slightly so it focuses more on this end of town rather than the other ...' [I. C. 6].

Their attempts to attract more people into the inner city to shop were sometimes conducted in association with the local authorities. In some metropolitan areas legislation limited the opening hours of 'out - of - town' centres. In Brisbane at the time the interviews were conducted (October, 1993), for example, only those shopping centres which were located within the inner city area and on the Gold Coast could open on Sundays while the out - of - town centres around Melbourne¹ were permitted to open on ten designated Sundays during the year.

¹ The interviews in Melbourne were conducted in November, 1993.

CATERING FOR A MARKET FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS - SELECTING AND POSITIONING THE RETAIL TENANTS.

The need to correctly 'mix' a centre so that visitors were attracted to all levels (although not necessarily in the same numbers) was seen as an important component of a multi level centre's success with some managers saying, like their contemporaries in the other shopping centre categories, that they constantly worked on the tenancy mix. The importance placed upon the tenancy mix by centre management was demonstrated in some instances by the way in which vacancies were dealt with. The returns which could be gained in the longer term due to a correctly mixed centre were sometimes thought to outweigh the shorter term gains associated with leasing an outlet. In a couple of centres areas on the top floor were left vacant while the right tenant was sought. Some centre managers, especially those in Australia, stated that they chose their tenants very carefully. A manager claimed, for example, that she tried to anticipate the desires of the market in three to five years time while another said that although they had a list of retail tenants who wanted to come into the centre most of them were not wanted because their presence would detract from the specialist nature of the centre. *'... it's very easy to slip into the generally main stream of retailing when you've got a list of people who want to come in but they want to sell ... what's available over there ... thank you, but no thank you!'* [I. C. 9].

At variance to this, most of the inner city centre managers in New Zealand claimed that they often did not have the luxury of being able to choose tenants, as some had been able to do in the past. A few of them had abandoned the idea of correctly mixing their centres in an attempt to fill the vacancies within them. The ability to lease first floor and above retail space was usually considered to be very difficult.

'... just having to pursue those opportunities that are in the market place and put to one side any thought of a tenant - mix ... for obvious reasons - it's eating its head off and we've just got to ... try and get some ... tenants on that first floor ...' [I. C. 12].

Though it was felt that any tenant was better than none, not all prospective tenants who had approached centre management were leased space. It appeared that the risk associated with leasing space to tenants whose financial viability was doubted due to them being under capitalised or inexperienced in retailing, was sometimes considered to be too high. *'But first floor CBD mall retailing, leasing thereof, is bloody hard ... So ... without sounding too desperate and we don't just take anyone that comes along, it's much more difficult on the first floor ...'* [I. C. 15].

A couple of centre managers in Australia also claimed that their original tenant mix had to be altered because the market pitch of the tenants was too high, or because the leasing agents had been unable to secure tenancies to fit in with the predetermined mix of some areas within their centres. A couple of managers whose centres had been built relatively recently claimed that they were, or would be, making changes to their tenancy mixes while another stated that there had been a number of tenancy changes since the opening of the centre (within the last three years), possibly because retailing was considered to be '*... tough for anybody at the moment ...*' [I. C. 5].

As with the other categories of shopping centres similar specialty tenancies were located within proximity to each other. '*... we have an overall strategy of what we're putting on a floor, depending on the size of the tenancy, where you would place the tenancy, who's adjacent to it ...*' [I. C. 8].

While some of these centres had their food outlets located on lower levels other centres used their food tenants as destination type tenancies and had them positioned on the higher levels. Destination type tenancies such as those selling lifestyle products, homewares and the more exclusive fashion outlets which were sometimes defined by the managers as the centres' majors, were located on the higher or highest floor in centres which had multiple levels.

'... I guess it seems logical ... number of people who are going to use these things. You position tenants that need to feed off volume by those people who are automatically walking past not so much by choice ... bit of impulse with tenancies. Level two where people need to buy clothes for a purpose more so they'll take that step up and they'll go through there ... slightly different feel ... and then Level three ... it's a committed zone, it's destination shops ...' [I. C. 9].

The increased exclusivity of the tenancies as one's distance from the ground floor increased, was also sometimes accompanied by a change in the decor and ambience. In one centre, for example, instead of floor tiles, carpet was used on the highest floor and an up - market coffee shop was being built which would provide, according to the centre manager, the type of environment which people expected to find in the city, that is, visitors anticipated that in the city they would be able to sit back in a relaxing leisure oriented environment. '*... that nice environment that people do expect in the city. They expect food, they expect the capacity of being able to sit down and become part of a relaxation, leisure environment ...*' [I. C. 7].

Although most of the retail tenants wanted to be located on the ground or thoroughfare levels (according to a manager) because of the large number of people that used those parts of a centre, the average time individuals spent in each outlet

increased with its distance above the ground. Several managers also claimed that the environment or the 'feel' of the upper level or levels was different from the rest of the centre in that it was more relaxed, less hurried, and that more money tended to be spent with each purchase! *'... most feel that the ground floor is where they want to have their business because there's so much passing trade - they don't realise that it's exactly that - passing trade - not necessarily shopping ...'* [I. C. 1].

The relationship between the retailers and the managers or the owners could be viewed as potentially one of conflict. The managers and/or the owners want to achieve as high a rental or return on their investments as possible while the retailers want to keep their profits to a maximum and their expenses to a minimum. Despite this potential antagonism, a couple of the managers said that the relationship between themselves and their retailers should be a partnership.

'... it's only active management that will continue to ensure the success of any retail outlet and the centre as a whole. We're in partnership with the retailers 'cos if they don't work, we don't work either and they've got to work to their utmost to be able to ensure that the asset is able to be maintained ... we're asset managers' [I. C. 7].

The retailers, however, did not always make the distinction between the managers and the owners even when they were separate companies. As rents were much higher in inner city shopping centres in comparison to the out - of - town centres a manager claimed, that tenants wanted to know the cost of their gross rental and were not interested in knowing how much of this figure went towards the operating expenses of the centre. The management company he worked for continued to itemise their rentals, however, because they believed that it protected the tenants from short - term landlords who might try and 'jack up' the rent role by insisting that the managers keep operating expenses to a minimum. Such a course of action could allow the landlord to profit from the investment but would negatively impact, in the longer term, on the retailers due to the poor state of repair and/ or presentation of the centre.

'If the building isn't being maintained because the landlord won't feed it, 'cos there are certain landlords that only own property for short term, so they'll say, 'Fine. We only want it for two years spend nothing on maintenance'. Then the tenants who are occupants of the property, their property, the building they occupy and are paying rent for, is going to slip and die, ... we are going to loose market share. So we're stuck in the middle as managers, we're saying that 'We don't want that to occur for the retailers' and the retailers are saying, 'No, wrong. We want that because it's easier' and we're saying, 'You don't want that!' and they're saying, Oh! You're being a landlord!...' [I. C. 9].

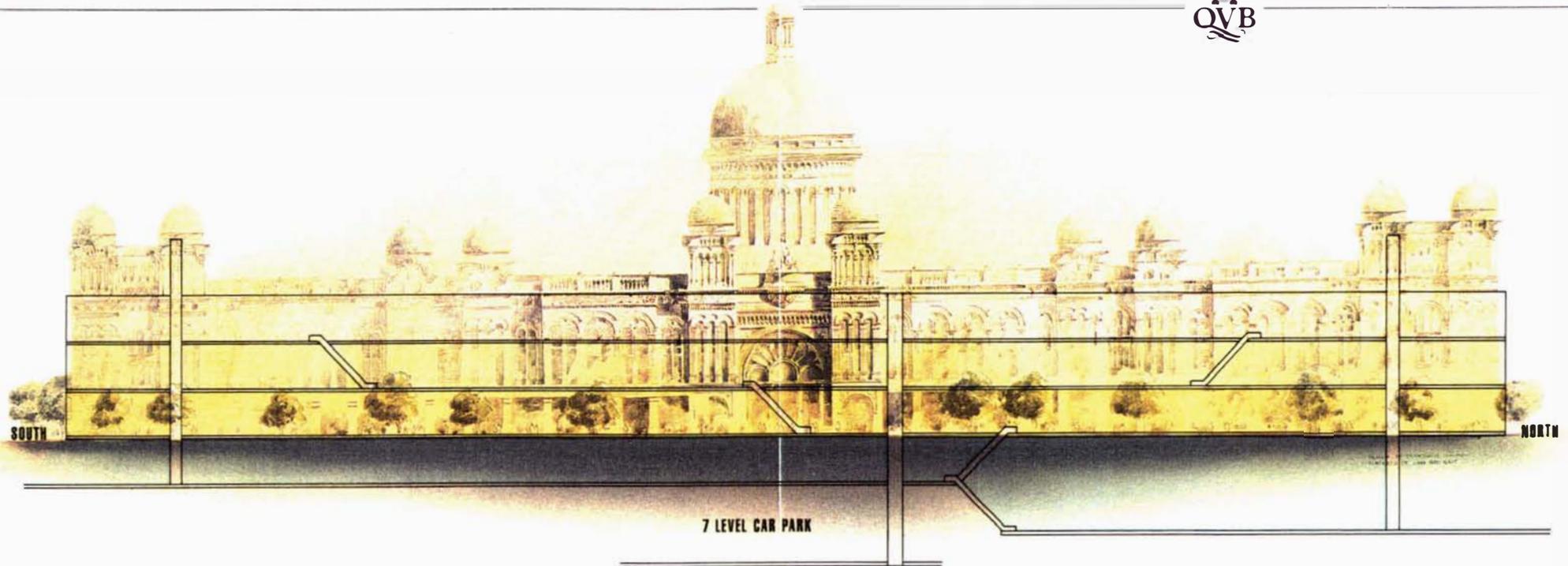


Figure 8.2 Positioning retail tenants on different levels to suit perceived needs and desires of the shoppers, The Queen Victoria Building (QVB shopping centre), central Sydney.

Source: 'The Queen Victoria Building.

Leasing Opportunities in the World's Most Beautiful Shopping Centre'.
(photograph reproduced by kind permission of centre management)

- SECOND LEVEL**
South End: Australliana. Souvenirs • North End: Bridal. Antiques.
Exclusive Giftware. Restaurants
- FIRST LEVEL**
Australian Designer Fashions & Jewellery
- GROUND LEVEL (Street Level)**
National & International Fashion Merchandise
- LOWER GROUND LEVEL**
Convenience and service shopping.
Town Hall Walk • Commuter thoroughfare • Mezzanine
• Eat Street • Grace Bros Walk.

As with the other categories of shopping centres the way in which rent was calculated varied between the centres and within the centres. One participant stated that rent was calculated in four different ways in their centre! Rents could be calculated on an area basis while other tenants paid a percentage of their gross sales (or the greater thereof). In other instances the managers said that the rents and/ or the rent reviews were dependent upon the market or the position of the outlet within the centre. A manager claimed that the rents within one shopping centre had in the past been calculated as a percentage of the tenants' gross sales, but because the retailers did not always provide accurate figures, and although the managers could insist on having the retailer's accounts audited - an unpleasant task - they now calculated their rental on an area basis which varied depending upon which level the outlet was on.

'... we find that the tenants are not always honest, it causes a great deal of aggravation between the tenant and landlord, it can become very unpleasant particularly when we want to go in and audit their books and things ... so whereas we did have originally some turnover clauses we're not interested in offering leases for turnovers' [I. C. 2].

Lease terms also varied both within the centres and between them. In some instances legislation made it compulsory for the managers or leasing agents to offer a tenancy for a minimum term of five years for a first time tenant. A number of centres did, however, have five year lease agreements usually without any right of renewal or option clauses. Those managers who chose to comment on why they did not offer, or tried to avoid, offering options stated that it gave the retailers an unfair advantage when the leases came up for renewal.

'There's total disadvantage to the landlord ¹ to give options, the only advantage is to the tenant. And we give an option if you think about it at the end of five years we want to fit - out and we're locked into an option ... you end up with a court case. ... the judge says, 'Poor little tenant! You big bad landlord you! They don't have to do it!' There's a lot of disadvantages in options' [I. C. 2].

Other managers stated that a long term 'good tenant' would always be given first right of renewal. Competition within the central business district was such, according to a manager, that although the trend was away from options '*... to do a deal with a decent retailer we would consider every option that's available, basically ...*' [I. C. 9]. The lease terms for the specialty tenants varied between monthly agreements and fifteen years with a couple of the managers saying that they liked to have the ability to re - mix their centres on a reasonably regular basis, and that five years was a long

¹ As indicated by this quotation it is not always only the retailers who fail to make the distinction between the owners and the management.

time in the retailing life cycle for both the managers and the retailers. A manager of a new centre, however, believed that for a recently built centre short term tenancies of one to two years were not a good option because they limited the manager's ability to do any future or forward planning. The owners, he claimed, were always looking for the increased security that the longer lease terms with 'good' growth increases could provide, but they needed to be realistic and had to ensure that the tenants had viable levels of turnover and that they continued to attract enough visitors to the centre.

The presence of 'Mum and Dad' retailers within a couple of the centres was under threat with the managers saying that they had either been got rid of or that they were not going to renew their leases because as one centre manager put it, '... *they can't do it in centres ...*' [I. C. 8]. These retailers were the hardest to deal with, a manager said, because they wished to limit the hours during which their shops traded while those retailers whose prior experience had been as retailers on a commercial strip sometimes found it difficult to adjust to the more controlled environment of the shopping centre.

'They've not been used to having, and I say this very loosely, management control over them in terms of not putting signs out, not putting all their garbage out on the malls, to ensure that everything's behind their lease lines ... everything is so governed by a management team - here we basically control everything from if you change a menu - we have to know about it and approve it ...' [I. C. 16].

The need for the retailers within the centres to work together to produce a conducive environment for shopping was recognised by a number of the managers and by some retailers who insisted that their peers maintain a certain standard. All the retailers within a centre needed to be very good because an unprofessional retailer could detrimentally affect not only their own business but also the other retailers within the centre. *'The problem with this centre is you've got to have very good retailers to make it work because they do feed off each other but if one's pulling them down, they all tend to go down ...'* [I. C. 4].

DISCOVERING WHAT THE VISITORS DESIRE AND WANT.

Although a small number of the inner centre managers claimed that they did not survey their customers, others considered that it was important to research their market. As with some of the other centres, the techniques employed either by consultants or by employees of the management company, included focus groups, exit surveys, questionnaires and telephone surveys. The frequency of such research varied greatly between the centres. Research was conducted every three to five

years by an outside company in a centre, for example, while in - house research was conducted three times a year in another centre where consultants were also employed to carry out research once or twice a year. Although management wanted to gather information from their centre's catchment they also had to be careful not to inconvenience customers. So as not to annoy their visitors, management limited the regularity with which they conducted in - house surveying. The time and costs associated with using consultants placed limitations on the frequency of their usage. Information from research was, a manager believed, a useful way of identifying signs of change in the catchment. It also provided important data on how to market the centre. Survey work conducted by the City Council every three months was also used. *'... research is very important as far as marketing is concerned - marketing is not an exact science - so you've always got to completely research your catchment and customer base for any sign of change ...'* [l. C. 6].

Qualitative research techniques were used in almost half of these centres. Observing who the customers were as well as the use of psycho - graphics were employed. Information was not only gathered from known centre visitors but sometimes also involved targeting competing centres' customers for focus group discussions. The usefulness of research was highlighted by a centre manager who acknowledged that there was a common misconception that a particular centre was their main competition, their research, however, identified that this was not in fact the case, because they did not share many of the same customers and appeared to be appealing to different sections of the market.

RE - PRESENTING THE ATTRACTIONS OF THE INNER CITY; THE MARKETING OF THE CENTRES AND THEIR LOCATIONS.

The marketing of the inner city shopping centres was financed by contributions from the retailers and from the owners. The marketing levy on the tenants was calculated as a percentage of their base rental, on an area basis or as a percentage of their annual rental. The size of the contribution made by the owners to market the centres varied greatly. One manager stated that the owners contributed approximately one dollar for every three dollars contributed by the retailers while another claimed that the owners contributed a 'big whack actually', that is, about 25 per cent of the total fund collected from the retailers. The amount of money collected from the tenants to market the centre was, another manager said, 'insignificant' in comparison to that paid by the owner.

As with the other categories of centres the marketing of these centres was controlled by the centre manager or by a marketing manager in consultation with, or under the

guidance of the centre manager. Although in a small number of centres in New Zealand marketing was controlled by a Merchants' Association most centres had a promotions panel. This committee of retailers met with management to discuss how the centre should be promoted and the success or otherwise of marketing campaigns but the final decisions were made by management. A manager said that in his centre the fund was administered in such a way that it was not obligatory for management to discuss the marketing campaigns with their tenants. He said, however, that he talked to the retailers about the marketing campaigns.

'So we run the fund. What we always still do, and the way I prefer to do it, is that under the fund instead of having people voted for and appointed ... if we're going to do fashion promotions, we go to the fashion retailers and say, 'What do you think?', ... It's a function of management to always consult with the tenants because effectively that's what it's all about! You're promoting the tenants, you're not promoting us!... there's no point going about a promotion for a particular sector of tenancies ... if it's going to be ineffective' [I. C. 9].

Not all the retailers appeared to have faith in the ability, or were satisfied with, the level of effort made by management to market their centres. Some retailers in a centre appeared to be sceptical about promotion panel meetings as they did not feel that the former management had done anything to market the centre. The manager, however, pointed out that they had the absolute right to market the centre as they saw fit, claiming that the owners could threaten to withdraw their funding.

Shopping centres were usually marketed as a 'whole' or as a 'product' but sometimes certain categories such as food or fashion were focused upon. Some centre managers said that there has been a move away from event marketing or more bluntly that events did not work - a view also shared by some managers of shopping centres analysed in the other categories. Although people can be attracted to a centre to watch an event or show they often did not spend much or even any money in the shops, that is, the increased numbers of people in the centre was not reflected by a corresponding increase in sales. The move away from event marketing which had been a popular marketing technique as recently as three years ago (in 1993) had, according to a manager, been accompanied by a change in attitude on the part of management. In the past successful marketing was thought to involve attracting as many people as possible to a centre. The general feeling now was that it involved attracting people to a centre in a mood that was conducive to purchasing'... *our purpose is to bring people to the centre in a mood to buy. Now creating this mood to buy is quite difficult ... I think we're still exploring this ...* [I. C. 4].

Fashion parades were, however, still used as a marketing technique. Sometimes entry to these parades was by ticket or by personalised invitation. Most of the centre

managers thought their parades were very successful. For example, when a parade was advertised the manager said, that the centre received 'heaps' of telephone calls from people wanting tickets while another said that the mini fashion parades (as she termed them) which were held during the day were 'very successful'. Like most events which were used to market centres it may be difficult to monitor their impact. A manager said that the fashion parades which had recently (at the time of the interview) been held within the centre had not resulted in an immediate marked increase in sales. Other events used to market centres included corporate events and those which were more designed to increase people's awareness of the centre, specifically with respect to the upper levels.

Unlike out - of - town centres, inner city shopping centre managers tended not to market their centres using the 'traditional retail calendar' that is, they did not run big marketing campaigns for Mothers' and Fathers' Day, Easter and even sometimes Christmas.

'... to actually promote an image - so it's more a positioning image of the various classifications of merchandise, that we do. So, in seasons of fashion, we sort of focus on the fashion image. In the seasons of food, we focus on that ... you know Spring, ... get back into fitness and getting a new look or a feeling ...' [l. C. 1].

A manager commented that while they still ran Easter promotions she did not think that they were that successful unlike the Spring and Autumn fashion shows and the market days which the centre also ran. In another centre the interior decor was only changed substantially at Christmas. Management, did however, attempt to alter the ambience or the atmosphere associated with the centre in keeping with mood changes in the market. *'From a shoppers' point of view - they find it delightful to be able to walk through at any time of the year and not feel as if they're being forced to buy something! It's the general feeling of this is what I like ...' [l. C. 1].*

In centres where the built form was almost unique due to its age and architectural design, management sometimes tried to reflect this in the selection of their retailers and in the marketing campaigns which they ran. These centres were marketed in such a way so that the 'integrity' or the 'exclusiveness' of the building would be maintained. *'We don't want to do what everybody else does' [l. C. 1].*

A wide range of media were employed by the centre managers or marketing managers to market the centres. Techniques employed included advertising on the radio and in both the metropolitan and in the inner city newspapers. As there was a perceived need to attract people from a large area, the use of television which

included advertising on special channels available in hotels, was also sometimes thought to be necessary.

'... you've got to market to a wider audience to be able to maintain the interest levels that you have. ... On an individual basis, ... would market itself [the centre] as ... the unique difference and we advertise quite heavily on the TV. ... and in the local press as in the papers that we know obviously cover the larger audiences ... and we do a lot of radio. So, we tend to probably use all the media advantages that we can - more so than what a suburban centre would, who would probably rely on local content' [l. C. 6].

Other ways of marketing the centres included the publication of catalogues which were sometimes only distributed in the affluent areas of the metropolitan catchment as well as the use of brochures, flyers and the hosting of press conferences to increase the centres' profiles. 'Public relation exercises' and sponsorship of events were also used as were competitions where, like in a number of out - of - town centres, the information provided by the participants on the entry forms was used as a surveying technique.

The marketing campaigns employed by inner city centre management sometimes varied because of the market which they were trying to attract or according to the performance of the tenants. Office workers, located in proximity to the centres were sometimes specifically targeted. Such campaigns often involved discount or bonus vouchers provided by retailers in the centres and 'welcome kits' for workers employed by new businesses in the area. The frequent changes in office personnel meant that such campaigns needed to be run continuously, according to a manager.

'... how we reach them is damn difficult! because research has shown that within a five year period you have a 100 per cent turnover of your office worker ... you've got to be out there with the same message constantly' [l. C. 4].

The diverse nature of these centres' markets meant that a number of different programmes each designed to target a different type of customer, that is, the inner city worker, the tourist (local, national and international) and the suburban customer, were sometimes run. At various times, for example, free bus services would run between the hotels and a centre in Australia, with special offers for groups or conference delegates and their partners. Analysis revealed that the managers of inner city centres sometimes worked co - operatively together in an attempt to encourage people to go into the inner city to shop. In one city, for example, a group of inner city centres advertised as a group once a week in the evening newspaper. In a number of cases centre managers (and sometimes retailer representatives) were also members of inner city promotional committees which attempted to encourage visitors back into the central city area to do their shopping or for a day

out. Centre marketing campaigns were sometimes also co - ordinated with those sponsored by the city councils.

'We tend to ride a lot, or join in with, more to the point, the City of Melbourne's marketing on making Melbourne CBD the place to come and shop ... all the major players in the CBD will all join forces from time to time to promote the CBD as a whole and of course we all get the benefit out of it' [I. C. 6].

Although a number of the centre managers stated that the city councils were trying to encourage people back into the inner city areas the successfulness of their schemes was sometimes questioned. A manager, for example, claimed that the council initiated plan to remove all vehicular traffic from the main shopping street for a trial period on Saturdays had been met with only limited, if any, success.

'You may be aware of some of the efforts the Council are making on a Saturday 'cos they opened until four, they asked us all to open 'til four for a trial period up to February of this year [1993]. I think they closed off Lambton Quay to encourage a lot more market - style atmosphere, but I think it met with limited success' [I. C. 15].

A high level of customer service was another way in which inner city centres were sometimes marketed. This was reflected by retailers attending training courses, mystery shopper programmes and by a high level of customer service - from valet car parking to cooking classes.

As well as paying into their centres' marketing fund retailers were sometimes also required, under the conditions of their lease agreements, to spend a certain amount of money advertising their own businesses and where they were located. Managers of centres where this was not a requirement of the tenants' lease agreements said that it was in the retailers best interests to advertise themselves. *'... any tenant that's in this building that's prepared to spend money on marketing reap the rewards' [I. C. 2].*

CREATING AND RE - IMAGING; CENTRE DESIGN AND REFURBISHMENT.

Many of the inner city centres did not have anchor tenants in the form of department stores, discount department stores or supermarkets. Some of the managers identified specialist tenancies which because of their strong drawing power served the same purpose as anchor tenants, that is, their presence encouraged people to visit. Their position within the centre was often used strategically to encourage shoppers to walk past as many shops as possible and/ or into an area within the centre which may, because of a lack of foot traffic, for example, find it difficult to attract visitors.

Some of the managers said they would have liked their visitors to feel that they were in a centre which was very different, if not unique. A recently built centre, for example, had been purposively designed so that there was only a limited number of retail outlets on each level, so each retailer had a high profile.

'... give the people the feeling that they are in something that is very exclusive and very different ... ours are very individual, very deliberately set to a minimum as far as the number of tenancies you'll see on each floor - so that each retailer can stand out in their own right and shop fronts ... are deliberately designed ... very high quality, very high finish. This was the decision taken by the owners then, to spend that sort of money because the owners put in those shop fronts for them at the designs ... of the actual tenants ... '[I. C. 6].

The design and structure of these centres sometimes also influenced the images promoted by the managers and the type of ambience which they tried to create, with several of them saying that their actions had to be in keeping with, or should maintain, the integrity of the built form of their centres.

The general design features of the centres sometimes limited the alterations which could be made to the structure once it had been built - another point of difference the inner city centres had particularly in comparison to the centres on stand alone sites, many of which had been increased in size, sometimes more than once. In several instances, for example, where the centres were contained within older buildings, the owners were limited in the changes which they could make because the buildings were protected. In more recently built centres the presence of office towers built above the centres could limit the changes that could be made during a refurbishment.

In some of the more recently built centres and in a centre which was about (at the time of the interview) to be refurbished, the design ideas had come from a combination of centres in other countries. Designers involved in one of these centres in New Zealand had, the manager believed, travelled to the United States of America as well as to Australia where the 'supposed benchmarks' were. There were, he claimed, no indigenous New Zealand designs for shopping centres. Most of the centres were designed so as to maximise the number of people that moved past the shops.

Visitors to some of the centres found their layouts confusing as one of the managers of a large (in terms of size and tenant number) inner city centre admitted - a situation which management was trying to rectify by way of additional information signs. In another centre the lighting from both natural and artificial sources was organised so that it directed people through the centre while at the same time indicated the



Plate 8.3 Outside The Strand Arcade, central Sydney, which opened in 1892 and has been run as a shopping centre since 1978.



Plate 8.4 The space formerly occupied by the D. I. C. (Direct Importer Company), Department Store in central Wellington, now contains the Harbour City Centre, a restaurant and professional suites.

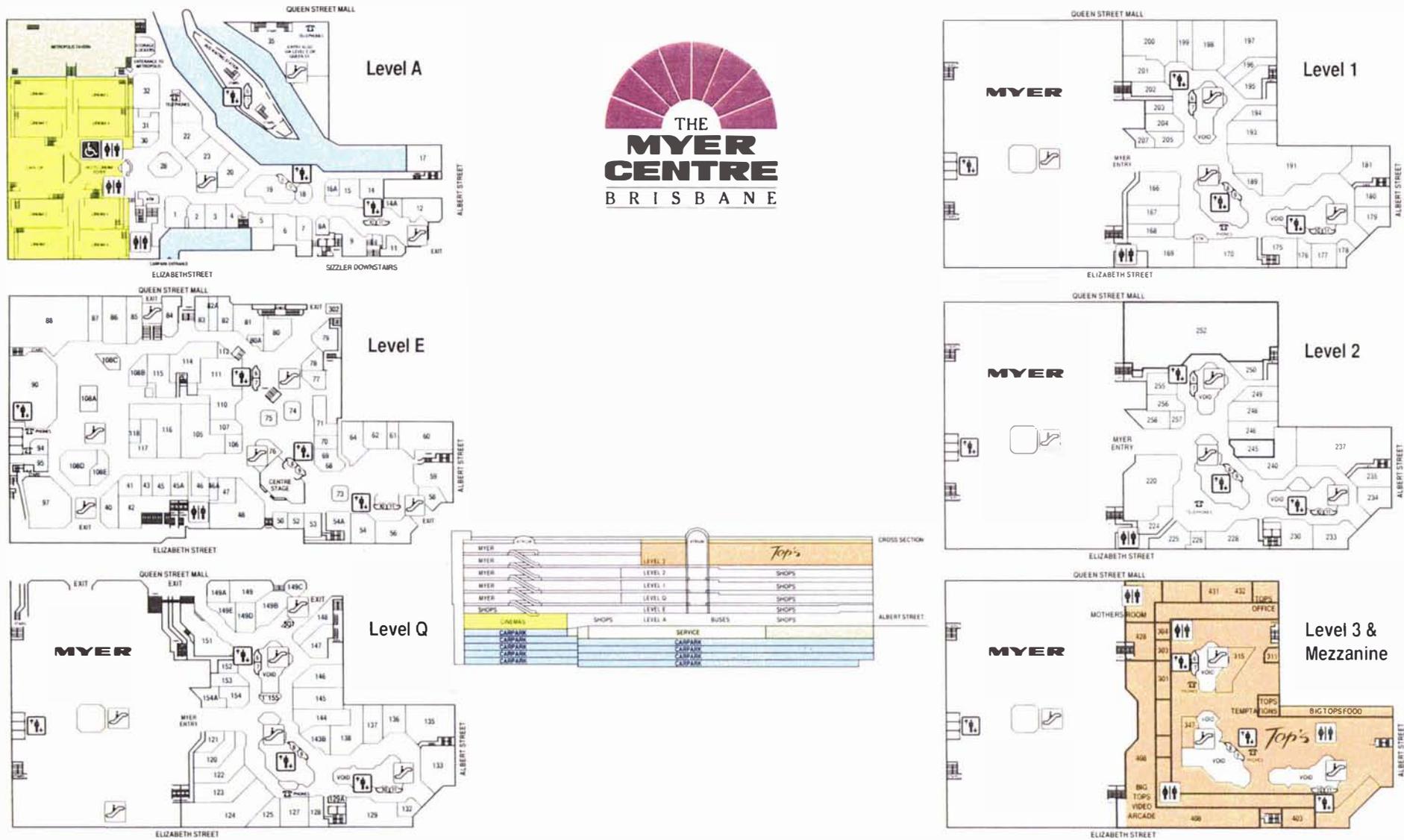


Figure 8.3 The multi-level Myer Centre, central Brisbane, which was built using a Victorian Department store plan. From the outside at street level, the Queenslander bungalow style is also a visible feature of its design.

Source: Myer Shopping Centre Directory.



Plate 8.5 Re - presenting the department store, inside the Myer Centre, central Brisbane.

(proposed) different ambience of the areas which would also be reflected in the tenancy mix, once the tenants had been sourced!

'... whole environment that really is completely different ... from the other area ... lights are even designed ... to actually direct people through and sort of naturally bring them through with all that, combining natural lighting as well as artificial ...' [l. C. 16].

Most of the retail tenants in the inner city shopping centres had to refurbish their premises at lease expiry - a condition which several of the centre managers thought was vital for the success of their centres, and in some instances for the retailers themselves, because they believed that retailing was changing so quickly. In most new lease agreements, according to a centre manager, the retail tenants were required to do a shop fit - out and make alterations to the front or decor every two to three years so that they kept abreast of the latest designs and efficiencies within the industry.

'... most leases now days carry a clause provision in that every two years, even if it's an eight year lease it may be every three years, that the shop fit - out and shop front or the shop decor is altered to be keeping pace with what is happening out there in the industry as far as designs and levels and standards of efficiencies and that way the tenants can always improve their overheads in keeping their expenditure down by introducing the latest technology etceteras ... I would suggest that probably in the term of the lease the shop front has probably been upgraded or updated during the term anyway' [l. C. 6].

A small number of centre managers admitted, however, that it was sometimes difficult for them to insist that retailers refurbish their outlets, or that they comply with the painting dates listed in their lease agreements, due to the availability of inner city retail space and the competition they faced from the other inner city centres for retailers. The shop fronts were provided or partially financed, by several of the centre owners - a not unusual occurrence in a new centre according to one centre manager, who claimed that the shop front allowance paid to prospective retail tenants, which depended upon the size of the outlet, varied between \$800 per metre squared to a total pay out.

The frequency with which the managers believed that the common areas of the centres should be refurbished varied depending upon whether the centres were in Australia or in New Zealand. A number of the centre managers in Australia said that they thought that their centre needed to be, or would be, refurbished every three to five years while in New Zealand a manager said that he believed that 'something' should be done every five years. A couple of the other managers, however, thought that their centres should be refurbished every ten to fifteen years - a statement which was qualified by one manger who claimed that the frequency of refurbishment would

be dependent upon the economy and the market at the time. Several of the managers (on both sides of the Tasman) said that if it was their decision to make, the frequency of refurbishment within their centres would be conducted on a more regular basis than the owners were doing it at present. A manager, for example, claimed that his centre needed a major refurbishment to bring it up - to - date and then he believed there should be funds in the vicinity of two to three million dollars available on an annual basis which could be used on the common areas and to assist retailers with their shop fronts. The need to refurbish the centres on a regular basis was considered necessary because of the competition posed by other centres.

'Well, if it was up to me, and I had the cheque book ... I'd be doing it at least every three years. Landlords look at it every five years, realistically they take two years to do anything about it and seven years down the track you've got a centre that looks like it's ten years, and in fact is only seven years old, 'cos the guy down the road has done his. It should be done at least every five years' [I. C. 9].

It was also believed that the centres always needed to appear 'new' and 'fresh'. Even centres where because of the age of the building, managements' ability to make any alterations was extremely limited, were painted on a regular basis. Most of the centre managers said that maintenance and cleaning within the centres were conducted constantly. The difficulties associated with doing this due to the design features of some centres was commented upon by managers, one of whom claimed that they should be involved at the planning and design stage of a new or refurbished centre. Although an architect's ideas may be very aesthetically pleasing they were sometimes very difficult and/ or costly to maintain once the centre was built or refurbished.

'... we have a wonderful space frame out the front which looks lovely but every three months we've got to get cleaning contractors in ... expensive, but more expensive will be the day when we've got to re - paint it ...' [I. C. 12].

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHOPPING AND PURCHASING.

The development of the planned and managed shopping centre in out - of - town locations has radically altered the retail environment of the inner city in 'advanced capitalist' countries. While the importance of the central city as the primary retailing district for metropolitan areas may have declined, inner city areas now contain planned and managed centres which use many of the features developed in the out - of - town centres, as well as extending the amenities which were found in the early inner city arcades.

At times, the managers worked co - operatively together and/ or were involved with city council sponsored events aimed at encouraging people to go back into the inner

city areas to shop and to be entertained. Such techniques were quite different from those used by the managers of centres on stand alone sites who marketed their centres as a product or provided entertainment. They usually did not try and encourage shoppers to go to their centres by promoting other events which may be occurring within the area.

The importance of the city paid worker to the financial success of the inner city centres was demonstrated in Melbourne by, for example, the collective decision to change the opening hours of the centres to better reflect the needs and desires of these visitors. Unlike the Stand Alone shopping complexes, these centres had what Marking (1986) termed 'natural consumer traffic', although there had been a reported decline in the number of people going into some of the inner city areas every day for paid employment. Managers, however, believed that the people who came into the inner city for paid employment did not have the time to comparison shop. They may frequent the centres' prepared food outlets but tended to make their larger purchases in the out - of - town centres, particularly if they wanted to buy commodities from one of the retail chain stores which had outlets in the out - of - town centres as well as in a number of the inner city centres. Inner city department stores (in Australia) and other centres in the area were also regarded as competition.

The need to replicate at least some of the attributes of the created environments which have been developed in centres located on out - of - town sites was highlighted by the comments made by managers of centres located within two to three blocks of the city centre. These managers spoke of the difficulties associated with attracting people to their centres when they had to walk along the street through areas which did not protect them from, in particular, the climatic elements.

Inner city centres were specifically marketed so as to appeal to the inner city paid worker and often to the tourist and the suburban shopper as well. The diverse nature of the needs and desires of these groups was sometimes reflected in the simultaneous running of different marketing campaigns designed to attract visitors from each of these markets. In these centres the marketing campaigns tended not to adhere to the retail marketing calendar but rather reflected the changing seasons and/ or the mood of the market.

The centres in this category were built on more than one level which includes those which had mezzanine floors. Their multi - level nature which was probably a reflection of the cost of land in the inner city areas and the difficulties associated with finding large enough sites on which to build a single level centre, was not discussed to any great extent by the managers. Their structural designs, however, sometimes

limited the alterations which could be made to their built forms. Managers did, however, remark on how their centres were linked to department stores and/ or hotels. In New Zealand they also spoke of the difficulties associated with leasing first level and above, retail space while others - mainly in Australia - said they purposively mixed their centres so visitors would be tempted to walk through it and onto the different levels (although not necessarily in the same numbers). Spaces were sometimes therefore left vacant while the right tenant was sought.

In some instances managers deliberately tried to select tenants which were either unique or at least not part of the tenancy mix in every other centre. Rental charges and lease terms varied both between and within centres. Right - of - renewal terms were not usually attached to the lease agreements but in some instances they would be given in order to secure or retain a 'good' retailer. As in a number of other centres, 'Mum and Dad' retailers were sometimes viewed unfavourably and it was noted that retailers whose previous experience was in a street retailing environment sometimes found it difficult to adjust to the more stringent control which management exercised over the activities of their tenants.

The creation of an appealing environment for shoppers so that they would not only want to visit a centre but also make purchases there, involved a combination of factors, according to the managers. These included the initial design and construction of the centre, regular refurbishment of the leased (although the availability of rental space in some inner city areas meant that the managers did not always feel they could insist upon this) and common areas, marketing campaigns, the selection and mix of retail tenants and also the development of a particular mood or ambience. This was attempted by, for example, positioning cafes in the same area as fashion retailers because it was believed that shoppers liked to be able to stop for a coffee while they comparison shopped. In some centres the tenancy mix varied depending upon the floor level as did the ambience and at times the fixtures and fittings with the more exclusive tenancies and more expensive chattels being positioned on the higher levels.

While many of the managers liked to survey their centres' visitors or catchment area, it was noted that while this information was valuable in the creation of an environment which would appeal to visitors they had to be very careful that such exercises did not annoy and even perhaps aggravate the very people whom they were trying to attract.

Although inner city centres had the perceived advantage of being located in areas where there were many people passing by, some managers indicated that this may in fact be all that they did.



Plate 8.6 A 'Mixed Use' centre (Rogers, 1990), Southgate, South Melbourne, which contains retail tenants, a multiple number of cafes, wine bars and restaurants, a hotel, office towers, and is located near the Victoria Arts Centre.

CHAPTER NINE THE CONSUMPTION OF COMMODITIES AND EXPERIENCES.

INTRODUCTION.

The geography of consumption has been defined as *'The study of the geography of consumption of commodities'* (Johnston et al, 1994, 88). It is not, however, limited to the purchase of commodities for their use and/ or sign value but also involves the consumption of a particular experience or experiences.

Researchers with an interest in the geography of consumption have predominantly concentrated upon the shopping centre or on advertising imagery (Gregson, 1995). Those who have chosen to examine the shopping centre as a consumption site have tended to focus upon the more exceptional centres, for example, the West Edmonton Mall in Canada rather than more ordinary centres (in terms of size and features). There is a need, therefore, for research focusing upon more 'common place' shopping centres to continue to develop along with analyses which examine other consumption sites including those not directly linked to retailing. Although shopping is still predominantly 'women's work' or is regarded as something that the 'girls' like to do, the geographers who have examined the megamalls have been male.

'When we look at the geographers' readings of the megamall what we find then are masculine and masculinist representations masquerading as universal and homogenous tendencies in the world of consumption' (Gregson, 1995, 137).

Planned and managed shopping centres are an important feature of the built environment and of the retailing sector in 'advanced capitalist' nations. Commentators believe that the proportion of retail spending which occurs within shopping centres in New Zealand will follow overseas trends and increase (*Sunday Times*, 4 October, 1993; *Manawatu Evening Standard*, 20 July, 1994). New Zealanders, however, still 'do' the shopping less frequently than Americans and Australians. On average New Zealanders visit the supermarket twice a week, Australians go four times a week and Americans make the trip six times per week (*Sunday Star*, 1 November, 1992).

Researchers have mainly conducted their analyses by observing and interpreting the created environment from a position which is removed from the producers and the consumers and have focused upon the shopping centres as given entities rather than considering how they were created. A shopping centre is a place where both commodities and experiences are produced and consumed by visitors. The attraction of these consumption sites for shoppers is dependent upon the created

environment, the shopper's state of mind and reason(s) for being at 'the mall'. My main research question was concerned with finding out how shopping centres were managed so as to appeal to shoppers. In order to answer this question it was decided that the centre managers who were involved in the day to day running of the centres and therefore in the creation of the environment on a daily basis (unlike most of the designers and owners), would be the most appropriate people from which to collect information¹. Though the centre managers' duties and level of autonomy with respect to the owners of the centres varied depending upon the size of the centre and whether it was owned and managed by the same or separate companies, it was felt that all these individuals had at least some input. My examination of shopping centres in Australia and New Zealand, therefore, differs from the existing accounts of shopping centre research because it involved the collection of information from those who attempt to make the centres appealing to visitors.

Although the qualitative technique of semi - structured interviews has not been used extensively in research involving elite groups such as centre managers it was considered to be the most appropriate technique to use in order to gain an in - depth understanding of how the shopping centre environment is created. Semi - structured interviews enabled me to alter the questions asked dependent upon the responses made. This was important. As an outsider to the industry my knowledge of shopping centres was, at the beginning of my research, limited to what I had read (much of which was written from a North American or British perspective) and to my (often enjoyable!) visits to shopping centres in New Zealand and in particular to my 'local' centres. Semi - structured interviewing allowed me to modify the order in which I introduced topics for discussion as well as the flexibility to converse on particular topics in more detail. Such adaptability would not have been possible had a more structured research technique such as a questionnaire been employed. It also allowed me to discover the individual circumstances which impacted upon the way centre managers thought and acted. The information collected therefore involved the gathering of opinions and beliefs in an attempt to see the creation of a shopping centre environment from the managers' points of view. These individuals' responses have been interpreted and then presented by me. Such an approach has been criticised and has been referred to as naive, but I believe that all researchers have to be very careful that they do not try and make the information they collect fit their own existing categories and thereby, inadvertently alter the meaning of what has been said by the participants (see also Silverman, 1993).

¹ I also walked around the centres to familiarise myself with their layout and ambience.

All interview transcripts were analysed by hand using the techniques of coding and mapping. The maps allowed me to see connections between the different coded categories which were not immediately obvious from the interview transcripts.

Shoppers cannot be forced to visit a shopping centre and as a manager put it '*... it's hard getting inside people's heads!*' [S. S. 11. The managers therefore, were not always sure whether the attractions (or which particular combination of attractions in their centres), would appeal to visitors and/ or whether in the future they would be viewed favourably by shoppers. Such uncertainty has been reflected in the presented findings. The responses of managers both between, and within, the categories used to analyse the centres sometimes vary and contradict each other which indicates that the creation of an attractive, as well as a financially successful, shopping centre environment may not be as straight forward as some of the researchers appear, perhaps unwittingly, to imply.

In this thesis, the verbal responses gathered from my discussions with the managers on the created environment of shopping centres have been used rather than data that may be derived from newspaper and/ or annual reports. This was because such information, which sometimes involves the cost of building or extending a centre or its annual sales figures, would not have helped me understand how managers try and create (and re - create) an environment which will appeal to shoppers. I wanted an in - depth explanation of the managers' roles and opinions rather than descriptions of centre turnover or costs. Shoppers are, I believe, more concerned about whether there is adequate convenient parking (for themselves, at least!), the tenancy mix, the attractiveness of the centre's built form and its ambience. It is the managers' view of their perceptions of centres which are likely to be the most revealing.

THE CREATION OF A CONSUMPTION SITE - THE PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT OF PLANNED SHOPPING CENTRES.

The unified ownership and management structure of centres makes it easier, than it is on a commercial strip, for developers, owners and managers to influence visitors' experiences of shopping. The appearance, the commodities on offer and tenancy mix can all be orchestrated in order to increase shopper satisfaction (Beddington, 1982; Jacobs, 1984; Kowinski, 1985; Gottdiener, 1986; Morris, 1988; Shields 1989; Hopkins, 1990, 1991; O' Brien and Harris, 1991; Crawford, 1992; Goss, 1992; Langman, 1992). Inside the centres analysed the weather was controlled - nearly all of them had air conditioning, for example -, security personnel were (sometimes) employed to subdue 'excesses' in visitor behaviour and the tenancy mix was decided

upon by the centre manager or the leasing department. Market research was often used to select tenants which would satisfy the needs and desires of the centres' customers. In a tourist centre, for example, the tenants, collectively, were selected so that they would appeal to the local and the tourist markets while in a shopping centre located on or near a commercial strip, some of the retailers had 'down - marketed' themselves while others which were selling commodities which were priced too highly for the primary catchment had been replaced. In centres where the market composition consisted of 'ethnic' (the term used by the managers) population groups, however, management were catering more for their income level than their cultural group.

Management tried to market their centres so that people within the catchment (and sometimes outside of the immediate market) would be encouraged to visit. Advertising in the retailing sector has two main purposes, that is, product marketing and the promotion of individual retailers which is a more recent trend and involves target marketing to clearly identified market groups. More emphasis is sometimes now placed upon the image of the retail outlets rather than the price of the commodities sold (Davies, 1991). The marketing associated with the centres analysed followed a similar pattern in that it often involved marketing the centre as a whole, that is, as a product. The expenses associated with marketing the centres were often paid for by the tenants on a pro rata basis and were supplemented by a contribution from the owners.

Marketing Managers (as well as Assistant Marketing Managers in some cases), primarily controlled the marketing of the centres usually in association with a committee of retailer representatives. Merchants' Associations (where retailer representatives had, or at least, could have the opportunity to vote) had been disbanded in many centres. Managers often claimed that they were ineffectual and there was a belief that although the tenants elected on to the Merchants' Association may be profitable retailers, who knew how to successfully market their own businesses, they were not always the best people to market the centres partly because of their vested interest.

Event marketing was still, or was once again, favoured in some centres where it was used to make a visit to a centre an enjoyable experience by putting the 'fun' back into retailing. There can, however, be a '*... clash between a consumption of space which produces surplus value and one which produces only enjoyment and is therefore 'unproductive'*' (Lefebvre, 1991, 359). The view that a shopping centre visit is productive only if the shopper spends money was supported by some managers with respect to event marketing. In centres where event marketing was still used the

managers had varying opinions as to how successful they thought this technique was at attracting people and at encouraging them to spend money. In the past, some managers said, it had been relatively easy to attract customers to their centres in this manner. It was now considered to be more difficult because there were so many more shopping centres and they had to compete with every other leisure or entertainment event. Managers of smaller centres admitted that the expense associated with corporate event marketing campaigns meant that they found it difficult to mount campaigns for special retail calendar days, such as, Mothers' or Fathers' Day. Even when the events managed to encourage large numbers of visitors to the centres, the increased number of people was not always accompanied by a correspondingly large increase in sales. Some managers, however, claimed that it was difficult to assess the successfulness of a campaign on sales figures alone. Staging events may, they believed, have longer term benefits by, for example, an increased awareness of the centre amongst people living or working within the area.

In other centres there had been a move away from this type of marketing during the 1980s, particularly in Australia. Marketing in these centres now involved selecting retail tenants which were suited to the market place rather than putting something on the stage¹. Other marketing techniques used included category marketing, the use of branding and imaging by, for example, the provision of a high standard of customer service and hygiene, and the hosting of community events.

Constant maintenance and regular refurbishment were vital for the financial success of shopping centres as it enabled them to maintain their competitiveness and to out-perform the strip retailing areas, according to managers. These expressed opinions agree with King's (1988) assertion that the built form, or in this case the frequency with which the centres' leased and common areas were redecorated or refurbished, facilitates consumption. It also supports the view that developers, owners and managers believe, or know, that the created environment of shopping centres influences shopper behaviour (Kowinski, 1985; Hopkins, 1990; Beddington, 1982; Crawford, 1992). As a requirement of their lease agreements, retailers often had to redecorate and/ or refurbish their outlets within specified time periods. Such action was not only thought to benefit the retailers in terms of increased, or at least maintained sales levels, but also improved the appearance of the centres by

¹ In some of the centres, particularly the older centres, the importance attached to event marketing prior to the 1980s was demonstrated by the presence of a permanent stage structure where such events or performances could be held.

preventing areas becoming run down or 'blighted' as can occur in street retail environments particularly in the older or less fashionable parts of a city.

Professional retailers recognised that although redecoration, and in particular refurbishment, were expensive undertakings, the cost, in terms of lost sales could be even higher, the managers claimed. Retailers, they said, knew they needed to keep abreast, if not ahead, of the trends within their industry and in step with their shoppers' changing needs and tastes. Managers occasionally went so far as to say that they would be very worried if a retailer needed to be told to regularly upgrade their outlet. The tendency for specialty retailers to regularly refurbish their outlets in order to keep its structure and ambience in step with their merchandise has also been recognised by Sommers (1986) and Crewe and Davenport (1992). Proposed state legislation in Queensland, for example, which would make it illegal for owners to offer a new lease agreement on the condition that the retailer refurbish their outlet, according to a manager, however, would impact upon the created environment of the shopping centre removing some of the advantages that they have had over their strip retailing competitors. The manager of an inner city centre also admitted that because of the availability of rental space in the area they were conscious that if they tried to force a retailer to refurbish their outlet they may decide to leave the centre and take advantage of the incentives offered by the owners of other retail space within the central city.

The high costs associated with upgrading and refurbishing the common areas of centres meant, that such an exercise was often conducted at the same time as an extension. There was a need some managers felt, for the interior of a shopping centre to appear consistent even if it had been built in several stages. Visitors they believed should not be able to tell by looking at the decor and fittings which were the older, and it is assumed, less attractive parts of their centres. The frequent upgrading of the retail outlets and the common areas within planned shopping centres is one of their main distinguishing features in comparison to other forms of retailing. Refurbishing or redecorating a centre also helped, particularly the older centres, to compete on a more equal footing with the more recently built centres. Opinions varied amongst the managers (and sometimes the owners and the managers) about the frequency with which redecorating and refurbishing should occur. A small number of managers, for example, said that they would like the owners to agree to more frequent refurbishment programmes.

The need for shopping centres to always appear new (Fiske, 1989; Kowinski, 1985) in order to encourage visitors to consume (King, 1988), did not always include making structural changes but sometimes involved the ambience of a centre

(Beddington, 1982). In an inner city centre, for example, where the interior decor was only substantially altered at Christmas¹, management attempted to reflect the prevailing mood of their market by making changes to the centre's ambience. In a shopping centre, according to Beddington (1982), there should be a feeling of excitement and bustle but at the same time visitors should feel comfortable and confident in their ability to find their way around the centre - an opinion which was also shared by some of the managers.

Managers of centres on stand alone sites and those located on or near a commercial strip sometimes commented upon how they tried to develop or foster a community focus in their centres by, for example, hosting community events (Shields, 1992b). In a couple of 'regional' sized centres, this was done in order to develop and/ or to maintain a feeling amongst the local community that the owners and managers were sympathetic to their needs. As some of the smaller centres could not compete with the retail offer of the larger centres they were promoted on the basis that they were a 'hassle free' place in which to shop. A manager of a centre on a stand alone site, however, claimed that people decide to visit a centre because of its retailers, that is, in the minds of shoppers the architectural design and/ or the ambience of a centre is less important than their tenants, which supports Beddington's (1982) and Jacobs' (1984) claims that the selection and positioning of tenants within a shopping centre are the most important contributors towards its financial success.

Analysis revealed that predetermined plans were often used to select and to position retail tenants when a centre was built, within centres where an extension programme was planned, and as a result of an outlet becoming vacant. Tenants were often arranged so that retailers selling similar commodities were located within proximity of each other, that is, in precincts. The information gathered, however, demonstrated that such an arrangement could be relatively difficult to orchestrate within existing centres. Historical factors, financial considerations and difficulties associated with attracting particular tenants sometimes meant that the positioning of the tenants did not always follow what some of the managers referred to as the 'textbook' case. The 'better' retailers at times insisted, for example, that they be placed next, or in proximity to, each other and/ or that they had a right - of - renewal option attached to their lease. Short term lease agreements were used because they enabled management to assess the successfulness (or otherwise) of a specialty tenant. Under such conditions the positioning of a tenant could also be altered within a

¹ The shoppers appreciate this, according to the manager, because they can walk through the centre and do not feel as if '*... they're being forced to buy something!* ...' [I. C. 1].

relatively short period. Shifting tenants within the centres, however, often required, a substantial amount of organisation. Although tenants could be moved during a lease agreement, the costs associated with it, in comparison to the benefits which may accrue from such action, were sometimes considered to be too high.

When a retail outlet within a centre became vacant various actions were taken by the manager or by those employed within the leasing division. If a higher return could be secured from a prospective tenant, even if their type of retailing did not fit the existing mix, they maybe given the space. At times 'high quality' retailers were paid to become tenants. In some instances the space was let to a temporary tenant while in others it was left unoccupied while a certain type of tenant, or even a particular tenant, was sought for the space. Leaving the space unoccupied was, in the short term at least, the more expensive option.

The retailing sector often isolates itself from the production and the distribution processes which occur before a commodity arrives in a shop ready for resale. Commodities offered for sale by retailers are presented in a manner which provides shoppers with few, if any, hints as to where, how, and under what conditions they were produced (Sack, 1988; Goss, 1992). This is a feature of the industry whether the outlets are located within a planned and managed shopping centre or on a commercial strip. In a shopping centre, however, the commodities which arrive in the shops do so 'under cover of darkness' or via hidden entrance ways and therefore appear as if by magic, according to Goss (1992). This was not the case for centres analysed for this research. The hours during which retailers could receive deliveries and the entrance ways which they could use were sometimes limited. A number of managers admitted that although they preferred that no deliveries be moved through their centres during its trading hours, it was something that was very difficult to police particularly if it involved couriers bringing parcels into their centres. Other managers even said that they did not consider the delivery of stock through the centres to their retailers during trading hours to be a problem.

The lack of history associated with the commodities offered for sale by retailers is sometimes also a feature of the created environments of shopping centres. Placelessness and timelessness¹ have been used by shopping centre designers to

¹ The presence of clocks (some of which could be called post-modern time pieces) within a number of centres, however, meant that consumers were not completely removed from the passing of time while they were inside a centre. This is at variance to Goss (1992). Some shoppers wanted to know the time while they were in the centres. In one centre, for example, visitors had asked for a clock by way of the centre's suggestion cards- a request which had been agreed to and acted upon.

re - create historical and/ or geographical features in an attempt to connote pleasurable and sanitised images of different times and places for the enjoyment of the visitors. The manipulation of time, space and place (Hopkins, 1990) so that the simulation appears to be more real than reality has been referred to as the hyper - reality of the shopping centre environment (Moore, 1988; Shields, 1989, Clarke, 1991). To a lesser or greater extent the created environments of all the centres analysed were a simulated version of 'reality'. The built structure, for example, usually protected shoppers from the climatic elements and isolated them from the world outside. Some centres were designed to connote a boulevard type atmosphere simulated by the 'planting' of trees under the shelter of a glass ceiling which enabled visitors to stroll, and even to promenade, as they once could on 'High Street'.

Centres were also occasionally contained, for example, within older buildings. Like older homes which have been gentrified, however, use was often only made of the facades of these older buildings with many of the more modern conveniences, such as, electricity incorporated into the design. Some of the owners and/ or managers of these centres however, were, restricted in the changes which they could make, particularly to the built structure, because the centres were protected by heritage legislation. Several architectural styles were sometimes incorporated into a centre's design as was the case with the *Myer Centre* in central Brisbane, where the Victoriana department store and the Queenslander bungalow style were juxtaposed to connote different times and places. The food courts that were a common - place feature of the centres analysed also demonstrated a degree of placelessness. Their outlets were sometimes international fast food franchises or sold food types which have originated from a number of different countries.

Some centre designers have made use of department store features with one of the centres, *Harbour City Centre* in central Wellington occupying space within a former department store building. As Ewen and Ewen (1982) stated, some centres also appeared to be built as spectacles. *Melbourne Central* (in central Melbourne), for example, has a shot tower (which had been used to make lead pellets) protected by a glass cone shaped structure incorporated into its design, a butterfly enclosure and an elaborate fob - watch time piece which when it is lowered from the ceiling on the hour drew the crowds. Centres were also sometimes designed so that a multiple number of spectacles were juxtaposed with each other. Such a style has been strongly influenced by the visual images provided by films and television (Clarke, 1991; Relph, 1987; Kowinski, 1985). The outdoor part of the indoor - outdoor centre, *Pacific Fair* on the Gold Coast, for example, was designed using a number of

different architectural styles which were designed to connote different times and/ or places.

The placelessness and timelessness associated with the created environment of shopping centres also helps shoppers to suspend themselves from reality and in particular the reality of their every day lives. Unlike the work place there is a degree of equality associated with being a consumer (Butler, 1991; Hopkins, 1990; Shields, 1989, 1992a, 1992b). Although the shopping centre is more controlled than other retail environments as long as visitors do not behave in a manner which management considers to be unsavoury or commit illegal acts, they are able to make use of their created environments. Shopping centres have become, and are becoming, places where one can 'hang out', watch others and meet people (Shields, 1989, 1992a; Hopkins, 1990; Goss 1992, 1993; Langman, 1992) which may result in a mixing of the social classes (Shields, 1992b).

Management sometimes helped shoppers to distance themselves from their differential positions as consumers. In a stand alone centre this was attempted by making visitors feel special by informing them that they were shopping at the best shopping centre in the country, even when they had to make their purchases from the discount operators. The need to distance shoppers from their material existence sometimes also involved the provision of entertainment and the selection of retail tenants. There was a feeling amongst some of the managers of centres in lower socio - economic areas, for example, that although discount retailers may reflect the financial position of many of their visitors, too many of these retailers within the centres' tenancy mixes tended to denigrate them. At least part of their centres' created environment therefore, did not resemble 'reality' for many of the shoppers who visited the centres.

There was some evidence of over - accumulation difficulties with managers sometimes commenting upon how their, or other centres, had struggled to attract tenants and/ or visitors. Although the created environment of shopping centres is controlled and often presents a high level of consistency to the outside world, people cannot be forced to visit nor can they be made to purchase. The owners and managers can never be completely confident that the built form or an event which is staged, for example, will help, and will continue to help, make their centres financial successes. A couple of managers, for example, conceded that their centres had not been constructed in a manner which was conducive to making people want to visit.

Extending a centre may enable it to compete in a more equal manner with other centres or to dominate an area. Such a process increases the size of the owner's (or

owners') investment and adds to the tenancy mix of the centre. It may not, however, be viewed favourably by all visitors. Managers of some of the larger centres admitted that shoppers, may perceive that it is easier to shop for food at a stand alone supermarket or at one that is part of a strip retailing environment, rather than at one which is part of the tenancy mix in a large shopping centre. Increasing the size of centres can also make some shoppers feel confused about finding their way about.

Although managers were asked to talk about the design of their centres, they tended not to comment upon their inward - looking nature, their plain blank outside walls and their limited, or lack, of outward facing windows all of which have been written about in the literature (Langman, 1992; Goss, 1992; Kowinski, 1985; Gottdiener, 1986). It has been claimed that such a structure helps the owners and managers create an environment which isolates shoppers from the world outside. The frequent use of a plain architectural style on the outward facing walls of centres has been compared to the fortress like structure of a Medieval castle (Gottdiener, 1986). Researchers have said that shopping centres are purposively built in this way so that the contrast between the exterior and interior of the shopping centre is brought sharply into focus. Visitors to the (stand alone) centres are drawn (or even swept) in from the 'uncontrolled bleak world' of the car parking area into the controlled, safe and brightly lit interior of the shopping centre (Goss, 1992). In more recent years, however, attempts have been made to make the external areas of shopping centres more attractive with, for example, landscaped car parking areas, according to O' Brien and Harris (1991). Although some of the car parking areas of the centres visited had trees and shrubs, the exterior environments of the shopping centres analysed were predominantly unadorned.

Retailing does not simply involve an economic transaction between the retailers and the purchasers but is also concerned with a degree of social interaction between the parties. The social function associated with retailing combined with the attraction people feel towards being part of a crowd may help to explain, Shields (1992b) suggests, why shopping centres attract large numbers of visitors even though they list amongst their retail tenants a high number of chain store tenants. In some centres, however, management ran or had run retailer training programmes which were designed to teach the tenants how to treat customers. This implies that the retailers may have either been unaware, or did not believe, that the social function associated with retailing is as important to their own financial success as Shields (1992b) and the managers of their centres thought it was.

Marking's (1986) claim that shopping centres tend to cater for the needs and desires of the mass market was partially supported by the managers interviewed for this research. Chain store retailers which are designed to appeal to a large number of people often predominate the tenancy mixes of centres on stand alone sites and those located on or near a commercial strip. These managers viewed chain store tenants in a favourable manner because they believed that they were more professional, had more drawing power, spent more money advertising their businesses and on the fit - out of their shops in comparison to the owner - operators (Mum and Dad retailers). Other reasons given for the predominance of chain store retail tenants in centres included the scarcity of 'good' retailers, hence the need to have a large number of multiple retailers and franchise operations in a centre, and the perceived lower financial risk associated with such tenants. In order to maintain their market share the chain store owners often wanted to have outlets in a number of centres. Managers also said that shoppers wanted to find chain store outlets within the tenancy mix. Such outlets are immediately recognisable by visitors because they stock and advertise branded commodities. The manager of a centre located on or near a commercial strip which was being extended and redeveloped, for example, stated that shoppers do not always like points of difference. Once his centre has been redeveloped, therefore, it will, he said, contain approximately 80 per cent generic retailers with between fifteen and 20 per cent of the retail offer being a little different, whose merchandise nevertheless will still be designed to appeal to the mass market. The managers did, however, concede that owner - operators can provide their centres with some interesting points of difference and may have a bit more flare and provide more service than the chain store retailers.

In some of the inner city and smaller out - of - town centres there was a need, the managers claimed, for their tenancy mix to contain a number of 'one off' or owner - operator retailers because of the nature of the market which they served and/ or the restrictions placed upon them due to their size. The smaller out - of - town centres could not compete with the range of chain store retailers found in the larger centres so managers said they sometimes tried to compete on the basis of the more exclusive nature of their tenancy mix. An inner city manager, for example, stated that although they had a list of prospective tenants who wanted to come into the centre, management often did not want them as they were chain - store operations whose presence would detract from the specialist nature of the centre while another inner city centre manager said that the tenants in her centre catered specifically for the needs and desires of professional women.

Jacobs (1984) considers that the sameness associated with the created environment of shopping centres (Kowinski, 1985) makes them rather drab. Their opinion was not, however, shared by the shoppers, according to some of the managers. Visitors, they claimed, liked going to a centre which was designed in a manner which did not confuse. To help shoppers to find their way around display boards which showed how the centres were organised, signage, directory brochures and information booths were used. In an inner city centre, for example, where visitors had said that they found the design confusing, management were trying to rectify this 'problem' by increasing the amount of signage used. In another the lighting was arranged in a manner which was designed to draw people through the centre while at the same time give an indication of the ambience of the different areas.

This apparent difference between the perceived shoppers' view of the created environment of centres and the opinion of some researchers, may at least be partly due to the differing reasons these two groups of people have for going to the centres. The shoppers, for example, go so they can make purchases, leisure shop, or make use of the created environment in a general way which may not involve purchasing or even looking at the commodities offered for sale, but rather involves spending time in the centres by, for example, observing and mixing with the other visitors. For researchers who choose to focus upon shopping centres, however, their reasons for being in a shopping centre may be quite different from those of the shoppers. Instead of accepting the environment that has been created they often attempt to analyse it from a position which is removed from that occupied by the shoppers and managers. The pleasure associated with being in the created environment of a shopping centre is dependent upon individuals making use of it as a place in which to shop. Researchers are not catered for by the architects!

Although shopping centres in Australia and New Zealand are designed by architects who have to work within the constraints of capitalist economies and are built by developers for owners who want their investments to provide them with favourable returns, some of the centres were built or extended using styles or features which were more expensive (according to the managers), than those often found in shopping centres which appears to support the view that the built environment is not solely economically determined (Dickens, 1980 cited in Knox, 1987). It was often believed by the managers, however, that, such designs fixtures and fittings would appeal (or appealed) to a particular market and/ or would give, or gave, their centres a point of difference in comparison to their competitors. Stained glass was used in a tourist centre, for example, in an attempt to enhance its ability to attract tourists. In some centres there were large common areas, for which there was no direct financial

return but which provided space that was sometimes used to stage events. The purpose of which was to attract an increased number of visitors to the centres.

Some managers of centres on stand alone sites and those located on or near a commercial strip defined the design of their centres using the terms 'gun barrel', 'dumb bell' and 'T - shaped' with, as Jacobs (1984) stated, the anchor tenants located at the end points of malls which contain specialty tenants. Other managers claimed that their centres were, or had been, designed in an original manner. Managers' opinions as to the successfulness of these more uniquely designed centres, however, varied. The need to position 'major' or those tenants which draw shoppers to a particular centre, so that people moved past as many specialty shops as possible was considered to be an important feature of a successful shopping centre as a correctly mixed centre would, an inner city centre manager believed, attract shoppers to all levels although not necessarily in the same numbers. Beddington (1982) and Goss (1992), however, claim that a shopping centre design should not predominate and that the circulation routes within centres should filter shoppers into, and not past, the specialty tenants. Such routes should not provide too much common space as the earlier centres did, according to Marking (1986). This opinion was also shared by the designer of a shopping centre located on or near a commercial strip, where the malls were deliberately built narrower in width than is the norm, so that visitors could see the window displays on each side of the mall as they walked along. It was believed that such a design would be beneficial to the retailers because they did not have to rely upon shoppers walking along both sides of the mall in order to see all the window displays. The position of tenants within centres was not fixed but often subject to change. Managers constantly worked upon making adjustments to the arrangement of their retailers, so that people would be encouraged to move throughout their centres. They also attempted to reflect, with the positioning of their retailers their perception of how their visitors liked to shop.

Jacobs (1984) claimed that it was more usual for shopping centres to be built on one level although he admitted that if they were increased in size or built in inner city locations they were more likely to be multi - storied. Many of the centres in Australia and New Zealand tended to be built on more than one level although as Marking (1986, 10) stated the out - of - town centres were usually designed on no more than three levels even when their department store anchors operated on four or more floors. According to Clarke (1991) a size threshold will be, and is being, reached while Jacobs (1984) claims that developers are now more likely to build smaller centres. There was little support for these views in this study, however, except for

the building of centres in inner city locations, which as Jacobs (1984) identified, tended to be smaller than out - of - town centres although this was not always the case. The design of some inner city centres sometimes made it more difficult, if not impossible, for the owners to make major structural changes once the centres had been built. This was in marked contrast to the out - of - town centres analysed many of which had been or were being, extended in size.

The retailing sector is (or until recently was) a localised industry (Berman and Ellis, 1993). This has begun to change however, with the internationalisation of the architecture associated with retail outlets and shopping centres, and of the industry itself (Mulgan, 1989; see also Clarke, 1991; Alexander, 1990). Such 'internationalisation' was a feature of centres analysed in this research. An Australian architect, for example, was involved in designing the extension and redevelopment of a centre on a stand alone site in New Zealand while an American architect was used in the construction of a shopping centre located close to a commercial strip area in Australia. Australian expertise was being used to assist management with their re - mixing programme in another centre in New Zealand. Although there may be a globalising culture associated with the built environment different cultures may not derive the same meanings from similar built forms (King, 1990). There were some commonalties in the design of shopping centres in Australia and New Zealand. Centre managers, owners, developers and architects also sometimes travelled overseas visiting centres in order to gain (new) ideas as to how to construct and/ or redevelop their centres. Incorporating such ideas into centre design in Australia and New Zealand appeared to be done, however, with little or no thought as to whether visitors would be able to interpret the built form in the manner intended.

The shopping centre form is still developing (Beddington, 1982). Rogers (1990), for example, claimed that the largest numerical increases in shopping centre type in the United States had occurred in the 'strip centres' whose concepts included the 'Power' and the 'Off - price' centre. This study mainly focused upon the more conventional types of shopping centre but some managers commented upon the power centre concept. A manager, for example, remarked that if the power centre located near his centre had contained fashion outlets, its impact would have been devastating. In a couple of other instances shopping centre owners had also built power centres on the same site or in proximity to their more 'conventional' shopping centres. It was believed that such positioning would be to the mutual benefit of both types of centre. Another manager, however, claimed that the power centre had not had a major impact (either positively or negatively) on her centre. Retail units in power centres

are usually much larger than in the more traditional types of shopping centre. Because of this, according to Rogers (1990), they are able to accommodate 'category killers'. Analysis revealed, however, that such tenants were also contained within the confines of some of the centres examined in this study.

There was also evidence of what Rogers (1990) termed 'Mixed Use' or 'Festival' centres. Some of the inner city centres could be referred to using the term 'Mixed Use' because they were attached to office space and/ or hotels and sometimes included restaurants as well as retailers amongst their list of tenants. The increased security that such centres may offer their retail tenants because they cater for the work/ professional, tourist and the home - based shopping trip is, however, debatable. A number of the inner city managers identified the paid city worker as an important market group but some said that these people tended only to make small 'every day' type purchases. Their larger acquisitions were made at their 'local' shopping centres because they did not have enough time to comparison shop before and after work or during their lunch breaks. Some of these centres were also, according to their managers, being detrimentally affected by the availability of office space and/ or the decline in the number of inner city workers in some cities.

The more uniform nature of shopping centres in comparison to the shopping street (Morris, 1988; Hopkins, 1991) due to their organisational structure and the control exercised over their appearance and level of maintenance, means that any 'local colour' (Jacobs, 1984; Kowinski, 1985; Hopkins, 1991) can be removed from their created environments. The sterility and lack of spontaneity of shopping centres was commented upon by a manager who claimed that they could not compete with the excitement and the unpredictability associated with 'going into town', even though in his opinion, the retail offer in his centre was superior to the inner city selection. Management sometimes tried to make minor alterations to the created environments of their centres by allowing individuals and organisations to set up displays in their common areas, by hosting fund raising events for local charities (Shields, 1989, 1992b; Jacobs, 1984; Hopkins, 1991) and by the guest appearances of (sometimes local) 'stars'. Involving the centres in community events was considered by some managers (and as the literature suggests) to be a useful way of generating customer loyalty so that the people viewed 'the' centre as 'their' centre, even though different or 'foreign realities' may be simulated in, for example, their design and construction.

Williamson (1992, 220) claims that '*... our experience of shopping malls is multiple*' and is dependent upon the consumers' reasons for being in a centre - a view also shared by managers. In inner city centres, for example, managers sometimes referred to the lower floors as thoroughfare or commuter levels, while higher floors

were identified using terms such as the 'committed zone' . The varying reasons people had for moving through the centre were often matched by the tenancy mix. For example, tenants selling frequently purchased commodities such as newspapers and pre - prepared food were usually positioned on the lower levels while exclusive fashion outlets were located on the higher floors. Managers of out - of - town shopping centres also sometimes recognised more than one type of shopping trip. They talked about 'going' and 'doing' shopping. Doing the shopping involved visiting centres in order to purchase necessary commodities, such as food, and therefore was a chore. People often want to get it done as quickly and as easily as possible while going shopping can be a pleasurable leisure activity. Sometimes the tenancy mix in centres was arranged so that the two types of shopping trip were catered for in different areas. Supermarkets and fresh food tenants were positioned at the end (in many out - of - town centres supermarkets were anchor tenants) of malls and were easily accessible from the car parking areas while specialty tenants, particularly fashion retailers, were located away from these areas, sometimes on a different level, within proximity to each other so shoppers could comparison shop. The more relaxed and enjoyable nature of this type of shopping activity was sometimes matched by the placement of coffee shops and pre - prepared food outlets and more pleasant or up - market environmental features such as the use of carpet instead of tiles as floor coverings. In all but the smaller out - of - town food concentrated shopping centres visitors could 'go shopping'. Managers of these 'browsing' centres (the term some managers used) sometimes also attempted to heighten their shoppers level of enjoyment by providing them with entertainment.

Retailers selling leisure commodities, for example, sport, and entertainment equipment were also a characteristic of the shopping centres as were more overt facilities such as cinema complexes as part of the tenancy mix and in - centre entertainment. More unique leisure facilities included the 'tabaret' at the *Highpoint* centre in Melbourne, the 'Tops' entertainment level which included 'fair ground' type rides at the *Myer Centre* in central Brisbane, the swimming pool at *Airport West* in Melbourne and the ice rink at the *Macquarie* centre in north Sydney!

The popularity of shopping amongst tourists was also recognised (Butler, 1991). Managers of centres located in inner city and tourist destinations, for example, sometimes tried to capitalise on this by selecting more exclusive retail tenants and/ or by using particular marketing campaigns especially pitched at this market group.

Managers talked about how the created environments of their centres were designed to appeal to their particular catchment. They tried to select tenants which were suited to their market and to position them so they were arranged in a manner which

reflected the way in which it was perceived that their visitors liked to shop. The manager of a centre located on or near a commercial strip which was being expanded in size, for example, sometimes talked to shoppers and asked them to identify the retailers which they would like to see in the centre. He often found, however, that he would be given the names of shops that sold higher priced commodities and that the shoppers did not actually make purchases from these outlets but rather liked to look at the merchandise. As 'looking' does not pay the rent, retailers selling higher priced commodities were not given space. Shopping centres are purposively designed, Ferguson (1992) claims, so that shoppers are made to feel as if they freely choose the commodities they purchase. Fiske (1989, 26), however, states that purchasing can be an empowering act because '*... one single act of buying necessarily involves multiple acts of rejection ...*'. The managers, did not comment about if, or how, they tried to give shoppers the impression that they freely chose their purchases.

According to King (1990), the built environment does not only reflect or represent cultures and economic and social and political formations but rather '*... constitutes much of the social and cultural existence*' (King, 1990, 404), a view which was at least partially supported by the manager of a shopping centre located near a strip retailing area. The centre's catchment primarily consisted of lower socio - economic groups. After the centre was extended and redeveloped, however, management noticed that the visitors' dress standards rose in keeping with the upgraded built form of the centre. Different cultural groups were not, however, specifically catered for, or reflected, within the created environments of the centres.

The state protects the collective interests of the capitalist class from the action of individual capitalists, by way of, for example, development controls, according to King (1990). The managers in this research, predominantly, however, made only passing reference to planning controls and appeared to be more concerned about legislation which restricted their opening hours during the weekends (in the Melbourne and Brisbane metropolitan areas).

There is a sense of guilt attached to being a consumer. Developers of shopping centres try to assuage the shame visitors feel about making purchases, according to Goss (1993), by designing structures which enable individuals to disassociate themselves from the act of shopping. Given the parameters of my research I am, to a large extent, unable to comment about whether the developers of the centres analysed had purposely tried to create structures which enable visitors to fantasise about their reasons for being there. If the developers are concerned about salving the troubled consciences of visitors to shopping centres, however, they are probably

more concerned with the guilt that may be associated with purchasing rather than shopping - as shopping, does not always involve buying commodities. The importance placed by managers upon sales as a measure of the success of their centres does, however, imply that they were very interested in the amount of money that visitors spent within their centres and therefore it can probably be assumed that they would be in favour of any design features which make them do this readily and more frequently!

The created environment of planned shopping centres which includes their built structure, the retailers and their position within the centre, the controlled nature of the space in terms of the shoppers, the climate and the provision of entertainment, is one of their main attractions in comparison to other forms of retailing. Researchers have not differentiated between the importance of each of these factors which collectively make up the created environment of a centre. Some managers, however, expressed the view that the retail tenants were their centre's most important attraction. But there also appeared to be a belief that the built form and the ambience of a centre needed to be appealing as demonstrated by the emphasis placed upon refurbishment and regular maintenance in many of the centres, and in some centres by the use of event marketing which may provide shoppers with an entertaining or pseudo - carnival like experience as well. While the interior design of a shopping centre is considered to be vitally important, the manager of a centre on a stand alone site also considered the location and provision of car parking areas to be extremely important facets of successful shopping centre design.

The success or otherwise of the created environment of a shopping centre was also thought to be dependent upon the shoppers. The developers, owners and managers of shopping centres were reliant upon people being prepared to go into an environment where not only were they able to socialise and observe other people, but where they too, were subjected to the gaze and even the scorn of others (Shields, 1989, 1992a, 1992b; Hopkins, 1990). Being the subject of observation and comment by others may be as alienating as one's position with respect to the mode of production (Lefebvre, 1991). This was not commented upon, but a manager did concede that the large open spaces which were part of her centre's design may be threatening to some shoppers. Kowinski (1985) and Hopkins (1990) claim that shoppers have to create some of the experience of visiting a centre for themselves and other visitors. A small number of managers said, for example, that their centres' were designed so that visitors could promenade up and down the malls as they could, and maybe still can on 'High Street'. Shoppers do not like to feel that they are the only visitors in a centre, according to a couple of managers. In their centres,

design features and fittings were therefore used to give the impression that there was always a relatively large number of people within the centre.

Although shopping centres appear to be public space they are in fact privately owned. Individuals are free to enter the centres but the private nature of the space means that they can be removed at management's behest. The confusion surrounding the public/ private nature of the space has been added to by the provision of public services within some centres. Few, if any, researchers have discussed the impacts which may be associated with the provision of space for public services within privately owned places. There is a possibility that access may be restricted.

The blurring of the public/ private nature of the space was also a feature of some of the centres analysed in this research. Some of the managers, for example, likened their centres to the town or market square of times past. The community focus was demonstrated by the hosting of events and displays which also helped to give the impression of an ever - changing spectacle. As well as giving shoppers another reason to visit they may even provide the owners with extra income if the individual or organisation involved is charged for the space. The provision of public services within the centres such as public libraries and post offices were sometimes situated within areas or on levels where it may otherwise have been difficult to attract visitors, that is, their positioning was designed to affect the way visitors moved through the centres. The developers and owners of shopping centres at times had to agree to provide space for such public services before their development applications were approved. A manager, however, claimed that planned shopping centres will not be able to survive as commercial enterprises in the future and need, therefore, to take over some of the former features of the town square of earlier times.

Branding has been (and is being) used by manufacturers as a way of challenging the dominance of retailers. Retailers, too, have made use of branding with own - branding considered to be a useful way of generating customer loyalty (Biel, 1991; Foord et al n. d.). Brands carry meaning and provide purchasers with an identity. Their presence can also reassure individuals (Biel, 1991). The information gathered for this research demonstrated that branding was also a feature of the shopping centre industry in Australia and New Zealand. Retailers selling branded commodities, the names of which were sometimes shared with the outlets, were an important part of the tenancy mix in many centres. Some shopping centres, too, particularly in Australia, also made use of branding. The shopping centres which were owned/ managed by the Westfield Group, for example, were branded as Westfield centres. The image of the brand in these centres was more important than

the created environment of each individual centre. Corporate marketing was also used to brand their centres. Westfield marketing campaigns were used at the local, national and state level and the company had a service initiative which was operational in every centre. AMP Shopping Centres Propriety Limited also made use of corporate marketing campaigns. This corporation had the sole rights in Australia to the Walt Disney characters and the Westfield Group had the rights to the Warner Brothers characters. Shows using these characters were performed within their centres.

The assumption that dupe - like consumers buy whatever the producers, with the aid of advertisers, tell them they need was not sustained in this analysis (Ewen, 1976; Gronmo, 1988). Instead research was conducted so that management could identify any signs of change in their centres' market and make adjustments to their created environments so that they would better reflect its composition. A manager, for example, said that they were altering their tenant selection because some of the retailers were selling commodities which were too highly priced for the centre's catchment, while an inner city centre manager claimed that when they selected tenants they had to try and anticipate what the market will want in three to five years time. Research findings were also sometimes used to provide information on the most appropriate ways in which to market the centres.

Planned shopping centres in out - of - town locations are thought to have been responsible for the decline in the economic viability of 'High Street' retailers. Some inner city managers agreed with this statement and commented upon the strong competition their centres' experienced from out - of - town centres especially during the weekends, even though weekend trading hours were restricted in the Brisbane and Melbourne metropolitan areas. Jones and Clarke (1994), however, claim that their impact has been more severe on the small independently owned shops located in residential areas than on the central city retailers. Managers of centres on stand alone sites and those located on or near a commercial strip sometimes agreed with this statement, but others said that retailers in their centres were competing with the local strip retailers and the free standing supermarkets for the food dollar. Some of these managers also claimed that the inner city areas had an unfair advantage because rate payers money was spent on improving the 'High Street' environment while the owners of out - of - town centres had to use their own financial resources. A couple of centres were, however, involved with Main Street programmes which are usually designed to make the commercial strip areas more competitive against planned and managed shopping centres!

RESEARCHING THE CREATED ENVIRONMENT OF SHOPPING CENTRES.

People, both the consumers and the providers, need to be re - introduced into consumption research (Gregson, 1995). Researchers who have focused upon shopping centres have concentrated upon the controlled nature of the built environment. It has been implied that creating such an environment is relatively easy. Managers interviewed as part of this study, however, commented upon the difficulties associated with trying to create and re - create an environment which was both conducive to shopping and to purchasing. They therefore, conducted research as a way of finding out what individuals in their centres' catchment needed and desired.

'Viewed as texts, built environments are open to varied interpretations ...' (Bondi, 1992b, 158). Researchers have, however, presented their readings of the created environments of shopping centres as if they were the only ones possible. There has also been a tendency to assume that architecture will reflect dominant ideologies and that the users of, in this instance, the shopping centres, are powerless to interpret or alter them in any other than the manner intended by the architects, developers, owners and managers (Bondi, 1992b). My reading has demonstrated that managers constantly worked upon the tenancy mix of their centres and tried to think of marketing campaigns or service initiatives, for example, which would differentiate their centres from their competitors. Even with their constant attention not all shopping centres were financially successful, or as successful as the managers would have liked them to have been.

Researchers have castigated the sameness, the 'grey on grey' quality of shopping centres caused by the controlled nature of the space and the highly visible presence of chain store outlets. According to the managers, especially of the out - of - town centres, however, visitors want to find multiple retailers amongst the tenancy mix and do not always like too many points of difference, although owner - operator retailers were often used to help distinguish one centre from another. Rather than being regarded as negative qualities, the lack of surprise and a selection of tenants catering for the mass market, were listed by the managers as amongst their centres' attractions.

Shopping centre research has predominantly been conducted in North America which accounts for some of the observed differences between the literature and the research findings. Unlike their counterparts in North America, out - of - town centres in Australia and New Zealand are usually food - based, that is, they have at least one

supermarket as an anchor tenant. This difference is important when it is considered that managers sometimes identified two types of shopping trip, that is, 'going' and 'doing' shopping. The created environment which visitors want to find in a centre was, some managers claimed, dependent upon their reason for being at the centre. Those shoppers who had gone to the centre to do their weekly grocery shopping wanted to be able to get in and out of the supermarket in as little time, and with as much ease, as possible. In comparison, visitors who were 'going' shopping, it was perceived, liked to be able to amble along the malls, comparing commodities offered for sale in the various retail outlets.

Researchers have focused upon how the created environment of centres differs markedly from other retail forms as a result of their unified ownership and management structures. The most important contributors to the success of their shopping centres, according to the managers, however, involved constant maintenance and regular upgrades of both the retail outlets and the common areas, the tenancy mix and how their retailers were arranged within the centres.

Shopping centres are '*... overwhelmingly and constitutively paradoxical*' (Morris, 1988, 195). They are constructed in order to make money for their investors but they are also designed to promote enjoyment (or at the very least, convenience) and provide an arena for social interaction. Such a contradiction is increasingly a reflection of the retailing sector in general, where the economic transaction between the retailer and the purchaser is only one of a number of exchanges that can occur. Social interaction has always been a feature of retailing. The perceived need to know the particular requirements of the market place, for example, resulted in, a localised industry even when a number of the commodities offered for sale were manufactured in other countries. This has begun to change, however, with international franchise operations and the ability of retailers to mirror the requirements of particular catchments by demanding that the manufacturers produce small production runs within shorter periods of time.

Shopping centres are places of both competition and co - operation. While it can be assumed that retail outlet owners want to attract shoppers (and preferably those who will become purchasers), to their shops and want to achieve at least 'reasonable' sales figures, they are reliant not only on themselves to create an appealing environment but also on the other retailers with whom they compete for retail sales. They need other retailers to conform with centre policy over, for example, trading hours and to participate in marketing campaigns so that the centre is perceived by visitors as a unified whole and not as a series of separate components, as the

consistency of the planned shopping centre environment is one of their main distinguishing features in comparison to strip retailing areas.

Analysis also revealed that managers of competing centres sometimes conferred or worked together in an attempt to create more attractive environments for shoppers and retailers. The Building Owners and Managers Associations' (BOMAs') management qualifications, for example, were run by managers for managers, the intention being, that it was in the industry's best interests for managers to be professional and beyond reproach with respect to good business practice [Interview with New Zealand Council of Shopping Centres (NZCSC) Chairperson].

The ownership and management structure of centres can prevent parts of a centre or a centre, becoming run down as can occur in the street retailing environment and makes it less likely that conflicting retail types will be placed next to each other. The retailers are, however, dependent upon the owners and the managers matching their visions of an appealing shopping centre environment with the individuals who make up the centre's catchment. Tenant selection and marketing campaigns, for example, need to match the needs and desires of the market place. The retailing industry is now dominated by the retailers as opposed to the past where it was variously controlled by the wholesalers and then by the manufacturers. Individuals cannot be forced to make purchases, however, and it is the consumers who are directing at least some of the changes which are occurring within the industry.

It is not only the use values of commodities which are marketed but also their sign values, that is, for example, what ownership of particular merchandise says about the purchaser. The image, or images, that retailers, often with the aid of advertising, try to associate with their commodities are sometimes also reflected in the created environments of their outlets. Such 'lifestyle' marketing is expensive. The outlets have to be regularly up - dated so as to match the changing fashions as reflected by the merchandise offered for sale.

Regular up - grading of the retail outlets was a common feature of the centres analysed in this research. As the importance of 'lifestyle' marketing increases and the need to regularly upgrade both the retail outlets and the common areas of the centres is recognised, however, the number of power centres, especially in the United States of America, which offer the '*... no - frills brick - and - asphalt look*' (*Sunday Star Times*, 25 June, 1995), ironically continue to grow. These centres which contain huge anchor tenants as well as smaller retail outlets and restaurants offer consumers more selection, convenience and because of their lower costs, can offer lower prices to the customers than the 'traditional' regional shopping centre.

Where the created environments of outlets are designed to reflect the commodity image, both the merchandise and shops are sometimes branded using the same name. Branding was first used by manufacturers and has now also been adopted by retailers and even shopping centre owners. The images simulated by brands are often not only recognisable to the local and national markets but also in the international market place as well. Retailing is becoming more of a global industry with internationally recognised images, brands, outlets and architecture.

Retailing, and within that the created environment of shopping centres, demonstrates how economic and cultural processes are becoming inseparable. Commodity purchase does not simply involve the exchange of money capital for commodities. The selection of a particular commodity by a purchaser is made as a result of a series of decisions. Selecting a commodity over its competitors may involve the purchaser's view of a particular brand name (as well as the manufacturers promotion of it), their opinion of the outlet offering the commodity for sale and possibly its country of origin. Reading the signs attached to commodities and to the created environments of retail outlets and shopping centres, requires individuals to have a certain amount of 'cultural capital'. Being able to recognise what is simulated does not, however, mean that consumers will make use of the environments or the commodities in the manner intended by the producers.

Production does not simply drive consumption, that is, alterations in the production sphere are not simply matched by readjustments in the consumption sphere. There is a need to study production and consumption together but this does not imply that consumption can only be studied using the systems of provision approach as advocated by Fine (1993). To a certain extent consumption is divorced from the production process. Commodities arrive in the shops with little, or no, history even if they do not appear as if by magic in the shopping centres as was stated in the literature. There is a certain degree of equality associated with being a consumer or a visitor to a shopping centre in comparison to one's position within the productive sphere. Shields (1992b), even goes so far as to claim that consumption has its own internal logic and is ultimately beyond the control of capitalism.

Consumption does not simply equate to purchasing commodities. The experience associated with being in a shopping centre and in consuming the commodities purchased may be as important to an individual. A consumer's experience of a shopping centre, therefore, does not only involve buying commodities but also how they react to its created environment, which includes the selection and positioning of tenants, the frequency with which the common areas and retail outlets are

refurbished and its ambience, as well as more pragmatic considerations including their perceptions as to the convenience of the car park.

Creating an environment which consumers will find appealing often involves the construction of a 'sense of place' even if this is derived from 'placelessness' and 'timelessness'. In the shopping centres analysed, for example, community events were hosted and supported and community services were sometimes incorporated into the environment. Although such actions were designed to simulate nostalgic community images, the centres were also often designed to represent different or 'foreign' realities. This was done to create a point of difference and to add to the experience of visiting a centre. If such attributes only produced enjoyment and not surplus profit, they were, however, according to Lefebvre (1991), unproductive. As with event marketing, however, the successfulness in terms of sales figures, of such environmental features may be difficult, if not impossible to measure.

THE SHOPPING CENTRE EXPERIENCE IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

Almost all of the available literature on shopping centres is written from a North American or British perspective. The various conceptual approaches which examine consumption have also mainly been developed within the British and North American context. The adoption of these conceptual frameworks and the use of such descriptive literature in an attempt to explain consumption in other countries may be problematic. The empirical information collected for this thesis highlights the way in which socio - cultural structures, mechanisms, processes and practices are constituted and expressed quite differently in Australia and New Zealand. British and North American frameworks therefore may be inadequate in terms of conceptual and descriptive retail geographies. Important differences exist between centres in Australasia and those in the United States and Britain¹.

Existing studies on shopping centres have predominantly focused on spectacular or unique centres on stand alone sites. In this research more common place centres have been concentrated upon because they are a ubiquitous part of the built environment in 'advanced capitalist' nations and are designed to satisfy the needs and wants of shoppers on a regular basis. A range of centre types have been examined in this thesis. Shopping centres in Australia and New Zealand exist in a number of different locations (for example, in the inner city and in tourist areas, on or

¹ There are also some differences between the created environments in Australia and New Zealand.

near a commercial strip as well as on stand alone sites) and in a variety of sizes and formats. This has been reflected in this cross - national study.

Current research has predominantly focused on a single centre. The environments of these centres' have been examined by 'readings' of their built forms. From such 'readings' researchers have attempted to analyse why centre owners create particular environments for shoppers. They have also sometimes commented on how closely the semiotic messages appear to reflect the lives of the centres' visitors and report from their observations whether shoppers are interpreting the created environments in the 'right' way. Their interpretations of the created environments of the centres are presented as if they were definitive. However this research attempts to represent or reflect the views of the agents involved in the production and consumption of these consumption sites. There is a need therefore to gather information from the people who are 'writing' and/ or 'reading' the environments which are being analysed that is, the owners, developers, managers, retailers and visitors to these centres.

In this thesis centre managers who are involved in running the centres on a daily basis were interviewed. By examining how and why managers created particular environments in their centres a new layer of interpretation has been added to the literature. The decision to focus on the managers reflected my personal experience of paid employment in retailing (although not in a shopping centre) and my visits to shopping centres. It also stemmed from the frustration that I felt at the completion of my masterate. My Master of Arts dissertation examined investment cycles and the position occupied by retailing within the circuit of capital but it failed to capture the socio - cultural importance of shopping. I came to appreciate that retailing involves more than an economic transaction between retailers and purchasers. Retailing is also concerned with social interaction. Shopping centres are the most popular leisure facility in this country, according to the Life in New Zealand survey (Wilson et al, 1990). The shopping centre experience, therefore, is one that appeals to a large number of people. Shopping centre environments are created by owners, investors, developers and managers so they will make a profit but they are not economically determined. They have to appeal to their catchments so that people will want to visit and purchase commodities from the centres' retailers. My thesis attempted to examine this.

In much of the literature there is an underlying assumption that creating appealing shopping centre environments for visitors is a relatively straight forward process. If the design is right, that is, if the anchor tenants are positioned at the end of 'gun barrel' malls it appears that a centre will be a financial success. In this research,

however, it was demonstrated that managers occupy a strategic position in making their shopping centres appealing to shoppers on a daily basis. They have to continuously interpret what their visitors want in the created environments of their centres. To help managers to do this, a number conducted research or employed researchers in their centres. I have demonstrated that environments which are designed to appeal to shoppers must be continuously worked upon. The need for such vigilance has not been acknowledged in the literature up until this time.

Researchers have criticised the sameness of shopping centre environments. Their formats have been dismissed as bland. The dominance of chain store retailers within centres has been regarded as problematic. Managers of centres on stand alone sites and those on or near a commercial strip in this study, however, often stated that the presence of a large number of generic retailers was a necessary feature of these particular consumption sites. Shoppers, they often said, felt more comfortable in centres where there were chain store retailers and franchises¹ because they were familiar with the names of these shops and liked to purchase the branded commodities such outlets offered for sale. At the same time these managers also acknowledged that there was a need to have a small number of stores within their retail mix which were slightly different. These retailers helped to distinguish the created environment of a centre from its competitors. The need for centres on stand alone sites and those located on or near a commercial strip (in particular) to appear familiar but also to offer a degree of individuality was reflected in other aspects of their created environments. Similar floor plans, for example, were used but sometimes unusual (and possibly more expensive) building materials or finishes were incorporated into these standardised designs. The management team in a number of these centres also attempted to gain the loyalty of shoppers in their catchments (especially their primary markets) by hosting local events and providing space for community groups. To be financially successful, according to the managers, those people living in proximity to many of these centres had to feel an allegiance towards them.

Shopping centres in out - of- town locations have a degree of similarity in 'advanced capitalist' nations as shown in the literature and evidenced by the incorporation of overseas ideas into the created environments of centres in this study. They exhibit features which may make their created environments appear to be placeless and timeless (Sack, 1988, Shields, 1989). Rather than helping visitors to forget the time

¹ Some of these were national or even international retailers.

and where they are, however, these factors according to the managers, assisted in the creation of a particular ambience or atmosphere in their centres. Alongside such environmental components which were designed to signify different places and times (provided that the visitors recognised what was being simulated), features which incorporated the centres into their local area were also used. This thesis has demonstrated that there is a need for the created environments of centres to show a degree of local variation as well.

The empirical literature on shopping centres has concentrated upon the need to position anchor tenants correctly. Little attention has been paid to the arrangement of the smaller shops. The positioning of specialty tenants was, however, considered by managers of centres in each of the location categories used in this thesis to be of paramount importance. Selecting the right retailers for the centres' catchments and positioning them in a manner which reflected the way it was believed that visitors liked to shop were identified by managers as significant (if not the most significant) contributors to the financial success of centres. Some managers identified two types of shopping trip, that is, 'doing' and 'going' shopping which needed to be reflected in the positioning of retailers within their centres. In their centres the supermarket anchor stores were positioned in proximity to car parking area access ways. Fresh food retailers occupied the retail space next to the supermarkets. The specialty retailers selling comparison goods such as fashion clothing, accessories and shoes were positioned away from these fresh food areas and were often arranged in 'precincts'. The more relaxed and enjoyable nature of shopping (that is, 'going' shopping) in these parts of the centres was sometimes mirrored by their built environments and furnishings and by the presence of coffee shops and cafes.

Constant maintenance and the regular up - grading and refurbishment of both the leased and common areas of centres also contributed to their financial success, according to managers. The need for the created environments of shopping centres to always appear to be new was recognised in the Anglo - American literature. Such actions enabled the centres to out - perform their commercial strip rivals. They also allowed, managers in this study claimed, older centres to contest their market share on a more equal basis with centres that had been constructed more recently. The frequency with which the retailers had to up - grade and refurbish their outlets was a feature of lease agreements in a number of the centres in this study. It has been implied that such conditions benefit the owners of shopping centres - by having the leased areas of their centres up - dated on a regular basis - at the retailers' expense. Some managers, however, said that 'professional' retailers recognised that redecorating and refurbishing their shops led to an increase (or at the least

prevented a decline) in their outlets' sales figures. Chain store tenants often updated the image of their shops long before they were required to do so. Regular updating of the retail outlets not only benefited the shopping centre owners and the retailers concerned but also other retailers in the centres. Retailers within shopping centres compete with each other for retail sales but they are also dependent upon each other. This feature of the created environments of shopping centres has not been emphasised in the literature.

Shopping centres are also sites of both production and consumption. Production does not merely drive consumption. The owners, investors, managers and retailers try and produce (create and re - create) environments which will appeal to their visitors. For shoppers a visit to a shopping centre involves the consumption of an experience (or experiences) and may also be concerned with the purchase of commodities. Visitors to centres also help to create part of the experience for other shoppers. The owners, investors, managers and retailers have little control over the creation of this aspect of the shopping centre environment apart from encouraging people to visit. Part of the creation of the shopping centre experience is therefore beyond the control of these agents which in the literature have been identified as the producers of these environments. How a shopper feels about going to a shopping centre may also depend on their reasons for the trip and their state of mind on the day in question.

This research demonstrated that the type of environment that is created in shopping centres varies depending upon where they are located. Four different centre categories were identified. These categories were determined on the basis of where the centres were located and from that the market that they were designed to serve. Inner city shopping centres, for example, were created so as to cater for the needs and desires of the paid city worker. Some of these centres also tried to appeal to shoppers in the metropolitan area and to tourists (both national and international) as well. To do this some of the managers said that they had to make the created environments of their centres different from their competitors in out - of - town locations. This was sometimes done by having more 'one - off' retailers. This study demonstrated that location, catchment area (size and composition), local variables and centre size all affected the created environment of shopping centres. Existing conceptual frameworks derived from research based on a single shopping centre are therefore inadequate. Differences in location and size must be an integral part of any re - theorising and analysing of shopping centres. Although some features of the created environments of shopping centres in this research demonstrated similarities with those centres described in the North American and British literature there were

also some important differences. Shopping centres in out - of- town locations in Australia and New Zealand tend to be food based, that is, they have at least one supermarket as an anchor tenant. This is an important difference when it is considered that some of the shopping centre managers identified two types of shopping trip and discussed how they tried to position their retailers so that 'going' shopping was done in a different part of their centre than 'doing' the shopping. According to available statistical information there are also differences in the amount of retail sales that occur in shopping centres in the United States of America, Britain, Australia and New Zealand¹. The implications of all these differences have not been adequately investigated in the British and North American literature and should be examined further.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN CONSUMPTION RESEARCH.

Conducting research is a process and as such involves a series of decisions which ultimately impact upon the findings. Even, as in this study, when the more flexible qualitative research method has been used, a researcher is often able to consider at the end of a project whether their analysis could have been conducted in a different way and the benefits which therefore may have accrued.

At the beginning of this analysis on the attraction of shopping centres it was thought that a centre's catchment may impact upon its created environment. A variety of centres were therefore analysed, varying from the centres on stand alone sites and those on or near a commercial strip to the inner city and tourist centres, and from those with more standardised formats to the more unusual.

Visitors could have been asked what appealed to them about shopping centres. Management in some of the centres analysed, for example, commissioned qualitative research designed to extract this type of information from individuals within their centres' catchment. The researcher, would not only, however, have to assume (as I did with this research) that there is an unproblematic relationship between participants' words and deeds, but also that they were able to tell them how they reacted to the existing created environment and what changes they would like to make. As well as research concentrating on the visitors' views of centres other

¹ There is some variation in these figures. According to Rogers (1990), however, planned shopping centres account for between 45 and 50 per cent of registered retail sales in the United States of America. In Britain 'High Street' and the traditional inner city shopping areas account for approximately 54 per cent of retail spending (Jones and Clarke, 1994) and in Australia and New Zealand shopping centres account for 30 and fifteen per cent of total retail sales, respectively (*Manawatu Evening Standard*, 20 July, 1994).

individuals and groups of people involved in the production of the created environment of shopping centres could be approached. Semi - structured interviews with the designers, developers and owners of these centres could, for example, be conducted to find out what type of environment they try to create for visitors and what they believe makes a centre appealing to shoppers.

The BOMA Shopping Centre Directories in Australia and New Zealand differentiated between different shopping centres by categorising them on the basis of size, location and whether they had at least one full - line department store or a large discount department store as an anchor tenant (which would have made it a regional centre according to the definitions provided, Appendices 1 - 3) (Morris, 1988). In this research, however, the centres were categorised primarily on the basis of location. After all the interview transcripts had been analysed and interpreted, it appeared that, location had the greatest impact upon the created environments of centres. Although the presence of a full - line department store as an anchor tenant was not always found to be indicative of centre size, using the method of categorisation favoured by BOMA may have enabled me to recognise more fully the importance (or otherwise) of centre size with respect to the perceived level of attraction of the environment produced.

This study analysed the created environments of shopping centres in Australia and New Zealand. Further research could identify more concisely the differences that exist between centres in each of these countries. In general terms shopping centres (in each category) in Australia, for example, were larger than those in New Zealand. Managers of centres in Australia considered research focusing on their centres' catchments and regular refurbishment of the common areas to be more important than their counterparts in New Zealand. Corporate marketing campaigns which were a feature of shopping centres in out - of - town locations in Australia were not used in this country. Such differences affect the type of environment that is created for visitors and occurred even though there was some commonality of centre ownership and in spite of the management qualifications which were the same in both countries.

Research focusing upon consumption is no longer uncommon, particularly in Britain. The belated awareness of its importance has not, however, been accompanied by a wide range of analyses focusing upon a number of different consumption sites. To date advertising imagery and planned and managed shopping centres have captured the imagination of (geographic) researchers. Other important sites including 'High Street', department stores, markets, boutiques and factory outlets have received limited attention, or have been ignored, as have other consumption sites not directly associated with the retailing sector (Gregson, 1995).

This study on the created environment of shopping centres in Australia and New Zealand has highlighted a number of aspects associated with Consumption which are in need of urgent attention by researchers. As noted by Gregson (1995), there is a need re - introduce people into consumption analyses. Although individuals must create some of their experience of the shopping centre environment for themselves, examinations of centres have tended to ignore the shoppers and have attempted to analyse their experience of the shopping centre environment from a position somewhat removed from the other visitors. Winchester (1992), for example, claims that rather than empowering women, the shopping centre environment re - enforces many of the inequalities associated with capitalism and patriarchy by the use, for example, of mannequins in the clothing shop windows which portray women as tall, slim, young, white and successful - an image which did not, she claimed, reflect her observed reality of many of the women's lives who frequent the Wollongong City Mall (see also Morris, 1988; Bondi, 1992b).

The need to carry out consumption research with consumers is difficult to dispute. How meaningful studies can be conducted with people who visit a shopping centre is less straight forward. The usefulness of techniques such as participant observation and questionnaires, for example, have been questioned by Morris (1988). The difficulties associated with gathering information from consumers is further compounded by the multi - faceted nature of the consumption experience. How a consumer feels about a particular consumption site, for example, is at least partially dependent upon their reason for going there. The feelings associated with, and their experience of, a particular retail outlet or shopping centre, for example, will reflect whether they are going there to leisure shop, take advantage of the created environment or to purchase commodities which they regard as necessities. The same features of a consumption site may conceivably, therefore, amuse or annoy depending upon the purpose of a visit.

The multiple nature of the consumption experience, therefore, presents a powerful challenge to the ability of developers, owners and managers of consumption sites to create an environment which consumers will find appealing or at the very least, not inconvenient. How consumers feel about a particular created environment may also vary with time, hence the perceived need to regularly refurbish both the retail outlets and the common areas of the shopping centre.

This analysis of shopping centres in both Australia and New Zealand has shown how managers of these centres have attempted to create and re - present environments which are appealing to shoppers. It has demonstrated the need to examine the changes which have and are, occurring within the economies of 'advanced capitalist'

nations by focusing upon the importance of consumption as well as production. Such research need not be restricted to analyses of unusual or exceptional sites of consumption but should incorporate notions of everyday experiences and places. Created environments are actively transformed and re - created. They are not merely peopled places. It is the act of production and consumption by both the 'creators' and the 'users' which produce the experiences associated with visiting the centres. Going to a mall, a so - called 'Cathedral of Consumption' involves so much more than the purchase of commodities.



Much of this beauty is derived from its classic architecture featuring elegant arches, ornate columns, stained glass windows, elaborately tiled mosaic floors and towering copper domes.

The Queen Victoria Building (Q. V. B.), central Sydney.

Source: *QVB - The Queen Victoria Building*.
(photograph reproduced by kind permission of
centre management)

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APPENDICES.

APPENDIX 1

SHOPPING CENTRE CLASSIFICATIONS AND THE DEFINITIONS USED IN THE *BOMA NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL OF SHOPPING CENTRES (1993) DIRECTORY P 5.*

'A shopping centre is defined for the purposes of [the] directory as a group of commercial establishments, planned and developed, owned and managed as a unit. The following classes have been adopted.

City Centre:

Central city shopping centres and arcades providing the highest order of goods and services and civic facilities as well as acting as a centre of commercial activity.

Town Centre:

Town centre shopping centres and arcades providing high order goods and services as well as acting as a centre of commercial activity.

Regional Centre:

Major shopping centre providing comparison goods shopping in depth and variety (comprising a major department store or stores, a large number of specialty shops and maybe combined with a number of service activities, community centres and more general commercial activities; with generally greater than 20,000 square metres of rentable area).

District Centre:

Medium sized or intermediate centre providing convenience and lower order comparison goods shopping (comprising a junior department store, variety store or discount department store and generally comprising between 5,000 and 20,000 square metres of rentable area).

Neighbourhood Centre:

Shopping centres providing for the weekly shopping needs of communities (comprising a supermarket, convenience stores, personal services, and sometimes, a limited number of comparison goods outlets, and generally ranging up to 5,000 square metres in rentable area).

Local Centre:

Small shopping centres providing for the day to day needs of small communities'.

APPENDIX 2.

SHOPPING CENTRE DEFINITIONS USED IN THE BUILDING OWNERS AND MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED SHOPPING CENTRE DIRECTORIES (Facsimile message, BOMA Australia).

'Shopping centres are classified relative to size as follows;

City Centre Complex

A number of retail premises on either side of an arcade or mall owned by one company or firm or person and promoted as an entity within a city or Central Business District.

Regional Centre

A major shopping centre incorporating at least one full line Department Store or a large Discount Department Store, one or more Supermarkets and generally, 60 or more specialty shops. Total Gross Leasable Area Retail will generally exceed 20,000 square metres.

Community Centre

A medium sized shopping centre incorporating a junior Department Store or a Discount Department Store, and at least one Supermarket together with between 30 to 60 specialty shops. Total Gross Leasable Area Retail will generally range between 5,000 and 20,000 square metres.

Neighbourhood Centre

A local shopping centre generally comprising a Supermarket and between 5 to 30 specialty shops, and which is intended to provide day to day convenience goods for the immediate neighborhood.

Bulky Retail

A medium to large sized shopping centre with few tenants taking large areas for the display of large retail items such as furniture and white goods, few specialty shops'.

APPENDIX 3.

BOMA AUSTRALIA'S SHOPPING CENTRE CLASSIFICATIONS. THESE CLASSIFICATIONS WILL BE INCORPORATED INTO ALL BOMA SHOPPING CENTRE DIRECTORIES BY THE END OF 1995 (Facsimile message, BOMA Australia).

'[This] revised system comprises six (6) core and three (3) specialist classifications'.

'A. Core Classifications

1. City Centres

Definition:

Retail premises within an arcade or mall development owned by one company, firm or person and promoted as an entity within a major Central Business District.

Total gross lettable area exceeds 1,000 square metres.

Key features:

- dominated by specialty shops;
- likely to have frontage on mall or major CBD road;
- * generally do not include supermarkets; and,
- * often co - exist with large department stores.

2. Super Regional Centres

Definition:

A major shopping centre typically incorporating two full line department stores, one or more full line discount department stores, two supermarkets and around 250 specialty shops.

Total gross lettable area retail exceeds 85,000 square metres.

Key features:

- one stop shopping for all needs;
- * comprehensive coverage of the full range of retail needs (including specialised retail), containing a combination of full line departments stores, full line

discount department stores, supermarkets, services, chain and other specialty retailers;

- typically include a number of entertainment and leisure attractions such as cinemas, arcade games and soft play centres; and,
- provide a broad range of shopper facilities (car parking, food court) and amenities (rest rooms, seating).

3. Major Regional Centres

Definition:

A major shopping centre typically incorporating at least one full line department store, one or more full line discount department stores, one or more supermarkets and around 150 specialty shops.

Total gross lettable area retail generally ranges between 50,000 and 85,000 square metres.

Key features:

- one stop shopping for all needs;
- * extensive coverage of the full range of retail needs (including specialised retail), containing a combination of full line department stores, full line discount department stores, supermarkets, services, chain and other specialty retailers;
- * typically include a number of entertainment and leisure attractions such as cinemas, arcade games and soft play centres; and,
- * provide a broad range of shopper facilities (car parking, food court) and amenities (rest rooms, seating).

4. Regional Centres

Definition:

A shopping centre typically incorporating one full line department store, a full line discount department store, one or more supermarkets and around 100 or more specialty shops.

Total gross lettable area retail typically ranges between 30,000 and 50,000 square metres.

In some instances, all other characteristics being equal, a centre with two full line discount department stores, without a department store, serves as a regional centre.

Key features:

- extensive coverage of a broad range of retail needs (including specialised retail), however, not as exhaustive as major regional centres;
- contains a combination of full line department stores, full line discount department stores, supermarkets, banks, chain and other specialty retailers; and,
- provide a broad range of shopper facilities and amenities.

5. Sub - Regional Centres*Definition:*

A medium sized shopping centre typically incorporating at least one full line discount department store, a major supermarket and around 40 or more specialty shops.

Total gross lettable area retail will typically range between 10,000 and 30,000 square metres.

Key features:

- provide a broad range of sub - regional retail needs;
- typically dominated by a full line discount department store or major supermarket.

6. Neighbourhood Centres*Definition:*

A local shopping centre comprising a supermarket and up to around 35 specialty shops.

Total lettable area retail will typically be less than 10,000 square metres.

Key features:

- typically located in residential areas;
- * service immediate residential neighbourhood;
- * usually have extended trading hours; and,
- cater for basic day to day retail needs.

B. Specialist Classifications

1. Showroom - Warehouse Centres

Definition:

A medium to large sized shopping centre dominated by bulky goods retailers (furniture, white goods and other homewares), occupying large areas to display merchandise. Typically contain a small number of specialty shops.

Key features:

- * generally located adjacent to large regional centres or in non - traditional retail locations (ie. greenfield sites and industrial areas);
- purpose designed, built and operated, generally with a layout of outlets around a central landscaped area and an overall design and color theme to promote the appearance of an integrated development; and,
- generally greater than 5,000 (GLA) square metres in size.

2. Themed Centres

Definition:

A specialty shopping centre located primarily in resort areas to cater for specialist tourist needs, which does not normally include a supermarket.

Key features:

- resort/ tourist style development;
- * size of centre is not a determining factor; and,
- * comprises mainly speciality shops with food courts.

3. Markets

Definition:

A covered centre of at least 5,000 sq. m. dominated by food retailing with at least 50 stalls or outlets. It operates on a permanent or irregular basis.

Key features:

- includes areas with refrigeration facilities and air conditioning as well as areas without these facilities;

APPENDIX 4.**COPY OF FACSIMILE MESSAGE SENT TO SHOPPING CENTRE MANAGERS IN NEW ZEALAND OUT - LINING THE THEMES I WISHED TO DISCUSS WITH THEM.**

13 September, 1993.

[Centre Manager's name and the address of the centre].

Dear,

I am writing my PhD thesis on the created environments of shopping centres in Australia and New Zealand at Massey University.

I understand that you manage [centre name] in [general location] and was wondering whether I could make an appointment to see you to discuss the following broad topic areas:

1. The age of the centre and the owners/investors associated with it.
2. The general design features of the centre.
3. How the tenant mix is decided upon.
4. The tenant - lease agreements - duration; how they are calculated.
5. How deliveries are made to tenants.
6. The specific market the centre is designed to serve.
7. The frequency of refurbishment.

8. How the centre is promoted and the way such promotion is financed.

9. The operating hours of the centre.

I would very much appreciate the opportunity of an interview with you on one of the following dates; Tuesday 21 September, Wednesday 22 September, Thursday 23 September or Friday 24 September, 1993. If these dates are inconvenient would it be possible to organise a meeting with you on some other occasion? I will telephone you on Thursday 16 September to discuss this matter with you.

Once the PhD has been completed I am intending to send a summary of my findings to all those people interviewed.

Thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully

Susan Bowler.