

RELATIVE VALUE OF EXTERIOR APPEARANCE  
OF SHOPPING CENTERS: PATRONS VS. DESIGNERS

by 1264

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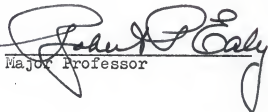
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Importance of the Visual World

As our nation continues to grow both in population and in degree of urbanization, there is a growing awareness of man's visual sensitivities. This concern was evidenced by the following statement from President Johnson's message on natural beauty:

To deal with these new problems will require a new conservation . . . Its concern is not with nature alone, but with the total relation between man and the world around him. Its object is not just man's welfare, but the dignity of man's spirit . . . This means that beauty must not be just a holiday treat, but a part of our daily life (39).

Although vision is perhaps the most important sense in man's arsenal for physical survival, it has also been the least easily offended. Great care has been taken to protect man's other senses from unpleasantness and to cultivate them to appreciate the finest that life has to offer. What is seen, however, has most often been left to fate, and the public has come to accept even that which has been universally judged as visually unpleasant.

Vision is a device whereby man interprets the physical world and which allows him to orient himself to it (44). Sharpening his awareness and disciplining his vision increases man's ability to understand his world and, thereby, cope with its problems (44). Visual language is a universal language not encumbered by the vocabulary of the tongue or grammar. It knows no

nationalism and is used by the illiterate as well as the literate (43). It is not separated from verbal communication, but rather can reinforce the verbal language to bring about a more complete understanding of our world.

By cultivating visual awareness, man has come to appreciate that which is called art. The importance of art to man has never been conclusively determined, and indeed, many persons view art as an unimportant amusement and merely decoration (38). Many authors have written their opinions on the subject, and most of these writers have been concerned with convincing the reader that art has indeed been important. To the knowledge of this investigator, little has been written defending the opposite point of view.

With some certainty, art can be termed a basic form of human behavior. It has been found that even before man cultivated plants and animals or had the simplest of inventions, such as the wheel, he had developed pictorial art of a highly perfect style (38). Further substantiation is the fact that art is universal among all living races. Among living groups throughout the world, there is none, despite its crude culture, which does not have a characteristic form of art (38). Although these findings have not proven the worth of artistic endeavors in today's society, it must be agreed that art is more than just an easily-dispensible part of the serious business of making a living.

Artistic activity has been described as a crystallization of forms that are significant or symbolic (64). If so, this gives art a primary function in the evolution of human culture.

## Architecture and Landscape Architecture as Art

Although architecture and landscape architecture have been commonly referred to as arts, they operate within a different framework than do most of the other arts. A work in these professions must, in practically all cases, serve some practical function, as well as be esthetically pleasing. A work of architecture or landscape architecture is not considered satisfactory, no matter how visually pleasing, if it does not serve its intended function in a logical and orderly manner. The reverse is also true: it can provide for function in the most satisfying manner and be considered a failure because it is not esthetically pleasing.

Perhaps the most detrimental influence upon architecture and landscape architecture is that of the profit motive. The profit motive works in two ways. First, the architect is a businessman, and in most cases has several employees dependent upon him for their livelihood. He is hired for a specific job by a specific client, and the client's wishes may override his artistic judgment. In this situation, a compromise is usually possible; however, in most cases, the limiting factor is the amount of time an architect can afford to spend on the project and still show a profit for the services rendered. The other damaging aspect of the profit motive is in the area of land development. In many cases, land is developed solely for a profit without concern for adjacent land, community benefit, or artistic merit. When this is the case, the client wants not only a reasonable profit, but he wants the highest profit possible. This situation can easily



develop in an expanding economy where new development is readily absorbed and little thought is given to its quality.

Architecture and landscape architecture do, however, perform important functions in their role as artistic endeavors. A man may go through his whole life without being influenced by a painting, but where will a person find a man who is not influenced by his daily contact with the landscape and the objects upon it? This is not to lessen the importance of good painting, but rather to call attention to the opportunities which landscape architects and architects have to appeal to the esthetic sensitivity of all persons. Their philosophies cannot be as pure and idealistic as those of the painter, philosopher, and poet, for their combination of art and profession must be acceptable to society. They, by the same token, must accept society if they are to successfully perform their function. Therefore, landscape architecture and architecture hold a mirror to society, truly reflecting its values. It is the most honest of histories (28). It does not symbolize man's hope or dreams, but rather symbolizes his ability to realize his hopes and dreams.

#### Critical Judgment of Architecture and Landscape Architecture

Landscape architecture and architecture, being different in other aspects, must also be judged by different criteria than most other forms of art. It is generally accepted that art must be judged by a disinterested observer, or one who is concerned only with the object as art. This means that the observer must have no feeling for the content, but judge on the merit of color, form,

composition, style, and other considerations. In comparing painting with architecture, function in architecture takes the place of content in painting. As determined earlier, function is a basic premise for good architecture and landscape architecture and therefore cannot, as in painting, be omitted from judgment. Function, in addition to being a basic part of these two arts, must be evident to all persons, not only to the trained critic. Who, then, is best qualified to judge works of landscape architecture and architecture?

Perhaps one of the best judges is the man who uses and is familiar with the work. Although he is not likely to consider himself an architectural critic, he will have some basic feeling about the work, and these feelings will be a result of the total experience created by the work. The individual may not be able to determine just what it is that he likes or dislikes, but some opinions on his part will be evident. The architectural critic, although able to judge such things as color harmony, form, balance, rhythm and other factors, is not, in the opinion of this investigator, the best judge unless he is extremely familiar with the work and its intended functions. If the trained critic is not always the best judge, the question then arises as to what the relationship between the designer and layman should be.

#### Relationship of Architecture and Landscape Architecture to Society

The relationship between architect, landscape architect and layman is of particular importance when the design projects are commercial or public in their intended use. Basically, two

avenues of approach are open. The first is the school of thought that the designer must be a constant innovator, always seeking new and different solutions to his design problems. In this case, the designer may pay little or no attention to the wants and desires of the public and will probably be viewed by the public as an eccentric. The designer, at the same time, will salve his conscience by convincing himself that the general public is esthetically very unsensitive and doesn't really know what is best.

The second avenue of approach is one in which the designer is a reflector of public wants and produces only that which he knows will meet with wide acceptance. In this situation, the landscape architect or architect may cease to function as an artist and become, for all practical purposes, a technician. He can justify this type of behavior by saying that he tried being an innovator only to become discouraged after his ideas failed to gain acceptance and respect.

Obviously, neither of these approaches when taken by itself will result in satisfactory progress and understanding. The purpose of this paper is not, however, to judge the merits of these approaches, but rather to explore the attitudes of the public, in regard to public shopping facilities, as compared to those of the landscape architect and architect. One fact that cannot be ignored is that the designer knows pathetically little about the attitudes and desires of the people for whom he supposedly designs. Most soap companies know more about the user of their products than does the urban designer. Where almost all other

professions rely upon modern techniques and research to guide them in decision making, the design professions still rely basically upon intuition for guidance. If the design professions of landscape architecture and architecture are to make a significant contribution to the rapidly expanding world, they must gain insight and knowledge into the society which they serve.

### Shopping Centers

For the purposes of this study, shopping centers were selected as representative examples about which the attitudes of the public and the designers were to be measured. Shopping centers were selected for the following reasons. First, shopping centers are commercial facilities, and a customer, by his patronage, or lack of it, may express his pleasure or displeasure with the facilities. Second, the presence of shopping centers means that there are most likely other places in the community at which to shop, whether it be a downtown area, other shopping centers, or both. This assures the patron does have a choice. Third, these centers have usually been designed and built as a unit. This allows each center to stand on its own esthetic and functional merits without interference from adjacent developments such as encountered in the downtown area. Thus, it is seen that the shopping center is a place for the architect, landscape architect, and developer to create the type of shopping environment which they think the public will appreciate.

During the planning of the center, the designer and the developer had to decide what importance would be placed upon the esthetic aspects of the center. They probably relied upon

intuition or past experience to provide the information necessary to set the esthetic standards. Obviously, intuition is not a reliable source of information, and past experience is not always a good indicator of the public's desires. It may be a method to determine what the customer will accept, but not what he desires or appreciates.

There are, of course, many other factors which determine the success of a shopping center other than esthetics. Examples of these factors are location, prices, service, and parking. What has been lacking and what this study has attempted to determine is the relative influence of these factors, including esthetics, on the shopping habits of the public. In a highly mobile society, the shopper has the opportunity to be discriminatory in his choice of shopping centers. Because of this mobility, the shopper need no longer accept that which he finds unpleasant, but he is free to choose the best that his community has to offer.

### Hypothesis

In spite of extreme mobility and mass communication, this author feels that the general public still places less importance upon the esthetic appearance of shopping places than do landscape architects and architects who design shopping centers. This study is, then, directed at testing the reliability of the following hypothesis:

In the city of Wichita, Kansas, the shopping center patron will place relatively less importance upon the exterior appearance of shopping centers than the architects and landscape architects responsible for the design of such centers.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As was expected, literature written on the specific subject of customer concern with the appearance of shopping centers was virtually non-existent. Also noted was a lack of information concerning human reaction to architecture and landscape architecture. Much has been written about architectural styles, philosophy, and criticism, but largely neglected has been the field of human reaction to the esthetic environment. This study utilized existing information on similar subjects as guidelines for research.

Perhaps the greatest amount of writing has been on the general subject of esthetics and esthetic appreciation. Also prevalent were reports of testing for esthetic appreciation, usually by psychologists. Although much has been written on the subject of esthetics, it was soon evident that little agreement existed on the definition of esthetic appreciation or how to test for it.

Many authors felt that esthetic appreciation could be accomplished only by the disinterested observer, that is, one who, for example, appreciates art for the sake of art only. He must not let his personal feelings for the subject matter, color, and other aspects of art enter into his artistic judgment. This places more importance upon the observer and his attitude than upon the work being observed. It has been suggested that instead of isolating features of merit in art and labeling ideal those works which

possess these characteristics, that a set of conditions be set for the ideal observer. It follows that these persons would be responsible for determining the relative value of esthetic projects. This was labeled the concept of the "ideal esthetic observer" (34).

Santayana did not think that one must be disinterested to appreciate beauty (5). His opinion was based upon belief that it is impossible to be really disinterested and that an object must give some type of pleasure or it is not a thing of beauty.

Gibson, on the other hand, stated that beauty and art are not the same, and that an object or a poem may be one without being the other (26).

Mainwaring rejected even the idea of empirically testing for esthetic appreciation (53). He contended most studies have only tested the preference of subjects, and preference may not necessarily be related to esthetic excellence. Also questioned were the units for measuring esthetic excellence, for there are no recognized units for such measurement.

The dilemma of esthetic testing was aptly stated as follows: "Indeed so complex and subtle are the experiences of beauty that sometimes a small variation in method will produce different results" (73). This statement by C. W. Valentine points up the basic reason that numerous difficulties are encountered when testing for esthetic preferences.

Gyorgy Kepes has written extensively concerning esthetics and the growing domination of technology and science in today's society (43 and 44). That our world revolves around science and

technology is not inherently bad, but the balance has been destroyed. "No culture can live by economics and intellect alone" (44). He was concerned that art directors and buyers, who influence public taste by publicity and articles of daily use, often judged the public's esthetic appreciation below its actuality. The introduction by John Burchard to one of Kepes' books called attention to the fact that we are very selective about what we see: thus we have learned not to see (44). This is because of the chaos which is so abundant in our physical environment. Many might call this a blessing, but the opposite should be true, for our sensitivities should demand an end to the visual blight which surrounds us.

As mentioned previously, a basic problem has been to measure esthetic appreciation and excellence. Three theories concerning art standards have been set forth (30). The absolute standard stated that a true order of merit exists among art products and that humanity will finally arrive at a true estimate of each artist's work. The subjectivistic theory followed the line of reasoning that evaluation of art products is purely a personal matter and that agreement between judges is coincidence. The relativistic theory was that no single standard is appropriate for all times, cultures, and mediums. Judgments are lawful and correct for the particular critic involved and for others with comparable backgrounds and attitudes. In evaluation of the theories, the absolute standard is not valid because art standards change from time to time. The subjectivistic theory is not generally considered valid because most persons would agree that



at least some generalities can be made about all art products. Although the relativistic theory also has drawbacks, it seems to be the most flexible and allows room for more scientific study.

Souriau has written that it is extremely difficult to substitute any objective methods for such a personal thing as esthetic appreciation and obtain meaningful results (67). To confront a subject with an object for esthetic evaluation and then elicit a verbal evaluation does not mean that the response will be esthetic in nature.

Several research projects have taken place in which the opinions of a layman or a person untrained in art have been compared with the expert or person trained in art. Most of these experiments were conducted as follows. A group of laymen were selected at random and asked to state their preferences from a selected group of paintings. They were to rank the paintings individually, or in some cases by groups, from the best liked to the least liked. This procedure was repeated using selected art experts, or at least persons with considerable training in art. There was little agreement as to the utility of the results of these experiments, but some interesting observations have been recorded.

The results decisively determined that the laymen and experts did not agree in their choice of paintings. One study showed a correlation of  $-.27$  (29). The person without art training definitely leaned toward paintings which contained representational subject matter and almost universally disliked the abstract. In explaining their basis for rating the paintings,

the laymen placed importance upon the content, color, realism and clarity, with content being the dominant factor. The experts, on the other hand, were concerned with such factors as form, color, composition, texture, lighting, technique in general, conception, mood, and content. Unlike the laymen, no one factor was dominant in their judgment. The expert, however, was also influenced by his experience as an artist and his success or failure with a certain style. The laymen, in general, seemed to have a much simpler and more uniform approach than the experts, being concerned with content, realism, and coloring, while the experts were concerned with a much wider range of factors. Also of interest was the fact that the experts disagreed more among themselves than did the laymen. The laymen made judgments much more quickly, with the experts taking two to three times as much time (13).

In the past, researchers tended to say that if a person was in close agreement with the average preference, then this was a measure of high esthetic sensitivity. Child found, however, that individuals who most closely agreed with the average had preferences which least resembled the criterion of esthetic value as judged by art experts (13).

An interesting study, also by Child, dealt with change in esthetic judgment as affected by exposure to art (14). College students selected at random were shown hundreds of pairs of slides and asked to judge which they thought was the better work of art. The slides were of various paintings, and of each pair, one slide had been previously chosen over the other by art experts as a basis for comparison. The students' preferences were noted in

comparison with that of the art experts and found not to be significantly increased or decreased in average agreement with the experts, even after viewing hundreds of slides. This indicates that mere exposure without comment does not increase a person's esthetic judgment. Whether or not this same factor also applies to landscape architecture and architecture is unknown, but the functional aspects of the two would create vastly different circumstances for testing.

In pictures or music, a part of the work may disproportionately influence a person's opinion of the total work (73). That is, a part of the work which is especially liked or disliked may cause the observer to like or dislike the entire work, regardless of the quality of the remainder of the work. The same may hold true for the appreciation of landscape architecture and architecture.

Children varied with age in their esthetic preference, with their preferences becoming more like that of adults with increasing age (69). This similarity with age was probably not a result of verbal instruction, but as a result of exposure to articles accepted in everyday use. The above study used rectangles as examples; however, the same results were obtained when using slides of paintings (40). Also of interest is an experiment which used preference of polygons of various shapes. Extremely familiar polygons were either very high or very low in preference, but never indifferent (62). Unfamiliar polygons, however, were uniformly low in preference. This would suggest that new shapes and forms require exposure time before being either

accepted or rejected. It would be most helpful if this principle were tested on other esthetic endeavors such as landscape architecture, painting, sculpture, and architecture. It was noted, however, by some authors, that tests of esthetic sensitivity which use stimuli other than works of art, and use reference to peers, had little or no relation to tests which used works of art and tested with reference to standards provided by judgment of art experts (12).

Perhaps the most interesting study was one by Maslow and Mintz concerning the effects of esthetic surroundings (55). In this study, subjects were tested in three rooms of varying esthetic quality. The first, or beautiful room, was furnished as a very comfortable study with carpet, drapes, tasteful furniture, and other articles which were complementary. The second, or average room, was done as a professor's office. It gave the appearance of a clean, neat, worked-in office, but in no way was it outstanding enough to elicit comments. The third, or ugly room, was arranged as an unsightly storeroom in a disheveled, unkempt state. It brought forth such comments as "horrible," "disgusting," "ugly," and "repulsive." The subjects were tested in each of the three rooms for their reactions to negative photographs of human faces. They were asked to rate each of ten photographs as "very or slightly weary" as opposed to "very or rather zestful," and "very or slightly irritable" against "very or rather content." Student examiners were used, but not told the real nature of the experiment so that they were also used as subjects. The student examiners were used as subjects so that the

effects of the rooms could be measured over a relatively longer time span than was possible with the other subjects.

The results of the experiment showed marked differences between the three rooms. The group tested in the beautiful room gave significantly higher results; i.e., more energy and well-being than did the groups in the average and ugly rooms. The results of the average and ugly rooms fell into the fatigued and displeased range. Also of importance was the fact that considerably less time was taken to complete each test in the ugly room than in the other two rooms.

The student examiners administered the test to themselves at the end of each session over a two-week period. The results of their tests were quite similar to the others, with prolonged exposure to the rooms not changing the initial test results. The beautiful room brought such reactions as comfort, pleasure, enjoyment, importance, energy, and a desire to continue the activity. The ugly room evoked such reactions as monotony, fatigue, headache, sleep, discontent, irritability, hostility, and avoidance of the room. The student examiners, when told of their reaction to these rooms, expressed surprise in that they did not realize the marked differences in their reactions to the different rooms.

The results of this experiment, if substantiated by further research, would be most useful. The most interesting application would be that most persons are affected by their esthetic environment, even though they are not aware of it. At the same time, this information would most likely discredit direct questioning as a method of rating the importance of esthetic surroundings to an

individual. The Harvard Graduate School of Design is currently doing research in this area, the purpose of which is to develop systematic ways to investigate the public's opinion about its environment. Hopefully, the findings of this study will provide badly needed facts on this important subject.

Roscow found that in the area of housing, the awareness of the layman and the professional may greatly differ (66). He found that people, in general, were far less sensitive to the difference between real and ideal housing than were professional designers. Also of interest is that only in extreme situations do housing environments change social patterns to any extent.

Another factor in the make-up of the public esthetic opinions are the pressures exerted by advertising. As described by Lynes, the pressures to constantly change our esthetic tastes are "unrelenting in their insistence" (52). The motives for these pressures are varied but probably, in the majority, commercial rather than moral.

Although little research has been done concerning the motives for shopping at various locations, some work has been accomplished in regard to market area characteristics and travel patterns (41). One important finding was the great amount of overlap in trading areas. In cities such as Chicago where many choices were available, it was found that residents of an area did not restrict their shopping to one or two areas, but visited seven or eight over the course of a year. It was found that 95 per cent of shopping center trips were accounted for within a twenty-minute driving time radius, and 75 per cent of the trips came within a five-mile radius. Market areas, then, were not mutually

exclusive, and shoppers regularly shopped at different centers which were within reasonable distance or driving time.

Through the literature reviewed in the preceding pages, an insight into the problems of testing for esthetic preferences was gained. The literature also provided information as to the factors which determine the environment in which we live.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

As indicated in the hypothesis of this paper, there were two groups whose opinions needed to be solicited. The first was the shopping center patron, and the second was the architect or landscape architect responsible for the esthetic design of shopping centers. Opinions of the patrons were obtained through a mailed questionnaire, while the designers were interviewed personally.

#### Group I - Patrons

It was decided that rather than try to obtain a representative sample from the total city of Wichita, that the questionnaire would be sent only to a selected area of the city. An area of the city was needed from which the residents would have a choice of shopping centers at which to shop and would be within a five-mile radius of these centers. In the eastern portion of the city, a three-square-mile area was selected from which four centers might be patronized. See Appendix A for a map showing location of these areas. Two centers were of the large regional classification, and two were neighborhood centers. Within the area were approximately 4,000 dwelling units of which a 1 per cent sampling was taken. The method used was to initially send fifty questionnaires, and steps were taken to insure a high number of returns. From the number of replies to the first fifty questionnaires, an average return percentage was determined. Additional questionnaires were then sent until a minimum of forty questionnaires were received.



Names for the mailing list were selected at random by a procedure described in Appendix F. The following measures were adopted to assure the highest possible number of returned questionnaires:

1. A letter was sent with each questionnaire explaining the purpose of the study and stressing the importance of each being returned. (See Appendix B for sample letter.)
2. Assurance was given that all individual replies would be kept confidential.
3. The questionnaire was carefully worded, brief, required a minimum amount of writing, and was contained on one legal-size page. (See Appendix B for sample questionnaire.)
4. An addressed, stamped envelope was provided in which to return the questionnaire.

The following explanations of the survey questions are included to describe the purpose for each question. Complete question components are contained in Appendix B.

1. Is less than 50 per cent of your shopping done in downtown Wichita?

This question was designed to determine the relative importance of shopping centers within the survey area. It was assumed that a positive response would indicate that the patron did most of his shopping in an outlying shopping center of some type. In order to avoid confusion as to the definition of a shopping center, the

question was asked negatively regarding downtown rather than positively regarding shopping centers.

2. Is there any shopping center which you patronize more frequently than others? If so, why?

The response to this question would reveal two factors, the first being whether or not the patron did indeed favor one center over others. Secondly, the major reason or reasons for this preference would be revealed. It was assumed that the reasons given would be of primary importance to the shopper.

3. What are your most common objections to shopping centers in general?

Through the patron's experience with various centers, it was assumed that common problems, inconveniences, or visual distastefulness would have been observed. Shopping centers "in general," were specified to avoid comments concerning minor objections peculiar to an individual center. The result of this question might also give clues as to why one center was more frequently patronized than others.

4. What do you think could be done to improve the over-all exterior appearance of most shopping centers?

This question was to determine if the patron was aware of the appearance of shopping centers, and if so, what areas were of interest to him. Exterior area was specified because in many cases the designer of the shopping

center has no control over the interior design of the individual shops and stores.

5. Have you seen other centers in this city, or another, which you especially liked because of over-all exterior appearance? If so, what features did you like about the center?

It was assumed that the responses to this question would reveal some features of exterior appearance which would be well accepted if present in the centers available to the patron. The question also has similar goals to that of question four in that it might help the patron realize the possibilities for improvement of many of our shopping centers.

6. Please rate the following in order of importance to you when choosing the shopping center which you patronize most.

The choices listed were: good service, location, external appearance, parking, low prices, pedestrian areas, and others. This question assumed that a shopping center patron would be able to place a relative value upon the various factors which determine his shopping habits. Also of major importance would be the relationship of appearance or esthetics to other shopping factors.

All questions except the last were of the open-ended type in order to avoid suggestion of appropriate answers. In this manner the questions attempted to determine the ideas of the patrons

which have been stimulated by the shopping centers and not ideas contained in the questionnaire. As stated by Souriau,

If a questionnaire is used, much care must be taken to make sure the subject is relying upon personal impressions belonging to perception and not indulging in mental imagery which might be suggested by the questionnaire (67).

### Group II - Professionals

Nine architects and three landscape architects were interviewed representing eight architectural firms and one landscape architectural firm. These firms were the larger firms in Wichita and the ones having the most experience in shopping center development. In each case, the individuals interviewed were members of the firm who were responsible for design decisions and those having experience with shopping centers. Each of the subjects were contacted in advance for an appointment date and were informed at that time of the general nature of the interview.

The procedure used was to interview each of the subjects in his own office, and instead of note taking by the author, a tape recorder was used to record the conversation in its entirety. The method was quite successful, and the recording allowed the author to analyze the conversation at a later time.

The subjects were instructed to answer the questions as though the author were a client interested in building a shopping center. This was done so that answers would be based on professional experience and not personal opinions.

The following explanations of each of the questions are included to describe the purpose of each question. Complete question components are contained in Appendix C.

1. In order to have a successful shopping center, what, in your opinion, are the major factors involved?

This opening question was designed to elicit candid response without first informing the subject that the main focus of this study was on esthetics. Also, its purpose was to explore the many factors involved in designing a shopping center.

2. What importance does exterior appearance have in commercial shopping facilities?

Through the response to this question, the subjects could relate their experience concerning the effects of exterior appearance upon a center. Also, the effects of appearance could be related to other factors affecting the success of a shopping center.

3. Do you think the public will discriminate in their choice of shopping centers because of over-all appearance?

If the public will discriminate esthetically, then appearance becomes a major factor in shopping center design. If the builder of a center can be convinced that appearance is a motivating factor for shoppers, then he will certainly be concerned about it.

4. Rank the following in order of importance to a successful shopping center.

This is the same list of factors to be ranked as that sent to the patrons. From the two rankings, a comparison can be made as to the relative importance of appearance and other factors to both groups.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION OF DATA

As stated previously, questionnaires were sent to the public at large, and designers were interviewed to determine the relative importance each group placed upon the esthetic aspects of the shopping centers. The groups were as follows:

Group I - Shopping Center Patrons. For the purposes of this study it was assumed that all persons living within the survey area had had some experience in patronizing a shopping center.

Group II - Professional Designers of Shopping Centers. This group consisted of architects and landscape architects representing the major design firms in the city of Wichita, Kansas. The men interviewed were in each case the member of the firm responsible for design decisions.

The following is a presentation of the data from the two groups.

#### Group I - Patrons

To obtain a one per cent sampling of the test area, it was necessary to send 75 questionnaires in order to receive 41 replies. This represents a 55 per cent response from shopping center patrons. The data presented here are based upon the 41 replies received. The following is a listing of the questions asked and comments to summarize the answers given. For a summary

of tabulated results, refer to Table I. For complete listings of all answers, refer to Appendix D.

No. 1 - Is less than 50 per cent of your shopping done in downtown Wichita?

Of the 41 patrons replying, 32 answered yes, 8 answered no, with one unanswered. The high per cent of positive answers indicated the relatively high importance of shopping centers to those surveyed.

No. 2 - Is there any shopping center which you patronize more frequently than others? If so, why?

To this question, there were 34 positive responses, 6 negative, and one unanswered. While living in an area which offered many shopping alternatives, 84 per cent of those answering revealed that they had a definite preference for one center. There were three primary reasons given for this preference: variety and quality of stores and merchandise, location of the center, and parking. Twenty-nine patrons referred to stores and merchandise either in terms of variety or quality, indicating that the make-up of merchants in a center is of primary importance. Location of the center, being close to home, or convenient to reach by auto, were mentioned 28 times. Answers relating to parking were given 24 times as follows: ease of parking - 17; free parking - 4; parking arrangement eliminates long walks - 3. Other factors were suggested only 7 times, indicating that in the Wichita area, stores and merchandise, location, and parking are the primary reasons for selecting one center over another. It is of interest that reference to the appearance of a center was given

only once in that one patron liked the "comfortable atmosphere" of a certain center.

No. 3 - What are your most common objections to shopping centers in general?

Replies to question No. 3 did not evidence the consensus shown in the replies to question No. 2. The most common objection, noted 14 times, was lack of variety and quality of stores and merchandise. Ten of those replying stated they had no objections to shopping centers. Mentioned 9 times were objections to parking arrangement or parking adequacy. Traffic congestion was cited 5 times, with other objections accounting for the remaining 21 replies.

No. 4 - What do you think could be done to improve the overall exterior appearance of most shopping centers?

Sixteen of those answering referred to attractive landscaping as a desirable improvement. However, the fact that the questionnaire was sent from the department of landscape architecture may have suggested a response referring to landscaping. The second most frequently listed improvement was enclosed malls. Improved architectural appearance was mentioned six times; larger or better defined walkways - 5 replies; and more compact shopping centers - 4 replies. Five patrons indicated they had no suggestions for the improvement of the appearance of shopping centers. Although the patrons receiving questionnaires may have associated compact centers and enclosed malls with improved appearance, these factors in themselves do not have a direct bearing upon esthetic appearance. A compact center, or one with



an enclosed mall, can be as attractive or unattractive as any other center.

No. 5 - Have you seen other centers in this city, or another, which you especially liked because of over-all exterior appearance? If so, what features did you like about the center?

Twenty-five patrons answered yes, ten answered no, and six gave no answer. The most frequently preferred features were: enclosed mall - 13 responses; attractive landscaping - 9 responses. Others mentioned were: architectural appearance - 6; parking arrangement and capacity - 6; compact, well arranged center - 5; rest-stops, benches, and sitting areas - 3; and others - 7.

No. 6 - Please rate the following in order of importance to you when choosing the shopping center which you patronize most.

In order to establish a comparative score for each of the factors in question No. 6, a rating of 6 points for a first choice, 5 for second choice, and so on through 1 point for sixth choice was assigned. The point total for each factor was used as a basis for determining its relative importance. First, second, and third choices were location, parking, and service, with scores of 211, 179, and 149 respectively. Fourth, fifth, and sixth choices were pedestrian areas - 95; low prices - 86; and exterior appearance - 80. The scores of this question essentially followed the pattern of the preceding questions in that location and parking were important factors, while pedestrian areas, low prices, and exterior appearance were of much lower importance.

TABLE I  
 TABULATED SUMMARY OF GROUP I - PATRONS\*

Question	Number of patrons referring to this factor
Is less than 50 per cent of your shopping done in downtown Wichita?	
Yes	32
No	8
No answer	1
Is there any outlying shopping center which you patronize more than others?	
Yes	34
No	6
No answer	1
If the answer to the above question is "yes" please state the reasons for your preference of that center	
Variety and quality of stores and merchandise	29
Location	28
Ease of parking	17
Free parking	4
Parking arrangement	3
Others	7

---

\*See Appendix D for complete listing of answers.

TABLE I (continued)

Question	Number of patrons referring to this factor
What are your most common objections to shopping centers in general?	
Lack of variety and quality of stores and merchandise	14
No objections	10
Parking	8
Traffic congestion	5
Arrangement of center	4
Others	19
What do you think could be done to improve the over-all exterior appearance of most shopping centers?	
More attractive landscaping	16
More malls or enclosed malls	13
Improve architectural appearance	6
Improve parking	6
Better walkways	5
No suggestions	5
More compact centers	4
Others	10
Have you seen other centers in this city or another which you especially liked for reasons of exterior appearance?	
Yes	25
No	10
No answer	6

TABLE I (continued)

Question	Number of patrons referring to this factor					
If answer to the above question is "yes," what features did you like about the center?						
Enclosed malls	13					
Attractive landscaping	9					
Architectural appearance	6					
Parking	6					
Compact, well arranged center	5					
Rest stops and sitting areas	3					
Other	7					

	Choice						score
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	
Please rate the following in order of importance to you when choosing the shopping center which you patronize most.							
Good service - courteous and efficient clerks	5	7	12	10	3	-	149
Location - close to home or on route to work, etc.	28	7	1	1	-	1	211
Over-all external appearance	1	-	7	4	10	14	80
Ease of parking	4	19	10	4	2	-	179
Low prices	2	-	5	9	8	11	86
Pedestrian areas - ease of circulation, ample room, etc.	2	4	2	8	11	9	95
Other							
Variety of goods and stores	-	1	1	-	-	-	9
Clerks well trained in pricing	1	-	-	-	-	-	6

## Group II - Professional Designers

As would be expected, the professionals differed considerably in their experience with shopping centers, both in the size and the number of centers which they had designed. Four of the designers had experience primarily with small or neighborhood centers in Wichita and other communities within the state of Kansas. The experience of the remaining eight professionals consisted of design of large regional centers as well as neighborhood centers. Their experience consisted of work in Wichita and surrounding communities, and in other states. All of the twelve architects and landscape architects were most helpful with their comments and expressed interest in the project.

All conclusions are based upon the interviews with the nine architects and three landscape architects. For tabulated results of the interviews, see Table II.

The following comments are included as a summarization of the answers given in the interviews with the professionals.

No. 1 - In order to have a successful shopping center, what, in your opinion, are the major factors to be considered?

In general, the major factors considered in successful shopping centers were not those concerned with esthetic aspects of the center. The three factors referred to most often were: economics and financing, mentioned by seven professionals; major tenants, mentioned by seven; and the physical relationship of tenants, also referred to by seven. To the professional, then, economics and merchandising were of primary importance when designing a center. Many of those interviewed stressed the importance of major

tenants, such as department stores and grocery stores, and how much power these tenants exerted over the physical design of a center. Since, in many cases, money must be borrowed against the guarantee of a major tenant or tenants, these stores hold virtual veto power over the layout of a center. If properly planned, most professionals felt that a center could hold the customer's interest throughout his entire stay at the center, offering him a wide variety of shops without long, uninteresting walks.

Locational factors were also thought to be of major importance. These factors were location within a market area, mentioned five times, and location so as to allow easy vehicular access which was mentioned three times. Location within a market area assumes the patron will shop close to home, while concern with vehicular access assumes that patrons will shop at the center which can be reached in the shortest time while encountering the least amount of traffic congestion. Mentioned four times was the importance of creating a pleasant environment in which to shop. This factor would include the esthetic aspects of the center. The following factors were also mentioned: quality and variety of stores, parking, adaptability of the site, uniqueness, human scale, and management.

No. 2 - What importance does exterior appearance have in commercial shopping facilities?

Only three of the professionals said that they thought exterior appearance was of major importance to a shopping center. Three of the designers thought appearance was of some importance, and three believed it to be of minor importance. One of the

latter, however, qualified his statement by saying that although appearance was of minor importance, the public should not be offended, and that the esthetic appearance should at least be acceptable. Two of the professionals, while not sure of the exact importance of appearance, believed that the public was more aware of esthetic factors than most designers thought. The effect of appearance upon the successful life of a center was discussed by one professional. He thought that a well designed center might be successful for a longer time period than one which was not. He also revealed, however, that many centers are built for speculative reasons, and the life of the center is not necessarily a prime consideration at the time it is built.

No. 3 - Do you think the public will discriminate in their choice of shopping centers because of exterior appearance?

Only four of the professionals stated that the shopper would discriminate in his shopping because of the appearance of a center, and six of those interviewed believed the patron would discriminate under certain conditions. The proper conditions were said to exist if a shopper were faced with choosing between two centers equal in all aspects except esthetic appearance. This would mean equal prices, variety, service, parking, and location factors. If these factors were essentially equal, then the six designers thought esthetic appearance would be the deciding factor. An unqualified "no" was given by one of those interviewed, and another said that the shopper would discriminate, but that he probably would not realize that esthetic appearance was a factor in his decision. He felt the shopper would probably like one center better than

another, but he would not stop to analyze the reasons for his selection.

No. 4 - How can the importance of exterior appearance in commercial facilities be increased?

All twelve of the professionals interviewed stated that probably the best way to influence the public was by exposing them to good examples of architecture and landscape architecture. The reasoning for this answer was that if the public were introduced to very good examples of shopping facilities, they would soon come to expect this type of facility.

No. 5 - Rank the following in order of importance to a successful shopping center.

In order to establish a comparative score for each of the factors in question No. 5, a rating of seven points for a first choice was assigned, 6 for second choice, and so on through 1 point for seventh choice. The point total for each factor was used as a basis for determining its relative importance.

The first two choices were variety of stores and goods available, and location, with scores of 62 and 59 respectively. The third choice was good service with a score of 51, followed closely by ease of parking with a score of 50. Also of approximately the same importance as service and parking were pedestrian areas which scored 48. Although next to last, over-all exterior appearance scored 44 which was 71 per cent of the first choice. Seventh, or last choice, was low prices, scoring only 24. The first six choices from this list were very close to one another in score, indicating that all were considered to be important.



TABLE II  
TABULATED RESULTS OF GROUP II - PROFESSIONALS

Question	Number of professionals referring to this factor
In order to have a successful shopping center, what, in your opinion, are the major factors to be considered?	
Economics and financing	7
Importance of major tenants	7
Physical relationship of tenants	7
Location	5
Esthetic appearance for the enjoyment of the patron	4
Vehicular access	3
Quality and variety of shops	2
Parking	2
Adaptability of the site	1
Uniqueness	1
Human scale	1
Management	1
What importance does exterior appearance have in commercial shopping facilities?	
Major importance	3
Minor importance	3
Some influence	3
Public more aware of design factor than we give credit for	2

TABLE II (continued)

Question	Number of professionals referring to this factor							
Might affect longevity of the center	1							
Minor importance; however, esthetic appearance must be acceptable	1							
Do you think the public will discriminate in their choice of shopping centers because of exterior appearance?								
Unqualified "yes"	4							
"Yes" if all other factors are equal	6							
"Yes," but they may not realize that it is good design which attracts them	1							
Unqualified "no"	1							
How can the importance of exterior appearance in commercial facilities be increased?								
By providing the public with outstanding examples of good design	12							
	Choice							
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	score
Rank the following in order of importance to a successful shopping center								
Good service	2	3	-	3	1	2	-	51
Location	5	-	3	2	-	-	1	59
Over-all exterior appearance	1	2	1	2	3	1	1	44
Ease of parking	1	1	5	2	1	-	1	50
Low prices	-	1	-	-	2	4	4	24
Pedestrian areas	2	1	1	3	3	1	-	48

TABLE II (continued)

Question	Choice							score
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	
Variety of stores and goods	3	4	3	-	-	1	-	62
Other								
Vehicular access	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	13
Enjoyable personal experience	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	7

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was undertaken in order to test the relative importance of the exterior appearance of shopping centers. The study was designed to determine the esthetic attitudes of the shopping center patron as compared to those of architects and landscape architects who are responsible for the exterior design of shopping centers.

Data were obtained from the shopping patrons by means of a mailed questionnaire. Data for the professional designers were obtained through personal interviews in their offices.

It was found, after analyzing the data in this study, that the shopping patron and the professional designer did differ somewhat in their assessment as to the importance of exterior appearance. The patrons consistently rated exterior appearance to be of minor importance to the success of a center, while the professionals varied their responses depending upon the individual question. It was concluded that the professionals did place relatively more importance upon the exterior appearance of shopping centers, but in general, neither group considered it to be a major factor in the success of a center.

Factors affecting the shopper's convenience were thought to be most important by both groups. These factors were: variety of stores and merchandise; location of the center; and parking considerations. Variety of stores and merchandise was probably

important so that the patron could do most all of his shopping at one center. Locational factors were important so that the shopper was able to reach the center in the minimum driving time while encountering the least amount of traffic congestion. Parking considerations were important in order to allow the patron not only to find a parking space upon reaching the center, but to have the minimum walking distance to reach his destination.

It was interesting to note that sixty per cent of the replies indicated that they had visited centers which they liked because of exterior appearance, and although they were aware of these factors, they were not important in their selection of shopping places. It was concluded that shopping patrons are more aware of the exterior appearance than previously thought, but convenience factors must be essentially equal before appearance becomes a factor in choosing a shopping place.

Although the economic levels of the residents within the survey area were varied, it can be said with some certainty that, in general, the economic level was somewhat above the average for the city as a whole. Perhaps if the survey had been taken in another area, the results would have been changed. It would seem, however, that the influence of prices might be the only factor expected to change to any degree.

In general, it was concluded from this study that the shopping center patron places relatively less importance upon exterior appearance of shopping centers than do the professionals who design such centers. Both groups, however, considered exterior appearance to be a relatively minor factor in the success of a shopping center.

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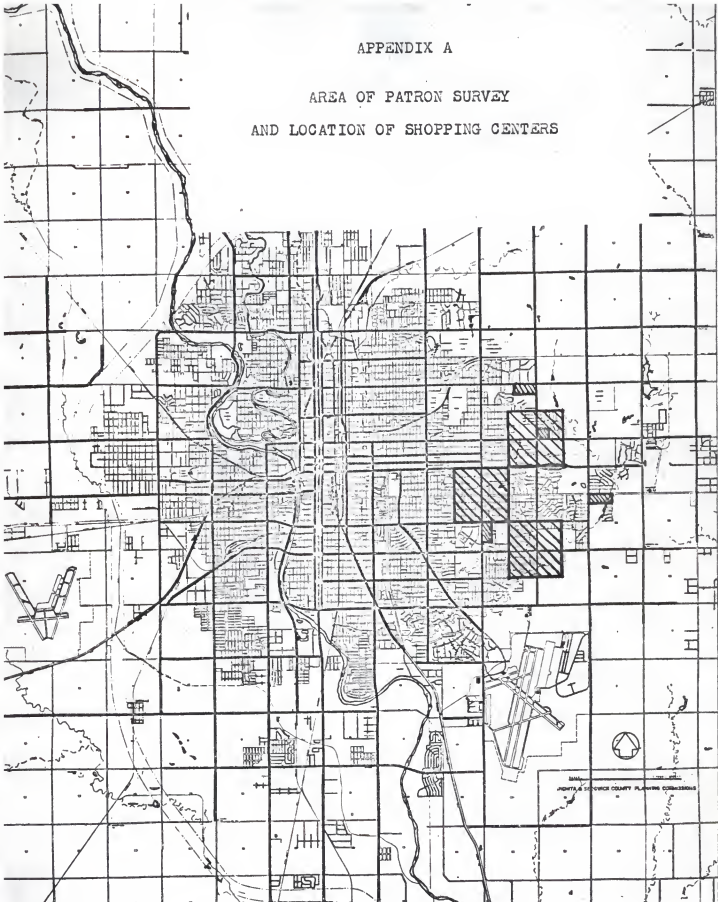
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## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

AREA OF PATRON SURVEY  
AND LOCATION OF SHOPPING CENTERS



SURVEY AREA



SHOPPING CENTER



MAJOR STREET SYSTEM-1975

CITY OF WICHITA, KANSAS

## APPENDIX B

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PATRONS

The following letter and questionnaire were sent to the patrons to be surveyed. An addressed, stamped envelope was included for the recipients' convenience. The questionnaire was mimeographed upon legal size paper which allowed the questions to be contained on one sheet. The introductory letter was copied on stationery of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Kansas State University. It was then co-signed by the author and Dr. Robert P. Ealy, Associate Dean, College of Architecture and Design, Director of Landscape Architecture. This was done to assure the recipient of the validity of the questionnaire for research purposes and that there was no ulterior motive involved.



December 1, 1967

The Department of Landscape Architecture at Kansas State University is currently involved in a research project aimed at providing a more pleasant and efficient environment for shopping center customers. We are interested in the attitudes of the patrons of shopping centers, and your name was statistically selected as one whose opinions would be of value in our research. Since you, the customer, are the one for whom shopping centers should be designed and operated, we feel that you are best qualified to suggest improvements. It will be most helpful if the member of your household responsible for most of your shopping will complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it at your earliest convenience in the stamped envelope provided.

All persons from whom information is received will remain anonymous as we are concerned only with compiling representative data concerning the attitudes of the shopping public. Because of the small number of questionnaires being sent, the return of each one is vital to the success of this project, and your cooperation in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

The results of this study will be available to practicing architects and landscape architects, as well as to the faculty at the university, for use as an aid in providing you with a more pleasant and efficient environment in which to shop.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Lowell E. Richardson  
Graduate Student  
Department of Landscape Architecture

Approved:

Dr. Robert P. Ealy, Associate Dean  
College of Architecture and Design,  
Director of Landscape Architecture



Shopping Center Questionnaire

1. Is less than 50% of your shopping done in downtown Wichita?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. Is there any outlying shopping center which you patronize more frequently than others? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If answer to the above is "yes," would you please state the reasons for your preference of that center.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are your most common objections to shopping centers in general?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you think could be done to improve the over-all exterior appearance of most shopping centers? ("Exterior appearance" in this questionnaire refers to all areas exclusive of the interior of the individual stores and shops, but including parking areas, pedestrian walkways, malls, landscape planting, building form, color, etc.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you seen other centers in this city, or another, which you especially liked because of the over-all exterior appearance? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If "yes," what features did you like about the center?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Please rate the following in order of importance to you when choosing the shopping center which you patronize most: Opposite the most important item, place the number "one."

Opposite the second most important, place a number "two," and so on until all blanks are filled.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Good service - courteous and efficient clerks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Location - close to home or on route to work, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Over-all external appearance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ease of parking
- \_\_\_\_\_ Low prices
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pedestrian areas - ease of circulation, ample room, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### QUESTIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL DESIGNERS

The following questions were asked of twelve landscape architects and architects from Wichita, Kansas. These men represented eight architectural and one landscape architectural firms. The interview was recorded by use of a portable tape recorder. The subject was instructed to answer the questions as if the author were a client interested in building a shopping center. Question number four and the instructions were mimeographed and given to the designer for ranking.

1. In order to have a successful shopping center, what, in your opinion, are the major factors to be considered?
2. What importance does exterior appearance have in commercial shopping facilities?
3. Do you think the public will discriminate in their choice of shopping centers because of over-all exterior appearance?
4. Rank the following in order of importance to a successful shopping center:  
Opposite the most important item, place the number "one," etc.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Good service - courteous and efficient clerks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Location - close to home or on route to work, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Over-all external appearance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ease of parking
- \_\_\_\_\_ Low prices
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pedestrian areas - ease of circulation, ample room, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Variety of stores and goods available
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX D

## TABULATED QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS GROUP I - PATRONS

Question	Number of patrons referring to this factor
Is less than 50 per cent of your shopping done in downtown Wichita?	
Yes	32
No	8
No answer	1
Is there any outlying shopping center which you patronize more than others?	
Yes	34
No	6
No answer	1
If the answer to the above question is "yes," please state the reasons for your preference of that center	
Variety and quality of stores and merchandise	29
Variety of stores and merchandise	25
Good stores	2
Name-brand clothing	1
Quality products	1
	<u>29</u>
Location	28
Close to home	26
More convenient	1
Saves driving	1
	<u>28</u>

## APPENDIX D (continued)

Question	Number of patrons referring to this factor	
Parking	24	
Ease of parking - ample space	17	
Free parking	4	
Parking arrangement eliminates long walks	<u>3</u>	
	24	
Others	7	
Low prices	2	
Arrangement of stores	1	
Room to move around	1	
No mall	1	
Saves time	1	
Comfortable atmosphere	<u>1</u>	
	7	
What are your most common objections to shopping centers in general?		
Lack of variety and quality of stores and merchandise	14	
Lack of complete services or stores	5	
Lack of complete merchandise	4	
Lack of major chain stores	3	
Low quality merchandise	<u>2</u>	
	14	
No objections	10	
Parking	8	
Capacity inadequate	4	
Inconveniently arranged	2	
Walk too far to parking	1	
Open parking	<u>1</u>	
	8	
Traffic congestion at exits and in general	5	
Arrangement of the center	4	
Lack of heated and air-conditioned mall	4	
Detracts from downtown area	2	

## APPENDIX D (continued)

Question	Number of patrons referring to this factor
Others	13
Untrained clerks	1
Absence of good restaurants at reasonable prices	1
Not open early enough	1
Only one entrance to stores	1
Sidewalks too small	1
Usually crowded	1
Expansion does not follow original planning	1
Poor maintenance	1
Higher prices	1
Crowded and cluttered aisles	1
Store fronts look the same	1
Color too dull	1
No shelter for loading and unloading auto	<u>1</u>
	13
Blank	2
What do you think could be done to improve the over-all exterior appearance of most shopping centers?	
More landscape treatment	16
Attractive landscape	10
Landscape parking lots	2
More fountains	2
Trees close to buildings	1
Plants with soft lighting	<u>1</u>
	16
More malls or enclosed malls	13
Enclosed malls	9
Malls	3
Covered walkways	<u>1</u>
	13
Improve architectural appearance	6
Parking	6

## APPENDIX D (continued)

Question	Number of patrons referring to this factor
Enclosed parking	2
Remove poles and islands from parking areas	1
Improve parking surface	1
Mark posts to find car	1
Better parking	$\frac{1}{6}$
Better walkways	5
Better walkways to parking	2
More roomy walking areas	2
Define pedestrian walkways	$\frac{1}{5}$
More compact centers to eliminate long walks	4
Others	10
Better signs as to what stores and where located	2
Variety of colors	2
Traffic control	1
Good lighting	1
Well designed display windows	1
Improve grading and drainage	1
Eliminate sidewalk displays	1
Keep clean	$\frac{1}{10}$
No suggestions	5
Blank	7
Have you seen other centers in this city or another which you especially liked for reasons of exterior appearance?	
Yes	25
No	10
No answer	6

## APPENDIX D (continued)

Question	Number of patrons referring to this factor
If the answer to the above question is "yes," what features did you like about the center?	
Malls	13
Enclosed mall Malls	9 4 <u>13</u>
Landscape treatment	9
Attractive landscaping Relaxing landscaping	8 <u>1</u> 9
Architectural appearance	6
Uniform architecture Geographical color and style Modern architecture Buildings well suited to merchandise offered	2 2 1 <u>1</u> 6
Parking	6
Good parking Adequate parking Covered parking No islands in parking	2 2 1 <u>1</u> 6
Compact, well arranged center	5
Rest stops and sitting areas	3
Others	7
Decorated according to season Good display windows Clean looking Good signs to locate stores Easy access to stores Variety plus theatre Larger, which automatically makes a better center	1 1 1 1 1 1 <u>1</u> 7
Blank	14



## APPENDIX D (continued)

Question	Choice						score
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	
Please rate the following in order of importance to you when choosing the shopping center which you patronize most							
Good service - courteous and efficient clerks	5	7	12	10	3	-	149
Location - close to home or on route to work, etc.	28	7	1	1	-	1	211
Over-all external appearance	1	-	7	4	10	14	80
Ease of parking	4	19	10	4	2	-	179
Low prices	2	-	5	9	8	11	86
Pedestrian areas - ease of circulation, ample room, etc.	2	4	2	8	11	9	95
Other							
Variety of goods and stores	-	1	1	-	-	-	9
Clerks well trained in pricing	1	-	-	-	-	-	6

# APPENDIX E

## TABULATED INTERVIEW RESULTS GROUP II - PROFESSIONALS

Question	Number of professionals referring to this factor
In order to have a successful shopping center, what, in your opinion, are the major factors to be considered?	
Economics and financing	7
Importance of major tenants	7
Physical relationship of tenants	7
Location	5
Esthetic appearance for the enjoyment of the patron	4
Vehicular access	3
Quality and variety of shops	2
Parking	2
Adaptability of the site	1
Uniqueness	1
Human scale	1
Management	1
What importance does exterior appearance have in commercial shopping facilities?	
Major importance	3
Minor importance	3
Some influence	3
Public more aware of design factor than we give credit for	2

## APPENDIX E (continued)

Question	Number of professionals referring to this factor
Might affect longevity of the center	1
Minor importance; however, esthetic appearance must be acceptable	1
Do you think the public will discrim- inate in their choice of shopping centers because of exterior appearance?	
Unqualified "yes"	4
"Yes" if all other factors are equal	6
"Yes," but they may not realize that it is good design which attracts them	1
Unqualified "no"	1
How can the importance of exterior appearance in commercial facilities be increased?	
By providing the public with out- standing examples of good design	12

	Choice							score
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	
Rank the following in order of importance to a suc- cessful shopping center								
Good service	2	3	-	3	1	2	-	51
Location	5	-	3	2	-	-	1	59
Over-all exterior appearance	1	2	1	2	3	1	1	44
Ease of parking	1	1	5	2	1	-	1	50
Low prices	-	1	-	-	2	4	4	24
Pedestrian areas	2	1	1	3	3	1	-	48
Variety of stores and goods	3	4	3	-	-	1	-	62

## APPENDIX E (continued)

Question	Choice							score
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	
Other								
Vehicular access	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	13
Enjoyable personal experience	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	7

## APPENDIX F

### METHOD OF RANDOM SELECTION OF QUESTIONNAIRE RECIPIENTS

As stated previously, the questionnaires were sent to one per cent of the residents within a three-square-mile area in eastern Wichita. The area selected contained 4,000 dwelling units and was within five miles of four shopping centers. The households which received questionnaires were chosen at random in the following manner.

Because of the large number of dwelling units within the chosen area, households would be selected by address rather than by name. To compile a list of 4,000 names would have been extremely time consuming since no listing by area was available. A large map of the city was obtained, and the boundaries for the survey were delineated. (See Appendix A for location of survey area.) Each of the 193 intersections within the survey area were numbered consecutively. Using a table of random numbers, the first 75 numbers between one and 193 were selected. The author then canvassed the area by automobile, recording the address of the house nearest the northeast corner of each selected intersection. After compiling the addresses, a cross-directory was used to obtain the names of the residents to which questionnaires were sent. Although the method described above was somewhat time consuming, it was perhaps the only method available within reasonable time limits and worked very well for this study.

RELATIVE VALUE OF EXTERIOR APPEARANCE  
OF SHOPPING CENTERS: PATRONS VS. DESIGNERS

by

LOWELL E. RICHARDSON

B. S., Kansas State University, 1965

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Department of Landscape Architecture

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
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1969

This study was undertaken in order to test the relative importance of the exterior appearance of shopping centers. The study was designed to determine the esthetic attitudes of the shopping center patron in Wichita, Kansas, as compared to those of architects and landscape architects in Wichita who are responsible for the exterior design of shopping centers.

As expected, literature written on the specific subject of customer concern with the exterior appearance of shopping centers was non-existent. Also noted was the absence of literature concerning human reaction to esthetic environment. Much of the literature reviewed concerned itself with esthetics and esthetic appreciation of works of art. Also of value were several works on testing for esthetic preferences. These works and others on similar subjects were used as guidelines for this study.

Data were obtained from the shopping patrons by means of a mailed questionnaire. The questionnaires were mailed at random to residents in an area of the city selected because of its proximity to existing shopping centers.

Data for the professional designers were obtained through personal interviews in their offices. Nine architects and three landscape architects were questioned. These professionals represented the larger firms in the city and in each case, were the members of the firm responsible for design decisions.

It was found, after analyzing the data in this study, that the shopping patron and the professional designer did differ somewhat in their assessment as to the importance of exterior

appearance. The patrons consistently rated exterior appearance to be of minor importance to the success of a center, while the professionals varied their responses depending upon the individual question. It was concluded that the professionals did place relatively more importance upon the exterior appearance of shopping centers, but in general, neither group considered it to be a major factor in the success of a center.

Factors affecting the shopper's convenience were thought to be most important by both groups. These factors were: variety of stores and merchandise; location of the center; and parking considerations. Variety of stores and merchandise was probably important so that the patron could do most all of his shopping at one center. Locational factors were important so that the shopper was able to reach the center in the minimum driving time while encountering the least amount of traffic congestion. Parking considerations were important in order to allow the patron not only to find a parking space upon reaching the center, but to have the minimum walking distance to reach his destination. The study also indicated that shopping patrons are more aware of the exterior appearance than previously thought, but convenience factors must be essentially equal before appearance becomes a factor in choosing a shopping place.

In general, it was concluded from this study that the shopping center patron places relatively less importance upon exterior appearance of shopping centers than do the professionals who design such centers. Both groups, however, considered exterior appearance to be a relatively minor factor in the success of a shopping center.