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THE MAGAZINE OF
AIA
MICHIGAN

place

WINTER 1993

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ARCHITECTURE / EVENTS



Michigan Architectural Foundation

Happy new year! 1993 is looking to be a very exciting and rewarding year for the profession. The first few months of this year have a number of major events to attend. As mentioned in the last issue the MICHIGAN ARCHITECTURAL FOUNDATION is sponsoring two new seminars in 1993, I am happy to report we are adding a third seminar titled "Environmental Renovation Conference". It will deal with one of the industry's hottest topics, exploring "green building" practices, sick buildings, resource conservation and other issues relating the construction industry and the environment. The seminar will feature two of the nation's highest profile experts in the field - Randolph Croxton AIA and Susan Maxman FAIA. Here's to a great 1993.

Eugene C. Hopkins, AIA
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FEBRUARY

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3,4 EXPO 93, Cobo Conference/Exhibition Center, Detroit.

4 AIA MICHIGAN Business Meeting, 10:30-12:00, Cobo Conference/Exhibition Center, Detroit.

MARCH

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9 MAF, Environmental Renovation Conference, Michigan League, University of Michigan, contact Michigan Architectural Foundation at 313 965-4100.

18, 19 26th Annual Health Facilities Conference, Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids.

APRIL

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19, 20 MAF, Construction Code Conference, Shanty Creek, contact Michigan Architectural Foundation at 313 965-4100. Communication among the design, construction and enforcement professionals throughout the state is the goal of this educational gathering. Codes, review of plans, proper "sealing" of documents, ADA update, and state procedures will be combined in a social setting to promote open communication among all parties responsible for the built environment in Michigan.

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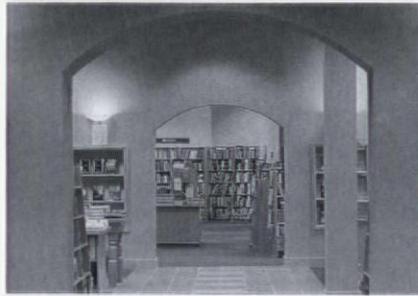
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Nine Examples Of The Metamorphosis Of The Retail Industry

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T h e S o m e r s e t C o l l e c t i o n
The Aggressive Revitalization Of An Outmoded Facility

▼

S i m m o n s & C l a r k - N a t h a n J e w e l r y - G a l a H a l l m a r k
The Design Challenges Of Retail Space In A Shopping Mall

▼

A. K. R i k k s - C o u c h & C o u c h
The Design Challenges Of Merchandising

▼

V i c ' s F r u i t M a r k e t
Creating An Environment With The Look Of Freshness

▼

B o r d e r s B o o k S h o p
Creating An Environment To Linger

▼

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L a n d m a r k s

Greektown Miracle

A b o u t T h e C o v e r

The entrance rotunda of the Somerset Collection, a high-fashion shopping center, features a stage for seasonal and promotional activities.

Architect: James P. Ryan Associates, P.C.

Photography by: Balthazar Korab

WINTER 1993 ▼ PLACE

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Pushing The Edge Of Fashion

As we busily prepare this first issue of *Place* for 1993, it is actually still the last month of 1992. A dominant topic of conversation in this pre-holiday season is the anticipated return of healthy holiday spending, anxiously and hopefully predicted by a retail industry nearly begging statistically average shoppers like you and me to make it come true. As you read this, you must know what I can't yet know, stuck as I am here in December. Did we make it? Did you and I do our part? Did we prime the pump of prosperity like good statistically average shoppers? You've got me worried. Pardon me while I make a purchase.

The theme for this issue of *Place* is Retail Architecture, "Environments for Spending." As architects and their hopeful retail clients well know, the formula for success in today's retail world is complex and ever changing. Any number of influences can cause customers to appear or disappear. The physical design of retail facilities is only one aspect, but design has a shelf life just like the products on display. Without the proper attention, a shopping environment can quickly begin to look like last year's Christmas decorations. Architects who practice retail design are constantly pushing

the edge of fashion right along with their clients.

Why then has *Place* devoted this issue to such a nebulous and allusive segment of architectural service? Well, for one thing, it's fascinating! All of us live in a merchandised world. The architecture of the retail marketplace is probably only surpassed by the home and work place in its effect on the quality of our daily lives. World cultures are often most identified and characterized by the vitality, or lack of it, in the marketplace.

A more specific purpose for this issue is to help define the role of the architect among all

of the various contributors to this complex business. Architects with experience in retail know how important it is to coordinate efforts with the urban planner, traffic engineer, real estate developer, financial advisor, graphic designer, lighting designer, landscape architect, point-of-sale merchandiser, product vendor, leasing agent, store tenant and so on. All these specialists, along with the owner and architect, are continually redefining their relationship with the most important member of the team, the customer.

The skilled architect always tries to see a design challenge through the eyes of the end user. In the case of retail design, we are all potential users, customers by design. Let's shop! ▼

Wayne L. Norlin, AIA

Place Magazine

Editorial Schedule 1993

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Summer '93 April 24, 1993
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Fall '93 July 24, 1993
Places of Industry:
Corporate Headquarters and Facilities
Advertising space Closes September 21

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If you are interested in advertising in *Place Magazine* contact: Karl Rabeneck, TSG Publishing, 940 Western Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15233. Phone 412/323-1808. Fax 412/321-4541.

s k e t

AIA Michigan Announces Design Honor Award Recipients for 1992

Six architectural firms have been selected as this year's recipients of AIA Michigan Design Honor Awards. The ceremony took place on the evening of October 30, 1992 at the Hyatt Regency Dearborn. Established over 25 years ago, the honor awards program recognizes excellence, innovation and creativity among architects from across Michigan.

The Atlanta, Georgia jury was chaired by Terrance E. Sargent, AIA, principal for design at Lord/Aeck/Sargent in Atlanta. Sargent presented jury comments at the awards ceremony. Presentation of the awards was made by Steve Whitney, AIA, president of AIA Michigan. The evening was a celebration of design talent within the profession. It followed the first annual Design and Construction Expo 92 where AIA Michigan, ASID Michigan, CSI Detroit and SMPS Michigan joined together as design professionals representing the built environment.

The award-winning projects for 1992, their owners, and the firms responsible for designing them are:

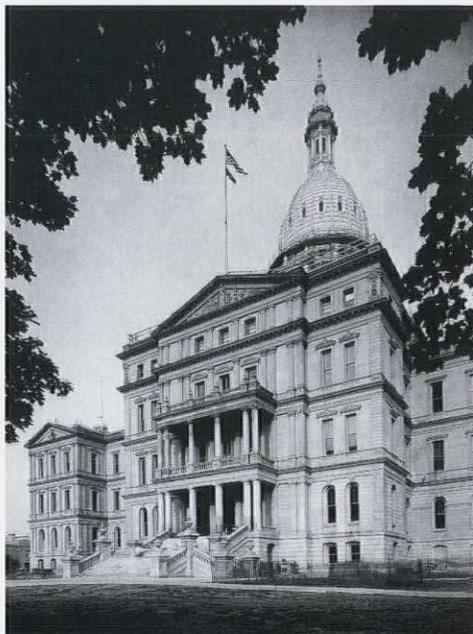


Camp 33-Upper Tahquamenon Falls State Park Tahquamenon Falls, Michigan

Owner: Barrett Campbell Ludlow, Lark Carlyle Ludlow,
John Barrett Ludlow, John Duer Ludlow

Architect: Corporate Design Group, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan

A public reception center providing food service, information, souvenirs and a relaxing place for visitors to Tahquamenon Falls. Corporate Design Group's design solution features a lumberjack's "campfire," a tinted block and limestone fireplace where timberframe "tents" huddle for warmth. The "clearing" is defined by covered wooden walkways connecting the structures and the forest edge.



Michigan State Capitol Building Lansing, Michigan

Owner: State of Michigan

Architect: Coordinating Preservation Architect -
Richard C. Frank, FAIA, Saline, Michigan
Implementing Architects -
Architects Four, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan
Quinn/Evans/Architects, Ann Arbor, Michigan
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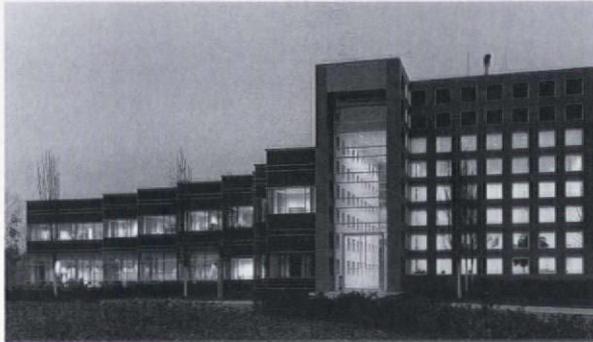
Historic preservation for functional seat of State Government. Divided into 18 construction segments, the building remained open throughout construction. State-of-the-art preservation and restoration techniques employed.

cases

Amoco Performance Products, Inc. Research and Development Facility Alpharetta, Georgia

Owner: Amoco Performance Products, Inc.
Architect: Giffels Associates, Inc. Southfield, Michigan

A research and development facility for carbon fiber and advanced composite products. Giffels' responsibilities included a site search, master plan and building design.



Chester Street Parking Structure Birmingham, Michigan

Owner: City of Birmingham
Architect: Luckenbach/Ziegelman and Partners, Inc. Birmingham, Michigan

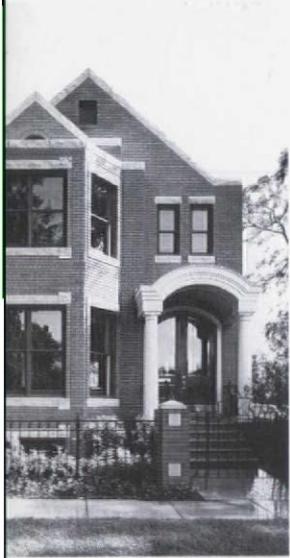
A 900-car public parking structure serving as a transition between the residential areas and the downtown business and retail areas of Birmingham. Featuring stair towers framed in steel and wrapped in glass, the structure is sited at the top of a hill in a potentially dominant location. ▼



Merrill Park Townhomes Birmingham, Michigan

Owner: Merrill Park Properties
Architect: Victor Saroki & Associates Architects P.C. Birmingham, Michigan

Seven attached single-family residences, creating the atmosphere of a street of row houses. Because each unit has a different combination of bay shape, brick detailing and stone accents, the project conveys the variety, harmony and character of a traditional urban streetscape.



Resurrection Cemetery Mausoleum and Chapel Clinton Township, Michigan

Owner: Mt. Elliott Cemetery Association
Architect: Harley Ellington, Pierce Yee Associates, Inc. Southfield, Michigan

Three mausoleum buildings containing 5,000 crypts, a covered circulation gallery incorporating 1,000 wall niches, and a high-image chapel.



Minding The Store

Interview with an Insider

Architects who claim retail design as a specialty, as well as those of us who include it as one offering among many, recognize that it is the consumers themselves who are ultimately most responsible for the shaping of this environment. The customer IS always right. It is the art of turning shopper into buyer that will distinguish successful retailers. Similarly, it is the art of serving each retailer's uniqueness in the marketplace which will distinguish successful architects in the retail sector.

Al Kochanowski, AIA is an architect with an interesting perspective on retail clients. He is among that special class of our profession who, after practicing as a consulting architect in a variety of settings, moved inside the client's organization to become a "corporate architect." In Al's case, the corporation is Meijer, Inc., the retailing giant based in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Recently, Vern Ohlman and Wayne Norlin of Design Plus, P.C./AIA Grand Valley, asked Al to share with *Place* his views on retail design and service to the retail client. The conversation went, more or less, like this:

VO: Currently, what are the dominant trends in retail design?

AK: I like to compare what we do to theater. My experience with Meijer has shown me that form and material need to be dynamic; responsive to fashion. Much of this is the responsibility of the merchandising designer. The real action is "on stage." The store, like a theater, needs to be able to accommodate any show that comes to town. Therefore, the architecture itself can't be too serious. We don't want to build such a monument that we'd be reluctant to tear it apart when the next show arrives.

I can think of other issues, ideas that are not really new, but are perhaps becoming more important all the time. First, retailing in this country

and elsewhere has become a kind of entertainment, not just for the tourist, but for every shopper. The customer expects a little fun and inspiration out of the experience, even when shopping for the most basic of items. Second, the customer expects convenience and service. We'd all love to encourage the shopper to stay in the store as long as possible, but it has to be their decision. If the store creates confusion or unwanted delays, the customer goes away with a bad feeling and may never return. Third, (do I sound like Bill Clinton?) the retail environment needs to remain fresh.

Regardless of how wonderful the design is, a store can begin to look and feel real tired after about seven years. It's best to freshen the look on a regular basis. Color is probably the most important element to staying current. Lighting is next, followed by form and implied space. Concentrate on the things the customer will notice.

VO: What does it take to meet the customer's expectation of convenience?

AK: Adjacencies are very important. If one product is an accessory to another, put them both in front of the customer at the same time. Organize the store to encourage rather than deny the shoppers' impulses. Perhaps even more important is the visual organization of the store. Allow visitors to visually take in as much of the store as possible, as quickly as possible, upon entering. Initial confusion is difficult to overcome.

"Wayfinding," or a clear and quickly identifiable route to the product, and then to the purchase, will help the

customer more cheerfully part with her or his money. The feeling of safety is another significant element in the perception of convenience. People prefer stores that are light and bright, open and transparent, filled with other people and readily identifiable store personnel.

WN: You mentioned earlier that much of the responsibility for effective retailing belongs to the merchandizing designer. Can you explain that role compared to that of the architectural designer?

AK: Sure. We as architects can only do so much to "set the stage." At some point the product has to take over. The point-of-purchase industry really has tremendous influence on how we show off our merchandize. They, along with the store operations people, have day to day control over a lot of design decisions. The architect must be very attentive to the fact that others will be manipulating the facility continuously. The architecture must facilitate this, not stand in the way.

That is not to say that the architect isn't involved in merchandizing design. On the contrary, I think the most successful retailers use complete concepts that involve all disciplines. The Disney Stores, for example, have found a formula which includes the architecture, decor, merchandizing, product and employees. It's all one package that really gets a response from the public.

I do think that architects need to lighten up a little to work in the retail sector. Oftentimes, serious, "respectable" architecture just

doesn't look like retail. The architecture of the marketplace is impulsive, whimsical, tongue-in-cheek, fun loving, colorful. It also seeks a more human scale, something which can be a challenge in today's large multi-service facilities.

WN: How are your personal perceptions of the architectural profession different now, as a corporate architect, from your years in practicing as a consulting architect?

AK: I believe that an organization which owns and manages its own facilities can't hire anyone better than an architect to be a facilitator inside their company, regardless of the type of business. Architects are uniquely trained and qualified to fit in and play a pivotal role. Because we tend to be generalists, architects are typically very flexible to the changing demands of most organizations.

I have always been interested in process. When I was in practice, I was interested in how to get good design and good service out of the firms I was with. That has not changed. I play the same role at Meijer. I am responsible to help my own staff and our consultants be successful. The excitement for me comes in helping architects integrate their design process with our project goals. I am the facilitator between them and the complexities of our organization.

VO: How does the client's organizational complexity affect the architect?

AK: Well, I now understand, better than I did in consulting practice, that all clients, retail or otherwise, are

complex by nature. They are not interested in simplifying those complexities for the benefit of the consultant. Not until architects make the effort to understand the client's organizational and operational dynamics can they hope to provide appropriate consulting services.

On the other hand, let me say that a client shouldn't have to learn the complexities of their consultant's organization. The most helpful thing a consultant can do is to assign a single representative who is empowered to advocate within the firm for the client's interests. Don't burden the client with operational details they don't want or need to know.

Retailers face the same challenge with their customers. The shopper is the most complex ingredient in the whole retail formula. Successful retailers need to understand the minds of their customers and make everything as simple as possible for them. Architects can use the same formula to be successful.

WN: Is there any one thing you think architects need to better understand about how retail organizations function?

AK: Retailers have always had to keep a watchful eye on the competition, now more so than ever. Consumers are always looking for a better deal or an easier way to get a good deal. We cannot ever relax and expect that habit alone will keep our customers loyal. Everything we do in business is driven by that basic truth.

Architects are just starting to understand what retailers have understood for a long time.

continues

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Those of you who do work in the retail sector will probably understand it sooner and better than those with other specialties. Facing the stark reality of competition changes your perspective dramatically. Traditionally, architects have found satisfaction mostly in pleasing people, with good design and good service. But in these times, the real test of good service is the extent to which the architect helps or hinders the business success of the retailer. Just like a retailer, architects cannot expect to compete on price alone. Like it or not, there is always someone who will do it cheaper. And, just like in the retail business, you must strive to differentiate your performance and quality from those with lower prices. If architects are always to be in the reactive mode, trying to be everything to everybody, it becomes hard to compete on anything but price. But if you stress experience, process, sincere interest in the client's business, quality of people on the team and, above all, commitment, then you shouldn't have to defend the value of your services. Let the marketplace be the judge of that. ▼

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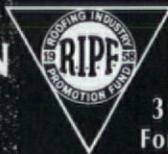
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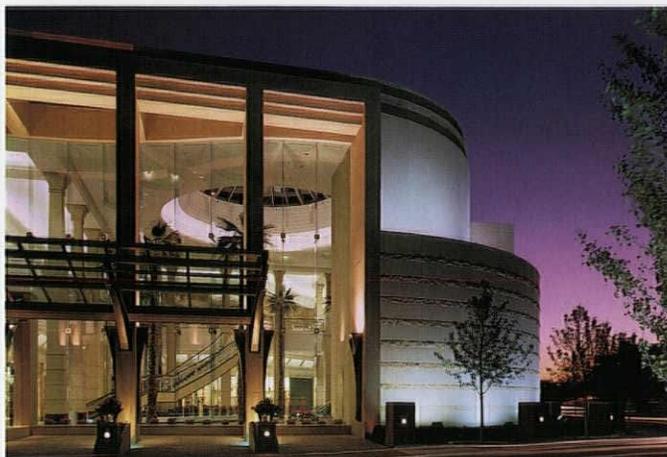
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ENVIRONMENTS FOR SPENDING

The retail industry has gone through an amazing metamorphosis in its relatively short modern history, and consequently the definition of marketplace continues to evolve. Goods and services are marketed in many ways and in many places. The latest concepts in retail design and merchandising have extended themselves to influence other industries such as health care,

public use buildings, sports and entertainment facilities. In fact, according to James

P. Ryan, AIA, we are seeing an "almost lopsided rush to provide entertainment in retail facilities in the form of amusements or fantasies for both adults and children."

The Somerset Collection

Ryan, President of JPRA in Farmington Hills, notes that another manifestation of evolution in the marketplace is the extent to which some outmoded facilities are being

aggressively revitalized. In Troy, Michigan, for example, JPRA designed the recent renovation for The Somerset Collection as a high fashion retail shopping center, anchored by the existing Saks Fifth Avenue and a new Neiman Marcus store. The challenge for JPRA was to create a totally new environment, dramatically removed in image and spirit from the preceding shopping center.

The project included total renovation of the exterior, entries and 60,000 sq.ft. common area; a new grand court "rotunda" area; addition of a new 10,000 sq.ft. second level above the fully leased lower level, and a new four-level parking deck with a bridge to the mall. The new center makes a far greater visual impact for approaching customers. Sophisticated



The challenge was to create a totally new environment from the preceding mall.

interior materials and detailing support the image of fashion demanded by tenants of The Somerset Collection.

Ryan predicts that a cyclical return to urban and urban fringe areas will continue to support adaptive reuse of retail facilities. Such projects are not without risk, however. "No job ever ends up to be what it started out to be," he warns. He advises that a clearly defined scope, budget and schedule, along with well-understood existing conditions, are all critical elements of a successful retail renovation. ▼

Project: The Somerset Collection,
Troy, Michigan

Owner: Frankel/Forbes-Cohen
Associates
Troy, Michigan

Architect: James P. Ryan
Associates, P.C.
Farmington Hills, Michigan

Mechanical/Electrical
Engineer: SWS Engineering, Inc.

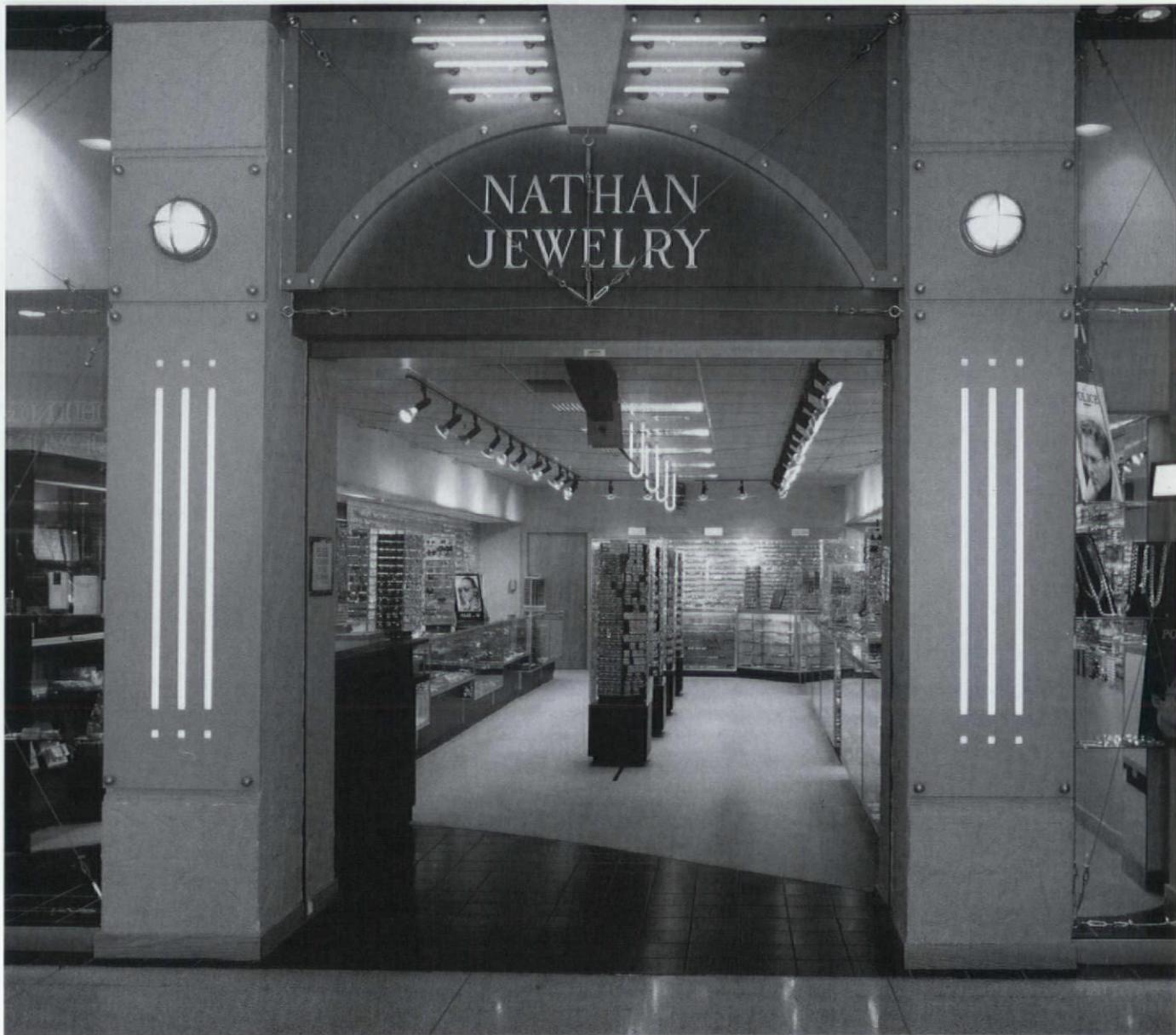
Contractor: Clark Construction
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The main mall is a soaring space crowned with continuous skylights. At night, tiny fixtures give a "star light" effect.

The new main entrance, extending 60 feet beyond the existing, uses buff colored Mankato stone and Cranbrook brick.



Steel cables and exposed neon are used as design accents on and around the store's twin entrance columns.

Simmons & Clark Jewelry, Nathan Jewelry and Gala Hallmark

A different kind of challenge is presented by the retail tenant whose business must occupy a given allotment of space within an urban block or shopping center. Even with the limitations of the pre-set parameters typical to such developments, architects experienced in this project type can find a world of imaginative design solutions.

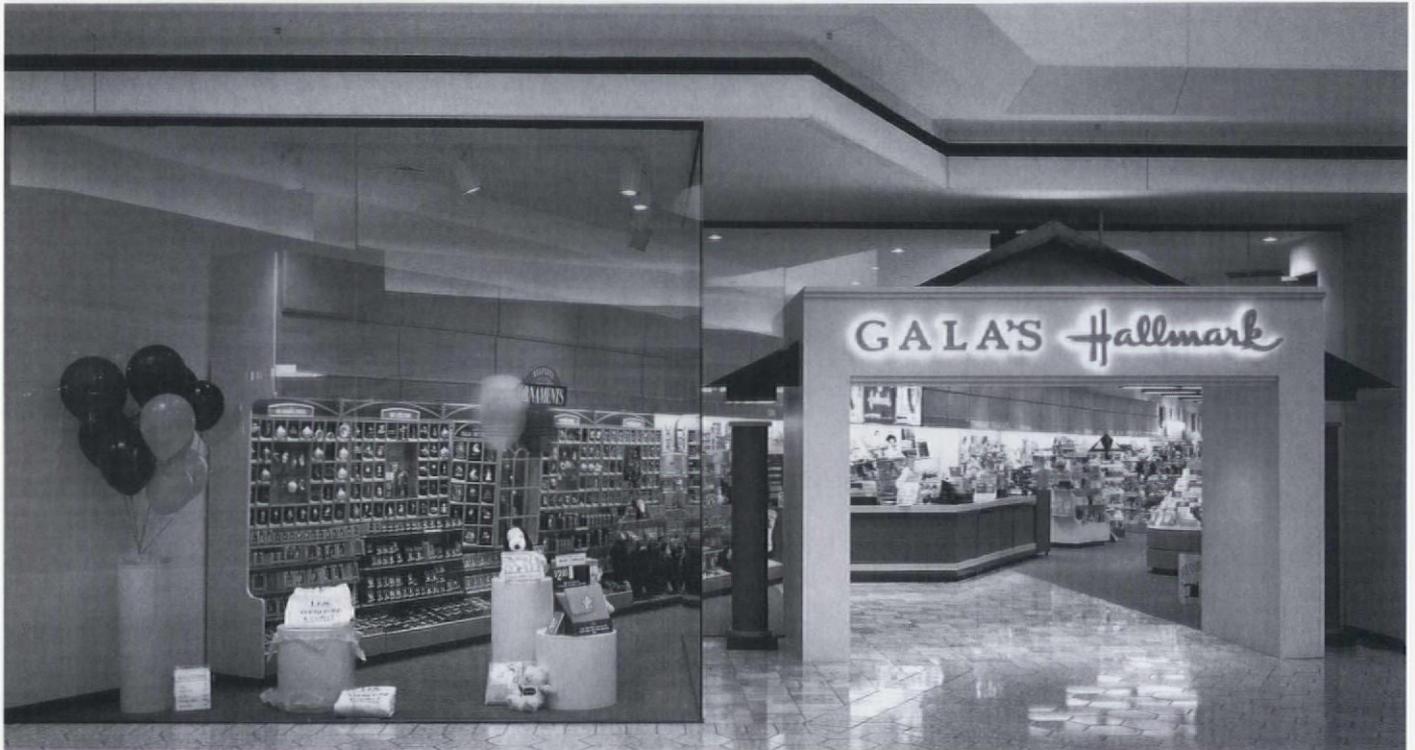
"Competition in retailing has heightened everyone's awareness of how much the store image helps retailers merchandise their products," says Joseph G. Wolf, AIA. "Our first responsibility is to attract the customer off of the mall."

Wolf is president of JWA/architects in Farmington Hills. Three projects by JWA in the Detroit area exhibit more of his firm's

philosophies toward design for tenant clients.

Simmons & Clark Jewelry in Eastland Mall has a fairly wide, open front which invites customers to browse while the rear wall is accented with lighting and architectural detail to visually attract shoppers in further. The design depends heavily on dramatic contrasts in lighting effects. By comparison, Nathan





Jewelry in Northland Mall has a relatively narrow frontage. The emphasis here is on the storefront itself, with striking geometry and lighting techniques.

Wolf's third example, Gala Hallmark in Fairlane Town Center, combines ideas from the two previous designs, with a clearly articulated entrance flanked by a full height glass display wall. The resulting controlled transparency is very welcoming.

According to Wolf, architects are uniquely equipped for these design challenges because,

by their nature, they consider the total environment, not just surfaces. Architects can be involved in finishes, graphic design, lighting, fixture design, fixture layout and special effects. "With some clients we are involved in analyzing their total merchandising approach. We are aware of the space and all the elements within it that become the merchandising package." ▼

The angled storefront provides broader exposure and transparency to an otherwise narrow space.



Projects: Simmons & Clark Jewelry*,
Harper Woods, Michigan
Nathan Jewelry*
Southfield, Michigan
Gala Hallmark**,
Dearborn, Michigan

Architect: J. Wolf Associates, Inc.
Farmington Hills, Michigan

Photography: *Carey Moscovitz
**Gunther Schabestiel

Display cases and show windows are lit and positioned to provide maximum exposure to the customer.

Bulkhead detailing, display screens, floor materials and furnishings are all used to define and control the retail space.



A.K. Rikks and Couch & Couch

Product type can have a tremendous effect on the direction of retail design. While the basic concepts for merchandising apply to just about any project type, each unique category of merchandise comes with a particular set of challenges.

Perhaps the most dramatic example is clothing. More than any other kind of merchandise, clothing is fashion sensitive. According to Steven C. Fry, AIA, learning about the client's products, customers and marketing strategies is step one.

"The designer must understand how this merchandise changes seasonally," Fry says. "This may involve merchandise type, color or

quantity changes as well as market changes. Flexibility is crucial. The architecture must be able to change to keep merchandise looking fresh, new and exciting."

Fry, President of Concept Design Group in Grand Rapids, teamed with Gretchen Minnhaar, AIA to design retail spaces for Couch & Couch Women's Fashions and A.K. Rikks Men's Fashions in Grand Rapids' downtown City Centre. Both projects respond specifically to the apparel on display. Creative display units interact with historical references to convey a message of classic quality. The designs successfully enhance the merchandise without competing with it.

"We use modularity to create order and rhythm as well as enhancing flexibility," says Fry. "Clothing or merchandise modules can be easily and quickly changed while keeping the space in order. The owner can plan for it without disrupting business."

While maximizing the display of products, the layout must also address ease of movement, visibility, customer assistance and security control. Fry believes that every leasable square foot should serve a purpose. ▼

Projects: A.K. Rikks* Grand Rapids, Michigan
Couch & Couch** Grand Rapids, Michigan
Architect/Engineer: Stephen C. Fry,
AIA - Concept Design Group &
Gretchen Minnhaar, AIA
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Photography: *William Hubbert
**John DeLong

Architectural interest at the ceiling plane helps define the character of the area below.





The architecture forms a backdrop for the merchandise, which always takes center stage.



The original grocery store, built in the 1960s, has been given a new image with the addition of 2,000 s.f.

Vic's Quality Fruit Market

If fashion is the measure of success for the clothing retailer, then freshness is the test of quality for retailers of items like garden produce, meats, fish, dairy products, baked goods and so on. Marketers of fresh foods strive to entice shoppers by building upon their expectations. The shopper must somehow be convinced that the goods are indeed as fresh as they claim to be. Of the many techniques available to the fresh food retailer, store design is one of the most effective.

A case in point is Vic's Fruit Market in Beverly Hills, Michigan. Architect Jon Sarkesian, AIA began this project by listening. Owner Vic Ventimiglia was experienced in running a successful produce market and Sarkesian, president of JSA in Royal Oak, knew his input would be essential to the design.

From any vantage point in the market, customers have views of many choices of merchandise.



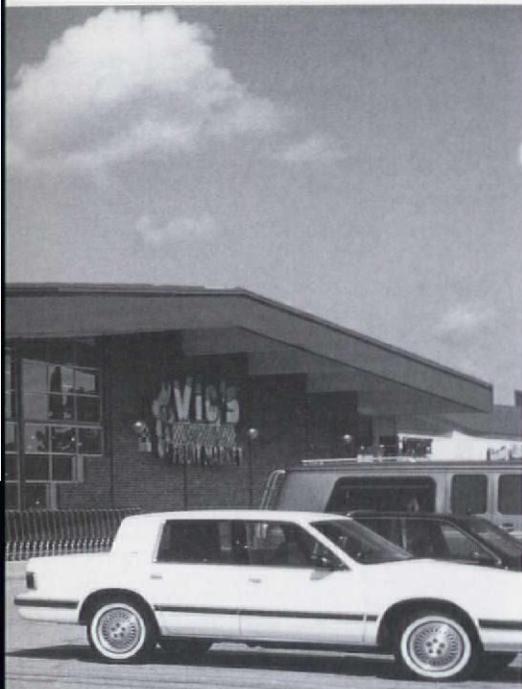
"I wanted to learn his concepts and methods of retailing in order to find a creative yet functional solution," recalls Sarkesian. "Together we worked out a scheme for an open market in the town square."

An addition of 2,000 s.f. to the original 17,500 s.f., 1960's era store offered

JSA an opportunity to enhance the exterior, using repeated metal clad roof gables and a double arched entry pavilion for a "farmers market" aesthetic. Inside, street light detailing on the columns, storefront style specialty shops and cabana covered produce islands continue the theme. Lively graphics and lighting support the concept.

According to Sarkesian, "Retail architecture should highlight the product being merchandised, not overshadow it." Architects who can do so and still make a strong design statement have served their clients well. ▼





A mix of utility and specialty lighting creates a bright interior with strong personality.



The character of the specialty shops within the market is enhanced by exciting graphic design.

Project: Vic's Quality Fruit Market
 Beverly Hills, Michigan
 Owner & Contractor: Vic Ventimiglia
 Architect: Jon Sarkesian Architects, P.C.
 Structural Engineer: Rick Widener
 Photography: Robert J. Eovaldi

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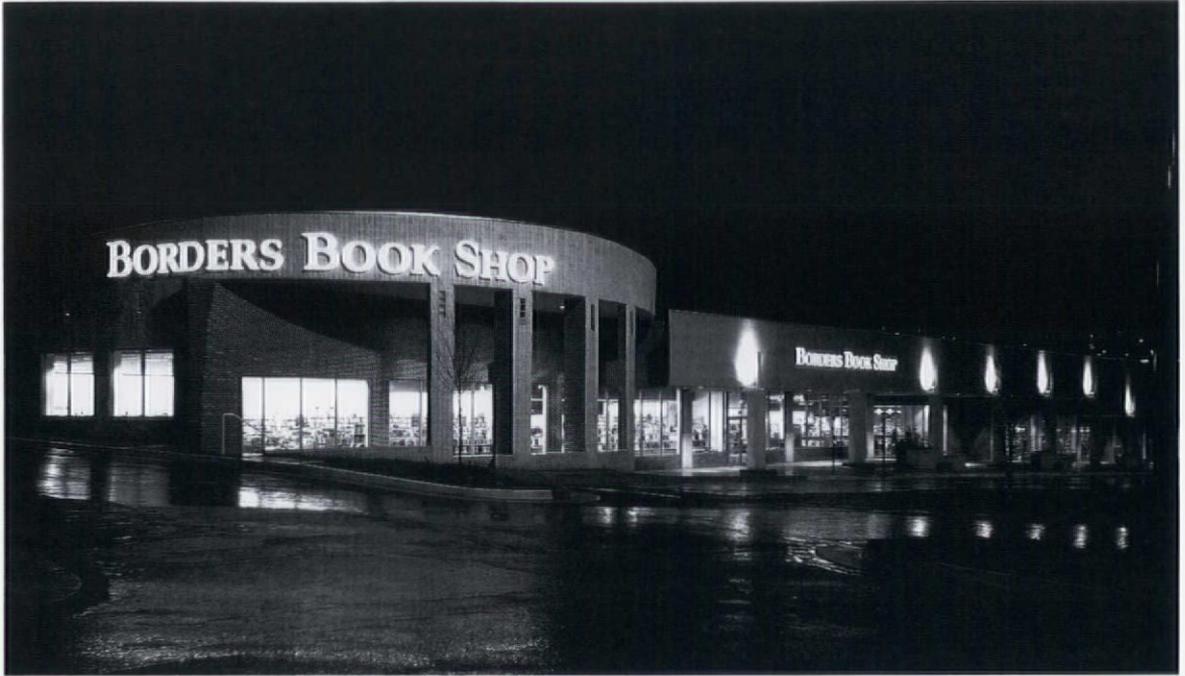
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Ceiling, floor and partition design serves to strengthen the linear movement of customers through the store.



The play of various geometric forms and a mix of lighting techniques gives the store a strong nighttime presence.

Borders Book Shop

As the previous examples have suggested, time is a key factor in successful retailing. Fashion and freshness are defined by the passage of time. An even more basic aspect of time for the retailer is the length of a customer's visit. All retailers hope to create an

environment for shopping which encourages customers to linger among the merchandise. Usually a short visit to the store is a visit without a sale. But at the moment the mind of the shopper becomes the mind of a buyer, the formula is reversed. Then the passage of time is the retailer's enemy.

The design of the store begins with a philosophy of customer service and love of books.

continues



This is especially true for the bookstore owner. Some bookstores are places that feel like libraries: relaxed, comfortable places to spend time and, hopefully, spend money. Others present a more fast-paced atmosphere of consumption, where the decision to buy is encouraged at the moment one enters the store.

Borders Book Shop fits the relaxed description. According to Lorri Sipes, AIA, "The Borders organization knows their customers well, their need to take their time and browse, their love of books. We have helped them translate this knowledge into a

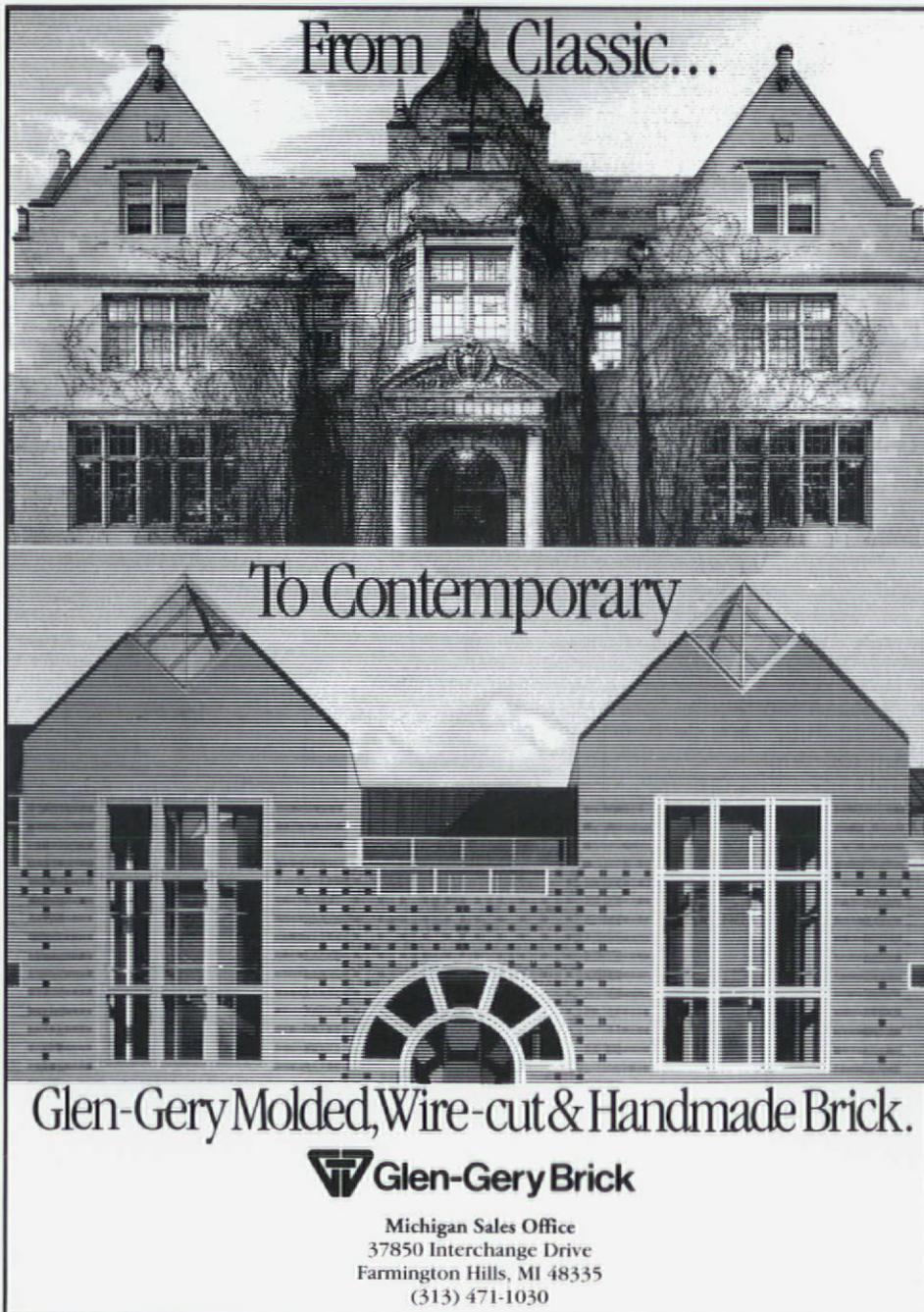
special, extremely user-friendly environment."

Sipes, of Architects Four, Inc. in Ann Arbor, explains that Borders' long time commitment to people who love books has made it an Ann Arbor tradition and a tourist attraction. Recently the company has begun to expand, building stores in several states and adding new related products and services.

Architects Four designed Borders' new 25,000 s.f. store in suburban Washington, D.C. along an interior "street." Arched portals along the street connect the main retail space with a children's area and an espresso cafe.

Sipes asserts that "designing a retail space is about customer comfort. From both a visual and organizational standpoint, the customer should feel welcome, relaxed and comfortable being there. ▼

Project: Borders Book Shop
Tysons Corner, Virginia
Architect: Architects Four, Inc.
Ann Arbor, Michigan
Contractor: Harvey Construction
Photography: Scott Sanders



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Bronco Mall

Quite often, retail facilities find their way into buildings with primary uses which are distinctly non-retail. In urban areas, the street levels of high rise office towers are frequently given over to retail purposes, feeding off the customer traffic generated by the floors above. Governmental complexes and places of public assembly will lease common area space to retail vendors as a way of generating revenue. In such cases, the architect's job is to create one environment that has the look of retail within another that doesn't. The first task with this kind of "project within a project" is to define the market, or source of customers.

At Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, until recently, visitors were leaving campus seeking products and services unavailable at University facilities. According to architect Daniel E. Durkee, AIA, the new Bronco Mall in WMU's Bernhard Student Center was created to try to capture some of this business.

"What was somewhat unique to this project," explains Durkee, "was the remoteness of the space within the building. It was important to be able to attract students and visitors into the Mall from within the building as well as from the campus at large."

continues



Sloped glass over the food court seating area welcomes as much daylight as possible into the lower level of the building.



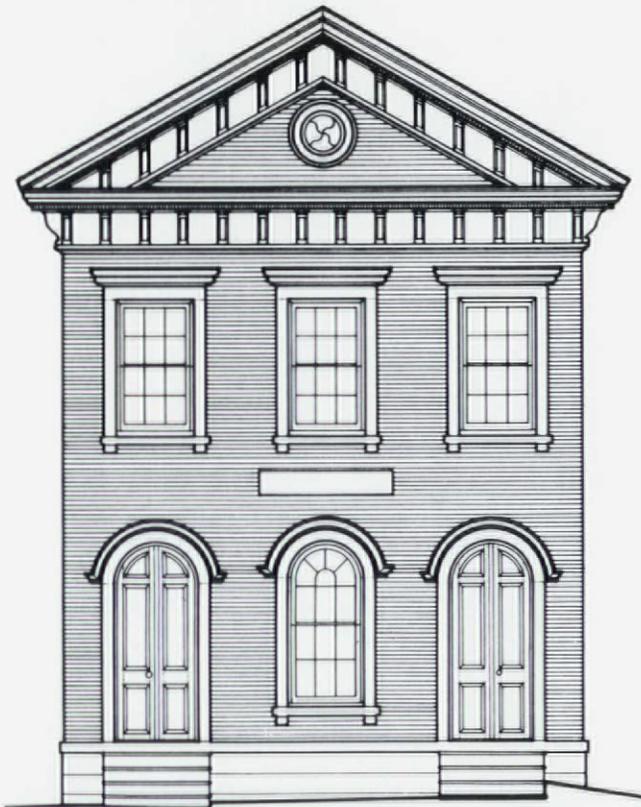
Lighting and signage at the entry indicate the presence of something exciting inside.

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Durkee, a Principal at Robert Lee Wold & Associates in Grand Rapids, points out that the proposed "basement" location represented a challenge to achieving both of these goals. In order to take full advantage of what little exposure the space had to the outside, an existing service entry was enhanced with a new canopy and marquee lighting. From within the building, a continuous blue neon "wave" was employed as a unifying element and to tease the curiosity of approaching students.

The demand for space has consistently outpaced availability.

The demand for space in Bronco Mall has consistently outpaced availability, an enviable position for any retailer. Durkee attributes much of this success to the owner. "As with all architecture," he says, "owners should be actively involved in the design process. They represent, perhaps, the greatest resource for us as designers." ▼





The blue neon "wave" is a retail signature element which connects the various shops in the mall.



A "basement" space was converted into this totally new and refreshing environment.

Project: Bronco Mall
 Western Michigan University
 Kalamazoo, Michigan
 Architect: Robert Lee Wold & Associates, Inc.
 Grand Rapids, Michigan
 Mechanical/Electrical Engineers:
 Fishbeck Thompson
 Carr & Huber
 Structural Engineer: ENTELA, Inc.
 Contractor: Kalleward Bergerson
 Photography: Dietrich Floeter

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