



CHAPTER 5. THEORETICAL CONTEXT - THE MALL LANDSCAPE





5.1 [THE MALL AND THIRD PLACE THEORY]

This chapter extends the theory of Third Places discussed in Chapter 4 and applies it to shopping malls and the mall environment. It will address a brief history of the formation of the mall, the design intent, the typical people they aim to attract and questions the mall's role as a public space. The mall environment will be tied back to the concept of the Third Place through an analysis of design interventions.

Focus will then be on Riccarton, and Riccarton mall, to look at the design, history, architectural formation and the relationship the mall has with Riccarton and the greater area.

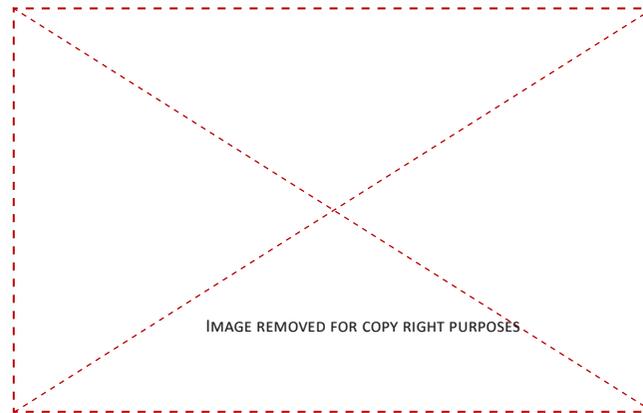
5.2 [DEFINING THE SHOPPING MALL]

Shopping centres have existed in one form or another for thousands of years: as ancient market squares, and seaport commercial districts. They were often small in scale and integrated into the local community, providing a strong sense of place that was induced through the architecture and landscaping (Goss: 1993: Pg 23). However this concept has developed over time and nowadays there are many different forms of shopping mall and many terms that describe a similar concept; from shopping mall, shopping centre, shopping arcade, shopping precinct or simply mall.

As a result any reference made to the term shopping mall in this thesis, needs to be defined. For the purpose of this thesis a definition will be adopted from R.J Batty's (2008) thesis. He defined shopping malls as "large suburban shopping malls located within major centres of New Zealand. These 'shopping malls' will typically exceed 40,000 square metres in size, and incorporate an enclosed promenade, food court, cinema complex, two or more anchor stores, specialty retail stores, visitor and information centre, shopper amenities, and free car parking, often in a parking structure" (Batty: 2008: Pg 9). The basic design for all is the same, with typically one or more buildings forming a complex of shops, with

interconnecting walkways that enable people who visit to walk from each unit and the car park with ease.

This does not mean that the ancient market squares have been disregarded as the first form of shopping mall, however for the purpose of this research and when applying to Riccarton the definition needs to be more focused on one specific mall 'typology'.



5.3 [THE EMERGENCE OF THE SHOPPING MALL]

Shopping, as an activity, and the environments in which it takes place have both undergone interesting transformations in recent decades – Batty (2008), Page14.

The development process of the Shopping Mall follows a number of social and structural growth patterns. Laurenson (2005) suggests the development of New Zealand malls can be tied with the development process in other countries, and although developing later the malls in New Zealand still experienced growth patterns similar to their British, Australian, American and European counterparts

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHOPPING MALL: (See Fig 5-1).

‘The basic concept of the centralised marketplace has been well established across cultural lines for more than a millennium’ (Hall, 2007, p.10). A number of covered arcades can be considered precursors to the present day shopping mall. Some of these arcades date back to the 15th Century, with examples such as The Grand Bazaar of Istanbul. With more the 58 streets and 4,000 shops this is one of the world’s largest covered markets and still functions as one today.

Most recently these arcades began to form in 19th Century Europe. Here arcades were enclosed spaces for people ‘to stroll and look, to idle and dawdle’ (Featherstone: 1998); they were passageways through neighbourhoods which had been covered with a glass roof and graced by marble

panels so as to create a sort of interior-exterior for vending purposes (Crickenberger: 2007). Each arcade was lined with elegant shops, so creating a “city, even a world in miniature” (Baudelaire Pg: 36-37 in Crickenberger: 2007). These arcades were so popular in London, Naples, Brussels and Milan that they were soon adopted further afield, and on the far side of the world countries like Australia embraced the concept with much enthusiasm (Westfield: 2012). An example of this is Sydney’s Queen Victoria Building built in the 1890s, featuring a series of lofty and ornate glass-roofed atriums built to house hundreds of new shops. The contemporary and sophisticated nature of the marble and iron lacework, and the chandeliers attracted crowds of people. After undergoing a series of restoration projects its owners describe it as ‘the most beautiful shopping mall in the world’ (Westfield: 2012). Stylish, ornate and protected from the elements these enclosed high streets or arcades offered diversity, interest and a fashionable place to promenade.

THE RISE IN CONSUMER CULTURE:

The United States in the latter half of the 1920s saw a significant shift in how these arcades functioned. Due to growing levels of consumer culture and the ease of spending, shopping soon become no longer a chore but a leisure activity (Batty: 2008). This coupled with the introduction

of the automobile, the improved public transport system and the growth-related pressure on the suburbs, saw the emergence of strip malls and department stores on the outskirts of cities (Kavanagh: 2000). These were under the control of one owner and usually occupied a single site that was not bisected by public streets. Gradually storefronts began to face inwards away from the streets, they were large scale with regular architecture, harsh exteriors and car focused landscapes (Kavanagh: 2000). Shephard suggests that in New Zealand import restrictions, price-fixing, suburban drift, and a call to follow American retailers, led to the development of the shopping mall in New Zealand (Shephard: 2006). From department store to shopping mall: - ***‘it seemed the larger they grew the more successful they become’*** (Laurenson: 2005: Pg 5).

THE SHIFT TOWARDS EXPERIENTIAL PROVISION

In the US from the 1900’s through to the 1950s onwards the shopping centres doubled and then tripled in size. Marketing strategies became more extravagant, car parking spaces increased, and as more housing developments occurred they were accompanied by the malls.

Soon shopping became the second most important leisure activity in North America, second to TV (Goss: 1993). It can

be argued that similar trends have been seen in New Zealand. Shopping is one of the most popular leisure activities in New Zealand, with shopping malls being characterised as the heart of the community (Shepherd: 2006). The average New Zealander spends up to 1 hour a day purchasing goods and services, with TV watching and sports, the only leisure activity taking up more time than this (Statistic New Zealand: 2012). It is not surprising to learn therefore that trips to the shopping mall have become a top 'Kiwi' recreation (Drinnan, 2006).

More recently New Zealand shopping malls, similar to their American counterparts, have begun to cater for a perceived increase in demand for exciting environments. They have begun to offer a multitude of leisure related activities such as a gym, cinema and food court, not just shopping (Batty: 2008: pg 6) (Fig 5-2 & Fig 5-3). The number of malls is ever expanding, within New Zealand, the combined space taken up by shopping malls, excluding car parking, is over 172 hectares (Shepherd, 2006), or the equivalent of over 300 football fields – and growing (Batty: 2008).

A Demand for exciting environments?



Figure [5 - 2] The provision of Cinema within Malls. Retail and entertainment as one.



Figure [5 - 3] Many Malls in New Zealand now provide a leisure component with Gym, Movies and Food court.

5.4 [THE PEOPLE OF THE MALLS. THE FLANEUR, THE SOCIAL ELEMENT OF THE PARISIAN ARCADES AND THIRD PLACES]

In order to gain a snap shot into the type of people and therefore some of the activities that are undertaken in the mall environment, research can be analysed as far as the 19th Century and the Parisian arcades.

The flâneur was the emblematic figure of urban, modern experience. Derived from the French noun *flâner*, it has the basic meanings of strolling, lounging, sauntering or loafing around. A flâneur was a man of leisure, an urban explorer and connoisseur of the street. He goes about immersing himself in the sensations of the city, 'bathing in the crowd', to become lost in feeling, at the same time noting the impressions of the city and decoding the streets through his emotional immersion (Featherstone: 1998).

Walter Benjamin, a German philosopher and social critic, described the flâneur in his *Arcades Project*, and indicated the importance of the 19th Century Arcades in Paris to the flâneur.

These arcades, constructed between 1800 and 1850, consisted of enclosed spaces for people 'to stroll and look, to idle and dawdle' (Featherstone: 1998). They were passageways through neighbourhoods which had been covered with a glass roofs so as to create a sort of interior-

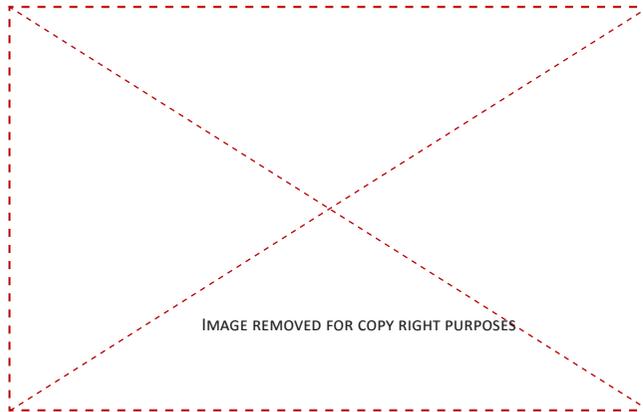


Figure [5 - 4] The flâneur. by Paul Gavarni (1842). emblematic figure of urban, modern experience.

exterior for vending purposes (Crickenberger: 2007). The flâneur has his origin in these Arcades and is completely at home in this cross between interior and exterior worlds because his own personal interior-exterior boundaries are also ambiguous (Crickenberger: 2007).

To him the shiny, enamelled signs of businesses are at least as good a wall ornament as an oil painting is to a bourgeois in his salon. The walls are the desk against which he presses his notebooks; news-stands are his libraries and the terraces of cafés are the balconies from which he looks down on his household after his work is done. (Baudelaire: Pg 37 cited in Crickenberger: 2007)

From a social point of view, the main components of the flâneur and the arcades of Paris was the relationship between the flâneur and the residents of the city. In one aspect he

moved through the space unnoticed, just another face in the crowd. However Featherstone (1998) suggests that “others spotted him as a social type; most likely he was well-known to the cab-drivers, office messengers, newspaper sellers, flower girls, the prostitutes and the homeless, who worked and lived on the streets” (Featherstone: 1998: Pg 113). The flâneur addressed everyone on the street, even strangers and was known to have a strong relationship with people in the arcades.

It is interesting to note that these arcades had the potential to be inhabited by all members of the public, from the rich upper class to the beggars and homeless, the individual was the important component in making up the social element of the crowd.

Walter Benjamin writes, as consumer culture developed from the arcades to the ‘dream palaces’ of the department stores around the mid 19th Century so too came the decline of the flâneur. With the development of the city, the introduction of rail, the narrowing of footpaths, the introduction of large department stores and boulevards, not only did the city become harder to read but a different type of person was brought into the city (Featherstone: 1998). Benjamin described this person as the ‘badaud’, the mere gaper, who becomes intoxicated by the urban scene to the extent that he forgets himself (Benjamin: 1973: p.69).

However, Featherstone (1998) suggests that department stores did not cause the decline of the flâneur but it manifested itself into something different.

Flâneur / flaneuse = shopper = (post)modern self.

Featherstone (1998) argued that as the flâneur experienced all the pleasures and frustrations of the voyeur, he was interested in people and consuming the experiences that passed in front of him and that these careful observations, immersion in sensations and civil inattentiveness may occur in contemporary women shoppers. That the shopping centers today are “designed to be, and are used, as places of sociability and association; people walk around, look, talk, joke and are engaged in forms of display” (Featherstone: 1998: Pg 116).

However, as mentioned earlier, the arcades of the 19th Century in Paris were frequented by all levels of society from the rich, middleclass to the prostitutes, flower girls and homeless. They were therefore the epitome of Third Places not only because of their social elements but they were “in-between” areas that people could occupy. People of any class could use them, compared to today’s modern day malls that are only frequented by the predominantly wealthy, consumer driven culture.



5.5 [SO HOW IS THE WAY MALLS ARE DESIGNED RELATED TO THE DESIGN OF THIRD PLACES?]

As mentioned previously malls are designed in order to make people feel comfortable. As one of the most predominant social activities the way malls are designed is becoming an art in itself. Mason (2010) developed a series of criteria that looked at the design of Malls. When these criteria are compared to the criteria already established on the design of Third Places (chapter 4) there are strong similarities (Figure 5-5, Pg 107). (A full detailed analysis of this comparison, and descriptions of each of Mason's criteria is available in Appendix - See Appendix Table 5-1: Pg 199).

Goss (1993) indicates that the need to design mall environments to positively affect the shopper has resulted in retailers creating shops as idealised representations of past or distant public spaces. This therefore raises the question ***'can the mall environment act as the Third Place for Landscape Architecture?'***

Mason (2010) Architectural design criteria for Malls.

Design Criteria for third spaces
(Established chapter 4).

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SCALE
TENANT MIX



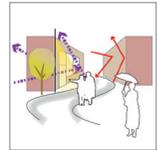
→ 1. ARCHITECTURAL RELATIONSHIP



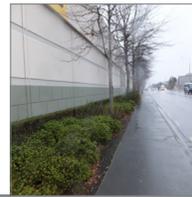
TRANSPARENCY
PERMEABILITY AND POROSITY



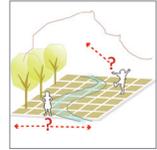
→ 2. PERMEABILITY FACTORS



SIGNAGE ADVERTISING



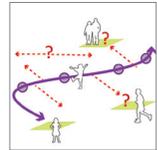
→ 3. LEGIBILITY



ENTRY
ENTICEMENT
VISUAL CUEING
FLOOR PLAN
MATERIALITY



→ 4. LINKAGES AND SEQUENCING



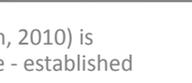
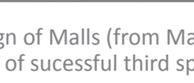
CLEANLINESS
LIGHTING



→ 5. SAFETY CONTROL



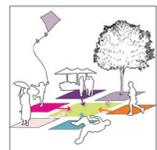
REDUCED AFFORDANCE
ORIENTATION
NATURAL CONNECTION
TIME
ART / ORNAMENTATION



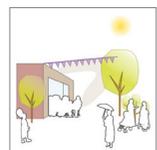
6. ACTIVITIES



7. HYBRIDITY AND ADAPTABILITY



→ 8. COMFORT & PERSONALISATION



9. THE EXPERIENTIAL LANDSCAPE



Figure [5 -5] The Criteria for the Architectural Design of Malls (from Mason, 2010) is compared against the criteria for the development of successful third space - established in Chapter 4 .

5.6 RICCARTON MALL

Figure 5-5 shows the significant correlation between how malls are designed and the design criteria of successful Third Places that was developed earlier in Chapter 4.

The intentions of the mall designers are to enable people to feel comfortable and attract them to place, similar in many ways to the way landscape architects design Third Places. The malls are even designed with the key elements that make the outside environment popular and unique (for example, sunlight and natural connection through planting). Malls appear on the surface to work as ‘havens of sociability’, and therefore successful Third Places. However more analysis is needed to develop this concept of the shopping mall as a Third Place.

The second half of this chapter will now focus on Riccarton Mall, Christchurch. It will analyse the history, form and design interventions and analyses the Malls role as a Third Place for Riccarton.



5.6 RICCARTON MALL



5.6 [RICCARTON MALL]

As mentioned previously, when applying theoretical understanding to place, there is a need to establish the nature of the area and its character. The following section contextualises Riccarton Mall, its history, design intent and relationship to the landscape.

5.7 [HISTORY & FUNCTION]

Westfield Riccarton (Riccarton Mall) is a large retail complex located in Christchurch, New Zealand. It now has a total of 170 stores, with many of the shops selling fashion and a large percentage of the other space being taken up by food courts and entertainment facilities.

Riccarton Mall was first open in 1965 and is Christchurch's oldest shopping centre. In 2003 the mall underwent a \$90 million redevelopment, focused heavily around a leisure component with the introduction of cinema, and gym development. Following this, in 2009, the mall opened a new \$75 million expansion increasing the overall size to 54,000 sqm and making it New Zealand's third largest mall by retail space at that time (Wilson: 2009, Voxy: 2009, Westfield: 2008) (Fig 5-6). Riccarton mall was 'rebranded'

Westfield Riccarton shortly after the renovation. This name highlights the impact the homogenous effect of the generic multi-national brand. The Westfield brand has investment interests in 124 shopping centres across Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Brazil, encompassing around 25,000 retail outlets and its total assets under management in excess of A\$59 billion (Westfield: 2012b).

In 2006 before the last expansion, Riccarton mall has an annual pedestrian count of 8,678,000 people and an annual turnover of \$261,536,000 (Property Council, 2006). This pedestrian count is significant when compared to the 383,887 visitors Canterbury Museum receives each year (Canterbury Museum: 2011).

The mall is a large footprint within Riccarton suburb, and is a major focus node for Riccarton and the surrounding City. This has been further highlighted by the recent Canterbury earthquakes with revenue increasing by 16.3% due to the lack of damage in Riccarton (Fairfax: 2012).

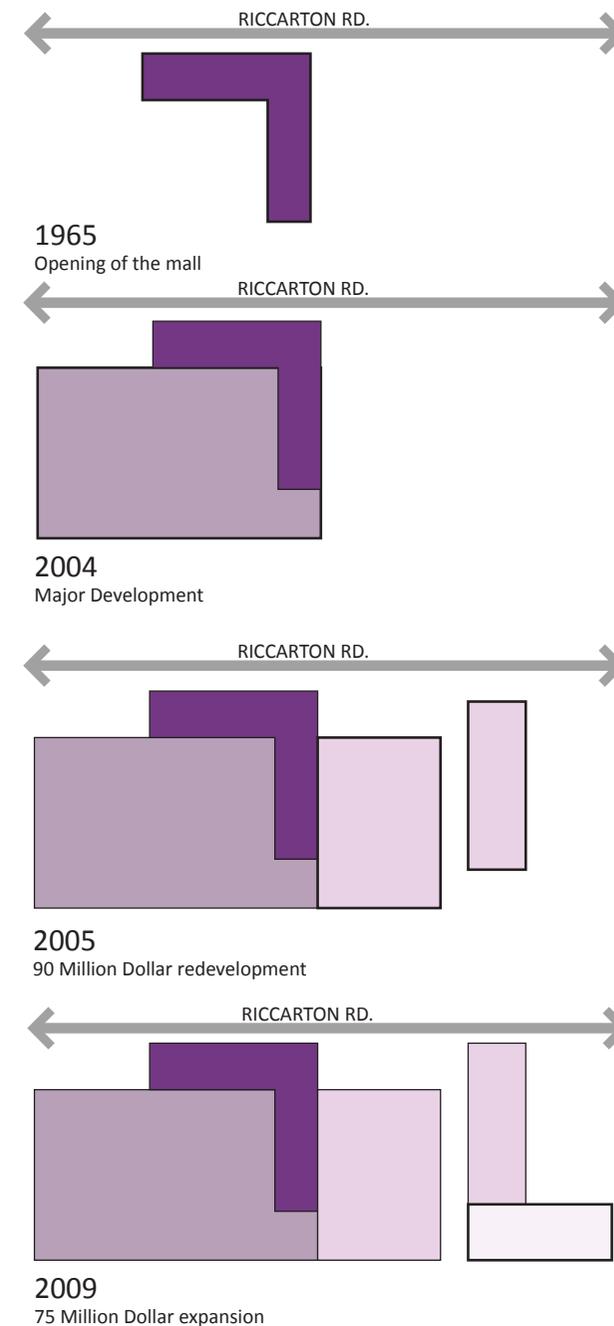


Figure [5 - 6] Schematic Concept - the staging development of Riccarton Mall.

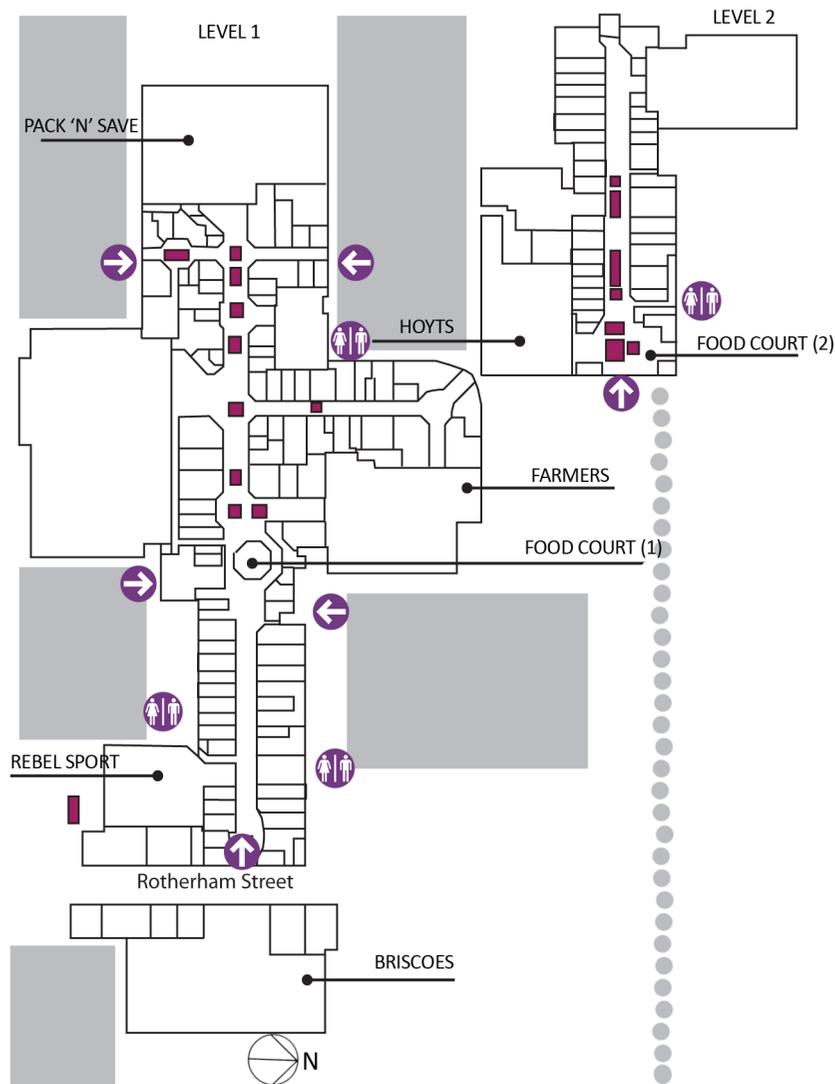


Figure [5 - 7] Floor Plan - Levels 1 and 2 - Riccarton Mall.



Figure [5 -8] Food Court (1)



Figure [5 -9] Rotherham Street.



Figure [5 -10] Multistorey development

5.10 [ACTIVITIES “RETAIL AS ENTERTAINMENT”]

The main aim of the mall is to attract people and keep them coming back. The mall is seen to act as a vacuum on the streetscape – luring people away from the streets, based on the comfort factors such as a shops, heat, atmosphere and seating (Fig 5-14). This is not surprising, as on analysis the surrounding urban design of Riccarton shows it lacks many basic amenities, and comes across as a very noisy, busy and unsafe environment (Fig 5-15). There are limited numbers of seating, often with poor aspects and designed to a poor standard. The levels of maintenance is lower than in the mall and traffic is a significant safety issue.

Malls are often described as the Vaticans of shiny happy consumerism (Dery: 2009) and Riccarton mall certainly meets this in more than one aspect. The design of the mall - from the sofas, street like walkways, sheltering people from the environment appears almost as if people are seduced. Consumer behaviour and shopping is effectively monitored into a stage-managed experience, focused as a place for consumerism and social activities. It is not a place where people come to seek basic amenities [excluding Pak n Save supermarket]. Many of the shops sell clothing (82%), with little to no other basic amenities like small grocery stores, small family owned business, or health services.

Even something as seemingly belonging in the open air is brought inside at Riccarton, as it has a ‘walking club’. Here,

members of the public sign up to do walking and exercise routines. They meet at Muffin Break at 7:45am on a Tuesday and Thursday morning and walk up and down the mall making several routes and always turning at the door before you get to the ‘outside world’. People never leave the perimeter. The benefit – get fit and also enjoy store discount if you sign up. (Fig 5 -16).

5.11 [DESIGN STRATEGIES TO COMBAT MALLS]

Usually a flourishing mall has an influence on its surroundings, for example the surrounding strip shopping, fast food restaurants, banks and entertainment venues also thrive. However in Riccarton this symbiotic effect is not evident. So much so infact that despite the mall there were a number of empty shops prior to the earthquakes, up until recently (with many boutique shops damaged in the central city due to earthquakes) many of the shops down Riccarton Road where closed or poorly performing.

Predictably, given the impact of shopping malls on suburban form and retail behaviour, there has been a lot of research looking at the problems of malls and the impacts they have on the surrounding landscape. The responsible and sustainable way to deal with sprawl is neither to abandon it nor to continue building in the same pattern, but to re-use and reorganise as much of it all possible into complete, liveable, robust, communities.



Figure [5 -14] Comfort Items of the mall. Seating, shelter, controlled climate.



Figure [5 -15] Surrounding environment of Riccarton. Busy, noisy and unsafe.



Figure [5 -16] Welcome to Riccarton Mall Walking Club.

Suggested design strategies include ‘sprawl repairs’; visionary and proactive retrofitting of the land and mall buildings (Tachieva: 2010) (Fig 5-17). However Westfield Mall at present is the largest mall in Christchurch and currently shows little sign of decline to incorporate many of the mixed use retrofitted elements suggested in this theory. However there are opportunities to encourage greater interaction between the mall and the surrounding streetscape, to harness the ‘magnet’ nature of the mall and draw customers out into the Riccarton to benefit the whole community.

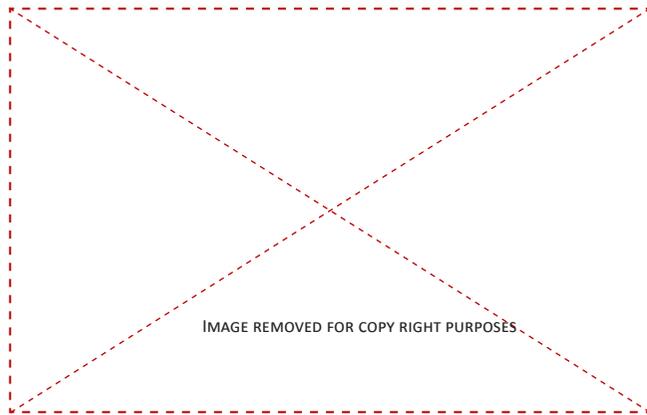


Figure [5 -17] Sprawl Repair. Image adapted from Tachieva, (2010) Shows existing shopping centre and ‘repaired’ mixed-use centre.

5.12 [RICCARTON THIRD PLACES? OR THE MALL AS THE THIRD PLACE?]

THE DESIGN ELEMENT

Analysis of the Third Places in Riccarton indicates a deficiency in the area surrounding the mall. However if these findings were to include spaces within the mall then this may be seen as available Third Places. The key difference in this comparison is the public / private debate of the mall environment and the lack of connectivity it has with the surrounding landscape.

PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SPACE?

One of the most notable things about mall environment is the political nature of space and the overarching ability of the environment to control the space. By virtue of their scale, design and function shopping centres appear to be public spaces in that they are more or less open to anyone and they are safe, monitoring the ‘scary’ aspects of society (Goss: 1993: Pg 25).

Yet in reality this is not true. Malls are not accessible to all, they tend to serve and provide space for the ‘credit card elite’ (Ibid). You would not tend to find homeless people or buskers using the space. Although the mall is designed to look purposely like a shopping street with the inwards facing design and street-like space it is in fact a very private space in which every move people make is being monitored. They are a “designed environment” where people experience a loss of moral conviction, authenticity, spontaneity and community.

5.13 [SUMMARY]

THEREFORE HOW TO COMBINE THE TWO?

This chapter identifies the history of malls, and in particular focuses on the Westfield Mall of Riccarton. It is evident from this research it is a key component to the built form of Riccarton, due to its status and size; and there is no conceivable way to remove it from the landscape. The malls themselves appear to be designed to work as social environments and in turn Third Places, However levels of monitoring and security mean some people are excluded from this landscape.

Therefore more needs to be done to look at how the design of a mall environment works in relation to external third spaces. ***How as landscape architects we can incorporate the magnet of the mall environment whilst still designing successful Third Places?*** and ***do these mall environments according to the criteria developed in Chapter 3 of this research provide the Third Place for Landscape Architecture?***

Chapter 6 will assess the criteria developed in chapter 4 and 5 of this thesis against a series of case study sites in order to establish ***‘what is the ideal form for the Third Places of Riccarton?’***