

MODERN SHOPPING MALLS IN THE USA AND EUROPE – OUTLINE

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Abstract

The shopping centers in the USA have undergone the process of evolution in accordance with the economic and social growth. The biggest impact on their emergence and further growth in the first part of the 20th century was exerted by the popularization of cars, changes in the density of urban and suburban populations, expansion of the commercial media (television, radio, glossy magazines) which facilitated access to wide public and different social groups and opportunities for creating needs, for advertising and developing brands. In comparison with the USA, shopping malls in Europe developed in relatively different conditions: density of population, more urbanized areas, characteristic compact settlements of towns and cities – all these factors imposed other architectural solutions on designers and investors. The first malls sprang up in France and England in the form of shopping passages and commercial streets with stands and stores covered by one roof at the end of the 18th century. Modern multi-spatial malls in North America and Europe do not much differ in terms of their spatial aspects. The differences stem from the cultural conditions and involve, in most cases, their specific functional program, but not the functioning manner. It should be emphasized that both in North America and in Europe, the impact of multi-spatial shopping malls on the surrounding space is increasing.

Streszczenie

Centra handlowo-usługowe w Stanach Zjednoczonych ewoluowały (i nadal ewoluują) adekwatnie do rozwoju gospodarczego i społecznego. Na powstanie i funkcjonowanie centrów handlowych na kontynencie północnoamerykańskim największy wpływ miało pojawienie się, a w przeciągu I połowy XX. wieku rozpowszechnienie nowego środka komunikacji – samochodu, zmiany koncentracji populacji mieszkańców miast i przedmieść, pojawienie się komercyjnych mediów (telewizji, radio, kolorowych magazynów), za pomocą których uzyskano dostęp do szerokich warstw społecznych i możliwość efektywnego kreowania potrzeb, reklama, a także powstanie marek produktów. Centra handlowo-usługowe współczesnej Europy powstawały, w stosunku do centrów w Stanach Zjednoczonych, w nieco innych warunkach; większa gęstość zaludnienia, wyższy stopień rozwoju urbanistycznego oraz charakterystyczna, gęsta zabudowa miast wymusiły na projektantach i inwestorach poszukiwanie innych rozwiązań architektonicznych. Pierwsze współczesne centra handlowe zaczęły powstawać we Francji i w Anglii w formie pasaży, czyli uliczek handlowych z kramami i sklepami, przekrytych zadaszeniem, już pod koniec XVIII wieku, natomiast nowoczesne wielokubaturowe centra handlowo-usługowe Ameryki Północnej i Europy pod względem przestrzennym różnią się od siebie obecnie w stosunkowo niewielkim stopniu. Występujące pomiędzy nimi różnice związane są z uwarunkowaniami kulturowymi i dotyczą one przede wszystkim ich szczegółowego programu użytkowego, a w mniejszym stopniu sposobu funkcjonowania. Podkreślić należy, iż zarówno w Ameryce Północnej, jak i w Europie, wpływ centrów handlowo-usługowych na otoczenie stale rośnie.

Keywords: History of shopping malls; Architecture of malls; Shopping space; Economic and social factors.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF SHOPPING MALLS IN THE USA

Market Square built in Chicago (Illinois) in 1916 [1] was the project that changed the perception of shopping centres in the USA, until then they had been considered to be complexes of commercial and service units emerging at one specific site over a period of several years. However, Market Square, designed by *A. Aldis* was the first planned shopping district, erected as an integrated functional and spatial unit including 28 shops, 12 separate offices, 30 apartments and parking places.



Figure 1.
Country Club Plaza at night, Kansas City
Source: en.wikipedia.org dated 09.02.08

The first big shopping centre – Country Club Plaza (Fig. 4) was built in the USA, in 1922, as an entire functional program that previously could be found only in urban shop complexes. [2] The store block, located about 6.5 km south of Kansas City (Missouri), occupies 223 000 square feet and constitutes a separate functional entity, accessible only by vehicle transport. The functional concept of the mall, assuming a complex of commercial buildings that resemble an urban district was developed by *J.C. Nichols*, but the design architect of Country Club Plaza was *E.B. Delk*. Parking lots, unlike later solutions, were placed under the stairs, on the roofs accessible, first and foremost, to pedestrians. Country Club Plaza is a reference to Spanish architecture (Seville); but the lighting of the streets and buildings resemble San Francisco.

The highest unit within Country Club Plaza is Giralda Tower, a direct allusion to the Cathedral in Seville. The centre is also the first one where the rates for tenants were based on the percentage of their total revenues. [3]

In the late 1920s, due to traffic hold-ups caused by increasing traffic congestion, the construction of small strip shopping malls located on the outskirts of towns and cities began. They were anchored by supermarkets or department stores as well as by convenience stores and they had a characteristic strip arrangement of shops and parking places located next to the entrance. A typical example of such a solution is Grandview Avenue Shopping Centre in Columbus (Ohio), which originally consisted of 30 shops.

In 1932 H. Prather opened up Highland Park Shopping Village on the outskirts of Dallas, which was the second planned and integrated mall in the USA. [4] Occupying the surface of 18 600 m², it had an inner parking lot in the central part surrounded by 64 shops. The front facades of the shops were turned backward to the streets encircling the mall and facing parking lot.



Figure 2.
Highland Park Shopping Village, Dallas
Source: www.hpillage.com dated 13.02.08

Even before the end of World War Two (in 1944) the US Federal Government enacted the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, which guaranteed low interest loans to war veterans, granted for the purchase of cars, houses and small businesses. As a result, migrations from downtown zones to the suburbia increased, creating favorable conditions for the growth of shopping malls located outside city centers. At the same time, a tremendous spread of the popularity of television (starting with 1947-1948), a very effective advertising medium, contributed to increased demand for consumer goods. Hence, the need of constructing new type shopping malls that could face the growing demand and new social and economic circumstances. In the meantime, in 1947 the US Urban Land Institute set forth standards for planning and designing shopping centers located in

the USA. The first modern regional mall, opened up in 1950 was Northgate Shopping Centre in Seattle, anchored by the investor and providing floor areas for tenants.



Figure 3.
Northgate Shopping Centre, Seattle
Source: en.wikipedia.org dated 15.02.08

Thus, the main investor – Allied Stores – started up construction of the chain of multi-spatial shopping malls. The design architect, *John Graham Jr.*, proposed a relatively simple functional layout on 91 000 m², with about 125 small shops and 5 anchors located on both sides of the pedestrian walkway. Accordingly, Northgate Shopping Center became a template for successive investors.

The principles and rules of shopping malls design were broken in 1956 by *D. Hudson*, who opened up Southdale Mall in Edina, on the outskirts of Minneapolis. Designed by Victor Gruen & Associates [5], the mall has two big commercial zones and two floors occupied by over 120 shops belonging to tenants. It also accommodates office facilities, medical units and apartments.



Figure 4.
Southdale Mall, Edina; Source: en.wikipedia.dated 15.02.08

The entire complex, occupying about 120 700 m², is covered by roofs and fully enclosed, equipped with heating and air conditioning systems, providing com-

fortable and convenient conditions for shopping all year round. To secure easy access to the shops located on both floors, the parking lot is divided into two parts, one on each floor, with lifts located in the central part of the commercial space. Thanks to a lot of glazing surfaces, customers could observe office workers on higher floors. Both commercial parts on the higher floor had a clothing part, which compelled smaller tenants to locate their cloth and shoe outlets also on the same floor. [6] Southdale Mall in Edina is regarded to be the first US mall that was the ultimate contribution to the decision of moving commercial and shopping services from the city centers to their suburbs.



Figure 5.
Midtown Plaza, Rochester – McCurdy's
Source: www.rochesterdowntown.com dated 15.02.08



Figure 6.
Midtown Plaza, Rochester – B. Forman department store
Source: www.rochesterdowntown.com dated 15.02.08

To increase sales, in 1957 *J.C. Penney* chain introduced attractive loans for customers, targeted, first and foremost, at newly married couples, and resulting in a big commercial success. Quickly and easily available loans became a part of the services offered by

shopping malls, which, again, contributed to better sales. In response to an increasing role of shopping centers in the social and economic life, International Council of Shopping Centers was founded in the same year. Since that time it has been the most important forum for discussion and experiences exchange among developers, and, on the other hand, for creating new standards in this field.

Unprecedented economic growth in the USA in the 1960s and 1970s triggered rapid expansion of shopping centers and department chains. In 1970 there were already 11 580 malls of various sizes, but of similar functional layouts. Bigger and bigger facilities were constructed by American developers, some of them, on experimental grounds, were assumed even at the design stage as modern city centers. At the same time, it was recognized that big malls may contribute to urban revitalization. In 1962 *Victor Gruen*, well known for his previous works and projects, designed the downtown Midtown Plaza in Rochester (New York), which positively affected the revitalization of the urban tissue.



Figure 7.
Water Tower Place, the center of Chicago
Source: en.wikipedia.org dated 15.02.08

Revitalization plan included, among other assumptions, reconstruction of the neighboring office buildings, shops and auditoria. By means of a wide pedestrian walkway two anchors (*McCurdy's* and *B. Forman*)

were connected. [7] The structure of the mall as such was partly supported by the encircling 7-storey office buildings, and functionally joined to them by means of a multi-floor system of walkways. The building, which was a novel solution focused on revitalization of cities has received many awards and has become a place of pilgrimage for many American urban planners and architects who face similar design tasks.

Water Tower Place is the first vertical shopping mall in the USA constructed by Urban Retail Properties in 1975 in Chicago. It contains 74 floors with total square area of 70 500 m². The height of the building is 262 m, currently it is rated as the sixth tallest building in the USA. The anchors, designed by *Loebl, Schlossman & Hackl* were chosen to be Lord & Taylor and Marshall Field's. The interiors of Water Tower Place hold 8 levels offering commercial functions, including, apart from the anchors, over 100 retail outlets and connected with the luxurious Ritz-Carlton hotel (apartments, offices and several catering points) by centrally situated panoramic lifts. When constructed, the mall was the tallest building in the world made of ferroconcrete. Its façade was lined with grey marble. The erection of this building had a very positive influence on changes in the whole district – acting as a new center of its social and commercial life. [8] After 25 years of its existence, in 2001 Water Tower Place was subjected to renovation works including closure of the arcade from the side of North Michigan Avenue, extension for new commercial space and refurbishment of vertical communication routes and the fountains.

The 1980s and the 1990s in the USA were marked by big consolidations of commercial and shopping centers. Accordingly, nowadays most of the malls belong to few owners. Also, two main developmental directions emerged: the first one involving reconstruction and revitalization of urban zones, for example: Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles, Lower East Side in New York, Manayunk in Philadelphia; the other one assuming the construction of multi-spatial centers with a complete functional program and several anchors. An excellent example of such type of malls is Aventura Mall, erected by Oxford Developments in 1983 in Aventura, Florida. The total square area of the mall comprises 233 000 square meters (initially anchored by four chains: Sears, Lord & Taylor, J.C. Penny and Macy's, nowadays by: Bloomingdale's, Macy's, Macy's Men Home Furniture, J.C. Penney and Sears), which makes it the sixth biggest mall in the USA, with 250 shops located on three floors (the

fourth floor holds only offices), and 10 000 parking spaces. The mall is located next to the sea and, unlike other centers, has pedestrian walkway connection to the neighboring beach. [9]



Figure 8.
Aventura Mall in Aventura, Florida
Source:en.wikipedia.org dated 15.02.08

During the last 20 years it has also been recognized that better insight into the interaction between the shopping mall and its customers and higher quality of customer service contribute to the improvement of social bonds in a given area. [10] At the same time, the need of making their architecture more individual has been identified [11], and it is in view of these circumstances and in consideration of another very important financial aspect that new shopping malls are nowadays designed and managed.

2. SHOPPING MALLS IN EUROPE – OUTLINE

The first modern shopping centres in Europe – passages – were generally created on newly demarcated lots along streets where only pedestrian traffic was allowed. Such template, at first made and implemented in Paris, was next adopted in London, and, subsequently, in other major European cities. [12] One of the first such shopping gallery was Vivienne in Paris, 176 m long, and 3 m high, constructed in 1823. However, it is Vittorio Emmanuelle II in Milan, designed by *Giuseppe Mengoni*, an Italian architect, that had the biggest impact on the architecture of next shopping centers. [13] The street passage was covered by a steel and glass arcade, whereas the central part of the gallery by an octagonal glazed dome. Such architectural solution greatly influenced other commercial facilities in many European countries.



Figure 9.
Gallery Vivienne, Paris (built in 1823)
Source: www.hberlioz.com dated 16.02.08



Figure 10.
Gallery Vittorio Emanuele II, Milan (built in 1877)
Source: en.wikipedia.org dated 28.02.08

In Eastern Europe the first shopping center was the Saint Petersburg Passage opened up in 1848 and targeted at well-to-do customers. The central street of the Passage was 180 m long and had shops placed on two higher floors, whereas the ground floor accommodated office facilities (there was also one more subsurface level).



Figure 11.
Saint Petersburg Passage right after the 1902 renovation works that had to be executed after the fire
Source: en.wikipedia.org dated 28.02.08

The Passage was the first facility in Russia that was lighted by gas lamps. It was designed to serve not only commercial functions, but also social and cultural ones, including a museum of anatomy, wax figures museum and even a small zoo.

Further popularization of shopping passages was triggered by the use of steel in roof structures, thanks to which existing small shopping centers expanded into huge complexes, incorporating even the whole network of shopping streets. In the 19th century two new types of multi-spatial facilities emerged: big department stores and trade halls. [14] Au Bon Marche erected in 1874 is considered to be the first department store in Europe. The multi-floor building was designed and constructed only for retail outlets. Its offer was targeted at a specific social status profile, yet, the manner of displaying goods (used for the first time), customer service and functional layout have practically been preserved to date. Such type of shopping malls was quickly adopted in all European countries.

Great Britain was the forerunner of the construction of multi-spatial shopping halls, built, first and foremost, to meet the demand for food products. The

novelty of the shopping halls did not involve unusual construction solutions, as the same methods proved in the case of shopping passages were used. However, essential new concept was an attempt to concentrate the trade on one type of goods (food) at one specific point. The floors of the halls were tiled with clinker, the walls with tiles or terracotta. To avoid undesirable penetration of smells, specific food branches, if possible, were located separately. A typical feature of the shopping hall was a huge roof structure, made from steel and glass, providing very good lighting of the entire commercial floor area. [15] The first multi-spatial shopping hall was St. John's Market in Liverpool, designed in 1822 roku by *J. Foster*, who used wood for roofing the 8 000 m² of the trade area, yet, with cast iron supports. Pretty soon, similar solutions were adopted all over Great Britain.

Shopping passages, department stores and trade halls may be considered as direct forerunners of modern multi-spatial malls in Europe, yet, the biggest impact on their form and functional organization was exerted by North American examples. The first instance of adaptation of American concept of an open-air mall is the Christ Church Market, constructed in 1951 in London under the auspices of the British Festival and designed as one integral investment. The site houses different types of shops, cafes and the clock tower.

Undoubtedly, one of the first modern shopping centers on the Continent was Ausstellungs- und Einkaufs-Zentrum (AEZ) in Vienna, opened up in 1957. Designed by *Joseph Wohnart* it had 1010 parking places on the fourth and unroofed fifth floor where cars were transported [16] by means of a lift. Unlike previously constructed facilities, it did not have any anchors.



Figure 12.
Ausstellungs- und Einkaufs-Zentrum in Vienna
Source: www.bezirksmuseum.at dated 26.02.08
Source: en.wikipedia.org dated 28.02.08

Thanks to the interference of local authorities, modern shopping malls in France and Germany, and, in the successive years, in other European countries,

were constructed, just like in the USA, on the outskirts of towns and cities. But, the main reason for such location was not excess traffic congestion and overload, but the fear of the impossibility of facing such strong competitive offers by small conventional stores. Hence, the first modern shopping mall in Germany, Main-Taunus-Zentrum (MTZ), was opened up in 1964 on the peripheries of Frankfurt/Menn (Sulzbach), next to A66 motorway. The total floor area is about 79.000 m² and includes almost 100 retail shops. The parking lot was designed to hold about 4000 vehicles.



Figure 13.
The first German shopping mall – Main-Taunus-Zentrum on the peripheries of Frankfurt/ Menn
Source: de.wikipedia.org dated 24.02.08

In the aftermath of Carrefour group success, other companies initiated construction of hypermarkets and supermarkets chains. French E. Leclerc undertook opening of its first hypermarket as early as in 1964, after the reconstruction of Landerneau supermarket. Four years later, Tesco ventured into opening up its first hypermarket in Crawley (England, West Sussex). Accordingly, most of the successive hypermarkets, contrary to their Sainte-Geneviève-des-Bois template, were located as anchors in big shopping malls. Consequently, detached hypermarkets were losing their popularity, with the exception of chains whose main strategy was low prices (Tesco). Due to high costs of constructing big shopping malls, chain companies that previously invested in hypermarkets, supermarkets and shops with relatively limited floor area took over in the 1960s the majority of such investments both in Europe and in the USA.

The first shopping mall opened up in Great Britain in 1967 was the outcome of the second phase of building a town for about 50 000 inhabitants, the last phase of which was completed in 2005; however, all planning assumptions were never implemented. It should be emphasized that currently Cumbernauld (Scotland) is an integral element of the urban tissue. Cumbernauld and its shopping center are considered as one of the sixth key post-war architectural heritage sites.

A forerunning company that made a decision to conduct sales in hypermarkets in Europe was the French Carrefour (the first hypermarket was opened up in the USA – Meijer Thrifty Acres, in Grand Rapids (Michigan) one year before). The first of the two chain stores that opened up in 1963 was Sainte-Geneviève-des-Bois detached hypermarket building near Paris. It covered about 2 500 m² and offered 400 parking spaces. In spite of its relatively modest cubic capacity, it was the first European mall with a functional program, typical of most hypermarkets built afterwards in Europe in the successive years. [17]



Figure 14.
The first Carrefour hypermarket, Sainte-Geneviève-des-Bois near Paris, France
Source: www.carrefour.com dated 17.02.08



Figure 15.
Eastern façade of Cumbernauld Shopping Center
Source: en.wikipedia.org dated 03.08.08



Figure 16.
Western façade of Cumbernauld Shopping Center
Source: en.wikipedia.org dated 03.08.08

Development of shopping malls in Europe is not convergent with American model. European architects, pioneers of the design and construction of shopping centers even as early as in the 19th century, scores of years later commenced adaptation of American model in France, Great Britain, Germany and other European countries. Although in the USA modern shopping malls have constituted an essential element of day-to-day life of people from various walks of life, organizing, beside shopping, leisure, entertainment, many other aspects of their life, European malls have followed this trend only for the last several years. Nevertheless, at the turn of the 21st century, spending up leisure time in shopping malls has become more and more popular, especially in Northern Europe, where the atmospheric conditions for most of the year do not encourage people to perform activities in open space.

In North America, especially in the USA, the leading role in the commercial and services market is played by regional and district shopping malls, i.e. multi-spatial facilities, the floor area most of which often exceeds 37 000 m²), which exert big architectural and urban planning as well as economic impacts on their surroundings.

The malls, with their rich functional, commercial and entertainment offer, are an important part of North American cities and their suburbia. Despite the expansion of the internet trade, the malls still have very attractive offers and serve the function of big social centers, thus shaping space in its social aspect.

The architecture of multi-spatial malls in the USA is dependent, to a large extent, on their location. Their emergence in urban space always involves the maintenance of higher aesthetic standards both in terms of new architectural solutions, materials used, as well as detailed analyses of the urban context, especially in its spatial aspect. In addition, technical, technological and architectural solutions applied in shopping malls take the ecological aspect into consideration, both in terms of renewable energy sources, recyclable materials, and the application solutions, for example green roofs. The urban malls are increasing their role in the functioning of North American cities, often constituting an integral part of the urban tissue. The *life style* malls, often located in resort or entertainment towns and cities are becoming more and more popular, serving, to a large extent, the function of social centers.

Multi-spatial regional and district malls located in

suburban areas in the USA are mostly characterized by lower architectural standards, not giving too much consideration, except for public transportation access, to the spatial aspect. The form and shape of their bodies in relation to downtown zones is generally less diversified, fulfilling, first and foremost, the role of reconstructing, or roofing the inner space. However, they have become specific parts of the suburban landscape, and their current role as important commercial, services and social centers is growing.

European shopping malls have evolved – indirectly – from commercial centers and big city department stores, but still adopting some North American architectural solutions. Their current role has increased in view of very many construction projects of new malls; therefore, likewise in the USA, traditional medium size ((20 000-39 999 m²), big (40 000-79 999 m²) and multi-spatial (exceeding 80 000 m²) facilities are built.

Contrary to North American patterns, European shopping malls do not take advantage of specific “Disney-like” references, but, often have high architectural qualities. It should be emphasized that especially in the early 1990s Central and Eastern Europe underwent the economic expansion of foreign capital, leading to the emergence of many substandard multi-spatial shopping and commercial facilities, and it was only after several years that the projects of such poor aesthetic value were abandoned.

Currently constructed malls are bigger and bigger, but, at the same time, they use modern architectural solutions and put special emphasis on the urban context. In the majority of cases, new traditional shopping centers exert a big impact on their surroundings; accordingly, their emergence, as in case of their North American counterparts, is usually preceded by analyses of their potential impact on the neighborhood.

Urban, centrally, located malls have specifically high quality of architecture. In view of considerable damages and devastation of the urban tissue in Central and Eastern European countries (as well as low level of the urbanization of some developed West European countries (Ireland, Portugal)) shopping malls in those regions play very important roles, both city-forming, as well as social ones. Due to different economic and social conditions, in developed states, as well as in Poland, increased interest in so called “lifestyle” centers has been observed, the sites that, to a certain extent, create behavior of their visitors and become an important part of their lives.

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