A FAST FOOD COMPLEX

FOR SEYMOUR, INDIANA. U.S.A.

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Abstract

This is a project that challenges some accepted situations that take place in the interstate-woven midwest. It takes the form of a hypothesis at a large scale and works itself into built form as an example of what would hopefully take place within the stated parameters.

In the midwest and other interstate-infected parts of the United States a unique phenomenon has occurred with the development of our highway system. As the Interstate highway weaves its way from city to city it seldom goes directly through a city. Thus an access road is necessary to connect the city with the highway system. This connecting link, in almost every case, develops into an example of what Venturi calls the "American strip." To say whether or not the strip is an asset to society is an often debated subject. I believe the vitality that it radiates is, but the chaos that seems to be its essence becomes a hindrance. Consequently this project tries to give an order to the chaos without loss of the vitality. This was by no means a simple task.

What is proposed in this project is to cluster together commercial establishments providing the same types of goods and services. This would create a more organized set of parts in the strip. The use of shared parking lots could put an end to the "sea of asphalt" so often associated with the strip. As for the products, direct competition could only serve to improve
abstract:

both of them and the service one would receive. Another problem associated with strip architecture is its neglect of the rear of the building, believing that only the front is important. The major objectors of this problem tend to be the owners of the neighboring land (i.e. farmers, residences, and recreation activities). By surrounding the clusters with a green strip (park areas, ball diamonds, playground equipment, etc.), it works as a unifying element between existing and the strip. It works to buffer the drastic difference between the farm and the strip, and also it works to connect the residential community and the interstate travelers with playground equipment, ball fields, or jogging trails. The green strip also works to connect one cluster to the next cluster as well as the surrounding areas.

The location chosen for the first of hopefully many of these "interstate parks" is Seymour, Indiana. Its biggest advantage is that the strip is not totally developed. This avoids the problems that would occur if an establishment would not join in the clustering, hoping to compete effectively with a cluster of the same commercial type. This would eventually prove economically fatal and the establishment would wait until an opening occurred within the cluster and then move in for more direct competition with its rivals. A developer would need only to have a few established tenants renting space within his framework and certainly there would be others.
abstract:

To show how a cluster might be designed, the commercial establishment chosen as an example is the most typical of strip architecture, the fast food restaurant. To show how a restaurant works within the confines of the cluster, the firm Eggs Etc. was created. This restaurant specializes in omelets (eggs, milk, and cheese, the most neglected items in the American diet today). Hoping that by giving customers what their bodies need, they can draw customers from the less healthy other fast food restaurants.
Concepts

text:

On the site there is one major overriding concern—how to make the connection between the street environment; cars, noise, signs, power lines and constant activity, and the natural, more serene areas surrounding the street. The interstate park concept will accomplish this transition only if the complexes within it are designed with that overall concern in mind.

In accordance with this notion the initial concept for the fast food complex was that of a retaining wall, which would hold back the natural environment, only allowing penetration at special locations. Most people enjoy the natural areas more than the street, so it was felt that they (the customers) should spend as much time as possible within natural surroundings. This would hopefully maximize the enjoyment they could feel in the complex. In a fast food establishment, most of the patrons time is spent in the dining area eating his food. So it follows that the dining part of this complex puts the patron as close to nature as is possible. It also seems appropriate that the more mechanized food preparation part of the complex remain outside of the protected natural areas.
concepts:

The back side of the complex, or the natural, has earth covering most of the exterior. Only exterior seating areas are paved, to simplify cleaning, and of course any glazed portions are not covered. This berming was done to blend the park area behind the building and the seating area together. Inside the seating area there are landscaped gardens which echo the curved form of the exterior retaining walls. This will hopefully give the impression of only earth holding up the structural grid ceiling.
The material selection for the complex also exemplifies the overall notion of street-restaurant-nature. The nature side, as was previously discussed, is made up mostly of earth and plants. The center of the complex or restaurant portion echoes the primary materials of today's fast food restaurants--plastic and bright lights. The front or street side utilizes common materials relating to the highway, these being paving, metal, and glass. The front elevation is covered by a metal grid which is in the form of six boxes protruding out of the structural wall--one box for each restaurant inside the complex. The panels in the grid will be either glass or different colored aluminum, and placed in a basically random order. The glass panels will give restricted glimpses of the restaurants behind the wall, so a patron can begin to make a decision about which of the restaurants he will eat at.
concepts:

Probably the most important part of the design of this complex is the notion of communicating to the motorist what the function of the building is, or the design of the signage. It seemed that there were three types of sign communication to the prospective customer. The first and most important would be communicating the overall image of the complex to a motorist travelling on the interstate. This was accomplished by the use of a framework extending up from the restaurant sign location inside the complex. The hollow metal framework is on top of the building so that it is visible to the interstate traveller. Attached to this framework is a series of found signs relating to the food industry. By attaching the signs to the framework it becomes a collage of signs designed to transmit the notion of food to all of those hungry motorists travelling along the interstate. The second type of sign communication occurs after the motorist has parked his car. This type of communication informs the patron as to where he should go to get his food. It takes place through the glass pannels randomly placed in the protruding boxes at the front of the building. By receiving glimpses through these windows, the customer can learn what lurks behind that colorful wall. The third type of signage is the actual fast food restaurant's logo and menu located above the heads of the counter workers in each restaurant. These signs would be attached to the same framework that the exterior signs are attached to, only this takes place
concepts:

inside the building. This communication gives all the information necessary to make a choice between the six restaurants.

The site was handled in a way that allows the building to act as a retaining wall which for the most part separates the auto from nature. The reason for the complex to be turned 45 degrees instead of parallel to the road is to have the front or street elevation facing both the interstate and the access road. If this was not done, all of the sign communication discussed earlier would not work as effectively. Also since the neon side faces the interstate, the natural side is pointed toward the city which is much more pleasing to the city dwellers than the gaudy neon side. The parking is in a semicircular plan to emphasize the location of the restaurants within the complex. By locating the parking lot always within view, as a prospective patron approaches the complex there is no confusion as to where he needs to go. The delivery and trash pick-up is located at the basement level to the sides of the restaurants to give direct access to the storage which is under the restaurants. It was a difficult task to incorporate an area large enough to accommodate the trucks used for deliveries in the middle of the complex.
concepts:

The basement level or storage area for the restaurants has lockable access from each restaurant. On this level, there are two loading docks, one on each side, that are shared by the six restaurants. Also there are employee rest rooms shared by all the employees and the mechanical/janitorial storage room.

On the main level, the two bathrooms are centrally located for easy access by all. The seating is broken up into three zones, one upper level and two lower level areas. The upper level seating is reached by going up 1/2 level over the drive-thru lanes which are sunken 1/2 level. This is done with three ramps which each run between two restaurants and along the sides of these ramps are glass walls which provide a nice view down into the food preparation areas of the restaurants. So in this complex, the food preparation areas are no longer hidden behind walls which do not allow the customer to see his food being prepared. The reason for the ramps is handicapped access, and since there is seating on the upper level, handicapped patrons can sit in this seating area. The seats are in groups of two and four. Since tables seating four people are close together, parties of more than four can spill out into surrounding tables. This should hopefully accommodate any number in a group, which makes this type of seat grouping quite an asset.
Sketches

Versailles
-the strip plan.

FACTORY
-the fast food cluster.

MINIATURE STRIP
-individuality & competition in the cluster.

THE FARM
-the image of the fast food chain.
sketches:

possible height restriction

GREEN STRIP

in scale of interstate exit
sketches:

- Sign zone with block backdrop and service path behind
- Pedestrian sign zone and parking creating a new front in the zone
- Actual layout of existing strip
- With the notion of the signage zone

- Direct backdrop for signs
- Front away from road
- Parking behind

- Parking above
- Eating below with new paint in rear

- Service above
- Drive-thru above
- Eat in below
sketches:
sketches:

DRIVE-THRU

PICK-UP

PELLET BELOW RESTAURANTS

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. CO.
sketches:

"You can't put a door in a goose's nose." — Philip Johnson

- (Diagram showing architecture)
- (Diagram showing garden, non-machine, neutral, natural)
- (Diagram showing machine, aesthetic, colorful, loud, histrionic)
- (Speech bubble: I never promised you a rose garden.)
SITE PLAN
STREET PERSPECTIVE
AERIAL PERSPECTIVE
Appendix

PROGRAM:

INTRODUCTION

history:

To understand why roadside food establishments developed is difficult for an individual brought up in today's world. Because the automobile and all that has developed with it seems to always have been. This was not the case in the late '20's and early '30's. The automobile was a symbol of America's future. It was fast and sleek, almost space aged in appearance. The time had come for every family that could afford it to have a car. With this use of the car establishments that served people's needs began moving closer and closer to the street. Customers wanted everything to be drive-in, drive-thru, or at least drive-up. Out of this phenomenon the roadside diner emerged. "The roadside diner was designed to accommodate motorists who drive to the 'stand.'" Food was brought to the car on a tray, mounted on a rubber-tipped bracket to fit on the side of the car. Most designs were planned to accommodate the maximum number of parked automobiles. The inclosed structure was intended for counter service during inclement weather.
history:

With these early designs the structure either became the sign or it was attached to the diner. The building took on the appearance of the automobile. Many used tile and glass—it was extensively used to give the feeling of sleek and futuristic.

The next step in roadside food service development is the drive-in restaurant. These include a vast range of establishments from hamburger stands to elaborate coffee shops, dining and banquet rooms and cocktail lounges. Some catered solely to motorists with no interior seating, others provided large parking areas for interior service. The success of these drive-ins depended not only on a good location along the highway, but also good food, adequate parking, attractive surroundings, service efficiency, and employee welfare.

By the mid 1940's America's highways had become lined, first with dining cars, then with drive-in hot dog stands. But the businesses were, as a whole, inefficient. Further, even a disheveled motorist wants a pleasant, clean place to stop—and most of them weren't clean. Thus the "food-for-travelers" industry was ripe for organization—consequently numerous food chains grew making handsome profits. Individual operators could lease rights to a name and an organization's advice. Another chain would reverse the process, leasing and operating restaurants from individuals who put up the buildings. Whichever the method, operations either privately-owned-and-operated or chains, reflected a uniform
history:

basic conception. It was at this point in time that the names Howard Johnson's, White Castle, and McDonald's among others became well known. Chains such as these marketed an image that the public would recognize them by and then consequently the motorist would feel confident about what to expect from any of the chain's restaurants. The fundamental sources of profit are ice cream and soda-fountain business, frankfurters, hamburgers, and sometimes sandwiches. Thus the soda fountain and the hamburger counter became the focal points in plan.

The war-necessary rationing of gasoline, its use of rubber and new car curtailments did affect the roadside restaurant chain's business. Such problems, of course, did not affect the cocktail-lounge, night club type of restaurant, at least not as directly.

In the late '40's and early '50's this country's highways grew into turnpikes and interstates. With this development, a new type of roadside restaurant was created. They were called highway service areas. The building or buildings incorporated a variety of functions. The two most basic functions were fuel for the car (service station) and fuel for the motorists (restaurant). The general location of a station was usually determined by the highway and minimal other natural considerations: 'a site affording the oncoming motorist a long-range view to avoid surprise in driving; a supply of 100 gallons of drinkable water a minute; electric power;
history:

proximity of access roads to keep trucks off the Thruway; etc....
Those stations too used image in different locations in the same way as the other roadside restaurants did. In Europe this concept of the motorway service area has been developed to a greater extent than in the United States. In England the planning policy for this type of facility is as follows. 'Least commitment' is advocated in which parking areas and fueling and catering facilities are designed initially to meet the statistically predictable demands of the next few years, but are also planned to permit future adaptation to meet the changing requirements of both operator and user during the fifty year lease period. To combat the extreme variations in service area use, buildings are planned to permit the shutdown of areas during slack periods. The commissioning of prominent architects to do the designs makes the service areas of Europe far superior to those in the U.S.

In the United States the roadside restaurant is no longer called roadside, it is now the 'Fast Food Chain Restaurant.' In the early '60's this fast food restaurant was a combination of all its predecessors innovations--sleek, bold, bright, drive-in, drive-thru, image, and plenty of advertisement. Out of the pack of fast food chains rose a man named Ray Kroc and his food chain, McDonald's. In 1937, two brothers, Mac and Dick McDonald started a small drive-in in Arcadia, California. It did well and they started another drive-in in San Bernardino. But in 1948 the brothers did a courageous thing and closed
history:

that successful restaurant. They reopened it a short time later with a new and radically different kind of format. It was a restaurant stripped down to the minimum in service and menu, this was the prototype for legions of fast-food units that later would spread across the land. Hamburgers, fries, and beverages were prepared on an assembly line basis, and, to the amazement of everyone, it worked. Kroc bought the rights to McDonald’s idea in 1954. From that day on he guided the McDonald’s chain to the top of the fast food industry and has kept it there with many important innovations. Just for comparison—what was once a drive-in restaurant in California now has 2,500 outlets in the U.S. and is averaging a new one every day. In 1972 McDonald’s rang up sales of $1.03 billion dollars surpassing the 1972 food volume of the U.S. Army at $909 million.

Today the trend in the fast food business is a new sophistication. Block after block of neon signs once drew the hungry for fast food into those garish, gaudy, plastic-appearing takeouts built in the ’60s. The strip remains today but the plastic has evolved into natural. The reason for the tiles and plastics of past years was an extreme consciousness of durability and cleanliness of materials. Today’s restaurants are also to appear clean, fresh, and unworn. The new alternatives are brick, hard woods, and ceramic and quarry tiles. The hope of the designers is to make the customer feel at home. No longer are the fast food chains reflecting the speed of the highway, now the image is that of the home

31.
scope:

This complex is the product of a few well-studied assumptions dealing with the American Interstate System and commercial establishments directly related to it. This project extends from a simple fast food restaurant to a fast food complex housing six restaurants. This complex is incorporated in an interstate park which houses certain functions related to interstate travel. The park extremities become green strips for residential use as well as a resting place for interstate travelers.
GOALS

To create more direct competition between commercial establishments selling the same types of goods and services.

Improve the quality and service in those establishments.

To allow fast food chains to come and go within the framework supplied.

To organize the commercial development that occurs around an interstate highway exit.

To provide all the services needed for the interstate traveler.

Incorporate park land which serves the residential community as well as the interstate traveler.

To have the commercial development work well with the existing functions on the land as well as with future development.
ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

Since most patrons will arrive by automobile, there needs to be an area devoted to parking directly accessible from the road. The main entry(s) of the building should then be equipped to accept the majority of traffic from the parking area. A patron will order and pick up his food at the service counter, which should be visible from the main entrance. After receiving his food, the customer should have a clear view of the seating area where he can sit and relax while eating. After eating, trash containers should be readily accessible on the customer's way out of the building to his parked car.

Drive-thru service should be routed to avoid it being crossed by pedestrians. It should flow smoothly by the drive-thru service counters which receive their food from the restaurant's kitchen. After receiving the food, the car should be allowed to return onto the road easily and quickly.
Food service must begin with the growing of the food. It is then sent to the processing plant to be treated for consumption. Then it is often frozen and transported to restaurants across the country. At the restaurant, it is thawed and prepared for eating. Usually it is packaged to retain its freshness, then served to patrons. They then tend to devour it, disposing of the packaging and finally returning the food to the ground in which it was grown.
SPACE REQUIREMENTS

users:

Manager

Employees
  Service counter (4)
  Drive-through service (2)
  Preparation (4)
  Janitorial (2)

Drive-through patron
  An individual who wishes to quickly receive his food without leaving his car.

Walk-in patron
  An individual who wishes to eat his food in the complex.

Carry-out patron
  An individual who wishes to come into the complex receive his food and eat it somewhere else.
furniture and equipment:

Food Preparation Areas

Range, ice machine, soft drink machine, preparation table, grill, sinks/drains (3), waste disposal, food warming/display area.

Service Counter Areas

Cash registers, disposable silverware storage, napkin dispensers, straw dispensers.

Drive-Thru Service Areas

Counter, cash register, disposable silverware, napkin, and straw storage, paper bag storage.

Offices

Desk, chair.

Seating Area

Tables, chairs, booths, counters, stools, waste containers.

Restrooms

Sinks, toilets, towel dispensers, soap dispensers, mirror, waste container.
# SPACE SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>sq.ft.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee Lounge*</td>
<td>100 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office*</td>
<td>50 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Preparation*</td>
<td>600 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerated Storage*</td>
<td>150 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage*</td>
<td>400 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive-thru Service Counter*</td>
<td>50 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Counter*</td>
<td>120 each ----- 3820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage (General)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter Seating</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booth Seating</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Seating</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest Rooms (Public)</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest Rooms (Employee)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loading Dock</td>
<td>400    ----- 8800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Six of these spaces, one for each restaurant.

**TOTAL** 17,620 sq. ft.
SPACE RELATIONSHIPS

drive-thru

office

lounge

food preparation

storage

delivery

counter service

entry

waste

dining

rest rooms

parking

39.
BUILDING CRITERIA

The complex needs to be able to continue to operate with changes in restaurant occupancy, and possibly periods of partial vacancy.

The complex should easily handle peak loads during meal time, as well as slack loads in between those times.

The security should accommodate different serving hours for different restaurants.

Seating areas should be able to be closed off during slack periods.

Customer circulation should be quick, and direct from the parking lot through the entrance to the service counter and on to the dining area, as well as back to the parking lot again.
EXTERIOR CRITERIA

Parking needs to be very visible to the prospective patron, and easily accessible.

Signage should be directed more toward attracting prospective patrons to the complex, but not overpowering to individuals already using the facility.

The front of the building should promote an image to the public.

Service should be easily accessible to large vehicles but little noticed by patrons.

Exterior seating needs to be incorporated in the landscaping.
BUILDING TYPE ANALYSIS

The fast food restaurant is a very interesting phenomenon of American society. How it evolved has already described but what is it, and what does it try to do?

It is two areas, one public and the other private. The distinction between the two is very obvious. Inside what separates the two spaces is the service counter which keeps the customers out of the food preparation area. On the outside, it is often very apparent where this division takes place. A good example of both cases is a Long John Silvers. Outside shows where the public domain is by the amount of articulation and by the gable roof. For economic reasons, the food preparation area is more of a shed that is hidden to the public by the gabled part.

What today’s fast food restaurants try to do is to first and foremost make money. They accomplish this by giving customers a comfortable and relaxing environment to eat in. Often this environment creates a fantasy world related to the type of food they serve. In the case of Long John Silvers, it is a spin-off of a nautical environment do to their main menu item, fish.
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