Can The Corner Grocery Store Exist in Suburbia

Joseph William Verbrugge
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Thesis Statement
The traditional corner shop is one that is usually family-run and managed with part-time assistance. The shop hours are usually long and it is almost a necessity that it remain open on Sunday.

This traditional shop is growing out of its time, but should not be abandoned. The notion of the corner shop and its social implications cannot be lost. What is needed is a new form of the corner store.

The demand for the small shop has dropped and can be recognized in several ways. One way is in that the small shop's role has become such that it is only a source of supplement to the major amount of goods that are purchased elsewhere. This is not only true for food items but for other goods as well. Another way is that the loyalty to the small shop has diminished except for those among the poor and the elderly. Their loyalty is most likely a response to the lack of access to larger stores. Also, the population's change of residential location is a factor which probably has the greatest effect on the diminishing demand for small shops.

It seems that the majority of the contributors to these changes of shopping habits is the American middle class. The wide spread suburbanization of the population during the last two decades, and the reduction of the concentration of people living in the inner-city, has perhaps been the biggest motion for the change in retail. The old occurrence of the regular trips to the corner store only exist in memory, and for some it doesn't even exist in that. It seems that it only remains in areas in the inner-city where there are concentrations of the elderly and the poor. This shift in residential location caused an enormous shift in the place of retail shopping, with a great number of shopping centers that were built in the cutting areas of suburban neighborhoods. This caused a great decline in the number of retail establishments which could survive in the inner city. This change of residential location also caused more regular, planned, shopping habits than had previously existed. Trips to the store were less frequent and the availability to immediate shopping needs no longer existed. If one wished to purchase an item on a moment's notice, it was no longer a short venture. It was a venture to the closest available store which could often be several miles away.
History of the Corner Store
A store is relatively a simple thing. It must contain a shelter with an entry door; a display area in which one can inspect and examine goods; and a service area for the incoming and outgoing merchandise. The test for a functional store is how well it integrates these three elements.

These three aspects which make up the functional requirements for shop have been expressed in thousands of different store types. These differences in types are a direct response to varied ways of living, trading, and traveling, which have been established throughout history. This paper will attempt to briefly discuss a basic outline of store development and later concentrate on the small shop or general store and its role in today's environment.

Probably the least recognized as a commercial structure, because their original function no longer exists, is the American farmhouse. "American farmhouses were once economic centers for the production, distribution, and consumption of everything needed for existence. Food, clothing, furniture, farm equipment, and every household necessity were produced, processed, and distributed entirely on the farmstead's own acreage."[1]

These commercial centers were all combined into one structure and the surrounding barns. They were very simply constructed and were functionally placed for production. The trade here was not that of money but goods in exchange for other goods or services. [see plate 11]

The development of the city market was a response to the ability of these farms to produce more than they could consume. Therefore, they sought a market for this surplus. In the marketplace, the farmer found that he could now obtain products such as clothing and furniture that were produced by individuals that specialized in their production. This lessened his need to produce these goods on the farm and thus led to the farmer specializing in food production.

The city merchant of the eighteenth century also had his whole production workshop, store, and home all in one building. Some of these types of shops can still be found. They were usually two or three story buildings. The entrance front and sales areas were located at ground level, usually facing streets that were lively with commerce. "Such personal contacts between buyer and seller were typical of a time when tradesmen candusted small
business based on home manufacturing and home retailing. There were no wholesalers to supply their merchandise, no national advertising to boost the sale of their products. Instead, they depended almost entirely on personal salesmanship. Consequently, the shops were residential in character. Show windows were usually small and the doors took on a sturdy nature. The display area was constructed just as another living room. There was no reason to separate it independently from the rest of the structure. (See plate 21)

Up until the middle of the nineteenth century, shopping streets reflected this type of small scale merchandising. The buildings were all of this relatively small scale and the use of material and signs were restrained by nature.

Around 1860, the development of such transportation means like the railroad and steamboat enabled goods to be produced and sold on a national scale. This led to the creation of mass markets and in turn mass production of merchandise. This called for new ways of retailing.

The city shop was reduced to becoming a retail outlet. Goods were now produced by manufacturers and the small shop became stocked with many of their products. Thus, the general store emerged. The general store became a one-stop-shop with every type of merchandise available. The general store was a center for trade, information, and sociability. It also marked the start of modern merchandising. For the first time a store was really a store and not a combined factory, home, and shop. (See)

Although, the general store was of a little larger scale than the previous, privately owned, specialized shops, it was no longer the place of residence of the owner. Still it maintained the personal sale contact between customer and merchant. This is something that would become lost in the periods that followed. (See plate 33)

The general stores that exist today are few in numbers. What has replaced them is known as the department store. The department store was another response to a vast amount of mass production and distribution. The department store could take advantage of a tremendous buying power because it was able to purchase large quantities of goods, therefore, affording a lower purchasing price with a huge volume of transactions.

One of the more recognized department stores built in the nineteenth century was the Carson, Pirie, Scott store in Chicago, designed by Louis.
Sullivan. In Sullivan’s building the steel structure was expressed by a pattern of large windows throughout the entire structure. The use of the large windows were a necessity of the time because artificial lighting and air conditioning had not yet been perfected. There were large areas for display at the ground level and the entries were more than adequately scaled. The store marked a definite shift in the shopping habits which had been prevalent. It also marked the new era in retail merchandising. [see plate 43]

The need for small shops still existed, but the small shop was being hurt by the larger retail stores. To combat these larger stores, the small shops attempted to make a more intimate shopping atmosphere and more comfortable shopping conditions. In addition, they began to offer other services to pick up the slack. For example, the old-fashioned pharmacist began to stock everything from soap to toothpaste.

The small store was in a constant struggle to combat the enormous buying power of the larger stores. "Groups of small stores banded together

Modern suburbia is born. Photograph: Thomas Airviews
under common management as chain store organizations, in order to pool their buying power and to minimize their operating and advertising expenses. Such chain store groups soon began to operate successfully on a national scale, both as corporations and as cooperative ventures."

This physical change in the small shop did tremendous good for their economic value. This gave the small shop the advantage of being located in a concentrated area where many goods and services could be obtained. At the same time, it gave the customer a quality of personalized service, and the appearance of greater quality goods.

Both the small shop and the department store began to realize that having the right product at the right price was not enough to produce a profitable business. The comfort and entertainment of the customer became an important consideration in retail. In particular, the design of store fronts became a major consideration. With the technical advancements which had occurred in glass and metal, wood glazing was almost eliminated. Also, advancements in wall and floor coverings forced interior design considerations to obtain the appropriate atmosphere. Elevators and escalators also entered the scene and made selling at different levels practical. "Today, the integration of form and function—of new methods of trading with new methods of building—is approaching maturity. Designers and builders are creating a new commercial architecture to answer the demands of contemporary retailing."[5]

There is no question that the changes that have occurred in the past ten to fifteen years have been greater than any comparable period in the past. These changes are not entirely due to innovations in business itself but reflect responses for the consumer population. Consumers today have become more mobile, more independent, and have a bigger range of tastes and demands. The question of whether the retail establishments have changed to accommodate changes in consumer attitudes or if these attitudes have been a result of the changes in retail is one that is in much debate. I feel that it is a result of the interaction between the two. Both produce the mixture of cause and effect.

This quote was taken from an author who was writing
about what he felt the needs of the shopper should be in the early sixties. It fairly and accurately describes what has happened and outlines the major fault in their planning scheme. "The basic needs of the suburban shopper is for a conveniently accessible, amply stocked shopping area with plentiful and free parking."[6] What he states here is the purely practical need for which the shopping center was originally conceived, which most centers adequately fulfill. What has been left out is the additional attractions for shoppers that produce an appropriate psychological climate. By affording opportunities for social life and recreation in a protected pedestrian environment, shops would fill an existing void. If the shop can do more than just satisfy physical living requirements and add to our social and community needs, it is then that it will make a significant contribution to the enrichment of our lives.

What needs to be established here is what is commonly considered a small shop. The term small shop, small retail unit, and small retail outlet can sometimes become confused. The definition ascribed to that given by Dawson and Kirby: "a retail establishment of any form of organization (but most commonly independently owned) with an annual sales figure of less than approximately $100,000 and having fewer than ten employees."[7]

The traditional corner shop is one that is usually family-run and managed with part-time assistance. The shop hours are usually long and it is almost a necessity that it remain open on Sunday. "The commitment required to endure these working conditions for a low level of income means that the average shop has been increasing over time, with fewer sons and daughters being prepared to take over the running of a shop when parents have died or retired."[8] This traditional shop is growing out of its time, but should not be abandoned. The notion of the corner shop and its social implications cannot be lost. What is needed is a new form of the corner store.

There has been a substantial decline in the number of small shops during the last two decades and it appears that this trend will continue. "This demise can be associated in part with the growth of larger scales of activity but is more properly to be explained by the changes in consumer behavior that have occurred and some deep seated problems in the operating circumstances of small-unit retailers themselves."[9]

The demand for the small shop has dropped, and can be recognized in several ways. One way is in that the small shop's role has become such that it is only a source of supplement to the major amount of goods that are purchased elsewhere. This is not only true for food items but for other goods as well. Another way is that the loyalty to the small shop has diminished except for those among the poor and the elderly. Their loyalty is most likely a response to the lack of access to larger stores. Also, the population's change of residential location is a factor which probably has the greatest effect on the diminishing demand for small shops.

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regular, planned, shopping habits than had previously existed. Trips to the store were less frequent and the availability to immediate shopping needs no longer existed. If one wished to purchase an item on a moment's notice, it was no longer a short venture. It was a venture to the closest available store which could often be several miles away. (See plates 5-6)

The key element which has been neglected and is continuing to be neglected is the omission of neighborhood community facilities. Education no longer exists in suburban neighborhoods. It has become an entity which is located outside the neighborhood. In fact it is not uncommon for neighbors within a residential development to be located or placed in totally different educational environments strictly because they are located on the school district line. This tends to separate not only the youths within a neighborhood but the families as well. This separation occurs because of different locations and realms of social and recreational activities. They occur in different locations outside the neighborhood. Common shopping facilities have also been removed from the neighborhood. These shops, which would be used by members of the community almost every day, have become a place that is now traveled to.

It is most generally expected that those basic services which cannot be satisfied within one's own dwelling should be included among the neighborhood's community services. Yet, how many times has the woman, for who the kitchen was scientifically designed, had to travel several miles just to obtain a loaf of bread or carton of milk because insufficient thought was given to activities beyond the lot line.

This immediate problem which exists in suburbia could become the precise line that is needed to begin to replace what was left out when designing these suburban neighborhoods.

Examination of the location of current shopping centers reveals the root of the problems which exist today. Large portions of towns have insufficient services. Shops which could provide these services locate themselves near other shops instead of locating themselves where they are needed. Two-thirds of all small shops go out of business within one year. I feel that their economic instability is largely linked to a mistake in location. In order to assure a small shop's economic viability, one must locate it where it will fill a gap among other shops offering similar service. The characteristics of a stable location for a small shop relies primarily on a certain "catch basin" of the
latter. I contend the fact is, however, that the first is both better and safer. This option is not always possible since zoning ordinances often prevent these shops from locating in so-called residential areas. These ordinances can be altered or changed by a municipal government if requested by the residents who see such an establishment as becoming a vital contribution to the neighborhood.

It has been assumed that people no longer want to walk to local stores. I believe that this assumption is incorrect. People are not only willing to walk to local stores, but a local store plays and essential role in any viable and stable neighborhood. This is because it is more convenient for individuals to use and because the facility is perceived as being integrated into the neighborhood. It creates a destination for neighborhood walks. It also allows for and stimulates important social interaction, which is vital to a successful neighborhood.

Fig. 6. Carson, Pirie, Scott Department Store, Chicago, Ill. Louis Sullivan, Architect. Collection The Museum of Modern Art, Chicago Architectural Photographing Co.

"In the short term we shall continue to see the development of what we might call 'the modern forms of shopping', with increased reliance on the use of cars, more single purpose trips for convenience and durable goods, longer, more infrequent journeys to shopping centers, more bulk purchasing of commodities, and greater discrimination in types of stores patronized."[10]

In conclusion, most people would profess that the small shop is, or at least was, a beneficial and necessary feature in our environment; but most people are no longer loyal to the small shop and find the large, multiple stores more preferable for shopping. It is apparent that a change in the small shop must be made in order for it to remain in existence. The chief objective for the small store is to meet its locational requirement needs in this changing society. This will allow it to trade in a way that is economically beneficial and possible.
FOOTNOTES


SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY


sources of illustrations


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**Climate Analysis**
LAND USE MOVEMENT PATTERNS

VEHICULAR ACCESS

There is an influx of auto traffic coming into the neighborhood to visit the Halteman pool area. Some younger people come from other surrounding neighborhoods to play basketball, swim, and use the schools facilities.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

People within the neighborhood have access to the open space areas. Walking to these areas, which are mainly devoted to recreational activities, is primarily done by using the street as means of a sidewalk.

Several opportunities exist for recreation within the neighborhood.

The pool area
Tennis and Basketball
School facilities

IMPLICATIONS

The store will need to focus its efforts on capturing the existing patterns of pedestrian traffic in order to function economically.

The store will need to locate itself around the activity node which exists now. This is the areas located directly adjacent to the pool and the tennis and basketball courts.

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION:

ADJACENT TO THE SITE

Lancaster provides secondary access to the "finger streets"
Lincolnshire is used by people coming from outside the neighborhood to the parking area for the pool. (seasonal)

VEHICULAR TRAFFIC GENERATORS

Everett allows for secondary access to the neighborhood.
It also provides access to services. (adjacent shopping areas)
Oakwood serves as the connecting link with Ball...
VEHICULAR TRAFFIC COUNTS

Information Taken From 1984 City Traffic Counts. (24HR. counts)
State University.

Wheeling is major thoroughfare to McGallard and the downtown area. It also provides an entryway to the neighborhood.

Major Points of Access into the Neighborhood.

Purdue provides the main access to the neighborhood - heavy circulation all day.

PeDESTRIAN CIRCULATION PATTERNS

Walks in the neighborhood tend to loop or pass the pool area. This is because it is located where most of the activity takes place.

The tennis and basketball courts are a meeting ground for youth in and out of the neighborhood.

The pool area has become a "cut through path" to connect the neighborhood between the social area.

* Traffic loop around the site
NIGHT LIGHTING

Ample night lighting within the neighborhood is necessary to supply enough lamination to allow for night walks. Safe paths to and from the store must be available.
SITE OPTIONS: WITHIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Purdue Redding Lincolnshire Lancaster Parking Halteman Pool Sheffield Barcelona Tennis Courts Surrey Cambridge
Building Type Studies
The store is conducive to pedestrian traffic. It lacks adequately planned parking areas, which is a significant issue, as the store and shop are not well-equipped to handle the flow of people.

**Halteman Village**

**Muncie, Indiana**
OBSERVATIONAL ASPECTS

OBSERVATIONAL TOPICS

MATERIALS AND FINISHES
walls
floors
ceilings
openings
levels/stairs
details
fire ratings

BUILDING SYSTEMS
structural geometry
load bearing
non-load
heating/cooling
lighting
ventilation
adaptable
flexibility
special equipment
special systems

MANAGEMENT
maintenance
control
other

COMFORT LEVELS

Having the employee located in a "king-pin" position is helpful in several ways:

Customer greeting
question directing
total control

An over-bearing individual working behind the counter can lead to customers becoming uncomfortable. They begin to feel as if they are being watched.

- The customer is greeted by one of the employees directly upon entry - ask feel welcome right away - other strangers

- The corner area is hot the place where interaction takes place - the counter and the back kitchen area is where most conversation occurs.
The sitting area allows people to sit comfortably without feeling on display.

The drop ceilings with the fluorescent lights are too sterile looking and produce distracting illumination.

The back entry to the store adds because it allows people to enter the kitchen area without being noticed at the front entry. Thus allowing them to be seen as secondary visitors to the store.
HUMAN ASPECTS

OBSERVATIONAL STUDY MATRIX OF ENVIRONMENT AND INTERACTION

OBSERVATIONAL TOPICS NOTICES AND SKETCHES CONCLUSIONS

PEOPLE TYPES
- receiving services
- residents/participants
- admin./staff
- visitors/guests
- non-visitors
- other

PEOPLE DESCRIPTION
- age
- gender
- disabilities
- color
- language speaking
- other

PEOPLE RELATIONSHIPS
- individuals
- couples
- groups
- friends
- family
- strangers

PEOPLE ROLES
- performer/spectator
- active/passive
- other

The store in general functions very well as far as interpersonal relationships. It works.
PERCEPTUAL ASPECTS

OBSERVATIONAL STUDY ASPECTS OF ENVIRONMENT AND INTERACTION

OBSERVATIONAL TOPICS NOTES AND SKETCHES CONCLUSIONS

CHARACTER OF SPACE
as destination area
as conversation area
as interchange area
as focal point
as other

ORIENTATION
complex uncertain
visual language
signs
serial vision to other space
other factors

SOCIO/PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE
light/dark
quiet/noisy
isolated/integrated
active/passive
warm/cool
other

USER RESPONSE TO SPACE
changes to setting
user decoration
user territory
user neglect
user awareness

- walls are for the most part covered with
  articles. Peg boards - above 16" high-
  covered with paper
- indoor - outdoor parked to seam anywhere
  except for the entry area - tile, wipe caulk
- plastic & rubber are for high traffic
  areas - bathroom, kitchen, entry, etc.
- pegs - shelves can be moved within the
  store area - also small display areas (bullets)
- "pop-up" temporary displays

- Lighting is by the use of fluorescent
  fixtures. The main displays fixtures are used.
  Some lights above shelves are used.
  Three people appear to be working
  full time - Pharmacy - 2
  Register 1
  Kitchen - 1
  Most business is through the pharmacy
  but people seem to sit at and use the
  kitchen.

The peg boards work functionally but they are

The fluorescent lighting is
distracting. It has an
institutional feeling.

Carpeting throughout the store
works well by reinforcing
paths with darker and lighter
colors.

24
Building Type Study
Suburban Neighborhoods
THE BLOCK AS A WHOLE

The block in the area of the three sites reveals itself bit by bit as one travels along the street. This is because the streets are curved. In order to strengthen the block's unity and to preserve the visual quality, one must place the store in conjunction with the existing homes on the block.

Set back lines and the alignment of the existing homes must be maintained to reinforce unity in the block.

If the site selected is one that resembles a corner site, it may then become more elaborate that the homes in the neighborhood. Because of the prominence that naturally is given to these sites, therefore, the corner store may become more articulate bases on the already existing patterns of social activity in the immediate area.

NATURAL SETTING

There is a need to preserve the natural connection with the pool area. The building, new trees, and other landscape should not obstruct the view to this area.

The overall height of the store should be of similar height of other structures in the neighborhood as to reinforce continuity within the neighborhood. It should also echo the original contours.

The school as well as the pool are physical community focal points. Physical access to these focal points should not be obstructed.

Public open space helps to define the character of an area. Site selection is very important in order to maintain and enhance the existing character.

ALIGNMENT OF ELEMENTS

The general alignment of window frames, bands, moldings, etc., should be maintained in the store to help strengthen the visual ties among the building in the neighborhood.

The pattern of entrances along the street must be maintained. The primary entrances for buildings in the neighborhood face the street.

The entrance is usually emphasized by a sidewalk leading to it and by a porch framing it. The porch is usually raised a few steps...
above grade. However, these entrances are not the primary entrances used by the homeowner. The primary entrance is actually the entrance which is most closely related to the automobile.

There are places in every neighborhood which make people feel more in contact with the area. Destruction of these sites could damage the fabric of the neighborhood.

The best way to intensify these sites is to create a progression to the area as one approaches the site. This will not only improve perception of these areas but it will also strengthen the neighborhood fabric.
• Progression to the site
LANDSCAPING

The new development should maintain the visual continuity of the vegetation by using plant material similar to those already in place.

Also, new vegetation should not hamper any existing views to community focal points within the neighborhood.

PARKING

Parking lots interrupt the visual continuity of any street, particularly in residential areas. The patterns as alignment of buildings, landscaping, and other features were established without the acceptance of excessive automobile use.

Parking areas should not be visible from the street of sidewalk area. They should be placed in the rear of the building.

If the parking area must be visible from the street it should be screened by planting beds, hedges, or low fences.

BUILDING COMPONENTS

The building components should be similar in size and shape to those already in existing along the street. They need to address:

- Porches
- Ornamentation
- Roof Shape
- Building Materials

In some situations a variety in building materials is acceptable. This may be the case as long as other design criteria are met. This is because building materials have less impact on visual continuity than larger scale visual elements.
Conclusions and Implications

Site Data

Building Type Study

The natural connection to the pool needs to be preserved. The building, trees, and other landscaping should not obstruct the view to the pool area. The over all height of the store should be similar to those in the neighborhood. It should also echo the original contours.

The store must be placed in conjunction with the homes in the block in order to strengthen the blocks unity and to preserve the visual quality of the street.

The general alignment of window frames, bands, moldings, etc., in the neighborhood, should be maintained in the store.

One entrance to the store must face the street in order to follow the existing pattern of entrances in the block.

The building components should be similar in size and shape of those of the homes in the neighborhood. The store needs to address porches, roof shape, and building materials.

The landscaping materials chosen for the site need to maintain the existing landscaping in the neighborhood. Visual continuity can be accomplished by using similar plant materials.

The parking area should either be placed in the rear of the store or located on the side and screened by planting beds, hedges, or a low fence.

The site location is located off major vehicular paths in the neighborhood. This allows for safe pedestrian access to the store. At the same time the site is located close enough to Purdue Avenue, one of the major means of access to the neighborhood, to be accessible by vehicles.

The store must allow not only for outdoor activity spaces but must allow for indoor activity spaces as well. This is because of the high percentage of cold months in this climate.

The area located near Haltaman Pool is the best location for the site. It is the only source of open space in the neighborhood and is already a node for social activity.

Pedestrian activity in the neighborhood appears to exist primarily around the Haltaman Pool area. People seem to be drawn to this area because it is the existing source of activity in the neighborhood.

Night lighting in the areas of the site is sufficient for pedestrian access during the night hours. This allows for the possibility of night shopping which would be a necessity during peak business hours.

30% of the individuals in the neighborhood are eighteen years of age or younger. This suggests that a considerable portion of the store must cater to their needs.

Only 6% of the population in the neighborhood is sixty-five years of age or older. This suggests that some consideration should be given to these members of the community, but design decisions should be weight in proportion to their ratio.

The total number of people within a four block radius of the site is 815. This number of individuals will determine the size of the store and the amount of goods and services which the store will supply.

Site number (3) on page 29 is the best location for the store for several reasons:

- It does not interfere with existing social activities in the area.
- It is located in visibility from connecting streets.
- It is located on the corner which is more prone to this type of establishment than Lincolnshire because of its existing vehicular traffic.

People tend to cut through the open space around the pool. This is because it is the only land in the neighborhood that is considered "in-man's-land." It does not belong to anyone. This occurrence suggests that people will cut through this area to arrive at the store.

The major points of access to the neighborhood all create problems in comparison. This is because of their close proximity to retail establishments.

The store layout should be such that communication can take place from one end of the store to the other. This is because there are needs for communication not only between owner and customer but also between the customers themselves.

Shopping in the store will tend to be done more on an individual basis. It will more often occur in groups of one or two people. Design considerations should be geared toward individual shopping habits.

The owner-operator of the store needs to be a member of the neighborhood. He needs to be aware of and know the customers. The communication that is needed in this type of environment, greetings etc., requires that the owner be a part of the community.
Business Plan
Business Plan

The Industry and its Products

The purpose of this section is to give the investor some framework in which to fit all that is to be considered concerning the product and its market.

The Industry

The current status of the proposed industry is one that is in great reform. The corner store for the past decade has been struggling with great hardships. It is an American ideal that has almost completely fallen from existence. The corner store has been replaced by larger stores that can function in a more efficient manor. Recently, however, the trend is beginning to sway back to the concept of the convenience store. This can be seen in the development of small, automobile oriented, convenience stores such as the Village Pantry and Seven Eleven shops. The proposed store is attempting to take this trend a step further by integrating the shop directly into suburban neighborhoods, where a need for convenience shopping is in demand.

The Company

The proposed business will concentrate on the redevelopment of the corner store. The store will offer products and services that are needed in the current market. The current market which the store will service is that of existing suburban neighborhoods. Data obtained by a survey questioning the need for such an establishment showed positive responses to user needs. (see section on questionnaire results)

The Products and Services

The types of products that will be marketed will include convenience items that would not usually be obtained from a large supermarket or retail store setting. Products would include heavily consumed items that are utilized on a daily basis by the market. The store will also serve as an information source for the neighborhood. It will fulfill the need for small convenience trips. At the same time, the corner store will strengthen

* Photograph taken from Christopher Alexander's "Pattern Language"
the identity within the neighborhood, and thus become a focal point of interaction.

Market Research and Analysis

The purpose of this section of the plan is to present facts to convince an investor that the venture product or service has a substantial market in a growing industry and can achieve sales despite the competition.

Customers

The primary customers for the anticipated application are the residents within the neighborhood where the store will be located. The potential customers can be broken into three homogeneous categories.

1. Children under 18 years.
2. Individuals over 65 years.
3. Working Adults

In each of the categories the basis of their purchase decision will be different. Price, quality, service, personal contacts, or some combination of these factors will play a roll in their decision. The goal of the store will be to enhance the quality and service in combination with personal service to make the products marketable. This will become a necessity in order to offset the slightly higher prices which will be needed to maintain the establishment.

Market Size and Trends

The total size of the current market has been calculated from a four block radius of the proposed site for the store. This has been determined as the distance that individual customers will walk to obtain goods from a corner store. In the proposed neighborhood there are 815 total persons. The tally of people was taken from the 1981 census data in the area. The necessary number of potential customers needed to support a corner store is 1000. This figure was given in Christopher Alexander, Pattern Language, in which he establishes this number which needs to be concentrated within a four block radius. The established trend in suburbia today is that of an automobile shopping experience. For this reason I speculate that the store will not only attract individuals within the immediate four block radius, but customers will also drive to the store from beyond this distance and thus increase the total market size.

One strength of the competing companies is the lower prices that they are able to offer. This is perhaps one of the major reasons for the decline of the corner store. Also the corner stores lack of ability to provide customers with convenience is another reason for their decline. The corner store must be able to combat larger establishments by providing the market with convenience in order to justify higher prices. The problem of location has become the problem for the corner store. With the growth of suburbia, the corner store has no longer become a convenient place to shop. I contend the attacking the problem of location by moving right in to suburbia will allow the corner store to thrive again.

Estimated Market Share and Sales

As discussed earlier, the major service that the store will offer to the market is that of convenience. The major customers will be those residents in the neighborhood. Information taken from a survey, conducted in the spring of 1985, where the residents were asked if they would walk to a store if it were in walking distance, indicated that 65% of the
people surveyed would walk in good weather. This indicates that not only is there a need for more convenience, but there is also some degree of acceptance for a shop in the neighborhood. I contend that people will not only walk to the store, but will use the store on a regular basis.

Marketing Plan

This section will discuss specifically what is to be done, how it will be done, and who will do it.

Overall Marketing Strategy

Contacting members of the market group will be a relatively easy task because the facility will be located directly in the neighborhood. The store will be visually seen by members of the community and recognized easily because of its location among suburban houses. The general marketing philosophy will be one that will concentrate mainly on maintaining customer use of the shop. These strategies will need to be focused not only at the community as a whole but there will be a need to utilize specific marketing concepts to generate sales with emphasis on specific groups.

Pricing

The pricing policy is one of the most important decisions that will have to be made. The price must be right to penetrate the market, maintain a market position, and produce profits. The pricing must be such that the products price doesn’t exceed the need for convenience. However, the price must be such that the store can maintain a profitable margin. The prices set must allow the store to get the products and services accepted; must maintain and desirably increase the market share in the face of competition; and must produce profits. Since the prices will inevitably need to be higher than that of the competition, the store must make up for this fact by not only convenience, but also utilizing lower labor costs and lower overhead. This may be implemented by utilizing the older and younger members of the community as employees. They would be more likely to be willing to work for a lower wage. At the same time, they will already be recognized as members of the neighborhood.

Manufacturing and Operations

A service business, such as a small shop, needs to require particular attention and focus on an appropriate location, an ability to minimize overhead, lease the required equipment and obtain competitive sales from a socially skilled labor force.

Geographic Location

The location of the shop is one that has been carefully considered. It will be located directly in a suburban neighborhood. The advantages of this site location will be that it will be close to the customers, it will be easily accessible, and labor will be readily available. Utilities for this scale project are readily available because the site is located in an area planned for this scale project. Zoning, however, could create some problem based on the negative responses given in the survey concerning a store being located in the neighborhood. Fifty-seven percent of the people surveyed responded negatively to the question of weather they would promote a shop in their neighborhood. However, the responses were given in a yes or no format. This could lead to some confusion as to why they responded in such a manner. Preconceived negative images of the shop's scale, location, and aesthetic appearance could
be possible reasons for the negative responses.

Labor Force

The immediate labor force, other than the management positions, will be relatively easily accessible. There is minimum skill required for general employment and the quantity of potential employees in the neighborhood is excessive. I feel strongly that the employees should be from the neighborhood for two reasons. One being that by having people from within the neighborhood working at the store, it will automatically bring community awareness to the store from families immediately in contact with that employee. Also, having the place of employment close to the home, especially for the old and younger members of the neighborhood, is a necessity.

Critical Risks and Problems

The development of a business has risks and problems. The business plan invariably contains some implicit assumptions about them. The discovery of any non-stated negative factors by potential investors can undermine the credibility of the venture and endanger its financing.

Among the risks involved:

Stocking Costs:
The store will need to stock a wide variety of small consumable goods. Therefore, obtaining these goods and keeping them stocked could become a financial burden for a store of this size and nature. This hazard could be avoided by further marketing studies into the accessibility of these products.

Sales Projections Not Achieved:
In this type of venture there will be considerable risk involved. The integrating of a commercial development directly into suburbia is one that really has no predecessors. There is a possibility that the sales projections will not be achieved. In this case, however, the venture will not become a total loss on the part of the investor. The unit, being primarily designed to integrate into the suburban setting, could easily be converted into a residential home. Thus, the investor would not suffer a great loss.
# Building Cost Analysis

## Costs

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Half the people in the neighborhood make small trips at least 3 times a week. Conventional shopping service within the neighborhood is less frequent. Most members of the neighborhood are of the opinion that the trips are usually conducted on a regular basis.

**QUESTION 1**

How often do you make trips to the store for just a few items?

- Everyday
- Three times a week
- Two times a week
- Once a week or less

**the corner store**

Halteman Village
Muncie, Indiana
The close proximity of existing stores will cause problems in competition. The other shop locations allow for greater variety. The store will need to establish and capitalize on an attractive psychological climate. Thus attracting members within the neighborhood. Also a certain degree of loyalty to the shop will need to exist.
The majority of the neighborhood members tend to make small trips in the evening hours. This reveals the need for proper night lighting within the neighborhood. Safe paths to and from the store will be needed.

- What time are small trips most often made?
  Morning  Afternoon  Evening  Never made  Varies

37

the corner store
halteman village
muncie, indiana
TRIPS ORIGINATE FROM PLACE

HOME (70.9%)

IN THE AREA (8.2%)

WORK (20.9%)

WHERE YOU LEAVE FROM

QUESTION (4)
SKETCHES——

The third question reveals a couple of considerations. Some people tend to make small trips on the way home from work. This suggests there is a need for the store to supply some parking area.

Most of the people in the neighborhood leave for small trips from home. The fact that most trips are originated from home reinforces the notion that the store should create more convenience to shopping in the neighborhood and thus allowing it to capture this portion of the market.

Do you usually go to the store from:
Work. Home. When you have other business in the area.

the corner store
QUESTION (5): What percentage of the people in the neighborhood felt that they would walk to a small shop if it were within walking distance? (This suggests that individuals might use the corner store as a fallback.)

-Would you or your children walk to a store if it were in walking distance? (5-10 minutes walk) Yes  No

the corner store
haltean village
muncie, indiana
SHOP IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

QUESTION (6)

The majority of the neighborhood members stated they would either object to or protest a store being located in their neighborhood. This indicates the expected response in which the store could encounter problems in obtaining a zoning variance. The store would have to obtain an image among community members such as to persuade individuals that such an establishment would become a beneficial contribution to the neighborhood. It would need to take on a different character than existing shopping establishments in the outlying areas of the neighborhood.
GROCERY DELIVERY SERVICE
WOULD IT BE USED

LESS THAN ONCE
(78.9%)

THREE TIMES
(0.9%)

EVERYDAY
(0.9%)

TWICE
(4.6%)

ONCE
(14.7%)

HOW MANY TIMES A WEEK

QUESTION (7)
This question simply revealed that the people in the neighborhood felt that if a delivery service became available they would not be prone to use it.
GOODS OBTAINED FROM SMALL TRIPS

GROCERIES (93.7%)
HARDWARE (0.0%)
OTHER (1.8%)
TOBACCO (4.5%)

TYPES OF GOODS

QUESTION (8)
Groceries was indicated as the most often purchased good when making small trips. The shop would need to focus its marketing attention to these type of items. Also a few members indicated that small trips are made for tobacco.
STABILITY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD
LENGTH OF RESIDENCY

OVER 10
(48.6%)

LESS THAN ONE
(12.6%)

(5-10) YRS.
(19.8%)

(1-5) YRS.
(18.9%)

LENGTH IN YEARS

QUESTION (9)

This question confirmed that the neighborhood is a very well established neighborhood. Half the people surveyed indicated that they have lived in the neighborhood at least (10) years.
SOCIALIZATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD MEMBERS
FAMILIES KNOWN

NUMBER OF FAMILIES

(1-5) (58.2%)

(5-10) (27.3%)

(10-15) (9.1%)

(15 OR MORE) (5.5%)

QUESTION (10)

Most members of the neighborhood indicated that they only know (1-5) families in the area in which they live. This confirms the notion that suburban neighborhoods are not conducive to interaction among families; or families within the neighborhood do not wish to interact with one another in order to increase their freedom from social ties.
HOW LONG AND HOW MANY
FAMILIES KNOWN IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

LENGTH OF TIME

FAMILIES KNOWN

TABLE 9-10

CONCLUSIONS

The length of time families live in the neighborhood doesn't seem to have an effect on how many other families they know within the neighborhood. This suggests that families tend to only socialize with neighbors living directly adjacent to them. Thus, creating small circles of association within the neighborhood and deferring it from working as a social unit.

ROWS: HOW LONG

COLUMNS: HOW MANY

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CELL CONTENTS -- COUNT
TABLE 3-5

CONCLUSIONS

Of the people who tend to make (2-3) small trips a week, most make their trips in the afternoon or evening. This suggests that the shop would want to market itself for afternoon and evening activities.

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<tr>
<td>All</td>
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CELL CONTENTS -- COUNT
TABLE 3-4

Of the people in the neighborhood who make small trips in the afternoon or evening most leave from their homes. This reinforces the possibility that such an establishment could capture the small trip market because of its close proximity within the neighborhood.

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CELL CONTENTS -- COUNT
Conclusions and Implications of Survey

People in the neighborhood tend to make small trips to stores on a regular basis. A store being located in the neighborhood would bring some convenience to small trips and thus could capture this portion of the market.

Most people in the neighborhood already live within (1-2) miles of a store. Vehicular access to these stores is very easy. The store must capitalize on pedestrian access in order to compete.

The majority of the people make small trips in the evening hours. This will be the peak business hours for the store.

A delivery service would not be used enough by the people to make it economically beneficial.

Most of the people in the neighborhood leave for small trips from home. This reinforces the notion that the store could capture the small trip market because of its convenient location.

The neighborhood is a well-established, stable neighborhood. Most of the people have lived there for at least 10 years.

There seems to be little correlation between the questions asked. The only two questions that appear to have a small correlation is the question concerning how long the people have lived in the neighborhood and how many families they know there.

Most of the members of the neighborhood indicate that they only know about (1-5) families in the neighborhood. This suggests a desperate lack of social interaction within the neighborhood. It doesn't matter how long a family lives in the neighborhood, they tend to only know a few families.

There could be a problem with obtaining a zoning variance because the majority of the people stated that they would object to a small shop being located in their neighborhood.

Some people tend to make small trips on the way home from work. There will need to be a small amount of parking to compete with the larger commercial establishments. A drive up area may be a beneficial element.

The store will need to concentrate its marketing on grocery items. These are the most often obtained items from small trips. The majority of the retail space will need to be devoted to these type of goods.

Small trips are made to the store by neighborhood members, in the evening or afternoon regardless if they would walk to the store or not.

Of the people that make two to three small trips a week, and indicated that they would walk to a store if it were in walking distance, most leave for small trips from their homes.

The majority of the neighborhood members feel they would walk to a store if it were in walking distance. This suggests that the people within walking distance would use the store.
Concepts and Conclusions
CONCEPTS IN SHOPPING HABITS

The characteristics of a stable shop system is one that relies on the idea that each unit will locate itself in "catch-basins". Each unit must be distributed evenly and must be placed in the center of a catch-basin large enough for its support.

Placing a shop out of central shopping areas is both better and safer. Shops are more likely to survive when they exist without competition in the middle of a catch-basin which needs its service.

Steps To Successful Shop Placement:

Identify all other shops which offer the service you will provide and locate them on a map.

Identify and map the potential consumers. (total number/density)

Look for the biggest gap in those areas where there are potential consumers.

*Steps Taken From Christopher Alexanders, Pattern Language.*
CONCEPTS IN SHOP LOCATION

PRINCIPLES: CONCEPTS
When shops become too large, or are controlled by absentee owners, they become plastic, bland and abstract.

The corner grocery is essential in any healthy neighborhood because of several reasons:

- It provides convenient shopping for individuals.
- It helps to integrate the neighborhood as a whole.
- It is a generator for neighborhood walks.
- It helps to establish the "quality" of a neighborhood.

As a generic figure, how many people does it take to support a corner shop?

As a generic figure, how many people does it take to support a corner shop?

According to Christopher Alexander, Pattern Language, studies on the corner shop reveal that it takes a density of (1000) people within a four block radius. This figure was determined by the distance that an individual will walk to a small shop.

CONCEPTS OF PUBLIC ACTIVITY

People are different in the way they choose to have their house placed in the neighborhood. Some people are more introverted while others are more extroverted. Those who choose a home close to the swimming pool and court areas most likely tend to like a lively atmosphere. They except the fact that people will be going by there homes quite often. They have already chosen an area that is socially active and will except the presence of a store more readily.

CONCEPTS OF INTERACTION

Present housing patterns in suburbia tend to keep different types of households segregated from each other. Teenagers look to older people for role models; old people watch the very young; this interaction is the medium through which people feel their way through life.

Old people are not being integrated socially as in traditional cultures. This necessary integration cannot take place unless they are physically connected and share...
the same streets, shops, services, and common land with the young.

Four things that need to be done to allow the necessary interaction:

Old people must be allowed to stay in the neighborhood they know best.

Old people must be allowed to group together in the neighborhood.

Independent people must be allowed to live independently.

Care needs, such as drugs, must be available within the neighborhood.

The entrance must be placed so that people will have a hint of where the main entrance is as soon as they see the building. This affords the individual the opportunity to plan a path to the building.

There are two major considerations in designing the main entrance:

Placement of the main entrance is perhaps the most important decision that will be made when designing the building. The position of the entrance controls the layout, movement to and from the building, and interior flow about the building.
Position: the entrance needs to be the first thing you come to.

Shape: the entry should clearly be perceived as the entry point.

Visible line of approach.

Building shape
The Corner Store

The different entrance: around the store they could become a place where people would sit and watch.
front parking pool

CONCEPTS OF ENTRY STAIRS
Stairs outside the shop could become a hangout place for children and elderly people. Stairs could also become a place where youth in the neighborhood could meet. The steps must be visible and large enough to accommodate such activity in order for them to work.

If the stairs can allow some vantage point to activity

FINDING THE MAIN BUILDING

This aspect of trying to delineate the main building is one which was struggled with throughout the project. What I have found in trying to delineate a main building within a group of buildings is that the most important delineator is its position. Not only must it be higher that the other buildings but it must be centrally placed as well.

Central position and height are the most important determinates of a building becoming recognized as the main building.

SECONDARY ENTRANCES

Public entrances into the store must all be similar in nature. Each entrance must be located and delineated in such a fashion so that there is no confusion as to which entrance to use and as to weather the entrance is a public or private entrance.
Private Stair
Study and Model
part of the shopping experience.

The thick walls do several things to enhance the store. They add to the overall character of the romantic corner store environment; they allow the walls to become actively used as display shelves; and they reduce the scale of the shopping environment to a more intimate scale.

WINDBOWS IN THICK WALLS

Windows that are placed in thick walls can take on several functions. They can become window display areas for the store. The natural shelf which is made by its placement would serve this function. Also, these areas can become places to sit. Places that afford a view in and out of the store are ideal. They allow one to view indoor and outdoor activities. At the same time they allow the person to be seen by people outside the building, thus drawing attention to activity inside the building.

Window seats and bay windows should be used throughout the store and within the residence. Each serving its own individual purpose.

CONCEPTS IN DISPLAYING GOODS

The concept of "thick walls" which Christopher Alexander discusses in his book, Pattern Language, was seen as an effective means for displaying goods. This concept allows for the walls of the store to not only be used as thin membranes between rooms, which only act as space definers, but allows the wall to take on character and become an active
display of goods
CONCEPTS OF HOUSE LAYOUT

The house should be planned in such a fashion that the rooms gradually become more private as one enters further into the residence. The rooms that are closer to the main entry (the entry most often used) should be more public. The rooms that are located away from the main entry should be the more private, intimate rooms.

Orientation of the house is very important in order for it to function properly in the environment. It should be oriented East and West in order for the house to obtain the most beneficial effects. The living or public activity areas should be located primarily to the West to gain light and heat in the afternoon and evening hours. The kitchen and bedrooms should be located to the East in order to allow for morning light.

DINING ROOM CONCEPTS

The dining area needs to be as comfortable as any other room in the house. It should not be just a room for eating. The dining room needs to be able to accommodate people even when they are not eating. The atmosphere should be such that it is inviting for group gathering before, during, and after meals.

Plenty of light is needed in this area. Natural light should be afforded on all walls of the room. Without plenty of natural light in this room it will become a room that is only used for eating and not for gathering.

PRIVATE PARKING

The owners of the store require a private parking area. This parking area needs to be accessible just as parking garages are used by other families in the neighborhood. It needs to be architecturally defined as being a private parking area.

The parking space should be located directly adjacent to one entrance into the house. This is because the natural pattern of entering a residence is to enter through the garage, not the front door. The front entrance is primarily used for guests.
There should also be a connection between the garage and the house such that the garage and kitchen are directly linked to one and other. This is because goods are often brought into the kitchen from the automobile, and then sorted for storage.

CONCEPTS OF OWNERS BACK YARD

The site is located in an area which is going to make it hard to find private space. The private space must be located away from activity around the store. It should also be located in the southern part of the site, thus allowing for a more favorable space for outdoor activity.

The area need not be a space which is large. It only needs to have a sense of privacy and of personal territory; a space which the owners of the house will occupy.
Image and Form Studies
Structural Image Studies
the corner store
halteman village
muncie, indiana
Image Study openings
Image Study
Conclusion Statement
There is no question that the changes that have occurred in the past ten to fifteen years have been greater than any comparable period in the past. These changes are not entirely due to innovations in business itself but reflect responses for the consumer population. Consumers today have become more mobile, more independent, and have a bigger range of tastes and demands. The question of whether the retail establishments have changed to accommodate changes in consumer attitudes or if these attitudes have been a result of the changes in retail is one that is in much debate. I feel that it is a result of the interaction between the two. Both produce the mixture of cause and effect.

This quote was taken from an author who was writing about what he felt the needs of the suburban shopper should be in the early sixties. It fairly and accurately describes what has happened and outlines the major fault in their planning scheme. "The basic needs of the suburban shopper is for a conveniently accessible, amply stocked shopping area with plentiful and free parking."[63 What he states here is the purely practical need for which the shopping center was originally conceived, which most centers adequately fulfill. What has been left out is the additional attractions for shoppers that produce an appropriate psychological climate. By affording opportunities for social life and recreation in a protected pedestrian environment, shops would fill an existing void. If the shop can do more than just satisfy physical living requirements and add to our social and community needs, it is then that it will make a significant contribution to the enrichment of our lives.

In conclusion, most people would profess that the small shop is, or at least was, a beneficial and necessary feature in our environment; but most people are no longer loyal to the small shop and find the large, multiple stores more preferable for shopping. It is apparent that a change in the small shop must be made in order for it to remain in existence. The chief objective for the small store is to meet its locational requirement needs in this changing society. This will allow it to trade in a way that is economically beneficial and possible.
Drawings
site elevations