AUTOMOBILE THEME PARK

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introduction ................................................................. 2
issues and position .................................................... 3
program ................................................................. 6
site ................................................................. 7
design ................................................................. 8
reference ......................................................... 19
To explore the form, function and context of automobile retailing is the focus of this report. Taking the position of a theme park as a possible alternation of the form, function and context, the process shows the process of design. An automobile theme park is a combination of car dealership, showroom, and auto show and test-driving track. With the Internet communication development, shopping through the Internet has increased. Automobiles are not exception. Regardless of the computerization in the society, the actual experiences will be still vital to make a decision of purchasing automobile. This theme park is meant to give experiences beside automobile sales.

The automobile theme park is divided into four categories according to the car types: utility cars, family cars, cityscape cars, and sport cars. Architectural designs symbolize each of the car types. The design of sport car section had been developed farther than other three.
Car dealerships were originally started from garage builders, who contributed to accelerate the new age of transportation, automobile, in the late 19th century. Only a few automobile manufactures survived in the competition and stabilized. By the early 20th century, the manufacturing process is taken at the factories and the car dealerships became mostly for sales and repairs. As time goes by, the design of car dealership has been changed. One of the styles is like a strip malls where many different car dealerships built side by side. The advantage of the strip car dealership is the customers traffic flow at one location. This idea has been turn into an auto mall, where many car dealerships gather around at one big site with their own circulation connects all the dealerships, but separated from the public road. This change is similar to the shopping mall design development. It started from the individual stores lined along a street to a mall accommodates anchoring department stores and small shops in one big location. The inside of a shopping mall, the customers encounter the taste of each store's style. Although, those changes of shopping malls' designs have been noticeable, car dealerships' design has been unchanged or less attractive. The pictures on the left are three car dealership examples from the Midwest. The common in all three is the buildings are boxes and not many cares were paid at the connection between the front sales area and the back, repair area. Another characters of car dealerships are the vast asphalt parking lot at the front with signage and the other signage on the front facade's wall.
These pictures are interior views of the car dealerships in the previous pages. The low ceilings and the luminaries create the space more like an office space instead of a space for displaying designs. The low ceiling may draw customers' attention to the automobiles' height level and to their significance in the tight space. On the other hand, the automobiles seem to be jammed into the tight space.

Every year, there are Auto Shows in the world. It is the time that automobile designers, manufactures, and engineers can show the improvement, new characters, and aesthetics of automobiles for the year. Many people visit and enjoy the shows as one of attractive events. automobiles are expensive shopping, but valuable transportation. The car dealership is the connection between the builders and the customers to show the quality of automobile. Why the Auto Shows advantages are not applied to the daily base car dealership building design?
The pictures on this page are taken at the Toyota showroom in Tokyo. It accommodates a test driving track, which runs inside and outside. For the safety issue, the track is used only for the alternative fuel cars. The interior is open with the high ceiling like a convention center look. The space consists of 3-D theater, virtual ride, driving games, upgrading equipment sales, and children's play area. The place was more likely as one of destinations for weekend activities. The building was meant to be a car showroom. However, this is not a car dealership. Is it possible to combine car dealership design with car showroom style and auto show style?

With the use of Internet, the number of cars sold on the Internet has been increased. However, the automobile sales will not be taken over by Internet business yet. The automobiles give the drivers experiences, which the drivers will not know exactly until he/she actually drives the car. The smell of car, the feeling of seats, the texture of seats and interior, the comfortability of handle grips, the smoothness of driving will not be experienced through the computer screen at home. Exploring the form, function and context of automobile retailing will be discussed in this report.
Showroom
120,000 sq. ft.
includes audio parts, upgrading stores.

Office
30% of showroom/36,000 sq. ft.
includes financial, sales, managing, and general offices.

Restrooms
>4,800 sq. ft. (16@300 sq. ft each)

Parts Storage & Regular Storage
50,000 sq. ft.

Service
100,000 sq. ft.

Restaurant
3,000 sq. ft.

Cafe
1,000 sq. ft.

Child Care
2,000 sq. ft.

Internet Access Stations

Visitor Parking

Service Parking/Outdoor Inventory Parking
2,000 car lots

Trash/Loading & Unloading

Water Retention Pond
20% of site (8' to 10' deep)

Landscape
The site is located in Daleville, Indiana. It is along state road 67 on the east of highway 89. The state road has just been renovated and widened to five lanes, which will ease the traffic accessing the site. The Anderson Outlet Malls are located by the exit 34. The Mall is attracting people from Indianapolis and 50% from Illinois. Indianapolis does not have any auto malls yet, therefore, the site should be close enough and convenient enough to draw people from the surrounding cities.
The auto mall is divided into four car types instead of manufactures: utility cars, family cars, cityscape cars, and sport cars. The buildings symbolize the car types. The utility, family and cityscape sections remain as schematic phase and the sport section takes step farther into design development as an example of the automobile theme park design. The linear circulation clarifies for the visitors. To visit the site, there are four ways to approach. The visitors who are unfamiliar with the site, park at the visitor parking. Then, they can get information at the main office and take the sky train which runs at the second floor level, to their own destination. Second, those who are familiar with the site and knowing where they want to go, can drive up to the parking located in front of each building and visit the insice. Third, people who are in a hurry but want to have some quick information, stop by the display pavillons. The each display pavilion houses the monthly-advertised cars for sale and network computer to search for cars on the site. The last way to approach is people who just want to use the daycare center facility, the water retention pond for picnic, to receive repairing service, or the restaurant for dinner and lunch.
The utility car design has rough, solid, and mountainous for its themes. This section does not really have a paved test-driving track because of the utility car's capacity. The customers can drive on unflattened surface in the section. The vertical element is a car elevator which is used for taking car out for the test drive and for the purpose of moving cars into the multi-level showrooms inside.
The theme for family use car is centering and hugging. Although all the water retention ponds are open to public, the family pond has soft edges with the grass-covered ground and creates more open feeling for the visitors to come around and sit around.
The cityscape section is divided into six different buildings to accommodate the numbers of automobiles on the market. The water retention pond of cityscape has clean edge, which is raised enough from the ground, so the people can sit around the edges.
The sport car design has characteristics of innovation, mechanics and technology. The structure becomes the focus of developing the design of sport car section. The structure appeals in inside and to outside.

The oval form creates the proportion slender, which achieves the verticality. Since the site is very horizontal and to emphasize the horizontally is introducing verticality as contrast. The verticality also advance in its visibility from the distance.
The idea of network between the sections is expressed by distorting the connection between the skin of building and the sky train. This punching through the site, but not accumulated or obstacle by the skin, or the wall, emphasizes the speed of new age, so as Internet service. However, more detailing of connection would be better.
The colored portion above is the indication of the entrance to the sky train. The interior design, especially fabric covered ceiling carries on the idea of roof, which has light floating taste to it to symbolize speed and lightness of sport car. The ceiling exposes mechanical equipments, however, fabric covers them and diffuses light. The materials used for architecture are metal panels and create cold color atmosphere. Therefore, using warm colors soften up in the interior.
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