

## **The Highland Park Shopping Village: A Planned Sub-Retail Center\***

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The purpose of this paper is to set forth the way in which a specific sub-retail center has been planned and built in order to more efficiently serve the trade territory on which it depends. The shopping center selected for study is one of several strikingly similar projects which are being developed in widely separated areas west of the Mississippi River. All have been in operation a relatively short period of time, each was begun almost immediately after the financial crisis of 1929, and each has been built to meet the demand by automobile trade for more accessible and less congested shopping areas.

The Highland Park Shopping Village was visualized on paper as early as 1917, the year that the Flippen-Prather Real Estate Company platted a homesite area to be developed about five miles north of the business district of Dallas, Texas. This subdivision was called Highland Park West to differentiate it from the original Highland Park, a small independent suburb toward the east. Nine acres on the northeastern corner of the original plat, at the intersection of two main highways was set aside for the building of schools, churches, public buildings, filling stations, and retail shops. That area was selected because it would border potential residential property owned by the developer on only two sides. In 1924, the Company began selling lots, supplying the purchasers with information concerning the proposed use of this special acreage. Before the time of the platting of Highland Park West, Highland Park, and another independent homesite area, known as University Park, near Southern Methodist University had been growing steadily. Neither of these subdivisions provided areas for business zoning, hence, sub-retail centers grew up on their east and north boundaries. The Flippen-Prather Company realized a business center would be needed ultimately to serve the area

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to be developed. As late as 1924 all land to the north and northwest of Highland Park West was undeveloped except for farms and dairies.

By 1930, two small sections of the Village were completed. Since then large homesite sections have been opened and almost completely developed to the northeast, north, and northwest. Nearly a quarter of the area to the west has been built up. The trade territory of the Village includes approximately three square miles of territory and contains about 20,000 people, whose purchasing power per capita is distinctly above the average of Greater Dallas.

The pattern or physical arrangement of the Shopping Village is a modification of the rectangular design (Fig. 1). Six rectangular blocks are spaced about the boundary of the area, and one long center block has store entrances on two sides with a service walkway extending from east to west and a pedestrians' passageway crossing it from north to south. It should be noted that considerable space has been left for walkways and broad streets between the blocks.

The architecture of the Village is uniformly of a California-Spanish style. Maximum window space has been provided for display purposes, and off-sets of some buildings from the sidewalk line serve to focus the attention of the passerby on the store before him as well as to vary the architectural pattern. Block A, in the original plan was to have been a two-story building with a covered walkway across the front. This plan was abandoned, however, in favor of one-story buildings and open walkways for better lighting. There are four units, the inside corners of block F, which have second stories for offices (Fig 2).

Only units A and B have delivery passageways and basements. These blocks house the heavier retail businesses such as grocery stores and restaurant, which have constant heavy deliveries. The passageways are separated from the adjacent street by a high wall before which has been planted shrubbery and grass to make it more attractive. Property values have not decreased in the area surrounding the Village. Some home owners even prefer to live opposite the village rather than opposite possibly undesirable neighbors.

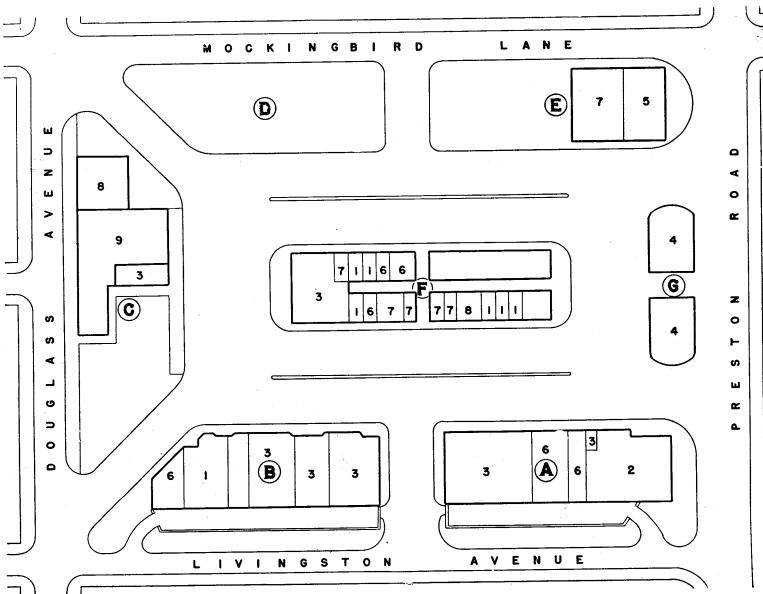


Fig. 1. The plan of the Highland Park Shopping Village. Blocks are designated by letters. Use of space within each block is shown by numbers: (1) personal service shops, (2) drug stores, (3) food stores, (4) gasoline filling stations, (5) bank, (6) specialty goods shops, (7) clothing stores, (8) professional offices, (9) theater.

The objectionable noises, sounds, and smells of the usual retail center sub-landscape are practically non-existent in the Shopping Village. The real estate company, which owns not only the land and buildings but also the sidewalks and streets, effectively limits the type of signs and awnings used. Janitor service, for which the lessee agrees to pay fifty cents per front foot each month, eliminates refuse and keeps sidewalks and windows clean.

The pattern of the Village in regard to the parking facilities and the accommodation of a maximum number of cars has been one of the main factors considered by the realtor in planning the project. The shopping centers nearest the Village, the natural competitors for its trade, were allowed to grow up without any regard to the demands of automobile patrons. All are located on main traffic arteries with parking only on thoroughfares and the side streets intersecting them. The congestion during rush hours slows



Fig. 2. Shops in the center of Block F. Note the style of architecture and the pedestrian walkways in the center of the block.

down the average shopping time and limits the number of persons who can shop in peak periods. The Village, recessed from two main intersecting highways, allows parking space without congesting traffic, yet it is openly accessible to all trade carried by those highways. The development of a shopping center in the traffic eddy off the main traveled roads is a feature peculiar to the Highland Park Shopping Village. Other planned projects have selected areas on the heaviest traffic arteries and have offset the original error by setting aside otherwise valuable building property for free parking space for patrons. The Village will accommodate a maximum of 500 cars with diagonal parking (Fig. 2). The company has exercised great discretion in choosing and placing lessees, so that a peak period for one business, such as the theatre, does not fall at the same time as the peak period of another business as the restaurant, in its immediate area, and thus cause congested avenues and parking spaces. Not only does the lessor space lessees in the blocks according to the types of similar businesses around him which might aid in drawing customers to his store, but also

according to the blocks where his patrons could find maximum parking facilities during rush hours. Some professional men have offices in the Village, but the number is limited because persons visiting their offices take up more hours of parking space than the traffic plan of the Village could allow.

The Company has attempted to prevent congestion in the Highland Park Shopping Village and to have shopping within its area efficient and pleasant. Already half-completed is a smaller shopping center on the southwest corner of the Highland Park West plat. This center is not planned in competition to the larger Village, but it is believed that a small retail district such as this one having a grocery, drug store, bakery, and similar small stores will serve the adjacent apartment house section and reduce crowds shopping in the Village for everyday articles of necessity. This plan of having one main sub-retail center with shops selling many different commodities, and smaller centers selling only commodities daily necessity demands, has been tried with great success by the J. C. Nichols Company of Kansas City in their Country Club District.

The types of businesses which are located in the Shopping Village are similar to the types found in other centers of the same nature; drug store, food stores, filling stations, personal service shops, professional service offices and studios, clothing stores, specialty goods shops, theatre, and bank (Fig. 1). The Texaco station and high grade grocery store which were the first to go into the Village in 1930 and 1931 respectively have done a steadily increasing business. Twelve businesses which came in the period from 1931 to 1935 were unsuccessful because the Village did not have enough shops to attract customers. However, the theatre and several small shops that were established between 1931 and 1935 succeeded. Since 1936 all businesses, including some of the same type as those which failed a few years before, established in the Village, have been successful, and have moved into larger quarters. Obviously the Village is now sufficiently well established and draws enough customers to practically prevent the failure of any business except, of course, through

poor management. Another explanation of its success is that the surrounding homesite areas have experienced a phenomenal growth thereby enlarging the trade territory.

The shopping center is almost completed. Only one whole block and parts of three others are still in construction or in temporary utilization. The Flippen-Prather Company is extremely interested in securing the proper types of businesses for these blocks in order to complete the drawing power of the Village without overloading the parking facilities.

In all respects, the Highland Park Shopping Village has been an interesting experiment in city planning. Though on a small scale as compared with the city as a whole, it has played an important part in demonstrating the efficiency a planned city unit may achieve.