Chapter One
The Prehistory of Australian Shopping Centres

This chapter provides an historical background to the emergence of shopping centres in Sydney in the late 1950s and 1960s. It begins with a brief outline of nineteenth century European department stores, and their Australian counterparts. From here it turns to the development of early American shopping centres, tracing their evolution through to Victor Gruen's Southdale centre in Edina, Minnesota. Gruen's internalised design dominated modern shopping centre development. It was the model adopted in Australia where an American influence had been washing through in waves since the 1920s, as Australia slowly built its own consumer culture. The retail history surrounding, driving and responding to this culture is traced in the remainder of the chapter, paving the way for Chapter Two, which examines the construction of the first Sydney shopping centres.

Department Stores, the bourgeoisie and the middle class

Australian shopping centres evolved from home-grown retail, international trends and, through the twentieth century, innovative American business systems and architecture. Department stores and arcades had forbears and contemporaries in nineteenth century Europe where public space as a whole was under transformation. Buildings such as exhibition halls, museums, and railway stations offered new public arenas where the upper and middle classes might parade, exhibiting both their finery and their manners. Internalised retail sites – arcades, bazaars and emporiums – offered similar spaces for the socially mobile to see and be seen. Their grand architecture, viewing galleries and ornate skylights offered palatial luxury to the rising middle class that held growing economic power. Shopping for this clientele became a leisure activity built around the concept of fashion. They were further attracted by exhibitions and entertainment; fixed and marked prices; sophisticated display techniques; free entry, browsing and comparison shopping; and collections of commodities from around the globe.[1]

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[1] Barbara Henderson-Smith, 'From Booth to Shop to Shopping Mall: Continuities in Consumer Spaces from 1650 to 2000', PhD Thesis, Griffith University, 2003, pp. 17-59.

The Parisian department store of the late nineteenth century became symbolic of the bourgeois world from and for which it was created.[2] Along with a number of other historians, Miller cites Aristide Boucicaut's Bon Marche in 1830s Paris as the first of the great department stores, although Sydney's David Jones, which opened in 1838 may also have a claim.[3] On the world stage, though, it was Bon Marche to which retailers turned for leadership in style, image, size and innovation.[4] By the 1850s, most large cities in Western Europe and the United States had department stores of various shapes and sizes inhabiting existing or adopted premises. In 1869 Bon Marche again led the way when it laid the cornerstone for the first purpose-designed department store building (see Figure 1.1). It was in this building, Perkins and Freedman argue, that the first true department store was born because of the autonomy Boucicaut gave to his various department heads to buy and sell at their discretion.[5]

Successful late-century Australian retailers emulated Europe, developing bustling, more efficient, middle class arcades and department stores.[6] The latter grew out of general stores that had provided a vast array of goods to urban, suburban and country markets throughout the nineteenth century, into recognisable department stores towards its end.[7] David Jones again led the country with the opening of its George Street store in 1887. Elsewhere in Sydney, E. Way and Company followed in Pitt Street in 1891; Anthony Hordern at Brickfield Hill in 1905; Mark Foys in 1906, and Farmer's in 1910. The massive stores became urban landmarks, dominating the city skyline. Their 'impressive facades… evoked a combination of grandeur and stability' offering ostentatious proof of the strength of private enterprise, and the power and prestige of individual retailers who became household names.[8]

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[2] Michael Miller, *The Bon Marche: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, c1981), p. 3.

[3] Westfield Holdings Ltd, *The Westfield Story: The First 40 Years* (Sydney: Westfield Holdings, c2000), p. 2. For the continuation of retail trends prior to, and through the development of the department store, see Henderson-Smith, 'From Booth to Shopping Mall', pp. 7-40.

[4] Miller, *The Bon Marche*, p. 5.

[5] John Perkins and Craig Freedman, 'Organisational Form and Retailing Development: The Department and the Chain Store, 1860-1940', *The Service Industries Journal*, vol. 19, no. 4, October 1999, p. 127.

[6] Kingston, *Basket, Bag and Trolley*, p. 26.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[8] Wolfers, 'The Big Stores Between the Wars', p. 19; Gail Reekie, *Temptations: Sex, Selling, and the Department Store* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1993), p. 4; Joy McCann, *A Lot in Store: Celebrating Our Shopping Heritage* (Parramatta: NSW Heritage Office, 2002), p. 8.
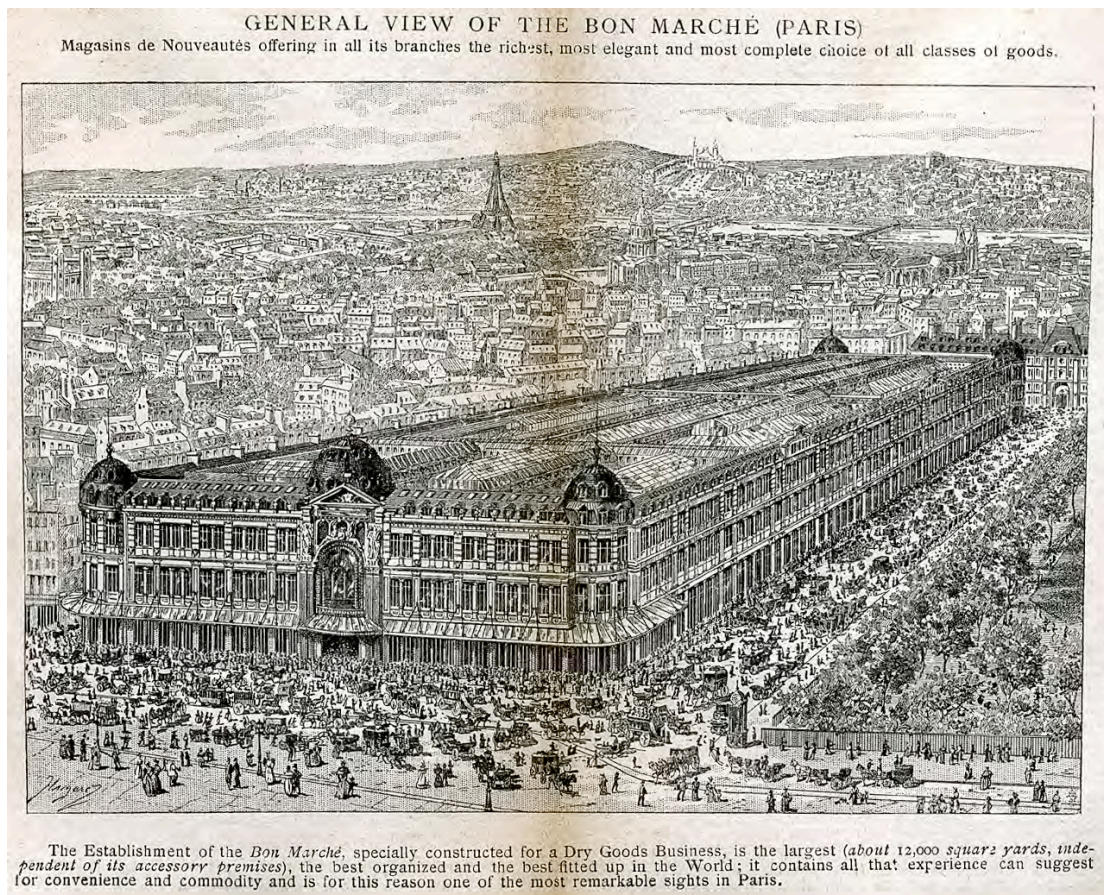
GENERAL VIEW OF THE BON MARCHÉ (PARIS)
Magasins de Nouveautés offering in all its branches the richest, most elegant and most complete choice of all classes of goods.

The Establishment of the *Bon Marché*, specially constructed for a Dry Goods Business, is the largest (*about 12,000 square yards, independent of its accessory premises*), the best organized and the best fitted up in the World; it contains all that experience can suggest for convenience and commodity and is for this reason one of the most remarkable sights in Paris.

Figure 1.1: 'General view of the Bon Marche (Paris)'
D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville 28804, 'Souvenir of the Bon Marche, Paris', 1896, ID: Bonm012, available at
http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/books/booklets/bon_marche/default_bon_marche.htm

By the turn of the century a mass market was emerging in Australia, and the biggest retailers expanded their operations in response. They joined trade associations, published their own journals, and shared sales expertise.[9] Rationalist modes of retailing were initiated, including 'scientific' and technical solutions to staff training, shopper management, store layout, display and salesmanship.[10] Newspapers and journals were used for advertisements; posters celebrated festive sales.[11] Preceding the marketing and promotional blitz of shopping centres, eager and appreciative audiences were drawn by art exhibitions, musical and dramatic performances, pantomimes, magicians, puppet shows, 'fairyland' scenes, Santa Clauses, lectures and demonstrations.[12] With

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[9] Reekie, *Temptations*, p. 44.
[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 44-62.
[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
[12] Wolfers, 'The Big Stores', pp. 19-23.

technological developments in lighting and plate glass manufacture, store windows were turned into mini theatres that combined amusement with product promotion.[13]

Figure 1.2: 'Anthony Hordern and Sons Palace Emporium, 1935'
State Library of NSW, Anthony Hordern and Sons pictorial collection, ca. 1901-1938, Image No.: Pic.Acc.1274 (v.3), Anthony Hordern and Sons: Exteriors of department store, building construction work and factories, 1901-1938.

Above all, the big city retailers marketed themselves as cosmopolitan destinations. Their ability to purchase internationally, architectural magnificence, and perhaps a little cultural cringe led the colonial imagination to link department stores with the sophistication of 'home'.[14] Their popularity represented a broader cultural acclimatisation towards commodity consumption in which advertising was playing an increasingly important role. Stores identified themselves with marketing slogans that emphasised their size, economy, quality and familiarity [15] Such claims were later adopted and adapted by suburban shopping centres, even as they defined themselves against city retailing, claiming to bring 'the city to the suburbs'.

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[13] Reekie, *Temptations*, pp. 5-6.
[14] Humphery, *Shelf Life*, p. 36.
[15] Wolfers, 'The Big Stores', pp. 19-23.

Purpose built department stores began spreading across American cities in the 1890s.[16] In the 1920s, American retailers began placing free-standing general merchandise stores at busy intersections on the expanding public transport networks that serviced the suburbs of American cities. These attracted other retail outlets, creating unified shop fronts and an assortment of traders.[17] Such shopping strips became commonplace in cities across the country by the end of the decade, but soon experienced parking shortages and considerable traffic congestion.[18] Developers sought models that would more comfortably marry cars, people and retail.[19] In 1923, four miles south of Kansas City, the J. C. Nichols Country Club Plaza, opened with extensive free parking an integral element of its design. Kenneth Jackson argues that when Jesse Clyde Nichols organised retail into this single car-friendly development, he 'created the idea of the planned regional shopping center.'[20]

Figure 1.3: J. C. Nichols Country Club Plaza, Kansas City, c1920s
Greetings From Route 50, http://www.rte50.com/2007/06/country-club-pl.html.

Greenery and open space for community activities were plentiful, as were park benches, tiled fountains and public art. The Country Club targeted an affluent demographic. Its aesthetics and layout appealed to civic pride and provided an important underpinning for the commercial side of the enterprise.[21] Despite all the

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[16] Richard H. Robbins, *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*, (Needham Heights MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), p. 15.
[17] John A. Dawson, *Shopping Centre Development* (London; New York: Longman, 1983), p. 4.
[18] J. J. Farrell, *One Nation Under Goods: Malls and the Seduction of American Shopping* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 2003), p. 6.
[19] Andrew Hutson, '"I Dream of Jeannie?" The American Origins of the Chadstone Shopping Centre', *Fabrications*, vol. 9, May 1999, p. 20.
[20] Kenneth T. Jackson, 'All the World's a Mall: Reflections on the Social and Economic Consequences of the American Shopping Center', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 101, no. 4, October 1996, p. 1113.
[21] Farrell, *One Nation*, pp. 6-7.

trimmings, however, Nichols insisted that the Club's success lay in its parking facilities.[22]

Other entrepreneurs imitated the Country Club, but the Depression and World War Two slowed development. There were only eight shopping centres of significant size in the United States in 1946.[23] Retail analyst John A. Dawson argues, however, that the industry's foundations were in place: the concept of unified, pre-planned and managed complexes; planners and architects with the expertise to construct them; developers prepared to finance and organise construction; willing retailers; and suburban consumers well versed in the language and culture of mass consumption.[24]

The first suburban shopping centres that used department stores as anchor tenants began appearing in the 1950s, as the major city stores followed their customers out from the city. A significant early development was Northgate, opening in Seattle in 1950. Northgate stood next to a highway and was surrounded by parking for 4,000 cars.

Figure 1.4: 'Northgate Shopping Center, c.1950'
Eastern Connecticut State University, Shopping Mall and Shopping Center Studies,
http://www.easternct.edu/~pocock/MallsHistory.htm, accessed 10 October 2010.

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[22] Margaret Crawford, 'The World in a Shopping Mall', in Michael Sorkin (ed.), *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), p. 20.
[23] Jackson, 'All the World's A Mall', p. 1113; Dawson, *Shopping Centre Development*, pp. 5-6; Farrell, *One Nation*, pp. 6-7.
[24] Dawson, *Shopping Centre Development*, pp. 6-7.

Within this sea of automobiles, its architect John Graham created a long pedestrian mall joining its two department store anchors. They helped generate custom for the shops flanking the mall. Northgate's architecture was functionally minimalist, designed for cost effectiveness in both construction and operation. As well as saving costs, the pared back aesthetic of clean lines and geometric shapes matched the post-war, modernist vision of progress that shopping centres sought to embody.[25]

Building on these earlier developments, the man commonly credited as the great innovator in mall design, Victor Gruen, burst onto the scene in 1954 with Detroit's Northland Centre: the first mall to have central heating and air-conditioning.[26] Northland provided parking for 10,000 cars and was formed from a cluster of single story buildings grouped around the central focus of Hudson's three-story department store. The buildings were spaced with landscaped, non-commercialised garden courts, of varying size and character, dotted with benches, flowerbeds and low walls. Mature trees softened the harsh edges of the centre's walls and provided shade in summer, while pedestrian malls and covered walkways connected the different structures and unified the design.[27] Northland became one of the most popular and commercially successful malls in America and Gruen was celebrated in newspapers and magazines across the country.[28] *Architectural Forum* described Northland as a 'classic in shopping center planning'.[29]

Gruen was strongly influenced by European modernist architects such as Gropius, van der Rohe, Behrens, Loos, Sitte and Le Corbusier. He also held powerful and nostalgic memories of his childhood in early century Vienna, recalling a centre of cultural and intellectual life where a broad cross section of the population came to discuss politics, culture and daily affairs in outdoor cafes and public spaces. Gruen was aghast at American suburban sprawl. Northland, and his next great project, Southdale, were attempts to emulate, in modern commercial terms, the refinement of European inner city

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[25] Farrell, *One Nation*, pp. 7-8; Jackson, 'All the World's A Mall', p. 1114; Meredith L. Clausen, 'Northgate Regional Shopping Center – Paradigm from the Provinces', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 43, no. 2, May 1984, pp. 153-61.
[26] Farrell, *One Nation*, pp. 7-8.
[27] Edwards, 'Reimagining the Shopping Mall', pp. 6-7.
[28] M. Jeffrey Hardwick, *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 142.
[29] Edwards, 'Reimagining the Shopping Mall', p. 6.

public space.[30] Gruen considered the automobile to be 'the means by which the last vestige of community coherence was destroyed.'[31] His malls were an attempt to bring human scale back to commercial environments:

> By affording opportunities for social life and recreation in a protected pedestrian environment, by incorporating civic and educational facilities, shopping centers can fill an existing void. They can provide the needed place and opportunity for participation in modern community life that the ancient Greek Agora, the Medieval Market Place and our own Town Squares provided in the past.[32]

Southdale cemented Gruen's place in American architectural and retail history.[33] Northland had removed traffic from the shopping equation. Southdale removed the weather.[34] It was the first completely internalised regional shopping centre, and was a conscious attempt to create an urban environment for suburbanites. Hardwick argues that it brought the thrills and attractions of the city: the lights, colour, bustle, variety and crowds, without their unwanted accompaniments: noise, dirt, chaos, congestion, 'danger', and racial complexity.[35] It had parking for 5,200 cars, 139 specialty shops and two department stores,[36] but its standout visual feature was its monumental central court. The length of a city block and five stories high, it was lit by natural sunlight, and filled with visual attractions and distractions. Trees grew fifty feet above the fountains, ponds, cafes, abstract glass mosaics, giant birdcage and children's zoo. Magnolia trees, orchids and eucalypts grew alongside Californian flora while a giant lacquered steel plate sculpture reminded shoppers of the modernist power behind the fantastic scene. Pedestrian bridges crisscrossed the vast expanse, and escalators glided customers through the spectacular array, enhancing their view as they were coaxed upwards.[37] The

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[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 2-7.

[31] Victor Gruen and Larry Smith, *Shopping Towns USA: The Planning of Shopping Centers* (New York: Reinhold, 1960), pp. 17-19.

[32] Victor Gruen quoted in Farrell, *One Nation*, pp. 9-10. In their influential work, *Shopping Towns USA*, Gruen and his economic consultant Larry Smith traced the long history of retail through ancient and medieval times, positioning the shopping centre in a long lineage of the pedestrian-centred market places. Frank Lowy, then Joint General Manager of Westfield Development Corporation Ltd, offered a similar historical context for Westfield's activities in a 1971 industry address. See Frank Lowy, 'Regional Shopping Centres', *Australian Property Journal*, vol. 39, no. 4, December 2006, pp. 278-79 (Reprint of a paper originally published in *Valuer*, vol. 21, 1971).

[33] Farrell, *One Nation*, pp. 7-8.

[34] Edwards, 'Reimagining the Shopping Mall', p. 8.

[35] Hardwick, *Mall Maker*, pp. 151-2.

[36] Jackson, *All the World's A Mall*, p. 1114.

[37] Hardwick, *Mall Maker*, pp. 148-9.

design solved a long-term problem faced by multi-storied shops: how to attract people beyond their scope of vision to higher floors. The central court area opened up Southdale's two floors, revealing selectively displayed public art, glittering merchandise displayed in multiple shop windows, and the activities of other shoppers. This design, combined with parking lots that had entrances onto both levels, rendered the historical dominance of the ground floor obsolete.

Figure 1.5: Grey Villet, 'Shoppers in interior Garden Court w/ stairway to upper level in Southdale Regional Shopping Center', *Life Magazine*, vol. 41, no. 24, 10 December 1956, p. 61.

The central court at Southdale was designed to fill the same function as the outdoor gardens at Northland. Gruen's intention was to create a non-commercial space – a place for people to take a break from shopping, relax and be entertained. Its attractions were positioned in the centre of the court so that people watching them would turn their backs to the stores.[38] Gruen fought a running battle with another architect employed on the project who argued against the removal of shop fronts from the shoppers' eye. Although Gruen prevailed, the alternative practice of continuous market inundation was to become the standard when variations of Southdale were reproduced around the globe.

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[38] Edwards, 'Reimagining the Shopping Mall', p. 8.

Gruen's name became associated with the model he fought against. The 'Gruen transfer' describes the point at which the layout and sensory overload of the mall disorients shoppers, leaving them open to impulse purchases.[39]

Australia was one of the first countries following in America's wake with versions and variations of the shopping centre model, indicating the presence of a number of preconditions shared with its Atlantic neighbour.[40] There had been trade between the countries since Australia's European beginnings, but America's expanding push for international markets in the twentieth century saw a significant increase in the number and variety of American products being introduced after the First World War. Of particular cultural importance was the film industry. A contract system gave powerful US firms virtual de facto control of movie distribution and exhibition during the 1920s and 1930s.[41] Hollywood introduced broad cultural values that were accompanied by new types of consumer durables for which a mass market was emerging in a number of countries. These were produced by increasingly efficient labour-line management methods.[42] Australia had its own mass-production manufacturing industry, focused on food consumables, which had been developing since the 1850s. By the end of the century it boasted household names such as Rosella and Arnotts. British and American food consumables were initially distributed and then manufactured in Australia, reflecting a growing internationalisation of production, consumption and marketing. Switzerland's Nestle, Britain's Cadbury and America's Kellogg all had Australian plants by the 1920s, with Heinz arriving later from the United States in 1935.[43]

While these daily consumables, in their tins and packets, could be found in the homes of all classes, more expensive durables were not so widely spread. This began to change with the introduction of credit mechanisms that lowered initial purchase costs and spread the remainder over time. Hire purchase schemes grew during the 1920s, hitting

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[39] Nicholas Jewell, 'The Fall and Rise of the British Mall', *The Journal of Architecture*, vol. 6, Winter 2001, p. 360.
[40] Hutson, '"I Dream of Jeannie?"', p. 18.
[41] Allan Ashbolt, *Words From the Vietnam Years: An Australian Experience* (Sydney: Australasian Book Society, 1974), pp. 65-7; Diane Collins, *Hollywood Down Under: Australians at the Movies: 1896 to the Present Day* (North Ryde, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1987), pp. 13-15.
[42] Greg Whitwell, *Making the Market: The Rise of Consumer Society* (Fitzroy, Vic.: McPhee Gribble, 1989), pp. 12-3; Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (New York: McGraw-Hill, c1976), pp. 23-34.
[43] Kim Humphery, *Shelf Life*, pp. 41-3.

their stride in the second half of the decade. Again this innovation began in America, but was quickly emulated in Australia, Britain and many other Western countries. Over the same timeframe the prices of both automobiles and electrical appliances dropped, although they remained beyond the reach of the working classes.[44] In the 1920s, Australia received more cars, films and electrical appliances from America than from any other country. These imports brought with them foreign advertising and Australian business quickly emulated both, further fuelling local consumption practices.[45] The market was reaching down further and more pervasively through the classes. It was the economic growth produced by this vertical reach that was to underpin the post-war suburban consumer boom.

The suburbanisation of retail

In the 1920s, as Australia was 'developing into a home owning nation', Sydney's suburban houses and their local shops nearly all lay within easy walking distance of railway stations, ferry wharves and tram stops.[46] These shops held none of the city's glamour, nor the polish and efficiency of the 'modern' retailing that would sweep many of them aside after the War. They supplied day-to-day needs and are perhaps best represented by the small owner-operated grocery store: dimly lit, cluttered, service oriented, and easy on credit for regulars.[47] As public transport services grew, so did the populations surrounding their stations and stops. The larger market attracted retailers selling products that were increasingly mass-produced, encouraging innovation in shop design and customer service.

Chain stores offered a cheaper, more efficient distribution point for mass-produced food and the necessities of everyday life. Like department stores, they vigorously pursued 'scientific' retailing – observing and implementing international technologies, store

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[44] Whitwell, *Making the Market*, pp. 11-4.
[45] Robert Crawford, 'Emptor Australis: Constructing the Australian Consumer in Early Twentieth Century Advertising Literature', *Australian Economic History Review*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2005, p. 233.
[46] On the home owning nation, see *Building*, 12 July 1917, p. 66, quoted in Paul Ashton, 'The Suburban Home', *Locality,* Winter 2001, p. 10; Peter Spearritt, *Sydney's Century: A History* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999), pp. 37-8.
[47] Claire Schofield, *The Shaping of Hornsby Shire* (Hornsby, NSW: Hornsby Shire Council, 1988), p. 210; Kingston, *Basket, Bag and Trolley*, pp. 85-6; Kim Humphery, *Shelf Life*, pp. 40-1.

designs and sales techniques. Perhaps the most significant of these was the notion of self-service. It began with cash-and-carry stores in which customers selected goods from tables, rather than having a grocer or shop assistant fetch them from behind a counter. Customers then carried their items to a purchasing counter where an assistant would tally them on the newly introduced cash register.[48] Prices were cheaper because labour costs were reduced and because the more regulated operations precluded informal credit arrangements between shopkeeper and customer.[49] Organisational structures solidified and grew along with the size of shops, the number of outlets and the quantity of (especially pre-packaged) goods stocked, causing retailing skills to shift away from product knowledge and towards marketing and managerial techniques.[50] Advertising stepped in to provide the 'expert' advice and information previously offered by the retailer.[51] By the mid-1930s Australia's two biggest chain variety store operators, Coles and Woolworths, were firmly established in the Eastern States, although they only diversified into food retailing in the 1950s.[52]

Figure 1.6: Neil Murray, 'A typical cash-and-carry (self-service) grocery store at Essendon, Victoria'
National Archives of Australia, Series A1200, L3986, 1945.

The Depression brought mixed fortunes for retailers and advertisers. Suburban shopping strips expanded, as some of the big city stores lost ground. Restrictions continued to dampen economic expression during World War Two, but pockets of consumer-oriented social experimentation flourished, particularly amongst young, working women. The million-odd American GI's who crossed Australia's shores during the conflict, brought with them a consumer sensibility that was literally foreign to many Australian males. Hsu-Ming Teo has argued that many women were more in tune with this worldview because of their

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[48] McCann, *A Lot in Store*, p. 27.
[49] Spearritt, 'I Shop Therefore I Am', p. 132; Kim Humphery, *Shelf Life*, pp. 66-7.
[50] Kim Humphery, *Shelf Life*, pp. 66-7.
[51] Crawford, 'Emptor Australis', p. 234.
[52] Kingston, *Basket, Bag and Trolley*, pp. 58-9.

magazine consumption and exposure to the commodified romance of popular culture through movies. They engaged with GIs through a new form of courtship, dating, that positioned romantic interactions and interludes within a context of commodity consumption.[53] Advertising encouraged such practices, even as sections of the media frowned upon them.[54]

At the end of the War, Australia and the Western world more generally stood on the brink of a new way of life. Consumer culture had grown in fits and starts since the turn of the century; now it would flourish. Retailing was to be transformed; media and advertising take an ever-greater and more intrusive role in people's daily lives. Existing trends in marriage ages and childbirth numbers would be reversed – the former dropping, the latter rising. Women's participation in the paid workforce would climb steadily for the next fifty years. Urban environments, driven by the car, would morph from central hubs dangling ribbons of development into a massive, seemingly indistinguishable sprawl of suburbs.[55]

Cars changed all before them, forming the foundation of an economy that increasingly revolved around their production, maintenance and the facilitation of their use.[56] Between 1939 and 1960, ownership in New South Wales trebled (and trebled again by 1984).[57] Frequency of usage also grew. Spearritt estimates that the percentage of trips by private vehicle rose from thirteen percent in 1947, to forty-seven percent in 1960, and to seventy-two percent in 1971.[58] Australia's first locally manufactured mass produced car rolled of the assembly line at Fisherman's Bend on 29 November 1948.[59] By 1962, the millionth Holden had been built and the automobile was established as a

[53] Hsu-Ming Teo, 'The Americanisation of Romantic Love', in Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake (eds), *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective* (Canberra: ANU E Press, c2005), pp.171-192.
[54] Karen Hutchings, 'Beauty Begins at 7am: Cosmetics, Fashion, Consumer Goods and Beauty Mythology in 1950s and 1960s Australia', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 64, March 2000, pp. 44-5. For the limitations of sexualised advertising imagery in the lived lives of mature women, see Lisa Featherstone, 'Sexy Mamas? Women, Sexuality and Reproduction in Australia in the 1940s', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 36, no. 126, October 2005, pp. 234-52.
[55] Clive Forster, *Australian Cities: Continuity and Change*, third ed. (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 11-12, 17.
[56] Spearritt, *Sydney's Century*, p. 150. For the pre-war history of the motor car's impact on Sydney, see Lester Hovenden, 'The Impact of the Motor Vehicle, 1900-39', in Garry Wotherspoon (ed), *Sydney's Transport: Studies in Urban History* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1983), p. 139-54.
[57] Robin Walker and Dave Roberts, *From Scarcity to Surfeit: A History of Food and Nutrition in New South Wales* (Kensington, N.S.W.: New South Wales University Press, c1988), p. 140.
[58] Spearritt, *Sydney's Century*, p. 152.
[59] *The Holden Story* (Melbourne: GMHA, 1989) n.p.

necessity in Australian society.[60] As the inner suburbs merged together, new ones appeared on the suburban fringe, pushing the boundaries of the metropolitan area as they sprawled outwards.[61] Industrial, commercial and retail infrastructure followed, and then encouraged, the spreading population.[62] By the mid-1950s, forty percent of Sydney's population lived beyond the reach of public transport, and required a car for daily activities, including shopping, and commuting.[63]

The suburbs offered clean, affordable space where the city seemed crowded, run-down or unsanitary. Housing shortages had become pressing during the 1930s with the onset of the Depression, and made worse with building controls during the war.[64] At the war's conclusion, the shortage was severe – estimates vary between 350,000 to 480,000 houses.[65] Housing and environmental conditions were also poor: factories continued to set up in inner working class neighbourhoods, belching out smoke and foul odours. This attracted the political Left to suburbanisation because it offered the chance to improve the living standards of workers,[66] whilst the Right foresaw the suburbs as an environment conducive to a non-radical working class and a settled, conservative middle class. Both sides of politics shared a commitment to the concept of the nuclear family in its own residence, leading to the self-contained freestanding house as the dominant suburban model.[67] City dwellers became weekend home builders. While the total metropolitan population grew by about half a million between the late 1940s and late 1950s, the percentage living in the inner city dropped from around twelve to eight

[60] *The Holden Heritage*, 3rd ed. (Port Melbourne, Vic.; Blakehurst, NSW: Public Affairs Department, General Motors-Holden's Automotive Ltd in association with Marque Publishing, 1992), p. 31; White, *Inventing Australia*, p. 164; Susan Sheridan with Barbara Baird, Kate Borrett and Lyndall Ryan, *Who Was That Woman?: the Australian Women's Weekly in the Postwar Years* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001), p. 19.
[61] Sheridan, *Who Was That Woman?*, p. 19.
[62] E. C. Fry, 'Growth of an Australian Metropolis', in R. S. Parker and P. N. Troy (eds), *The Politics of Urban Growth* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972), p. 20.
[63] Stella Lees and June Senyard, *The 1950s: How Australia Became a Modern Society, and Everyone Got a House and Car* (Melbourne: Hyland House, 1987), p. 18.
[64] R. W. Connell and T. H. Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History: Poverty and Progress* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1992), p. 280; Seamus O'Hanlon, 'Modernism and Prefabrication in Postwar Melbourne', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 57, 1998, pp. 108, 111.
[65] Lionel Frost and Seamus O'Hanlon, 'Urban History and the Future of Australian Cities', *Australian Economic History Review*, vol. 49, no. 1, March 2009, p. 9; Graeme Davison and Tony Dingle, 'Introduction: The View from the Ming Wing', in Graeme Davison, Tony Dingle and Seamus O'Hanlon (eds), *The Cream Brick Frontier: Histories of Australian Suburbia*, (Clayton, Vic: Monash Publications in History, Department of History Monash University, 1995), pp. 9-10.
[66] Carolyn Allport, 'The Unrealised Promise: Plans for Sydney housing in the forties', in Jill Roe (ed.) *Twentieth Century Sydney: Studies in Urban and Social History* (Sydney: Hale and Ironmonger, 1980), pp. 55-8.
[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 51-2.

percent.[68] In the same time period almost one hundred thousand people moved out of the inner city, most relocating in the outer suburbs.[69] Home ownership provided more than a place to live, it was also an investment related to consumption as people bought up in the 'great sweepstakes of rising land values', and having built the house, set about furnishing it.[70]

Retailing in the suburbs

The great expansion of the suburbs saw a marked increase in suburban retail provision, particularly in hardware and furnishings.[71] This was largely to do with accessibility; a fact city retailers could do little about, and which would increasingly plague their businesses.[72] The car had made much suburban growth and retail expansion possible, and now, even as it further spread the population, its proliferation added traffic congestion and parking problems to the inner-urban environment.[73]

As late as the 1950s, big city retailers still felt comfortable in their grand buildings, as yet unshaken by the growing market share of smaller suburban enterprises.[74] Even in 1961, David Lloyd Jones confidently declared that: 'the variety of goods carried by [city] specialty shops, general stores and department stores exceeds anything available in the suburbs.'[75] His perspective may well have been shaped by his store's ongoing success, but for others the decline in sales growth could not be dismissed, nor go unarrested forever.[76] In the ten year period to 1956, trade in Sydney's inner city dropped

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[68] Beed, 'The Growth of Suburban Retailing in Sydney', vol. 1, p. 8.

[69] 'Summary of the 5th Annual Residential Retail Trader's Association Conference', *Retail Trader*, vol. 39, no. 12, July 1958, p. 32.

[70] Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 11.

[71] John Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', Honours Thesis, Department of Geography, Sydney University, 1965, p. 6.

[72] D. N. Jeans and M. I. Logan, 'Problems of Growth in Sydney's New Suburbs', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, no. 1, 1961, p. 35.

[73] G. S. Newell, (Chairman of Directors, L.J. Hooker Ltd.), ' Real Estate Development', *Retail Trader*, vol. 41, no. 11, July 1960, p. 17; 'Retail Trader's Association Annual Report 1961-1962', June 1962, p. 5.

[74] Peter Spearritt, 'Suburban Cathedrals: The Rise of the Drive-In Shopping Centre", in Graeme Davison and Tony Dingle (eds), *The Cream Brick Frontier* (Clayton: Monash Publications in History No. 19, Monash University, 1995), p. 92.

[75] Quoted in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 January 1961, p. 30.

[76] Charles Lloyd Jones, Chairman David Jones, 1960-1980, cited in Westfield Holdings Ltd, *The Westfield Story*, pp. 64-5.

from fifty to thirty-six percent of total retail turnover.[77] The main area of decline was in the city's last sales category bastion, comparison goods – more expensive, less frequently purchased items that customers were likely to compare prices on as part of their purchasing decision – with convenience stores already well entrenched in suburban areas.[78] An industry analysis of city and suburban sales figure for men's and women's nationally branded clothing lines in 1963, returned evidence of suburban retail growth. It indicated that the suburbs had overtaken the city with thirty-four percent of sales, compared with 30.5 percent in the city and 35.5 percent in the country.[79] A more detailed study commissioned by Farmer's claimed that from 1956/7 to 1961/2, sales of 'Department Store Type Merchandise' increased by 71.1 percent in Sydney's suburbs, and by just 3.4 percent in the city.[80]

The Retail Traders' Association, dominated by the larger retailers, cajoled and berated the government, trying to get assistance to halt the slump.[81] It pleaded for an end to the deference being paid to the car and for priorities to be refocused on 'mass public transport systems'.[82] While there may well have been 'fumbling and inadequate traffic and transport arrangements' as the big stores claimed, the general problems were not unique to Australia.[83]   American cities were reporting similar issues, and the broader trend of decentralisation was shared by many major cities in the industrialised world.[84]

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[77] Summary of the 5th Annual Residential Retail Trader's Association Conference, *Retail Trader*, vol. 39, no. 12, July 1958, p. 32.

[78] Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', p. 7.

[79] Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *FARMS039, 142*, Letter from J. G. Clarke, Director, Holeproof NSW Limited to E. L. Byrne, Managing Director, Messrs. Farmer & Co. Ltd, 17 June 1963; Letter from E. L. Byrne, Managing Director, Messrs. Farmer & Co. Ltd to J. G. Clarke, Director, Holeproof NSW Limited, 25 June 1963. See also Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *FARMS039, 142*, 'The Drift from the Cities', 1 August 1963; Letter from George J. Connor, George J. Connor & Associates to E. L. Byrne, Managing Director, Farmer & Company Limited, 17 September 1963.

[80] Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *FARMS039, 142*, Peter Hyde, 'Suburban Opportunities in Sydney Metropolitan Area', May 1965, p. 2.

[81] Joseph J. Myler, 'The Retailers Stake in Public Transport', *Retail Trader*, vol. 41, no. 6, January 1960, p. 32; Editorial, 'The Fate of Sydney', *Retail Trader*, vol. 46, no. 8, March 1965, p. 1; Editorial, 'Rehabilitation of a City', *Retail Trader*, vol. 48, no. 1, August 1966, p. 3.

[82] *Retail Trader*, vol. 46, no. 2, September 1964, p. 3. (Note that there are frequent cases of information being presented in *Retail Trader* and other trade journals without an author or article title). See also, Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *FARMS039, 142*, Letter from James B. Griffen, Secretary, Retail Traders' Association of New South Wales to The Town Clerk, Town Hall, Sydney, 27 September 1963.

[83] Theo Kelly (Managing Director Woolworths Ltd.) quoted in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 January 1961, p. 31.

[84] Joseph J. Myler, 'The Retailers Stake in Public Transport', *Retail Trader*, vol. 41, no. 6, January 1960, p. 32; Beed, 'The Growth of Suburban Retailing in Sydney', p. 7.

The city stores had to adapt to survive. Grace Bros, forced by the decline of the Broadway end of the city that accompanied the opening of the Harbour Bridge, had been the first of the Sydney department stores to make the jump to the suburbs.[85] In 1933, it opened cut-down branches at Parramatta and in a dilapidated building at Bondi Junction.[86] Commenting on their move to the suburbs, A.E. Grace declared that: 'if the mountain will not go to Mahomet, then Mahomet must go to the mountain.'[87] The company's further expansion was constrained because the Depression had soaked up excess capital that was difficult to recuperate within the limited war time economy and the ongoing restrictions after hostilities had ceased. But by the late 1950s, Grace Bros was poised 'to encircle Sydney', beginning with renovations of its Parramatta and Bondi stores.[88] The Parramatta redevelopment was the country's biggest poured concrete project since the war. Twenty-five years earlier, the company's rat-infested converted vaudeville hall at Bondi had wowed the shoppers.[89] Now, the lavish, modern appointments of the revamped stores reflected the transformations that consumer capitalism had brought to Australian society. Reportage in *The Retail Trader* described the stores in the newly emerging language of the suburbs:

> Everything for the family can be found in each store… [with the] greatest comfort and convenience… Everything is within sight and touch… the colour scheme combines turquoise and white, highlighted with yellow, orange and cherry-red, against cedar and ash polished timbers… specially designed lighting fitments, cool indoor garden areas and murals of richly coloured Perspex contribute to the decorative scheme.[90]

By the early 1960s there were department store branches in a variety of sizes throughout Sydney. It simply made better economic sense to locate stores on cheaper land, away

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[85] Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 3236*, 'Macquarie Shopping Centre North Ryde: Submission by Grace Bros Pty Ltd that Interim Development Order No. 13 Municipality of Ryde be altered or rescinded so as to permit the establishment of the Macquarie Shopping Centre at North Ryde', c1969, Section 2, p. 1.
[86] Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 69*, 'Grace Bros. Parramatta Store History', July 1980; Nicholas Brash, *The Model Store 1885 – 1985* (Adelaide: Griffin Press, 1985), pp. 269-71; 'The top of the trade (7): Store that found itself at wrong end of city set fast pace to get out of difficulty', *Inside Retailing*, no. 277, 27 June 1977, p. 6; Spearritt, *Sydney's Century*, p. 214.
[87] Brash, *The Model Store*, p. 272.
[88] This was a stated aim according to Brash, see *The Model Store*, pp. 275-76. Similarly, Myer in Melbourne planned to encircle that city with regional shopping centres in the 1960s. See Humphery, *Shelf Life*, p. 116
[89] Brash, *The Model Store*, pp. 270-1.
[90] *Retail Trader*, vol. 39, no. 4, November 1957, p. 6.

from congestion and closer to where customers and workers lived.[91] Of the largest, Grace Bros had added a branch at Chatswood; David Jones had joined them at Parramatta; Anthony Hordern had opened at West Ryde; while Farmer's had a store at Gordon. The smaller department stores and 'general retailers' were more widely spread. Snows, Winns, McDowells, Waltons, Bebarfalds, Nock & Kirby, Marcus Clarke and Mark Foys dotted the more developed suburbs. Parramatta was the largest of these, followed by Bankstown, while Bondi Junction, Chatswood, Hurstville, Fairfield, West Ryde, Burwood and Manly also had considerable retail development.[92]

Figure 1.7 Sam Hood, 'Exterior, Grace Brothers, Parramatta'
State Library of NSW, Hood Collection Part I: Sydney streets, buildings, people, activities and events, c.1925-1955, Home and Away – 9957, October 1939.

Supermarkets and variety store chains were even more widely distributed, matching themselves to existing blocks of land and drawing on smaller market catchments. Companies like Derrin Bros, Moran & Cato and Franklins competed with the dominant Woolworths.[93] By 1959, Australia had over 3,000 small supermarkets. While this was

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[91] Hal Kendig, *New Life for Old Suburbs: Post-war Land Use in the Australian Inner City* (North Sydney: George Allen & Unwin Australia Pty Ltd, 1979), p. 22.
[92] T. W. Beed, 'The Growth of Suburban Retailing in Sydney', pp. 88-91.
[93] *Ibid.*, pp. 88-91.

still only twelve percent of the total number of grocery stores, they accounted for thirty-seven percent of sales. Three years later supermarkets had ballooned to seventeen percent of grocers controlling seventy-one percent of the trade.[94] The growth in car ownership and household refrigeration lay behind their success, but their modernist aesthetic, fully stocked shelves and particularly their cheaper prices also held great appeal.[95]

With department stores, supermarkets, and chains expanding their operations in the suburbs, these areas became increasingly viable for a range of smaller retailers, especially after wartime restrictions were lifted in 1954.[96] Specialist clothing and footwear stores thrived, particularly on basic items like nightwear, school clothes and men's wear that did not require the city's stamp of class. Electrical retailers appeared selling radios, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, washing machines and, after 1956, television sets. They complemented and supported established local businesses like butchers, bakers and chemists, but in a sign of rising affluence, second-hand stores began closing or moving as the electrical and home-furnishing retailers moved in.[97] Small owner-operated grocers also suffered, unable to compete on price or convenience with the supermarkets' economies of scale.[98]

Retail in the suburbs was booming, but there remained room for innovation. Strip shopping precincts were popular, but with parking and traffic congestion becoming suburban as well as inner-city problems, their viability as commercial and social environments was being questioned. Continued growth in suburban populations and material aspirations demanded further retail expansion to meet them. Centralised social space appeared to be missing from, or falling short of demand in suburban infrastructure. The success of supermarkets indicated the appeal of modern retailing methods, and developers now sensed a healthy profit in a 'retail cure-all for the chaos

[94] Karen Hutchings, 'The Battle for Consumer Power: Post-War Women and Advertising', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 20, no.s 50 & 51, 1996, p. 67.

[95] John Fiske, Bob Hodge and Graeme Turner, *Myths of Oz: Reading Australian Popular Culture* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), pp. 112-3; Forster, *Australian Cities*, p. 18.

[96] B. A. Grace, (Managing Director of Grace. Ltd. and President of Retail Traders Association of N.S.W.) quoted in *Australian Retailing* vol. 3 no. 1, April 1969, p. 4.

[97] Kingston, *Basket, Bag and Trolley*, pp. 85-6.

[98] For the social impact of this, see Janet McCalman, *Struggletown, Public and Private Life in Richmond, 1900-1965* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1984), pp. 275-76.

created by suburban sprawl and inner city congestion.'[99] As was so common in capitalism's spread through the course of the twentieth century, America was sought as the font of inspiration. The shopping centre was on its way to Australia.

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[99] James E. Deger (Associate Director of Richardson and Wrench Ltd. and consultant to Lend Lease Development Pty. Ltd. on all retail projects), 'Retail Expansion and Development', *Retail Trader*, vol. 44, no. 1, August 1962, p. 44; D. D. Harris and B. Y. Harper, *Urbs and Surburbs: The City Environment* (Melbourne: Cheshire Publishing Pty. Ltd., 1974), pp. 71-3.

Chapter Two
Building Sydney's First Shopping Centres

Large-scale, pre-planned, 'regional' shopping centres began appearing in Australia in the late 1950s. Australia's first regional centre was opened at Chermside near Brisbane in 1957. It was followed by one at Top Ryde, Sydney, later the same year and then by Myer's massive Chadstone complex in 1960. Shopping centre construction, in its variety of sizes, became the major form of all new retail development in the country.[1] It was a boom industry with department store companies and property developers scouring the suburbs of Australian cities for suitable sites on which to build.[2] In Sydney, Top Ryde was followed by Warringah Mall, Miranda Fair, Roselands, Burwood Shoppingtown and Bankstown Square, all of which were opened between April 1963 and September 1966.

Depending on the configuration of existing building sites, there were also numerous smaller 'community' or 'neighbourhood' developments offering parking, supermarkets, perhaps a small department store and a few specialty shops. In the early 1960s such complexes were built at St Ives, Hornsby, Matraville, Rockdale and French's Forest. At Hurstville, a 'super shopping centre' which included 1700 car spots, sixty-nine shops, commercial offices and 300 motel-type units was built over the top of the railway station.[3] Some of these developments, particularly Hornsby and Hurstville were to grow into regional centres in their own right.

This chapter details the emergence of regional shopping centres in Sydney. It discusses the critical importance of car usage and its attendant traffic and parking problems that were a key motivation for centre construction. The arguments for centres as community meeting places are outlined and analysed. Interactions between business and government are then examined through an analysis of the pre-development process. Tenant selection and the tastes of suburbia during the home building boom of the 1960s are discussed, as is the critical importance of department stores and supermarkets to any

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[1] Editorial, *The Retail Trader*, vol. 44, no. 3, October 1962, p. 3.
[2] Spearritt, 'I Shop Therefore I Am', 134-5. See as an example of planning future developments, Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 3236*, P. A. Management Consultants Pty Ltd, 'Retail Market Survey of Sydney Metropolitan Area for Grace Bros. Pty. Ltd', September 1968.
[3] *The Retail Trader*, vol. 44, no. 11, June 1963, pp. 4-7.

major development. The chapter sets a foundation for those that follow by outlining the causes behind the early developments – many of which remained constants through the post-war period.

<p style="text-align:center">**********</p>

The reasons for the emergence of regional shopping centres in Australia paralleled those in the United States. There, as we saw in the previous chapter, the shopping centre had been designed to marry cars, retail and people. With Australian suburbs and their retail services also expanding rapidly in conjunction with ever-increasing car usage, Australian business turned to its post-war friend, protector and mentor and emulated its design. Conditions were different: there were fewer cars and freeways, and Sydney's relatively dense built environment saw more compact, vertical centres than the sprawling green field constructions in America.[4] Here, smaller populations resulted in smaller centres, and public transport services still guided site selection.

Many of the basic conditions, though, were similar enough for the American-designed model to be embraced. Rising affluence, the availability of credit, changing work patterns, suburban sprawl and materialist lifestyles all indicated the growth of consumer capitalism. Although the car had not yet swept all before it in Australia, its influence was on the rise. Davison has described the 'repertoire of novel urban forms' constructed for the car in America, which were then exported around the globe. In Australia, highways, roadside food outlets, motels, drive-in theatres and service stations all rolled out before it.[5] Service stations sprang up on the corner blocks of major roads[6] – Sydney's Sutherland Shire alone had over a hundred service stations built or approved by the early 1960s.[7] Drive-in theatres were embraced as 'part of the contemporary scene' across the metropolitan area.[8] And the self-contained, one-stop, drive-in shopping centre was widely acknowledged as the logical means to accommodate the

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[4] Barrett, 'Roselands', p. 126-7.
[5] Davison, *Car Wars*, p. 78; Noel Bell Ridley Smith & Partners Pty Ltd, 'Top Ryde Shopping Centre Demolition Report, Heritage Impact Statement', 30 October 2006, p. 12.
[6] Spearritt, *Sydney's Century*, p. 150.
[7] Paul Ashton, Jennifer Cornwall and Annette Salt, *Sutherland Shire: A History* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006), p. 172.
[8] Ben Goldsmith, 'The Comfort Lies in All the Things You Can Do: The Australian Drive-in, Cinema of Distraction', *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 33, no. 1, 1999, pp. 153-4; *Building, Lighting Engineering*, April 24 1958, pp. 41-2.

cars, retail and people that were fighting for space in existing suburban shopping districts.

Automobile traffic and retail parking in the suburbs

Retail has always been entwined with and dependent upon systems of transportation. Simply put, people have to be able to access shops in order to purchase goods and the length and difficulty of the trip has to be worth the end object. As the car reshaped the post-war cities of industrialised nations, retail too was transformed. Cars enabled people to travel further to shops and carry more goods home. The work and onus of delivery began to shift from the retailer to the consumer, just as self-service had shifted the responsibility of labour within the store.[9] The car freed people from dependency on local shops, but also spread the city, making travel into its centre less amenable.[10] Department stores opened suburban branches.[11] Chain stores and supermarkets undertook expansion programs, and increasing numbers of specialty shops opened around them to provide 'modern' services and consumer goods to suburban populations.

But even as it drove their expansion, the car brought to the suburbs the congestion, noise and pollution that many suburbanites were trying to leave behind.[12] Cars were also dangerous; between 1950 and 1970 twice as many Australians died in traffic accidents as perished in the Second World War.[13] Strip shopping precincts had naturally grown along the busiest roads, or at major intersections to capture passing trade. These roads, usually no wider than they had been before the war, now carried much greater volumes of both local and through traffic.[14] As traffic increased, the utility and

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[9] My thanks to Bev Kingston for this point.

[10] R. O. Powys, 'Economic Impact Statements: A Market View', in R. Stimson and R. Sanderson (eds), *Assessing the Economic Impact of Retail Centres: Issues, Methods and Implications for Government Policy*, AIUS Publication no. 122, (Canberra: Australian Institute of Urban Studies, 1985), p. 72.

[11] Peter Scott, 'The Australian CBD', *Economic Geography*, vol. 35, no. 4, October 1959, p. 290.

[12] On the fresh air 'out there', see 'Where our people live', *Argus Women's Magazine*, 9 May 1950, pp. 8–9, quoted in May, 'Ideas From Australian Cities', p. 77.

[13] W. J. Hudson, '1951-72', in F. K. Crowley (ed.), *A New History of Australia* (Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1977), pp. 541.

[14] B. A. Grace (Managing Director of Grace Bros Ltd. and President of the Retail Traders' Association of NSW) quoted in *Australian Retailing* vol. 3 no. 1, April 1969, p. 6; Peter Yeomans (partner Clarke Gazzard Yeomans, Architects, Planners) 'Shopping Centre Renewal – Some Recommendations', address to the 37th A.N.Z.A.A.S. Conference in Canberra, January 1964, reprinted in *The Retail Trader*, vol. 45,

attractiveness of such precincts declined.[15] Promotional material for Top Ryde shopping centre argued that it was 'becoming more and more difficult – and on Saturday mornings virtually impossible… to park the car anywhere within coo-ee of where it is desired to shop.'[16] The *Retail Trader* commented: 'the last justification for this kind of shopping centre goes when the volume of traffic makes easy, free customer-parking in front of the shops impossible.'[17]

It was difficult for established shopping areas to provide the quantity of parking 'demanded by a society where motor vehicle ownership tripled from 1947 to 1971.'[18] Often the only way to provide parking for suburban shops was to demolish existing commercial or residential buildings, and little of this occurred in the 1950s. Land was expensive and there was competition for suitable positions – not least from high bidding oil companies seeking sites for petrol stations.[19] T.W. Beed noted the influence of land prices at the time, observing that those areas with considerable parking – Parramatta, Blacktown, Bankstown and Willoughby – were far removed from the expense of inner city property prices.[20] But even outlying areas faced shortages. On the Northern Beaches, all but one of the general shopping areas were located on both sides of busy main roads that were 'cluttered up with parked vehicles'.[21]

Despite traffic increases caused by the State government's focus on roads, combined with people's enthusiasm for driving, Local Government authorities were sluggish in taking up the challenge of providing off-street parking stations. Although responses varied across the metropolitan area, they tended to be remedial rather than the result of forward planning. The first public off-street parking facilities were built in Parramatta in 1953, with other areas following during the decade. But at the beginning of the 1960s significant shortages remained, especially around inner city suburbs like Redfern and

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no. 8, March 1964, p. 13. On cars and commuters, see Frost and O'Hanlon, 'Urban History and the Future of Australian Cities', p. 10.
[15] *The Retail Trader*, vol. 40, no. 12, July 1959, p. 14; see also *Building, Lighting Engineering*, April 24 1958, p. 44.
[16] Spearritt, *Suburban Cathedrals*, p. 96.
[17] *The Retail Trader*, vol. 40, no. 12, July 1959, p. 14.
[18] Spearritt, *Suburban Cathedrals*, p. 94.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] Beed, 'The Growth of Suburban Retailing in Sydney', pp. 95-8.
[21] Warringah (NSW) Council, 'Town Planning Scheme: Scheme Report, Financial Statement, Civic Survey, Ordinance' (Sydney: The Council, 1956), p. 12. For an example in Dee Why, see Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', p. 51.

Newtown, but also in some major suburban centres. The most notable of these was Bondi Junction where, despite the level of development, there was little off-street parking other than on the roof of the Grace Bros store. T.W. Beed concluded that 'the provision of adequate parking space' was 'one of the most significant problems confronting' metropolitan shopping areas.[22]

Figure 2.1: 'Miranda shopping centre, Sydney'
National Library of Australia (NLA), Sievers, Wolfgang, 1913-2007. Wolfgang Sievers photographic archive, Image no.: nla.pic-an23150241, Wolfgang Sievers, 1964.

Pre-planned regional shopping centres offered a solution to this infrastructure shortage with large car parking facilities an integral component of their design. As one retail executive put it: 'the planned shopping centre is a product of the twentieth century. Or at least the motor vehicle is, and the motor vehicle is one of the main reasons for the new shopping centres of today.'[23] Denis Winston, Professor of Town and Country Planning at Sydney University, saw a battle looming between existing suburban

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[22] Beed, 'The Growth of Suburban Retailing in Sydney', pp. 95-8.
[23] *The Retail Trader*, vol. 40, no. 5, December 1958, p. 33.

shopping areas and the new regional centres. The latter, he thought, held such great advantages that nothing could long hold back their development. Winston argued that the former were well located, but required rapid modernisation and improved car parking facilities to hold their market position.[24]

The integration of parking facilities with shops became a matter of architectural innovation. Early American centres had emulated city-style, or 'downtown' development, building flush to the street with parking in the rear. This left customers a long walk to the shops. Following the Southdale design, the 'modern' mall maximised shop frontage while limiting walking distances from parking areas. This followed a fundamental sales principle: 'that a retail location is only as good as the amount of buying foot traffic delivered to it.'[25] It was commercially inefficient to make shoppers walk long distances without them passing shops and being invited in to buy.[26]

Sydney's big regional shopping centres were all designed to accommodate large numbers of cars around these sales-maximising strategies. When it opened in 1957, Top Ryde provided 400 car spaces.[27] In 1963, Warringah Mall opened with 2,300 parking spaces, reflecting a car ownership level for the surrounding area almost twenty percent higher than the metropolitan average.[28] At Miranda Fair's opening in 1964, 1,100 car spaces were available for shoppers providing them with direct access to all three levels of its Farmer's department store.[29] The larger car parks at Roselands (1965) and Bankstown Square (1966) at least partly reflected the rapid growth of car usage through the decade. Roselands opened with 3,000 car spaces, Bankstown Square with 2,500 and a maximum walking distance of 400 feet to the shops.[30] A few years after opening, Warringah Mall expanded its car park to accommodate 3,000 cars.[31] In the highly motorised Warringah Shire, eighty percent of early visitors to 'The Mall' arrived by car,

[24] *The Retail Trader*, vol. 40, no. 12, July 1959, p. 14.

[25] James B. Douglas (President, Northgate, and Executive Vice-President, Bergen Mall Shopping Centres U.S.), 'The Future of Regional Shopping Centres', *The Retail Trader*, vol. 39, no. 8, March 1958, pp. 44-5.

[26] The commercial logic of shopping centre layouts is discussed further in Chapter Five.

[27] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1957, p. 19.

[28] *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, p. 18; Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', p. 45.

[29] Sutherland Shire Council Library, Local Studies Collection, Miranda Fair File, Farmer's Press Release, 'Statement for Architectural and Trade Journals', 17 October 1962, p. 2. *St. George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Hurstville ed.), 5 February 1964, p. 9.

[30] *The Retail Trader*, vol. 48, no. 3, October 1966, pp. 6-7; *Sydney Morning Herald,* September 20, 1966, p. 22.

[31] *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, p. 18; Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', p. 45.

with fifteen percent coming by bus and only five percent walking.[32] On average the Mall welcomed 70,000 vehicles a week.[33]

Figure 2.2: 'Bulldozing the car park, Bankstown Square'
Barry Doherty, State Library of NSW (SRL NSW), APA Collection: Sydney people, places and events, 1953-1987, APA – 22740, 3 May 1966.

Creating a social retail space in the suburbs

Suburban retail services sat at the heart of suburban communities, but their convenience and amenity was marred in many areas by the busy main roads that cut through their midst.[34] Shopping centre advocates argued that their new retail form offered the kind of safe, modern and comfortable centralised community meeting place that the suburbs desperately needed. They echoed Victor Gruen's earlier arguments, despite the fact that

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[32] These figures are based on surveys conducted by Warringah Mall management, collated and cited in Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', p. 54.
[33] These figures were obtained from traffic counters at the Mall's entrances and exits, collated and cited in *Ibid*.
[34] Warringah (NSW) Council, 'Town Planning Scheme', p. 12.

Sydney's suburbs in the 1960s had quite a variety of facilities and venues compared to the tract sprawls of America. It was true, however, that Sydney's existing suburban social sites lacked the centralised focus that a pre-planned development could offer.

Centralised community facilities had not been adequately provided by any of the parties responsible for suburban residences. Private developers could see no profit in them, while owner builders were naturally focused on their own individual projects. The initial designs for estates built by the New South Wales Housing Commission (NSWHC) included social infrastructure, but funds were scarce in the immediate post-war period and community facilities bore 'the brunt of restrictions'. Plans for integrated community centres combining recreational, social, and educational activities along side child care and health services were frequently shelved. Instead more affordable, decentralised facilities such as sports fields, swimming pools, and the widely supported Baby Health Clinics dotted the suburbs. The state government offered support for local library development in the late 1940s, but by the early 1950s only a little over half of Sydney's 40 municipalities had taken it up.[35]

The absence of cohesive well integrated suburban development and the problems facing the city centre saw long term calls for a regional planning body bear fruit with the creation of the CCC in the late 1940s. This followed overseas trends in which planning had become institutionalised and 'a profession in its own right'.[36] Local councils in NSW had held some regulatory authority since the Local Government Act of 1919 but had largely let development go unchecked. Focused on local interests, they also lacked the power or inclination to plan on a citywide scale. In places this led to what Hugh Stretton described as somewhat charming and haphazard development, but it also caused plenty of problems.[37]

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[35] Allport, 'The Unrealised Promise', pp. 55-8.

[36] Brendan Gleeson and Nicholas Low, *Australian Urban Planning: New Challenges, New Agendas* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2000), p. 118; on the recognition by Australian States in the 1940s that their capitals required planning to deal with expansion, see Nigel W. Ashton, 'Australia', in Arthur Ling (ed.) *Urban and Regional Planning and Development in the Commonwealth* (Lincolnshire: Howell Publications, 1988), p. 251; NSW Planning and Environment Commission, *Review: Sydney Region Outline Plan* (Sydney: Government Printer, 1980), p. 21.

[37] Hugh Stretton, *Ideas for Australian Cities*, third ed. (Sydney, NSW: Transit Australia, 1989), pp. 237-8.

The Planning Scheme developed by the Cumberland Council and delivered in 1948, described a number of issues caused by a decentralising population inhabiting a centralised urban framework. The city remained at the core of transport, business, employment, culture, entertainment, and retail infrastructure, leaving the suburbs unable to create cohesive local communities. The Plan referred to suburbs as 'mere dormitory areas, dependent on the city's facilities except for purely local and very limited interests'. It identified a number of existing suburban district centres, including Burwood, Bankstown, Hurstville, Parramatta, Liverpool, Chatswood, Ryde, and Warringah. These district centres had grown up naturally around transport hubs and boasted commercial development as well as the potential for population expansion. Under the scheme, a cluster system built around these existing centres would replace the existing city-centred model. Solving transportation problems arising from the 'all roads lead to Rome' structure would be easier, decentralised infrastructure could be developed, and the foundations laid for local cultural identities to form.[38]

The Plan, however, faced a number of difficulties, not least the cooperation of local councils. They had to foot the bill for funding both the council and many of its initiatives in their areas. There was also a shortage of skilled planners. In the end:

> local planning did not eventuate, and the movement for community centres was resolved into a commitment to provide decentralised community services… The only successful decentralization of services that did occur under the Cumberland Plan was the decentralization of shopping centres. Thus it was the shopping centre that developed as the communal meeting place.[39]

With strip shops compromised by traffic congestion, pre-planned, self-contained shopping centres offered a coherent solution. Parking stations would separate pedestrians and cars; their internal walkways providing a cool haven from the noise, dirt and pollution of major traffic arteries. In 1964, NSW Premier Bob Heffron warmly welcomed Miranda Fair as a private enterprise response to the city's shortages, which he said had arisen due to Sydney's rapid expansion.[40] Councils across the city likewise

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[38] CCC, 'The Planning Scheme for the County of Cumberland, New South Wales/ the report of the Cumberland County Council to J.J. Cahill, 27th July 1948' (Sydney: CCC, 1948), pp. 27 – 34.
[39] Allport, 'The Unrealised Promise', p. 66.
[40] *St. George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Hurstville ed.), 18 March 1964, p. 5.

embraced shopping centre investment, eager for the infrastructure and 'progress' it brought without significant municipal expense – except for the odd public road or open space that a centre might enclose.

Figure 2.3: 'Exterior and car park of Miranda Fair shopping centre, Miranda, New South Wales'
Wolfgang Sievers, NLA, Sievers, Wolfgang, 1913-2007. Wolfgang Sievers photographic archive, Image no.: nla.pic-vn4853388, 1964.

Shopping centres as social space

Shops had long provided social space for urban populations, and the idea of positioning a store as a community focus was not new to big business. In 1959, *The Retail Trader* had advised its readership to:

> Build your store as an essential institution within your community…let the shadow of your institution fall over the length and breadth of your

community for the base of that shadow will always be rooted in your store.[41]

Although they were overtly commercial environments, early shopping centres did provide a number of community and social facilities that brought something new to suburbia and made them attractive to patrons. Winston argued that they were 'the first examples of the return to the amenities of the pre-industrial city'.[42] And a number of residents and shoppers remember the early centres as 'social hubs' of their communities.[43]

When it opened, Top Ryde included an auditorium, which was intended for fashion shows, Christmas promotions and other demonstrations. A baby-minding centre was located on the centre's bottom floor where mothers could leave their children while they shopped. The open central mall featured a kiosk, sculptures, a children's playground, garden areas and a fountain pool. Wheel chairs for the disabled were available upon request as were strollers for young children.[44] Further convenience was provided through offices at which people could pay gas and electricity bills and lodge medical benefit claims.[45] Miranda Fair, which opened in March 1964, included a medical and dental centre, a children's playground, a child-minding centre and a branch of the local library.[46] Sutherland Council had also hoped for an auditorium in the complex, but settled for a large restaurant that could be hired for organised functions.[47]

Perhaps the most impressive of the early centres in terms of community facilities was Roselands. Child minding, rest centres, play areas, outdoor coffee bars and amusement facilities added social value to the commercial underpinnings of the centre. Statues, greenery and the magnificent raindrop fountain provided a compelling and attractive

[41] *The Retail Trader*, vol. 40, no. 7, February 1959, p. 43.

[42] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1957, p. 21.

[43] See for example, Ros, OHR no. 14, 14 - 20 January 2007; Maire-Louise, OHR no. 33, 21 - 27 January 2007; Dianne, OHR no. 48, 21 - 27 January 2007; Robert, OHR no. 65, 11 February – 11 March 2007.

[44] *Daily Telegraph*, A. J. Benjamin Supplement, 13 November 1957, pp. 22, 34.

[45] Ryde City Council Library, Local Studies Collection, Top Ryde File, 'Top Ryde Shopping Centre, 40 Year Commemoration Supplement', 1997, pp. 2-3,

[46] Sutherland Shire Council, Finance Committee Meeting, minute no. 421, L6/3/2, 1 July 1962; Sutherland Shire Council, Finance Committee Meeting, minute no. 503, L6/3/2, 6 August 1962.

[47] Sutherland Shire Council, Special General Committee Meeting, Minute no. 161, 7 May 1962.

backdrop.[48] The fountain was comprised of fifteen miles of clear nylon thread, descending from the ceiling into a pool. Drops of water streamed down the threads giving the impression of indoor rain.[49] The fountain symbolised Roselands – beautiful, modern, elegant – and was a much-mentioned attraction. The 'Rendezvous Room' provided women shoppers with a 'place to freshen up', a 'hostess to answer queries', telephones, magazines, a powder room, an ironing room – to 'press a dress while you wait for your friends' – and even showers.[50] The 'Rose Tearoom' was a favourite for wedding receptions.[51] A Post office and banks provided essential services and 'like any city or town', there was a 'Town Hall'.[52] Situated on the gallery level, it was designed as a venue for club meetings, wedding receptions and parties, although it did cause some confusion amongst residents who took the name literally, believing they could conduct Municipal business at the centre.[53]

The idea of shopping centres as community meeting places was a powerful one. Again echoing Victor Gruen, Australian developers and operators frequently equated their modernist centres with the 'medieval market square'. This imagined historical site had, it was said, represented the 'gayest time in trading' where 'a friendly meeting place' provided 'a happy family atmosphere'.[54] Melbourne urban historian Andrew May argues that such historical analogies were used to provide a guise of public space for modern, privatised retail environments.[55] This is not to undermine the value of shopping centres to the people who used them, but it is worth noting that non-commercialised space in shopping centres declined over time. Graeme Davison has suggested that planning authorities are at least partially to blame for not applying sufficient pressure to the industry.[56] Developers for their part increasingly viewed community facilities as costly luxuries. The child minding services, auditoriums, meeting rooms and free services of the 1960s shopping centres, had all but disappeared by the 1970s. In

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[48] *The Retail Trader*, vol. 44, no. 3, October 1962, p 6.

[49] Steve Bedwell, *Suburban Icons: A Celebration of the Everyday* (Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1992), p. 107.

[50] Canterbury City Council (Campsie) Library, Local Studies Collection, Roselands File, Grace Bros promotional brochure, 'Explore Roselands', c1965.

[51] Personal correspondence with Lorne Parker Doyle, Bundanoon, 3 October 3 2006.

[52] Canterbury City Council (Campsie) Library, Local Studies Collection, Roselands File, Grace Bros promotional brochure, 'Explore Roselands', c1965.

[53] Canterbury City Council Records, 65/ 5766, 'Town Clerk's Report', 7 December 1965.

[54] Advertisement in *The Advocate*, 16 October 1968, p. 10.

[55] Andrew Brown-May, *Melbourne Street Life: The Itinerary of Our Days* (Kew, Victoria: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1998), p. 120.

[56] Davison, 'From the Market to the Mall', p. 21.

America, with malls abandoning community facilities and entire complexes devoted to promoting consumption at every turn, Gruen lamented the bastardisation of his design.[57]

While it may have been profitable, the highly commercialised nature of modern shopping centres was a point of critique for many of those who responded to this project's oral history survey. A particular focus was the extent to which shopping centres promoted consumer spending 'for entertainment' at the expense of other social interactions.[58] 'Their key objective', wrote Tanya from Penrith, 'is profit – not people.'[59] Ann Marie claimed that shopping has 'become a national past-time', and that 'we are buying things we don't need, that don't suit us and [we are] always eating in the process.'[60] Others spoke of centres 'being impersonal and creating anonymity'.[61] Matthew, a research assistant from Croydon in his twenties suggested that a 'loss of identity with the outer world' occurs when one walks through their doors.[62] While those with grievances were probably more likely to respond to the survey, and particularly the question of the shopping centre's place in their community, critiques were mingled with pragmatism and complicated with sophisticated understandings of historical change. Many people appreciate the convenience of shopping centres and their importance as social sites, but feel able to criticize their business model. They also recognise that centres are representative of broader changes in Australian society and culture.[63]

Location, location, location: Situating Sydney's early shopping centres

Industry literature from the late 1950s onwards emphasised the fundamental importance of location when considering a potential site for a shopping centre. Nothing was said to be more critical to success or failure.[64] Intensive market research was recommended to pinpoint and quantify a number of inter-related factors, including income and

[57] Victor Gruen, 'The Sad Story of Shopping Centres', *Town and Country Planning*, no. 46, 1978, pp. 350-52.

[58] Gretchen, OHR no. 1, 14 - 20 January 2007; Margaret, OHR no. 44, 21 - 27 January 2007; Peter, OHR no. 41, 21 - 27 January 2007; Julia, OHR no. 56, 28 January – 03 February 2007.

[59] Tanya, OHR no. 86, 8 January 2008 - 23 February 2008.

[60] Ann Marie, OHR no. 91, 8 January 2008 - 23 February 2008.

[61] Rose, OHR no. 39, 21 - 27 January 2007

[62] Matthew, OHR no. 3, 14 - 20 January 2007.

[63] Barbara, OHR no. 95, 8 January 2008 - 23 February 2008.

[64] Douglas, 'The Future of Regional Shopping Centres', p. 44; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May 1967, p. 19.

expenditure patterns; levels of car ownership; future demographic trends; zoning and potential zoning changes; an analysis of surrounding retail and existing centres; as well as the physical characteristics of the site in terms of construction requirements.[65]

In the early days of shopping centre development in Sydney, there was a marked lack of accurate data for developers to access when making planning decisions. Developers had either to draw broad conclusions from imperfect data or undertake more detailed research themselves or through qualified consultants.[66] In 1962, for example, Lend Lease undertook a survey of suburban retail floor areas in order to provide it with more complete data on which to base planning decisions. The team conducting the research manually measured 160 shopping precincts throughout Sydney.[67] Grace Bros, similarly, commissioned a detailed survey of the Sydney metropolitan area in 1968, to establish the optimum areas for development over the following twenty years. It provided demographic data, statistics on existing shopping centres, and a summary of areas where there was a projected surplus or deficiency of retail space.[68] When Westfield conducted surveys, it often did so in conjunction with a major retailer who would become an anchor tenant in the resulting complex.[69]

The most important factor when considering a location was the size of the surrounding population and its levels of income and expenditure.[70] The earliest centres were built in well-established residential areas such as Ryde, Sutherland, Bankstown, and Canterbury.[71] The people who lived in these areas did not occupy the top end of the retail market or income groups – higher social status shoppers expected a large range of comparison goods and were more likely to shop in the city.[72] The shopping centre industry sought middle-income suburbanites, both white and blue collar, with steady jobs, families and cars. Through the post-war years, the big centres expanded with the

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[65] P. D. Yeomans, 'Address to the Golden Jubilee Convention of the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales', *Retail Trader*, vol. 42, no. 7, February 1961, p. 38.
[66] Beed, 'The Growth of Suburban Retailing in Sydney', p. 154. Note that Beed himself was an academic geographer employed to conduct research for Lend Lease.
[67] The results of this are discussed and analysed in Chapter III of *Ibid*., pp. 56-101.
[68] Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 3236*, P.A. Management Consultants Pty Ltd, 'Retail Market Survey of Sydney Metropolitan Area for Grace Bros. Pty. Ltd', September 1968.
[69] Westfield Development Corporation, 'The Story Inside' (attached to the 1968 Annual Report) (n.p.: Westfield Development Corporation, 1968). See also 'Westfield Limited: A Company Review' (Sydney: Rivkin and Company, 1972), p. 4.
[70] *Retail Trader*, vol. 40, no. 5, December 1958, p. 40; *Inside Retailing*, no. 114, February 25, 1974, p. 10.
[71] Spearritt, 'I Shop Therefore I Am', pp. 134-5.
[72] Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', p. 22.

growth of this demographic. P. D. Yeomans, an influential figure involved in the development of both Top Ryde and Miranda Fair, told a real estate convention in 1961:

> We are in a wonderful business. Everything is on our side as far as the future is concerned. The rush to the suburbs is continuing, and that type of rush is the right type of rush for us. The people who are going to the suburbs are young people, people with children, people in the better income groups – and I do not mean high – who are perfect for the shopping centre market. Expressways will be built; they will reach out further to bring people from greater distances. There are more and better automobiles, there is the coming trend towards two-car families, and this is a fact tremendously favourable to shopping centres.[73]

Finding concentrated pockets of this demographic was the first step in research for companies involved in centre development, and it began many years before centres were actually built. Discussions on building a commercial village centre at Top Ryde were taking place in Ryde Council as early as 1943.[74] Benjamin's began negotiating the purchase of land in 1953 for the centre that was eventually opened in November 1957.[75] Plans for a large shopping complex at Brookvale to service the Warringah Shire were first formulated in 1955, eight years before Warringah Mall opened.[76] Lend Lease began researching Bankstown's population growth, income levels and retail habits in 1957, again eight years before it eventually opened Bankstown Square.[77] Myer was also active in the area: in 1958 it speculated with the purchase of undeveloped green belt land at Bass Hill that had been set aside under the Cumberland Plan to limit suburban sprawl.[78] At Miranda, approval for a shopping centre had been given to Farmer's in 1960 when it bought land from Suburban Shopping Centres Limited, and approached council to have that company's earlier development consent transferred to itself and the Myer Emporium Limited.[79]

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[73] Yeomans, 'Address to the Golden Jubilee Convention', p. 46.
[74] Ryde City Council Library, Local Studies Collection, Kathleen Spears, 'History of Urban Development', unpublished research essay, UNSW School of Town Planning, c1990s, p. 7.
[75] Noel Bell Ridley Smith & Partners Pty Ltd, 'Top Ryde Shopping Centre Demolition Report', p. 12.
[76] Warringah Council (Dee Why) Library, Local Studies Collection, 'Warringah Mall, Part II', Hammerson Group Presentation, n.d., p. 2.
[77] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 September 1966, p. 1.
[78] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, November 30, 1961, p. 1; December 7, pp. 15-7; December 14, p. 18; December 21, p. 2. On the strategy of using Bass Hill as an entry for Farmer's into the south-western suburbs, see Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *FARMS039, 142*, Keith Kelly, Larry Smith and Company, San Fransisco, 'Memorandum – Bass Hill Location' 24 October 1963.
[79] Sutherland Shire Council Development Committee Meeting, Minute no. 922 (1), DC.370/600/638, 19 September 1960; Sutherland Shire Council Meeting, Minute no. 268, DC.370/600/638, Letter from

On the Northern Beaches, which became Warringah Mall's market, retail services had expanded, particularly at Dee Why, to cater for a growing population drawn to the area by industrial development and employment opportunities.[80] There was still, however, little in the way of comparison stores, with only a junior department store, Coopers, in Manly. With Warringah Shire's population almost doubling between 1947 and 1954 and continuing to grow rapidly through the 1950s and 1960s (see Table 2.1), opportunities for retail development beckoned. The Mall opened its gates with David Jones, a Grace Bros Homemaker Store and Woolworths.[81]

Table 2.1 Population of Selected Local Government Area and Shires, NSW, 1933-1971[82]						
LGA/ Shire	1933	1947	1954	1961	1966	1971
Bankstown	25,384	46,646	102,384	152,251	159,981	162,730
Blacktown	13,724	20,753	36,328	86,295	111,488	156,830
Campbelltown	2,835	3,725	9,690	18,701	25,695	34,235
Canterbury	79,050	99,396	109,871	113,820	115,802	130,446
Liverpool	6,315	12,642	26,610	30,874	68,959	86,579
Parramatta	18,076	20,816	76,117	104,061	106,996	111,043
Ryde	27,861	36,418	54,101	75,568	81,291	88,806
Sutherland	13,525	29,184	65,757	111,746	131,739	151,574
Warringah	16,054	33,176	60,239	94,440	117,035	156,873

As Table 2.1 indicates, Sutherland's population increased by more than 45,000 to over 111,000 people between 1954 and 1961.[83] This created a demand for community and retail services. The first supermarket resulted from the conversion to self-service of Carlisle's general store at Cronulla, although Woolworths was the first major retailer to the area in 1959. McDowells brought the first department store. It opened at Caringbah in 1961, complete with a nautically-themed coffee lounge and extensive car park to cater for the Shire's populace that had car ownership levels equivalent to twice the

Farmer's (Holdings) Limited (16th February 1962), 5 March 1962. Sutherland Shire Council Meeting, Minute no. 268, DC.370/600/638, 5 March 1962.
[80] Warringah (NSW) Council, 'Town Planning Scheme', p. 12; Jeans and Logan, *The Problems of Growth*, p. 35.
[81] Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', p. 110.
[82] Census of the Commonwealth of Australia (Melbourne: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics 1933, 1947, 1954, 1961, 1966); Census of Population and Housing (Canberra: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1971).
[83] Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1947, 1961. For similar figures over a non-census year timeframe, see Kevin Hilferty, *Sutherland Shire: Birthplace of Modern Australia* (Sutherland: Sutherland Shire Council, 1995), pp. 44.

national average.[84] 'By the early 1960s all the shrines of American modernity and mass-consumerism… had made their appearance'.[85]

Bankstown was a relatively small suburb until after the Second World War when wartime aviation industries were converted to peacetime manufacturing. The conversion generated employment and the suburb rapidly expanded. Bankstown's population grew from 46,646 in 1947 to over 150,000 in 1961 (see Table 2.1).[86] Average families had a high percentage of wage earners, many could afford a second car, and significant numbers of 'housewives' were obtaining driving licences.[87] Bankstown was the biggest municipality in Australia, and was growing quickly by around 7,000 people every year. The size of the population within twenty minutes drive was larger than that of Perth and all its suburbs at the time.[88]

Research showed that these areas were an under-tapped source of retail revenue. In the late 1950s, Ryde was one of the city's fastest growing areas. Housing was filling its semi-rural environment, which was accessible through the busy conduits of Victoria and Ryde roads.[89] In addition to the almost 55,000 people living in the municipality in 1954, there were significant populations in the adjoining Hunter's Hill (12,571), Ku-ring-gai (52,615) and Lane Cove (21,806) municipalities.[90] While Ryde was fairly well serviced by existing food retailers, there was said to be a demand for clothing, footwear, furniture, floor coverings and hardware. Estimates of sales from the proposed centre suggested a total income of approximately £3 million a year, of which a department store would take around a third.[91] Further north, residents of Warringah Shire spent around £24 million on consumer goods other than motor vehicles in 1962, with at least £11 million spent outside the area.[92] Lend Lease's research at Bankstown also showed 'a leakage of spending money to areas outside the municipality'. Where Bankstown had more than six percent of the country's population, it held only three to four percent of

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[84] Paul Ashton, Jennifer Cornwall and Annette Salt, *Sutherland Shire: A History* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006), pp. 152, 168-9, 172.
[85] *Ibid*., p. 168.
[86] Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1947, 1961.
[87] *Ibid*., p. 108; *Sydney Morning Herald,* September 21, 1966, Special Feature, p. 1.
[88] *Sydney Morning Herald,* September 21, 1966, Special Feature, p. 1.
[89] Noel Bell Ridley Smith & Partners Pty Ltd, 'Top Ryde Shopping Centre Demolition Report', p. 10.
[90] Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1954.
[91] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1957, p. 19.
[92] *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, p. 20.

retail sales. In contrast, nearby Parramatta with five percent of the population took a greater percentage than this in sales.[93] It was estimated that nearly £20 million in retail expenditure was 'escaping' from the Bankstown area.[94]

Once a general area of suburban prosperity had been identified, a specific site within it was required. In the late 1950s, Grace Bros had its eye on the Canterbury Shire. Cheap, easy to build on land; good road and rail infrastructure; and a growing population that could serve as both a market and a labour force, combined with council's encouragement through land rezoning to make Canterbury an important centre for light industry.[95] Looking to build on such a sound base, Grace Bros scoured maps for a suitable site. After little success, a flight over the area in a small aircraft was arranged. From high above, the uninterrupted green expanse of the Roselands golf course jumped out as 'the perfect answer'.[96] Its owner, Stan Evan Parry, had been the municipality's Mayor from 1932 to 1947 and was, according to one commentator, 'for nearly half a century perhaps the most powerful and controversial figure in Canterbury'. He had bought the land, the former Fenwick estate, in 1943 and set it up as a golf course before being forced to flee abroad from a Royal Commission into land speculation in 1947.[97] By the 1950s he had returned. Ten years of successively rising land values combined with the expense of rates and taxes to make selling the golf course a logical economic decision. Parry sold thirty-one acres to Grace Bros in 1958.[98]

Where retailers were not the developers of a site, a final agreement on its location was part of a negotiated deal with the major tenants.[99] While demographic data was crucial, logistical practicalities were also important, beginning with the accessibility of a site. If people were going to shop at a centre, it had to be easy to get to. In the 1960s it was estimated that people would drive for five to six minutes to suburban centres for

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[93] *Sydney Morning Herald,* 21 September 1966, Special Feature, p. 1.

[94] Murphy, *Challenges of Change*, p. 108. Measuring escaping expenditure was a standard pre-development test and claim. For a later study, see Nancy Hillier Achives (NHA), City of Botany Bay Library, Ibecon Pty Ltd, 'Westfield Developments Pagewood Proposal', 7 May 1982.

[95] F. A. Larcombe, *Change and Challenge: A History of the Municipality of Canterbury, NSW* (Canterbury: Canterbury Municipal Council, 1979), p. 360.

[96] *Retail Trader*, vol. 47, no. 4, November 1965, p. 10.

[97] Larcombe, *Change and Challenge*, p. 176; Joan Lawrence, Brian Madden and Lesley Muir, *A Pictorial History of Canterbury Bankstown* (Alexandria: Kingsclear Books, 1999), p. 87.

[98] Canterbury City Council (Campsie) Library, Local Studies Collection, Roselands File, Laura Ferguson, 'Whatever Happened to the Raindrop Fountain: The History and Development of Roselands Shopping Centre', unpublished essay, p. 8.

[99] Lowy, 'Regional shopping centres', p. 280; 'Westfield Limited: A Company Review', p. 4.

convenience purchases and up to fifteen minutes for comparison goods.[100] When Roselands opened, 714,000 people – around a third of Sydney's population – lived within a twenty minutes drive; one quarter of a million within ten minutes. Sixty-seven thousand could easily walk to it from their house.[101] These distances were crucial determinants of retail success.[102]

As well as being close to major roads, sites had to be well serviced by public transport routes, both to meet development approval guidelines and to cater for women whose husbands took the car to work. In the late-1950s around sixty percent of Australians visiting suburban shopping precincts still did so using public transport.[103] Although rising car ownership levels, and the design of centres to accommodate them, would soon see this figure drop, proximity to public transport remained important in site selection. If a site was not already a hub of public transport, the willingness of government to make it one, as we will see in Chapter Seven, could be as equally important.

Top Ryde was situated at the intersection of two major traffic arteries, and was serviced by seven bus routes.[104] Warringah Mall had a large number of the area's bus services passing directly by, although most services from the north passed through the trade area of Dee Why first, and some eastern and southern Shire suburbs were more directly linked to Manly.[105] The close proximity of all these centres, though, meant that car drivers were likely to choose destinations on preferences other than just travel time.[106] Miranda Fair was situated one hundred yards from Miranda Station.[107] Around 6,300 cars passed the site every day, with a further 12,500 driving along Herring Road just north of it.[108] Roselands was situated near the intersection of King Georges Road and Canterbury Road. It was about 10 miles from Sydney, and less than five miles from the

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[100] Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', p. 21.

[101] *Retail Trader*, vol. 46, no. 11, June 1965, pp. 4-5.

[102] Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 3236*, P. A. Management Consultants Pty Ltd, 'Retail Market Survey of Sydney Metropolitan Area for Grace Bros. Pty. Ltd', September 1968.

[103] Excerpts from a report by George J. Connor entitled 'A Surfeit of Centres', *Retail Trader*, vol. 39, no. 10, May 1958, p. 44.

[104] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1957, p. 19; *Daily Telegraph*, A. J. Benjamin Supplement, 13 November 1957, p. 34.

[105] *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, p. 17; Beth, OHR no. 28, 21 - 27 January 2007.

[106] Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', p. 25.

[107] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 4.

[108] Sutherland Shire Council Library, Local Studies Collection, Miranda Fair File, 'Miranda Fair: A Modern Regional Shopping Centre Being Developed by Suburban Centres Pty. Limited', (c1960)

major population centres of Bankstown, Campsie and Hurstville.[109] Three railway stations, Wiley Park, Beverley Hills, and Narwee were also very close by, and bus services in the district were expanded to incorporate the new shopping Mecca.[110] Up to 300 buses arrived and departed daily from the Roselands terminal to carry the estimated 14,000 people travelling to the centre by public transport every day. For car drivers, Roselands provided its own 'gaily decorated' courtesy bus that toured the centre's car park, offering door-to-door service from cars to shops.[111]

Public transportation was also upgraded to aid the patronage of Bankstown Square. One Lend Lease consultant expressed the company's appreciation:

> Public authorities in the Bankstown area have been most co-operative in the planning of
> this development and have indicated that rail and bus services will be improved to serve
> the increased demand of shoppers wishing to travel to this centre. Streets and highways
> in this area are also planned for improvement.[112]

We examine governmental support of shopping centres below, but even without it the Square was in a good position. It was ideally situated on the railway line and between the Hume Highway and Canterbury Road, both of which were major south-western traffic routes from Sydney.

If a site could be found in a prosperous area that was close to major transport and traffic routes, developers then had to deal with its physical geography in the design and construction phase.[113] This could have a major impact on the cost of development. American literature recommended that around thirty acres of land be acquired that was, if possible, vacant, untenanted, and not too expensive. If it was also flat and free of foundation and drainage troubles, it was ideal. In the United States, land like this had been available on the fringes of suburbia where large sprawling centres had been built on greenfield sites. But in Sydney such sites were rare. Flat land was not easy to find in

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[109] *Retail Trader*, vol. 44, no. 3, October 1962, p 6.
[110] *Retail Trader*, vol. 46, no. 11, June 1965, pp. 4-5.
[111] Canterbury City Council (Campsie) Library, Local Studies Collection, Roselands File, Grace Bros promotional brochure, 'Explore Roselands', c1965.
[112] James E. Deger (Associate Director of Richardson and Wrench Ltd. and consultant to Lend Lease Development Pty. Ltd. on all retail projects) 'Retail Expansion and Development', *Retail Trader*, vol. 44, no. 1, August 1962, p. 50.
[113] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May 1967, p. 19.

the city's uneven topography. Roads, which were needed for access to any prospective centre, tended to 'run along ridges, spurs and valleys', and were lined with ribbon development.[114] Land along these routes was expensive, and had to be cleared and rezoned if a large centre was to be built. While Roselands golf course was an ideal site, elsewhere developers were forced to compromise, choosing the longer-term profitability of a desirable socio-economic location over the short-term construction costs and difficulties of an awkward building site.

Top Ryde had a forty feet variation in height across its irregular shape, and was surrounded on three sides by residential and smaller retail buildings, raising a number of engineering challenges. Even after excavating one side of the site and filling in the other, the central mall was built on a slope. This limited the possibility of producing repeated structural elements and meant that extensive stormwater drainage had to be built to accommodate the large run-off from the roof and paved areas of the centre.[115] At Miranda Fair, the site was relatively small and dominated by a partially flooded quarry. The architects responded with a compact design of three closely grouped hexagonal buildings and a decked car park to maximise the use of space.[116] Low-lying land caused constant delays at Warringah Mall. Earlier owners had frequently rowed a boat across the property at low tide, and after excavating the developers found themselves in an endless sea of mud. At one point, after nineteen inches of rain in a week, newly laid drainage pipes could be seen floating around the site as frustrated workers looked on.[117] Two miles of pipe were eventually laid to keep the water at bay, and foundation piles set up to seventy-five feet into the ground to anchor the centre in its swampy base.[118]

The business of shopping centre development

These early centre developments were amongst the largest private construction works undertaken in Australia's history. Bankstown Square began with the excavation of a

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[114] *Retail Trader*, vol. 40, no. 5, December 1958, p. 40.
[115] *Building, Lighting Engineering*, April 24 1958, p. 43; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1957, p. 19.
[116] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 48.
[117] Judy Judd, 'It's Not Bricks and Mortar, It's People: A Tribute to Warringah Mall Shopping Centre's 25th Anniversary' (n.p., 1988), pp. 10-11.
[118] *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, p. 17; 6 April 1963, p. 1.

hole the size of six football fields. Below this, a grease trap as big as a house was dug to take sediment from the Square's food outlets. A new type of lightweight concrete was mixed in a plant specially set up on the 20-acre site, before being transported on a monorail system in dozens of huge buckets to movable concrete forms that were themselves wheeled from one pouring to another. This all had to be done extremely accurately. The length of the building was 900 feet and from one end to the other, the maximum margin for error was 1/8 of an inch. The job was, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 'carried out with the precision of an army invasion.'[119] The concrete alone cost the developers $1 million. One-and-a-half million bricks were laid. Three-hundred-and-fifty miles of cable ran through twenty miles of conduit in the Square's electrical network.[120]

Figure 2.4: 'Crane hoists concrete wall panels into place on exterior of Bankstown Square shopping mall'
Jack Hickson, State Library of NSW, APA Collection: Sydney people, places and events, 1953-1987, APA – 22793, 10 May 1966.

[119] *Sydney Morning Herald,* September 20, 1966, p. 22.
[120] *Sunday Telegraph*, 18 September 1966, p. 42; *Sydney Morning Herald,* 20 September 1966, p. 22; *Sydney Morning Herald,* 21 September 1966, Special Feature, p. 6.

Their immense scale was an important element in the claims to modernity made by the early regional centres, and all argued for primacy in some combination of size and chronology. Barrett notes that such claims rested within the 'nationalist and developmentalist terms of the day: if it was big then it was obviously important, just as it was obviously important because it was big'.[121]

Figure 2.5: Don McPhedran, 'David Jones' new store, Warringah Mall, Brookvale'
State Library of NSW, APA Collection: Sydney people, places and events, 1953-1987, APA - 14351, 9 February 1963.

Although probably a little small by strict definitions, Top Ryde is commonly regarded as the first regional in Sydney and was advertised to that effect. When the larger Warringah Mall was built five years later its financial backer claimed that it was 'the first *truly* regional shopping centre in N.S.W.'[122] Because Warringah Mall had large open areas, Miranda built a year later declared itself 'the biggest regional shopping centre under one roof in the State'.[123] The local paper suggested that people would 'be amazed at its immensity.'[124] When Roselands opened, newspapers celebrated 'the largest, most advanced Shopping-Community Centre in the Southern Hemisphere'.[125] A press release from the builder, E. A. Watts, declared his pride in helping to make 'shopping history.[126] One local remembers 'watching Roselands being built from Arthur Park, Punchbowl in the 1960s.' The park, she writes, 'was a couple of miles away, as the crow flies, but it was the biggest building on the skyline from that perspective.'[127] A little smaller and a little later, Bankstown Square was billed as 'among the biggest

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[121] Barrett, 'Roselands', p. 124.
[122] Emphasis added, *Manly Daily*, 6 April 1963, p. 1.
[123] *St. George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Hurstville ed.), 5 February 1964, p. 9; 12 February 1964, p. 13.
[124] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 4.
[125] Barrett, 'Roselands', p. 124.
[126] Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 58*, Press Release, 'Roselands is a Building Triumph – says Mr E. A. Watts', 1965.
[127] Patricia, OHR no. 76, 8 January 2008 - 23 February 2008.

shopping centres in the world'.[128] Such claims were not confined to the sixties. When Macquarie Centre opened in 1981, its architects argued that comparisons rather than raw numbers gave a clearer indication of its size. Covering an area equivalent to thirty soccer fields or four, fifty story city office blocks, they declared it 'probably… the largest building of its type' in the Southern Hemisphere.[129]

To further establish modernist credentials, 1960s developers emphasised the American cultural and technological heritage of their complexes. In doing so, they were not manufacturing history. Australian retail industry literature was full of articles by American executives on the latest trends and the future of retailing. It had not been uncommon for retailing families like Grace and Myer to send their sons to America to serve an apprenticeship.[130] Kenneth Myer was born in the United States, where his father was a frequent visitor and observer of department store trends. Ken returned in 1949 to study retailing, returned to Melbourne to recommend the construction of Chadstone to the Myer board, and then made a follow up trip to the States in 1953 to further investigate shopping centre development.[131] The company appointed American architects Welton Becket & Associates as well as Victor Gruen's economic consultant, Larry Smith, when they came to design Chadstone.[132] Coles launched into food stores in 1958 and then supermarkets in 1960 after successive trips to America by managing director Sir Edgar Coles.[133] Store managers might also make a trip during their training, and owners were always keen to gain personal insights, so highly regarded was the American retail experience.[134]

Sydney developers, too, conducted research in America. The seeds from which Top Ryde grew were planted when Peter Benjamin visited around twenty American centres in 1953, meeting up with his friend Peter Yeomans who was undergoing postgraduate

[128] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 August 1966, p. 8; *Retail Trader*, vol. 48, no. 3, October 1966, pp. 6-7.
[129] Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, GRACS012, 71, Macquarie Centre Opening Folder, Memorandum: Macquarie Shopping Centre, Whitehead and Payne Architects, 6 October 1981.
[130] 'The top of the trade (7): Store that found itself at wrong end of city set fast pace to get out of difficulty', *Inside Retailing*, no. 277, 27 June 1977, p. 6.
[131] Hutson, '"I Dream of Jeannie?", p. 18; Anthea Hyslop, 'Myer, Simcha Baevski (Sidney) (1878 - 1934)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 10, Melbourne University Press, 1986, pp 657-660.
[132] Hutson, '"I Dream of Jeannie?", p. 24.
[133] Philip Luker, 'The top of the trade (6): Coles has everything except a little oom-pa-pah', *Inside Retailing*, no. 276, 20 June 1977, p. 5.
[134] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 24. Charles Lloyd Jones was sent to Bullocks, the first American department store to open branches, for his training in the family business. See Westfield Holdings Ltd, *The Westfield Story*, p. 64.

studies in Detroit on American Shopping Centres. The two worked hand in hand developing Top Ryde.[135] In the late 1950s, John Saunders, armed with letters of introduction to Australian trade commissioners, travelled to America while he and Frank Lowy were building the Blacktown Plaza that launched Westfield. Lowy made a similar tour with his consultant architect in 1960 to gather information on the design and operation of American shopping centres and motels.[136] Soon afterwards, Lend Lease sent a design team over to analyse shopping centres and to meet with other designers and developers in preparation for Bankstown Square.[137]

Such trips, at times, were also used to assure councils of developers' credentials. Farmer's wrote to Sutherland Council in 1962:

> 'It is our desire that this centre when it is completed should contain the very latest thinking in design layout and operation. In furtherance of this objective, this Company is sending one of its staff, accompanied by a senior architect, on a short trip to the United States to study specifically the development of sites of this nature.'[138]

With post-war reconstruction had come a corresponding need for the reconstruction of Australia's self-confidence. One way of doing this was to cast off old ties and to embrace modernity and 'the new'. And nothing symbolised 'the new' more than America.[139] Research trips were pilgrimages, undertaken by the bold, as they sought to build a new Australia, and no pre-opening publicity was complete without press coverage of the journey and results. Centres were said to be 'designed along the latest American lines', or 'developed to conform to proven American standards'.[140]

Where possible, Australian centres were described as exceeding their American originators. Myer had reduced Welton Becket's role during the design phase of Chadstone, partly because of a concern that they were not giving enough attention to the project, but also, it claimed, because more awareness was required of Australian cultural conditions. Opening publicity boasted of a hybrid design incorporating the best from

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[135] Noel Bell Ridley Smith & Partners Pty Ltd, 'Top Ryde Shopping Centre Demolition Report', p. 12.
[136] Jill Margo, *Frank Lowy: Pushing the Limits* (Pymble, NSW: Harper Collins, 2001), pp. 76-7, 89.
[137] Murphy, *Challenges of Change*, 108-9.
[138] Sutherland Shire Council Meeting, Minute no. 268, DC.370/600/638, Letter from Farmer's (Holdings) Limited (16th February 1962), 5 March 1962.
[139] Fiske, Hodge and Turner, *Myths of Oz*, p. 113.
[140] Spearritt, 'Suburban Cathedrals', p. 99.

both countries.[141] In Sydney, Benjamin's saw Top Ryde as 'far from… a slavish imitation of American regional shopping centres'.[142] *The Daily Telegraph* concurred, describing the interest that Top Ryde had generated around the country and across the world. American retail executives even visited the centre! One wished he had 'a few dollars invested in it'.[143] The managing director of Farmer's described Miranda Fair as 'equal to any similar development in the world'.[144] While 'the best American ideas' had been used, 'Australian brains and drive' were responsible for its rapid construction.[145] Grace Bros executives claimed that American shopping centre experts showed considerable interest in Roselands.[146] The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that its compact three-level layout and decked car park improved on 'wasteful' American 'sprawl'.[147] If early Australian developers did bring innovations to international designs the density of suburban development, and in Sydney the topography of the city, were creative constraints. Both prohibited the expansive single-level construction that had occurred in the United States.

Figure 2.6: Wolfgang Sievers, 'Miranda shopping centre, Sydney'
NLA, Sievers, Wolfgang, 1913-2007. Wolfgang Sievers photographic archive, Image no.: nla.pic-an23150337, 1964.

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[141] Hutson, "'I Dream of Jeannie?'", pp. 24-5.
[142] *Daily Telegraph*, A. J. Benjamin Supplement, 13 November 1957, p. 20.
[143] *Ibid*., p. 22.
[144] *St. George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Hurstville ed.), 12 February 1964, p. 13.
[145] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 40.
[146] *Retail Trader*, vol. 46, no. 11, June 1965, pp. 4-5.
[147] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 October 1965, quoted in Barrett, 'Roselands', p. 125.

The scale of shopping centre construction required a level of investment and expertise only the biggest firms or consortiums could offer. At Top Ryde, a new company, Regional Centres Limited, was formed to purchase the land from Ryde Council and to develop the centre.[148] At Warringah Mall, L. J. Hooker Investment Corporation Limited secured international financial backing from the Hammerson Group of Companies and shared leasing responsibilities with Jones Lang Wootton & Sons.[149] A major long-term industry player, Lend Lease, built Bankstown Square, and Sydney's most successful department store, Grace Bros was behind Roselands.

The early leader in the field, though, was Melbourne's Myer department store. In the early 1960s, the company was the fifth largest retailer in the world and the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. It had bought the Farmer's group in 1960 for £22 million, and with it acquired a number of Western Stores sites scattered throughout regional NSW. It owned Brownwills in Hobart, and in Queensland controlled McWhirters and Allan & Stark department stores.[150] With the acquisition of Allan & Stark had come Australia's first regional shopping centre, Chermside. In October 1960 Myer opened the massive Chadstone Centre on the outskirts of Melbourne – the first Australian centre 'to approach an American scale of operation'.[151] In Sydney, Myer built Miranda Fair after opening a smaller centre featuring a Farmer's store on the Pacific Highway at Gordon in 1961.[152]

This did not mean that Myer was dominant, and at times it lost out to other developers who got into an area first, or

Figure 2.7: Lyle Fowler, 'Myer, Chadstone Shopping Centre'
State Library of Victoria, Harold Paynting collection, Image no.: H92.20/7002, c1961.

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[148] Noel Bell Ridley Smith & Partners Pty Ltd, 'Top Ryde Shopping Centre Demolition Report', p. 12.
[149] *Retail Trader*, vol. 44, no. 3, October 1962, pp. 4-5.
[150] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 9.
[151] Tony Dingle, '"Gloria Soame": The Spread of Suburbia in Post-War Australia', in Richard Harris and Peter J. Larkham (eds), *Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form and Function* (London: E & FN Spon, 1999), p. 193.
[152] *St. George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Hurstville ed.), 5 February 1964, p. 9.

who managed to convince a council of the worth of their project over the strength of Myer's. Shopping centre development was an exercise in educated speculation. Not every investment came off; others paid great dividends. As we saw with Grace Bros efforts in Canterbury, suitable sites were not easy to find. Land in appropriate locations was likely to be occupied, perhaps by owners unwilling to sell. It was also likely to be zoned for a use other than commercial development under planning guidelines.

Zoning has been the principal means by which Australian cities have sought to regulate development. The idea originated with nineteenth century English reformers concerned with improving, or civilizing, the conditions of the working classes in industrial towns. They believed that one way to do this was to exert some control over the uses to which land was being put. Separating factories from residential areas, for example, would make those residential areas less polluted, safer environments in which to live.[153] In Sydney, shopping centre developers were forced to take gambles on rezoning in order to ensure their projects were positioned in economically sound locations.[154] In this regard, building a shopping centre was not only a race to get in first; it was a competition for favourable decisions by government authorities.

Cases of lobbying and influence are part and parcel of Sydney's development history. In the 1960s there was, at least publicly, a belief that government and business were together building a modern nation. Prior to Miranda Fair's development the Council had assured the Farmer-Myer Group that they 'could expect every co-operation from the Council,' and afterwards publicly proclaimed the 'fine spirit of cooperation' displayed by the company.[155] Bankstown's Mayor was quoted on the front page of a local paper arguing that Lend Lease's proposed Bankstown Square would bring in thousands of pounds worth of rate revenue and greatly assist the 'progress of Bankstown'.[156] The Town Planner described it as the 'largest single retail development yet proposed in any

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[153] Leonie Sandercock, *The Land Racket: The Real Cost of Property Speculation* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger for Australian Association of Socialist Studies, 1979), 17-8.
[154] *Retail Trader*, vol. 39, no. 10, May 1958, p. 44.
[155] Sutherland Shire Council, Special General Committee Meeting, Minute no. 161, 7 May 1962. *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 4. Myer clearly placed importance on cultivating media and political relationships. It developed clear protocols for working with the media and maintained a list of key contacts for major press and television news outlets. It also held lists of contact details for the leaders of political parties. See Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *MYERS022, 766*, 'Media Relations Procedures for Department Store Group; Key Contacts in Western Australia'.
[156] *Bankstown Observer*, 11 September 1963, p. 1.

suburban area in Australia' and considered that it would greatly increase Bankstown's sphere of influence and its status as a district centre. [157] This enthusiasm for development, the power of zoning to revalue land, the competition between companies, and the enormous sums of money involved, opened possibilities of 'colourful' interactions during the approval process. The Bankstown area provides an insight into the power plays underlying early shopping centre construction in Sydney.

Attracted by its rapid growth and relative prosperity, there were a number of companies active around Bankstown in the late-1950s. Walton's built a department store near the railway station, Myer battled to get approval for a massive centre at nearby Bass Hill, and Lend Lease taking a giant 'punt', as one of its executives later put it, began buying up land and options for more than eighty small properties in the heart of Bankstown itself. With some of the owners unwilling to sell, much of the property was bought above market prices at an eventual cost of over £1 million.[158] Such practices were not uncommon; residents at Burwood also held out for top dollar from Westfield when it was buying up houses, offices, shops, factories, warehouses and a church to build there.[159] In the middle of 1963, Lend Lease applied to council to have the land rezoned. It also requested a long-term lease of some council land at nominal rental; exemption from paying the council's parking levy; the council construction of a slip road to carry through traffic; and the purchase of a section of a street called The Mall that crossed its land, intending to close it as part of the development. Council referred the proposal to the town planner who was to return a report to the council on 6 August.[160]

Whilst awaiting the report from the town planner, Lend Lease was contacted with an offer of ten council votes for a discreet payment of £5,000.[161] The company reported the bribe to the police who recorded a reiteration of the offer through a wrist microphone and a tape recorder hidden beneath the jacket of a Lend Lease executive during a furtive meeting with Alderman Charles Little at Canterbury Racecourse. With arrangements in place, a down payment of £2,500 was left beside a pot plant in the corridor of Little's

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[157] Bankstown Municipal Council, P32/714/-/S267, Item 455, Lend Lease Development Pty. Ltd., 'Report of the Town Planner to Bankstown Municipal Council', 6 August 1963.

[158] Murphy, *Challenges of Change*, 108-9; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 April 1964, p. 6.

[159] Margo, *Frank Lowy*, p. 98. On the urban forms that the Burwood centre replaced, see Lowy, 'Regional shopping centres', p. 282.

[160] Murphy, *Challenges of Change*, pp. 108-9; *Bankstown Observer*, 26 June 1963, p. 1.

[161] Murphy, *Challenges of Change*, pp. 109-10; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 April 1964, p. 13.

office premises. Police later recovered it and charged six people with various corruption offences. When fronted, the Mayor of Bankstown revealed that although not involved, he was aware of the attempted bribery. He claimed that his silence on the matter had been to protect the council's reputation. He also assured Lend Lease that his support for the project remained firm and that he intended to vote for its approval.[162]

When the Town Planner's report was returned it supported the development. Another report, commissioned by the local Chamber of Commerce concurred, although both emphasised the importance of effective integration between the new centre and existing business and retail.[163] The Chamber shifted its initially supportive position, however, and lobbied against the proposal on the grounds that local businesses would suffer, but the Council sided with progress and signed off on the development before being dismissed by the State Government on 8 November 1963.[164] The process had been messy, compromised and political but Bankstown Square, which would so strongly shape the town's central business district for the next fifty years and beyond had been approved.

Selecting tenants for a regional shopping centre

With approval obtained, shopping centre operators could get down to the important task of finalising tenant selection. Anchor tenants, if they were not already locked in, were the first targets.[165] In systems that ranked the components of success, a department store and a supermarket ranked a close second after the raw population and income figures of the surrounding area.[166] As 'traffic generating' stores, they brought in the customers that could make the centre profitable, and offered a trickle down of trade to smaller stores. Their importance was reflected in the space they were allocated: David Jones and Grace Bros at Warringah Mall, for example, accounted for seventy-five

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[162] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 April 1964, p. 6. *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 15 April 1964, pp. 1-2, 35; 22 April 1964, pp. 1,4-5, 18-19; 29 April 1964, pp. 1, 3-4, 20.
[163] Bankstown Municipal Council, 'Report of the Town Planner to Bankstown Municipal Council', p. 1.
[164] Murphy, *Challenges of Change*, p. 110.
[165] That leasing arrangements, particularly with anchors, were made very early in the design phase, see 'Westfield Limited: A Company Review', p. 5.
[166] *Inside Retailing*, no. 114, February 25, 1974, p. 10.

percent of the centre's gross retail floor space.[167] In return for their drawing power anchors received generous leasing conditions, establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between big retailers and developers. One of the best illustrations of this was the bond that developed between Westfield and the then Victorian variety store retailer G. J. Coles.

Westfield had started from humble beginnings. Frank Lowy began his Australian working life in a toolmaking factory, before moving into a delivery job through which he met his future partner, fellow Jewish immigrant, John Schwartz – later John Saunders – who owned a delicatessen near Town Hall railway station. Lowy's efficiency and honesty impressed Schwartz and the two opened a deli catering to European tastes opposite Blacktown train station in March 1955. A successful continental espresso bar followed, before the two sold up to move into property development. Because they were dividing up fields in the Western suburbs, they called their private company 'Westfield'. Experience led them to small retail development, which they followed with an integrated shopping centre featuring a supermarket, small department store and car park. Westfield Place opened in Blacktown in June 1959 with immediate success, bringing an influx of new projects. The company went public in 1960 to generate more funds for its rapid expansion.[168]

Through the 1960s, Westfield built a number of similar small shopping centres in suburbs such as Dee Why, Eastwood and Hornsby. During the construction of Westfield Plaza, Hornsby, the company made a casual agreement with the Matthew Thompson grocery chain to open a supermarket in the centre. When the chain, which had around 200 metropolitan and regional stores, was taken over by the large Melbourne retailer G. J. Coles, Lowy offered them a place within the centre. Looking to diversify into food from its variety store base, as well as to expand geographically into NSW, Coles was persuaded to come on board. A strong relationship developed between Lowy, Saunders and Sir Edgar Coles. Taking them around Sydney in his chauffer driven car, Sir Edgar would point out of the front window at potential locations saying: 'Get me a site here, and get me one there.' Westfield developed seventeen sites for Coles over the following two or three years and also gave the company the right of first refusal in their own

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[167] Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', p. 22.
[168] Margo, *Frank Lowy*, pp. 63-81; 'Westfield Limited: A Company Review', p. 4.

developments.[169] According to Tom North, the NSW state manager for Coles, Westfield 'played a major role in getting Coles established in New South Wales'.[170] Westfield, for its part considers Coles to have 'contributed greatly to getting Westfield launched in Australia'.[171]

Once a supermarket and department store were in place, a suburban shopping centre could build an appealing tenant selection. Market research was again touted as the way to determine the types of goods and services that particular localities required, desired and might find attractive. Tenant selection became a marketing device through which a big centre's rather homogenous format could be moulded to its demographic surrounds. At Miranda, for example, it was claimed that months were spent on 'intensive surveys… to determine the specific needs and requirements… and the general shopping habits of the residents.'[172] In reality, centres from the very beginning tended to offer a similar range of shops and services. Miranda Fair's small selection of specialty shops included electrical retailer H.G. Palmers 120th Australian showroom; Bradmans thirty-first lingerie and accessories outlet; Fays eighteenth family shoe shop; Fletcher Jones' fifth New South Wales store; and Sydney's fourth Lo-Blanco's fruit shop.[173]

One of the most sought after, but difficult to acquire tenants was a good hardware store.[174] Shortages of both materials and labour saw increases in housing costs during the 1950s that encouraged a home building surge and provided a solid trade for local hardware stores.[175] In Sydney, the most popular hardware with the big centres, and the one that lasted longest in them, was Nock & Kirby. Thomas Nock and Herbert Kirby had opened a store on George Street in the city in 1906. By the early-1920s, the firm employed over 500 people. It bounced back after losses during the Depression, was listed on the stock exchange in 1954-55 and established a policy of suburban

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[169] Letter from Sir Thomas North, former chairman of Coles, quoted in Westfield Holdings Ltd, *The Westfield Story*, p. 86.
[170] Margo, *Frank Lowy*, p. 86.
[171] Westfield Holdings Ltd, *The Westfield Story*, p. 33.
[172] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 23.
[173] Advertisements in *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, pp. 8, 19, 23, 40-1.
[174] Yeomans, 'Address to the Golden Jubilee Convention', p. 42.
[175] Ashton, Cornwall and Salt, *Sutherland Shire*, pp. 152-3.

expansion.[176] By the early 1960s it had branches in the city, at Penrith, Bankstown, Parramatta, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Maroubra, Dee Why, Wollongong and Newcastle. Its stores were presented with clean modern finishes and included a range of quality home wares and furniture amongst their traditional hardware range.[177] Nock & Kirby opened stores in Westfield Plaza, Hornsby in 1962; Bankstown Square in 1966; Miranda Fair in 1971; Warringah Mall and Parramatta Shopping Town in 1975; Carousel Shopping Centre in 1976; and Westfield Hurstville Shopping Town in 1978.[178] In the 1980s and 1990s, hardware stores moved out of shopping centres, with the latter positioning themselves as middle class sites of leisure, and hardware companies seeking economies of scale in warehouse, 'big-box' outlets.

Figure 2.8: Nock & Kirby, Bankstown Square, 1967 advertisement indicting the diverse range of goods the company stocked to broaden its appeal.
Bankstown Observer, 21 September 1967, pp. 30-31.

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[176] Peter Spearritt, 'Nock, Thomas (1860-1951)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 11 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988), pp. 36-37.
[177] 'Annual Report: Nock & Kirby' (Sydney: Nock & Kirby Ltd), 1958 –1968; *Australian Hardware Journal*, 12 August 1967, p. 6.
[178] 'Annual Report: Nock & Kirby', 1962 –1978.

Suburban department stores in the 1960s often included hardware sections to cater to owner-builders' demand for building products.[179] Grace Bros at Warringah Mall even had a service that provided property inspections and detailed house plans, guaranteed to conform to council regulations.[180] Such direct involvement with housing was not new for department stores. In the 1940s Myer was producing cheap factory built and packaged houses in Victoria to meet the acute demands of the post-war housing shortage.[181] The Sydney department stores were simply tapping into a strong demand and need for building advice, supplies, and tools. They supplemented this with advice on décor and furnishings.[182] Interior decorators in the Grace Bros Homemaker departments at Roselands and Warringah Mall were available for consultation. One advertisement for these claimed that the stores and advisors would 'prove that you don't have to be rich to live in elegance'.[183] It was a simple message that echoed the promise of suburbia. With hard work and astute purchasing, post-war families could share the bounty of a rising nation, which distributed prosperity on a historically unprecedented breadth and scale.

Homemade to 'homewares'

Hardware and homemaker stores provided the tools and materials for building a suburban life on a budget. The early centres also had shoe and electrical repair shops, indicating an ongoing allegiance to, and practical need for thrift and economy. Most of the retailing space in 1960s regional shopping centres, however, was taken up with ready-made products. Modern décor and the layout of a house's interior was becoming an industry in itself, heavily promoted in popular women's and home magazines. Whilst the latter offered 'handyman' projects, there was a heavy emphasis on neat, stylish,

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[179] Canterbury City Council (Campsie) Library, Local Studies Collection, Roselands File, Grace Bros promotional brochure, 'Roselands Town Hall'; Sutherland Shire Council Library, Local Studies Collection, Farmer's Press Release, 'Farmer's £3½ million Miranda Project building to begin next month', 17 October 1962, p. 2. *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 52.

[180] *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, p. 25. For a more comprehensive service running from the Broadway store, but still targeting suburban home builders, see 'Thirty three home plans / Grace Bros home plans service, ground floor, furniture store, Broadway in association with the Sunday Telegraph' (Sydney: Grace Bros. in association with the Sunday Telegraph, c196-?).

[181] Alan Marshall, *The Gay Provider: The Myer Story* (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1961), p. 191-2.

[182] *Daily Telegraph*, A. J. Benjamin Supplement, 13 November 1957, pp. 31-45.

[183] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 13 October 1965, p. 1; *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, pp. 26, 30.

readymade items displayed in finished scenes of modernist domestic bliss.[184] These pictorial advertisements formed part of a cultural preoccupation that Lloyd and Johnson have described as: 'a kind of second-order consumption – constructed through… images, ideas, designs, [and] diagrams.'[185] This was a deeper level of consumption than the purchase of individual items; it was an intellectual enculturation towards commodified life.[186] This was not new. Department stores had long displayed complete room settings to tantalise shoppers and to stimulate their imaginings of desirable lifestyles.[187] But the extent to which the mass media could now proliferate these images, and the ability of suburban populations to pay for them, was a new step in the progress of consumer culture.

This burgeoning culture was given a significant boost with the arrival of television in Australia late in 1956, just ahead of regional shopping centres.[188] Together they transformed the way that people procured goods. Radio had broadened the reach of advertising in the 1920s and 1930s.[189] Television now gave consumer capitalism a persuasive visual presence within Australian living rooms. While the press remained a medium to advertise prices, television was used to establish brand names across the country, and to create 'universal fashions' in clothing, home furnishings and other forms of consumption such as leisure activities.[190] Australian families sitting on old or shabby furniture were reminded of what modern lifestyles really entailed, as 'the television programme [itself] became a display case for commodities'.[191] Department stores, chains and even independents were already distributing these now mass

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[184] Maryanne Dever, 'Introduction' in *The Home: An Exhibition of Material from the Monash University Library Rare Books Collection*, 31 March 2006 – 30 June 2006.

[185] Justine Lloyd and Lesley Johnson, 'Dream Stuff: The Postwar Home and the Australian Housewife, 1940 – 60', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2004, p. 257.

[186] On such enculturation, see, Kimberley Webber, 'Romancing the Machine: The Enchantment of Domestic Technology in the Australian Home, 1850-1914', PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1997; Paul Ashton, 'The Origins and Spread of Suburbia in 1920s Sydney', PhD thesis, Macquarie University, 1999.

[187] Henderson-Smith, 'From Booth to Shopping Mall', pp. 59-62.

[188] Brian Carroll, *Earning a Crust: An Illustrated Economic History of Australia* (Sydney: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1977), p. 146.

[189] Hutchings, 'The Battle for Consumer Power', p. 66.

[190] Kingston, *Basket, Bag and Trolley*, pp. 92-3. On the preceding American experience where television was used to promote national brands, see Sharon Zukin, *Point of Purchase: How Shopping Changed American Culture* (New York; London: Routledge, 2004), p. 82.

[191] Peggy Nightingale, 'Women as Audiences', in Mary Ellen Brown (ed) *Television and Women's Culture: The Politics of the Popular* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1990), pp. 31-34, cited in Reekie, *Temptations*, p. 165.

produced goods, but the shopping centre brought a new level of concentration, sophistication and scale to the process.

Shopping centres represented a transformation in Australian lifeways; modern in design, conception and promotion, they brought retail on a mass scale to the suburbs. Where stores had previously arrived in dribs and drabs, shopping centres, packed with shops, arrived in one fell swoop, transforming their surrounding environments. Like television, they both sold and embodied modern consumer life. Their scale, the abundance of goods they had to offer, their marriage with the car, loud displays, soft background music and endless promotion all celebrated the seemingly-limitless prosperity of the post-war West.[192] Miranda Fair was described as 'Australia's newest and most revolutionary regional shopping centre'. Its local paper considered it 'excitingly ultra-modern in design… as modern as tomorrow'.[193] At Roselands, a woman could 'step into tomorrow' by purchasing of a new pair of shoes.[194] Shoppers were told that they stood 'at the dawn of a new way of life'.[195] Over time shopping centres were expanded, rebuilt and refurbished to maintain what appeared to be a gale of innovation. The impact and reception of this wind of change is the story of this thesis, beginning in the next chapter with the first reactions and usage of centres in the 1960s.

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[192] Barrett, 'Roselands', p. 124.

[193] *St. George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Hurstville ed.), 5 February 1964, p. 9. For the widespread application of revolutionary rhetoric, see Morris, 'Things To Do With Shopping Centres', p. 209.

[194] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 20 October 1965, p. 27.

[195] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 6 October 1965, p. 15; *Daily Mirror*, 11 October 1965, quoted in Barrett, 'Roselands', p. 124.

Chapter Three
Shopping in Sydney's Early Shopping Centres

Like shopping centres, the culture that celebrated them was an Australian version of an American invention. The United States was the model of consuming, affluent modernity: in its business systems; its technology; its capacity to mass-manufacture; and with a mainstream population that had embraced the accompanying lifestyle – the 'American way of life'. Shopping centres were just one of its forms that Australian businesses imported. This chapter outlines the 'Australian way of life', an amorphous doctrine fusing nationalism, progress, consumer acquisitiveness and security. It details the expansion of credit, which helped fuel the consumer boom underpinning the new 'way'; the 'casual comfort' of the shopping centre, which appealed to the 'way'; and the targeting of women shoppers who were said to make the bulk of purchases characterising it. With affluence came teenagers; a key but cautiously accommodated retail demographic. Many young people welcomed modernity into their suburbs, and were encouraged to visit and work in centres, but they could also be viewed with suspicion by management and retailers wary of hooliganism and shoplifting. Attention is given to the experiences of teenagers in Sydney's early shopping centres, before the media celebration and promotional activities of the big centres round out the chapter.

Shopping centres, the middle class, and the 'Australian Way of Life'

Shopping centres should be situated within the wider social, cultural and economic changes that were occurring in post-war Australian society. Representative of this was their target demographic, the broad middle of the population, which formed perhaps the most significant social grouping of the post-war boom. Understanding the dimensions of this middle-market raises a number of issues, and draws us into definitions and debates over the constitution of the middle class. It is not necessary to resolve these debates to understand shopping centre history, but it is important to identify the values, practices and attitudes of middle Australia, because these were the people who flocked to shopping centres in the 1960s, and who have sustained them since.

In his 'Forgotten People' speech of 1942 – most notably analysed by Judith Brett – Menzies emphasised the centrality of family and home to the identity of the middle class, 'the backbone' of Australian society, which he defined against organised labour below, and the economically self-sufficient above. Menzies' middle class held a 'stake in the country' with, as he put it, 'homes material, homes human, homes spiritual.' The first represented frugality and saving, the second family, the third individual responsibility.[1] These values formed the core of an emerging constituency that Menzies identified and encouraged.[2] Through the course of the post-war period, Brett has since argued, these 'values and social formations' underwent considerable transformation. Protestantism declined; citizenship became centred around rights and entitlements rather than duties and obligations; individualism moved away from independence and self-reliance towards freedom and choice; and the rise of credit mechanisms and personal debt saw the ability to save money disappear from 'the construction of character'.[3] The family, home ownership and individual enterprise, though, remained at the core of middle Australia.

The changes identified by Brett, are useful for understanding cultural historian Richard White's analysis of the 'Australian Way of Life'. White argues that Australia changed its self-understanding in the post-war period. The old nationalistic, rural, white and masculine Australian type passed away – although its ghostly trails still linger in mateship, ANZAC, sporting culture and elsewhere – to be replaced by the 'Australian way of life'; an American import adapted to local conditions. Vaguely defined, it operated as a unifying ideology in the Cold War climate and, according

Figure 3.1: Television sets on sale at Miranda Fair, 1964.
SRL NSW, Government Printing Office 2 – 25891, New suburban shopping centre series, 21 March 1964.

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[1] Judith Brett, *Robert Menzies' Forgotten People* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 1992), pp. 5-9.
[2] *Ibid*., pp. 9-14.
[3] Judith Brett, 'Australian Liberals and the Moral Middle Class', *Sydney Papers*, vol.15, no. 3-4, Winter/Spring 2003, pp. 132-33.

to White, 'was closely related to the image of Australia as a sophisticated, urban, industrialised, consumer society.' Its imagery was the suburban family, with a house, a car, consumer durables and, by the late 1950s, a television. These were the trappings offered by consumer capitalism, and conservative elites in both Australia and America believed that they could be used to fade class consciousness. White argues that Australian egalitarianism moved from being a 'radical impulse in the national "type"' to just another impetus towards cultural unity.[4]

If there were sections of the labour movement that decried 'Americanisation' and the vacuity of consumer culture, the ideal of home ownership was bi-partisan. For Labor it was a 'worthy aspiration for their working class constituency'.[5] Janet McCalman argues that in a new manifestation of the old divide between the respectable employed and the itinerant poor of the working class, skilled workers earned enough through the war and afterwards to consider moving away from inner-city environs to buy a house in the suburbs. If their jobs held up, it was a step into 'middle-Australia'.[6] With the economic and social uncertainty of the Depression and World War II still an ominous memory, the stability of nuclear family life in one's own home was considerably attractive for many people of all classes.[7] Seamus O'Hanlon argues that this 'suburban ideal' became, and has largely stayed 'the social bedrock upon which Australian cities are based'.[8]

Shopping centres became identified as the retail Mecca and social space for suburban families occupying the broad middle of the socio-economic spectrum. Their emergence, growth and expansion coincided with the rise of middle-Australia and followed the trajectory of the baby boom generation. In America, shopping centres had been the protected preserve of affluent, white suburbanites; built on Greenfield freeway sites, they were often beyond the public-transport reach of the urban poor, coloured and

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[4] White, *Inventing Australia*, pp. 158-63.
[5] Seamus O'Hanlon, 'Cities, Suburbs and Communities' in Martyn Lyons and Penny Russell (eds), *Australia's History: Themes and Debates* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), pp. 181-2.
[6] McCalman, *Struggletown*, pp. 251-4.
[7] Richard Waterhouse, *Private Pleasures, Public Leisure: A History of Australian Popular Culture Since 1788* (South Melbourne: Longman Australia, 1995), p. 200; Peter Cochrane, 'At War at Home: Australian Attitudes During the Vietnam Years', in Greg Pemberton (ed.), *Vietnam Remembered* (Frenchs Forest, NSW: New Holland, 1990), p. 165; Barbara Davison and Graeme Davison, 'Suburban Pioneers', in Graeme Davison, Tony Dingle and Seamus O'Hanlon (eds), *The Cream Brick Frontier: Histories of Australian Suburbia*, (Clayton, Vic: Monash Publications in History, Department of History Monash University, 1995), p. 44.
[8] O'Hanlon, 'Cities, Suburbs and Communities', p. 177. See also Dingle, '"Gloria Soame", pp. 189-90.

ethnic populations. Australia's early shopping centres in contrast, were built in areas of steady employment and growth where large numbers of immigrants were making homes. Eighteen percent of Sutherland's residents in 1961 had been born overseas, and although a high proportion of these were British, there were also Germans and Italians in the Shire.[9] Bankstown and Canterbury both attracted large numbers of migrants.[10] Brookvale, where Warringah Mall was built held a strong concentration of Italian immigrants who had been settling there since the 1930s, although it was 'a suburb spurned socially' by the relatively young, largely middle class Anglos in the hilly surrounding areas, who looked down from their brick houses to Brookvale's fibro-walled flats below.[11]

Shopping centres epitomised the 'Australian Way of Life'. Their market, like the country's population, had a diverse ethnic base, but they were promoted as culturally and socially homogenous. Like Menzies' Australia, they eschewed class, but promoted middle class sensibilities. Promotional material pictured shoppers as neat, clean, composed, white family members who were conscious of mass-produced fashion.[12] Even the architectural sketches that accompanied development applications echoed this ideal Anglo family shopping 'type' (See Figure 3.2).[13] As we will see in Chapter Four, within the walls of the shopping centre, people were depicted as unified through consumption, sharing common desires, expectations and experiences. A wide range of people used shopping centres, but the classless, white, consumer-oriented urban Australian was the promoted norm and ideal. Shopping centres embraced the illusory homogeneity of the 'Australian way of life', breathing the air of prosperity which remained its great strength.

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[9] Ashton, Cornwall and Salt, *Sutherland Shire*, pp. 172-4.

[10] B. L. Howarth, 'Post-War Settlement Patterns of the British and Irish', in James Jupp (General Editor) *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins* (North Ryde, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1988), p. 426.

[11] Malcolm D. Prentis, 'Non-English Speaking Immigrants – Italians', in Malcolm Prentis (ed.), *Warringah History* (Dee Why: Warringah Shire Council, 1989), pp.144-6; Hughes Trueman Ludlow, 'Warringah Heritage Study, Vol. 1' (St Leonards, NSW: Hughes Trueman Ludlow, April 1994), p. 12. On the housing geography, see Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', pp. 29-30. On the attitudes, see Beth, OHR no. 28, 21 - 27 January 2007.

[12] Barrett, 'Roselands' p. 133.

[13] Bankstown City Council Library, Local Studies Collection, Bankstown Square File, Hely, Bell & Horne (Architects) 'Bankstown Square Shopping Centre, Fountain Court Entrance', Sydney, n.d.

Underlying much of the new purchasing power intrinsic to the Australian Way was the expansion of credit systems. Credit had been available in a variety of forms since the nineteenth century, but it flourished in the economic sun that had largely risen by the mid-1950s.[14] The retail industry attributed the finance boom to higher incomes; greater income regularity due to bi-partisan government support for full employment; early marriages with young couples trying to establish themselves; and improved 'security' in the form of insurance, superannuation, and institutional savings which made people 'more willing to incur debt'.[15] The economy had industrialised significantly during the war and there had been a successful transition of this industry to peacetime manufacturing. Wages were high and rising. Unemployment, particularly in the 1960s, was almost negligible. The stability of the economy, jobs and wages gave people the confidence to borrow.

Figure 3.2: 'Bankstown Square Shopping Centre, Fountain Court Entrance'
Bankstown City Council Library, Local Studies Collection, Bankstown Square File, Hely, Bell & Horne (Architects), Sydney, n.d.

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[14] Davison, *Car Wars*, p. 15.
[15] *Retail Trader*, vol. 48, no. 6, January/ February, 1967, p. 25.

Big retailers, too, had a new perspective. They had once viewed deferred payment as deferred profit and credit as a privilege to be bestowed only upon 'gilt-edged, gold-plated prospects'. But they now recognised that credit opened up a whole new realm of sales potential, and was one of the major ways in which they could expand their operations.[16] Advertisements for major household items were littered with promises of low deposits and 'easy terms' and for the first time, the credit story became 'the headline, the dominant feature of the selling story'. By 1963, credit in Australia accounted for approximately 50% of total general retailing sales.[17] One Grace Bros executive described the advantages of credit:

> to provide additional sales; to stimulate impulse buying; to promote customer goodwill and so provide future sales; to enable us to trade up to better quality merchandise; to provide shopping convenience for our customers; to give our customers greater buying power; and because of all these, to increase the profitability of our stores.[18]

Offers of credit featured heavily in early Sydney shopping centre advertisements. Credit was described as 'a pleasure at Grace Bros' Roselands, intimating the good grace with which it would be approved, as well the enjoyment of the purchase.[19] The store 'planned to please', while its Credit Plate offered 'a passport to a wonderful new shopping world'.[20] Shoppers, another advertisement suggested, would 'soon discover how much easier it is to say "Charge It Please"'.[21] Banner strips across the opening advertisements for Farmer's at Miranda Fair offered charge accounts to prospective customers.[22] And in preparing for the opening of the full-line Warringah Mall Grace Bros store in 1973, the planning committee envisaged leaning promotional material towards charge account holders, of which there were a 'considerable number' in the area.[23]

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[16] *Retail Trader*, vol. 45, no. 1, August, 1963, p. 33.

[17] Sheridan, *Who Was That Woman?*, pp. 19, 26; *Retail Trader*, vol. 45, no. 1, August, 1963, p. 33.

[18] Roy Prior (Company Controller for credit sales and accounts payable of Grace Bros, Sydney), 'Increase sales through credit', *Australian Retailing* vol. 2, no. 8, November 1968, pp. 18-23.

[19] For example, see *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 13 October 1965, p. 8.

[20] Canterbury City Council (Campsie) Library, Local Studies Collection, Roselands File, Grace Bros promotional brochure, 'Everything for Everybody at Grace Bros Roselands'.

[21] *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, p. 30.

[22] Advertisements in *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, pp. 6, 14, 16, 50, 51.

[23] Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 74*, Mount Druitt/ Warringah Mall Forward Planning Committee, 'New Store Promotion/ Advertising', Minutes of Meeting Held 9am, Monday 30 July 1973.

That so many people took up these offers was a sign of cultural transformation. Frugality and thrift had been under siege from marketers and business since the turn of the century as they sought to reconfigure a capitalist model that had failed in the 1890s depression. Some believed that overly efficient production and insufficient demand had unbalanced the system. Psychology and marketing aimed to reconstruct the social mind, breaking down thrift and encouraging conspicuous consumption to boost demand.[24] Lizabeth Cohen has written compellingly of the legitimisation of consumer spending in America where, particularly in the post-war years, it was linked to employment and national prosperity.[25] Less has been written on the politics of Australia's consumer economy, but socially we can see that a preparedness to borrow indicated a cultural change. Greg Whitwell argues that with post-war prosperity, 'the immediate gratification of wants… [became] an acceptable form of behaviour'.[26] Credit fuelled a boom built on full employment and industrial growth.

Casual comfort in the suburbs

In the city department stores, a woman without her best hat and gloves could feel quite intimidated and might even be patronised by salesgirls for her appearance.[27] While all classes could frequent these stores, special areas such as hairdressing salons, restaurants and sometimes even art galleries were clearly designated for elite and account holding customers.[28] The new way of the suburbs and their shopping centres, though, was 'casual' and 'comfortable', again underscoring the way in which the city stores were being overtaken by a retail model that was more in tune with the times.[29]

Shopping centres positioned themselves as emblematic of the 'new' consumer lifestyle. Top Ryde's advertising called on shoppers to 'come as you are [and] shop in comfort'. It claimed the centre had a 'gay, casual atmosphere, where you'll feel quite at home in

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[24] Robbins, *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*, pp. 13-4.
[25] Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*.
[26] Whitwell, *Making the Market*, p. 5.
[27] Elizabeth Wynhausen, *Manly Girls*, (Ringwood; Vic.: Penguin Books, 1989), pp. 6-7, quoted in Kingston, *Basket, Bag and Trolley*, p. 80.
[28] Spearritt, 'Suburban Cathedrals', p. 88.
[29] *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, pp. 26, 30. For a discussion of the 'casual way of life' promoted by shopping centres, see Spearritt, 'I Shop Therefore I Am', p. 133.

your slacks or casual clothes'.[30] An advertisement for Roselands, clearly targeting women, told prospective customers that at the 'luxurious shopping showplace': all around you is beauty, brilliance and bounteous colour' in an atmosphere that is 'relaxing, happy casual – contagious'.[31] The invitation to be casual did not mean an abandonment of standards; Grace Bros still employed floorwalkers with white carnations in their lapels, and the selling staff still all wore black and white.[32] But the customers did not have to reciprocate with their attire to the level they had done in the city. Figure 3.3 is an internal shot of Roselands on its opening day in 1965. It is bright, clean, and spacious, suggesting that the facilities, style and sophistication of the city were now available in a convenient and relaxed complex, close to home.

Figure 3.3: Roselands interior, 1965
Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 3458*, 'Roselands from Store and Centre, Opening Day, Scrapbook', Roselands Interior, c1965.

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[30] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1957, p. 19.
[31] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 6 October 1965, pp. 16-17. For the development of Roselands opening promotions, see Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 56*, 'Roselands Shopping Centre On Ring Road 3, Pre Opening and Opening Campaign Proposals. Our Theme: "Explore Roselands"', c.1965.
[32] Personal correspondence with Pauline, 20 April 2006.

Casualness suited the values and aesthetics of the expanding suburbs. Warringah Mall advertised that its 'modern and elegant buildings, the convenient location, the covered walks, the open courts, gardens and fountains add[ed] up to a warm friendly market place'.[33] David Jones store had 'avocado-green' columns [to] enhance the coolness of the air-conditioning.[34] Grace Bros Homemakers Store at the Mall had an 'ultra-modern ceiling where a gradation of sunny yellows… [sought to] inspire a feeling of fresh air and sunshine'.[35] When it was converted into a full three-floor department store in 1973, it was advertised as offering 'A bigger slice of the good life'.[36] An air-conditioned court that featured landscaped rockery and a modernist fountain linked Miranda Fair's three hexagonal buildings. Customers accessed the court through thirty-foot-wide sliding glass doors at the push of a button; and they could relax with up to eighty of their peers in the ground floor espresso bar surrounded by teak fittings and colonial furniture.[37] 'Soft mushroom vinyl floors' lay underfoot in the hairdressing salon where women could relax in the lavish blue interior, assured of a fashionable outcome under the capable hands of Mr. L. Ward who was 'experienced in all phases of hair care' and 'equipped with the latest hair dryers'.[38] To be in Miranda Fair, or Roselands, or Bankstown Square, was like being 'in a vast enclosed "city"': spacious, comfortable, and sheltered from the weather.[39]

Figure 3.4: Miranda Fair interior, 1964
SRL NSW, New suburban shopping centre series,
Government Printing Office 2 – 25901, 21 March 1964.

This comfortable, internalised world was made possible by air-conditioning. Air-cooling systems can be traced back to innovative engineers in the second half of the nineteenth century who were driven by

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[33] 'Shop with ease at the Warringah Mall', advertisement in *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, p. 18.
[34] *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, p. 20.
[35] *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, p. 25.
[36] Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 74*, Warringah Mall Forward Planning Meeting, Minutes of Meeting Held 9am, Monday 8 October 1973.
[37] *Retail Trader*, vol. 45, no. 8, March 1964, p. 8.
[38] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 23.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

fears of disease and a racially oriented belief that people, relieved of the enervative effects of heat, might realise their greater potential when working in artificially cooled environments. Initial plans to cool entire cities were scaled down to individual buildings, with arguably the first modern system being installed in the New York Stock exchange in 1902.[40] Theatres were the first businesses to adopt air-conditioning as a lure to the general public, followed by department stores.[41] By the second half of the twentieth century, air-conditioning was having a major impact on architecture. In 1950, Victor Gruen declared that 'without air conditioning, the modern store interior would never have been built.[42] He later explained its specific benefits to shopping centres:

> In providing a year-round climate of 'eternal spring' through the skill of architects and engineers, the shopping centre consciously pampers the shopper, who reacts gratefully by arriving from longer distances, visiting the centre more frequently, staying longer, and in consequence contributing to higher sales figures.[43]

Figure 3.5: Wolfgang Sievers, 'Interior water feature at Miranda Fair shopping centre, Miranda, New South Wales'
NLA, Sievers, Wolfgang Sievers photographic archive, Image No.: nla.pic-an23149748, 1964.

Air conditioning was a major symbol of modern life. All new shopping centres in Australia emphasised it in their opening promotions. The million-dollar system at Bankstown Square, for example, was said to keep the building at a constant a 'springtime' temperature of 71

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[40] Sze Tsung Leong with Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss, 'Air Conditioning', in Chuihua Judy Chung, Jeffrey Inaba, Rem Koolhaas and Sze Tsung Leong (eds), *The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* (Cambridge, MA: Graduate School of Design, 2002), pp. 98, 100-1.
[41] *Ibid*., p. 105.
[42] Victor Gruen, Morris Lapidus, Kenneth Welch and Daniel Schwartzman, 'What Makes a 1940 Store Obsolete?', *Architectural Forum*, July 1950, pp. 62, 73, quoted in *Ibid*., p. 114.
[43] Victor Gruen, *Centre for the Urban Environment: Survival of the Cities* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1973), p. 74, quoted in *Ibid*., p. 116.

degrees.[44] There is no doubt it was an appealing feature, with a number of responses to this project's oral history survey describing it as a motivator for shopping trips to this day.[45] Sylvia, a teacher now living close to Macquarie Centre remembers that she 'thought it was marvellous when… [Penrith Plaza] opened [in 1971] as it was air conditioned! And no-one else had air-conditioning.'[46] Suzanne, a retiree, notes that her local shopping centre 'is a nice place to go on hot days and enjoy the air conditioning while shopping'.[47] Similarly Peter, a software developer in his thirties, recalls that when he lived for a short time in Queensland he, too, used a nearby 'shopping centre simply for the air conditioning on really hot days.'[48]

Goods for the good life

Wrapped in the experience of centres, and awaiting the customers as they stepped off its escalators was a vast array of goods, all packaged in the language of modern living. Grace Bros' 'supermarket of tomorrow' had all the tins, pre-packaged cooking ingredients, meat, fish, fruit and vegetables that the busy housewife might require to prepare dinner for a hungry young family. If she was really stretched, or just felt like easing her load, she could avail herself of the pre-prepared food and menu ideas at the 'Magic Menu Bar'.[49] 'Speedy checkout packing, easy parcel pickup… bag minding and home delivery' all added to the ease of supermarket shopping.[50] Parcel pickup was a common feature of the bigger stores, further integrating the car, the shopping centre and the shopper into a cohesive system of purchase and delivery.[51]

Grace Bros' opening sales at Roselands offered swimsuits, fashion and casual shoes, transistor radios, long play records, teapots, tents, fur coats, school clothes, men's glo-

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[44] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 September 1966, p. 20. For another examples, see North Rocks K mart opening advertisement in *Advertiser*, 24 September 1975, p. 21.

[45] Deborah, OHR no. 18, 14 - 20 January 2007; Robyn, OHR no. 47, 21 - 27 January 2007; Patricia, OHR no. 76, 8 January 2008 – 23 February 2008. See also Bev Donald (interviewed 27 August 1994), quoted in Christopher Keating, *On the Frontier: A Social History of Liverpool* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1995), p. 203.

[46] Sylvia, OHR no. 29, 21 - 27 January 2007.

[47] Suzanne, OHR no. 34, 21 - 27 January 2007.

[48] Peter, OHR no. 73, 12 March 2007 - 7 January 2008.

[49] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 27 October 1965, p. 5.

[50] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 20 October 1965, p. 32.

[51] For some examples of parcel pickup arrangements, see *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 11; Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', p. 57.

weave shirts, sun lounges, garden furniture sets, rubber door mats, barbeques and sheet sets.[52] Specials were offered on modern accessories including refrigerators, 'famous name' sewing machines, 'famous' hairdryers (of the sit underneath variety), typewriters and records as well as television sets and washing machines that were being 'sacrificed'.[53] Homewares and furnishings had been a strength of Grace Bros' Broadway store, and were easily transferable to the suburban market.[54] The furniture department claimed to contain 'the greatest… collection ever exhibited outside of Sydney' with 'everything to make your home more beautiful… more liveable'.[55] Over at Warringah Mall, casual outdoor furniture suitable for 'peninsular living' filled the store. This particular lifestyle was said to be of 'Californian origin' and the dominant mode in the Warringah Shire – leaving the factories and industrialised surrounds of the mall aside.[56]

Figure 3.6: Advertisement, Grace Bros, Roselands
Torch, 20 October 1965.

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[52] Grace Bros advertisement in *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 20 October 1965, pp. 28-32.
[53] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 13 October 1965, pp. 44-45.
[54] Kingston, *Basket, Bag and Trolley*, p. 95.
[55] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 13 October 1965, p. 8.
[56] *Manly Daily*, 4 April 1963, p. 25.

It was not yet certain that high fashion would take off in the suburbs so there was a tendency to stay down market in the early shopping centres.[57] 'Fashion', though, was no longer the preserve of the upper classes, with a wide range of budget stores now providing for the broader population. In doing so, they were drawing on the work of 'the big [city] stores, their advertisers and the fashion press', which had co-operated determinedly since the end of the war 'to elevate the fashion sense of Australian women.' As well as increasing sales, it was thought that this would have a civilising influence on the female population. After the war's austerity the bright colours, and low maintenance of new synthetic fabrics proved very popular. Developments in production techniques brought prices down and by the 1950s affordable fashion was widely accessible.[58]

The concept of fashion again spoke of a changing cultural sensibility towards aspirational spending and away from thrift. In an article entitled 'Fashion is almost a way of living', the Advertising Manager of Grace Bros, Sydney, John Simpson, spoke of the intimate relationship between fashion, marketing and desire. He urged retailers to seek out 'the very soul' of their customer, claiming that a woman did not buy with her brain 'but with her heart, her stomach, her dreams'. She buys, he wrote:

> with her heart because she loves her kids, her husband, her parents; she buys with her stomach because these people get hungry; she buys with her dreams because, when she puts on that mini-care spring frock and new wig, chances are she just may be taken for Elizabeth Taylor up at the R.S.L. next Saturday night.[59]

Shopping centres tapped in effectively to the rise of 'budget fashion', advertising to women based on the now familiar theme of more for less at greater convenience. Farmer's at Miranda Fair offered women 'lighter and brighter Autumn clothes to match your every mood, take you glamorously anywhere, anytime.'[60] There was said to be 'excitement in store' at the prospect of 'Farmer's worldwide couture collection' making its debut. Available were 'the same elegant imports, the same top Australian labels' that

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[57] Yeomans, 'Address to the Golden Jubilee Convention', p. 42.
[58] Kingston, *Basket Bag and Trolley*, pp. 80-85.
[59] John Simpson (Advertising Manager of Grace Bros, Sydney), 'Fashion is almost a way of living…', *Australian Retailing*, vol. 2, no. 5, July 1968, p. 7.
[60] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 14.

had previously been confined to city retailing.[61] Big 'discounts' were available immediately, with much-publicised opening 'specials.[62] Bradman's at the Fair declared that it cost 'so little to look *Lovable* at Bradman's', opening with 'bigger, brighter bargains' on lingerie, girdles, bras, hosiery, gloves, handbags and travel bags.[63] Fays emphasised that it was a family business, catering for family shopping, that still kept up with 'the latest fashion trends'.[64]

The shopping housewife

The tone of this marketing was not unusual, nor was its appeal to women as the primary market demographic. Women had long been seen as the principal household shoppers. Department stores had offered feminised space from the mid nineteenth century. Shopping centres now brought their attractions to the suburban housewife with children. She was targeted heavily in promotions.[65] 'The spacious traffic-free central mall' at Top Ryde allowed 'the housewife…[to] carry out her shopping conveniently and safely for both herself and her children.'[66] Ryde's escalators could 'take a mother and child side by side in comfort'.[67] Miranda Fair's architects had given 'careful consideration to the needs of the women of Sutherland' during the design phase of the centre.[68] Bankstown Square was 'the Housewife's Square'. There it was 'ladies day every day'.[69] When Roselands opened, an advertisement for Grace Bros declared that:

> If you believe that variety is the spice of life… if you like your fashions new… to be in on the latest… if you have a mind of your own… if you seek the latest fads, priced within your reach… if you love your man in good clothes, well cut, well maintained, if you love to dress your children up in fashion designed to show them off then you'll love Grace Bros. Roselands.[70]

[61] *Ibid.,* p. 14.
[62] *Ibid.,* pp. 6, 10.
[63] *Ibid.,* pp. 19, 21.
[64] *Ibid.,* p. 23.
[65] Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*, p. 278; Barrett, 'Roselands' 134.
[66] *Building, Lighting Engineering*, April 24 1958, p. 42.
[67] *Daily Telegraph*, A. J. Benjamin Supplement, 13 November 1957, p. 21.
[68] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 23.
[69] *Bankstown Observer*, 21 September 1966, pp. 2-3.
[70] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 13 October 1965, p. 40.

Appeals to women as matrons of household expenditure and arbiters of family presentation tapped into and reinforced the social relationships of consumer capitalism. While men went out to work to provide funds, women, in a complex integration of empowerment and entrapment, both managed the home and laboured within it.[71] Their role of housewifery was built upon the economic forces fuelling suburban expansion, but also incorporated preceding social traditions based around motherhood and sexuality.[72] By the 1950s, motherhood was ensconced as a woman's duty and source of fulfilment.[73] This was only further reinforced by the practical realities of looking after the increasing numbers of children produced during the baby boom.[74]

The baby boom mothers who populated the suburban landscape had to balance maternal roles, an increasingly commodified understanding of female sexual attractiveness, and the changes that came with suburbanisation's radical restructuring of the city.[75] Those embedded within suburban homes could be separated from family networks, leaving the door open for marketing, advertising and 'experts' to provide knowledge and advice.[76] Consumer solutions were available for a range of issues, both personal and domestic.[77] Whether one wanted more youthful looking skin, or a more efficient means of washing the clothes, the answer could be bought. Pre-war values of thrift, self-help, and creatively improvising with what one had, became secondary to the selection and acquisition of commodities.[78] The purchasing housewife became the family's consumer lifestyle manager:[79]

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[71] On the conjunction of subjugation with new forms of authority, expertise and rights, see Sheridan, *Who Was That Woman?*, p. 20; Mica Nava, 'Consumerism Reconsidered: Buying and Power', *Cultural Studies*, 5, 2, p. 208 cited in Lesley Johnson, *The Modern Girl: Girlhood and Growing Up* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), p. 29; Lloyd and Johnson, 'Dream Stuff', pp. 254-9. On the Australian male's reluctance to part with his pay packet, see Gail Reekie, 'Market Research and the Post-War Housewife', *Australian Feminist Studies*, no. 14, Spring 1991, p. 16.

[72] See Sheridan, *Who Was That Woman?*, p. 42; Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle, 'Sexuality and the Suburban Dream', in Richard White and Penny Russell (eds), *Memories and Dreams: Reflections on Twentieth-Century Australia (Pastiche II)* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1997), pp. 194-200; Beverley Kingston, *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann: Women and Work in Australia* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson (Australia), 1975), p. 110.

[73] Game and Pringle, *Sexuality*, p. 200.

[74] My thanks to Beverley Kingston for this point.

[75] On commodified sexuality, see Hutchings, *Beauty Begins at 7am*, pp. 44-5; Marilyn Lake, 'Female Desires: The Meaning of World War II', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 24, no. 95, October 1990, pp. 267 - 284; Teo, 'The Americanisation of Romantic Love.

[76] Sheridan, *Who Was That Woman?*, p. 42.

[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-3.

[78] Game and Pringle, *Sexuality*, p. 196.

[79] Sheridan, *Who Was That Woman?*, pp. 22-3; Game and Pringle, *Sexuality*, p. 205.

For the young homemaker, shopping centres offered everything required for rearing consumer society's next generation. At Miranda, opening 'bargains for bubs' included '6,000 beautiful items of babywear'.[80] Elsewhere cots, mattresses and clothing were the subject of frequent sales, with baby goods a regular spotlight of advertising. Attitudes towards mothering were on display in a 'baby forum', intended to 'interest every woman, whether mother to be, young mother or grandma', held at Roselands in 1970. Presentations included a sex education film shown by the Family Planning Association entitled 'What shall we tell the children'; a talk on breastfeeding; demonstrations of the latest prams, strollers and maternity corsetry; as well as baby competitions.[81] A follow up headline declared: Roselands is 'the place to be if you're a lucky mother'. Mothers purchasing baby clothing could take a lucky dip in the Bond's Wishing Well. In the Bonny Bouncer contest, babies – separated into 'novice' and 'open' divisions - were placed in a Bonny Bouncer and 'judged on creative ability, fluency of movement and general vitality'. The following Monday a 'baby crawling derby' was conducted at the Raindrop Fountain with all entrants receiving a free gift.[82]

When NSW Liberal Premier, Bob Askin made 'a sneak preview' tour of Bankstown Square before opening, a local newspaper described it as his chance to have a look around 'before the women took over'.[83] The wife of the State Governor, Lady Cutler, oversaw the official opening. She opined that the building was 'fascinating for a woman', perhaps alluding to the grand scale of public space being targeted towards her gender. A feature of the opening ceremony was an overhead formation flight of light aircraft – piloted by women.[84] Liberated women! Free as birds! But the women who Bankstown Square was being pitched at were not free in this sense. Their careers were in the home, with perhaps a part-time job on the side, and when they got to fly free, it was through choosing consumables in the rarefied air of the shopping centre.

[80] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 10.
[81] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 9 September 1970, p.1.
[82] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 9 September 1970, p.17.
[83] *Bankstown Observer*, 21 September 1966, pp. 2-3. Note that Askin had always disliked his first name 'Robin', and since the War had used 'Robert' or 'Bob' in its stead. He officially changed it to Robert in 1971. See Murray Goot, 'Askin, Sir Robert William (Bob) (1907 - 1981)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 17, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2007), pp. 35-40.
[84] *Sydney Morning Herald,* Bankstown Square Feature, 21 September 1966, p. 1.

Shopping centres offered a limited freedom and greater convenience for suburban women that should not be dismissed. Juggling young children and bags of shopping across multiple locations could be onerous, frustrating and time-consuming. One-stop shopping with parking close to shops was a great boon for many suburban women, and one that has remained a constant over the past fifty years.[85] As one woman, Jody, recently commented: 'With 2 children one still in a 5 point harness getting them in and out of the car and then into the pram I want to do this as few times as possible. Using a major shopping centre I can do it all in one place.'[86] Kate expressed similar sentiments, writing that when she has her kids with her, centres provide 'the opportunity to visit lots of shops at once and get the shopping over with'. Even shopping alone, their 'parking is convenient (especially if I have a lot of bags) and most of the things I want are concentrated in one place'.[87]

In the 1960s, shopping centres were not only convenient, they offered the freedom to shop unfettered by young offspring who so strongly informed women's social identities. Childcare facilities in the larger shopping centres were gratefully and enthusiastically embraced by 1960s mothers who had little opportunity for time to themselves or in purely adult company. While there had been an increase in support for educational kindergartens for three to four year old children through the 1950s and 1960s, younger children of working mothers were largely cared for under individual and private arrangements.[88] Officials and experts differed in their opinions on child-care for working women, but were decidedly against child-care for leisure.[89] Against this dominant paradigm, regional shopping centres celebrated women's right to shop in peace.

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[85] Jan, OHR no. 36, 21 - 27 January 2007.
[86] Jody, OHR no. 6, 14 - 20 January 2007.
[87] Kate, OHR no. 19, 14 - 20 January 2007.
[88] Deborah Brennan, *The Politics of Australian Childcare: Philanthropy to Feminism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 52-9.
[89] On the former, see Patricia Grimshaw, Shurlee Swain and Ellen Warne, 'Whose Problem? Experts and the Working Mother in 1960s Melbourne', in Seamus O'Hanlon and Tanja Luckins, *Go! Melbourne in the Sixties* (Melbourne: Circa, 2005), pp. 136-37. On the latter, see Brennan, *The Politics of Australian Childcare*, pp. 52-9.

Warringah Mall opened with a child minding service called the 'mini-mall', containing an indoor area full of toys, a nursery and an outdoor play area complete with seesaws, miniature houses and a racing track. Three nursing sisters in starched white uniforms looked after the children for a small fee while their mothers shopped.[90] Roselands went a step further with its 'TV Child Minder' – said to be the largest closed circuit television system in Australia. Monitors positioned around the centre allowed parents to see their children happily playing, sleeping and being looked after by Sister M. Johnston; 'a triple certificate nurse, and mother of two,' and her small cohort of 'baby sitters'.[91] Miranda Fair had a similarly qualified nurse, Mrs A. L. Farmer, supervising children left to play with 'specially devised instructional and educational toys' while their mothers shopped.[92]

There were limitations to the childcare services. They didn't offer a solution to women who wanted to work, simply making it easier for them to shop. In this way, big shopping centres became the built environment's very tangible expression of the cultural, social and economic role that the post-war housewife was obliged to fulfil. They offered public, consumer oriented expression within a privately owned, largely indoor space. So while childminding facilities offered women much needed support and relief, they also served to reinforce their social position as housewives.

Suburban retail employment

Although the housewife was the shopping centre's demographic epicentre, society and women's roles in it were undergoing transformation. The 1960s housewife was increasingly under pressure to work outside of the home as well as in it, as the price of family consumables stretched beyond the reach of a single pay packet.[93] The service sector (and retail within it) was a key element in the suburbanisation of work, particularly for women. As the supermarket chains spread through the suburbs, women

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[90] Judd, 'It's Not Bricks and Mortar'*,* p. 52.
[91] Canterbury City Council (Campsie) Library, Local Studies Collection, Roselands File, Grace Bros promotional brochure, 'Explore Roselands'*,* c1965; Barrett, 'Roselands' pp. 127-8.
[92] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 23.
[93] Hudson, '1951-72', p. 541.

signed up en mass as cashiers.[94] While much of the work for women was part-time, it offered the prospect of additional income, perhaps even independent income, and access to a world beyond private domesticity. Additionally, the work was close to home and did not hinder the male breadwinner in his pursuit of career and income.

Employment, then, was another reason for governments at both local and state level to support shopping centre construction. Full employment had become economic orthodoxy in the post-war period for both sides of politics.[95] And although this primarily referred to men, the employment figures attached to shopping centre development made attractive reading. Myer argued that its proposed development at Bass Hill would create considerable local employment.[96] Miranda Fair predicted it would employ more than 1000, mostly local people.[97] Beyond direct employment, shopping centres were major investments and once built would encourage consumer spending. They offer a good analogy of the snowball model of consumer capitalism that proved so powerful during the long post-war boom: more jobs – including the part-time employment of both women and young people – and higher incomes led to greater consumer spending which in turn created further employment, growth and improved living standards.[98]

Employment helped embed centres in their localities, and indeed, it became an important element in their marketing.[99] The manager of the National Bank branch in Miranda Fair was a local, as was the childcare sister, the manager of Farmer's, and the newsagency operator who was also the head of the local chamber of commerce.[100] John

[94] Game and Pringle, *Gender at Work*, p. 63.

[95] On the prominence of full employment as a government initiative in the 1950s and 1960s see, for example, W. J. Hudson, '1951-72', p. 534.

[96] *Torch*, 7 December 1961, pp. 15-6. That it was advised by S. Haviland, the President of the Sydney Water Board, to promote its case through potential community benefits and proposed civic amenities, see Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *FARMS039, 142*, Letter from E. L. Byrne to V. Upson, The Myer Emporium Limited, 11 September 1961; Minutes of meeting in Mr A. H. Tolley's office 10am, Tuesday 9th August, Reference: Sydney Branch Development, 31 August 1961.

[97] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Hurstville ed.), 5 February 1964, p. 9.

[98] For the story of how this economic model was sold to, and adopted by Americans, see Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*.

[99] This is evidenced in the newspaper articles on local store managers. On the source of these articles, we can see, for example, a 'Personal Profile' memorandum sent to K mart managers in the late 1980s. It asked them to fill out personal details such as marital status, number and ages of children, hobbies, spouses and children's hobbies and interests etc. see Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *KMARS001, 460*, Store #1100 Campbelltown, NSW (Super K mart), 'Personal Profile for Publicity Use'.

[100] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 22-4.

Reid, who managed Woolworths at Warringah Mall, lived in the area.[101] For the families and friends of these employees, the shopping centre became an integral part of their day-to-day lives:

> My mother went to work in the centre for decades and this brought the centre into our family life as we felt, through my mother's dinner time stories, that we knew many of the shop owners and businesses. This all provided great interest. Later, in high school, my best friend's parents also had a shop there so the whole centre was intertwined in my life.[102]

One woman in her fifties found a job in the accounts section at Grace Bros Roselands, and was later joined by her eighteen year old daughter Lorne: 'I loved working with my mother, [and] had a great time getting to know people in Grace Bros', writes Lorne. 'It was like a big family (not always happy though!) but everyone knew everyone else.'[103] Lorne met her future husband, Ken, when he came in to make a payment on his $10 credit account. 'She offered me a lolly', Ken recollects. 'I was hooked. We were engaged two months later and married four months after that.'[104] Lorne and Ken held their reception:

> in the Rose Room which was part of Roselands. My mother was amazing she paid for the wedding as my father had just lost his job… people were very kind and understanding regarding the situation and helped us tremendously [in] keeping costs down etc. It was a tight little community the retail sector… in those days.[105]

With wartime babies and their post-war siblings coming of working age in the 1960s, young people like Lorne were a prime source of employment for retailers.[106] It was not only their labour: the marketability of a youthful sales team was discussed in industry literature. Dressed in a store's latest fashions, they could become live display models – walking examples of the culture and lifestyle up for sale.[107]

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[101] *Manly Daily*, 3 April 1963, p. 7.
[102] Maire-Louise, OHR no. 33, 21 - 27 January 2007.
[103] Personal correspondence with Lorne, 3 October 2006.
[104] Personal correspondence with Ken, 4 December 2006.
[105] Personal correspondence with Lorne, 3 October 2006.
[106] On the baby-boomers coming to employable age, see Gary Wotherspoon, *City of the Plain: History of a Gay Sub-Culture* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1991), p. 140.
[107] 'Promoting for the Teenage Market', *Retail Trader,* vol. 45, no. 5, December 1963, pp. 29-30.

Young people, for their part saw retail jobs as good opportunities for local and part-time work, and enjoyed the access to consumer goods that employment provided.[108] They were also much more than mere display models, working throughout retail organisations. Pauline, for example, joined the display department of Grace Bros, Roselands, after finishing art school as a teenager in the mid-60s. She recalls that it was an unusual occupation for a girl at the time and that most of her workmates were male and gay. 'I loved it and them', she writes:

> they treated me like a favoured child teaching me everything they knew from the 'hey day' of window dressing… at Mark Foys in Sydney. They were a talented and amusing bunch and introduced me to a lot of things, 'completing' my education with ballet, films, food and fashion. I can remember going to see *Elvira Madigan* with 'Tilly' after he had taken me to the original Adam's Marble Bar.[109]

Watching the ill-fated and tragic love affair of tightrope-walker Hedvig Jensen and Swedish cavalry officer Count Sixten Sparre, they 'sat and held hands and cried throughout the movie.'[110] Pauline also worked on her boss's drag outfits. Echoing Gary Wotherspoon's observation that queens in the 1960s could be seen arriving at the Trocadero Ballroom in George Street, Sydney, in removal vans to preserve their elaborate gowns and wigs, she recalls helping to transport her boss into the city – flat on his back in a station wagon passed a flabbergasted toll-collector on the Harbour Bridge.[111] She had earlier sewn him into a ball gown, which was covered in thousands of tiny mirrors, making it impossible for him to bend at the waist into a regular car seat.[112]

It was an exciting time for the young suburban girl, both socially and in career terms as display became more widely appreciated in an industry developing sophisticated marketing practices. In the 1940s, limited funds and materials had forced staff, who

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[108] On the link between youth consumption and employment, see Michelle Arrow, *Friday on Our Minds: Popular Culture in Australia Since 1945* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009), pp. 49, 59. Lorne, Ken and Robert all welcomed the opportunities afforded by retail employment. Personal correspondence with Lorne, 3 October 2006; Personal correspondence with Ken, 4 December 2006; and Robert, OHR no. 11, 14 - 20 January 2007, for example.
[109] Personal correspondence with Pauline, 20 April 2006.
[110] For a plot synopsis and review see 'Elvira Madigan', The Internet Movie Database, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0061620/plotsummary, and Bosley Crowther, 'Film Festival: The Landscape of Love: 'Elvira Madigan' Tells a Bittersweet Tale', *New York Times*, 30 September 1967, p. 26.
[111] Wotherspoon, *City of the Plain*, p. 135.
[112] Personal correspondence with Pauline, 20 April 2006.

were often viewed by management as odd and arty, to manufacture their own props. In the Fifties more pre-produced items became available, and by the 1960s (see Figure 3.7), display was being given increasing focus as an essential sales tool, with managers urged to integrate store displays with other promotional material.[113] An artistic influence remained, however, and interactions between display departments and straitlaced management were not always smooth. When Tilly received a command 'to pull his finger out' from the store manager, Pauline recalls, he sent a mannequin's broken off finger back up to the office in reply. It was also not uncommon for the display staff to run through the store with a naked mannequin, shrieking with laughter as they clutched at its crutch or breast.[114]

Figure 3.7: Grace Bros Window Display, Chatswood, c1965
Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 3458*, 'Roselands from Store and Centre, Opening Day, Scrapbook'.

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[113] David Paul Lydford, 'Display men: a necessary evil?', *Australian Retailing*, February 1968, pp. 4-7.
[114] Personal correspondence with Pauline, 20 April 2006.

Hanging out in shopping centres

Australian youth not only worked in shopping centres, they 'hung out', met friends, checked out fashion and entertained themselves in what quickly became a vibrant social space.[115] While some still found a trip to the city more exciting, many others embraced the new world on their doorsteps.[116] Roselands, writes Ken, was 'like a magnet' for local youth: 'The centre was the centre of the area.'[117] Robert recalls that it became: 'the central focus of my life and that of my friends… Each afternoon after school and every weekend was spent meeting up within Roselands to 'hang' with the guys of Punchbowl, Belmore and Narwee Boys and the girls of Wiley Park and Beverly Hills Girls… I met my first girl friend [there] and had my first kiss.'[118]

Such social interactions in the shopping centre were fuelled by consumer practices. The 'teen market' had been a media story since the late-1950s, and by the 1960s was recognised as an important demographic by marketers and retailers who were adopting age-based market segmentation.[119] There were suggestions in the retail trade literature that marketing products as 'in', rather than manufacturing them to a high quality, would produce higher sales amongst teenagers – even adolescent boys were said to be 'more style conscious' than ever before. Stores were advised to invest in promotions as 'study after study' had found young customers looking 'to their favourite store for… fashion guidance'.[120] This may have been wishful thinking by retailers hoping to dictate fashion to a market they did not truly understand, but Robert credits Roselands with introducing 'fashion to my group… [because] trends were on show that would have been unknown to those outside the complex. Gary Darby's surf shop gave me the look I wanted.'[121]

As consuming teenagers were welcomed, fears about miscreant youth were being expressed. Concern about the behaviour of working class larrikins had been a subject of public debate since the late nineteenth century. In the post-war period, assisted by ready employment and rising wages, sections of working class youth embraced consumer

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[115] Beth, OHR no. 28, 21 - 27 January 2007; Dianne, OHR no. 48, 21 - 27 January 2007.
[116] Deborah, OHR no. 18, 14 - 20 January 2007.
[117] Personal correspondence with Ken, 4 December 2006.
[118] Robert, OHR no. 11, 14 - 20 January 2007.
[119] Arrow, *Friday on Our Minds*, pp. 62-65.
[120] 'Promoting for the Teenage Market', *Retail Trader,* December 1963, pp. 29-30.
[121] Robert, OHR no. 11, 14 - 20 January 2007.

culture, adopting American styles of music, dress and dancing. Amidst wide-held fears of delinquency, they were identified against the establishment as 'bodgies' and 'widgies'.[122] One of their key social sites was the milk bar. They became closely identified with it, giving it a reputation that could rub off on other customers. Lorne recalls that all her school friends embraced Roselands when it opened because 'it was somewhere to go other than hanging around the local milk bar as that gave you a bad name!'[123]

Shopping centres provided a safe retreat for other respondents also. Deborah visited Westfield Burwood to 'avoid the punks and ruffians'.[124] For Beth, Warringah Mall, and later Lemon Grove at Chatswood, provided 'an excuse to go out legitimately by myself – after all it was SAFE to go to the shops'.[125] Youth 'gangs' in the 1960s, though, occasionally associated themselves with shopping centres: at Roselands long haired boys, called 'Hairies' by one survey respondent, 'Surfs' by another, faced off against the 'Sharps' from Bankstown Square who would arrive to intimidate the locals on their home 'turf'.[126] Sharps were denim-clad and working class, with short hair and a view of male mods, and long-haired males generally, 'as soft and unmanly'.[127] Lorne recalls other Canterbury locals steering clear of Sharps who were 'always bashing up kids (boys) with long hair'.[128]

For retailers, the primary threat posed by 'juveniles' was shoplifting.[129] Articles provided detail on State laws, products considered most at risk, and shoplifter profiles. Comparisons with overseas experience were made and advice offered.[130] The claims

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[122] Arrow, *Friday on Our Minds*, pp. 46-53.

[123] Personal correspondence with Lorne, 3 October 2006. On bodgies, widgies and milk bars, see Wotherspoon, *City of the Plain*, p. 111.

[124] Deborah, OHR no. 18, 14 - 20 January 2007.

[125] Beth, OHR no. 28, 21 - 27 January 2007.

[126] Robert, OHR no. 11, 14 - 20 January 2007.

[127] On Sharps' clothing and their attitudes towards mods, see Seamus O'Hanlon, '"Where All the Action is, Man": Youth Culture in Melbourne in the 1960s', in Seamus O'Hanlon and Tanja Luckins, *Go! Melbourne in the Sixties* (Melbourne: Circa, 2005), p. 54. That hippies were seen as 'effeminate "long-haired poofters"', see Robert Wolfgramm, 'City in the Self: Melbourne (1968-70) as Seen from the Margins', in Seamus O'Hanlon and Tanja Luckins, *Go! Melbourne in the Sixties* (Melbourne: Circa, 2005), p. 32.

[128] Personal correspondence with Lorne, 3 March 2007.

[129] 'Why do young people steal?', *Australian Retailing* vol. 2, no. 3, May 1968, pp. 17-9.

[130] 'Shop-lifting - $25m. a year and growing rapidly', *Australian Retailing*, vol. 1, no. 5, July 1967, pp. 5-9; 'Survey of shoplifting apprehensions in Southern California', *Australian Retailing*, vol. 1, no. 5, July 1967, p. 27; Robert Hartley (Deputy Managing Director, David Jones Sydney Pty. Ltd.), 'The cost of theft', *Australian Retailing* vol. 5, No.5, April 1972, p. 5.

were sensationalised but not without foundation. Lorne remembers that 'shoplifting was rife at that time', and girls at her school would frequently talk about it and show off shoplifted items.[131] Her husband also knew a lot of boys who would steal records, particularly EP's and singles.[132] She tells the story of being unjustly accused of shoplifting herself, being grabbed by a store detective, taken to security and harangued by a 'bully' of a manager:

> He threatened he would ring our school and everyone would know we were thieves… He drilled us for what seemed a long time repeating over and over we would be charged and the police brought in… The dickhead security manager told my father I was rude, and a juvenile delinquent… It was a horrendous experience and certainly just reinforced my point of view at that time about authority figures.[133]

Some local residents feared the concentration of teenagers that centres had brought so close to their homes. One man living next to Roselands claimed that his property was being used by a 'hooligan element' as a getaway route from security guards and demanded that a fence be built to protect his home.[134] Towards the end of the 1960s other residents began complaining to Canterbury Council about youths holding late night car races and noisy parties in and around Roselands. One local interviewed for this study recalled no drag races, but the fear of them may be as instructive as their actual occurrence, and the number of complaints is hard to ignore.[135] Certainly it was for council who forwarded them to Grace Bros, requesting that a regular security patrol be provided to crack down on the troublemakers – an increased police presence having already been the subject of dispute from residents protesting the neglect of other parts of the district.[136] If the security patrol stopped or redirected the young drivers and their cohorts they soon returned with more complaints being fielded in 1970. The matter was

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[131] Personal correspondence with Lorne, 3 March 2007.
[132] Personal correspondence with Ken, 4 December 2006.
[133] Personal correspondence with Lorne, 3 March 2007.
[134] Canterbury City Council records index, 68/1763, 'Roselands Shopping Centre', no. 2, April 1968. Note that most of the files on Roselands were removed at some point from the Canterbury City Council archives, leaving only index entries as a guide to their contents.
[135] Personal correspondence with Brent, 17 January 2007.
[136] Canterbury City Council records index, 67/4407, 'Roselands Shopping Centre', no. 14, September 1967; Canterbury City Council records index, 64/846, 'Roselands Shopping Centre', no. 2, 1966.

referred to the Police Department who this time were asked to keep the area 'under regular surveillance'.[137]

The hooning teenagers at Roselands were representative of the changes in youth culture that consumer capitalism and economic affluence had brought to Australia. 'Hot Curve' racing car sets were sold inside the centre, while older kids and adults were entertained by the frequent weekend motor shows held in the Roselands car park.[138] Young men, at once alienated by the rules of older generations, freed up by the booming economy and availability of work, and embracing the expression of individuality and choice being promised through marketing, found in the car the ideal medium to express their social position and desires. Richard Strauss has shown the way that Holden, while still maintaining a masculine mythology, shifted its marketing to accommodate youth sub cultures, expanding its product range to include the 'Sandman' or vernacularly, the 'fuck-truck', custom panel van.[139] Other makes and models such as the Torana and Monaro probably featured at Roselands, its tarmac offering an ideal site to show them off, both in defiance of the establishment, and in celebration of an expanding world of commercialised freedom.

For the less, or yet-to-be rebellious, a car park after hours could be an ideal location to learn to drive.[140] Younger kids, meanwhile, saw them as giant playgrounds:

> while the shops were closed the main public area's of Roselands were open during the day so us kids would use Roselands for hide and seek games and just mucking around, the carpark was the best for skateboard riding in the early mid 70's with not a vehicle in site from Saturday afternoon till Monday mornings.[141]

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[137] Canterbury City Council File 70/ 4174, Correspondence between J. D. Wheeler, Town Clerk, Canterbury Council and the Inspector of Police, Campsie Police Station, 13 and 23 October 1970; Canterbury Council File 70/ 4174, Council Minutes, 20 August 1970, 29 October 1970.
[138] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 18 November 1970, p. 27. Roselands management applied for permission to stage such shows as a Red Cross Driver Education Rally, Canterbury City Council File 69/ 1529; an Australian Racing Drivers Club Ltd event displaying cars participating in the Hardie Ferodo 500, Canterbury City Council File 69/ 2134; and a State Motorkhana Championship Final held by the Morris 850 Car Association, Canterbury City Council File 71/ 3899.
[139] Richard Strauss, 'Up for Rego? Masculinity and the Kingswood', *Public History Review*, vol. 4, 1995, pp. 116-17.
[140] Patricia, OHR no. 76, 8 January 2008 - 23 February 2008.
[141] Personal correspondence with Brent, 17 January 2007.

Suburban youth maintained a wide range of activities across multiple sites of which shopping centres were only one; but the new consumer palaces were changing the ways that young people spent their time. One Warringah teenager, Ros, writes that the Mall was 'a very big thing to people in my age group as we had something else to do on weekends apart from going to the beach and playing sport… We all loved going to the 'Mall''.[142] In an example of local culture being incorporated into the shopping centre, David Jones' two storey blank facade (see Figure 3.8) was used to show surfing movies on the weekends. Local youth, schooled in beach and surf culture, would watch from the car park:

Figure 3.8: Don McPhedran, 'David Jones' new store, Warringah Mall, Brookvale'
SRL NSW, APA Collection: Sydney people, places and events, 1953-1987, APA – 14347, 9 February 1963

> The first time I saw 'Endless Summer' was from the roof of my boyfriend's car, which was a VW which he had pulled the two front seats out of so we would be comfortable. Imagine several hundred teenagers all sitting in the car park, which was an open air style, either in or on top of their cars watching movies. Surfing movies of course, because we were all Northern Beaches kids who lived and breathed that stuff then.[143]

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[142] Ros, OHR no. 14, 14 - 20 January 2007.
[143] *Ibid.*

The attraction of shopping centres for youth, women, families and others was dependent on their convenience, modernity, range of retail and usefulness as a social space. But it was also built through promotional campaigns that were core activities of all centres. Indeed, as we shall see in Chapter Nine, the capacity of centralised management or merchants' associations to organise a diverse range of tenants into a cohesively marketed entity, was one of the great advantages shopping centres held over loosely affiliated retail strips.[144]

Shopping centre promotion began well before opening day. The press covered in detail the build up in the weeks and days beforehand, tension escalating as the big day approached and workers frantically laboured to finish construction. As in today's television home and garden makeover programs, doubt was dangled as to whether the new and wonderful complex would be completed on time; in this case for the arrival of politicians, dignitaries and thousands of shoppers.[145] For Westfield, it became 'commercially more savvy to gain a reputation for opening on time and for getting the rents rolling in than it would have been to spare a few dollars and incur long delays.'[146] When the big days arrived, reportage invariably recorded a huge crush of people desperate to gain access to the new worlds that had been built with record speed on their doorsteps.[147] As Megan Morris has argued, such crowds became 'a decorative feature of the shopping centre's performance' – a confirmation of the demand they sought to supply.[148]

Crowds brought politicians offering glowing tributes, couched in terms of progress, praising the nous of businessmen making such contributions to national progress. When NSW Premier Bob Heffron opened Miranda Fair in March of 1964, he cited it as a wonderful example of the area's rapid change, declaring that in his overseas trip the

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[144] Deger, 'Retail Expansion and Development', p. 51.

[145] Barrett, 'Roselands' p. 124. And see for example, *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 1.

[146] Westfield Holdings Ltd, *The Westfield Story*, p. 102.

[147] That 'thousands of women rushed the bargains on offer' at Miranda's opening, see *St. George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Hurstville ed.), 12 February 1964, p. 13. On the rapidity of construction at Roselands, see B. A. Grace quoted in *Retail Trader*, vol. 47, no. 4, November 1965, p. 9 and at Miranda, see *St. George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Hurstville ed.), 18 March 1964, p. 5.

[148] Morris, 'Things To Do With Shopping Sentres, p. 217.

previous year he had not seen such an impressive shopping centre. Sutherland's Shire President congratulated Farmer-Myer on its 'splendid choice' of site, marvelling at the 'rock courage [taken] to spend £3.5 million on this wonderful development'.[149] At the end of 1965, new premier Robin Askin declared that Roselands' 'million dollar spread of merchandise… brings the city to the suburbs in a glittering way that must rival even the fabled Persian Bazaars'.[150] A year later he described Bankstown Square as 'private enterprise at its best': a monumental business achievement that would 'help keep New South Wales as the leading State in Australia'.[151] As opposition leader in 1963, he had declared Warringah Mall 'a tribute to the prosperity of Australia'.[152]

Figure 3.9: Roselands opening ceremony, October 1965
Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 3458*, 'Roselands from Store and Centre, Opening Day, Scrapbook', Opening Ceremony, c1965.

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[149] *St. George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Hurstville ed.), 18 March 1964, p. 5.
[150] Robert Askin quoted in *Sydney Morning Herald,* 12 October 1965, quoted in Barrett, 'Roselands' p. 124.
[151] *Sydney Morning Herald,* 20 September 1966, pp. 4, 22; *Sydney Morning Herald,* 21 September 1966, Bankstown Square Feature, p. 6; *Bankstown Observer*, 21 September 1966, pp. 2-3.
[152] *Manly Daily*, 6 April 1963, p. 1.

Askin's claim that shopping centres brought 'the city to the suburbs' was a common industry theme. Indeed, the original American mall developers had envisaged themselves perfecting downtown for suburban consumption: eradicating its 'anarchy and ugliness' with standardisation, order, cleanliness and security.[153] Graeme Davison has written that 'cities are both markets and meeting places'. The modern city, he points out, offers 'an unrivalled range of goods and services', but also caters 'to the human desire for sociability, for experiencing the presence of other humans, bumping into friends and acquaintances, enjoying the hum and babble of the crowd.'[154] Developers sought, with shopping centres, to bring such facilities and energy to suburban residents.[155] Myer made a feature of Chadstone being a 'self-contained city', with 'all the best known city shops and offices squeezed under one airfield sized roof'.[156] Pointing to the great advantages of shopping centres, a 1968 Westfield report argued that:

> By simply driving her car or catching a local bus or train, she [the housewife] has a city's choice of shopping within a few minutes of her home and she can then enjoy a tranquil stroll in an air-conditioned atmosphere. An atmosphere of pleasant experiences…[157]

Like the politicians whose opening speeches featured on their front pages, the press hailed shopping centres for bringing a new way of life to suburban Australia, transforming shopping from chore to pleasure, fusing domestic duties with leisure.[158] For the first time in its history, the *St George Sutherland Shire Leader* published an extra edition to celebrate the opening of Miranda Fair, describing the occasion as a major event in Sutherland's 'remarkable development. The Fair, it said, was a 'landmark in progress' that would 'help greatly in the successful expansion of the Shire'.[159]

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[153] Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*, p. 263. Such a 'metropolis without anguish' is explored in more depth in Chapter Nine. This quote comes from Neil Masterton, 'Chaddie and the Southern Cross Hotel: The Periphery and the Centre in Post-War Melbourne', *Transition*, no. 44-45, 1994, p. 140.
[154] Davison, 'From the Market to the Mall', p. 1.
[155] Lowy, 'Regional shopping centres', p. 281.
[156] Masterton, 'Chaddie and the Southern Cross Hotel', pp. 139-40.
[157] Westfield Development Corporation, 'The Story Inside'.
[158] See for example, *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 13 October 1965, p. 27.
[159] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, pp. 1, 7.

The arrival of such massive developments in suburban communities caused a considerable stir and excitement amongst residents.[160] When Bankstown Square opened, Grahame who was working as a teller in the nearby National Bank recalls that 'it took 2 hours to off-load the coin from Mayne Nickless in readiness for the opening day.' [161] Students at Ryde Primary School had an excursion to see the new Top Ryde centre, with one remembering that:

> We were given sample bags. What a hoot - and on a SCHOOL DAY! One of the wonders was that the department store – Benjamin's – a 3-story affair, had ESCALATORS! We only saw them when we went into the city in school holidays.[162]

Figure 3.10: Roselands opening day traffic, October 1965
Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 3458*, 'Roselands from Store and Centre, Opening Day, Scrapbook', Roselands Opening Day Traffic, c1965.

Because of its scale, Roselands caused immense interest: 'people seemed to travel there from all over Sydney at least once, to see what the fuss was about.'[163] Figure 3.10 shows the stream of cars flowing to and from the centre on opening day. Some people

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[160] Maire-Louise, OHR no. 33, 21 - 27 January 2007; Judith, OHR no. 66, 11 February - 11 March 2007; Meredith, OHR no. 71, 11 February - 11 March 2007; Jan, OHR no. 36, 21 - 27 January 2007; Margaret, OHR no. 44, 21 - 27 January 2007; Jenny, OHR no. 45, 21 - 27 January 2007; Robyn, OHR no. 47, 21 - 27 January 2007.
[161] Grahame, OHR no. 82, 8 January 2008 - 23 February 2008.
[162] Carol, OHR no. 42, 21 - 27 January 2007.
[163] Ray, OHR no. 55, 28 January – 03 February 2007; Pamela, OHR no. 94, 8 January 2008 - 23 February 2008.

brought packed lunches to save money and having travelled so far made a day of it, enticed by the magic of the raindrop fountain.[164] One twelve year old came by public transport with two friends from Lane Cove:

> to have a day out there. It was obviously significant to me because 40 years later I can still remember that I was wearing white corduroy jeans, probably Amco brand, and the most wonderful crimson red long sleeve shirt with pintucks and buttoning down the back.[165]

Despite the excitement of grand openings and the initial flood of customers, not every Sydney shopping centre was an instant success. Early trading at both Warringah Mall and Bankstown Square fell short of predicted levels. The opening crowds at Bankstown – 100,000 on the first day of trading, 70,000 on the next[166] – did not last. Despite its modern design and fit-out, its prime location in the heart of Bankstown, its proximity to transport, and the spending capacity of the local market, trading at the Square was sluggish. After a year of trading, Lend Lease considered that a 'longer than usual establishment period' might be required because of its size.[167] Massive promotion by Roselands in the adjoining municipality of Canterbury was also held responsible.[168] Figure 3.11 shows sections of Roselands 1965 promotional schedule, giving an indication of both its scale and the degree of organisation devoted to promotional activities.

A number of tenants at the Square left, protesting over poor returns. At one stage there were forty empty shops. Lend Lease responded to the challenge with a promotional flurry of its own, organising a number of publicity stunts and advertising campaigns. Twenty-page lift-outs in the local press offered incredibly cheap groceries and fresh produce to the first one hundred shoppers. (A woman told that she was the hundred-and-first gave one unfortunate butcher a black eye.) In another promotion, thousands of balloons were filled with tokens bearing cash prizes with a jackpot of $500. On the day that the balloons were released, a crowd crammed below them 'packed like sardines'.

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[164] Stefania, OHR no. 87, 8 January 2008 - 23 February 2008.
[165] Shonagh, OHR no. 32, 21 - 27 January 2007.
[166] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 September 1966, p. 4; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 September 1966, p. 6.
[167] Lend Lease Corporation Limited, 10th annual report and notice of annual general meeting (Sydney: 21 August 1967), p. 18.
[168] For a detailed list of Roselands first year of promotions, see Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 56*, 'Explore Roselands, The Roselands Promotional Plan, 1st Year Program', 1965.

The Mayor couldn't get through to cut the release string, and when he did, 'all hell broke loose'. According to one organiser: 'We spent the next hour dragging out people who'd been squashed and stepped on, while all the time the crowd was crazily bursting balloons and grabbing for money tokens.'[169]

Warringah Mall did not have a competing regional shopping centre nearby but, according to Beth who used to shop in the area, it faced stiff competition from the established and 'thriving strip shopping centres at Manly and Dee Why'.[170] Dee Why had a McDowalls department store, Nock & Kirby hardware and a range of chain variety, apparel and household furnishing stores. These were combined with an attractive mix of business, recreation, administration and entertainment facilities that helped to draw shoppers.[171] Beth, who was a teenager at the time, remembers that:

Figure 3.11: 'Explore Roselands, The Roselands Promotional Plan, 1st Year Program'
Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 56*, 1965.

After attending the first day of trading my grandmother and great grandmother opined the verdict that it was no more than a novelty and would not be feasible for regular shopping. They both felt the entire venture would fail as it was out of the way with no direct bus access [from their home in Harbord], in a bad suburb and altogether just to difficult to use.[172]

While the Mall was moderately successful its backers, the Hammerson Group, were disappointed with the fairly low (ten percent) sales growth over the first two years. Hammerson's later suggested that because they were

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[169] Murphy, *Challenges of Change*, p. 112.
[170] Beth, OHR no. 28, 21 - 27 January 2007.
[171] Langdale, 'A Study of the Trade Area of Warringah Mall', pp. 49-51.
[172] Beth, OHR no. 28, 21 - 27 January 2007.

new to retail, and engaged in an experimental business, neither they nor the early Mall traders had realised 'that old loyalties to traditional shopping strips had to be broken down'. Like Lend Lease at Bankstown, they turned to promotion to increase custom. A Merchants' Association was formed to coordinate promotional activities, and the Mall began to turn the corner.[173]

The industry saw marketing not only as a sales aid, but an essential means of defending market position. As one American industry executive wrote in *The Retail Trader* in the late-1950s:

> a centre requires 365 days of intensive promotion each year to gain and hold its position in the area it serves… if media [to do this] are not available, they must be created. If the tenants in the centre are negative to promotion, they must be converted or additional tenants secured who will promote.[174]

Continual promotion became essential to shopping centre operations. Advertising of specials and sales was an obvious constant, but there was also an unending list of singing stars, children's shows, sporting personalities, curiosities and oddities, all brought in to attract customers. Miranda had only just opened when Col Joy and Little Pattie sung and signed autographs at Farmer's record bar.[175] Teenagers gathered for both fashion parades and rock shows at Westfield Burwood.[176] At Roselands, 'the raindrop fountain was the focus'. Crowds would gather all the way up to 'the top (third) floor to view the scene' and celebrities such as Robert Vaughn from 'The Man from UNCLE'.[177] Johnny Farnham performed 'Sadie the Cleaning Lady', and when Tiny Tim sang, 'Tip Toe Through the Tulips', Pauline and her friends 'stood near the stage & pelted him with plastic flowers'.[178] Ronnie Burns came to Roselands in 1969 to perform his single 'Age of Consent' causing, according to teen music magazine *Go-Set*, a 'near riot'. Photos depicted security guards struggling to hold back female fans and Ronnie being dragged off stage (before centre management shouted him lunch in 'the beautiful

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[173] 'It's the Biggest', *Australian Retailing* vol. 4 no. 7, January 1971, p. 18.
[174] Douglas, 'The Future of Regional Shopping Centres', p. 46.
[175] *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* (Sutherland ed.), 16 March 1964, p. 15.
[176] Maire-Louise, OHR no. 33, 21 - 27 January 2007.
[177] Robert, OHR no. 11, 14 - 20 January 2007.
[178] Personal correspondence with Pauline, 20 April 2006.

"Viking" restaurant').[179] Accompanying the celebrities, were innumerable competitions and lucky draw prizes. By 1970, Roselands claimed to have received more than 2,500,000 entry forms for various promotions that it had run since opening in 1965.[180]

Shopping centre promotions were developments of department store activities earlier in the century discussed in Chapter One. With the growth of the marketing industry and the increasing complexity of consumer culture, a dizzying array of popular culture icons could now be drawn upon to attract customers and motivate them to buy. This could form a cultural mishmash no less free-ranging than the architectural featurism that Robin Boyd might have readily identified in the conglomeration of marble, terrazzo tiles, sheer concrete walls, fountains, palm trees, gaudy signage, plush colonial furniture, carpet, sculptures and modernist painting schemes that confronted the shopping centre visitor. 'The Featurist', wrote Boyd, 'destroys any unified entity… applying gratuitous extra items wherever he fears the eye may be tempted to rest'.[181] The eye, as Gruen lamented, was not permitted to rest in the modern shopping centre.[182]

During Christmas, 1970, 'The Wonderful Wizard of Roselands' set up shop in his 'Palace of Oz' near the raindrop fountain. He was surrounded by Dorothy, Toto, and the good and wicked witches underneath 'millions of "emeralds"' sparkling down from the roof high above.[183] Santa, meanwhile, had his own palace inside an 'enchanted forest' in Toyland ('home of toys, toys and more toys') where he sat on his fur-covered throne with 'his usual sack full of gift *ideas*'. Peter Pan was also there in six 'fantasy scenes' that incorporated sixty moving figurines for children to explore. Pooh, Tigger and Heffalump also made appearances.[184] On the rooftop was a genuine old-fashioned carnival complete with Ferris Wheel, train rides, trampolines and a coffee shop for parents.[185]

[179] 'Ronnie in Near Riot', *Go-Set*, 29 January 29 1969, p. 9.
[180] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 23 September 1970, p. 21.
[181] Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books, 1980), p. 26.
[182] Gruen, 'The Sad Story of Shopping Centres', pp. 350-52.
[183] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 25 November 1970, p. 9.
[184] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 9 September 1970, p.1.
[185] *Bankstown Canterbury Torch*, 4 November 1970, p. 19; 18 November 1970, p.27. Note that from its very opening, Roselands planned to 'have the most spectacular Christmas decorations in the country'. See Coles Myer Archive, SLV, MS13468, *GRACS012, 56*, 'Explore Roselands, The Roselands Promotional Plan, 1st Year Program', 1965.

This variety of children's characters and activities were used for the dual and complementary purposes of selling toys for kids and entertaining them while their parents shopped. Although diverse, they, like the disparate forms that made up the décor of the shopping centre itself, were unified in their subjugation to commerce. Pooh and Tigger were no longer the creation of A.A. Milne, but were branded by Disney. Santa didn't deliver presents; he provided inspiration for purchasing them. Dorothy and Toto weren't trying to find their way home, they had settled in a consumers' paradise beneath the raindrop fountain. Where the movie Wizard had been revealed as illusory and his promise a sham, he was now made whole again, his edifice reconstructed and his ability to deliver bountifully returned. That which was useful had been appropriated, that which was not, was left in the marketer's waste-paper basket. If Dorothy's realisation that there was 'no place like home' held any cultural currency here, the little house in Kansas would have to be furnished and provisioned with the latest, most entertaining and distracting gadgetry the Wizard could provide.

Shopping centres appealed to unlimited desire, and were supported by constant promotion. They delivered the fruits of 1960s affluence, supplied the products that characterised the 'Australian way of life', and represented the progress that came with it. They not only brought the city to the suburbs, they brought the future. This was a marketing claim, but as we will see in succeeding chapters, the early shopping centres were indicative of development to come: massive private investments infusing consumerism with social space. By the end of the decade, regional shopping centres were well established within a fifteen-mile radius of Sydney's centre. After setting shopping centres up as important focal points in their areas, heavily promoting the range of services and goods available within them, attracting high levels of patronage and generating significant and increasing profits, developers set about expanding their initial sites and establishing new ones. The expansion of existing shopping centres became most noticeable in the 1980s and 1990s, and is dealt with in Chapter Eight. The next chapter deals with the establishment of further new centres in the 1970s, and their relationship with the emerging phenomenon of discount department stores, as Sydney's population continued its inexorable outward sprawl.