

# Factors That Influence the Success of Shopping Malls: A Case of Nairobi

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B02/0332/2008



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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and to the best of my knowledge has not been presented for award of a degree in any other university or for any other award in any other institution.

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**DEDICATION**

To Shirley. You are the reason I worked each day.

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- ii) Galleria Mall, Lang'ata.
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## **ABSTRACT**

A shopping mall can be said to be a privately owned public space. It is designed and constructed to profit financially the investors concerned while at the same time it serves as a recreational and shopping destination for the public. As such, the design principles applied should enhance its success.

Success of a shopping mall can be described in two main aspects:-

- i) Business success - This is the success of the tenants occupying the investors asset thus assuring the investor in profit making, and,
- ii) Architectural success - This is the public acceptance of the space that has been created once constructed.

This research thesis is concerned with the later.

**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Essentially, all our lives revolve around work and play. Nevertheless, in between, we must stop and exchange our wages for those goods and services that make both leisure and toil possible.

Retail centres link our lives together pleasantly, efficiently and firmly as they have been doing since the early man settled into permanent/semi-permanent dwelling structures and market places.

**1.1 What is a Shopping Mall?**

The word *shopping mall* is made up of two words; *shopping* and *mall*. **Shopping** can be defined as the activity that involves the exchange of goods and services for money. According to Kuria (1975), it is looking at, pricing and buying merchandise displayed for sale. It is an activity that involves a seller and a buyer.

A mall is a public space set aside for the public to walk. It is a major street used by the public for shopping and recreational activities. Fig 1.01 shows the various components of a shopping mall.

Combining the two words, a shopping mall can therefore be defined as a building or set of buildings that provide walkways for the public to walk from one unit to another within the same building/set of buildings as they go about their business of exchanging goods and services for money.

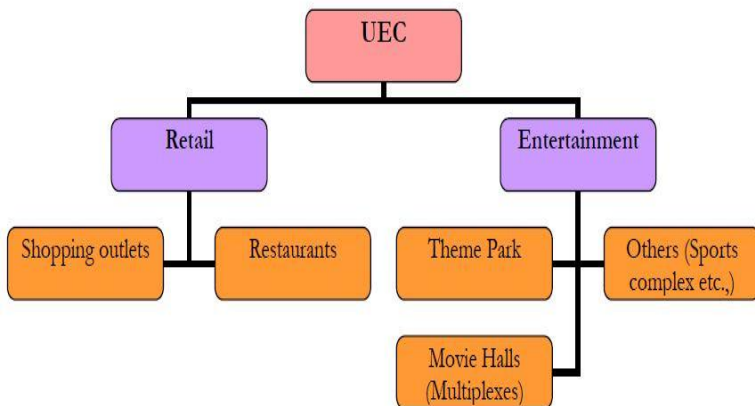


Fig 1.01: Various components of a shopping mall. Source; IDECK (2010)

According to IDECK (2010), a shopping mall or shopping centre is a building or set of buildings which contain retail units, with interconnecting walkways enabling visitors to easily walk from unit to unit.

The Concise Encyclopaedia defines shopping malls as a collection of independent retail stores, services and parking areas constructed and maintained by a management firm as a single unit. It is today's adaptation of the marketplace.

The Microsoft Encarta Dictionary defines malls as “large enclosed building complexes containing stores, restaurants, and other businesses and facilities serving the general public”, and shopping malls as “pedestrianized shopping areas with enclosed walkways in a town.”

Lousberg (2009) defines shopping malls as “...premises selling general merchandise or fashion related goods. They are enclosed inward facing stores, connected by a common walkway. Parking surrounds the outside perimeters.”

A shopping mall can therefore be defined as a complex that encompasses several retail stores, restaurants and other businesses with a common interest in soliciting sales. The complex is put up and managed as a single unit. Shopping malls offer private, off-street parking facilities.

Although shopping malls started out in the urban centres, they are also now found in the suburban areas of major towns, so as to serve the shopping needs of the suburban communities, away from the Central Business District. This reduces the hustle of having to drive to the otherwise congested town centre where in most cases, finding a parking spot can be hectic. In Nairobi this suburban setting can be seen, with several housing estates including shopping malls in their planning layouts e.g. Greenspan Estate in Umoja, Nairobi with its Greenspan Mall (Fig 1.02). There are also independent



**Fig 1.02: Greenspan Mall in Greenspan Estate, Umoja, Nairobi.** Source; <http://metrix.co.ke/html/greenspan.html>. (Accessed 06/06/2013)



**Fig 1.03: Taj Mall in Embakasi, Nairobi.** Source; [www.tajmall.net](http://www.tajmall.net), (Accessed 06/06/2013)



**Fig 1.04: A festival at The Village Market.** Source; villagemarket-kenya.com, (Accessed 07/06/2013)



**Fig 1.05: A luxurious room at The Tribe Hotel at The Village Market.** Source; www.tribe-hotel.com, (Accessed 07/06/2013)

shopping malls established in the suburban residential areas in Nairobi, e.g., T-Mall in Lang'ata and Taj Mall in Embakasi (Fig 1.03).

According to IDECK (2010), most shopping malls have one or more larger stores which are necessary for the financial stability of the malls, and to draw retail traffic that results in visits to the smaller stores in the mall as well. These traffic generators are referred to as magnet stores/anchor stores. In physical configuration, if more than one anchor store is in a single shopping mall, they are normally located as far from each other as possible to maximise the amount of traffic from one anchor to another. In this way, the smaller stores benefit from this traffic flow.

## 1.2 Shopping Malls as Recreational Centres

As cited by Buket (2010), Gruen and Smith (1960) state that... *By affording opportunities for social life and recreation in a protected pedestrian environment, by incorporating civic and educational facilities, shopping centres 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 Town Squares provided in the past.*

The basic function of the shopping mall is to create an environment where business can take place, an environment where the shopper can exchange money for the goods and services of the retailer.

However, as much as a shopping mall is a business centre, it is also a social centre. The patron does not just come here to shop, but also for social contact and other entertainment/recreation activities. In fact the patron might come to the mall just for recreation without the intention of shopping. Fig 1.04 and Fig 1.05 show different

recreational activities that have been provided at the Village Market, other than shopping.

Kuria (1975), observes that whilst people shop, they meet, converse and make friends. He thus puts it that an ideal shopping centre is one which provides physical living requirements for a community and simultaneously fulfils cultural, social and recreational needs, and thus makes a significant contribution to better living.

“Recreation is man’s way of passing time in an exciting way. It is the refreshment of the mind and body after work, especially by engaging in enjoyable activities.” (Microsoft Encarta Dictionary).

By defining recreational centres as areas, structures, buildings or any other such places where recreation facilities are offered, shopping malls can then be seen as recreational facilities, since they offer exciting ways of passing time, e.g. shopping, entertainment etc. To some, the concept of just “being in a shopping mall, seeing and being seen” is also a form of recreation.

Nunnink (1993), states that among the factors that may be credited for the success of malls is the emergence of malls as family activity centres that contain theatres, food courts and other enhancements.

Therefore, for a shopping mall to be successful, it needs to have quality recreational facilities. It has to create an environment where shopping and recreation can be combined into one enjoyable exercise.

## 1.3 Problem Statement

In the past few years, malls have cropped out in the country, especially in the major cities; Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. With Nairobi being the capital city of the country, the largest number of malls is found here.

Some of the popular shopping malls in Nairobi include:-

- i) Sarit Centre
- ii) The Village Market
- iii) The Junction

These malls enjoy a rather high traffic flow of customers daily. For instance, Sarit Centre records up to 20,000 customers a day. (Home & Away magazine, 13/06/13)

It can be said that the quality of spaces and the experiences created by these said spaces are related to the business success of the shopping mall. Thus, it can be concluded that the popularity of these malls is hinged on the quality of spaces in the said malls. This, however, does not necessarily mean that these spaces are the best in design, but they may just be better in comparison to what is offered locally.

There is therefore a problem in understanding the underlying issues, both social and architectural, that influence the success of shopping malls. This will enable architects and planners when undertaking such projects, and ensure their success for as long as possible. It will also help in avoiding the emergence of dead malls i.e. malls that are no longer in use. The Mall, Westlands can be said to be undergoing such disuse with the seen decline in business in the premises over the past few years (Fig 1.06).



**Fig 1.06: The Mall, Westlands, Nairobi has seen a reduction in number of tenants in recent years. Source; Author, 2013**

## 1.4 Research Questions

The research questions were:-

- i) *What is the context of the shopping mall in question and how well does the said shopping mall relate with its context?*
- ii) *How well has the internal circulation of the shopping mall in question been resolved?*
- iii) *What are the recreational facilities offered in the shopping mall?*
- iv) *How is the parking of the said shopping mall in quality and quantity?*

## 1.5 Objectives

From the questions raised above, the objectives of the study were to:-

- i) *Evaluate the response of the shopping mall in question to its context,*
- ii) *Study the internal circulation of the shopping mall in question,*
- iii) *Look into the recreational facilities offered in the shopping mall in question,*  
*and,*
- iv) *Evaluate the parking of the shopping mall in study.*





Fig 1.07: T-Mall in Lang'ata, Nairobi. Source; Author, 2013

## 1.6 Justification of the Study

The rate at which shopping malls are cropping up in Nairobi is quite fast. However, there seems to be no clear line that is drawn between a supermarket and a shopping mall. In fact, most of the “shopping malls” in Nairobi are merely supermarkets with a few supporting facilities. T-Mall in Lang’ata (Fig 1.07), is a good example of this. Only a few more recreational facilities, which are mostly eateries, are provided for in these malls apart the actual shopping.

Contrary to this approach of the design of shopping malls, Lousberg (2011), states that, ... shopping malls are not only centres of buying, but also *“highly organized social spaces for entertainment, interaction, and other types of consumer excitement.”*

It therefore means that, for a business establishment to be referred to as a shopping mall, and for it to perform as such, it has to provide entertainment/recreation facilities. People have to be able to come into the shopping malls for other reasons beyond their basic shopping needs.

Similarly, Hutchinson (2010), observes that ... .in order to get people to buy, you have to get them there. People have to be able to come to the shopping malls, stay there for a certain duration, long enough to take in and experience what the different stores offer. This cannot be achieved by provision of shopping alone.

There was thus the need to explore these different factors and find out how they had been applied in the shopping malls in Nairobi.

## 1.7 Scope and Limitations

The major limitation in this research study was time. Data collection and analysis was limited to the allocated time of six months.

Another limitation was finances. This study therefore focused its data collection in Nairobi County. However, desk studies of similar facilities outside the country were carried out to gain further knowledge on the subject.

The main aspects on shopping malls that were studied in this research were:-

- i) A brief history of shopping malls
- ii) Context of the shopping malls
- iii) Circulation within shopping malls
- iv) Recreational facilities in shopping malls
- v) Parking and vehicular flow in shopping malls

## 1.8 Assumptions

During the carrying out of the study, it was assumed that:-

- i) *Most of the local shopping malls did not respond to their contexts in their designs.*
- ii) *Circulation was a major factor of attraction in shopping malls*
- iii) *Shopping malls with better resolved supporting facilities like parking and recreational facilities provide better services to their customers.*

## 1.9 Research Methodology

This study intended to find out answers to the research questions through:-

- i) **Literature review** – books and publications on the subject were reviewed to gain knowledge on the subject.
- ii) **Observations** – Selected malls were visited and observations made on the activities taking place therein. Also observed was the context of the shopping malls and their response to the same. Sketches and photographs were taken to confirm these observations.
- iii) **Interviews** – The management of selected shopping malls in Nairobi was interviewed on different aspects of their shopping malls. Customers were selected randomly according to their age groups, i.e. either children or adults, in the selected shopping malls and interviewed.
- iv) **Desk studies** – Shopping malls in different parts of the world were studied and the lessons from them that could be applied at the local level learnt.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

A shopping mall is a building that encloses several businesses, with interconnected walkways allowing shoppers to move from shop to shop. They have parking spaces provided within their premises. The shopping mall is the modern day market place.

Shopping malls operate by having a magnet store/anchor store, with other shops/stores provided. The magnet store acts as the major attraction to the shopping mall. In Kenya, this magnet store is mostly a supermarket that acts as the traffic generator with the smaller stores benefiting from this traffic.

### 2.2 The History of Shopping Malls

#### 2.2.1 The Early Markets

Shopping has always been there since man learnt to exchange goods and services for what he didn't have. The earliest form of shopping was conducted in open air public spaces alongside other public functions and activities, such as the ancient Greek Agora shown in fig 2.01. Shopping was integrated with other daily activities like cultural functions, entertainment functions etc.

If the history of the shopping mall is traced back to the earliest enclosed complexes for trading goods, then the early bazaars of Asia cannot be left out. One of those is the Isfahan Grand Bazaar in Iran (Fig 2.02, fig 2.03). This was a largely covered market and dates back as early as the 10th century AD.

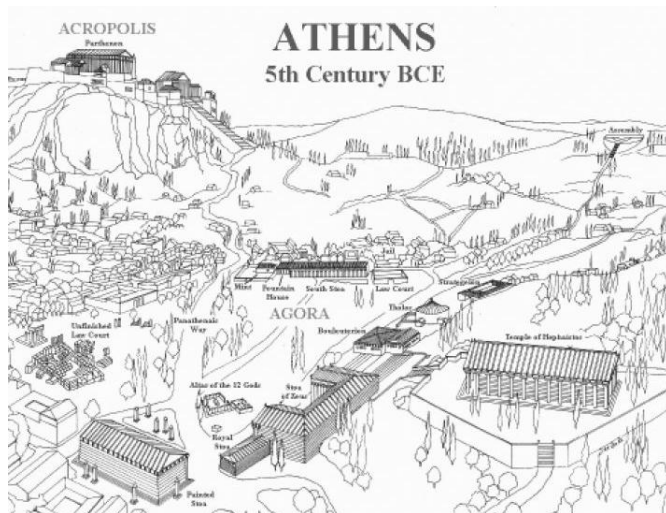
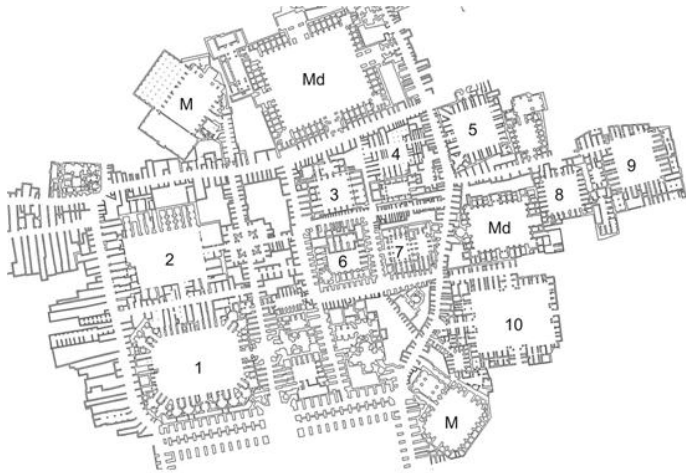


Fig 2.01: The Ancient Greek Agora. Source; <http://socrates.clarke.edu/athens.gif> (Accessed 12/12/2013)



Notes: M – Mosque; Md – Madrasa

Fig 2.02: Plan of the Qaysariyya (“Grand”) Bazaar of Isfahan. Source; O’Gorman (2012)

Another example of an early covered market is the Grand Bazaar of Istanbul which was built in the 15th century AD. This is still in existence today and contains 4,000 shops and 58 streets. It is one of the largest existing covered markets in the world today.

In Europe, specifically Oxford in England, the Oxford Covered Market opened on 1st November 1774 and is still in business today.

### 2.2.2 The Enclosed Mall

The enclosed shopping mall as we know it today did not just happen. As cited by Feinberg & Meoli (1989), Bombeck (1985) states that shopping malls ... are not the result of wise planners deciding that suburban people, having no social life and stimulation, needed a place to go. Feinberg & Meoli (1989) further cite Gruen & Smith (1960) who stated that, the mall was originally conceived of as a community centre where people would converge for shopping, cultural activity, and social interaction.

It is due to the need of provision of shopping spaces free from adverse weather elements that the covered shopping mall slowly evolved. This “covered shopping space” gave the shopper a relaxed environment where they could shop in peace, without the bother of having to dodge traffic, away from cold, rain or heat from direct sunlight and dust.

Due to the provision of these relaxed spaces, the shopper could now compare prices and make decisions without haste, but from the careful analysing of the different products on offer.



Fig 2.03: The Qaysariyya (“Grand”) Bazaar of Isfahan. Source; O’Gorman (2012)

There are several theories as to the origin of the shopping mall as it is today. Citing different authors, Feinberg & Meoli (1989) look at some of these theories. The first is that, as early as 1907, a group of stores in Baltimore established off-street parking (Feinberg, 1960). However, the consumer reports (1986) traces the first ancestor of the shopping mall to 1920, when California supermarkets started anchoring and acting as magnets for strips of smaller stores. Another theory according to Feinberg & Meoli (1989) is, in 1931, the Highland Park Shopping Village in Dallas became the first group of stores that had its own parking lot with the store-fronts facing away from the access roads.



**Fig 2.04: Architect Victor Gruen, the father of shopping malls, at the City Planning Symposium held at Connecticut General Life Insurance Company. Source; [www.buildingsatire.com](http://www.buildingsatire.com)**

### 2.2.3 Victor Gruen as the Father of the Mall

Victor Gruen (1903 – 1980) is identified with the very first shopping malls of America (Fig 2.04). He was a Jewish immigrant from Vienna, who escaped the pre-war Nazi oppression to the United States. Citing *Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (2005), Pedersen (2011), says of him as... a socialist, who unlike European modernists, believed in using capitalism into building a social and democratic society.

In his designs, he created shopping centres as community centres, meeting points and interactive facilities rather than as just profit generating business outfits. He sought to locate community centres built in a central court surrounded by sculptures, fountains and enough seating facilities.

According to Pedersen (2011), Gruen argued that the regional shopping centre “is able to play the role not merely of a commercial centre but of a social, cultural and recreational crystallization point of the up-to then amorphous, sprawling sub-urban regions.



Fig 2.05: Southdale Mall, the first enclosed mall in America by Austrian architect, Victor Gruen. Source; www.labels.com

Victor Gruen designed and built the first enclosed shopping mall in America in Minneapolis, the Southdale Mall shown in fig 2.05. It offered pleasant weather-free environment which was a great welcome to shoppers, who could now enjoy the amenities provided as well as shopping freely throughout the day and between seasons (Njoroge, 1995). Bigger shopping malls with improved weather control, better amenities developed in the United States from this.

## 2.2.4 Summary

The growth of the shopping mall, whenever it started can be attributed to the growth of the motor vehicle industry, and the movement of people away from the urban centres into suburban neighbourhoods. The shopping mall was designed to support motorized shopping for the suburban life. Gradually, it evolved to incorporate social aspects other than shopping, making it into sort of a community in itself.

The shopping mall has now become pretty much like the previously mentioned Greek Agora, where shopping is not the only activity that takes place within its premises. It has become a part of daily urban life and a multifunctional urban space where people can shop, gossip, conduct job interviews and be audiences to different modes of entertainment.

The shopping mall therefore evolved from the open air market, to encompass the following features, which can be termed as the major elements in a shopping mall:-

- i) On-site parking
- ii) Magnet stores that act as anchors to smaller stores within the shopping mall
- iii) Cultural/entertainment/recreational facilities within the same establishments, managed as a single unit.

## 2.2.5 Shopping Malls in Kenya



**Fig 2.06: The Sarit Centre, the first shopping mall in Kenya, opened in 1983.** Source; Author, 2013



**Fig 2.07: Westgate Mall in Westlands, Nairobi.** Source; [www.businessinsider.com/image/5244934fecad0431114a8db2-1200-/ap101829166388\\_3.jpg](http://www.businessinsider.com/image/5244934fecad0431114a8db2-1200-/ap101829166388_3.jpg) (Accessed, 07/06/2013)

Shopping malls in Kenya are not as an old phenomena as their sisters in the USA and Europe. In fact, not until 1983 was the first shopping mall in Kenya opened, which is The Sarit Centre, shown in fig 2.06. This shopping mall was opened in Westlands region of Nairobi by Vidhu Shah and his friend and business associate, Maneklal Rughani when the latter visited the then new Brent Cross Mall in London, and returned to Nairobi determined to build a similar shopping complex. According to the mall's website (<http://www.saritcentre.com/>), it is the largest in East Africa, boasting of 46,450 m<sup>2</sup> on six levels.

However, more shopping malls have come up especially in the major cities of the country – Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. In Nairobi, they include Westgate (Fig 2.07), The Mall, The Village Market and the recently completed Thika Road Mall among others.

A trend can also be seen where most of the upcoming residential estates have incorporated shopping malls in their planning. This has greatly reduced the distances travelled in order to access shopping mall facilities from the living estates to their once upon dotted locations especially in the wealthy suburbs. A good example of these malls is the Greenspan Mall in Greenspan Estate in Umoja (Fig 2.08).



**Fig 2.08: Greenspan Mall in Greenspan Estate in Umoja, Nairobi.** Source; <http://greenspanmall.com/index.php/about-us> (Accessed 07/06/2013)



## 2.3 Context

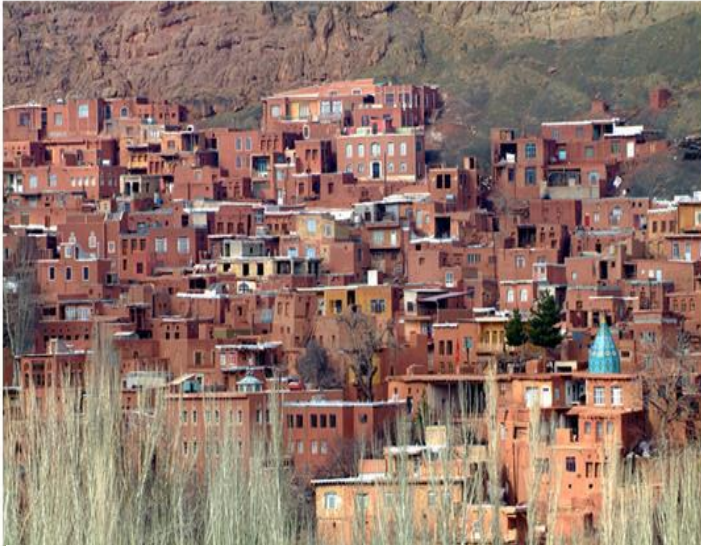


Fig 2.09: Abyaneh village in Iran, an example of traditional contextualism. Source; Molaee & Mahdavinejad, 2011

Architecture is adding things to things already in existence. Essentially, new elements are added into already existing structures. Be it landscaping, building extensions or entirely new buildings, there are pre-existing conditions that need to be checked and analysed with regard to design.

According to Molaee & Mahdavinejad (2011), context is derived from the Latin word “contexere”, which means to merge together. Thus, context in architectural terms can be said to be the bringing together harmoniously the different elements in a certain environment with the new additions to the same site, as seen in the Abyaneh Village in Iran (Fig 2.09).

Molaee & Mahdavinejad (2011), define contextualism as a kind of architecture that responds to the specific physical characteristics of its location. Unlike any specific architectural style, contextualism is as a set of values which help distinguish the architectural work. In an architectural wisdom, context can be perceived as the unified whole that gives meaning to the various parts of the building.

Thus contextualism can be seen as an approach to architecture that seeks to have a dialogue with its surroundings. Design by this approach seeks to address the existing conditions in the context of the project, from climatic/environmental, cultural to historic aspects. Since architecture, more so contemporary architecture is influenced by many factors, but majorly by the context in which it is designed for, a good designer should therefore respond to the surrounding contexts, both locally and globally.

Molaee & Mahdavinejad (2011) further note that, context can be a designing generator in architecture and designing solutions can originate from it. Thus, context does not limit or hinder creativity, but rather guarantees a design’s unity with its context.

Krug (2011) puts it that, *"the desire to define (a place) gives a role to architecture... the success to define, gives the environment its meaning... connections between give rise to context, experience, and urban form."* It should thus be every designers desire to design with context in mind.

### **2.3.1 Context in Shopping Malls**

Shopping malls are designed to serve the communities around them. They are, as earlier established, centres from whence communities living around get recreation as well as shopping and sometimes even work therein. Thus, they need to reflect on the values and beliefs of the communities not only in their function, but in their design as well.

Sahabuddin (2011) explores the importance of context in contemporary architectural design. In his paper, "How Important is Context in Contemporary Architectural Design?" he concludes that...response to the surrounding context is very important because it determines the architectural success of a building's design. By responding to the context, the designer creates communication channels between buildings and the people around them. Sometimes people will appreciate the architecture of a building if the designer appreciates their cultural and aesthetic values.

This goes to show that, a shopping mall design should strive as much as possible to reflect and respond to the environmental and cultural aspects of the region or location it is intended for. The users of the shopping mall should be able to connect with the mall as they shop or get entertained therein.

## 2.4 Circulation in Shopping Malls

Shopping malls attract huge throngs of people. They need to move freely both horizontally and vertically within and without the mall. This is necessary so as to enhance comfort and a feel of safety as one is going about their business inside the shopping mall.

Such factors like window shopping inside the malls make it necessary to take care to accommodate the window shoppers without blocking the paths for those that use the circulation spaces as connections from one point of the mall to another. If this is not done, the window shopper is not comfortable when doing his/her window shopping in a squeezed space, while at the same time the passer by feels that the path is too tight. These are some of the negative factors that might keep away patrons off some shopping malls, but bring them back over and over again to others.

Lee and Johnson (2005) look at the implications of shopping behaviours in retail design. They recommend five factors that are of utmost importance in the thinking out and design of any retail space. Three of these factors are under circulation within the shopping mall. They are:-

- a) **Transition Zone** – This is the area where the customers slow down their pace to look at merchandise on display in the store. It is where they make the change from being outside the store to being inside. According to Underhill (1999), it is “the shopper’s landing strip.”

The size of the store determines the size of the transition space. A large store, like a shopping mall need not worry much about this area, display in this area most often than not goes to waste since it is not seen by the shopper. For a small store however, this space should be kept at minimal. An example of this is the introduction of a horizontal barrier that also acts as a display area. This slows down the shopper, and



Window Shopping Lane

Circulation Lane

Fig 2.10: Wide walkways to accommodate window shoppers and normal traffic flow. Source; <http://ntl.bts.gov/DOCS/images/GL/GL4030.GIF>. (Accessed 18/06/2013)

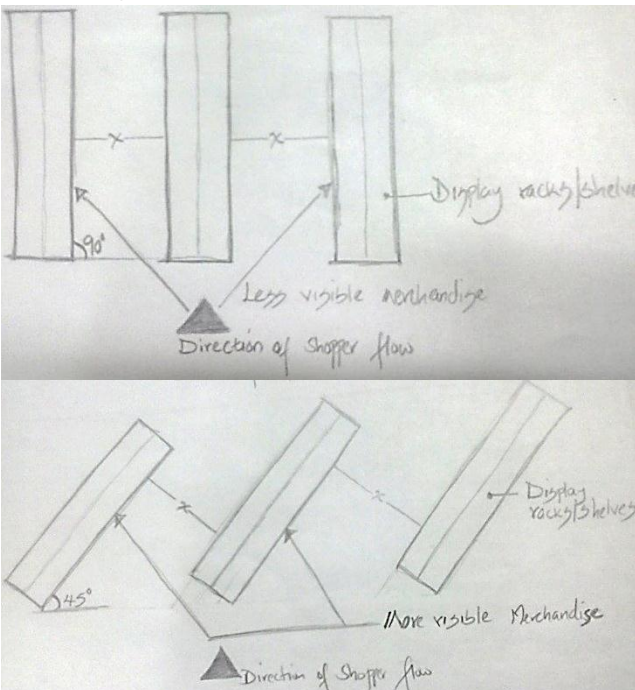


Fig 2.11: Top, Shelves arranged in 90° resulting in less visibility of merchandise. Bottom, shelves tilted at an angle (chevroning) resulting in more merchandise visibility. Source; Author, 2013

they get to look at the merchandise on display, before deciding where to go within the store.

- b) **The Butt-Brush Effect** – Each customer has personal space, one that when invaded makes the shopper feel uncomfortable. When one is bumped or jostled, they become irritated and more often than not leave without purchasing what they came for. Underhill (1999) notes that, “irritated shoppers do not tarry; in fact, they frequently leave before purchasing what they came for”.

Thus, enough manoeuvring room for customers should be created. This eliminates or reduces the butt-brush effect, making the shoppers more comfortable and thus more likely to make purchases. This is mostly achieved by the use of wide walkways and aisles as seen in Fig 2.10.

- c) **Chevrons** – According to Underhill (1999), a store designer should strive to maximise the customer’s views of the merchandise on display. He suggests the idea of chevrons, which is basically tilting the display racks and shelves at an angle, such that they are not in the traditional 90° angle as demonstrated in Fig 2.11. This ensures that more of what is on the shelf is visible to the shopper at a given time.

The only disadvantage of this mode of display is that it uses up more space. Only at most 80% of what can be displayed traditionally using the 90° method can be displayed when chevrons is done.

The other two, though not part of circulation are also important in the success of any retail space. Circulation to and from them should also be clear. They should be easy to find within the store, and this makes them more or less part of this analysis on circulation. They are:-

- a) **Seating Area**–Seating in a store makes the customers feel that the store cares for them. In fact, according to Underhill (1999), “a chair says: we care”. Seating should be provided in strategic areas for shoppers to rest, wait for their partners, watch the merchandise on display, watch how other customers are treated by the staff and also watch how others shop. This makes shopping a social activity.
- b) **Dressing Rooms** – Enough thought should be put into the design and location of these facilities. They should be well furnished with mirrors and hooks for shopper’s clothes and also easy to find. The longer a customer takes before finding a dressing room, the less likely they will make a purchase. These facilities should also be placed in areas where they do not infringe on other shoppers privacy e.g. near women lingerie.

All in all, enough thought should be put into any issue that pertains to signage, display, store layout, fixturing etc. This makes the space within to be comfortable thus keeping the shoppers within for longer durations and this leads to them making more purchases.

### 2.4.1 Circulation Design for the Physically Challenged in Shopping Malls

There is need to include access for the physically challenged in all public spaces. When inclusion of people with disability is achieved in any public space, it shows that there is embracing and celebrating human diversity. Effort should be made to ensure that people with disability find it easy to use the public spaces that are provided.

As had been mentioned earlier, shopping malls are privately owned public spaces. As such, they should strive to achieve inclusion of persons with disabilities accessibility in their designs. According to Afacan (2011), everyone needs to be part of social life through the use of public buildings.

According to the census conducted in 2009, the population of Nairobi is 3,109,861 people. Of these 24,659(0.79%) are visually impaired, 6,927(0.22%) have hearing disabilities, 15,008(0.48%) have speech disabilities, 17,130(0.55%) are physically impaired, 4,929(0.16%) have mental disorders and 4,902(0.16%) have other disabilities.

This study seeks to address accessibility in shopping malls for people with physical disabilities. According to the data provided above, this category has a substantially high number, standing at 17,130 people as of 2009. If the people with the unspecified disabilities are included in this category, the number rises to 22,032(0.71%).

This goes to show that a sizeable population of Nairobi is physically challenged. For this reason, there is need to design for them in all public spaces, shopping malls included.

Disabled inaccessibility does not come about by chance or by mistake. It comes about through neglect, ignorance or lack of adequate data and information (Afacan, 2011).

The main aims of having accessible shopping malls is to make sure that all the patronage enjoy the services and goods offered in the shopping malls without discrimination in terms of physical disability, while at the same time the shopping malls make maximum profits from as many people as possible, including the ones with physical disability.

It is important to note that, as much as most of the population in Nairobi is not physically challenged, the average people with friends or relatives who have physical disabilities will avoid shopping malls that are not fully accessible to people with physical disabilities. This is because it is also hard for them to navigate around the shopping malls together with these friends/relatives and so these trips to the shopping malls become cumbersome and less fun. People will thus go to the shopping malls that are fully accessible to avoid this, and this comes at a loss to the inaccessible shopping malls.

In a checklist provided by Adaptive Environment Centre and Barrier free Environment for removal of barriers in public spaces provided in 1995, the following guidelines were offered.

- 1) **Accessible approach/entrance** – People with disability should be able to arrive on site, approach the building and enter as freely as everyone else. At least one route of travel should be safe and accessible for everyone, including people with disability (Fig 2.12).

This route should not be interrupted by stairs, should be stable, firm and slip resistant and should be at least 1000mm wide.

There should be provided a ramp or lift or alternative accessible entrance. Signs should be provided at all inaccessible entrances indicating directions to the nearest accessible entrance. Doors at accessible entrances should have handles at accessible heights (not higher than 1000mm) operable with closed fists. The doors should also be easily opened without the use of too much force.



Fig 2.12: Illustration of a physically challenged man checking out at a cash register. Source; [http://www.ada.gov/business/bc\\_images/checkoutline.jpg](http://www.ada.gov/business/bc_images/checkoutline.jpg) (Accessed 18/06/2013)



Fig 2.13: A physically challenged man in a wheelchair accessing goods at Bentall Shopping Centre. Source; <http://www.richmond.gov.uk/shopmobility> (Accessed 18/06/2013)

- 2) **Access to goods and services** – The layout of a building should be such that it allows people with disabilities to obtain goods and services without assistance. The rooms and spaces should be wide enough and any furniture and fixtures should be arranged in such a way that it clears aisles and gives more room inside the spaces as shown in Fig 2.13.

Clear signage for goods and services should be provided. All controls for use by the public (including electrical, mechanical, cabinet, gaming and self-service controls) should be located at an accessible height.

Vertical circulation should be accessible by all in all public levels. If there are stairs, they should have non-slip surfaces and continuous rails. The elevators should have clearly visible and audible door opening and closing floor indicators.

- 3) **Usability of rest rooms** – Restrooms in public spaces should be accessible to people with physical disabilities. There should be at least one restroom for each sex, or a unisex restroom that are fully accessible. Signs should be provided at all inaccessible restrooms indicating the direction of the nearest accessible restroom.
- 4) **Additional access** – A reasonable percentage of all the public amenities offered should be fully accessible. Drinking fountains should have accessible heights, the same as public telephones.



## 2.5 Shopping Malls as Recreation Centres

According to Barry Maitland in *Shopping Malls: Planning and Design*, the public space is the major marketing attraction for the retail areas it serves, if not quite a marketable commodity. People may not go out to shopping malls for the shopping itself, but rather to “hang out”. The shopping mall therefore offers a space where people can relax as much as in they may want to shop.

The experience that the shopper has in a given shopping mall is crucial in determining whether the person will go back to the shopping mall again.

In the opinion pages of *The New York Times*, Allison Arieff writes on *Rethinking the Mall* in the June 1, 2009 issue. He observes that, retail to the people is of an outstanding importance in the success of a shopping mall. The shopping mall is a social environment that is not one’s home or office, but rather a “third place” in which to socialize, work or just hang out. A café in the shopping mall should not just be a place to hang out and/or work from a laptop, but part of a self-sustaining, self-generating scenario of distributed shopping experiences.

In an interview conducted by the Henry Ford Foundation (2009), Alfred Taubman, who developed some of the most successful malls in the United States, talks on the success of shopping malls, and the factors that influence the same. He reasons that ultimately, the success of a shopping mall is grounded in a profound level of insight into the shopper’s experience. He argues that, people want to be closer to other people. Just in the same way that a person doesn’t want to sit home alone and watch a movie on their television, but rather goes to a movie theatre to pay for the same movie. People are “entertained” by just watching other people go about their business.



**Fig 2.14: traditional dance at The Village Market.** Source; Wikipedia (2013). The Village Market, Accessed 08/09/2013

In this same way, some shopping malls have gone as far as providing fairs, exhibitions and other related activities, just to attract people into the malls. This of course means that spaces for such have to be provided. This especially happens in the public squares that are left in the malls as shown in Fig 2.14.

Njoroge (1995) studied malls in his undergraduate thesis. He observes that the interior pedestrian space is its prime attraction and spatial organizer, investing these spaces with public character and cultural purpose.

Therefore, the public space acts as the major attraction and/or the component that keeps the shopper for a duration that is enough for them to view and see all that the shopping mall has to offer.

The environment therein is of great importance too. For this reason, successful malls offer a controlled environment in their interiors. This gives a comfortable interior enabling shopper to go about their business in an atmosphere that is optimal for such undertakings. Ventilation, lighting thus become a big phenomenon in the planning and designing of the shopping mall.

In conclusion, shopping malls can be seen as theatres where watching as the events in the mall unfold is the main show. This is enhanced by the liveliness of the interior spaces, making them more tolerant and socially inviting. This eliminates the notion that the activities of the shopping mall are “screened off and restricted to certain acceptable commercial/cultural forums”.

## 2.6 Parking

### 2.6.1 Parking in Public Spaces

Parking is an important aspect in all public spaces. In any establishment, parking should be an integral part in the facility's design, but not provision of "left-over land" for parking. An unresolved parking will discourage the public from using the facility, and thus even if the facility is well designed with a non-resolved parking lot, it is bound to fail, especially if the public don't have to be there, but go there by will like in the case of a shopping mall.

Parking should be more convenient to the property it is intended to serve than the adjacent public highway. This discourages non-users of the property from using the parking lot, and at the same time improves on the security and safety of the parking.

Aesthetically, parking for any public facility should:-

- i) Provide for landscaping and vegetation to reduce the visual impact of large parking areas.
- ii) Use surfacing materials that add variety and interest.

It therefore goes without saying that for any public facility to be efficient and function properly, in this day and age of the motor vehicle, the vehicle has to be properly catered for. For most public facilities, the parking is the first experience of the user to the facility, and thus plays a fundamental role in the user's perception of the facility as a whole.



Fig 2.15: Parking warning against insecurity at The Sarit Centre. Source; Author, 2013

### 2.6.2 Security in Public Parking Facilities

Security poses a great challenge in most public parking facilities. Vehicles parked in these facilities are more often than not susceptible to burglary and the owners to robbing. In fact most public parking facilities in Nairobi put warnings such as “Vehicles parked at owner’s risk”, seen in fig 2.15.

Smith, (1996) highlights four factors that make public parking facilities unsafe. She points them out as:-

- i) Only a small fraction of the users of the facility are at the parking lot at any given time, therefore creating safe havens for criminals to carry out their intents without being seen
- ii) Parked cars provide hiding places and impede the distribution of light
- iii) Most parking facilities are open to the public
- iv) An offender’s car is not likely to be noted as strange or memorable in a public parking facility.

Moreover, she points out that multi-level parking facilities are more unsafe compared to surface parking facilities.

Smith (1996) goes further to outline safety measures that can be undertaken to make sure parking facilities that are open to the public are safer. These measures are:-

- i) **Lighting** – Lighting is considered to be the most effective method of eliminating crime and creating safer zones. Not only does it reduce crime in parking facilities, or any other place for that matter, users of a well-lighted space psychologically feel safe and are thus more comfortable when using the facilities in question. Lighting also reduces accidents within parking lots.

- ii) **Natural Surveillance** – This is the ability to see and be seen. It is achieved through openness of a given space. Dead ends should be avoided. If possible, activity should be introduced in the parking facilities, e.g. restaurants and small forms of retailing. Exits and entrances should be retained at minimal to make sure users of the facility can clearly see each other. However, care should be taken so that congestion does not arise if exits/entrances are too few.
- iii) **Transparency in Stair Towers and Elevators** – Smith suggests that if stair towers are present in a parking facility, they should be as open as possible. She suggests the use of materials such as glass to make sure that the patrons of the parking facility can see the people in the streets/surrounding areas, and vice versa.
- iv) **Access Control** – This basically means that people accessing the parking lot, both on car and on foot, should be controlled. People on vehicles should enter through several check areas where they hand in a ticket and interact with security officers, or use automated checking in machines. This will discourage people with criminal intent from accessing the facilities. Another measure that should be taken is fencing off areas with minimal activity to discourage pedestrians from accessing the facility from unchecked areas on foot. However, the materials used in fencing should be such that they create a sense of boundary, but still retain a sense of openness that as has been discussed earlier is a determinant in enhancing the security of parking lots.
- v) **Signs and Graphics** – These include colour codes, clear directions, warnings and notices. These help in ensuring that the patrons move through the parking lot fast enough thus improving efficiency. Colour codes also help patrons locate their vehicles fast enough, with the same results as above. Warnings and notices deter criminals when they know they are being watched, and also gives the patrons the sense of being safe when they know their safety is being monitored.

- vi) **CCTV** – The knowledge that images are being recorded or activities are being monitored deters would be perpetrators. Also, it helps identify criminals once the crime has been carried out, look at weak points in the security systems in place and seal loopholes to prevent such occurrences from happening in the future.
- vii) **Security Officers** – The presence of uniformed security officers continues to be the best crime prevention strategy. All security personnel should be trained to properly monitor, operate, and respond to all security equipment within the facility. Unscheduled patrols should be carried out frequently.

Smith (1996) concludes that, although certain areas may be presently low-risk areas, risk levels may change in future. Design for parking facilities in these areas should therefore bear this in mind. It must be designed to work as if it was a high risk area.

### 2.6.3 Parking in Shopping Malls

Most, if not all shopping malls, rely heavily on the use of the automobile by their customers as the first choice in terms of transportation. It therefore means that availability of parking is a major determining factor for a shopper to choose a certain shopping mall over the other. Essentially, the parking system will most often than not be the shoppers first and last impression of the shopping centre.

According to Gibbs (2012), parking is one of the most critical issues facing any retailer or shopping district today. He observes that, unlike work, school, or obligatory tasks, most shopping trips are elective activities. People do not have to shop and will often avoid shopping centres whose parking is difficult to find or challenging. If parking is not readily available, potential customers will simply continue on their way, often to alternative

shopping areas. If a street space or surface parking is available, even for a small fee, these customers will likely stop and shop.

As aforementioned, the shopping mall is a “privately owned public space”. Parking facilities for the establishments thus should be designed and resolved with this in mind – design for a public space. Since the shopper is intended to last a while in the shopping mall, parking should be adequate to accommodate the high traffic of vehicular flow that is common in shopping malls.

In a Buildings: Smarter facility management blog on 10 Principles for Rethinking the Mall, dated 06/01/2007, the writer puts parking as principle number 8. He recommends the design of parking as more than a ratio. Parking should not just be adequate, but rather should be secure and easily accessible. Since the parking is the shoppers first experience of the shopping mall - to those with cars - it goes without saying that it should be well resolved. Getting in and out of the parking should be easy and it should be close and easily visible to the entrance.



**Fig 2.16: Garden walkway at Wildwood Missouri. Landscaped walkway from surface parking to the mall makes this walk easier.**  
Source; Gibbs, 2012

The walk from the parking is also important. It should be comfortable and as short as possible. The transition from the parking to the other spaces within the shopping mall should provide a rather enjoyable experience. Surface parking lots can be more walkable with introduction of landscaping and civic art as shown in Fig 2.16 (Gibbs, 2012).

The aesthetic design of the shopping mall parking lot is also important, so as to create a visually appealing parking lot especially if it is in the direction of the views from the mall. Most malls however ignore this phenomenon and instead just arrange cars. This has a negative visual effect caused by the expansive surface parking. There is need therefore to introduce such elements like soft landscaping to reduce this negative visual effect.

Gibbs (2012) observes that, parking—size, design, and layout—needs to be functionally appropriate to the retailers and the type of shopping centre that it serves. There is an inverse correlation between the time it takes for consumers to find a place to park and then walk to stores or restaurants and the amount of time they are willing to spend shopping or dining.

According to Gibbs (2012), retail services require parking spaces as shown in the table 1 below.

RETAIL SERVICE	MINIMUM NUMBER OF PARKING SERVICES
Supermarket or convenience store	5.0 spaces for every 100 m <sup>2</sup> of GFA
Retail store	4.0 spaces for every 100 m <sup>2</sup> of GFA
Shopping centre (Strip -> 0-2,300 m <sup>2</sup> GFA	4.0 spaces for every 100 m <sup>2</sup> of GFA
Shopping centre (Neighbourhood-> 2,301-9,300 m <sup>2</sup> GFA	4.0 spaces for every 100 m <sup>2</sup> of GFA
Shopping centre (Community -> 9,301-37,200m <sup>2</sup> GFA	4.0 spaces for every 100 m <sup>2</sup> of GFA
Shopping centre (Regional -> 37,201-92,900 m <sup>2</sup> GFA	5.0 spaces for every 100 m <sup>2</sup> of GFA
Shopping centre (Super regional -> Over 92,900 m <sup>2</sup> GFA	4.0 spaces for every 100 m <sup>2</sup> of GFA

\*\*\*GFA means Gross Floor Area

Table 2.1: Parking requirements in retail service centres. Source, Gibbs (2012), edited by author

Thus, from this table, a formula can be derived for calculating the required parking spaces for any shopping mall.

$$\frac{GFA}{100 m^2} * X$$

\*\*\*X= minimum number of parking spaces per 100m<sup>2</sup> of GFA from Table 2.1



## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

According to Kumar & Ranjit (2005), research is an organized and systematic way of finding answers to questions. Research methodology can thus be defined as the methods used in the finding out of these answers.

This chapter looked at the data collection and analysis used in carrying out the fieldwork of the thesis. The methods of data collection, analysis and the tools that were involved in this exercise were clearly laid out. Other aspects of research methodology that were looked at in this chapter include the research purpose, research strategy, the time horizon/time frame and the population and sampling in the area of study of the thesis.

### **3.2 Research purpose**

The purpose of this research was mainly explanatory. It sought to explain the relationship between several variables in the performance of the spaces inside shopping malls. These variables are:-

- i) Context
- ii) Circulation
- iii) Recreation facilities
- iv) Parking

As stated earlier, these factors were assumed to be some of the main causes of success/failure of spaces in shopping malls in their purpose. These factors were thus

looked at into in detail, and their relationship in the success of shopping malls established.

An exploratory analysis of shopping malls was also looked at. The existing conditions in shopping mall design in Nairobi and internationally were explored. This enabled the researcher analyse the existing conditions and to recommend solutions to the existing problems.

### **3.3 Research Strategy**

The case study method was used in carrying out of this research study. Three shopping malls were selected within Nairobi. The malls were studied and analysed in detail with relevance to the objectives of the thesis study.

Two shopping malls outside Kenya were also studied. This was necessary to find out how other shopping malls in other parts of the world had dealt with the research problem, and if the same solutions could have been applicable at the local level.

### **3.4 Time Horizon**

This research study was a cross-sectional study. The research was carried out in a duration of six weeks, from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2013 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

### 3.5 Population Sample and Sampling Method

The malls studied were located in Nairobi. This research study focused on enclosed malls, since these would best help in the analysis of the variables studied.

#### 3.5.1 Sampling Method

The elements that were studied in the research were selected using a non-probability, convenient method. The variables looked at were the main determinants in the selection of the case studies.

The main criteria used on this selection was the location i.e. Nairobi, since the study was based in Nairobi. The location within the larger Nairobi was also of importance, so as to study shopping malls in different parts of Nairobi and bring out the differences and/or constants, if any.

Also considered was the type of the shopping mall. Shopping malls under one roof, i.e. housed in one building like The Sarit Centre, were studied as opposed to sprawling village like shopping malls, like The Village Market.

Malls studied in Kenya are:-

- i) The Sarit Centre, Westlands
- ii) Galleria Mall, Lang'ata
- iii) Thika Road Mall, Kasarani

Out of Kenya malls that were studied are:-

- i) Serramar Parque Shopping, São Paulo, Brazil
- ii) Asmacati Shopping Centre, Izmir, Turkey



Fig 3.01: Map of Nairobi showing distribution of shopping malls to be studied in Nairobi. Source; googlemaps.com, edited by author

## 3.6 Data Collection and Analysis

This section dealt with data intended to be collected during the course of the fieldwork. Most of the data was primary data, obtained directly by the researcher in field. However, secondary sources of information were also used. For instance, the information provided by the selected shopping malls' websites was reviewed and used for purposes of this research.

### 3.6.1 Data Collection Methods

The main data collection method that was applied in this research was observation. This was done in form of photographs, sketches and physical measurements. This was important to enable the analysing and comparison of the different aspects.

Another method that was applied in the data collection in this research was interviewing. The users of selected shopping malls, including the shoppers and the management were interviewed in this research. One hundred (100) shoppers per shopping mall were selected with accordance to age, seventy five (75) being adults and the rest twenty five (25) children (below 18 years). Fewer children than adults were selected because the shopping malls were found to have bigger adult visitor numbers than children visitors.

Apart from their ages, the selection of shoppers was rather random once their age group had been estimated. The selection was however also based on the level of enthusiasm of the shoppers to respond to the interview questions. The number of visitors interviewed was limited to one hundred due to the limiting amount of time that the research was carried out in, i.e., six weeks.

The intention was to find out their experiences when using the shopping mall and the main attraction to the facility.

### 3.6.2 Data Analysis

Data obtained from the field was analysed. Relationships between the various study variables were established. Analysis was important in order to get to conclusions.

### 3.6.3 Data Presentation

Data collected throughout the fieldwork exercise was presented using various methods. These include:-

- i) **Images** – these constituted the largest mode of data presentation. Photographs were sourced mainly by the author. However, other images sourced from the internet and other reference materials used in the research.
- ii) **Architectural drawings** – these include plans, sections and elevations and sketches. Several of these were used in the presentation of the data collected during fieldwork.
- iii) **Tables** – these were also be especially in areas that require comparison.
- iv) Data collected in interviews was also incorporated into the data presentation, by the statement of the facts found out.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

As earlier stated, three local case studies were selected for this study. They are:-

- i) The Sarit Centre
- ii) Galleria Shopping Mall
- iii) Thika Road Mall

They were studied in the order of their years of establishment, the first being the oldest, opened in 1983 and the last being the newest opened in 2013. Aspects studied were:-

- i) Context of the shopping malls
- ii) Circulation in the shopping malls
- iii) Recreational facilities provided in the shopping malls
- iv) Parking in the shopping malls

These malls were analysed based on these aspects in this chapter.



Fig 4.01: Sarit Centre main entrance from Pio Gama Pinto Road. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.02: Brent Cross Shopping Centre in London, Sarit Centre inspiration. Source; www.brentcross-mall.com (Accessed 12/12/2013)

## 4.2 The Sarit Centre

Architect: T.S. Nandra & Associates

Area: 46450m<sup>2</sup>

Anchor Store: Uchumi Supermarket

Average daily vehicle count: 5,500

Average daily pedestrian traffic: 25,000



### 4.2.1 Introduction

The Sarit Centre is located in the Westlands suburbs of Nairobi. It is located off Waiyaki way, bordered by Pio Gama Pinto Road, Lower Kabete Road and Mukinduri Road.

According to the mall's website, [www.saritcentre.com](http://www.saritcentre.com), the history of the Sarit Centre can be traced back to 1973, when his holiness Sat Guru Pujya Hariram Bapa visited Sobhagayachand Vidhu Shah (known as Bachu or Bachubhai to all his acquaintances), who was living on the land where the Sarit centre now stands. He advised the businessman (Vidhu Shah) to never sell this parcel of land, advice which he took. A few years later, Vidhu Shah's friend and business associate Maneklal Rughani visited the then new Brent Cross Mall shown in Fig 4.02 on a trip to London, and returned determined to build a similar shopping complex in Nairobi.

Upon returning, the neighbouring plots were purchased, the architect briefed and construction begun. However, due to the attempted coup in 1982, the construction was halted and a much scaled down shopping complex opened in April 1983. Fig 4.03 on the next page shows the original design of the complex.

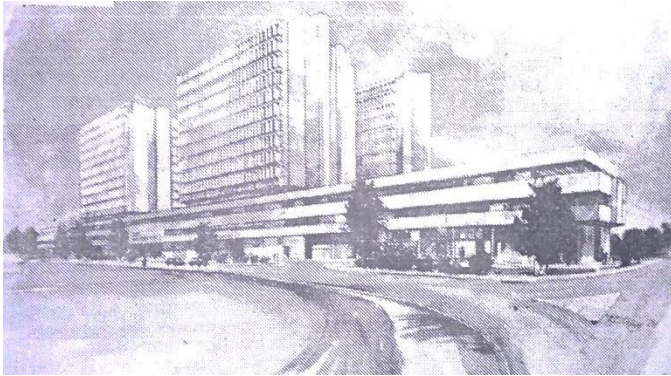


Fig 4.03: The original design of the Sarit Centre before it was scaled down. Source; Build July 1981



Fig 4.04: Sarit Centre model image showing the contemporary form. Source; www.h-m-design.com. (Accessed 12/12/2013)

The centre has a 300 seat cinema, a 140 m<sup>2</sup> food court and a 280 m<sup>2</sup> expo centre, capable of hosting over 50 stands. At the time of its opening, it was the first shopping mall in East Africa and remains one of the largest in the region up to date.

The mall whose slogan is “A city within a city” revolutionized shopping mall concepts in East Africa. According to the mall’s management, approximately 25,000 visitors are served daily with an approximately 5,500 car traffic frequenting daily both in the mall’s parking facilities and neighbouring streets.

## 4.2.2 Context

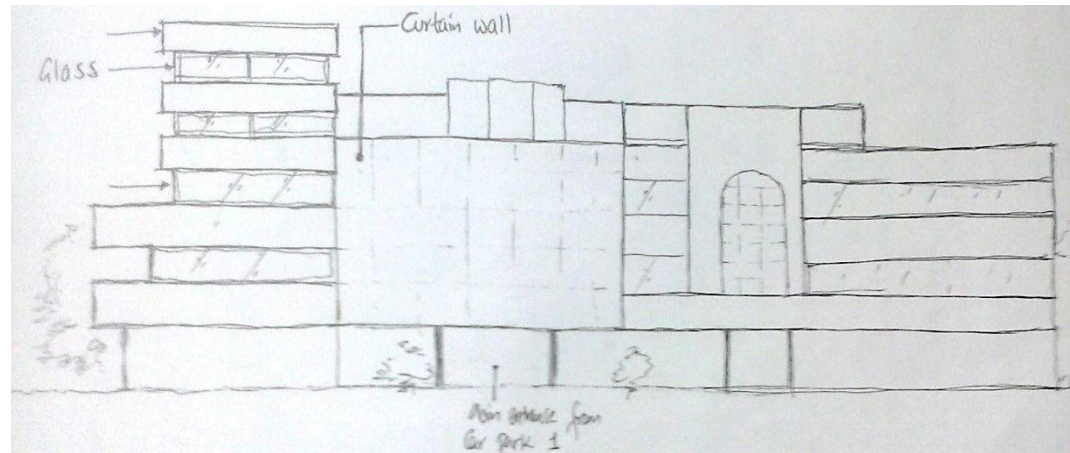


Fig 4.05: The Sarit Centre front façade as seen from the first car park; a contemporary glass building. Source; Author, 2013

### 4.2.2.1 Form

The centre’s form is orthogonal characterized by right angles with no curves in its layout plan. This can be traced to Brent Cross Shopping Mall in London, from whence the owners got inspiration to design a shopping mall locally.



The forms of both the Sarit Centre and Brent Cross Shopping Centre seem to have similar characters as can be clearly seen from the images above (fig 4.04 and fig 4.05).

There is a wireframe structure at the entrance of The Sarit Centre as shown in fig 4.06. According to the management at this mall, it was donated in 1993 during the celebration of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The management however didn't seem to know about its symbolism, but thought of it as just a decoration.

However, it can be said that it is supposed to show the magnificence of the shopping mall, bearing in mind that a baobab grows to be a huge tree. It may also show that Sarit Centre is there to last, since the tree grows to maturity after many years. Lastly, it can be opined that since baobab grows in Africa, the structure tries to knit the shopping mall to its African context.



Fig 4.06: A Baobab wireframe structure at visible from Pio Gama Pinto Entrance. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.07: Wall tiling and glass cover the facades of the Sarit Centre. Source; Author, 2013

## 4.2.2.2 Materials

Sarit Centre employed mostly imported materials in its design, further suggesting that the design was foreign. All the external walls are clad in white and blue wall tiles with the fenestrations being covered in glass (Fig 4.07).

When the immediate neighbourhood of the mall is put into consideration, similar materials and forms are employed in the designs of the neighbouring buildings. For instance, the Sankara that borders it on its Pio Gama Pinto Road side and the 9 West building nearby are also contemporary glass buildings as shown on fig 4.08, although these were put up much later after the construction of the Sarit Centre. Fig 4.09 shows a map of Westlands showing the different locations of some of Sarit Centre neighbouring buildings.



Fig 4.08: Top, the 9 West Building and bottom, the Sankara that neighbour Sarit Centre are also contemporary glass buildings. Source; Author,

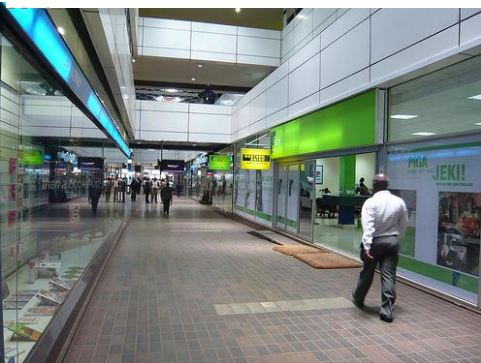


Fig 4.10: Walkway to Karuna Road Entrance showing wide walkways provided within the shopping mall to avoid congestion. Source; Author, 2013

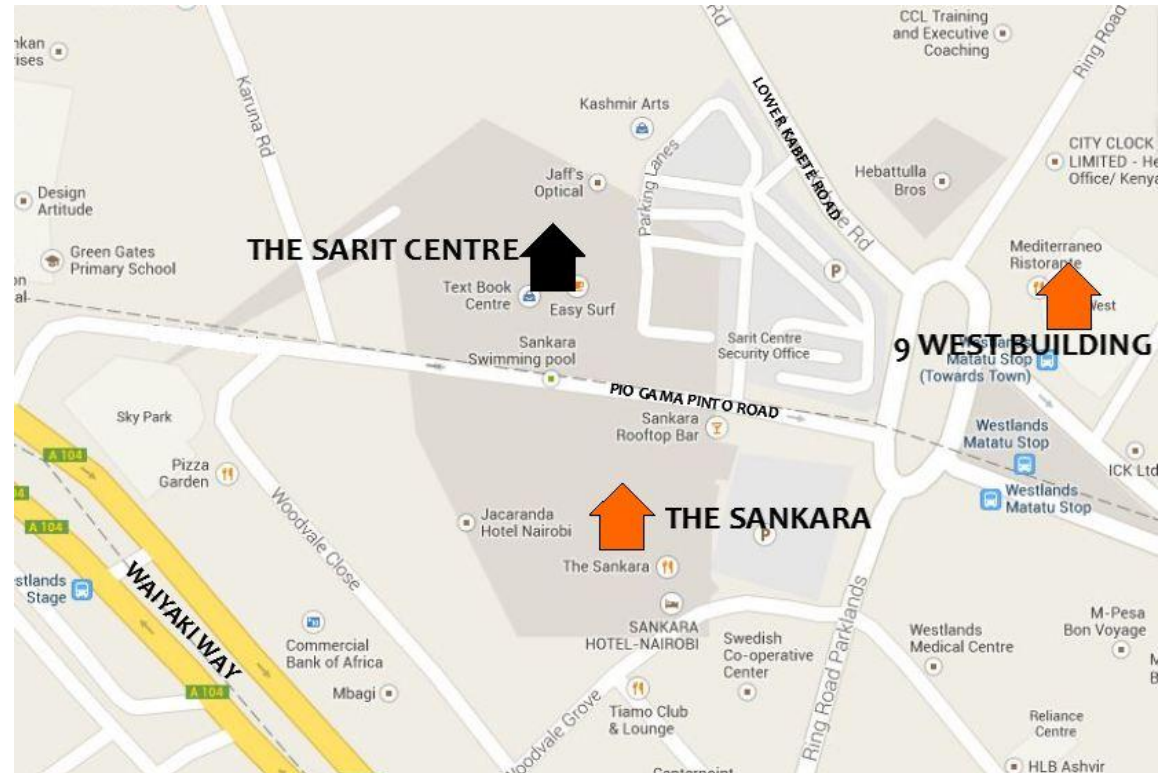


Fig 4.09: Map of Westlands showing the location of The Sarit Centre and some of its neighbours. Source; googlemaps.com, edited by author

### 4.2.3 Circulation

Wide walkways and aisles are provided throughout the shopping malls as shown in fig 4.10. This gives shoppers and visitors alike enough space to walk through from space to space, while pausing to look around without being obstructions.

The main walkways that connect the entrances to the two atriums at the centre of the mall are 4500mm to 6000mm in width, according to their positions with regard to traffic flow. This is because these are the regions that receive the highest number of traffic flow



**Fig 4.11: Sarit Centre central ramp helps in vertical circulation.** Source; Author, 2013

as patrons either exit from or enter into the mall before dispersing to their destinations of choice within the mall.

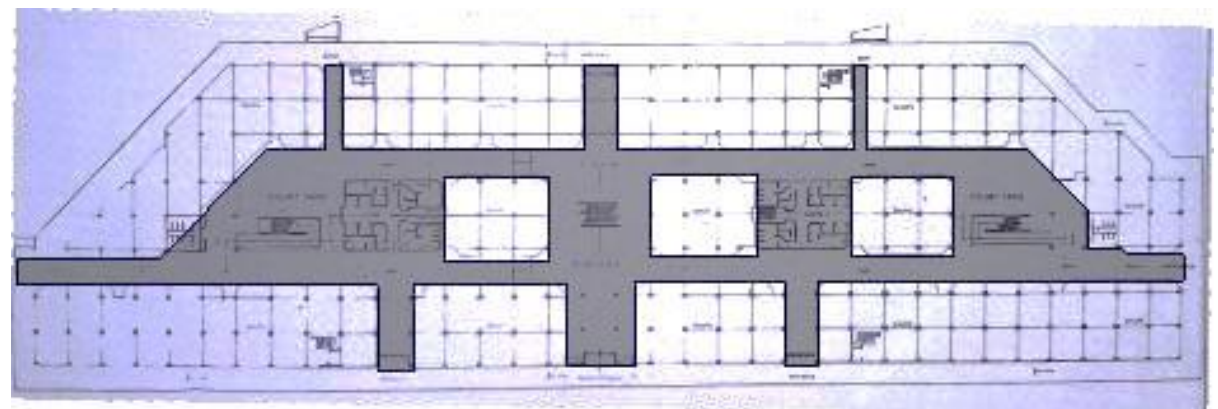
Staircases, elevators and ramps are provided at the central area of the shopping mall. These serve as vertical circulation channels without causing congestion. The staircases and ramps are wide enough for such public spaces. Fig 4.11 shows the main central ramp provided at the Sarit Centre.

Circulation is centralized in the mall such that, there are two atriums at the centre where all the main entrances lead, from whence patrons disperse to their destinations as shown in fig 4.12 below. Almost every mode of vertical circulation (staircases, ramps and elevators) are to be found here, except for a few staircases.

The lower ground floor plan below (fig 4.13) shows the main circulation areas at Sarit Centre shaded grey.



**Fig 4.12: Ground floor plan showing main circulation areas, shaded grey inside the plan.** Source; <http://www.saritcentre.com/index-page-services.htm>. Accessed 12/12/2013, edited by author



**Fig 4.13: Lower ground floor plan of the Sarit Centre showing main circulation areas.** Source; Build July 1981, edited by author

#### 4.2.4 Recreational Facilities

At Sarit Centre, there were no activities set out as recreational facilities according to the facility's management. There are however a couple of cafeterias and restaurants and a movie theatre.

However, various exhibitions and promotions take place at the centre's exhibition hall, the Sarit Expo Centre labelled as 1F19 in fig 4.14 below. Most of these exhibitions are free and open to the public, although they mostly focus on marketing the exhibitionist's products, rather than entertaining the general public.



Fig 4.14: The Sarit Centre first floor plan showing the Sarit Expo Centre to the far right, labelled as 1F19. Source; Source; <http://www.saritcentre.com/index-page-services.htm>. Accessed 12/12/2013, edited by author



Fig 4.15: A banner at Sarit Centre advertising its movie theatre.

Source; Author, 2013

Participant visitors interviewed seemed to enjoy these exhibitions. During an exhibition dubbed Baby Banda Exhibition that took place at this mall on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2013, 75% of the participants interviewed had planned to attend this exhibition and had not found out about it by chance. They seemed to enjoy this exhibition as they saw it as informative and educative.

The Fox Theatres movie theatre also attracted patrons that visited this mall primarily to go to the movies, and almost all of those interviewed (95%) were there primarily to catch a movie, and had not stumbled on the theatre by accident.

The children interviewed liked the visits to the mall primarily because of the prospects of food and snacks at the food zone. Almost half of the children interviewed also liked the visits at the prospects of acquiring new toys and clothes.

Thus, some people seemed to choose this shopping mall for the mere fact that there was a form of recreational activity going on. This shows that recreation is part and parcel of a shopping mall.

### 4.2.5 Parking

According to the management, the shopping mall has three parking areas spread out through its site, with a total of approximately 1250 parking slots. This can be confirmed by the layout below (Fig 4.16).

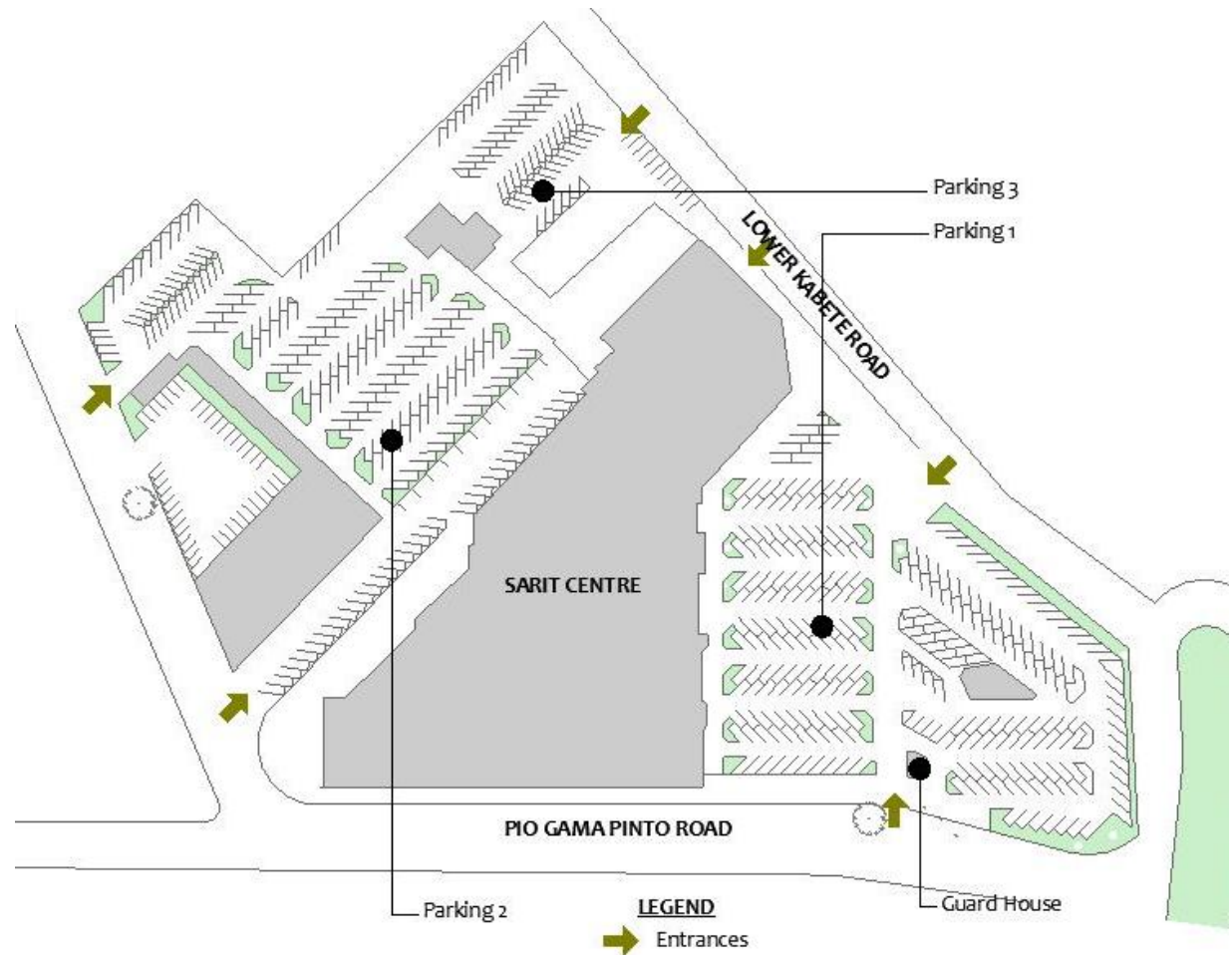


Fig 4.16: Layout of the Sarit centre showing the car park layout. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.17: Automated parking instructions at the Sarit Centre.

Source; Author, 2013

0 – 1hr	->	20Kshs
1 - 2hrs	->	40Kshs
2 – 3hrs	->	80Kshs
3 – 4hrs	->	120Kshs
4 – 5hrs	->	200Kshs

Thereafter additional 80 Kshs per hour.

Fig 4.18: Parking fees for the main parking at Sarit Centre. Source; <http://www.saritcentre.com/index-page-services.htm>

The first parking, which is the main parking, is located at the front of the shopping mall. It is accessible from both Lower Kabete Road and Pio Gama Pinto Road.

This is the largest parking available at the mall. It caters for approximately half of all the parking facilities provided. It is easily accessible both from outside and inside the mall. Patrons pay twenty shillings for the parking slots for one hour stay or less. Payment for this parking is pre-pay at points located at the entrances to the facility to facilitate speedy entrances and exits with instructions on how to use this automated service provided as shown in fig 4.17. Fig 4.18 shows the charges for this parking. It can be seen that the parking charges increase with time spent, thereby reducing the chances of outsiders who don't have an intention of using the mall from exploiting this service.

The main parking is articulated with various plantings at strategic points, and thus giving a green-like natural feel, reducing the visual impact of micro-concrete paving slabs that are used as the material for the parking (Fig 4.19). However, the plantings are not adequate and thus their desired effect is not achieved to the best.



Fig 4.19: Plantings act as demarcations and beautifying aspects at the parking at Sarit Centre. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.20: Automated parking paying points at entrances of the Sarit Centre. Source; Author, 2013

The plantings also act as demarcations between various parking slots and as bases for the various signs and instructions that are strategically placed throughout the parking lot.

Angle parking is provided on this parking lot, with the inclination at  $45^{\circ}$ , as shown by the image to the left.

There is a second parking lot, the express car park that is accessed from Mukinduri Road. This parking lot too resembles the first although it is smaller. It is also articulated with plantings to reduce the micro-concrete paving slab visual effect. This parking lot is a bit expensive than the first main parking lot, as shown by its charge sheet, fig 4.22.



Fig 4.21: Angle parking on the front main parking lot at Sarit Centre. Source; Author, 2013

0 – 1hr	->	40Kshs
1 – 2hrs	->	60Kshs
2 – 3hrs	->	100Kshs
3 – 4hrs	->	150Kshs
4 – 5hrs	->	250Kshs

Thereafter additional 100 Kshs per hour.

Fig 4.22: Parking 2 parking fees. Source; <http://www.saritcentre.com/index-page-services.htm>



Fig 4.23: Second car park bird's eye view taken from balcony at Sarit Expo Centre. Source; Author, 2013





Fig 4.24: Tenants car park, photo taken from the Sarit Expo Centre balcony. Source; Author, 2013

The third and last parking lot is the tenants' car park, being served by Lower Kabete Road. This is for the tenants of the shopping mall, though it is also subjected to parking fees.




The tenants' car park is less articulated with no plantings whatsoever save for the road markings that demarcate the lots. Its charges are the same as the main parking lot charges.

Bicycle parking is also provided at the main car park and is free of charge. At the time of this research visit, the parking was not full and thus can be said to be adequate for the facility. Moreover, cycling was not a common mode of access into the shopping mall, as most patrons either arrived on foot, or in cars.



Fig 4.25: Bicycle parking at main entrance to the shopping mall. Source; Author, 2013

4.2.6 The Sarit Centre Overview

VARIABLE	OBSERVED	COMMENTS
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contemporary form used.</li> <li>- Form and materials do not relate to the local environment or culture.</li> <li>- Only object found to relate to local environment is a wire-frame sculpture at the parking lot.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of respect to local environment/culture in the form making makes the shopping mall feel foreign.</li> <li>- The materials (ceramic wall tiles) used are foreign and thus expensive to maintain and replace if they fail.</li> <li>- The wire frame at the parking lot of the mall makes it relate with the African context, but only to a small extent.</li> <li>- The Sarit Centre blends in with the immediate context, since most buildings in Westlands are contemporary glass buildings.</li> </ul>
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wide walkways provided.</li> <li>- A ramp is provided at the centre .Signage provided in the circulation channels</li> <li>- Circulation centralized in that, it revolves around the centre of the mall.</li> <li>- Elevators and staircases used for vertical circulation.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The wide walkways enable customers and patrons to walk within the mall with a feeling of safety.</li> <li>- The ramp provided greatly eases vertical circulation in that it is more comfortable to use than staircases.</li> <li>- Signage provided helps one find their way in case they are lost or are not very familiar with the layout of the mall.</li> <li>- The centralized circulation makes it easy to navigate the mall since all the circulation channels either lead to the outside or back to the central point, thus reducing confusion.</li> <li>- The elevators further enable vertical circulation for the physically challenged.</li> </ul>
Recreational facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cafeterias/diners provided.</li> <li>- A Fox Cineplex movie theatre provided.</li> <li>- A health club provided.</li> <li>- An exhibition hall provided.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The cafeterias provided help in refreshing clients/customers during their visits at the Sarit Center, therefore keeping them there for longer.</li> <li>- Cafeterias also are an enjoyable experience to eat out, thus can be visited independently.</li> </ul>





		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The movie theatre is a good way of passing time at the shopping mall, attracting movie goers from around Nairobi.</li> <li>- The exhibition hall provides a space for companies to showcase their products, at the same time educating those in attendance at the same time.</li> <li>- All in all, the recreational facilities provided are not enough with regards to the size of the shopping mall.</li> </ul>
<p>Parking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approximately 1250 parking slots available in three parking lots around the mall.</li> <li>- Soft landscaping elements used in the parking lot.</li> <li>- Signage provided in the parking lot.</li> <li>- Automated parking fee machines provided at entrances/exits from the parking lots.</li> <li>- Bicycle parking also provided</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Soft landscaping</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Signage</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Bicycle parking</p> </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">  <p>Automated parking fee machines</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parking not enough, since for every 100 m<sup>2</sup>, 4 parking lots need to be provided. Thus, <math>\frac{46450 \text{ m}^2}{100 \text{ m}^2} * 4 = 1858</math> parking spaces. Thus, there is a deficit of <math>1858 - 1250 = 608</math> parking spaces.</li> <li>- The soft landscaping elements reduce the impact of the expansive parking lot.</li> <li>- Signage provided makes navigation in the parking lot easier to drivers.</li> <li>- Automated parking fee machines ease and reduce time during the payment of parking fees. They also enhance efficiency.</li> <li>- Bicycle parking provided is essential for customers/visitors who come on bicycles, helping in safeguard the bicycles and also easier location of the same after the visit.</li> </ul>

Table 4.1: An overview of facilities at The Sarit Centre. Source; Author, 2013



**Fig 4.26: Galleria Mall Entrance, view from Lang'ata Road.**  
Source; Author, 2013

## 4.3 Galleria Mall

Architect: Tom Bowman Architects

Area: 12 Acres

Anchor Store: Nakumatt Supermarket

Parking: 550 bays



### 4.3.1. Introduction

Galleria Shopping Mall is located along Lang'ata Road, near the Bomas of Kenya at the junction of Lang'ata Road and Magadi Road. It is located on a 12 acre piece of land, and is a member of SMAK (Shopping Mall Association of Kenya). This shopping mall was opened in August 2010.

Galleria shopping mall is a three storied building that houses diners, shopping outlets and professional offices including an outpatient hospital, ATM's, an insurance brokerage firm and a bank. Its food zone has a capacity of 250 patrons. There is also a children play area in the shopping mall.

Galleria has a feel of the outdoors. This is due to its design, unlike the 'big box' model that is evident with most shopping malls around the world. It has lots of open spaces that let in the beautiful tropical weather. The mall is also adorned with a warm colour scheme to capture and reflect the Kenyan red earth and the African sunset.

The shopping mall offers exhibition spaces and an alternative adjacent 5 acres piece of land for larger events.

There are plans to expand the shopping facilities within the mall and also put up an additional office block.

## 4.3.2 Context

Galleria shopping mall is set out in the Karen area, known for its leafy and expansive character. As such, the designers responded greatly in its design by creating a lot of open spaces for the patrons to enjoy the great African weather as they go about their business in the mall (Fig 4.27).



Fig 4.27: Nairobi Java House, a food court set out in the open air at galleria shopping mall. Source; Author, 2013

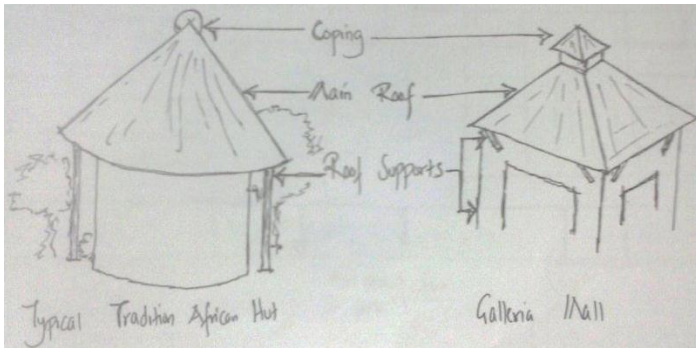


Fig 4.28: The African form reflected in Galleria Shopping mall. Source; Author, 2013

### 4.3.2.1 Form

Galleria Mall is designed as an orthogonal space, though with several positive and negative spaces set out in its façade, and thus to some extent has succeeded in avoiding the usual ‘box-like’ mall shapes.

The mall is fairly porous with its shell mainly dominated by columns that act as the main space defining elements. This gives the interior quite a splash of natural light while at the same time allowing those within to view what is without.



**Fig 4.29: A comparison of an African traditional hut and Galleria Mall forms.** Source; Author, 2013



**Fig 4.30: Bright colours used in the interiors enhance rich African culture.** Source; Author, 2013

The main striking feature of this mall’s form is its roof analysed in fig 4.29. It is a clay tiled roof shaped in the form of a pyramid thus mimicking the African conical shaped roof. The roof has deep eaves, about 1m in depth, supported by wrought iron bars set at an angle into the walls of the mall. This kind of support is also to be reckoned with in most traditional African structures. All this combined give the mall an African feel, and thus it can be said that the designer succeeded in contextualising the mall.

### 4.3.2.2 Materials

The materials employed in the construction of galleria shopping mall clearly reflect and respond to the surroundings. A rich cream and red paint is used on the external facades to reflect the red soils of the Karengata area.

The roof is constructed of clay tiles, supported by wrought iron bars and trusses which brings out the rustic feel of the surrounding wild.

The interiors are also adorned with rich bright colours as shown in fig 4.30 that reflect both the culture of the surrounding Maasai community that initially inhabited the area and the red soils of the surroundings.



**Fig 4.31: Materials and colours used on the malls exterior complement the African forms and local materials.** Source; Author, 2013

The colours can also be said to be exciting and arousing, a positive emotion in shopping malls as will be shown in the table 4.2 below.

Colour	Emotional Response
Blue	A cool colour. Makes room seem cooler. Calms and relaxes excited people. Makes time seem to pass quickly. Tends to stimulate thought processes and encourage conversation
Green	Easy on the eyes. A cool colour. Restful and tranquil. Stimulates conversation. Makes time seem to pass quickly.
Red	Excites and stimulates. Induces aggression. Makes time to pass more slowly.
Yellow	A cheerful colour. Creates a feeling of warmth and happiness. Draws attention. Boosts morale.
Orange	Friendly, warm and vibrant. Exhilarating.
Violet & Purple	A cool colour. Tends to lend elegance and sophistication. Royal
Brown	Relaxing and warm.
Grey	Depressing. Cool.

Table 4.2: Relationship between colour and emotional response. Source; Rajagopal (2011)

As seen in the table above (table 4.2), the combination of colours at Galleria Mall (Red, Yellow, Orange and Brown) is appropriate for a shopping mall and at the same time compliment the rich African colours and the soils of the area.

### 4.3.3 Circulation

Galleria Mall circulation is centralized in that, it emanates from a main atrium that is closest to the entrance. Both the horizontal and vertical circulations have their focal point at this main atrium.

The horizontal circulation is enabled by the presence of wide walkways that allow for large crowds of people to pass avoiding the butt brushing effect. At the upper floors, the



Fig 4.32: The horizontal walkways in Galleria are wide enough for walking and viewing without creating obstructions. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.33: Main atrium at Galleria Shopping Mall from whence vertical circulation emanates, thus centralizing circulation in the mall. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.34: Some of the children playing facilities at the Planet G in Galleria Mall. Source; Author, 2013

horizontal circulation is also arranged around the main atrium. This works as both a walkway and a gallery allowing people on the upper floors to view the activities going on below. It also makes way finding around the mall easy as one can see around them and thus spot “landmarks” or points of interest from different points around the mall.

Vertical circulation is taken care of by the presence of an elevator at the main atrium of the mall and also a staircase from the same atrium to the first floor. The only mode of vertical circulation for the physically challenged in Galleria is the elevator, since there are no ramps that lead to the upper floors like in the case of The Sarit Centre.

## 4.3.4 Recreational Facilities

### 4.3.4.1 Children’s Play Area

The mall offers a children’s play area play area known as Planet G. It is located on the first floor of the mall just after The Food Zone. Planet G is designed to thrill children by giving them an adventurous experience that not only excites and entertains them but also develops them in the process. Extreme safety precautions have been taken to ensure that children safe while having lots of fun.

95% of the children interviewed loved Planet G and in fact, they loved the shopping mall primarily for this reason. The parents also interviewed also liked the idea of this kid’s play area since they could leave their children in this area and do their other businesses in the shopping mall without the distractions that little children seem to cause. They liked the idea of their children having fun in a protected and safe area within the mall.





Fig 4.35: A cafe set out in the open at Galleria gives diners views around the mall and also lets in the air into the area. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.36: An indoors cafe at galleria mall still enjoys views to the outside due to the wide windows, thus achieving openness and porosity. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.37: An art exhibition at Galleria Mall's exhibition hall. Source; Author, 2013

## 4.3.4.2 Dining Areas

The other major recreational activity offered is dining by the several food courts in the shopping mall. Some of the cafes/restaurants in the shopping mall are Nairobi Java House, Artcaffe, KFC, Blanco's Sports Grill and The Food Zone.

The visitors interviewed however did not seem to think of this as a form of recreation in this shopping mall, but rather as a convenient service. However, it could be seen that, the scenery created in most of these diners and cafeterias was relaxing and could be concluded as a form of recreation.

## 4.3.4.3 Exhibitions

Apart from the children play area and diners in the shopping mall, there are also exhibitions that take place in the mall. There is also an alternative adjacent 5 acre piece of land for people and companies to hold events. However, this cannot be viewed as much of recreation since they are mainly promotional events.



Fig 4.38: Exhibitions also take place at the mall's main courtyard. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.39: Balconies at Galleria shopping mall offer places for viewing the surrounding and the activities within the mall. Source; Author, 2013

#### 4.3.4.4 Others

Another recreational activity offered in the mall is the ability to rest and view what is going on around the mall. A view can be seen captured from a balcony in fig 4.39. The activity of just watching people go about their business as discussed earlier in chapter 2 can also be termed as recreational activity.

In conclusion, not much has been offered in Galleria in terms of recreation and like other shopping malls in Nairobi, for instance movie theatres. The spaces within are majorly used for rental spaces as shops and offices.

#### 4.3.5 Parking

Galleria shopping mall offers a single parking lot that is accessible from Lang'ata Road and Magadi Road, as shown in fig 4.41 below. Lang'ata Road is the main entrance while Magadi Road Entrance serves as a secondary entrance.



Fig 4.40: View of car park and shopping entrance from Lang'ata Road entrance. Source; Author, 2013

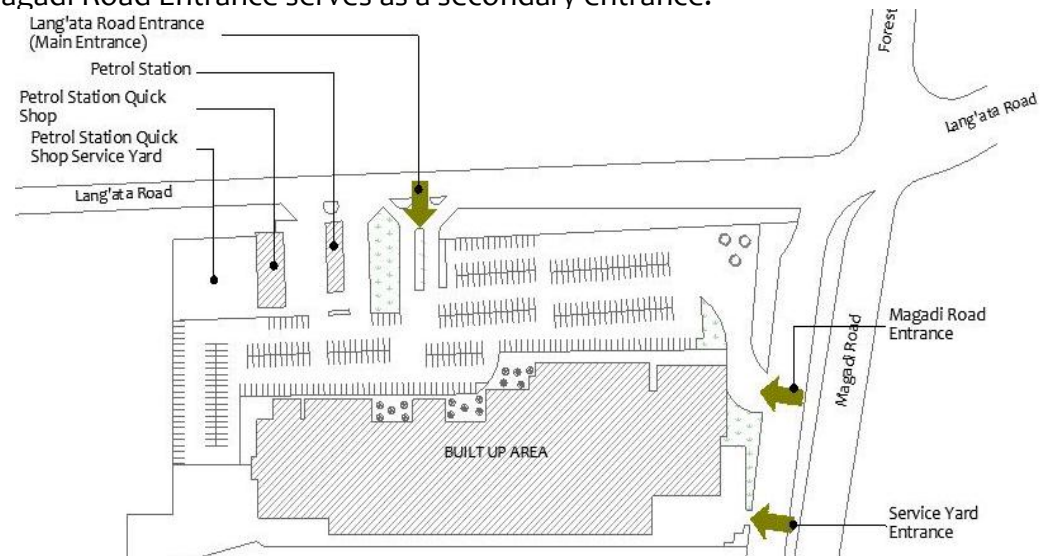


Fig 4.41: Galleria layout showing the main parking, the entrances and the service yards. Source; Author, 2013



**Fig 4.42: Galleria parking lot, a micro-concrete paving slabs expand with little vegetation to act as aesthetically enhancing elements. Source; Author, 2013**

The parking lot offers more than 550 parking bays. The parking is laid out at the front of the shopping mall for easy access. However this plays against the aesthetics of the shopping mall since the parking lot gives the negative visual impact of an expansive surface parking as shown in fig 4.42.

However, landscaping with vegetation at strategic points in the parking lot has reduced this effect to some extent. The vegetation acts as demarcations between slots in the parking lot, and also it is in this vegetated areas that street lights are placed thus complementing the parking lot more and also providing lighting at night to improve on security at night (Fig 4.43).








**Fig 4.43: Vegetated areas act as demarcations in the parking lot and also for bases for street lights. Source; Author, 2013**



**Fig 4.44: Galleria car park and entrance captured through the side mirror of a car at the lot. Source; Author, 2013**

### 4.3.6 Galleria Mall Overview

VARIABLE	OBSERVED	COMMENTS
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forms mimicking the African built form used.</li> <li>- Colours and materials used on the mall are bright, mimicking the surrounding soils.</li> <li>- Open spaces introduced in the mall, especially in the eateries.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 5px;"> <span data-bbox="436 808 638 829">Form and materials</span> <span data-bbox="730 808 863 829">Open spaces</span> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The form responding to African architecture gives the shopping mall a local feel, one that a local resident can connect with, and one that a foreigner can feel exotic.</li> <li>- The bright colours and local materials used make the shopping mall have a lively mood.</li> <li>- The open spaces introduced make the visitors appreciate the local scenery and at the same time enjoy the local warm climate.</li> </ul>
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wide walkways provided.</li> <li>- No ramp provided, but elevators provided.</li> <li>- Staircases also provided.</li> <li>- Circulation centralized.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">    </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 5px;"> <span data-bbox="401 1240 562 1268">Wide walkways</span> <span data-bbox="667 1240 764 1268">Elevator</span> <span data-bbox="884 1240 982 1268">Staircase</span> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The wide walkways enable customers and patrons to walk within the mall with a feeling of safety.</li> <li>- The elevators enable vertical circulation for the physically challenged.</li> <li>- Staircase also aids in vertical circulation</li> <li>- The centralized circulation makes it easy to navigate the mall since all the circulation channels either lead to the outside or back to the central point, thus reducing confusion.</li> </ul>
Recreational facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cafeterias/diners provided.</li> <li>- An exhibition hall provided.</li> <li>- A children play area provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The cafeterias provide patrons/visitors with refreshments/food during their visits at Galleria, therefore keeping them there for longer.</li> </ul>



	 <p>Cafeteria      Exhibition hall      Children play area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cafeterias also are an enjoyable experience to eat out, thus can be visited independently without the intention of shopping in the mall.</li> <li>- The exhibition hall provides a space for companies to showcase their products, at the same time educating those in attendance.</li> <li>- The children play area make families visit the mall, since both children and adults are able to enjoy the outing.</li> </ul>
<p>Parking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 550 parking spaces.</li> <li>- Soft landscaping elements used in the parking lot.</li> <li>- Signage provided in the parking lot.</li> </ul>  <p>Aerial view showing parking      Soft landscaping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parking not enough, since for every 100 m<sup>2</sup>, 4 parking lots need to be provided. Thus, <math>\frac{15000 \text{ m}^2}{100 \text{ m}^2} * 4 = 600</math> parking spaces. Thus, there is a deficit of <math>600-550= 50</math> parking spaces, which is not a huge deficit.</li> <li>- The soft landscaping elements reduce the impact of the expansive parking lot.</li> <li>- Signage provided makes navigation in the parking lot easier to drivers.</li> </ul>

Table 4.3: An overview of the facilities at the Galleria Mall. Source; Author, 2013

#### 4.4 Thika Road Mall

Architect: Studio Infinity

Area: 27,900m<sup>2</sup> on 6 acres

Anchor Store: Nakumatt Supermarket

Parking: 700+ bays



##### 4.4.1 Introduction

Thika Road mall, opened in April 2013, is located along the Thika Super-Highway, just as the name suggests. It is located at Kasarani Roundabout, with close proximity with facilities such as Moi International Sports Complex, United States International University (U.S.I.U.), the Safari Park Hotel and several residential areas including the expansive Zimmerman and Kasarani.

Thika Road Mall is a three storeyed building, with 27,900m<sup>2</sup> lettable space within it's walls. It offers a range of shops from basic household goods, fashion goods, dining to entertainment.

Thika Road Mall can be said to be the first shopping mall to be established along Thika Road. Neighbourhoods around like Kasarani and Zimmerman can now enjoy shopping and entertainment under one roof, like any other Nairobi residents in other residential areas.

Credit can be given to the location of this mall in that, the aspect of shopping mall being a reserve for the rich has been overlooked with regard to it's location. This is because most of the residents around Thika Road Mall are middle income earners.



Fig 4.45: Thika Road Model showing its typical 'box' shaped design. Source; Studio Infinity Architects



Fig 4.46: Some of the notable facilities near Thika Road Mall showing African forms and the use of local materials i.e. fair faced concrete for Moi International Sports Centre(top) and natural stone and roof shingles for Safari Park Hotel (bottom). Source; www.skyscrapercity.com

## 4.4.2 Context

### 4.4.2.1 Form

Thika Road Mall is designed in the usual 'box' shape that is evident in most shopping malls (Fig 4.45). It is worth noting that the mall design is orthogonal in shape so that arrangement of let-able spaces is optimised. However, it can be argued that this can be mitigated so that there is diversity in the forms so as to respond to the contexts that the shopping malls are sited in.

With reference to some of the major land marks around the site for this shopping mall, it can be said to be out of context. For instance, it is nothing like the nearby Safari Park Hotel, which has been designed with local materials and mimicking traditional African built forms as shown in fig 4.46.

The immediate neighbourhood is filled with residential apartment blocks that employ the rectilinear form in their designs. From this point of view, it can thus be said that Thika Road Mall has responded to the residential neighbourhood.



Fig 4.47: A front view of Thika Road Mall showing its typical "box - like" form. Source; Author, 2013

## 4.4.2.2 Materials

Thika Road Mall is a masonry building, clad in tiles and plaster. The plaster is painted creamy white at the entrance. The tiles are black and white to the sides of the entrance and give this building a contemporary look. This is shown in fig 4.48.

Apart from the design at the entrance, the pattern of alternating black and white tiles on the external facades is repeated all around the building. At the very bottom for about a height of 3000mm is the black tile cladding, followed by about 5000mm height of white tile cladding and finally by about 1500mm height of another black tile cladding level.

The other main material used in these shopping malls is the glass in the fenestrations that are visible mainly on the Eastern façade.

Steel is used as the main metal in offering support, for the gates and on the ramps as balustrade.

The main demerit from these cladding materials is that they are not local and thus give this building a foreign look. This works against the idea of contextualising the shopping mall, to better relate and reflect the people that it serves.

## 4.4.3 Circulation

Circulation in Thika road mall, just like in the other malls already analysed is centralized. The main entrance leads to a main atrium at the centre of the mall so that all other arteries lead from here, be they horizontal or vertical as shown by the image on the next page, fig 4.50.



Fig 4.48: Thika Road Mall front entrance showing cladding materials used on the mall. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.49: Thika Road Mall front entrance at completion, showing steel gate. Source; www.skyscrapercity.com Accessed 12/12/2013



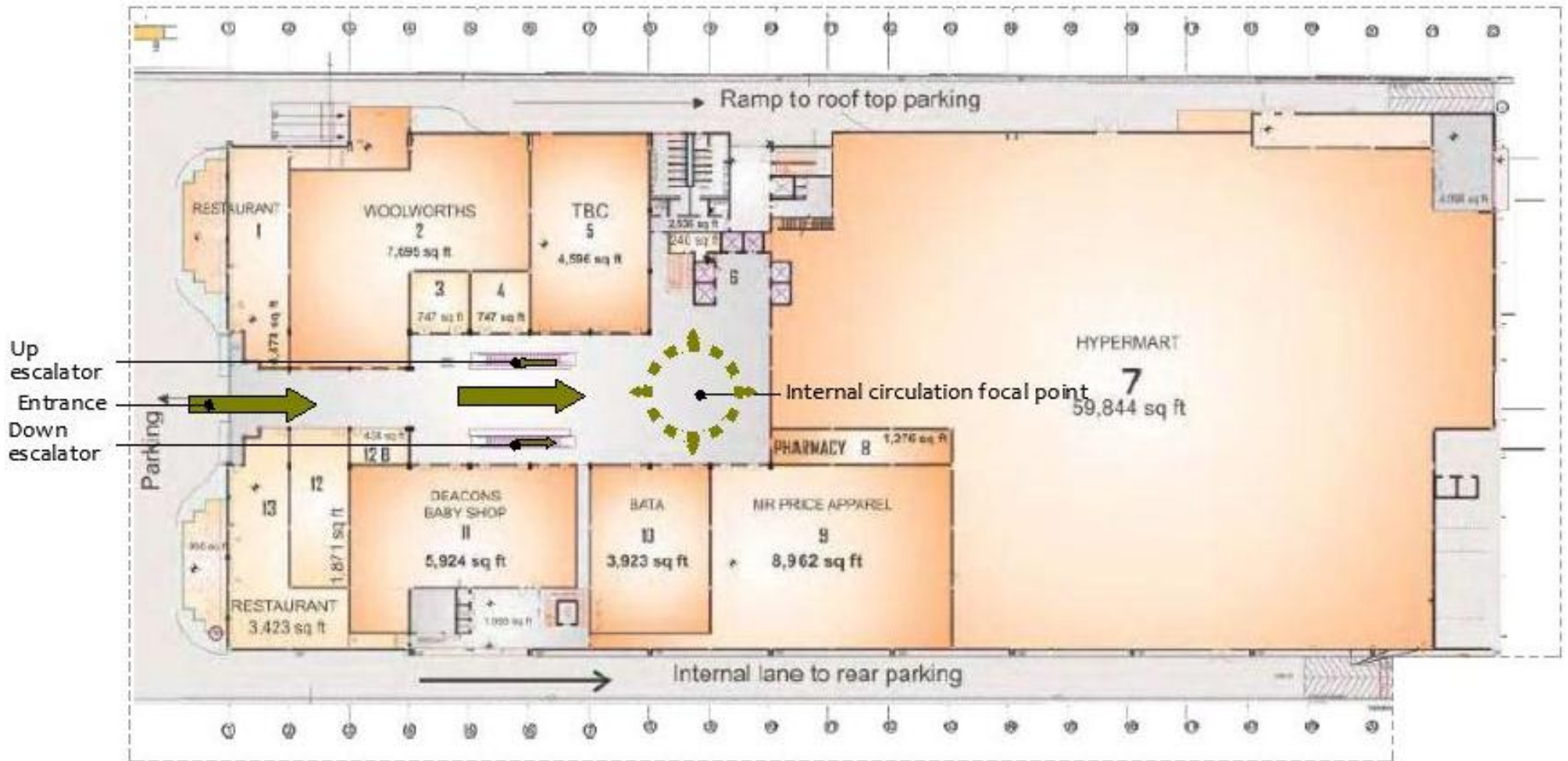


Fig 4.50: Ground floor plan of the Thika Road Mall. Source; Studio Infinity Architects

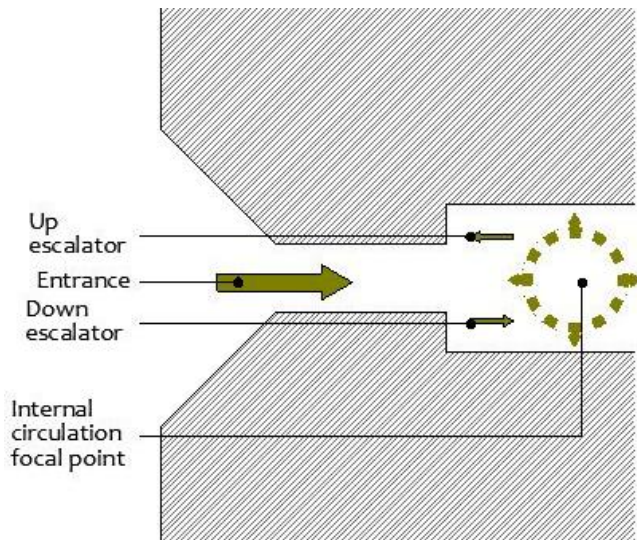


Fig 4.51: Thika Road Mall funnel-like entrance. Source; Author, 2013

The main entrance of the shopping mall is wide, funnel like which seems to draw people, lead them through a narrower corridor and into an atrium, which as earlier stated is the focal point of the shopping mall's circulation as demonstrated by the illustration in fig 4.51.

There are eight elevators and six escalators in the shopping mall. Two of the escalators are inside the Nakumatt supermarket in the mall, and these are escalating ramps, to enable access for people on wheelchairs and other shoppers with trolleys.

The arrangement of circulation around the atrium has also affected the layout of the stalls/shops in that they too are arranged effectively around the atrium. This enables them to be visible from a central point of view, and thus decisions on where to go are easy to make, once one finds themselves at the atrium.



Fig 4.52: Atrium at Thika Road Mall, the focal point of the mall's circulation. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.53: Escalating ramp inside Nakumatt at Thika Road Mall. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.54: Artistic impression of the atrium at Thika Road mall showing arrangement of shops to face the atrium and the 4 escalators that aid in vertical circulation. Source; Studio Infinity Architects



Fig 4.55: Funscape located on the second floor of Thika Road Mall. Source; Author, 2013

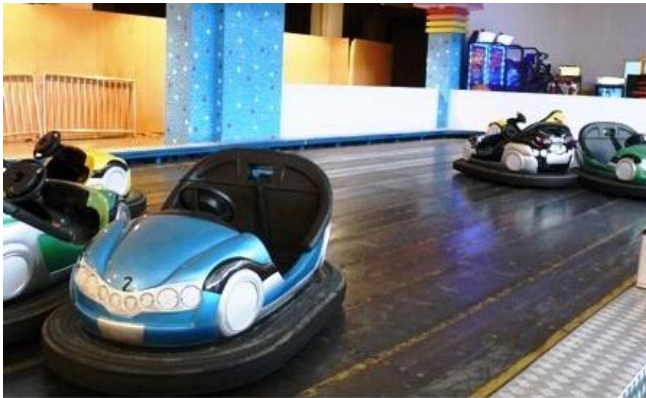


Fig 4.56: Electronic race cars at the Funscape. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 4.58: Some of the other gaming facilities available at Thika Road Mall. Source; Author, 2013

#### 4.4.4 Recreational Facilities

In Thika Road Mall, recreational facilities are focused electric car and computer oriented gaming. This area, dubbed “funscapes” is located on the second floor of the mall.

This paly area is located at the farthest end of the second floor of the mall, thus allowing for little interruption and buffering the noises that emanate from this area from reaching other users of the mall where less noisy environments may be required, e.g. cafeterias and offices.

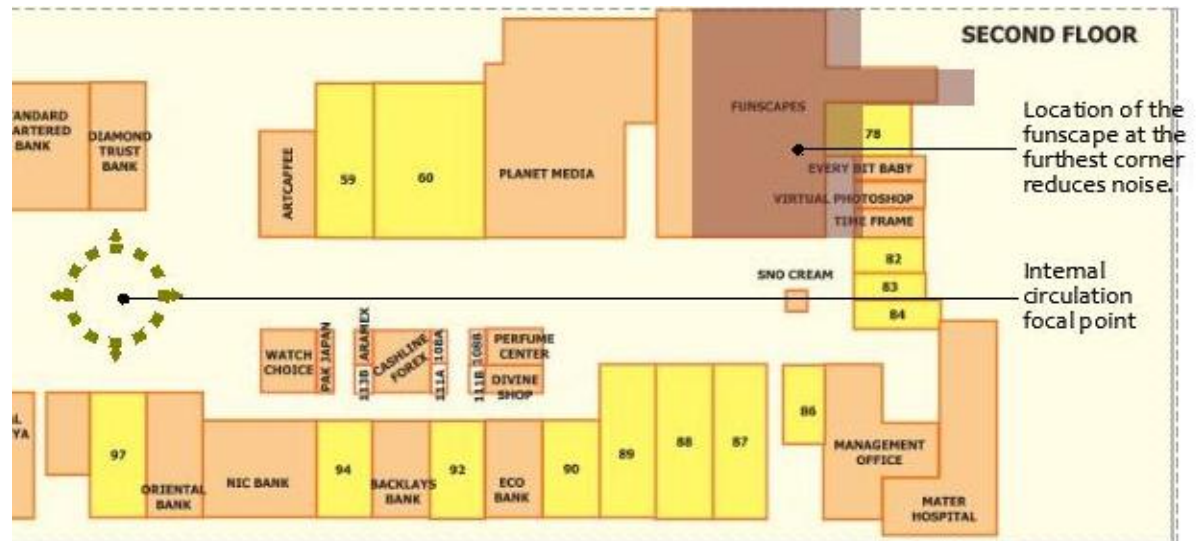


Fig 4.57: Second floor plan showing position of Funscapes in the layout. Source; [www.trm.co.ke](http://www.trm.co.ke) Accessed 12/12/2013

75% of those interviewed loved this gaming area, and thought this was a fantastic idea since they thought of it as a get away area on weekends. 90% of the children loved the gaming area especially the race cars, and the rest 10% didn’t know or were to shy to respond to the questions. The family patrons loved this area and saw it as a welcome idea on this side of Nairobi. It is worth noting that this gaming area is among the few

that are found in Kasarani. It can be concluded that, this recreational area is important to both the shopping mall and the visitors alike.

The only demerit of this recreational feature is that it is commercial, and one has to pay to use the facilities within. Other recreational facilities in the mall include cafeterias and restaurants.

## 4.4.5 Parking

Parking at Thika road mall is offered in three lots. The first parking lot is found at the entrance to the mall, shown in fig 4.59 below. This is the main parking lot provided by the mall. This parking is mostly used by users of the mall that want to access the ground floor areas and do not intend to spend a lot of time in the mall.



Fig 4.59: Thika Road Mall front parking showing articulation with palm trees and the ramp to the roof top parking together with the signage of the same to the far left of the image. Source; Author, 2013



**Fig 4.60: Model showing the layout of the roof-top parking with the ramp access to the extreme left façade.** Source; Studio Infinity Architects

The front parking lot is articulated by the use of plantings and street lights and nicely laid out curbs. Micro-concrete paving slabs are the surface material that is used on this parking lot. Angle parking is used on this parking lot, where the angle is  $90^{\circ}$

The second parking lot is the roof-top parking. This parking is accessed by the use of a ramp that covers the whole of the Western facade. This parking lot is used by shoppers who intend to spend a little while in the mall. There is a roof entrance provided for users of this parking lot to access the inside of the mall with ease. Escalators then take the shoppers to their intended destinations within the mall.

This parking lot also employs the use of cabbro as the surface material, with yellow road paint used for demarcating between slots. A combination of angle parking and linear parking is used on this mall.  $45^{\circ}$  is the angle used to layout this parking lot.

The main thing that can be outlined in the roof-top parking is the lack of security lights. This creates darkness at night and thus issues of security may arise. However, security guards are positioned strategically on the roof to both guard the shoppers and direct vehicles in and out of the mall. However, one feels that security lights need to be installed on the roof parking.

Another demerit of the roof-top parking is the ugliness that the service ramp brings to the Western facade. Natural lighting at this facade is also hampered by the presence of this ramp.






Both the front and the roof-top parking lots are free of charge, but are controlled by parking chip coins that are given once a vehicle enters the premises and deposited on coin machines at exits of the mall. This validates the parking and avoids theft of vehicles, thus improving on security.

The third and final parking lot provided by the mall is at the back of the mall, and this is serviced by an internal lane that runs along the Eastern facade of the mall. This parking lot is used by the tenants and employees of the mall.



Fig 4.61: A model showing both the layouts of the front and roof-top parking lots at Thika Road Mall and their servicing from the Thika Super-Highway. The ramp to the roof can be seen on the left side of the model. Source; Studio Infinity Architects

### 4.4.6 Thika Road Mall Overview

VARIABLE	OBSERVED	COMMENTS
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contemporary orthogonal form used.</li> <li>- Colours and materials used on the mall are bright.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Form</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Materials</p> </div> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The contemporary form gives the shopping mall a somewhat foreign feel about it.</li> <li>- The bright colours and local materials used make the shopping mall have a lively mood.</li> <li>- Contemporary materials used (porcelain tiles) are hard to maintain.</li> <li>- The form and materials of the shopping mall don't correspond to its context.</li> </ul>
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wide walkways provided.</li> <li>- Escalators, escalating ramps and elevators provided.</li> <li>- Circulation centralized.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Wide walkways</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Escalating ramp</p> </div> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The wide walkways enable customers and patrons to walk within the mall with a feeling of safety.</li> <li>- The escalating ramps enable vertical circulation for the physically challenged.</li> <li>- Escalators help in vertical circulation.</li> <li>- The centralized circulation makes it easy to navigate the mall since all the circulation channels either lead to the outside or back to the central point, thus reducing confusion.</li> </ul>
Recreational facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cafeterias/diners provided.</li> <li>- A gaming area provided.</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Gaming area</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The cafeterias provide visitors with food/drinks during their visits at Thika Road Mall, therefore keeping them there for longer.</li> <li>- Cafeterias also are an enjoyable experience to eat out, thus can be visited independently.</li> <li>- The gaming area makes a family visit to the mall enjoyable, since both children and adults can enjoy.</li> </ul>


<p>Parking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 700 parking spaces in three parking lots, including a roof parking.</li> <li>- Soft landscaping elements used in the front surface parking lot.</li> <li>- Signage provided in the parking lot.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parking not enough, since for every 100 m<sup>2</sup>, 4 parking lots need to be provided. Thus, <math>\frac{27900 \text{ m}^2}{100 \text{ m}^2} * 4 = 1080</math> parking spaces.</li> </ul> <p>Thus, there is a deficit of <math>1080-700= 380</math> parking spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The soft landscaping elements reduce the impact of the expansive parking lot in the in the front surface parking.</li> <li>- Signage provided makes navigation in the parking lot easier to drivers.</li> </ul>
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Table 4.4: An overview of the facilities at Thika Road Mall. Source; Author



## 4.5 Serramar Parque Shopping

Architect: Aflalo and Gasperini Arquitects

Location: Sao Paulo, Brazil

Built Area: 30,303.25 m<sup>2</sup>

Site Size: 119,000 m<sup>2</sup>

Parking: 1,000 bays



### 4.5.1 Introduction

This shopping mall is located in Caraguatatuba, a seaside town in São Paulo state, Brazil. The proposal for this project was to develop a mall for tourists and also for the residents in the Northern Coast of Sao Paulo State. Caraguatatuba being a coastal city, the first aspect considered in the design was its location. The land on which it is built was an undeveloped region of the city with front for a boulevard and an extra 600 metres offset from the sea.

The Serramar Parque Shopping has approximately 20,300m<sup>2</sup> of gross floor area with inbuilt anchor shops and retail stores, a supermarket, a home centre, a food court with fast food and family restaurants and four cinemas.

A striking feature with this shopping mall is that it is all accommodated on one floor. This is important to note since shoppers and mall visitors have a tendency to avoid vertical movements and hence facilities/shops on upper levels do not get as much use as those in the lower levels. This also removes the challenge of disabled visitors having to be accommodated on the upper levels.

## 4.5.2 Context

As stated earlier, Caraguatatuba is a coastal city and thus, of importance to be considered in the design of this shopping mall is its context.

### 4.5.2.1 Form

The inspiration in the design of this shopping mall was a natural consequence of its site, along with experiences of shopping. An open space integrated with nature concept was adopted, different from the concept of a closed mall. An opened ground floor mall with planted wooded courtyards was developed to compliment and highlight the beach climate.

The blocks of shops were arranged in an irregular and angled shape, set apart from each other in order to allow natural ventilation and enabling a dynamic movement.

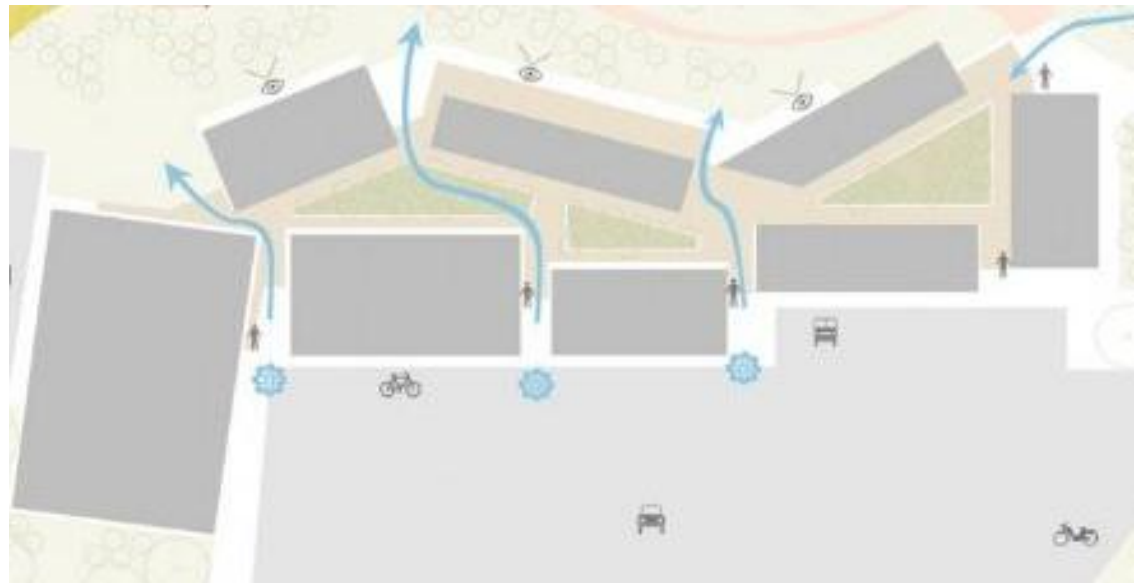


Fig 4.62: Blocks of shops arranged in an irregular and angled shape. Source; Helm, 2012



Fig 4.63: Sun-shading at Serramar Parque Shopping. Source; Helm, 2012



Fig 4.64: Simple finish of the blocks with a textured monolithic mass and a brown metal plate. Source; Helm, 2012



Fig 4.65: Yellow bamboo louvers shade circulation areas. Source; Helm, 2012

This idea was borrowed after a study of building blocks of stores with the same angled design was carried out. The simple form and expression secured a strong identity to the architecture of the mall, drawing the attention of the public who pass by.

The shopping mall employs simple rectangular blocks throughout the design. When they are arranged in the irregular and angled manner as shown in fig 4.62, they bring about a dynamic and interesting composition.

Sun shading is provided by slanting of the faces of East and West facing facades such that they protrude past the wide windows. This keeps the form simple without clutter in sun-shading elements that would otherwise seem too much in the design of a shopping mall.

#### 4.5.2.2 Materials

A composition of bright materials is used in the design of this shopping mall to create a cozy ambience. Yellow bamboo louvers are used to provide shade and protection to circulation areas.

Timber has also been used to cover walkways from the parking to the built up area. The use wood and bamboo compliments the wooden tones found in the inner squares of the mall.

The finish of the blocks that make up the mall is simple, consisting of textured monolithic mass and covered with a brown metal plate detail.

The use of transparent glass on the wide windows especially on the food court gives a good view to the Serra da Mantiqueira Mountains and the stream.

### 4.5.3 Circulation



Fig 4.66: Glass, bamboo louvers and wood are materials used at Serramar. The glass gives a good view to the mountains in the distance. Source; Helm, 2012



Fig 4.68: Decks provided for circulation in the planted areas at Serramar. Source; Helm, 2012

The external circulation at Serramar is dynamic and interesting, thanks to the arrangement of the building blocks of the mall. Decks are provided throughout the planted internal squares between the blocks for navigation and these decks are shaded by bamboo louvers.

Internally, the problem of circulation between the different shops was minimized since each block houses a specific function, and thus circulation is provided specifically for that block according to its function.

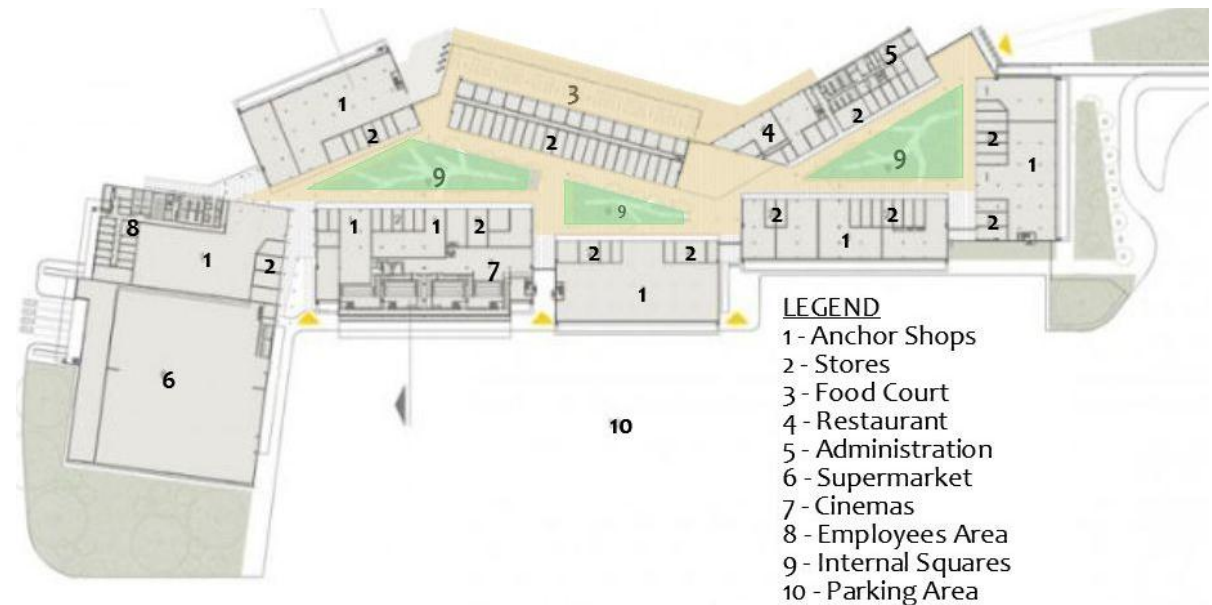


Fig 4.67: Floor plan for Serramar Parque Shopping showing different blocks. Yellow arrows indicate entrances into the mall. Source; Helm, 2012

The provision of four entrances into the mall ensures that there is no congestion at any given entrance. It is worth noting that most of the entrances (three of the four entrances) face the parking, while only one faces the main road. This can be attributed to

the fact that most people visit shopping mall in cars and hence, most of the traffic is expected the mall from the parking lot. This greatly reduces the distance one has to walk from their car to the inside of the mall. Visitors on foot are not neglected as they don't have to go all the way to the parking in order to access the mall, as they can branch off the main road and access it directly from here, as shown in the site plan below (Fig 4.70).



Fig 4.69: Planted area at the North end of the site where patrons can take walks. View of mountains also captured in this image. Source; Helm, 2012

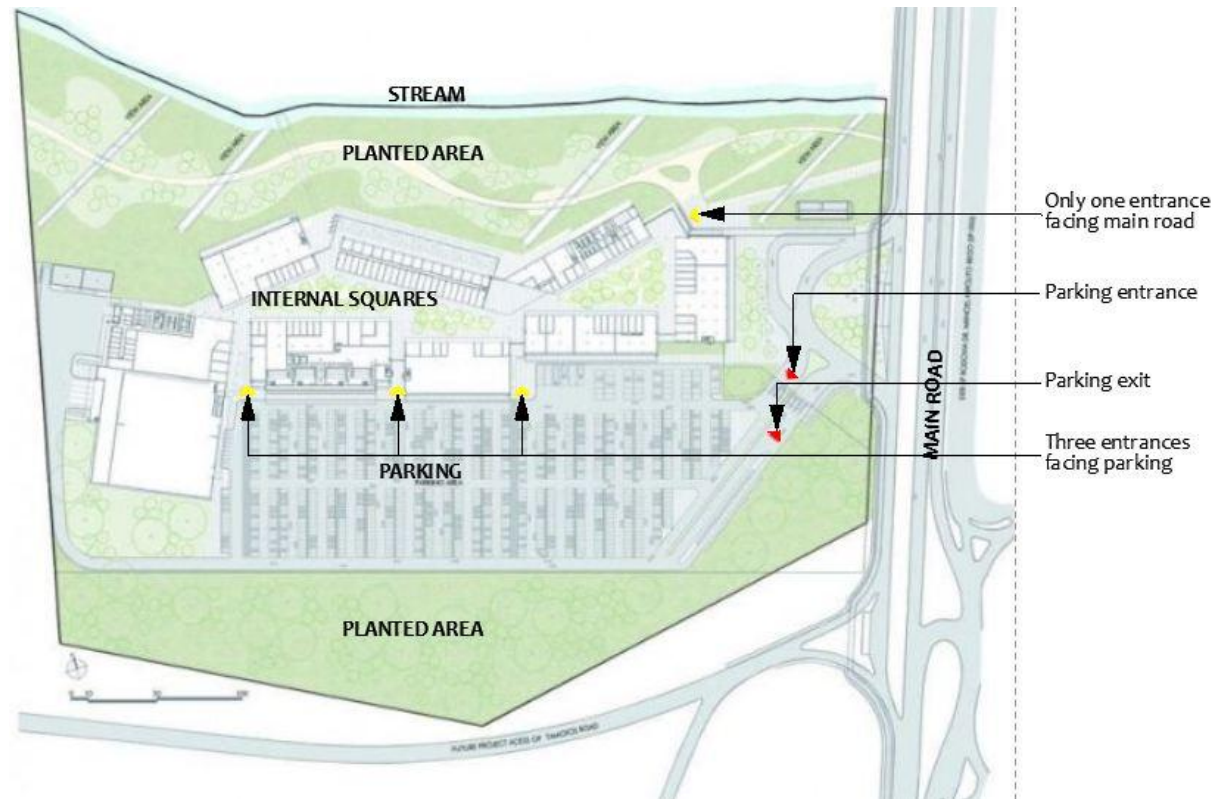


Fig 4.70: Site plan of Serramar showing the different entrance locations. Source; Helm, 2012. Edited by author

#### 4.5.4 Recreational Facilities



Fig 4.71: Food area facing the mountains at Serramar Parque Shopping. Source; Helm, 2012

At Serramar Parque Shopping, recreation has been integrated within the design of the mall. There are four cinemas, a food court and indoor play areas. Apart from these, the mall has a landscaped area where patrons can take walks, sit down and relax as they take in the views of the mountains and stream to the North of the mall. Several view areas have been provided as points to take in the views in the landscaped area.

It is important to note that, all the food areas have been set at the North end of the mall. This is because the best views of this site are towards this direction where the mountains and the stream are visible. Thus, one is able to relax in the food zone as they dine or drink and this doubles as a recreational activity. One does not have to go to the food zone just to eat, but also to enjoy the views offered. Recreation is offered from both within and without the food zone for those within this area.

However, the indoor play areas and the cinemas don't require the views and this explains their placement in the design. The recreational activity in these two areas takes place within only.



Fig 4.72: Entrance to the bowling area at Serramar Parque Shopping. Source; Helm, 2012



Fig 4.73: Indoor play area at Serramar Parque Shopping. Source; Helm, 2012

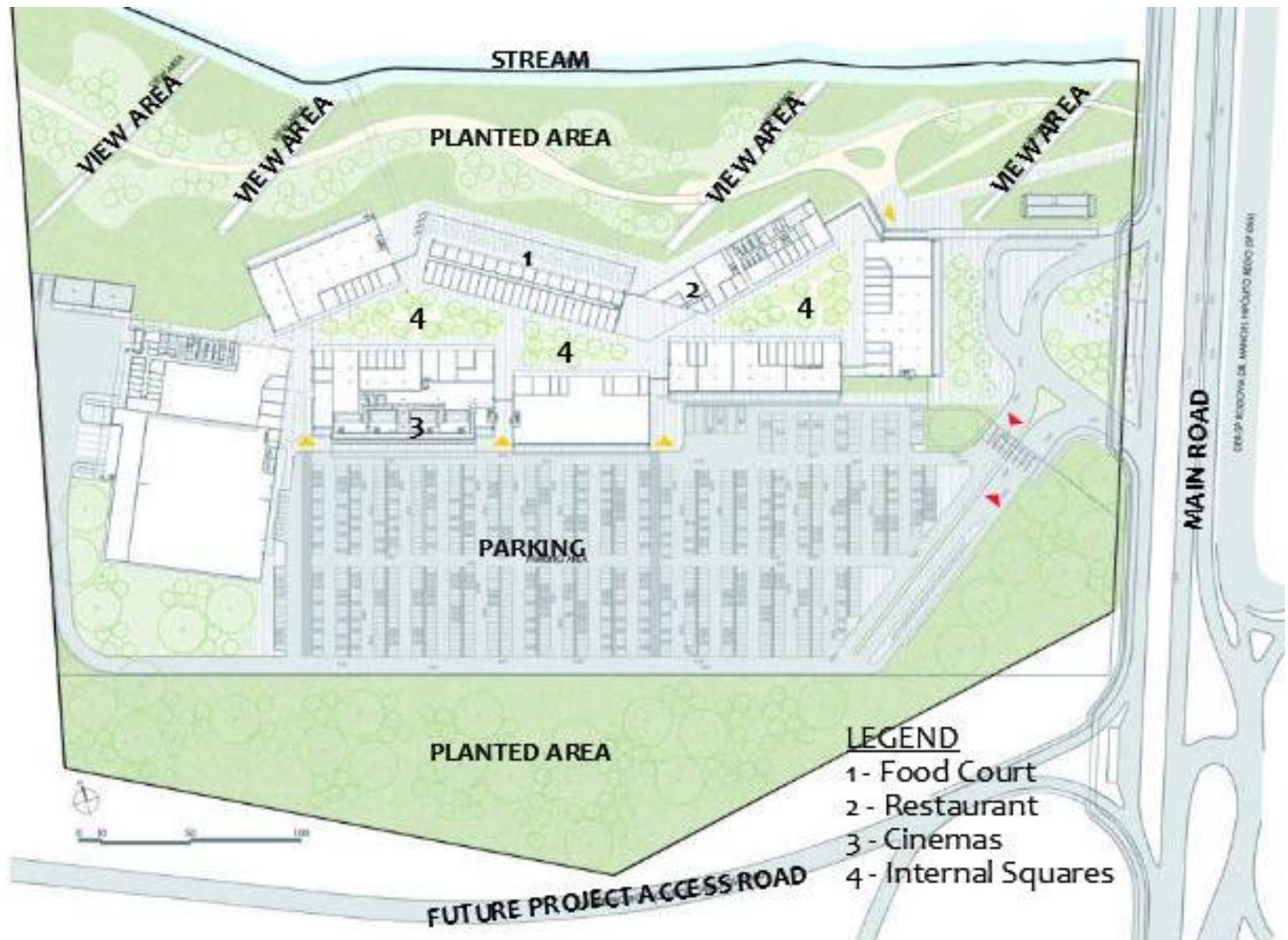


Fig 4.74: Plan for Serramar Parque showing different recreation facilities offered. Source; Helm, 2012 edited by author

### 4.5.5 Parking

All the parking for Serramar is provided on one lot only. There are more than 1000 parking spaces in this facility. The most striking feature about the parking is that, it is not placed directly in front of the mall facing the main road, but rather has been planned such that, it is not fully visible from the main road. However, it is still near the entrance and thus one doesn't need to drive over a long distance to park.

This can be attributed to the planning on the site such that, the shorter facades of the mall face the main road.



Fig 4.75: Serramar Parque Site plan showing parking and alignment of buildings on site. Source; Helm, 2012, edited by author



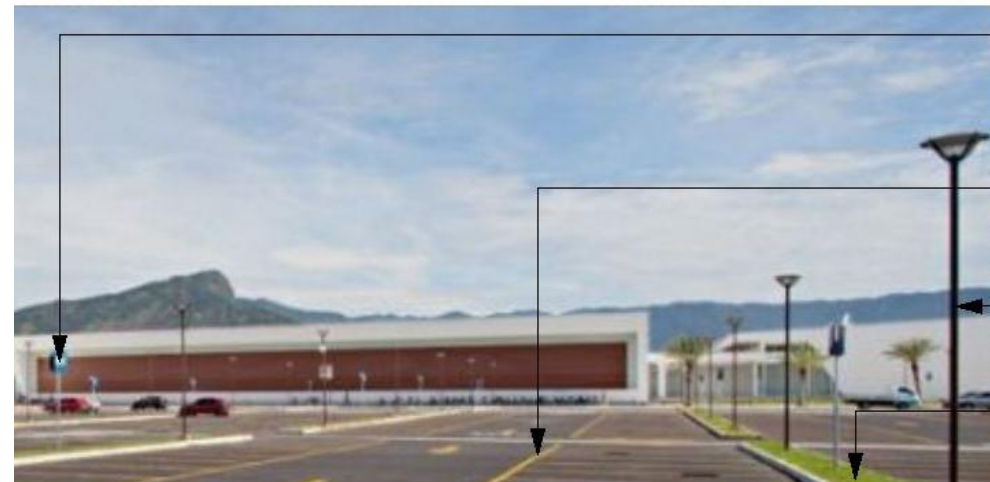


Fig 4.76: Canopy providing shade for walk from parking to mall buildings. Source; Helm, 2012



Fig 4.78: The use of road signs at Serramar Parque Shopping parking. Source; Helm, 2012

All the parking spaces are angled, set out at a 90° angle. Yellow road paint has been used to demarcate parking spaces while a group of parking lots on the same stretch is separated by a landscaped curb that also holds the security lights.



- Parking signs distributed throughout the parking lot
- Yellow road marking paint separates different spaces on the same stretch
- Security light
- A landscaped Curb separates a group of spaces

Fig 4.77: Image showing parking for Serramar with its different attributes. Source; Helm, 2012, edited by author

The wood canopy provided for the pavement from the parking lot to the mall buildings makes the walk comfortable away from the sun's heat. The materials used on this piece (i.e. are wood and concrete), absorb the heat reflected by the parking lot's asphalt and thus making this canopy comfortable.

There is the use of signs to enhance quick flow of traffic and avoid accidents and confusion in the parking lot. The security lights provided make the parking lot safe at night. They also improve on the security so that vandalism is minimised.

## 4.6 Asmacati Shopping Centre

Architect: Tabanlıoğlu Architects

Location: Balçova, İzmir, Turkey

Built Area: 22,760 m<sup>2</sup>

Project Year: 2011



Fig 4.79: Entrance into Asmacati Shopping Centre. Source; Mayer, 2011

### 4.6.1 Introduction

Asmacati Shopping Centre is located in the largest city of the Aegean Coast of Turkey, i.e. Balçova, in the province of İzmir. It is a semi-open facility that appreciates and enjoins the lifestyle of İzmir where people prefer to spend time outdoors with respect to the regions warm climate. This kind of design was inspired by the climate and the tradition of spending time outdoors which makes the facility to naturally create leisure zones between shops. Thus, it is not only a place to shop but also an enjoyable public space where people meet and have quality time.

This design references the traditional gazebo model in Izmir, where generally the tops or sides are surrounded by ivy plants (usually grape leaves – Asma means both grapevine and suspending in Turkish).

Open air patios offer a relaxing feeling under the shadow and glitters of the bower made up of contemporary material, mimicking grape leaves that are found in the local landscape. In this smart move, the mall design blends traditional, modern and nature thus establishing a unique relation with users.

Asmacati Shopping Centre thus merges with the city as a contemporary platform located between the sea, the mountain and the road, forming a lively “rest stop”, a link to the residential areas.

## 4.6.2 Context

As earlier stated, Asmacati Shopping Centre is located in the coastal town of Balçova in the Province or Izmir in Turkey. It is located in a region where the climate is warm, and the local people like to spend time outdoors, which greatly influenced the design of this shopping mall.

### 4.6.2.1 Form

The shopping centre is designed by integrating traditional design elements into contemporary forms. The orthogonal forms that make up the shopping mall have been blended with both the lifestyle of the locals and the landscape to provide a comfortable outdoor climate in the warm sea-side climate.

The form of this shopping mall references traditional gazebos, which are usually covered in ivy leaves on the top and the sides. This form is also inspired by the climate and Aegean tradition of spending time outdoors, thus creating a semi-open shopping mall, an enjoyable place to shop, meet, rest and eat, a place that the locals can relate with.



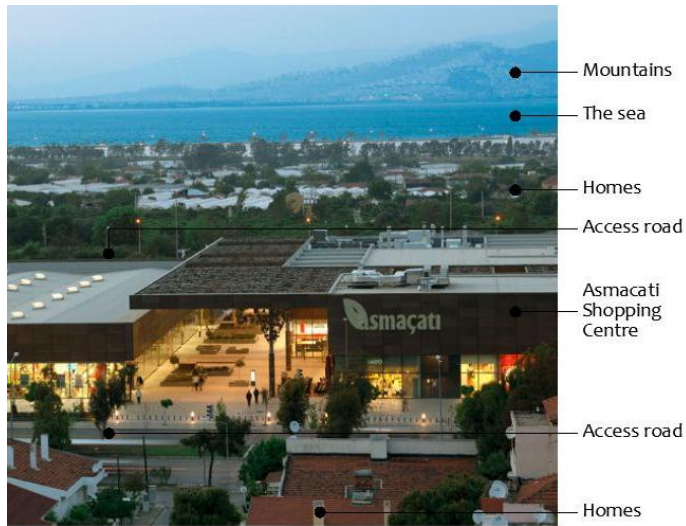
Fig 4.80: Ivy covered gazebo, an inspiration in the design of Asmacati Shopping Centre. Source; www.houzz.com Retrieved 15/01/2014



Fig 4.81: Outdoor living, another inspiration in the design of Asmacati Shopping Centre. Source; www.houzz.com Retrieved 15/01/2014



Fig 4.82: Asmacati is a semi-open shopping mall with patios roofed with elements with olive leaves pattern. Source; Mayer, 2011



**Fig 4.83: The critical location of Asmacati Shopping Centre.** Source; Mayer, 2011



**Fig 4.84: Tiles and glass are the major building materials at Asmacati Shopping Centre.** Source; Mayer, 2011

This shopping centre is located at a critical juncture between the sea, the mountains and a road that accesses many people’s homes, thus acting as both a link to the homes and a rest area in between. This shopping mall, which bears the Aegean culture in harmony with the region’s rhythm of life and social habits, will keep the gazebo tradition alive so will easily be embraced and join the existing local elements. The centre suggests an alternative shopping centre concept.

## 4.6.2.2 Materials

Asmacati Shopping Centre uses mostly metal as its framework, with tiles and glass used as coverings for the facades. This makes it stand out as a contemporary building, which has respect for local environment, both in lifestyle and environment. The colours used, which are different hues of brown give it a bright appearance, thus improving the mood of the patrons who visit this mall.

As seen in fig 4.83, most of the buildings around Asmacati have brown clay tiles as the dominant roofing material. Thus, the use of brown hues for the colours of the mall compliments the surroundings, thus keeping up with the context (Fig 4.84).

### 4.6.3 Circulation

Circulation at Asmacati Shopping Centre works simply, since all of the shops here are freestanding and are accessed from a corridor that runs almost at the middle of the mall. The main entrance is accessed from the open car park at the front of the mall. This entrance leads to the main corridor aforementioned, from where all the shops in the mall are accessed. This corridor also acts as a courtyard with rest benches placed strategically, thus providing for rest intervals within the mall.



Fig 4.85: Main access corridor at Asmacati Shopping Centre.  
Source; Mayer, 2011

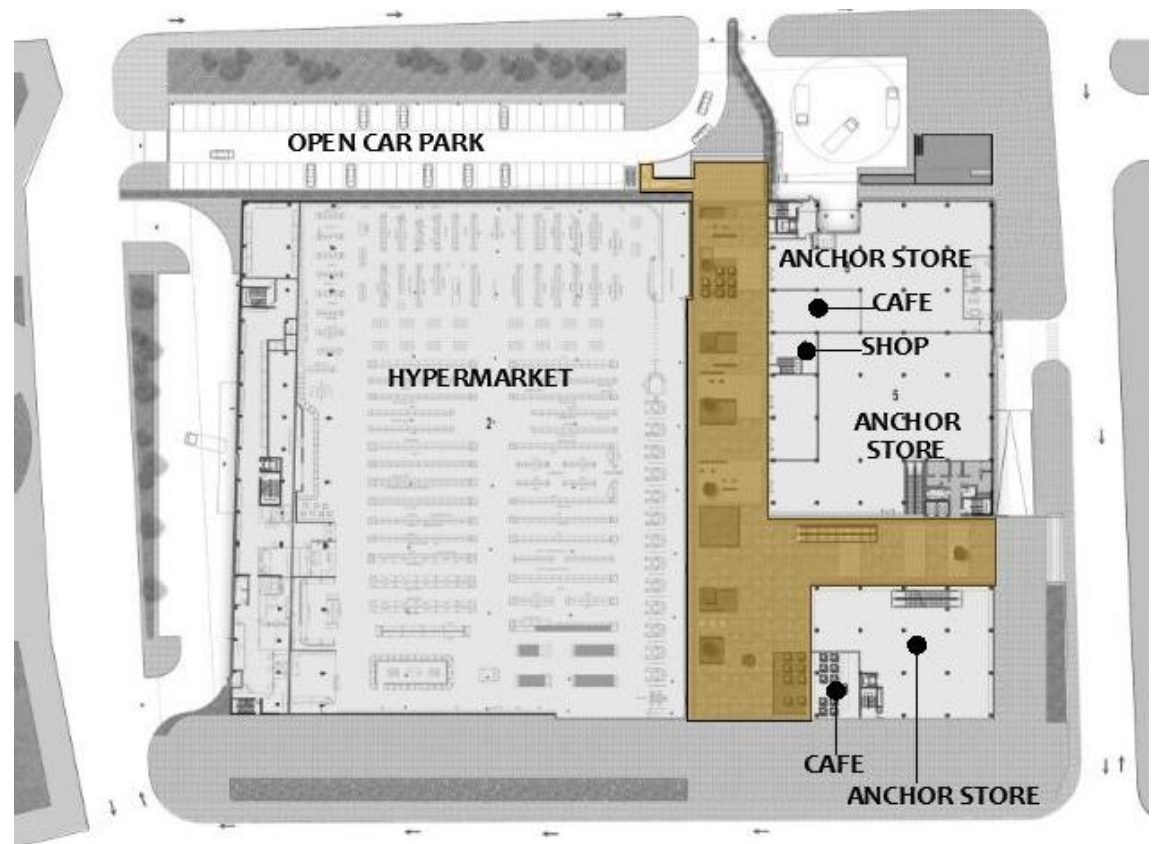


Fig 4.86: Ground floor plan showing location of different shops and the main access corridor. Source; Mayer, 2011, edited by author

This method of accessing all the shops from a single node makes circulation and way-finding easy and effective. Since there are benches introduced in this node, it further improves of the efficiency, since visitors/shoppers can rest before manoeuvring from one point to the next.

#### 4.6.4 Recreational Facilities

The main recreational facilities to be found at Asmacati are two cafeterias, where people can dine and have a drink. However, apart from these, there is a courtyard where people can meet and share quality times. The courtyard is shaded with a detail that is perforated with vine leaves shapes in order to better connect with the locals, where vines are used as coverings for gazebos.

Due to its location between the sea, the mountain and the road trio, the shopping mall forms a lively rest stop for both the people accessing their homes, and also the passers-by travelling.

Asmacati provides room for social and cultural activities such as small concerts and exhibitions.

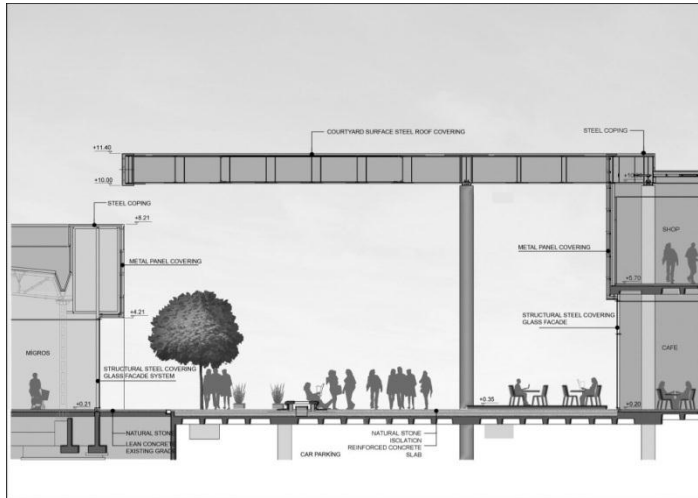


Fig 4.87: Courtyard detail showing different activities that can take place here. Source; Mayer, 2011

#### 4.6.5 Parking

Parking at Asmacati Shopping Centre is divided into three lots. The first is the surface/open car park that is found at the front of the mall, which is intended for shoppers in a hurry, who don't wish to spend much time in the mall.

The other two parking lots are both underground. They are found on the first and second basements as shown in fig 4.88 below.

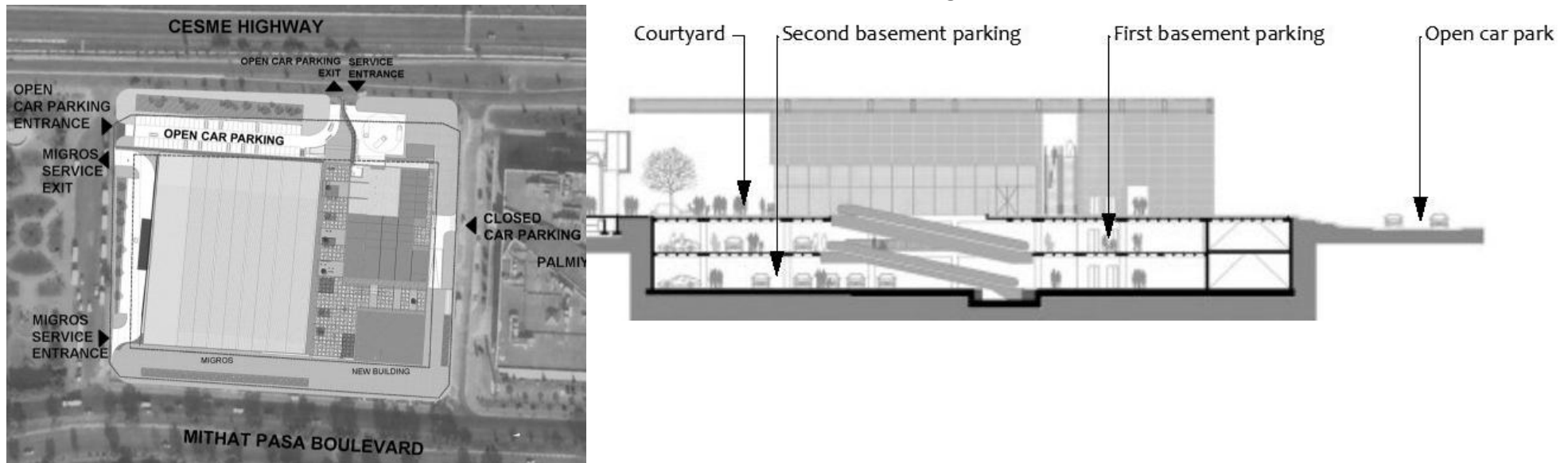


Fig 4.88: Plan and section of Asmacati Shopping Centre showing location of the different car parks. Source; Mayer, 2011

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will look at the effect of the following design phenomenon to the architectural success of shopping malls.

- i) Context of the shopping malls
- ii) Circulation in the shopping malls
- iii) Recreational facilities provided in the shopping malls
- iv) Parking in the shopping malls

From the case studies that have been carried out in this thesis research, it is obvious that the above play a crucial role in the success of any given shopping mall. They, combined with other factors affect the comfort of the malls' patrons and workers and also how they relate with mall.





Fig 5.01: Top: Galleria Mall showing its response to its African context. Bottom: Thika Road Mall. This mall shows little response to its context. Source; Author, 2013



Fig 5.02: View of Serramar Parque Shopping from parking shows its materials and colour that complement its context. Source; Helm, 2012

## 5.2 Context of a Shopping Mall

The context of a shopping mall is very important and should be considered in the design of any shopping mall. It is the factor that determines how shoppers and other patrons relate with the mall in question, and how the mall fits into the environment in which it is designed for, thereby avoiding architectural misfits in the given environ.

To be considered include climatic, cultural and historic contexts for the design of any mall to be considered as successful. A good comparison of context sensitive and insensitive shopping malls is Galleria Mall and Thika Road Mall respectively. Evidently, the form, materials and colour used in Galleria relate with its African environment while the same cannot be said of Thika Road Mall. Thus, one would feel more at home at Galleria than in Thika Road Mall.

To some extent, the business success of Sarit Centre can be attributed to its context and its response to the same. Westlands is a suburb of Nairobi whose buildings are contemporary glass buildings with businesses that can be considered as upmarket oriented. It is a kind of a foreign centre in an African city. Thus, to the shoppers that visit Sarit Centre, it gives them the foreign feel in Nairobi. Also to the foreigners that commonly live in the areas around Westlands, it gives them a kind of feeling of home.

At Serramar Parque Shopping, context has also been a major guide in its design. The use of local materials such as bamboo and other types of wood gives the centre such a homely feel while the use of its open spaces in the beach climate of Sao Paulo gives it a natural air flow and thus comfort. There has also been inclusion of courtyards that compliment and highlight the common design types found along most indigenous coastal towns.



**Fig 5.03: Asmacati shopping Centre uses olive leaf patterns and openness to mimic and relate with the Turkish vegetation and culture. Source; Mayer, 2011**



**Fig 5.04: Shaded wooden pavements in courtyards of Serramar Parque help in external circulation. Source; Helm, 2012**



**Fig 5.05: Galleria Mall circulation includes wide aisles that give each shopper comfort in walking avoiding bumping into each other. Source; Author, 2013**

Context also played a major role in the design of Asmacati Shopping Centre. The use of olive leaf shaped patterns in the design of the mall's facades and roof compliment the local vegetation, while the openness of the shopping mall enables the Turkish people to take shopping to the outdoors. Outdoor living is in the culture of Turkey, where the temperatures can be relatively warm.

Thus, it can be concluded that, for any shopping mall design to be considered architecturally successful (and for any design of any built type for that matter), context has to play a role in the design of that mall. The architect/designer has to have the context of the site in his mind throughout the design process or else the design will seem foreign, which will definitely work against the architectural success of the mall.

## 5.3 Circulation in a Shopping Mall

Circulation in a shopping mall is of utmost importance. From the entrance to the aisles and the interconnection of spaces within the mall, signage and ease of way-finding, all these play a vital role in ensuring the comfort of the shoppers within the mall. Both external circulation and internal circulation are of equal importance.

The external circulation determines how shoppers navigate from the parking and the main entrance to the entrance into the shopping mall building(s). The ease at which this happens, contributes to the architectural success of the mall and to how often the shoppers will re-visit the mall. This explains why most shopping malls plan their parking lots in front of the entrances to the shopping mall building(s).

A good example where external circulation has been well worked out is at Serramar Parque, where there has even been inclusion of covered walkways that shade the



**Fig 5.06: The ramps inside The Sarit Centre aid in vertical circulation of not only goods and patrons but also the disabled.** Source; Author, 2013



**Fig 5.07: Escalating ramps at Thika Road Mall.** Source; Author, 2013

patrons as they move from one area of the mall to the other. Also in the courtyard are wooden paths that enable the patrons to navigate the planted courtyards with ease.

Internal circulation determines how long the shopper will stay inside the mall, and how often they revisit the same mall. Aisles need to be wide enough to allow for all patrons navigate comfortably. Care has to be taken however to ensure that they are not too wide that they encroach onto the leasable spaces thus becoming financially unreasonable. The better the circulation, the longer they stay and this means that the mall is architecturally successful in terms of circulation.

Also to be considered is circulation for the physically challenged visitors. This explains the placement of ramps and elevators to aid in vertical circulation in the shopping malls that have been studied.

In Thika Road Mall, the use of escalating ramps has taken the ramp to the next level and helped a great deal since the normal escalator stairs are not physically challenged friendly. This helps in ensuring that the disabled don't feel excluded in the mall use.

It can thus be concluded that for any shopping mall to be considered architecturally successful, its circulation has to be resolved to the best. Otherwise it will feel uncomfortable where the passages and aisles are too narrow. Signage should also be clear such that way-finding is easy and there is no confusion within and without the mall building.

Such amenities like resting benches & waste bins that act as break-points in circulation to avoid long stretches that bring about tiredness should also be part and parcel of a well worked out circulation.



Fig 5.08: Top; Cafeteria at Galleria Mall. Source; Author Bottom; Cafeteria at Serramar Parque Shopping. Source; Helm. 2012



Fig 5.09: Top; A poster advertising the children's play area at Galleria Mall. Source; [www.galleriamall.com](http://www.galleriamall.com), retrieved 12/01/2014 Bottom; The gaming area at Thika Road Mall. Source; Author, 2013

## 5.4 Recreational Facilities in a Shopping Mall

As much as shopping is a recreational activity in itself to some people, most people are not that well financially endowed in Nairobi to enable them shop in a recreational way. They shop when they need to, and what is bought in most cases is strictly what is needed. Recreational facilities act positively in attracting most of the people in Nairobi to shopping malls. These facilities range from diners, movie halls, sports to gaming electronically.

It has already been established that a successful shopping mall should not only focus on leasing spaces to shops, but also to create recreational spaces which in themselves are also a source of revenue to the shopping mall investors.

Different shopping malls in Nairobi have created different recreational activities within their premises. All of them however have one or more diners and cafes, which means that this is of importance. Diners/cafeterias allow for shoppers to relax after/within their shopping activities and have meals/drinks at the same premises.

Sarit Centre, established in 1983 seems to put little emphasis on any other mode of recreation save from cinemas and cafeterias. Galleria Mall and Thika Road Mall however have additional recreational facilities in that at Galleria, there is a children's play area while at Thika Road Mall there is an electronic gaming area. These activities attract and encourage people to visit these establishments. It also ensures that people of a wider age bracket are taken care of, from children to adults. This turns visits to shopping malls into exciting endeavours for all.



**Fig 5.10: Cafe at Serramar Parque with views towards Serra da Mantiqueira.** Source; Helm, 2012



**Fig 5.11: The courtyard at Asmacati provides visitors with a relaxation space with a view towards the nearby hills.** Source; Mayer, 2011

Shopping malls designed on sites that offer views to natural features like mountains and valleys should take advantage of this phenomenon and design with this in mind. This has been well achieved in the Serramar Parque Shopping, where the Serra da Mantiqueira ranges are visible from a food court within the centre as seen by fig 5.10.

The openness created at Asmacati also enables visitors to relax in the courtyards. Nearby hills are also visible from the main courtyard, and this creates a fantastic view, as shown in fig 5.11.

It can thus be inferred that recreational facilities in a shopping mall play a vital role in ensuring the success of the mall, since they ensure that the mall does not turn out to be just another big supermarket with no any other function other than the basic shopping function.

## 5.5 Parking in a Shopping Mall

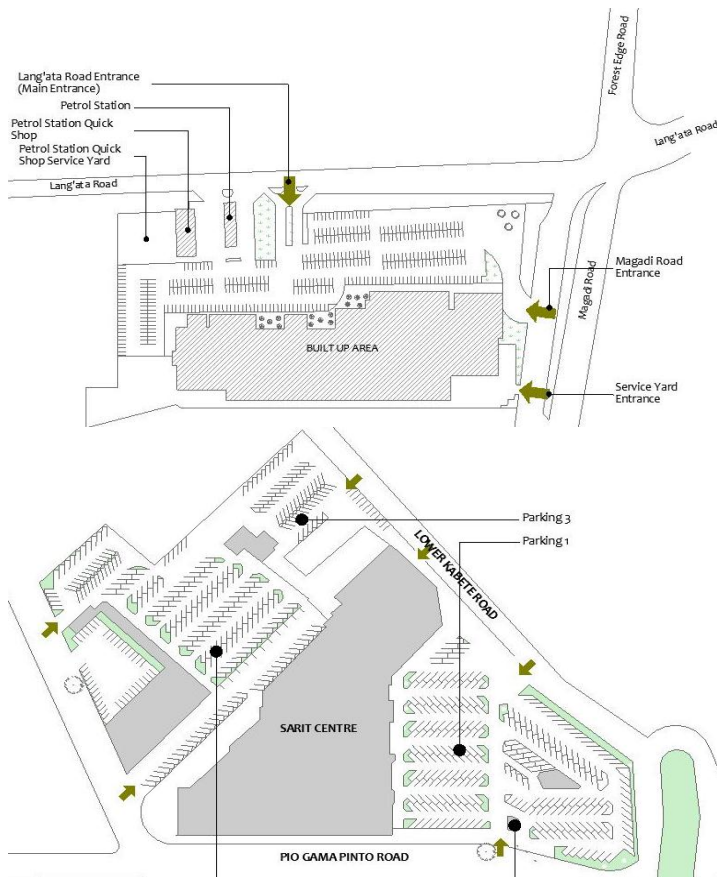
Another factor that affects the success and the functionality of a shopping mall is its parking. This is the first and the last impression, since the shoppers who arrive with vehicles access it first and last. This means that if the parking of a certain mall is not well worked out to deal with the volume of vehicular flow that visits the mall, both in size and layout, then chances of a shopper revisiting the mall are slim.

The position of the parking lot also serves a lot in enhancing the performance of the mall. This explains why most shopping malls position their parking lots (or part of their parking lots) nearest the main entrance at the main access point into the malls' premises. All the shopping malls that have been studied, both local and international, employ this strategy. This is to ensure ease of access into the shopping malls.

The layout of the parking is also important. All of the shopping malls studied apply angle parking. This is because it saves on space and also easier to park and come out as opposed to the linear parking.

Beautification of the parking lot is also important. This helps in avoiding ugliness of the parking lot since the surface material of the parking lots (micro-concrete paving slabs and tarmac) is not a friendly view, especially when they are used extensively as is the case with shopping malls.

Parking lots should also be well lighted to improve on their security, as this is an area where potential muggers and burglars are more likely to lurk. Lighting also gives the shoppers a sense of security and thus makes the premises more comfortable to the shopper.





**Fig 5.12: Parking lots of Galleria Mall (Top) and Sarit Centre (Bottom) showing angle parking.** Source; Author



**Fig 5.13: Beautification of parking lots; left, Galleria Mall, right, Sarit Centre.** Source; Author, 2013

### 5.6 Comparative Analysis of the Local Case Studies

SHOPPING MALL	CONTEXT	CIRCULATION	RECREATIONAL FACILITIES	PARKING
<p><b>The Sarit Centre</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contemporary form used.</li> <li>- Porcelain tiles used as cladding for external surfaces.</li> <li>- The Sarit Centre doesn't respond to its context, both in form and materials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wide walkways provided for circulation.</li> <li>- Provision of a ramp and elevators aids in the vertical circulation especially of those physically challenged.</li> <li>- Circulation centralized.</li> <li>- Circulation is well resolved at The Sarit Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Six cafeterias and diners provided.</li> <li>- A Fox Cineplex movie theatre also provided.</li> <li>- A fitness centre is also provided.</li> <li>- Exhibition hall provided.</li> <li>- The eateries and the exhibition hall are adequate for the mall. However, the movie theatre and the fitness centre are inadequate for such a shopping mall of this size.</li> <li>- Another disadvantage of the recreational facilities here is that they are all chargeable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1250+ parking spaces provided.</li> <li>- Signage well distributed throughout the parking lots.</li> <li>- Soft landscaping elements introduced in the parking lot.</li> <li>- Automated parking fee machines used, easing payment of these fees, and thus improving efficiency.</li> <li>- Except for the number of parking spaces provided, the parking for this mall has been resolved.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Galleria Mall</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forms in resonance with local traditional built forms used.</li> <li>- Materials and colours used bright, corresponding with local soils.</li> <li>- Bright colours improve the mood within the mall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wide walkways provided, thus there is a feeling of safety as patrons move from one place to another.</li> <li>- Provision of elevators aids in vertical circulation especially for the physically challenged.</li> <li>- Centralization of circulation makes way finding easier.</li> <li>- Circulation in Galleria has been well worked out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Five eateries provided.</li> <li>- A children play area also provided, making a family visit enjoyable for all.</li> <li>- An exhibition hall provided, with an extra five acres piece of land for larger events.</li> <li>- Recreational facilities seem innovative and adequate for this mall, especially the children play area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 550 parking spaces provided, which is almost adequate since the mall size requires 600 spaces.</li> <li>- Soft landscaping elements used.</li> <li>- Security lights present, thus improving on safety of users.</li> </ul>


SHOPPING MALL	CONTEXT	CIRCULATION	RECREATIONAL FACILITIES	PARKING
<p><b>Thika Road Mall</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contemporary orthogonal form used.</li> <li>- Porcelain tiles used for external wall cladding.</li> <li>- Plaster also used on the external walls.</li> <li>- Bright colours used, thus improving the mood of the mall.</li> <li>- The mall does not relate with its context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wide walkways used, thus enabling safety.</li> <li>- Escalators, escalating ramps and elevators also used, aiding in vertical circulation, including for the physically challenged.</li> <li>- Circulation centralized easing way-finding.</li> <li>- Circulation at Thika Road Mall is well resolved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two coffee houses found here, which seem inadequate for a mall of this size.</li> <li>- A gaming area available making a family visit enjoyable for all. Also makes it a good place to take children out.</li> <li>- Thika Road Mall does not offer enough recreation facilities and seems to focus much more on retail services, which is not good for a shopping mall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 700+ parking spaces available, creating a deficit of 380 spaces.</li> <li>- Roof top parking provided, thus structural stability of the building has to be very strong, increasing on initial construction costs.</li> <li>- Soft landscaping elements used on front surface parking thus reducing the visual impact of extensive parking.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Comments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In terms of context, both The Sarit Centre and Thika Road Mall don't respond to their contexts.</li> <li>- Galleria Mall has succeeded in achieving response to its context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All the shopping malls have resolved their circulation including for the physically challenged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both The Sarit Centre and Thika Road Mall are too big for the recreational facilities they have provided, thus not adequate.</li> <li>- Galleria mall, which is a neighbourhood mall has succeeded in providing recreational facilities for the whole family, but could have done better with the inclusion of a movie theatre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The parking spaces provided in both Thika Road Mall and The Sarit Centre are way below adequate according to the calculating formula of 4 spaces for every 100 m<sup>2</sup> of Gross Floor Area (GFA).</li> <li>- Galleria Mall is closer to achieving adequacy in the number of parking spaces.</li> <li>- However, the layouts of the parking lots for all the malls have been well worked out.</li> </ul>

Table 4.5: A comparative analysis of the local case studies. Source; Author



## 5.7 Recommendations

From the study that was carried out, the following is recommended in the design of a shopping mall:-

- i) A shopping mall design should strive to relate with its context. This has several benefits in that, it helps the shopping mall blend in with its surrounding and thus belong in that particular site. The choice of context friendly materials also is of benefit since this reduces on the cost of transporting/importing the materials and thus the overall cost of construction. It can also be argued that people relate better with a context friendly shopping mall.
- ii) Circulation of any shopping mall is also of great importance. In fact, it is one of the major factors that affect the success of any shopping mall. People feel more comfortable and safe in a shopping mall or in any public space, whose circulation has been well resolved. It is thus of uttermost importance to work out the circulation in the design of a shopping mall including for the physically challenged, both horizontally and vertically.
- iii) Another factor that also influences the success of shopping malls is the recreational facilities included in the shopping mall. People should be able to come to a shopping mall for purposes other than shopping. There have to be other facilities that attract people to the shopping mall other than the primary goal of shopping. It should therefore be a shopping mall designer's goal to include these facilities in his/her designs.
- iv) Parking is also of major importance in a shopping mall. Enough and well resolved parking spaces should be provided in the design of a shopping mall. A shopping mall that does not provide enough parking spaces will definitely fail, since a sizeable percentage of shopping mall visitors arrive by vehicles. Parking should also be well lit, safe and well articulated for aesthetic purposes to avoid expansive hard surfaces

which are not friendly views. Soft landscaping elements should be included in the parking lots.

When these four factors have been considered in the design of a shopping mall, it works positively towards its success.

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## PATRONS/VISITORS (ADULTS) INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Do you live around/ near this mall? YES  NO

Where do you live? (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many times per month do you visit this mall? ONCE  TWICE  MORE THAN TWICE

If more than twice, specify (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

What do you come to do? SHOPPING  RECREATION (e.g. Movie, Exhibitions, Eating Out etc.)  BOTH  OTHER

If other, specify (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you choose this mall over the others? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## PATRONS/VISITORS (CHILDREN) INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ yrs. If not sure, approximate age. BELOW 5 yrs  5-10 yrs  10-15 yrs  ABOVE 15 yrs

Do you like coming here? YES  NO

If you like coming here, what makes you like it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## MANAGEMENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name of shopping mall. \_\_\_\_\_

When was the shopping mall opened? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the Gross Floor Area of the shopping mall? \_\_\_\_\_

How many parking spaces does the parking lot have? \_\_\_\_\_

According to your observations, what does the bigger percentage of customers come to do? \_\_\_\_\_