
REACTIVATE : DONG DAE MUN

**A DESIGN STUDY ON A PLAZA-ARCADE INTEGRATED MASTERPLAN
FOR THE REVITALIZATION OF THE DONGDAEMUN COMMERCIAL
DISTRICT AROUND DDP**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL & UNDERGRADUATE THESIS
BY LEE DONG HOON**

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A Design Study on a Plaza-Arcade Integrated Masterplan for the Revitalization of the
Dongdaemun Commercial District around DDP
-Focusing on Good Morning City, Hello APM, Migliore, and Doota Mall-

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THE CONTEMPORARY PROJECT

Bachelor's - SEJONG univercity

Research Proposal & Undergraduate Thesis

Jung-gu, Seoul

2025

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ABSTRACT

This study reinterprets the Dongdaemun fashion district around DDP as an urban void, where formerly vibrant commercial and cultural infrastructures have deteriorated into underused spaces. Although Dongdaemun once operated as a unique urban production ecosystem integrating design, manufacturing, and retail, the rise of e-commerce and experience-oriented consumption has led to increasing vacancies, weakened pedestrian networks, and fragmented public spaces. These urban voids are positioned not as signs of decline but as latent spatial resources for cultural and industrial renewal.

The research first reviews theoretical shifts from utilitarian to hedonic, experience-driven consumption and the resulting transformation of offline retail into composite cultural spaces. It then analyzes precedents such as Klyde Warren Park and Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II to show how deck parks and arcades can reconnect fragmented fabrics and convert underutilized voids into active public realms. A spatial analysis of the DDP-front malls identifies vacancy, poor pedestrian conditions, lack of open space, and excessive internal density as core causes of decline, while reaffirming Dongdaemun's potential rooted in its dense design–manufacture–distribution ecosystem.

Based on these findings, the study proposes a plaza- and arcade-centered masterplan: undergrounding Jangchungdan-ro to form a deck plaza linking DDP and four malls, creating an elevated arcade network, and establishing a Fashion Atelier Terrace integrating studios, workshops, co-working, and public terraces. This reorganizes existing urban voids into a hybrid cultural–industrial cluster where production, experience, and consumption interoperate.

Overall, the study argues that revitalizing Dongdaemun requires transforming urban voids through infrastructural reconfiguration and expanded publicness, advancing from simple commercial recovery toward a new cultural–industrial urban complex.

KEYWORDS: Urban Regeneration, Public design, Fashion Cluster, Public Square, Arcade

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Dongdaemun fashion district (DDP area) functioned as a unique, integrated fashion cluster throughout the 1990s–2000s, where design, garment production, and retail coexisted within a single urban system. However, the rise of Chinese manufacturing and the rapid expansion of e-commerce weakened Korea’s domestic production base and shifted consumer behavior away from offline shopping. As a result, the Dongdaemun district gradually transformed into an urban void—a spatially and functionally stagnated area marked by declining street activity, deteriorating pedestrian environments, and the near disappearance of public open space. This decline intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to soaring vacancy rates and the emergence of a “ghost commercial district.” Despite this deterioration, Dongdaemun still retains strong locational advantages at the heart of Seoul and symbolic significance as Korea’s representative fashion hub, indicating substantial potential for regeneration through strategic urban restructuring.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to transform the deteriorated Dongdaemun fashion district a

declining commercial zone into a renewed cultural–industrial complex by reclaiming and reorganizing the existing urban voids. To achieve this, the study examines shifts in contemporary consumer culture, strategies for restructuring public open space, and methods of reconfiguring pedestrian networks, while diagnosing the spatial and functional problems of the DDP frontage from an architectural and urban perspective. Ultimately, the study aims to propose an integrated master plan—consisting of road undergrounding, plaza creation, and multi-level arcade connections—to restore spatial continuity and enhance urban dwell-time, thereby establishing a new fashion ecosystem in which production, experience, and consumption operate as a unified cycle.

METHOD

This study proceeds through five sequential stages. First, a theoretical review was conducted to examine transformations in consumer and retail environments, focusing on the rise of e-commerce and the emergence of experience-oriented consumption. Through hedonic and utilitarian value theories, the study identifies mechanisms by which offline retail settings have evolved into hybrid cultural–commercial spaces.

Second, site analysis was conducted on four shopping malls along Jangchungdan-ro facing DDP (Good Morning City, Hello APM, Migliore, DOOTA). Vacancy rates, retail trends, pedestrian conditions (sidewalk width, vendor occupation, visual openness), the presence or absence of public open space and greenery, and internal density and program distribution were

Third, two representative precedents—Klyde Warren Park (deck park, expansion of public open space, pedestrian restructuring) and Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II (arcade, integration of commercial and cultural functions)—were analyzed. The cases were compared in terms of public-space expansion, pedestrian-network reconfiguration, and economic and sociocultural ripple effects. examined.

Quantitative data were obtained from publicly available sources (Dongdaemun Fashion Town Tourism Zone Council; Statistics Korea), while qualitative assessments were derived from spatial and circulation analysis.

Fourth, integrating findings from the previous stages, the study proposes a plaza- and arcade-centered master plan. Major components include undergrounding a 320-meter segment of Jangchungdan-ro to create an elevated urban plaza; connecting the four malls via a 2F–5F arcade; introducing stepped sections and terrace spaces to enhance upper-level visibility and accessibility; and developing a 6F Fashion Atelier Terrace that supports a continuous cycle of design, production, exhibition, retail, and runway events.

Fifth, the expected effects of the proposed plan are evaluated qualitatively, focusing on expanded public open space, diversified pedestrian circulation, increased spatial retention, and redistributed commercial density (including the introduction of flagship-store typologies). These projected outcomes were examined in alignment with the economic and sociocultural impacts observed in the precedent cases.

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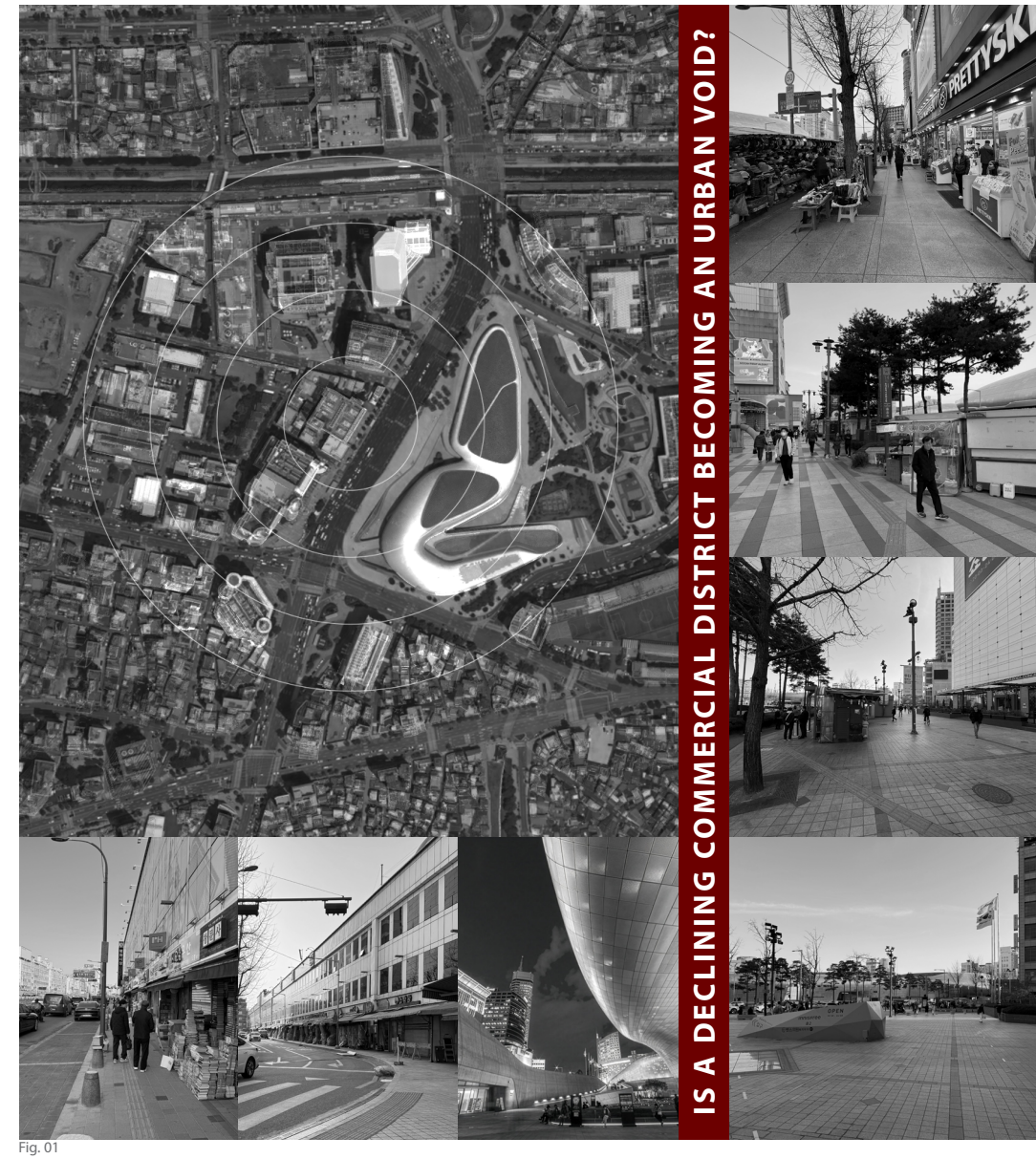


Fig. 01

Figure 01: Diagram of DongDaeMun commercial district issues
Figure Source: Drawing by author

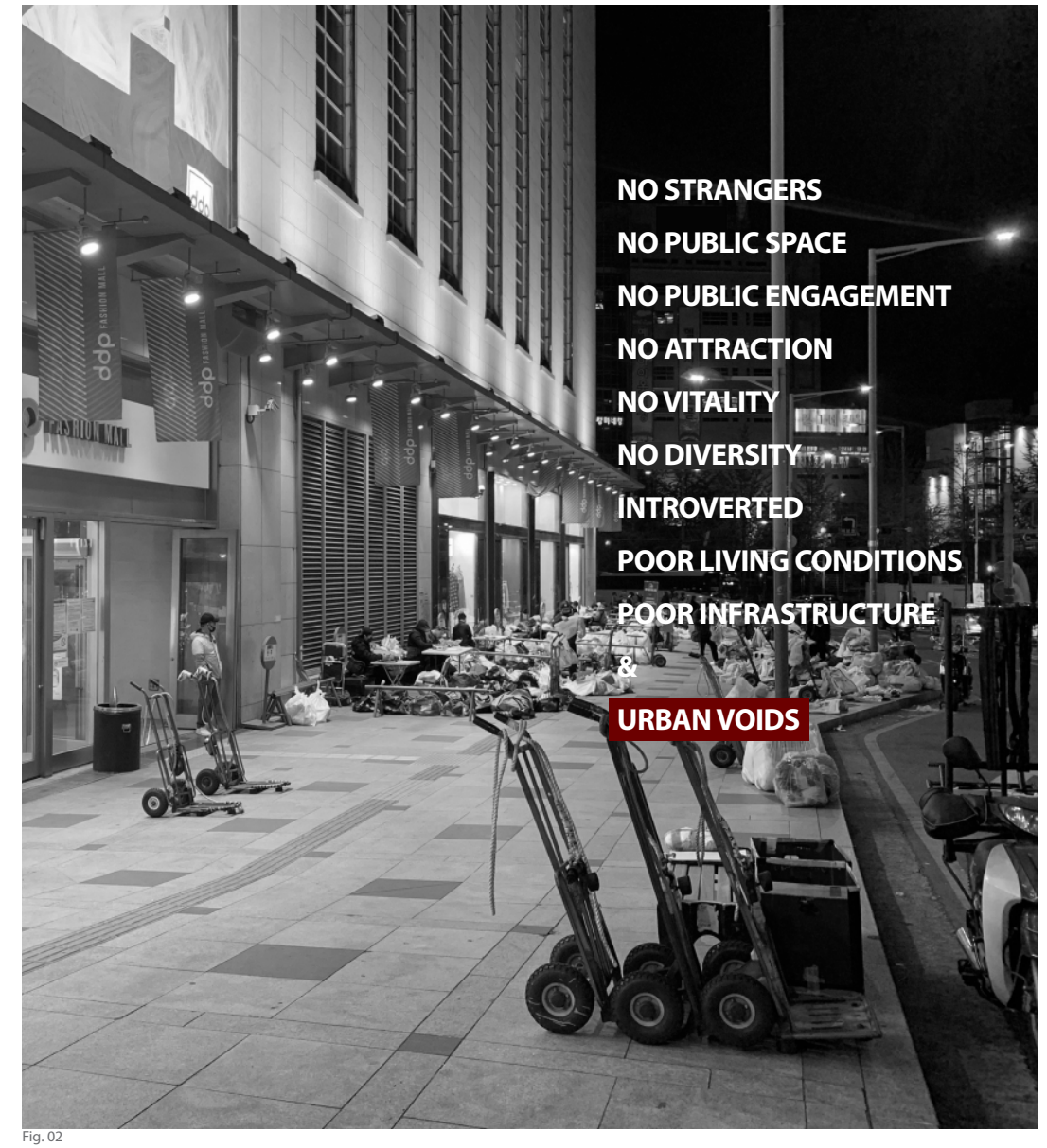
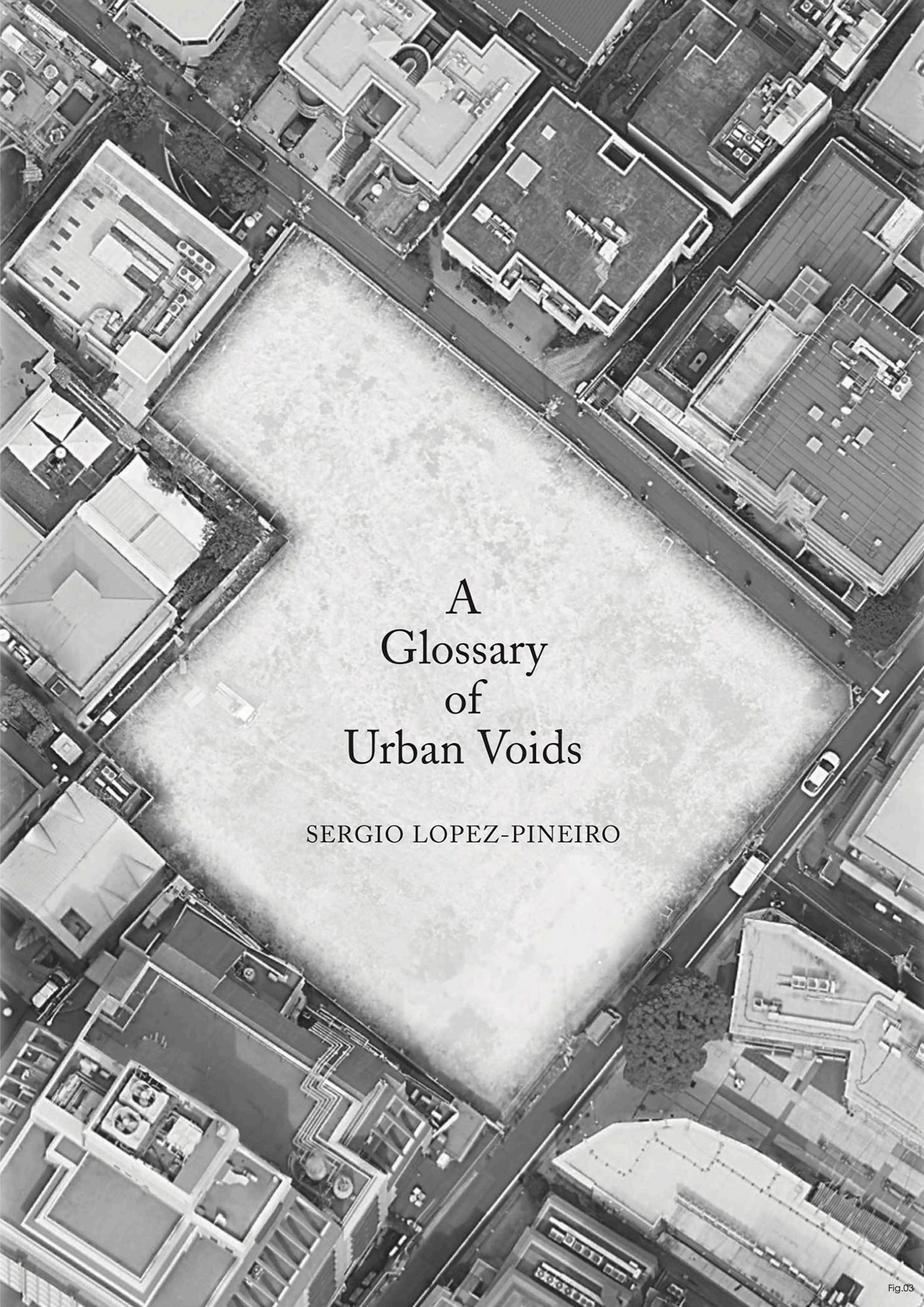


Fig. 02

Figure 02: Diagram of list of DongDaeMun commercial district issues
Figure Source: Drawing by author



A Glossary of Urban Voids

SERGIO LOPEZ-PINEIRO

CHAPTER 01: URBAN VOIDS

- 1.1 What is an urban void?
- 1.2 Definitions of urban void
- 1.3 Characteristics of urban voids
- 1.4 Declining commercial district as urban void

Figure 03: The State of Urban Void Around the World

Figure Source: A Glossary of Urban voids, Sergio Lopez-Pineiro ,2020

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1.1 WHAT IS URBAN VOIDS?

Architecture's destiny has always been colonization, the imposing of limits, order, and form, the introduction into strange space of the elements of identity necessary to make it recognizable, identical, universal. In essence, architecture acts as an instrument of organization, of rationalization, and of productive efficiency capable of transforming the uncivilized into the cultivated, the fallow into the productive, the void into the built.

—Sola Morales, *Terrain Vague*—¹

The city is not merely an aggregation of buildings, infrastructures, and streets. Rather, it is a complex field shaped by overlapping layers of social relations, economic flows, political decisions, and cultural memories. Within this continuously shifting field, certain spaces inevitably fall out of synchrony with dominant urban rhythms. These are spaces where meaning deteriorates, usage declines, and institutional management weakens—spaces known as urban voids.

An urban void is both a physical and conceptual construct. Physically, it may manifest as unused land, abandoned infrastructure, or a leftover space between larger developments. Conceptually, however, an urban void represents an absence within the urban system—a space that the city has failed to fully incorporate into its economic, symbolic, or functional logic. It is a place “inside the city yet outside its lived reality.”

Manuel de Solà-Morales describes the urban void as a site that lacks integration into the official urban structure, existing instead as a residual zone where neither function nor meaning has been assigned. These voids emerge for many reasons: the obsolescence of former infrastructures, shifts

[1] de Solà-Morales I. *Terrain vague*[M]. Routledge, 2013,
Citation source: *Terrain vague*, 122, Manuel de Solà-Morales i Rubió



Fig. 04

Figure 04: Manolo Laguillo, *Diagonal*, 1988-1989

Figure Source: © Copyright by Manolo Laguillo, VEGAP, Barcelona

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Fig. 05

in capital circulation, incomplete development projects, or the redirection of planning priorities. They are the material traces of urban discontinuities and structural limitations.

Importantly, “void” does not mean empty in the literal sense. A commercial building that has lost its economic purpose, a plaza cut off by traffic, a pedestrian underpass avoided by citizens—these are all urban voids in the functional and symbolic sense. The void is not defined by the lack of objects but by the withdrawal of value, activity, and collective memory.

Urban voids possess a unique condition of looseness: they are unregulated by strong programs,

Figure 05: Aerial view of urban void in Boston/Buffalo/Houston/Madrid/Milano/Santiago de Chile/Shanghai/Tokyo/Toronto
Figure Source: Maxar Technologies Images, 2019

unanchored by stable social practices, and unburdened by institutional expectations. This looseness grants them a specific form of potentiality. Unclaimed by dominant systems, voids can become fertile grounds for alternative uses, temporary appropriations, or new forms of publicness.

Thus, the urban void is a paradoxical condition: it represents both the failure of the city to sustain certain spaces and the possibility for the city to reinvent itself. Its ambiguity is not a weakness but the foundation of its capacity to host new urban imaginaries. This conceptual clarification establishes the groundwork for the next sections, which examine definitions, characteristics, and the relationship between urban voids and declining commercial districts.



Fig. 06

Figure 06: NOLLI'S PLAN OF ROME
Figure Source: Drawing by Giambattista Nolli, 1748

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1.2 Definitions of urban void

Scholars have approached the concept of the urban void through a wide variety of definitions. Rather than indicating confusion, this plurality reveals the inherently multidimensional nature of urban voids. This section expands on these definitions and explores how each highlights different aspects of the urban condition.

Some definitions interpret the urban void as a physical remnant—a by-product of industrial

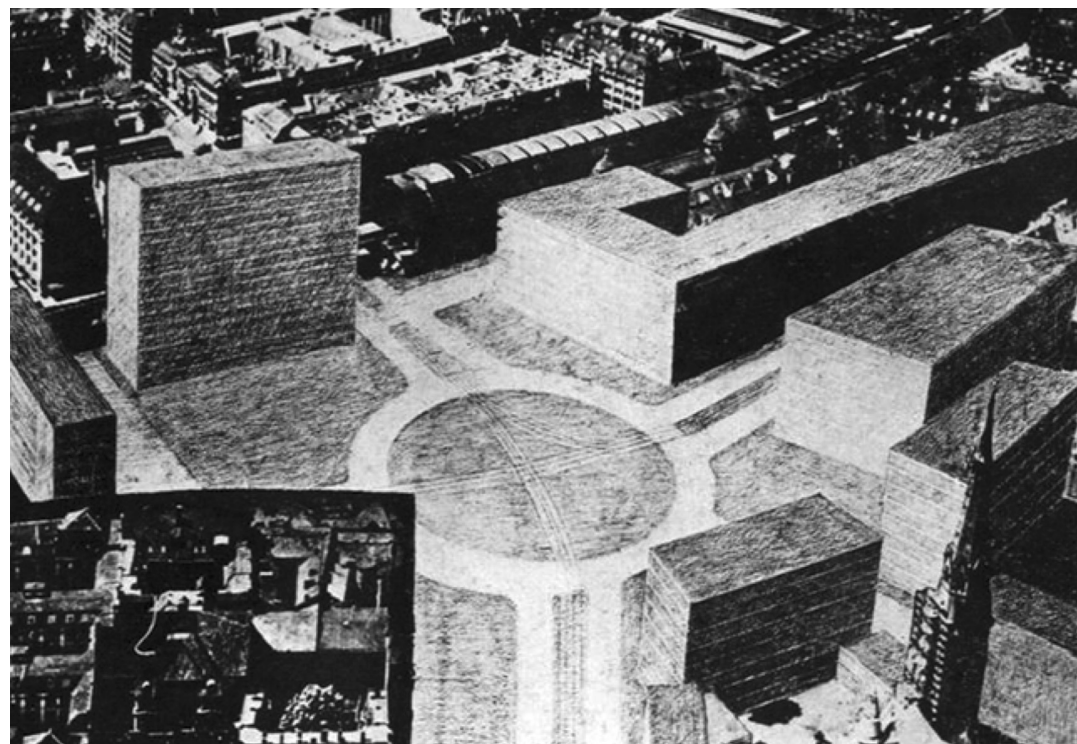


Fig. 07

Figure 07: Competition for the remodeling of Alexander square in Berlin

Figure Source: Drawing by Mies van der Rohe, project of square Alexanderplatz, Berlin, 1926

decline. Former slaughterhouses, railway yards, docks, warehouses, and military installations often fall into disuse as economic structures shift. These spaces become urban voids when their maintenance becomes economically irrational, their functions obsolete, and their integration into the urban fabric impossible. In this view, urban voids represent the material evidence of systemic failure within industrial and post-industrial urbanization.

Other definitions emphasize the relational dimensions of urban voids. From this perspective, the void is not defined by physical emptiness but by the absence of meaningful social interaction. Spaces that serve as mere passageways, neglected alleyways, buffer zones between properties, and ambiguous interstitial areas fall into this category. Such spaces lack the power to gather people, create relations, or contribute to collective life; therefore, they exist as voids in a functional and symbolic sense.

A third group of definitions focuses on potentiality. Scholars like Jonas and Rahmann view urban voids as inherently open fields capable of hosting multiple programs precisely because they are unfinished. Their looseness makes them sites for creativity, informal uses, temporary interventions, or alternative forms of publicness. These spaces, rather than being seen as deficiencies, are reframed as platforms for experimentation and urban reinvention.

Finally, critical theorists describe urban voids as politically charged spaces that expose the limits of capitalist spatial production. Torres asserts that voids display “a principle of absence” that reveals both the exclusions embedded in urban development and the hidden possibilities for alternative futures. In this sense, the void disrupts the dominant order and becomes a site of contestation.

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Within this broader field of interpretations, Rem Koolhaas offers an influential reading of urban voids through his writings on the Generic City and Junkspace. For Koolhaas, urban voids are not simply residual gaps but “territories with potential” and “fields that accommodate processes that refuse to be crystallised into definitive form.” He understands these spaces as part of a shift toward an urbanism grounded not in stability and order, but in indeterminacy and open-endedness:

“If there is to be a ‘new urbanism’, it will not be based on the twin fantasies of order and omnipotence... it will no longer aim for stable configurations but for the creation of enabling fields that accommodate processes that refuse to be crystallised into definitive form... the reinvention of psychological space.”²

Here, urban voids become a key instrument for staging uncertainty and enabling transformation, rather than problems to be eliminated.

In Junkspace, Koolhaas further radicalizes this view by connecting voids to the residues of modernization. He describes Junkspace as the spatial by-product of continuous development—what coagulates while modernization is in progress:

“If space junk is the human debris that litters the universe, Junkspace is the residue mankind leaves on the planet... the product of modernisation is not modern architecture but Junkspace.”³

The void, in this sense, is not just what is left empty, but what remains once earlier purposes have been exhausted: a flexible, amorphous field ready to be reoccupied, re-coded, or exploited.

Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubió adds another crucial layer with his notion of terrain vague. He describes these places as:

[2] S, M, L, XL, New York, The Monacelli Press

Citation source: Koolhaas, R., Mau, B., O.M.A. (1995)

[3] Junkspace, Obsolescence, Vol. 100, 175-190

Citation source: Koolhaas, R. (2002) Junkspace



Fig. 08

Figure 08: The photo of Slussen area in the southern part of Stockholm city

Figure Source: Photographed by Mårten Sjöbeck, Slussen area in the southern part of Stockholm city, 1939

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*"apparently forgotten where the past seems to dominate over present memory...
obsolete places in which only certain residual values remain in spite of their
complete detachment from the city's activity."*

For Solà-Morales, such spaces are not merely abandoned; they are charged with historical depth and latent significance. Their former uses and suppressed memories grant them a specific weight within the urban condition, and they hold the potential to be reactivated, reimagined, or reintegrated into the urban fabric in creative ways. His work situates urban voids at the center of broader debates on urban design, urban renewal, and the changing nature of the contemporary city.

The semantic field around urban voids has expanded over time. As A Glossary of Urban Voids notes, different authors have pursued two main strategies:

1. coining specific terms such as urban interstices, loose space, or vague spaces to emphasize particular characteristics and applications, and
 2. describing the various physical manifestations of terrain vague as distinct spatial types.
- Despite these different approaches, each contribution converges on the idea that urban voids are not a single, fixed category, but a family of related phenomena, with diverse spatial features, formation processes, and roles in the urban landscape.

In the philosophical realm, Edward Casey deepens the discussion by insisting on the fundamental bond between void, place, and materiality. He reminds us that existence itself is always situated:

"To be at all—to exist in any way—is to be somewhere, and to be somewhere is to be in some kind of place... We are surrounded by places. We live in places, relate to others in them, die in them. Nothing we do is unplaced."

Within this framework, an urban void is not a non-place or pure nothingness; it remains a place in the full phenomenological sense, however neglected or undefined. Its apparent absence is still grounded in material presence and lived spatiality, even if that experience is marked by avoidance, indifference, or marginalization.



Fig. 09

Figure 09: Aerial view. Rotterdam. Coolsingel with the city hall

Figure Source: © Copyright by BNA Photographic

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Urban voids have also been strongly associated with interstitiality. Many architects and theorists recognize that voids share key characteristics with the in-between, the leftover, and the marginal. Aldo van Eyck framed the urban interstitial realm as the basis for a “participatory urbanism,” calling for a renewed awareness of the “in-between” and its multiple meanings:

“Awareness of this in-between is essential... the meaning of every real articulated in-between place is essentially a multiple one.”

His series of interstitial playgrounds can be read as early attempts to activate void-like conditions and transform them into spaces of collective appropriation.

Similarly, Peter Eisenman explicitly deploys the term interstitial to describe the spaces of difference within and between architectural elements:

“My work addresses the space of difference between the exterior and the interior and the space of difference that is also within the interior. The term that we use for that space is the interstitial.”⁴

Here, the interstitial is not only a leftover but a deliberate design field where solid and void co-produce architectural space.

Dimitris Polihronopoulos describes urban voids as spaces without a specific role or clear context, marked by a strong sense of randomness. In his view, these are not simply empty sites; they are conceptual remnants of other urban spaces, whose former logics have collapsed, leaving ambiguous fragments that resist straightforward classification.

Taken together, these perspectives underscore that the urban void represents a complex aspect of urban dynamics, where challenges and opportunities intertwine to shape the character and

vitality of the city. The urban void has an undefined role; it is a residue of previous configurations and at the same time a reservoir of untapped potential, waiting to be mobilized through reuse or reprogramming. The way we choose to address urban voids—whether through erasure, commodification, preservation, or experimental occupation—can profoundly affect the overall urban experience and contribute to the ongoing evolution of cities. Its indeterminacy expresses a form of freedom oriented toward the future, while its residual condition highlights its dependence on the surrounding environment and the need for eventual reintegration into the broader urban structure.

Despite their differences, all these definitions and theoretical framings share one underlying theme: the urban void is a departure from normative urban logic. It is a space where function, meaning, or value has been suspended, creating a condition that is neither fully in nor fully out of the city.

Ultimately, the urban void cannot be confined to a single definition. Its meaning lies in the tension among various interpretations, and this conceptual multiplicity strengthens its analytical power. This section, by assembling these diverse perspectives—from industrial remnants and social absences to terrain vague, Junkspace, interstices, and philosophical place—establishes a theoretical foundation for discussing the characteristics and specific urban forms of voids in subsequent chapters.

[4] Benjamin, Andrew E. Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial

Citation source: Eisenman Architects, 1988-1998. New York: Monacelli, 2003. pp. 309.

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1.3 Characteristics of urban voids

Urban voids exhibit a set of defining characteristics that differentiate them from conventional urban spaces. Their most critical dimensions are spatial ambiguity, temporal layering, emptiness, and potentiality—each of which contributes to their transformative power within the city.

In terms of spatiality, urban voids resist established typologies. Their boundaries are unclear, their purposes undefined, and their forms often irregular. Consequently, they evade traditional urban categories such as parks, plazas, or streets. Instead, they exist as in-between spaces—ambiguous sites that interrupt the continuity of the urban fabric. This very ambiguity makes voids valuable as flexible and adaptable terrains, offering opportunities to reinterpret rigid urban structures.

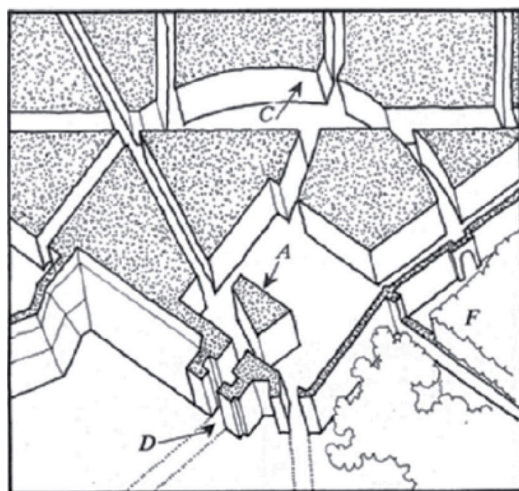


Fig. 10

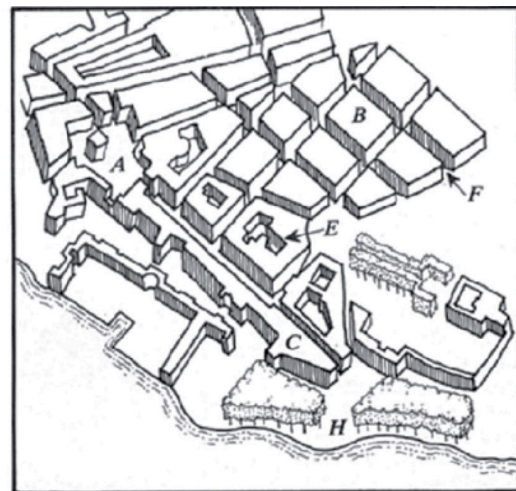


Fig. 11

Figure 10&11: Types of urban voids and solids

Figure Source: Finding lost space: theories of urban design, Trancik 1986,102



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

Figure 12: Urban voids existing in different spatial forms in Madrid

Figure 13: Potsdamer Platz in times of the Berlin Wall

Figure 14: Urban regeneration in Madrid Nuevo Norte

Figure Source: Photoed by George Garrigues

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Fig. 15

Figure 15: Residual urban spaces: The Knot of the Trinity

Figure Source: Photoed by Julia Ilorens

Urban voids exhibit a set of defining characteristics that differentiate them from conventional urban spaces. Their most critical dimensions are spatial ambiguity, temporal layering, emptiness, and potentiality—each of which contributes to their transformative power within the city.

The temporal dimension is equally important. Urban voids are not static; they reflect successive waves of use, disuse, demolition, and redefinition. A derelict station yard, a stalled development site, or a long-abandoned industrial complex bears the sedimented traces of multiple time periods. These layers turn voids into archives of urban transformation, where past decisions and future possibilities coexist in tension.

The notion of emptiness often invokes misunderstanding. Void does not simply denote the absence of physical matter. Rather, emptiness refers to the suspension of meaning, value, or function. As Georges Perec notes, imagining a space without function is already an act of imagining alternative possibilities. The void is not an empty vacuum; it is a background that enables new meanings to emerge.

Finally, potentiality defines the urban void's capacity to become a foundational element in urban regeneration. Because voids lack fixed programs, they are inherently open to diverse interpretations: temporary installations, community gardens, social gatherings, markets, performances, or informal uses. They host forms of publicness that rarely appear in rigid, pre-designed spaces.

Together, these characteristics reveal that urban voids are not mere leftovers but dynamic fields of openness. Their ambiguity is productive; it generates opportunities for new uses, meanings, and relationships. This open-endedness positions voids as critical catalysts for urban renewal and experimentation.

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1.4 Declining commercial district as urban void

Traditional scholarship on urban voids has often centered on abandoned industrial facilities, obsolete infrastructures, and large-scale decommissioned sites. Yet in the context of contemporary urbanization—marked by rapid economic restructuring, shifts in consumption patterns, and the rise of digital retail—declining commercial districts have emerged as one of the most critical and understudied forms of the urban void. While such districts may still appear physically dense and architecturally intact, their functional emptiness and experiential deterioration position them squarely within the conceptual framework of urban voids. This section expands on this premise and argues that declining commercial areas deserve recognition as significant and analytically

productive forms of the urban void in today's cities. At the morphological level, declining commercial districts maintain the outward appearance of urban fullness. Buildings remain occupied—or at least structurally present—signage persists, and cars continue to move along the surrounding roads. However, urban voids are not defined by physical emptiness alone. As multiple scholars have argued, voids emerge when spaces become detached from the metabolic, social, and symbolic systems of the city. In this sense, a declining commercial district operates as a void precisely because its physical presence masks a deeper condition of functional and conceptual absence.



Fig. 16

Figure 16: Aerial view of Commercial district in DongDaeMun

Figure Source: Smart Seoul Map



Fig. 17

Figure 17: Top view of Commercial district in DongDaeMun

Figure Source: Smart Seoul Map

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Fig. 18

Figure 18: Abandoned food courts are just as chilling as the empty stores and atriums.

Figure Source: Wikimedia Commons

First, such districts undergo a progressive withdrawal of economic activity, evidenced by rising vacancy rates, shuttered storefronts, diminishing rental values, and declining pedestrian flows. These indicators signal that the area has fallen out of the city's larger circuits of consumption, production, and capital accumulation. In this respect, the declining commercial district mirrors the trajectory of deindustrialized landscapes that earlier theorists identified as prototypical terrain vague: spaces that have lost their economic rationale and sociopolitical relevance within the broader urban system.

Second, the decline of commercial districts results in a breakdown of relational and connective urban structures. Streets that once facilitated dense flows of encounter, exchange, and mobility transform into corridors of avoidance. As foot traffic dissipates, adjacent residential neighborhoods become increasingly disconnected, weakening the district's role as an interface between different urban constituencies. In effect, the area becomes socially and psychologically bypassed—an interstitial zone lacking the capacity to structure or sustain meaningful urban relationships. This condition aligns closely with interpretations of urban voids as “relational absences,” where spaces persist physically but fail to support interactions that constitute urban life.

Third, a declining commercial district experiences a collapse of symbolic identity. Commercial landscapes often function as cultural mirrors of collective consumption and public life. When decline sets in, the district no longer performs this representational function. Instead, it becomes a space emptied of meaning: a symbolic void that reflects neither the aspirations nor the lived realities of the contemporary city. In this regard, declining districts exemplify the phenomenon described by Solà-Morales, in which spaces become “detached from the city's activity and memory,” occupying a liminal state between presence and absence.

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Fig. 19

Figure 19: The photo of Madrid. Plaza Mayor

Figure Source: © Copyright by Editoriale Domus Spa, Via G. Mazzocchi, Salvatore Peluso



Fig. 20

Figure 20: The photo of Madrid. Plaza Mayor

Figure Source: © Copyright by Editoriale Domus Spa, Via G. Mazzocchi, Salvatore Peluso

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However, viewing declining commercial districts solely as failures would be analytically reductive. Their very indeterminacy and disconnection from fixed programs provide a fertile ground for urban experimentation, similar to how scholars such as Jonas, Rahmann, and Koolhaas conceptualize the void as a field of potential. When commercial identity collapses, rigid spatial expectations dissolve, creating opportunities for new forms of occupation: community-driven initiatives, informal economies, cultural laboratories, hybridized public spaces, and experimental forms of collective production.

Thus, the declining commercial district represents a contemporary rearticulation of the urban void, one rooted not in industrial obsolescence but in the post-commercial and post-retail condition of the 21st-century city. Understanding these districts as urban voids reframes decline not as a terminal state but as a transitional one—a phase that reveals structural failures while simultaneously opening up new trajectories for urban transformation.

In conclusion, recognizing declining commercial districts as urban voids broadens the theoretical and practical scope of urban void studies. It enables a more nuanced reading of contemporary urban dynamics shaped by digital economies, demographic shifts, and changing consumption patterns. More importantly, it positions these districts as critical sites for regenerative design strategies—spaces where the void becomes not an absence to be filled, but a catalyst for reimagining the social, spatial, and economic futures of the city.



Fig. 21



Fig. 22

Fig. 23

Fig. 24

Figure 21: The photo of Commercial district in DongDaeMun

Figure Source: Photographed by the author

Figure 22&23&24: The photo of Commercial district in DongDaeMun

Figure Source: ©Copyright by The.MIGLIORE, Hyuk Choi, The Korea Economic Daily, Kim Ji-ho, The Chosun Ilbo



CHAPTER 02: CHANGES IN CONSUMPTION- SPACE DESIGN

2.1 Emergence of E-Commerce

2.2 Shopping Values: Hedonic and Utilitarian Dimensions

2.3 Experience-Oriented Consumer Goods

2.4 Retail as an Entertainment Industry

Figure 25: The photo of Commercial district in DongDaeMun
Figure Source: Photographed by the author

2.1 Emergence of E-Commerce

The emergence of e-commerce marks one of the most significant structural transformations in contemporary consumer culture. As digital technologies reshape the retail landscape, consumers increasingly rely on online platforms not merely as alternatives to physical stores but as primary environments for product information, comparison, and purchase. According to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (2025), offline retailers still account for 45.7% of national distribution, but online channels have rapidly expanded to 41.2%, demonstrating a steady upward trajectory.

This shift is not only technological but epistemological: consumers reconstruct their purchasing decisions based on algorithmic recommendations, peer-generated reviews, and digitally mediated trust mechanisms. The convenience of online shopping—temporal flexibility, reduced search cost, personalized interfaces—contributes to its growth. Yet, online retail is structurally limited in its capacity to deliver sensory and experiential information, especially for experience goods such as fashion, beauty, and lifestyle products.

Consequently, offline retail has undergone a paradigmatic redefinition. Physical stores are no longer conceived as transactional venues but as experience-oriented cultural platforms that incorporate leisure, entertainment, community gathering, and aesthetic immersion. Department stores integrate food halls, cinemas, event halls, and wellness zones. Fashion brands increasingly develop flagship stores that function as spatial narratives of brand identity. In effect, the rise of e-commerce has not diminished the relevance of offline environments; rather, it has compelled them to evolve into multi-sensory experiential infrastructures.

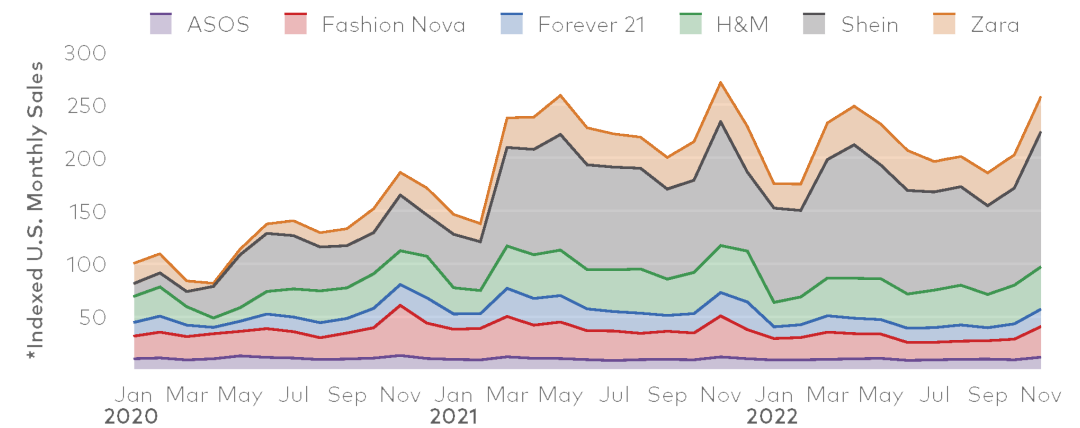


Fig. 26

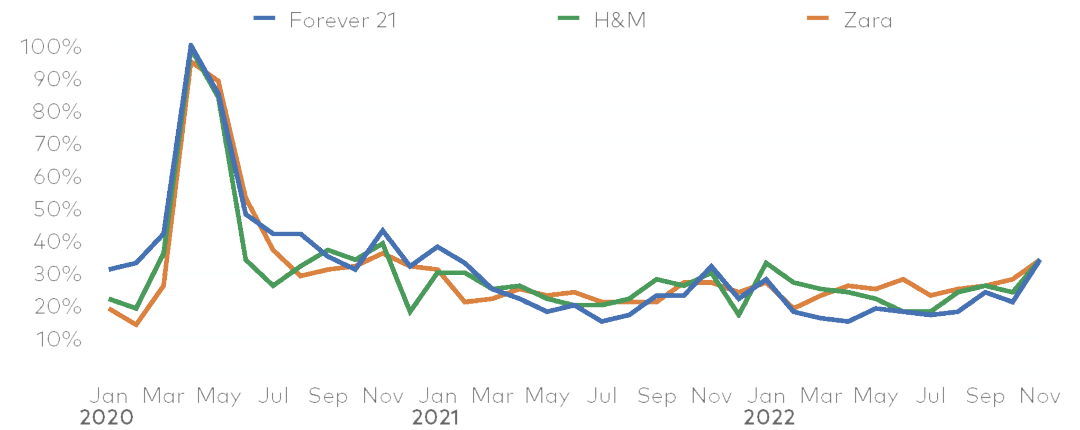


Fig. 27

Figure 26: U.S. Indexed Sales Among Major Fast Fashion Companies

Figure Source: ©Copyright by Bloomberg Second Measure LLC, Janine Perri

Figure 27: Online Sales as a Percentage of Total U.S. Sales for Fast Fashion Companies

Figure Source: ©Copyright by Bloomberg Second Measure LLC, Janine Perri

2.2 Shopping Values: Hedonic and Utilitarian Dimensions

Shopping behavior in contemporary consumer culture is anchored in a dual-value system composed of hedonic and utilitarian motivations, a conceptual distinction established in classical studies by Holbrook & Hirschman and later refined by Babin et al. While utilitarian shopping value concerns the instrumental, task-oriented, and efficiency-driven aspects of consumption, hedonic shopping value refers to the emotional, multisensory, and experiential dimensions that shape how consumers derive pleasure and meaning from the act of shopping. Over the past decade, research across marketing, retail studies, psychology, and consumer behavior has shown that

these two value systems are not merely parallel but deeply intertwined, with hedonic motivation increasingly emerging as a dominant predictor of consumer loyalty and satisfaction in experience-centered markets such as fashion, beauty, luxury, and cultural commodities.

Hedonic shopping value derives from the psychological principle that individuals are motivated to seek pleasure and avoid discomfort, a notion closely connected to the hedonic motivational model in psychology. Hedonic consumption involves “the multisensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of one’s experience with products,” emphasizing affective stimuli such as excitement, novelty, escapism, social enjoyment, and aesthetic gratification. This encompasses not only sensory pleasure but also psychological experiences such as self-expression, fantasy enactment, or the temporary suspension of everyday routines. Several studies indicate that the emotional “lift” associated with hedonic experiences—joy, excitement, immersion, social engagement—constitutes a primary driver of why consumers choose certain retail environments over others, even in cases where the functional attributes of the purchase are identical.

Importantly, hedonic consumption is also intertwined with guilt, impulse, and emotional regulation. Because hedonic goods are frequently associated with indulgence rather than necessity, consumers may experience guilt following excessive purchases or feel compelled to justify them through external cues such as discounts, rarity, or self-reward narratives. Paradoxically, hedonic motivations can also function as coping mechanisms for stress, negative emotion, or psychological tension; neurotic consumers, for example, may engage in hedonic shopping to alleviate negative mood states through immediate gratification. This dynamic underlies the growing prevalence of impulse buying, which is characterized by spontaneous, emotionally driven, and low-deliberation



Fig. 28

Figure 28: Diagram of Hedonistic Vs Utilitarian shopping motivation

Figure Source: ©Copyright by Adamant Links, Vlad Ungureanu

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purchases that provide short-term psychological relief. The rise of e-commerce and digital retail interfaces has amplified this tendency by lowering barriers to immediate purchase, increasing exposure to aesthetic cues, and embedding persuasive prompts such as “Limited stock,” “Only 1 left,” or algorithmically tailored recommendations.

Contrastingly, utilitarian shopping value is grounded in rationality, problem solving, functionality, and economic efficiency. Consumers driven by utilitarian motivations seek to maximize the functional outcome of their purchases by prioritizing attributes such as durability, price fairness, reliability, product specifications, and practical necessity. This behavior is typically associated with conscientious personality traits, future-oriented planning, and a desire to minimize waste or inefficiency. Utilitarian shoppers tend to prefer familiar brands, thoroughly research product specifications, and rely on authoritative information sources such as expert technical reviews or verified ratings. They exhibit heightened sensitivity to price–value ratios and are more likely to avoid brands that fail to meet expectations, often permanently eliminating them from future consideration. While utilitarian consumption is generally consistent, consumers with utilitarian tendencies may occasionally switch to hedonic motivation for small indulgences, especially when the emotional benefits outweigh the minor increase in expenditure.

Although utilitarian logic emphasizes functionality, reliability, and rational assessment, it does not preclude emotional satisfaction; rather, emotions remain secondary to the perceived fairness and equity of the purchase. Conversely, hedonic logic places emotional fulfillment at the forefront, often overshadowing functional considerations altogether. This distinction explains why shoppers may purchase a premium version of a product despite identical functionality or why they may choose an aesthetically appealing item even when a less expensive alternative offers similar performance.

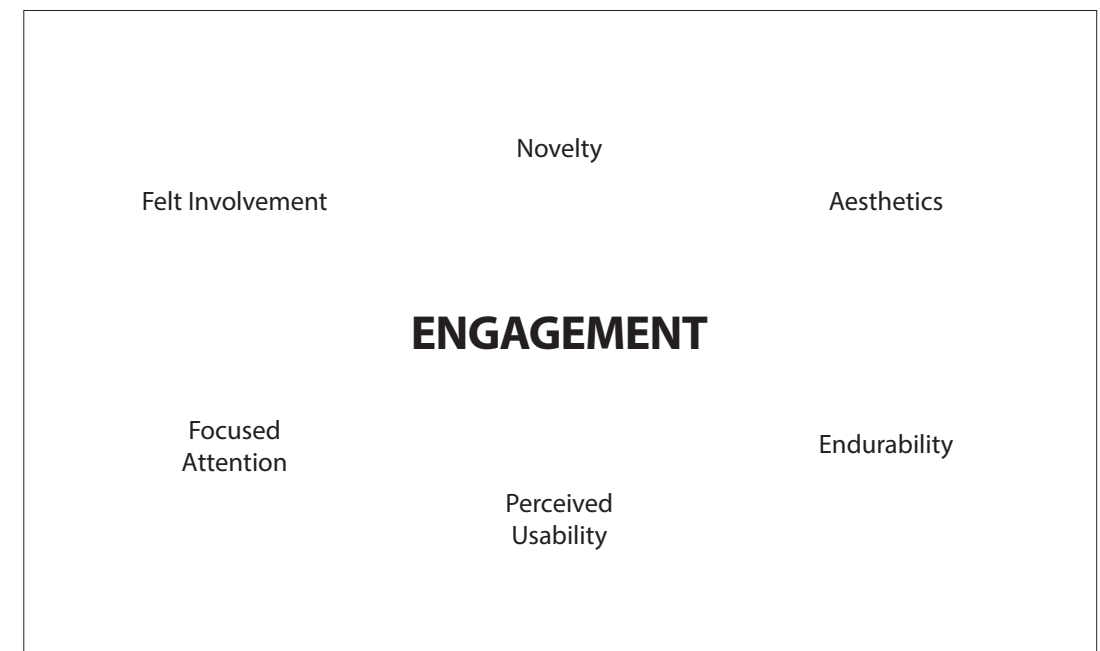


Fig. 29



Fig. 30

Figure 29: Diagram of Six critical factors that engage all shoppers

Figure Source: Drawing by Angus Lynch

Figure 30: Hedonic vs. utilitarian shopping

Figure Source: ©Copyright by Unbounce Inc., Angus Lynch

In practice, contemporary retail environments rarely appeal to only one type of motivation. Instead, they operate within a hybrid motivational field in which hedonic and utilitarian values coexist and reinforce one another. Offline stores excel at delivering hedonic experiences through atmospheric staging, sensory cues, immersive installations, curated events, and opportunities for social interaction. These environments provide multisensory richness that digital platforms struggle to replicate. Online shopping environments, originally dominated by utilitarian efficiency, increasingly incorporate hedonic elements through interactive visuals, algorithmic personalization, social commerce, influencer content, and live-streamed retail performances. This convergence reflects a broader cultural shift in which the emotional texture of shopping—not merely its practical outcome—has become central to consumer engagement.

As a result, hedonic value now plays a pivotal role in shaping long-term consumer loyalty and behavioral intention. Extensive empirical research demonstrates that emotional satisfaction, immersion, pleasure, and experiential novelty influence revisit intention far more strongly than functional efficiency alone. In a market saturated with comparable products, the emotional resonance of the shopping experience—whether physical or digital—often determines which retailers thrive and which fade. Thus, modern retail design, branding, and market strategy increasingly recognize hedonic value not as a complementary attribute but as a structural foundation of competitive differentiation.

HEDONIC VALUE

- Pleasure, joy, sensory, experience
- Novelty, aesthetics, tantacy
- Social interaction, identity
- Emotional regulation

UTILITARIAN VALUE

- Functionality efficiency
- Price fairness, durability
- Task-oriented decisions
- Rational evaluation

PERSONALITY TRAITS → SHOPPING

- Openness → Hedonic
- Extroversion → Social Hedonic
- Neuroticism → Impulse Hedonic
- Conscientiousness → Utilitarian
- Agreeableness → Social-Utilitarian

IMPULSE BUYING MODEL

Triggers → Sudden urge → Reduced control → Immediate purchase

Fig. 31

Figure 31: A table summarizing Hedonic Value and Utilitarian Value
Figure Source: Drawing by author

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2.3 Experience-Oriented Consumer Goods

Fashion products exemplify the characteristics of experience goods, whose quality cannot be fully evaluated prior to physical interaction. Fit, tactility, draping, color temperature, and material behavior often require embodied assessment, making consumers more sensitive to risk when shopping online. This creates heightened perceptions of:

- Performance risk (product may not meet expectations)
- Uncertainty of fit and sizing
- Color/material discrepancies
- Inconvenience associated with return policies
- Trust issues toward sellers or platforms

Empirical studies indicate that offline trust often transfers to online trust, meaning that brands with strong offline presence enjoy higher online credibility. This suggests that omnichannel strategies are not simply expansions but trust-building infrastructures that mitigate the inherent risks of online fashion purchasing.

To reduce experiential gaps, digital retailers employ AR fitting rooms, smart mirrors, 3D garment simulations, and AI-powered personalization. Nevertheless, these technologies cannot fully replicate embodied perception. The result is a retail ecosystem where physical and digital environments function complementarily rather than competitively.



Fig. 32

Figure 32: Discover the history and process of fashion

Figure Source: ©Copyright by Local Projects, an MTM Company

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2.4 Retail as an Entertainment Industry



Fig. 33

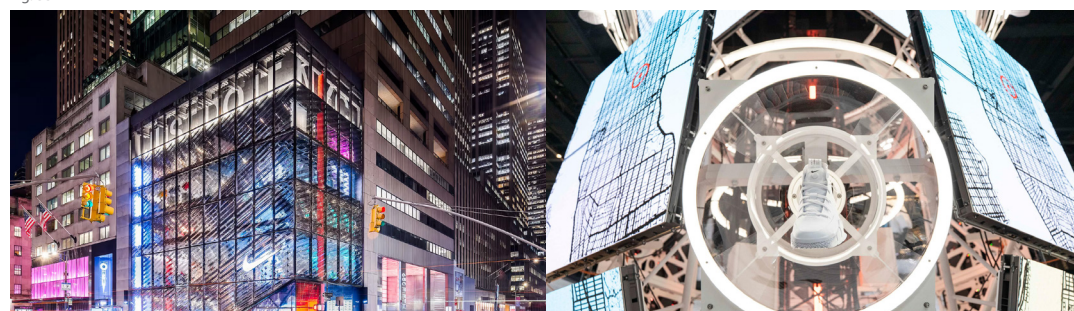


Fig. 34

Figure 33: Gentle Monster | Flagship Store In Houston

Figure Source: ©© Flaunt Magazine, Francesca Baratta

Figure 34: Nike House of Innovation NYC

Figure Source: ©Copyright by Nike, Inc

As consumer preferences shift toward hedonic and experiential gains, retail has increasingly evolved into a form of entertainment industry. This transformation reframes shopping as a cultural and recreational activity rather than a purely economic transaction.

Physical retail spaces now prioritize narrative, atmosphere, and participation:

- Flagship stores operate as immersive brand theatres
- Department stores host exhibitions, events, and cultural programs
- Malls integrate public spaces, green terraces, play zones, and cafés
- Retail architecture emphasizes experience sequencing, spatial drama, and emotional storytelling

Simultaneously, online retail adopts entertainment-driven modalities such as live selling shows, influencer-led product demonstrations, gamified shopping systems, and community-driven content. Retail thus becomes a hybrid media platform that merges commercial, cultural, and recreational functions.

In this context, the distinction between retail, leisure, culture, and entertainment becomes increasingly blurred. The future of retail depends not on product assortment but on its capacity to produce memorable experiences and cultivate affective attachment.



CHAPTER 03: MASTERPLAN SITE ANALYSIS

3.1 Project Site

3.2 Commercial Vitality

3.3 Streetscape Environment

3.4 Public Open Space

3.5 Internal Building Density

3.6 Is the Dongdaemun District an Urban Void?

Figure 35: The photo of Commercial district in DongDaeMun

Figure Source: Photographed by the author

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Fig. 36

Figure 36: Top view of Project site

Figure Source: Smart Seoul Map

3.1 Project Site

The site of this design research encompasses the four shopping-mall buildings—Good Morning City, Hello APM, Dongdaemun Migliore, and Doota Mall—aligned along Jangchungdan-ro directly facing DDP, as well as their surrounding urban blocks. This area constitutes the retail sector within the broader Dongdaemun fashion cluster.



Fig. 37

Figure 37: The photo of Commercial district in DongDaeMun

Figure Source: Photographed by the author

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Basic Information

Category	Migliore	APM	Good Morning City	Doosan Tower
Building ID	2120041030010327	2120041030020770	2120081030000109	2120041030010144
Location	Euljiro 6-ga, Jung-gu, Seoul	Sindang-dong, Jung-gu, Seoul	Euljiro 6-ga, Jung-gu, Seoul	Euljiro 6-ga, Jung-gu, Seoul
Street Address	263 Jangchungdan-ro	40 Majang-ro	247 Jangchungdan-ro	275 Jangchungdan-ro
Zoning District	General Commercial Zone	General Commercial Zone	General Commercial Zone	General Commercial Zone
Overlays	Fire-Prevention Zone, etc.	—	Scenic Zone, Fire-Prevention Zone	Central Scenic Zone
Building Name	Migliore	APM	Good Morning City Mall	Doosan Tower

Building Use, Structure, Floors

Primary Use	Retail, Office, Assembly, Neighborhood Facility	Retail, Office	Retail, Cultural Facility, Neighborhood Facility, Office	Retail, Office, Sports Facility
Floors	B7 / 20F	B4 / 9F	B7 / 16F	B7 / 34F
Main Structure	SRC	Reinforced Concrete + SRC	SRC (Steel-Reinforced Concrete)	Steel + Reinforced Concrete

Site & Floor Area & Height

Site Area (m)	3,414.3	1,909	7,792.5	9,410.7
Building Area (m)	2,046.71	1,138.13	4,671.76	3,103.18
Gross Floor Area (m)	49,556.03	14,178.6	92,206.03	122,586.8
Floor Area for FAR (m)	29,197.85	9,228.57	49,446.65	56,397.72
Landscaped Area (m)	—	—	—	1,901.65
Public Open Space (m)	—	—	—	—
Building Height	90.6 m	42.8 m	76.8 m	156.15 m
Setback Area / Distance	—	—	—	—

Fig. 38

Figure 38: Building Register of the Project Site Buildings
Figure Source: Mayor of Jung-gu, Seoul Metropolitan Government

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3.2 Commercial Vitality

The major commercial buildings within the project site exhibit extremely high vacancy rates: Migliore at 33%, Hello APM at 37%, and Good Morning City at 70% (Dongdaemun Fashion Town Tourism Special Zone Council). These figures clearly demonstrate a severe decline in the functional performance of the district's retail environment.

According to Statistics Korea, retail sales in the Dongdaemun area have shown a continuous downward trend, recording -9.0% in Q3 2022, -0.8% in Q1 2023, and -2.1% in Q1 2024. Despite a notably high pedestrian volume—approximately 5,000 people per hour—the sharp rise in vacancy rates and the persistent decline in sales indicate that the Dongdaemun commercial district is entering a phase of structural recession. This situation goes beyond a temporary market downturn and instead reflects the fundamental limitations of the district's capacity to function as a commercial hub within the urban core.

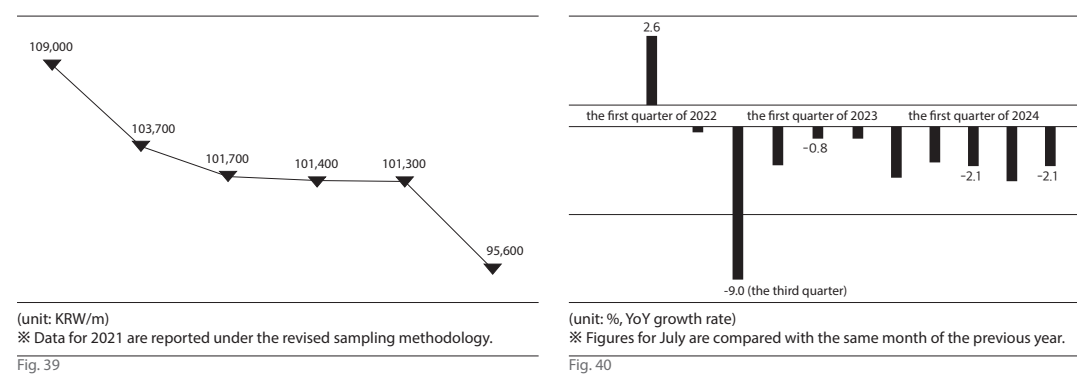


Figure 39: Rental Price Trends of Collective Retail Buildings in the Dongdaemun Commercial District

Figure Source: Korea Real Estate Board (KREB)

Figure 40: Retail Sales Growth Rate in the Dongdaemun Commercial District

Figure Source: Statistics Korea

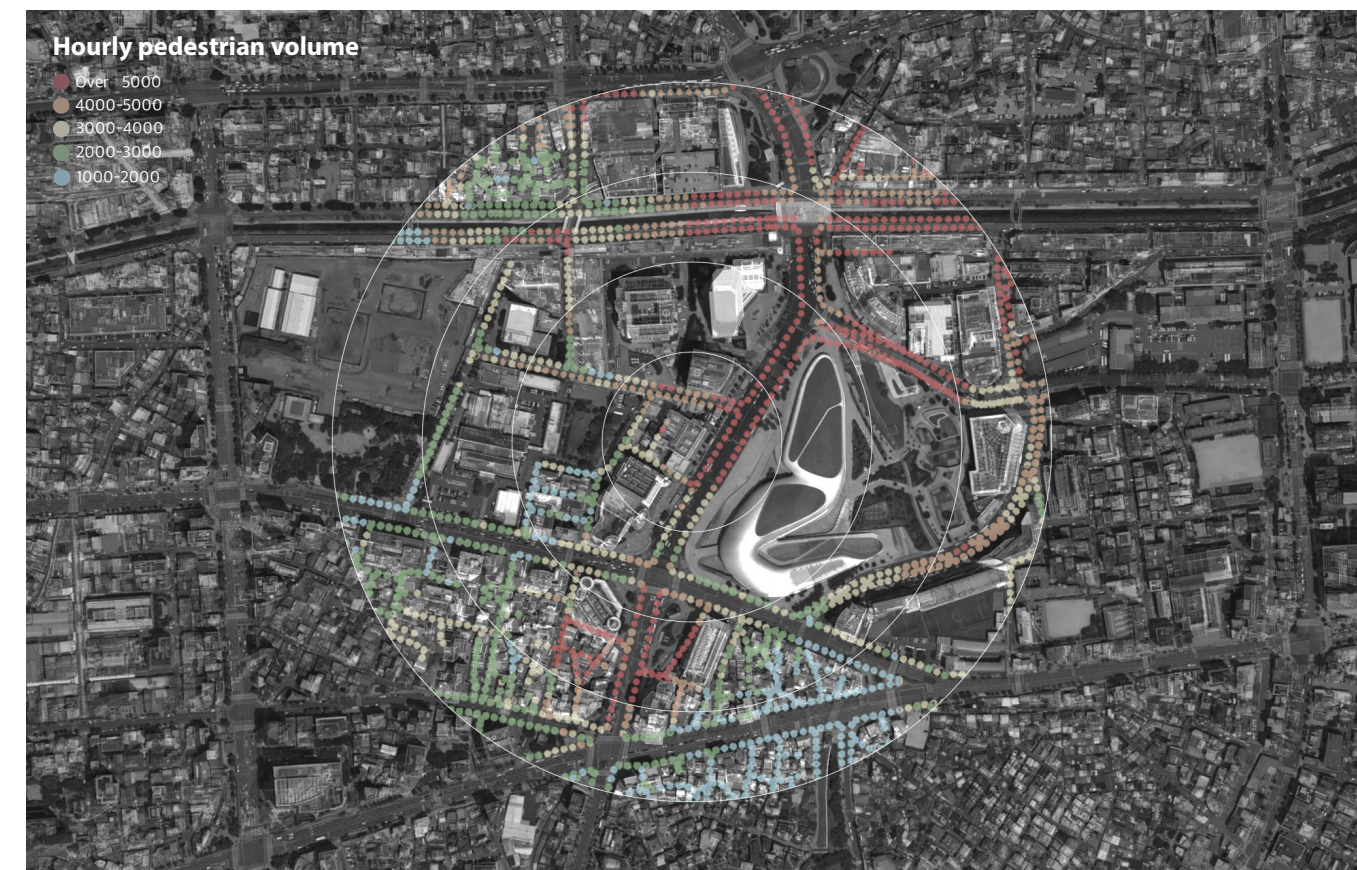


Fig. 41

Figure 41: Project site hourly pedestrian volume

Figure Source: ©Copyright by NICE Zinidata, Inc.

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3.3 Streetscape Environment

The pedestrian corridors in front of the four shopping malls within the study site are narrow, visually disordered, and further constrained by the occupation of sidewalk space by street vendors. These conditions significantly reduce visual openness, limiting spatial perception of the surrounding area. As a result, pedestrian movement is characterized by a unidirectional, fast-moving flow with

minimal opportunities for lingering or interaction. In addition, the wide arterial road functions as a physical barrier, making direct access toward the DDP difficult and further weakening overall pedestrian connectivity.



Fig. 42

Figure 42: The photo of Commercial district in DongDaeMun

Figure Source: Photographed by the author



Fig. 43

Figure 43: The photo of Commercial district in DongDaeMun

Figure Source: Photographed by the author

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3.4 Public Open Space

Although a large public open space and landscaped area exist behind DDP, the front façades of the four shopping malls entirely lack comparable amenities such as resting areas, publicly accessible open spaces, or greenery. This absence weakens the site's capacity to support pedestrian dwell time, limiting opportunities for users to pause, rest, or engage with the surroundings. As a result,

the front zone functions primarily as a transitional corridor rather than a stay-oriented public interface. The lack of greenery or open space further contributes to a visually barren and environmentally uncomfortable streetscape, reinforcing rapid pedestrian movement and diminishing the overall vitality of the commercial frontage.



Fig. 44

Figure 44: The photo of Commercial district in DongDaeMun

Figure Source: Photographed by the author



Fig. 45

Figure 45: The photo of Commercial district in DongDaeMun

Figure Source: Photographed by the author

3.5 Internal Building Density

Within the Dongdaemun shopping malls that constitute the project site, the interior environment is characterized by an excessively high density of commercial programs, with the majority of floor area dedicated almost exclusively to product display and sales. This results in a predominantly functional, transaction-oriented retail landscape that offers limited opportunities for rest, leisure, or experiential engagement.

In contrast, major shopping complexes in Seongsu-dong exhibit a markedly different spatial strategy: a substantial proportion of their interior is allocated to communal, leisure, and cultural programs—cafés, lounges, exhibition zones, event spaces—while the actual retail component occupies a comparatively smaller share. This spatial composition reflects a deliberate shift toward the model of the “hybrid cultural–commercial space,” wherein user experience, social interaction, and prolonged dwell time are prioritized over purely transactional activity.

The disparity between the two areas illustrates their divergent trajectories of commercial evolution. While Seongsu-dong malls have transformed into experience-driven cultural complexes aligned with contemporary retail trends, the Dongdaemun malls remain largely confined to a utilitarian, product-centric paradigm. Consequently, Dongdaemun’s internal spatial structure fails to accommodate the experiential expectations of contemporary consumers, contributing to reduced dwell time, weakened commercial vitality, and an overall decline in competitiveness within the broader urban retail landscape.

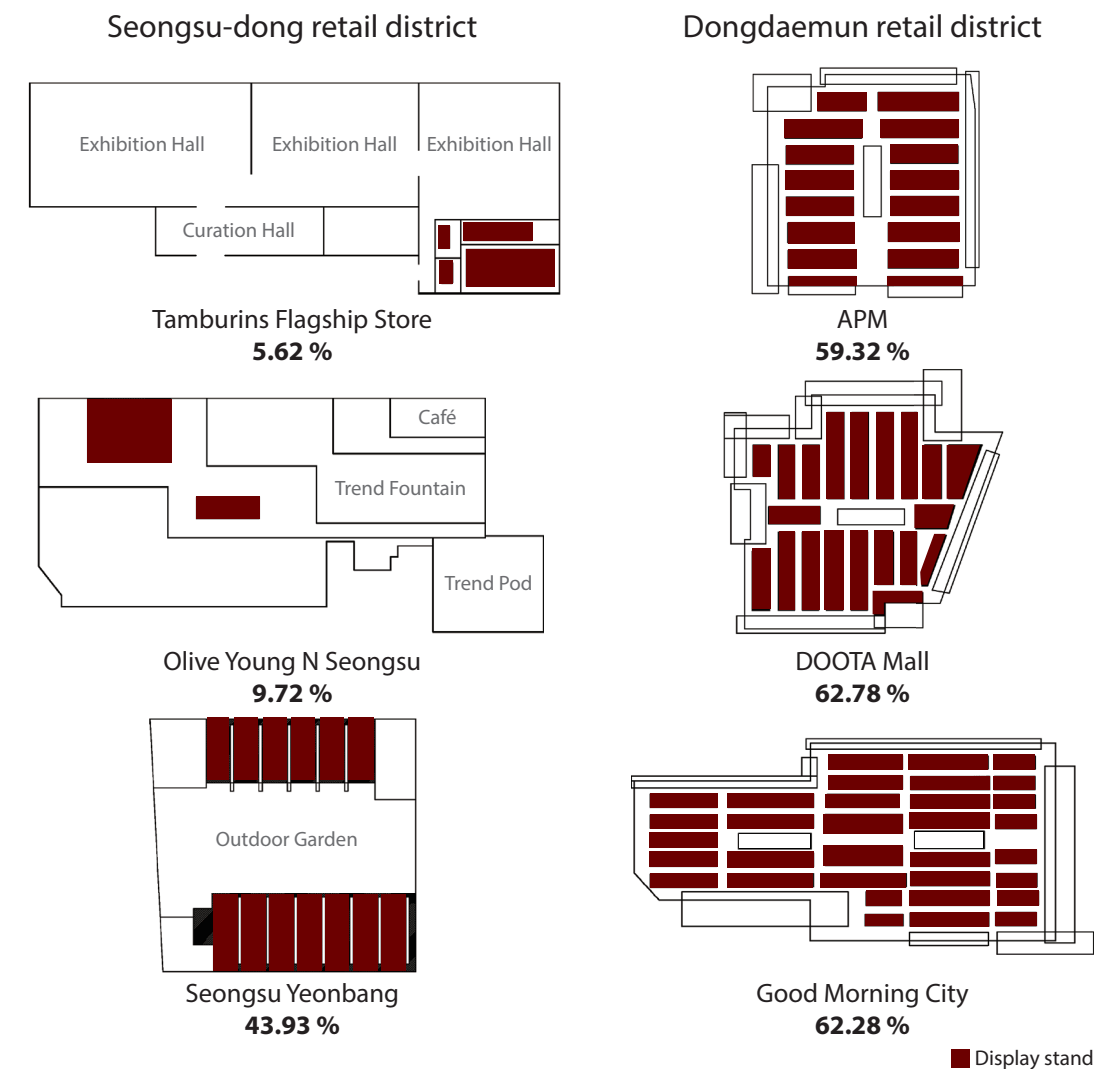


Fig. 46

Figure 46: Display-to-floor area ratio

Figure Source: Drawing by author

3.6 Is the Dongdaemun District an Urban Void?

The question of whether Dongdaemun—once the most active commercial district in Korea—can be understood as an urban void must be examined through the theoretical, economic, and spatial lenses developed in the preceding chapters. Traditional definitions of the urban void emphasize absence, abandonment, and spatial discontinuity; however, contemporary scholarship has expanded the term to include not only physically empty sites but also socially and symbolically depleted urban conditions. In this regard, Dongdaemun provides a critical example of how a commercial district may become “void-like” despite maintaining full physical occupation.

Urban theorists such as Solà-Morales, Koolhaas, and Torres describe urban voids as spaces that, although present within the city’s built fabric, are detached from everyday life, stripped of relational meaning, and excluded from active urban flows. A void may thus emerge not only from physical emptiness but from the collapse of urban functions—economic withdrawal, social disengagement, and experiential deprivation. Dongdaemun’s transformation in recent years aligns closely with this broader theoretical understanding.

Despite its architectural density, Dongdaemun has experienced sustained economic deterioration. Vacancy rates in major malls—33% in Migliore, 37% in Hello APM, and as high as 70% in Good Morning City—indicate a collapse of retail viability even under conditions of exceptionally high foot traffic (over 5,000 pedestrians per hour). Statistics Korea further reports continued declines in retail sales figures (−9.0% in Q3 2022, −0.8% in Q1 2023, −2.1% in Q1 2024), suggesting a structural, not cyclical, downturn. These indicators reveal that Dongdaemun is no longer embedded in the city’s economic circulation despite the physical presence of buildings and programs.

Spatial analysis reinforces this diagnosis. The sidewalks along Jangchungdan-ro are narrow, visually fragmented, and obstructed by street vendors, creating diminished openness and accelerating pedestrian flow through the district rather than inviting dwell time. The lack of public open space or greenery in front of the four major malls further weakens spatial anchoring, in stark contrast to the expansive public realm behind DDP. As a result, movement within the district becomes linear



Fig. 47

Figure 47: The photo of Commercial district in DongDaeMun

Figure Source: ©Copyright by KBS

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and utilitarian, resembling a transit corridor rather than a place of encounter.

Inside the shopping malls, the spatial organization remains dominated by dense product-display zones, with almost no incorporation of rest, leisure, or cultural programs—typologies now essential to contemporary experience-driven retail. Whereas Seongsu-dong's malls have evolved into hybrid cultural-commercial spaces prioritizing hedonic value, Dongdaemun remains locked within an outdated, purely transactional model. This functional rigidity diminishes both experiential richness and social diversity, leading to shortened dwell times and weakened public life.

From the perspective of consumer behavior, Dongdaemun fails to produce the hedonic shopping value that increasingly determines retail loyalty. Modern consumers seek multisensory stimulation, social interaction, and atmospheric enjoyment—qualities structurally absent in Dongdaemun's commercial environment. The district's inability to generate emotional engagement results in a withdrawal of people, despite the presence of buildings, merchandise, and continuous operating hours. In the context of urban void theory, this absence of lived experience is as significant as material emptiness.

Taken together, Dongdaemun exhibits all the critical characteristics of an urban void as defined in contemporary urban literature:

- economic withdrawal, despite continued physical occupancy;
- social and experiential depletion, even under high pedestrian volumes;
- spatial disconnection, caused by inadequate public realm and mono-functional building interiors;
- symbolic decline, as the district no longer represents the cultural vitality of the city.

Thus, Dongdaemun's condition cannot be adequately described simply as commercial decline. It represents a deeper structural void—a territory physically filled yet socially, economically, and symbolically empty.

In conclusion, Dongdaemun is indeed an urban void: a district whose buildings and programs remain fully packed, but whose absence of people, vitality, and lived experience reveals the very essence of contemporary urban emptiness.



Fig. 48

Figure 48: Diagram defining Dongdaemun as an urban void

Figure Source: Drawing by author



CHAPTER 04: DONGDAEMUN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE

4.1 Characteristics of the Dongdaemun District

4.2 Glocal Market

4.3 Efficiency of Agglomeration

4.4 Emerging Designers

Figure 49: The photo of Commercial district in DongDaeMun
Figure Source: Photographed by the author

4.1 Characteristics of the Dongdaemun District

The Dongdaemun district functions as a dense, multi-layered fashion cluster in which production, distribution, and retail are tightly interwoven within a relatively compact urban area. Historically emerging from traditional markets such as Gwangjang Market and Peace Market, the district evolved from a site of textile and fabric trading into a comprehensive fashion ecosystem that integrates fabric and notions supply, garment manufacturing, wholesale and retail, and more recently, tourism and cultural functions. Within this clustered structure, tens of thousands of small firms—wholesalers, sewing factories, trading companies, and retailers—coexist in a complex web of vertical and horizontal networks.

Spatially, the district is organized as a hybrid of traditional street markets, multi-story wholesale buildings, and large-scale fashion malls. Peace Market and its surrounding sewing factories once combined production and distribution within the same buildings, while the later emergence of modern fashion malls such as Migliore, DOOTA, Hello APM, and Good Morning City consolidated wholesale and retail functions in high-density, multi-tenant structures. As a result, Dongdaemun has long operated as a “one-stop fashion district,” where design, fabric sourcing, sample making, mass production, and distribution can be coordinated within a short time frame and limited radius.

Economically, the district is characterized by high turnover and rapid response capabilities. The concentration of suppliers, sewing factories, and logistics services—symbolized by motorcycle delivery networks—enables extremely short lead times from design conception to in-store display. This temporal compression, combined with dense human networks and informal information flows, has historically provided Dongdaemun with a competitive advantage over geographically dispersed production systems. At the same time, this dense and path-dependent structure also

generates the risk of over-embeddedness, making adaptation to structural change more difficult in later periods.

Category	Retail Building	Store unit	Store	Main product category	Remarks
Traditional market	15	16,266	11,218	General Apparel / Fabrics / Trims / Leather / Accessories	Footwear Market (excluding Undongjang Market)
Eastern modern wholesale market	13	5,624	4,658	Young Casual Apparel / Men's & Women's Apparel / Accessories / Imported Apparel	Large-scale wholesale mall
Western retail market	7	10,550	2,410	Designer Brands / Young Casual Apparel / Direct-Import Apparel / Men's & Women's Formalwear / Accessories	Entertainment-oriented mixed-use shopping mall
Total	35	32,440	18,286	—	—

Fig. 50

Figure 50: Dongdaemun Fashion Market Status

Figure Source: Seoul Metropolitan Government (2015.8), Dongdaemun Commercial District New Taekrijji Activist Operation Project.

4.2 Glocal Market

The Dongdaemun fashion cluster exemplifies a glocal market structure in which locally embedded production and design capabilities are tightly connected to global demand. While the district initially served primarily domestic consumers, the rapid diffusion of information technologies and the development of international buyer networks have transformed Dongdaemun into a node where local manufacturing and global fashion trends intersect.

Designers and wholesalers in Dongdaemun routinely source trend information from global fashion capitals such as Paris and Milan—either through study abroad experiences, overseas fashion shows, or digital channels—and translate these signals into rapidly produced garments for both domestic and foreign buyers. This “idea-to-market” pipeline operates on a compressed temporal scale: new designs can be identified, adapted, produced, and wholesaled within days. As a result, Dongdaemun’s value chain extends beyond the local market to encompass international buyers, many of whom regularly visit the district or order remotely.

Quantitatively, the district’s glocal nature is visible in the proportion of export-oriented transactions. A significant share of wholesalers engage in direct transactions with foreign buyers, and a portion of total sales is generated through overseas orders. More recently, online platforms and AI-based B2B services have further globalized this pipeline, enabling Dongdaemun-based firms to access designers and retailers in dozens of countries through digital interfaces. Thus, the cluster’s evolution illustrates how local “sticky” firms and knowledge-intensive startups can embed themselves in global value chains without abandoning their territorial base.

4.3 Efficiency of Agglomeration

Dongdaemun’s competitiveness has historically derived from efficiency gains associated with extreme spatial agglomeration. Within a walkable radius, actors across the entire fashion value chain—design studios, fabric and notions markets, sewing factories, wholesale buildings, and logistics services—are densely co-located, minimizing transaction costs, reducing coordination time, and allowing rapid iteration across design, sampling, production, and distribution.

This agglomeration generates multiple external economies. Logistically, materials and finished products move quickly via motorcycle delivery, enabling just-in-time production and replenishment. Cognitively, proximity fosters informal exchanges of know-how, trend information, and tacit knowledge among designers, manufacturers, and merchants, reinforcing a collective learning environment. It also promotes specialization and division of labor; factories differentiate into cutting, sewing, or finishing, while wholesale and retail functions diversify into niche markets. Together, these dynamics create a self-reinforcement cycle in which accumulated knowledge and networks attract additional firms and skills.

Yet the same agglomeration logic that once maximized efficiency also carries the risk of rigidity. As production and distribution systems become embedded in long-standing routines and spatial configurations, the cluster grows less responsive to disruptive shifts—such as e-commerce, evolving consumer behavior, or new technological paradigms. Thus, the efficiency of agglomeration in Dongdaemun is historically contingent: a powerful advantage under earlier conditions but a potential constraint under emerging ones.

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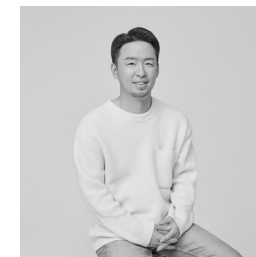
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4.4 Emerging Designers

A distinctive feature of the Dongdaemun fashion cluster is the pivotal role played by emerging designers and entrepreneurially oriented small firms. In the aftermath of the 1997 financial crisis, many designers laid off from established fashion brands, as well as graduates of leading fashion schools and overseas-educated designers, entered Dongdaemun as independent entrepreneurs. Their presence significantly upgraded the district's design capabilities, transforming it from a low-cost production base into a site of rapid, design-driven innovation.

These emerging designers operate at the intersection of local production networks and global cultural flows. On the one hand, they leverage Dongdaemun's dense manufacturing infrastructure to realize small-batch, high-velocity production. On the other, they actively utilize global fashion information and digital platforms to reach broader markets. In recent years, startups specializing in online wholesale intermediation, AI-based fabric databases, and personalized recommendation systems have further expanded the role of designers within the cluster, embedding them in data-driven and platform-based business models.

From the perspective of cluster evolution, these designers function as key agents of knowledge fusion and business expansion. They translate new ideas—whether drawn from overseas runways, subcultural scenes, or digital communities—into marketable products, thereby sustaining the cluster's innovation dynamics. At the same time, their activities highlight the tension between inherited spatial structures and new economic logics: while many still depend on the physical presence of Dongdaemun's markets and factories, their value creation increasingly unfolds across online channels and transnational networks.



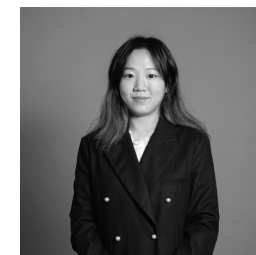
KRW 500 billion in annual transactions

Seojeong-hoon, CEO of Croquis.com, operates “Zigzag,” a platform that aggregates more than 3,000 shopping malls in the Dongdaemun market.



Establishment of a database containing two million Dongdaemun fabric items

FabricTime, led by CEOs Minji Oh and Yeonmi Jung, operates an online platform that sells Dongdaemun fabrics to designers overseas.



A total of 4 million visitors

Ms. Jayoung Yoon, CEO of StyleShare, acquired 29CM, a leading domestic fashion e-commerce platform.



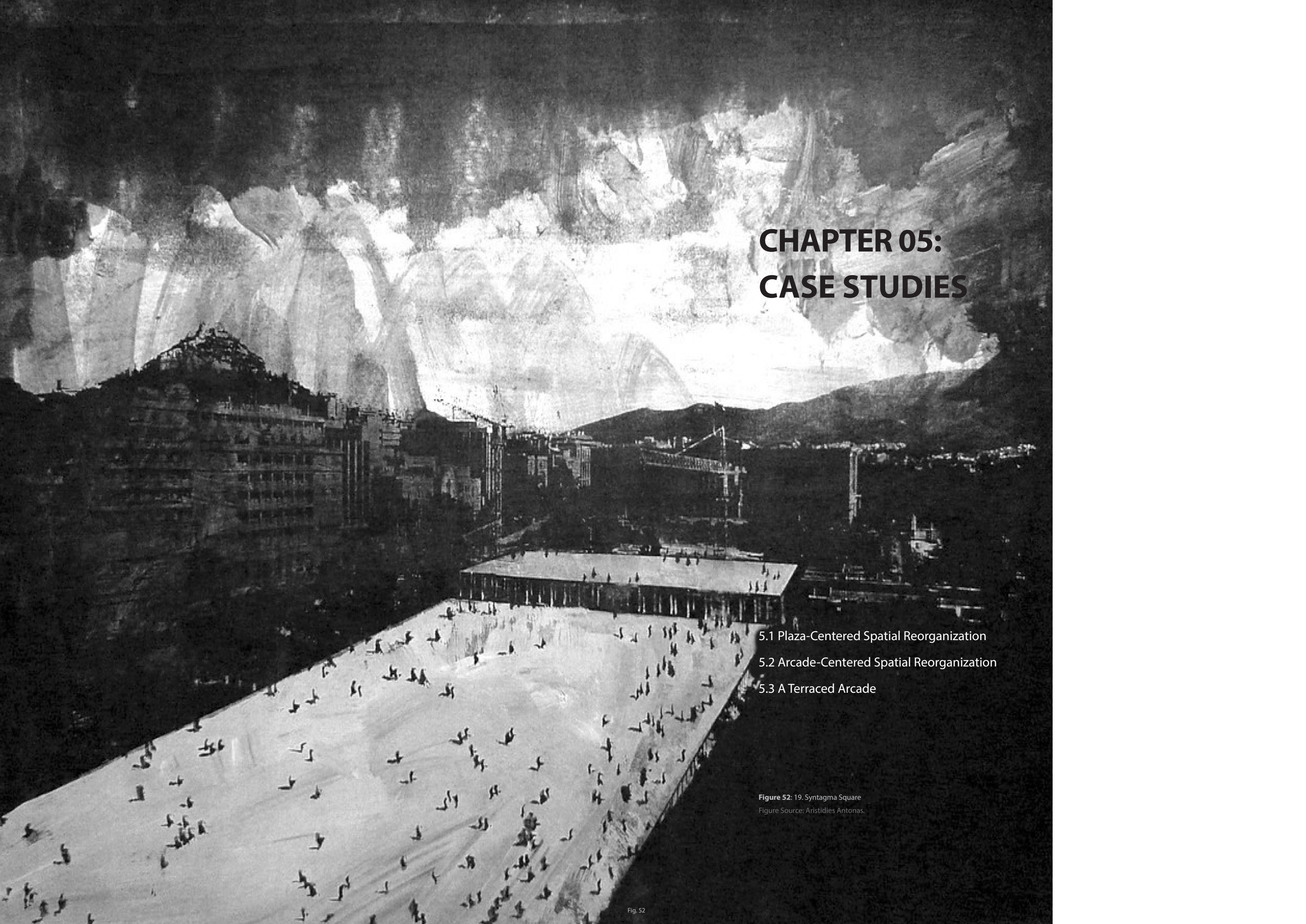
KRW 160 billion in annual sales

Ms. Sohui Kim, CEO of NANDA, is estimated to have sold the company to L'Oréal for approximately KRW 600 billion.

Fig. 51

Figure 51: fashion startups leading innovation in the Dongdaemun market

Figure Source: Park, Jae-su (2021). “Cluster Evolution: The Dongdaemun Fashion Cluster.” Journal of Traditional Markets Research, 8(1), 8–15.



CHAPTER 05: CASE STUDIES

- 5.1 Plaza-Centered Spatial Reorganization
- 5.2 Arcade-Centered Spatial Reorganization
- 5.3 A Terraced Arcade

Figure 52: 19. Syntagma Square
Figure Source: Aristidies Antonas.

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5.1 Plaza-Centered Spatial Reorganization

The conventional approach of providing mandatory on-site open spaces (gonggae gongji) within individual building plots satisfies parcel-level publicness but remains fundamentally limited in generating meaningful spatial continuity and sustained dwell time at the scale of the city. Such fragmented pockets of open space, dispersed according to legal requirements rather than urban logic, tend to function as isolated voids with minimal urban impact. In contrast, when multiple buildings collectively contribute to the formation of a shared urban plaza, the resulting public space—both in scale and experiential quality—far exceeds the sum of its individual components. This aggregated spatial resource produces substantially greater urban externalities, amplifying public accessibility, visibility, and commercial synergy across the district.

The introduction of a plaza fundamentally transforms the spatial logic of movement within the urban fabric. A previously linear pedestrian corridor becomes expanded into a field-like, multidirectional space in which circulation diverges rather than flows solely along a single axis. This spatial rearticulation diversifies sightlines, disperses pedestrian trajectories, and converts movement from a purely transitional act into an experiential mode that accommodates pause, observation, and interaction. In this expanded field, the act of walking becomes intertwined with the act of staying, thereby increasing opportunities for social encounter and spontaneous engagement.

Programmatic insertions within the plaza—ranging from cultural events and commercial kiosks to shaded resting areas and landscape elements—extend visitor dwell time and enhance environmental legibility. Such programs cultivate an atmosphere of urban vitality while simultaneously reinforcing the plaza as a node of everyday life rather than a mere passage space.

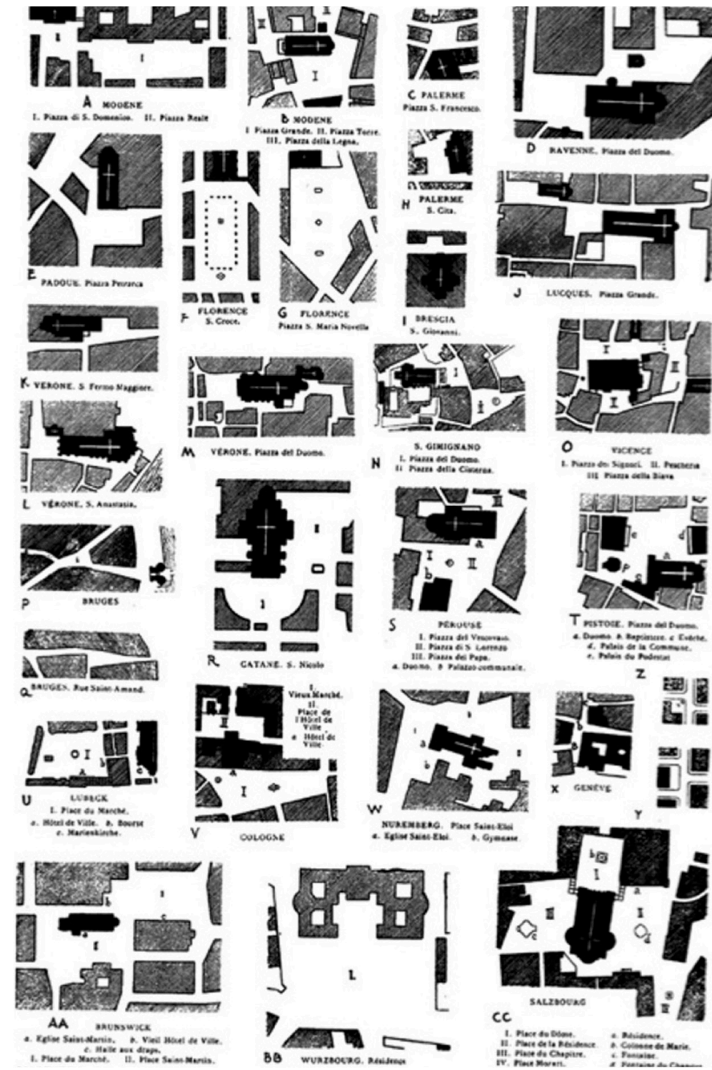


Fig. 53

Figure 53: Twenty-seven plazas at Urbanism scale

Figure Source: Drawing by Camillo Sitte, The Modern Revival of Civic Art, 1889

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The plaza's capacity to host heterogeneous activities positions it as an adaptable platform capable of responding to shifting urban rhythms and diverse user groups.

Ultimately, the plaza dismantles the rigid linearity of existing pedestrian routes and projects users' views and movements outward toward the surrounding urban landscape. By doing so, it exposes adjacent buildings, retail frontages, and secondary streets to greater visibility, effectively functioning as a catalytic device that activates the broader district. This is not simply an expansion of physical space but a strategic reorganization that enhances both civic publicness and commercial vibrancy. As such, the plaza emerges as a critical instrument in reconfiguring the spatial, social, and economic dynamics of the contemporary city.

Klyde Warren Park as an Urban Deck Infrastructure: Reconnecting Fragmented Urban Fabric and Generating Urban Vitality

Klyde Warren Park, constructed above the Woodall Rodgers Freeway in Dallas, Texas, represents one of the most emblematic precedents of infrastructural urbanism in recent decades. As a deck park bridging the previously severed urban fabrics of Downtown and Uptown, it demonstrates how the reprogramming of residual infrastructure can restore pedestrian accessibility, mend spatial continuity, and generate new forms of urban public life. Prior to its construction, the freeway operated not only as a physical barrier but also as a psychological divide, suppressing cross-neighborhood pedestrian flows and diminishing opportunities for social interaction. The introduction of a continuous public landscape over this infrastructural void fundamentally reconfigured the morphology and perception of the district, transforming a condition of urban fragmentation into an active civic connector.

PLAZA-CENTERED SPATIAL REORGANIZATION STRATEGY

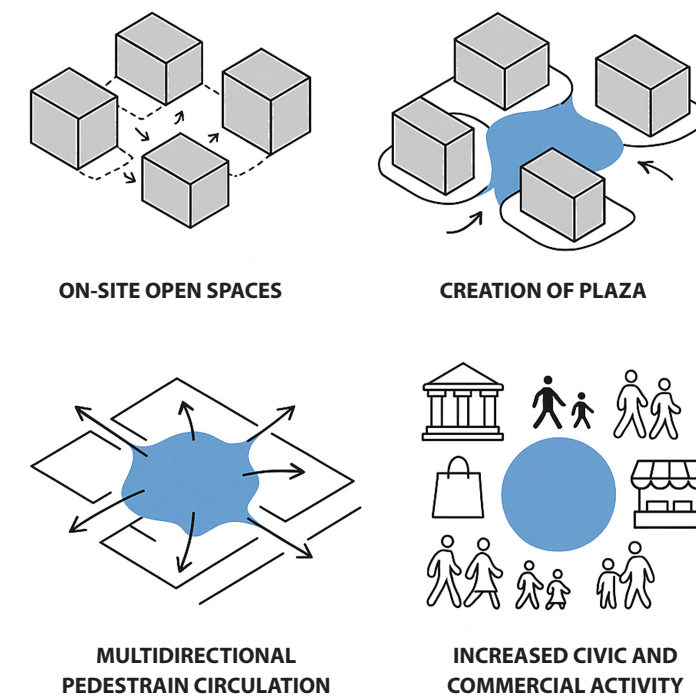


Fig. 54

Figure 54: Diagram of Plaza-Centered Spatial Reorganization Strategy
Figure Source: Drawing by author

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Fig. 55

Figure 55: The photo of Klyde Warren-Before

Figure Source: ©Copyright by Woodall Rodgers Park Foundation



Fig. 56

Figure 56: The photo of Klyde Warren-After

Figure Source: ©Copyright by Woodall Rodgers Park Foundation

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Fig. 57

Figure 57: The photo of Klyde Warren Park

Figure Source: Photographed by Thomas-McConnell

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Fig. 58

Figure 58: The photo of Klyde Warren Park
Figure Source: Photoed by Marion Brenner



Fig. 59

Figure 59: The photo of Klyde Warren Park
Figure Source: Photoed by Marion Brenner

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Replacing fragmented, lot-based open spaces with a singular, shared urban plaza created significant advantages in spatial integration and publicness. Whereas conventional development models rely on building-by-building provision of mandated open space—yielding scattered, low-quality residual pockets—the deck park consolidated these requirements into a cohesive, large-scale public realm. This spatial consolidation enabled a qualitatively superior urban environment, one capable of supporting a diverse range of programs, enhancing microclimatic comfort, and producing meaningful spatial continuity across the urban grid.

The establishment of the park also fundamentally altered the logic of pedestrian circulation. Formerly linear and unidirectional movement patterns were transformed into multidirectional networks as the park introduced a field-like space that attracts, redirects, and disperses flows. This shift from a corridor-based to an areal public space fostered a transition in the nature of pedestrian activity—from rapid passage to prolonged dwelling, leisure, and cultural participation. The integration of multifunctional programs, including food truck courts, outdoor performances, fitness classes, and film screenings, has further reinforced the park’s role as an experiential environment, extending visitor dwell times and enhancing the cognitive legibility of the broader urban context.

The urban impacts of Klyde Warren Park have been both immediate and measurable. Since its opening, the park has attracted thousands of daily visitors, with weekend attendance routinely exceeding 10,000 individuals. Within two years, cumulative visitation surpassed 10 million, signaling its adoption as a central civic amenity. Correspondingly, economic indicators reveal substantial gains: retail and restaurant sales in the surrounding districts increased by approximately 30% (FHWA, 2020), and commercial rents within a 0.5-mile radius rose by 30–60%. Property values exhibited even stronger upward trends. The 2000 McKinney Tower—one of the most prominent

adjacent buildings—increased in assessed value from USD 32 million (2008) to USD 91 million (2013), marking a 65% rise within five years (Landscape Performance Series, 2014). Other properties in the immediate vicinity doubled in value within a comparable period, underscoring the potent real-estate externalities generated by high-quality public infrastructure.

Through these transformations, Klyde Warren Park demonstrates that urban deck infrastructures can operate simultaneously as environmental, social, and economic catalysts. By converting infrastructural voids into connective civic grounds, such projects challenge the conventional limitations of parcel-based open space provision and instead propose a model in which collective publicness is produced through spatial integration at the urban scale. This precedent offers a compelling framework for understanding how large-scale public spaces can restore continuity, enhance pedestrian accessibility, and generate sustainable urban vitality in contexts characterized by fragmentation and infrastructural barriers.

Category	Before the park development	After the park development
Public open-space area	Minimum required public open-space area per building under legal standards	21,000m ²
Public open-space typology	Planting beds, open space	Green spaces, leisure facilities, and plazas
Public open-space typology	Unidirectional pedestrian flow along the main boulevard in front of the buildings	A multi-directional pedestrian network that accommodates diverse activity types within the park
Program	Roadway, pedestrian walkway	Food-truck zones, outdoor performances, yoga classes, and movie screenings

Fig. 60

Figure 60: Analysis of Plaza-Centered Activation Factors
Figure Source: Drawing by Author

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5.2 Arcade-Centered Spatial Reorganization

The introduction of an arcade within an urban street network functions as a highly effective spatial device for structuring pedestrian orientation and guiding urban flows through programmatic means. Whereas conventional linear streets offer direction primarily through their geometric configuration, an arcade embeds commercial and cultural programs directly into the circulation path, thereby generating programmatic orientation—a mode of behavioral guidance produced not merely by physical continuity but through the sequential experience of shops, displays, and architectural atmospheres. When an arcade is positioned along a desired pedestrian axis connecting point A to point B, users are naturally induced to follow this route as their movement becomes intertwined with activities of viewing, shopping, and dwelling. In this process, buildings and parcels flanking the arcade become visually and spatially integrated; fragmented sites are reassembled into a single, continuous urban interior, producing an expanded perceptual field that transcends parcel boundaries.

Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II: Arcade as an Experiential Civic Connector in the Heart of Milan

The Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan exemplifies this logic with exceptional clarity. Designed as a pedestrian-only axis linking two of the city's most symbolically charged public spaces—the religious center at Piazza del Duomo and the cultural center at Piazza della Scala—the arcade synthesizes these previously separate urban domains into a unified civic ensemble. Before its construction, the two squares operated as independent spatial and programmatic nodes. With the opening of the Galleria, however, residents and visitors gained access to a climate-protected, seasonally independent interior passage that dramatically strengthened the functional and experiential connectivity between the two squares. The space functions not merely as a covered



Fig. 61



Fig. 62



Fig. 63

Figure 61: The building of Palazzo Haas (1870-73) next to Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in Milan, Italy.

Figure Source: Pompeo Pozzi (1817-1880)

Figure 62: Milano, la Galleria nell'agosto del 1943, dopo i bombardamenti

Figure Source: SkyScraperCity - Milano Sparita

Figure 63: Posa prima pietra della Galleria di Milano il 7 marzo 1865

Figure Source: Domenico Induno

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walkway but as an experiential path, where the choreography of light, materiality, and monumental scale transforms walking into a culturally coded act. The adjacency of commerce, art, and religious institutions further reinforces spatial interactivity, enabling heightened cross-flows of people, programs, and meanings. In doing so, the arcade operates simultaneously as an infrastructural connector, a cultural mediator, and a generator of urban intensity—demonstrating the capacity of arcade-based interventions to reorganize urban movement and reconstitute fragmented city fabrics into coherent public realms.

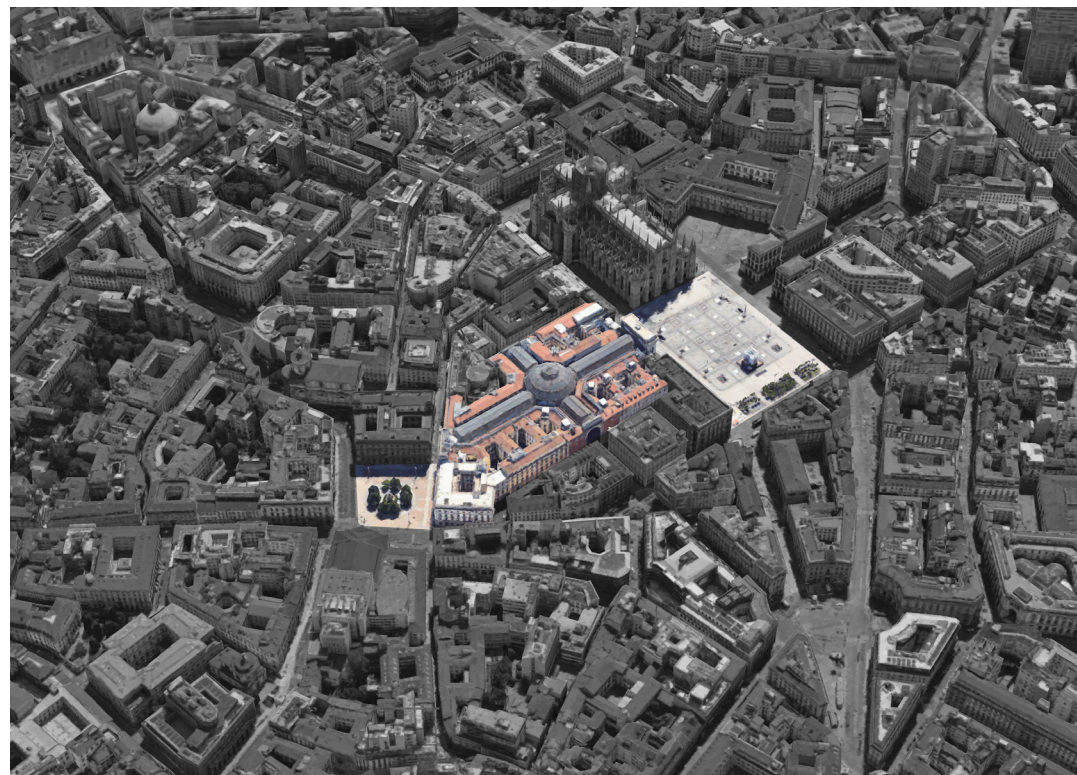


Fig. 64

Figure 64: Aerial view of Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II

Figure Source: Google Maps

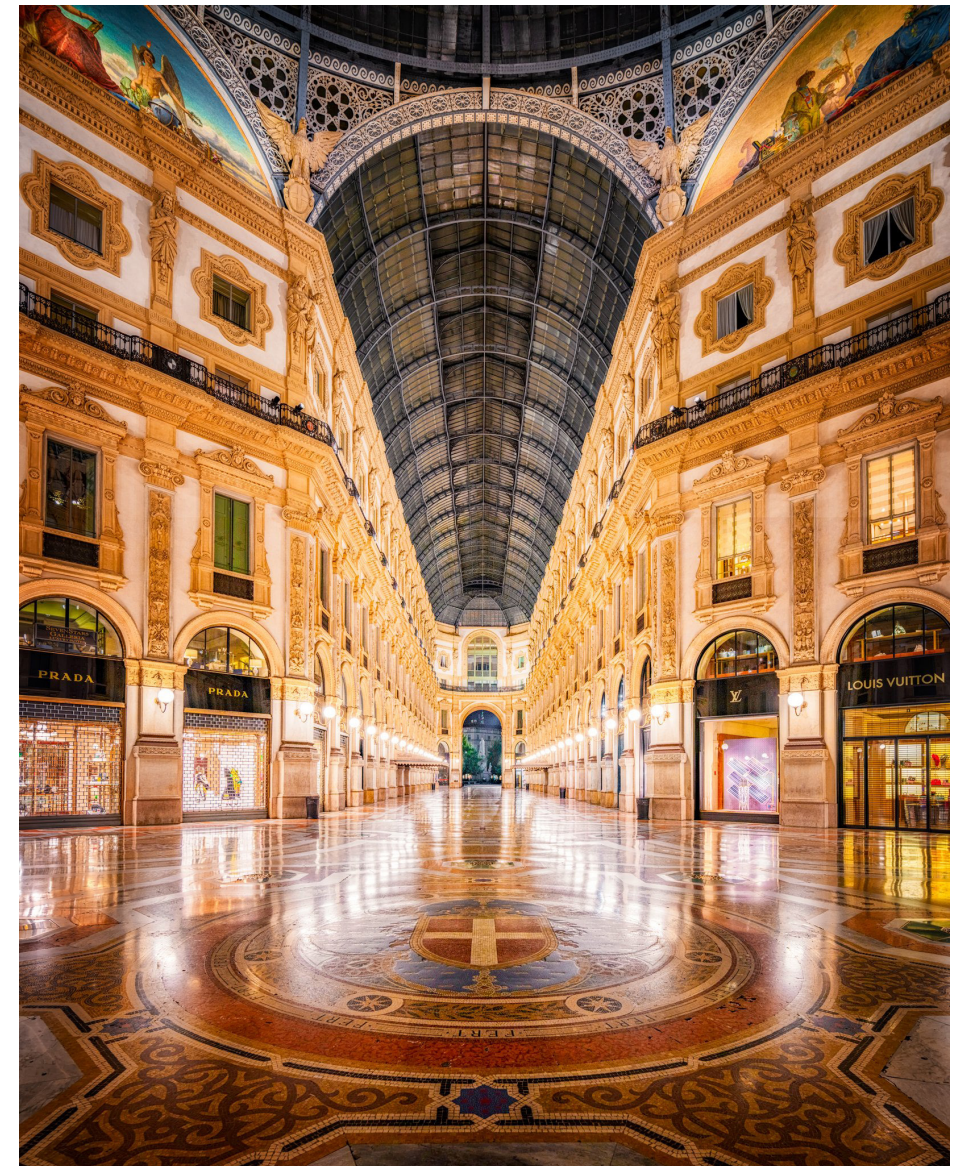


Fig. 65

Figure 65: The photo of Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II

Figure Source: Photographed by Nico Trinkhaus

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Fig. 66

Figure 66: The photo of Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II

Figure Source: © Italy.blog by Canva.com

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Fig. 67

Figure 67: The photo of Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II and Piazza del Duomo

Figure Source: ©Copyright by Bubbly Living

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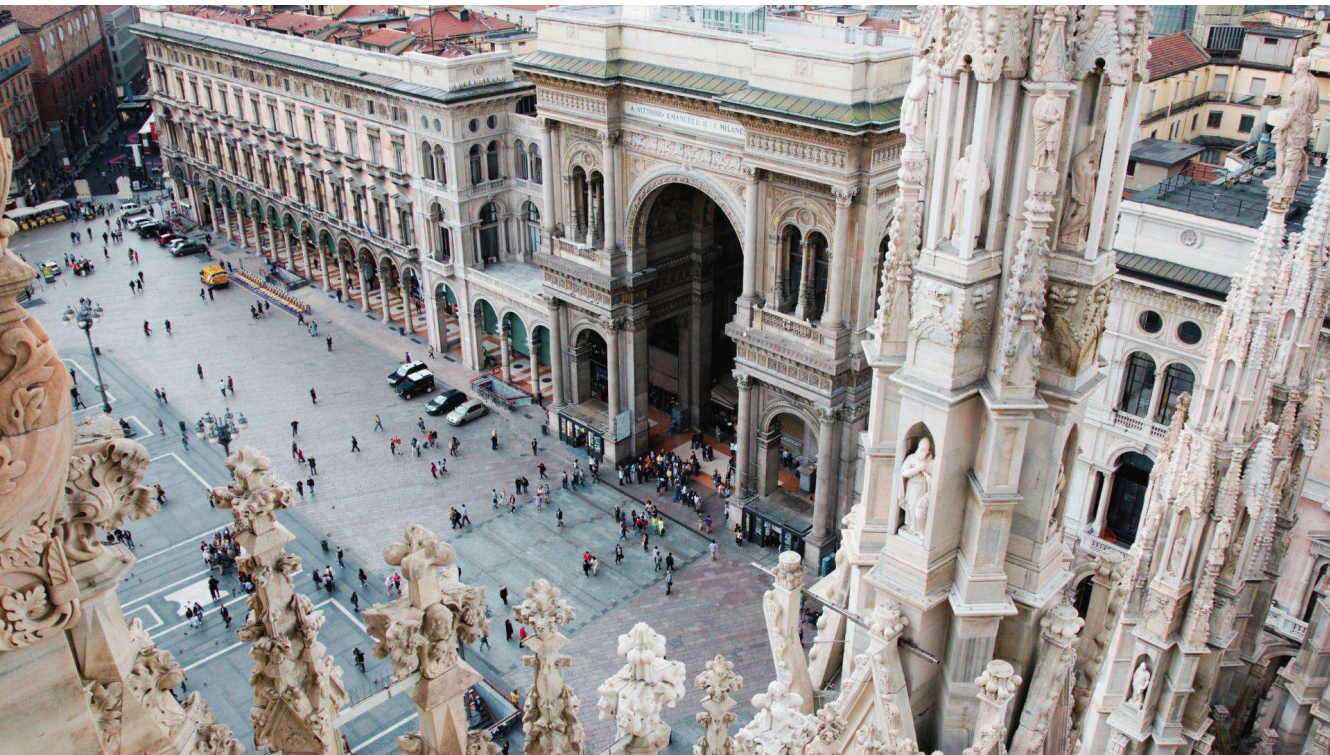


Fig. 68

Figure 68: The photo of Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II and Piazza del Duomo

Figure Source: © Italy.blog by Canva.com

Category	Effects of Connectivity	Outcome
From an urban-structural perspective	Integrating the two plazas into a single public axis	Formation of structural coherence in the urban fabric
Pedestrian-network perspective	Integrating the two plazas into a single public axis	Increase in pedestrian flows and expansion of the commercial district
Pedestrian-network perspective	Forming a commercial spine Roadway, pedestrian walkway	Influx of high-end brands and rise in property values
Pedestrian-network perspective	Forming a commercial spine	Influx of high-end brands and rise in property values

Fig. 69

Figure 69: Analysis of Arcade-centered activation factors

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

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5.3 A Terraced Arcade

Conventional shopping mall buildings in Dongdaemun have long relied on vertically stacked, monotonous floor plates, resulting in poor visibility for upper floors, weak spatial identity, and limited interior openness. To break away from these structural limitations and avoid repeating the mistakes of existing commercial buildings, the newly proposed intervention introduces a stepped arcade configuration. This is not merely a formal gesture but a strategic architectural response to the problem of spatial isolation and declining vitality in the district.

The stepped arcade maximizes visual permeability by retreating floor plates and establishing strong visual continuity between upper and lower levels. Upon entering the building, users can immediately perceive activities across multiple floors. As demonstrated in the BBC Scotland Headquarters, this enhances inter-floor communication and collective spatial awareness. In a commercial context—as seen in Seoul's D Tower—the improved visibility enables upper-floor tenants to gain equal exposure, effectively correcting the inherent disadvantages of stacked mall typologies.

Furthermore, the stepped arcade acts as a social catalyst, promoting informal encounters and indirect interactions. Visual connections between floors foster spontaneous engagement, creative exchange, and active browsing behaviors, reinforcing a lively social and commercial atmosphere.

When combined with a central atrium, the terraced configuration generates strong circulation inducement. Movement becomes a continuous experiential promenade rather than a purely functional transition. This dynamic circulation—as exemplified by D Tower's cascade escalator—encourages visitors to move upward and explore higher levels with ease.



Fig. 70

Figure 70: The photo of BBC Scotland headquarters Glasgow, UK 2001–07

Figure Source: ©Copyright by David Chipperfield Architects Ltd.

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Fig. 71

Figure 71: The photo of BBC Scotland headquarters Glasgow, UK 2001–07

Figure Source: ©Copyright by David Chipperfield Architects Ltd.

The stepped form also enhances environmental comfort and dwellability by increasing openness and admitting natural light deeper into the interior, creating an indoor environment that evokes an outdoor-like sense of airiness and comfort.

In sum, the stepped arcade provides a powerful architectural alternative to the conventional stacked mall typology of Dongdaemun, offering a means to simultaneously amplify visibility, social interaction, circulation dynamics, dwell time, and both commercial and cultural vibrancy within the urban fabric.

BBC Scotland Headquarters, Glasgow, UK: Promenade Atrium as a Vertical Social Spine

The BBC Scotland Headquarters in Glasgow integrates production facilities, technical support zones, and office workspaces through a centrally positioned terraced atrium, deliberately conceived as the building's principal spatial and social catalyst. Owing to its stepped and recessive configuration, the atrium enables immediate vertical visibility: upon entering the building, users obtain an upward panoramic view across multiple floors, allowing them to perceive ongoing activities on each level. This spatial transparency produces a heightened awareness of the organization's collective operations, reinforcing an architectural condition in which work processes are visually accessible rather than compartmentalized.

The terraced atrium also mediates interactions across floors. While occupying the atrium, users can observe colleagues working above or below, and as they move toward individual offices or studios, they naturally encounter meetings or collaborative sessions occurring on the stepped platforms. Such spatial sequencing fosters unplanned encounters, facilitating informal communication and promoting cross-disciplinary exchange. The atrium effectively functions as a circulatory

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and communicative core—encouraging movement between programs, dissolving hierarchical boundaries, and enhancing interdepartmental connectivity.

The architect designated this stepped atrium as a “promenade”, articulating it as a formal architectural concept. By choreographing visual permeability, spatial overlap, and vertical interconnection, the promenade becomes more than a circulation device; it operates as an infrastructural framework that organizes the building’s social, functional, and collaborative life.

Gwanghwamun D Tower: Reconfiguring the Commercial Core of the Office District

The lack of attractive public-oriented destinations in the Gwanghwamun area historically stems from the typological limitations of the conventional office building. The standard office block is organized as a lobby on the ground floor, a small arcade or retail strip in the basement or low-rise levels (typically the second and third floors), and office programs occupying the remainder of the tower. This configuration structurally separates external visitors from internal office workers, resulting in a commercial ecosystem dominated by weekday lunchtime demand. Consequently,

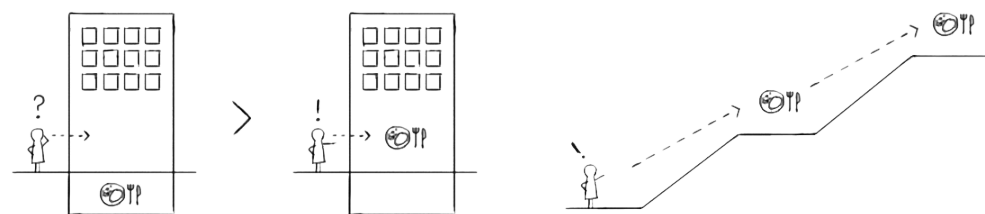


Fig. 72

Figure 72: Diagram of Terraced Arcade

Figure Source: ©Copyright by JOH & Company

retail programs struggle to attract evening or weekend users, revealing a fundamental mismatch between the heterogeneous needs of tenants, customers, employees, and building owners.

In response, the planning strategy for D Tower deliberately sought to break away from the stereotype of the conventional office building and develop an architectural form capable of generating an appeal that extends beyond office workers. Central to this strategy was the conception of Replace—the commercial component of D Tower—not as a subsidiary amenity but as the project’s primary attractor. To achieve this, the first through fifth floors were entirely

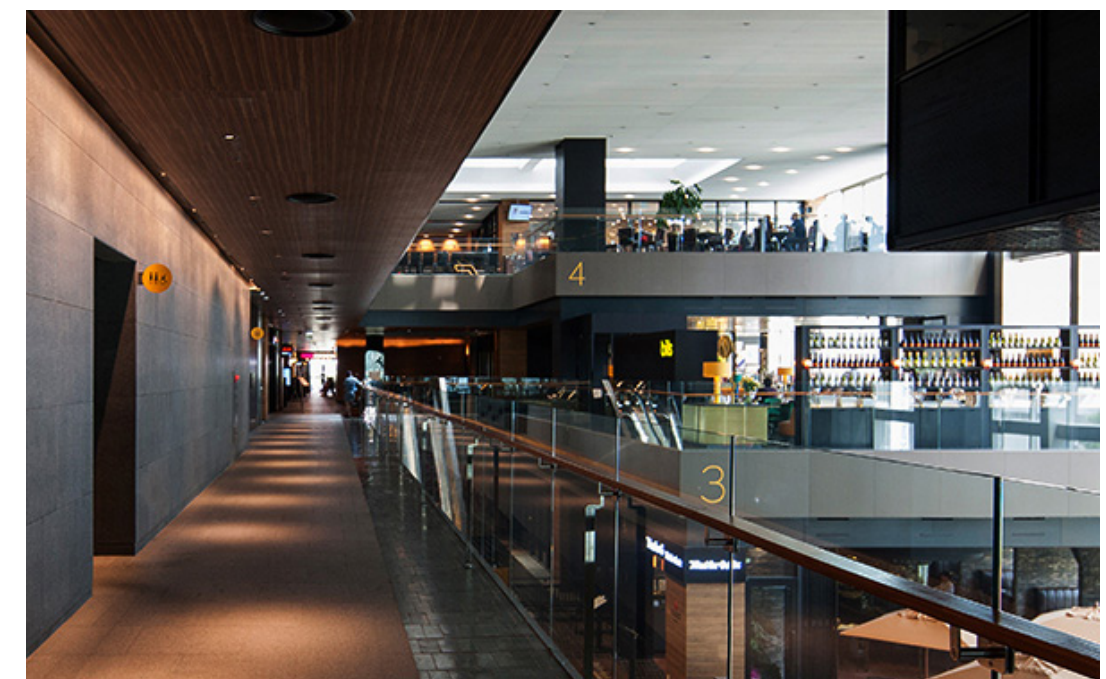


Fig. 73

Figure 73: The photo of Gwanghwamun D Tower

Figure Source: ©Copyright by JOH & Company

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Fig. 74

“The cascade escalator penetrates through Replace like a waterfall.

Unlike conventional department stores or shopping malls—where shoppers circulate around a central escalator—D Tower adopts a voided central configuration. Although this reduces the total leasable commercial floor area, it creates an open and expansive spatial impression, allowing visitors to visually perceive all shops throughout Replace at a glance.”⁵

dedicated to commercial use, supplemented by an independent point of entry to maximize permeability and openness to the public.

A key spatial device is the creation of a recessed, stepped atrium at the center of the building, in combination with a prominent cascade escalator system. By hollowing out the core and arranging each retail level in a terraced configuration, the design enables visitors to visually apprehend multiple floors at once, improving the visibility of upper-level tenants and encouraging upward movement. Unlike conventional department stores—where circulation pivots around a dense

vertical core—D Tower’s void-based configuration creates an expansive visual field, giving visitors the sense of viewing the entire “Replace” environment at a glance despite the relatively modest floorplate.

The cascade escalator, which penetrates the atrium like a vertical waterfall, serves as both a circulation spine and a visual anchor. As visitors ascend, their view continuously unfolds across multiple terraces, producing a spatial narrative that strengthens vertical continuity and enhances the likelihood of inter-floor browsing. This stands in contrast to enclosed or compartmentalized retail typologies, where upper floors often suffer from diminished footfall and visibility.

The project’s series of indoor terrace spaces further elevates the experiential quality of the commercial environment. Generous skylights and full-height glazing admit ample natural light, creating an open, outdoor-like atmosphere within an interior volume. In the context of Seoul—where seasonal temperature shifts, air quality concerns, and inclement weather often limit the usability of actual outdoor terraces—these interior terraces function as compelling alternatives, aligning with the Korean cultural preference for semi-outdoor leisure spaces.

Ultimately, the decision to “subtract space”—reducing net leasable area by carving out the central atrium—constitutes a strategic long-term investment rather than a short-term loss. The spatial porosity and vertical visibility generated by this gesture significantly enhance the accessibility and attractiveness of upper-level retail units, invigorate pedestrian movement, and amplify the overall commercial appeal of the building. D Tower thus provides an alternative development model that transcends the limitations of traditional office-oriented retail programs and contributes meaningfully to the revitalization of the broader Gwanghwamun district.

[5] Architects’ description of the Replace and the Cascade Escalator

Citation source: D Tower Replace of Gwanghwamun. JOH & Company

Figure 74: The photo of Gwanghwamun D Tower

Figure Source: ©Copyright by JOH & Company

CHAPTER 06: MASTERPLAN

6.1 Road Undergrounding

6.2 Plaza Development Plan

6.2.1 Plaza Masterplan

6.2.2 Public Open Space

6.2.3 Density

6.2.4 Circulation

6.3 Arcade Development Plan

6.3.1 Arcade Masterplan

6.3.2 Terraced Arcade

6.3.3 Commercial Pedestrian Spine

6.3.4 Mixed-Use Cultural Fashion Cluster

Figure 75: Model photograph

Figure Source: Photographed by the author

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6.1 Road Undergrounding Strategy

To secure substantial parkland and reestablish continuity within the fragmented urban fabric, this proposal undergrounds approximately 320 meters of roadway extending from Dongdaemun History & Culture Park Intersection to the front of DOOTA Mall. By relocating vehicular traffic below grade, the scheme heals the long-standing physical and perceptual rupture between the project site and the Dongdaemun Design Plaza (DDP), creating a unified pedestrian-oriented ground plane.

Within the undergrounded segment, only the ~90-meter ramp zone is reserved for vehicular ingress and egress. Excluding this portion, the intervention yields an effective surface area of approximately 140 meters in length that can be redeployed as programmable open space. This newly liberated urban land becomes the foundational armature for constructing a central urban park and a linear arcade system linking the existing shopping malls with DDP.

Through this restructuring, the project not only expands the city's public-space assets but also reconfigures circulation, strengthens pedestrian permeability, and establishes the conditions for a cohesive civic landscape across what was previously an infrastructural barrier.

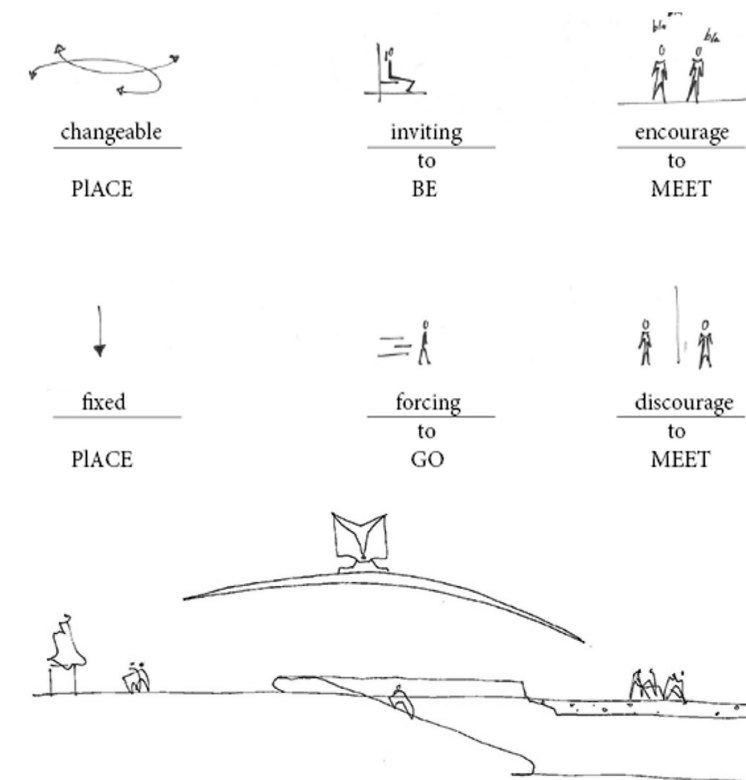


Fig. 76

Fig. 77

Figure 76: Small space & soft edge can encourage people meeting and activities happening

Figure Source: ©Copyright by The graduation thesis of SOFT CITY, Christine van der Veen

Figure 77: Concept section drawing, Patriarca Square Remodeling, São Paulo, Paulo Mendes da Rocha

Figure Source: Drawing by Paulo Mendes da Rocha

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6.2.1 Plaza Masterplan

To reorganize the currently fragmented exterior environment, an additional arcade mass is introduced above the newly created plaza, allowing the four previously isolated shopping malls and their dispersed open spaces to be perceived and operated as a single, continuous urban complex. This intervention integrates the formerly disjointed exterior pedestrian paths into

a unified circulation system, providing a more coherent, legible, and walkable ground-level experience.

Through this spatial consolidation, the four malls—which previously lacked meaningful or functional public open space—collectively acquire the newly established green plaza as their shared POPS. In effect, the plaza not only fulfills the public-space requirement for each building but also amplifies its urban value by functioning as a common civic platform that enhances accessibility, visibility, and pedestrian activity across the entire district.

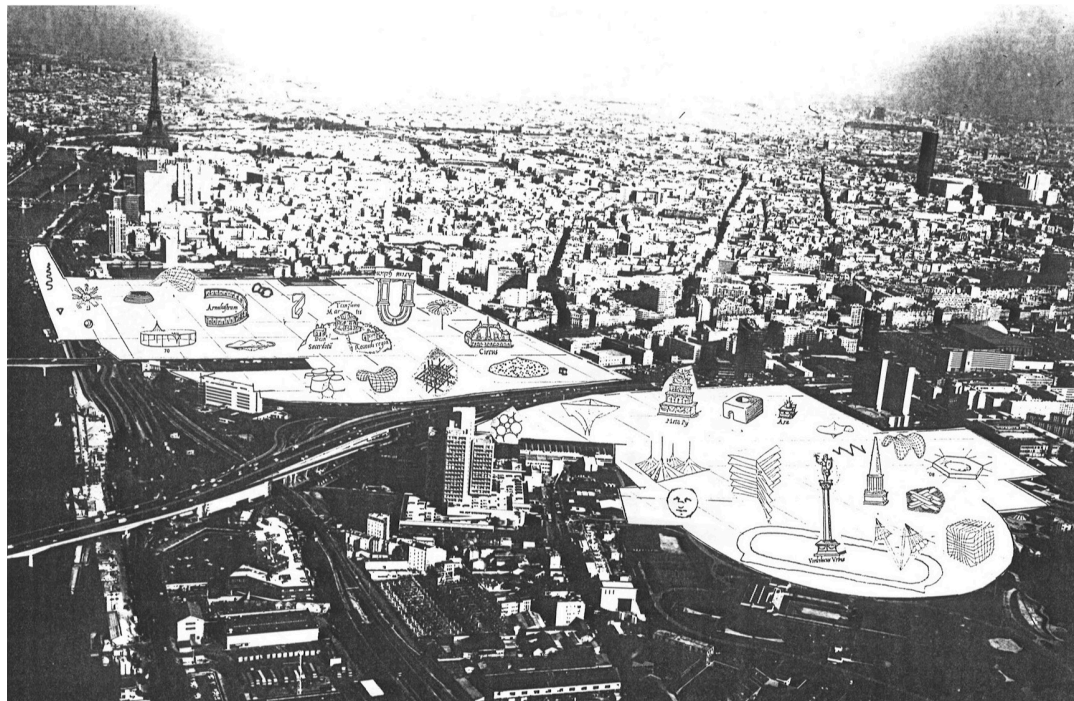


Fig. 78

Figure 78: Diagram of Exposition Universelle'89, Parc Citroën Cevennes

Figure Source: Drawing by Rem Koolhaas, OMA Architecture



Fig. 79

Figure 79: Concept of INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT, dynamic development of a park, Berlin

Figure Source: Drawing by Siri Frech, Melanie Humann, Christiane Kania,

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Fig. 80

Figure 80: Ground Floor Plan

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

6.2.2 Public Open Space

An additional arcade mass is introduced above the newly formed plaza to reorganize the currently fragmented spatial configuration of the four adjacent shopping malls. While these buildings previously operated as isolated commercial volumes with disconnected frontage spaces, the new arcade binds them into a single continuous spatial field. This integration allows the malls and their peripheral open areas to be perceived not as four separate entities but as a coherent urban complex with a unified public interface.

By consolidating the discontinuous exterior pedestrian routes into a clear, uninterrupted circulation spine, the project enhances legibility, improves walkability, and produces a more orderly and comprehensible pedestrian environment along the mall edges. The arcade further provides sheltered connectivity, reinforcing spatial continuity in both functional and experiential terms.

As a result of this reorganization, the four malls—historically lacking substantial or effective public open space—collectively gain the newly established green plaza as their shared POPS. This plaza not only satisfies public-space obligations but also significantly amplifies its civic value by operating as an integrated landscape that strengthens pedestrian engagement, improves visual coherence, and enriches the overall urban experience for daily users and visitors alike.

6.2.3 Density

By introducing an independent flagship-store-type commercial volume on top of the newly formed plaza, the project strategically redistributes retail programs that were previously over-concentrated within the existing shopping malls. This selective displacement eases the excessive spatial density, mitigates internal crowding, and relieves the long-standing functional compression that has constrained experiential quality within the malls.

Siting a freestanding commercial mass in the open plaza also recalibrates the relationship between interior commercial activities and the surrounding public realm. The new volume activates the exterior space, increases programmatic permeability, and promotes outward-facing retail behavior rather than the inward-oriented logic that has dominated the district. As a result, the plaza begins to operate not merely as leftover circulation space but as an extension of the commercial environment—supporting stay, encounter, and visual engagement.

Ultimately, the flagship structure diversifies the retail ecosystem, strengthens spatial porosity, and enhances the overall environmental quality of the district. By distributing program intensity more evenly across interior and exterior zones, the intervention supports more dynamic pedestrian patterns, encourages longer dwell times, and contributes to a more vibrant and contemporary urban commercial landscape.

6.2.4 Circulation

The existing pedestrian paths in front of the four shopping malls are narrowly configured, visually constrained by street vendors, and consequently reinforce a single, linear direction of movement. This condition restricts pedestrians' visual connectivity to the surrounding urban environment and limits perceptual access to the DDP. Such spatial compression not only reduces the quality of the walking experience but also diminishes opportunities for spontaneous engagement with adjacent commercial and cultural programs.

To address these limitations, the proposed design introduces landscaped elements along the pedestrian corridor and intersperses independent commercial volumes positioned in accordance with the natural flow of pedestrian movement. This alternating arrangement diversifies both sightlines and circulation patterns, gradually dissolving the previously fixed unidirectional flow and encouraging multidirectional pedestrian behavior.

As a result, pedestrians are able to visually engage with both the shopping malls and the DDP throughout their movement, gaining expanded spatial awareness and a more continuous sense of urban connectivity. The strategy enhances openness, strengthens spatial permeability, and improves the stay-oriented quality of the pedestrian environment, thereby transforming the corridor into a more dynamic, legible, and contextually integrated urban realm.

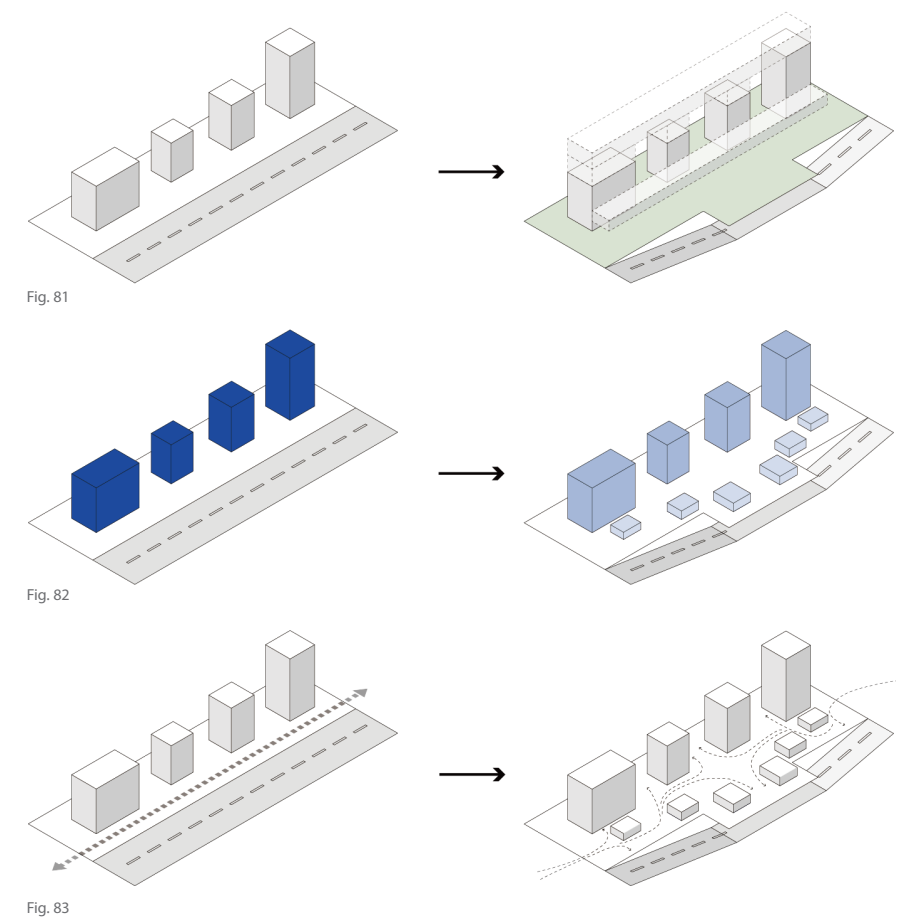


Figure 81: Diagram of Plaza Formation

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

Figure 82: Diagram of Density Distribution

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

Figure 83: Diagram of Circulation Diversification

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

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Fig. 84

Figure 84: Plaza aerial perspective

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

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6.3.1 Arcade Masterplan

An arcade structure is installed above the newly created plaza, spanning from the second to the fifth floor and connecting the four existing shopping malls. This arcade functions as a key programmatic device designed to guide pedestrian circulation and extend visitors' dwell time within the district. By establishing a commercially oriented pedestrian spine, the intervention stimulates foot traffic and contributes to the expansion of the surrounding retail ecosystem.

Furthermore, the newly introduced arcade directly links to the interior spaces of each shopping mall, enabling seamless movement between indoor and outdoor areas. This configuration produces a more diverse and three-dimensional circulation network, allowing visitors to navigate the site through multiple layers and spatial sequences rather than a single ground-level route.

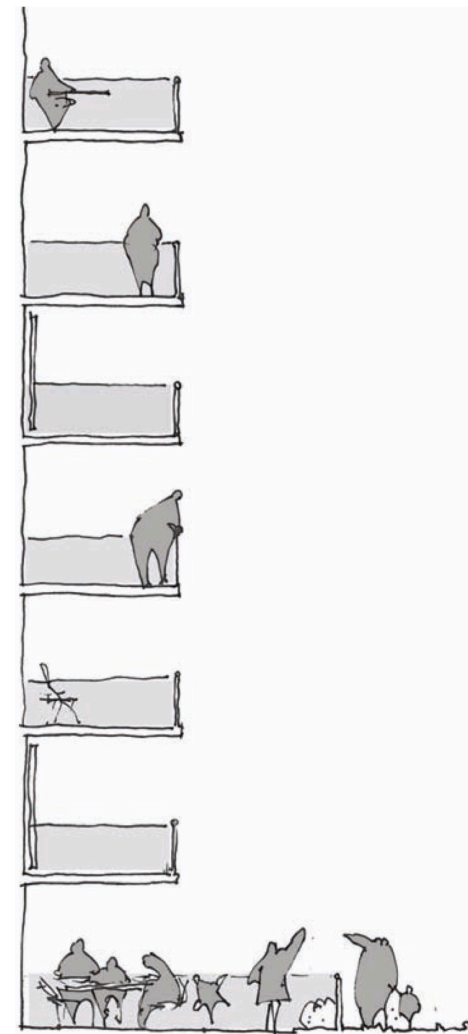


Fig. 85

Figure 85: Soft edge - The relationship between architecture and urban space

Figure Source: ©Copyright by Cities for People, Jan Gehl

6.3.2 Terraced Arcade

The newly proposed arcade serves as a spatial strategy designed to overcome the structural limitations of the existing Dongdaemun shopping malls, which are characterized by excessively dense merchandise layouts and inward-oriented, enclosed spatial configurations. By hollowing out the central volume of the new structure and adopting a progressively recessed, stepped form toward the upper floors, the design introduces a vertically expanding spatial sequence that fundamentally redefines circulation patterns within the district. The incorporation of large cascade-type escalators further encourages visitors to move naturally toward the upper levels, transforming vertical circulation into a seamless and intuitive experiential flow.

This stepped configuration ensures both visual openness and equitable visibility across all floors. By maximizing sightlines and distributing exposure evenly, upper-level retail units gain the same level of prominence typically afforded only to lower-level shops in conventional mall typologies. Consequently, the stepped arcade not only mitigates the problem of hierarchical spatial inequality within multi-story retail structures but also enhances spatial permeability, elevates the overall quality of stay, and supports the formation of a more dynamic, multi-layered commercial environment.

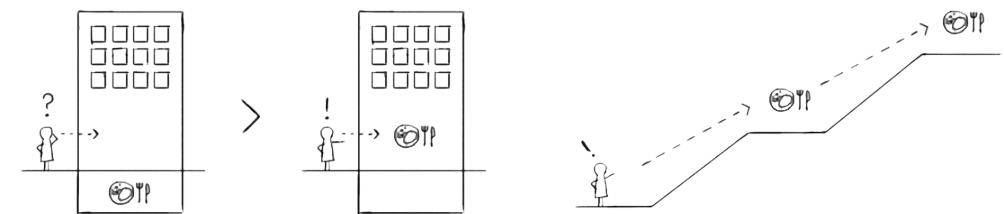


Fig. 86

Figure 86: Diagram of Terraced Arcade

Figure Source: ©Copyright by JOH & Company

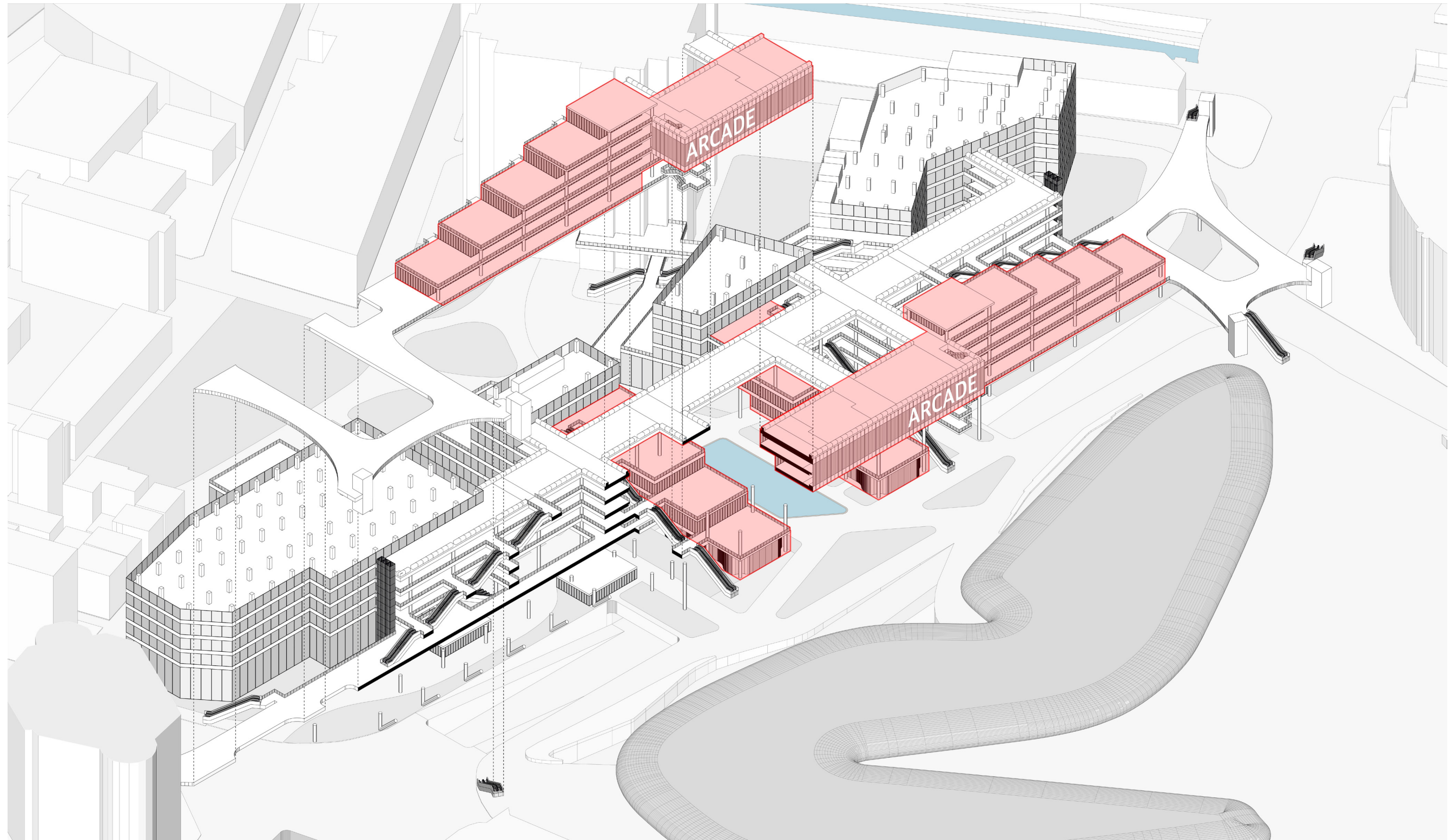


Fig. 87

Figure 87: Isometric diagram explaining the arcade

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

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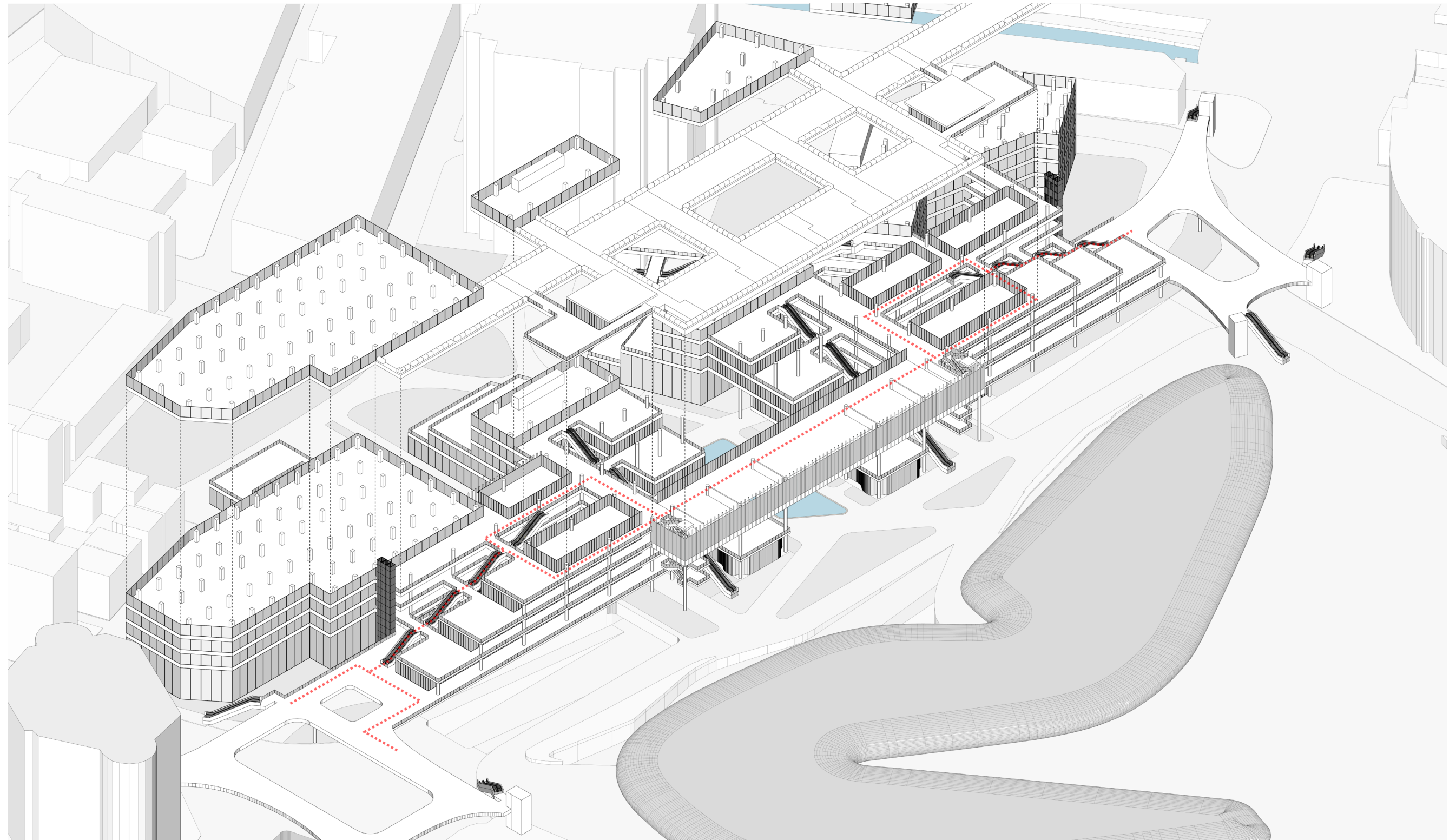


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Figure 88: Isometric diagram explaining the Pedestrian circulation

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

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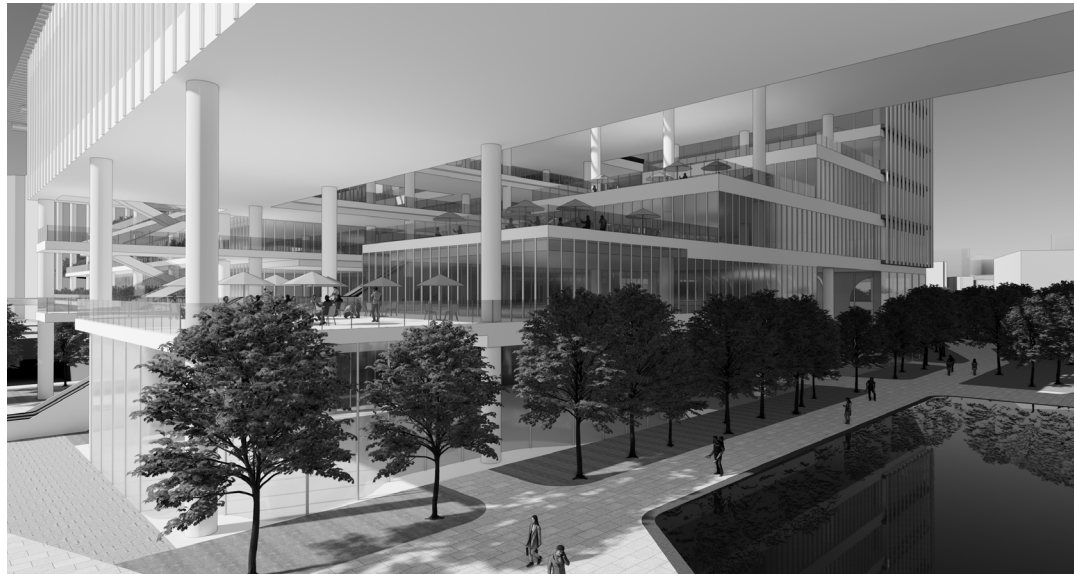


Fig. 89



Fig. 90

Figure 89&90: Perspective view of a terraced arcade

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

Furthermore, the terraces introduced on each level operate as key spatial devices that enhance both the distinctiveness of the arcade and the quality of user experience. The large roof structure, composed of transparent glazing, provides protection from rain while employing low-solar-transmittance glass to effectively block excessive direct sunlight. This combination creates an environmentally comfortable semi-outdoor condition that remains usable throughout the year.

As a result, users are able to enjoy visual openness and outward views while remaining sheltered from precipitation and harsh solar exposure, experiencing a hybrid spatial condition that merges the atmospheric qualities of outdoor space with the environmental stability of an interior. Such semi-open terraces significantly enrich the stay-oriented character of the arcade and reinforce its function as an inviting, climatically moderated public realm.

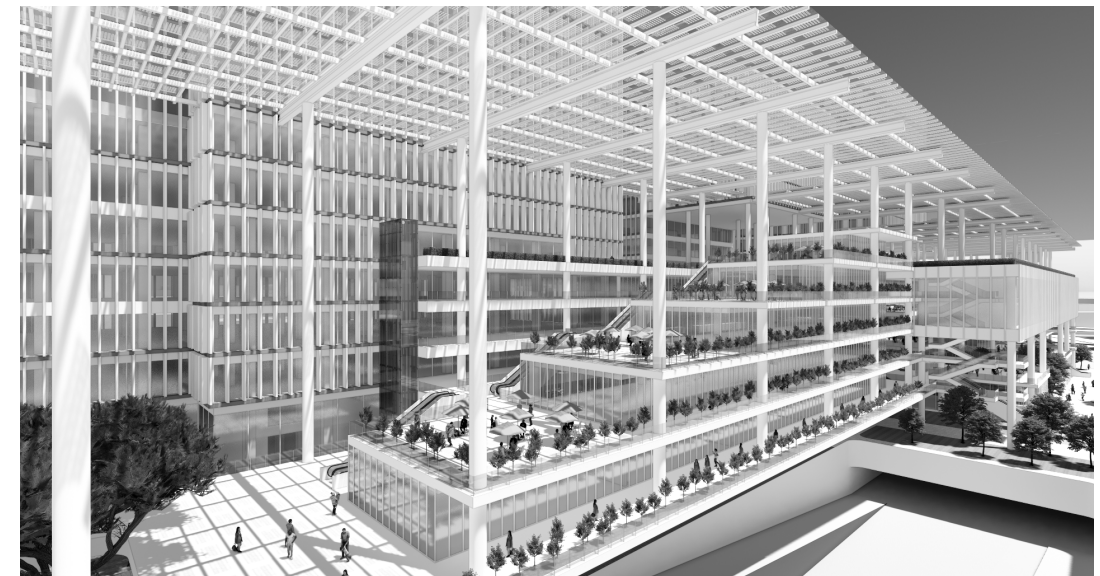


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Figure 91: Perspective view of a terraced arcade

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

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6.3.3 Commercial Pedestrian Spine

The second-floor pedestrian plane—originating from the elevated walkways that currently connect the shopping malls near Dongdaemun Station and extending toward the elevated paths surrounding Dongdaemun History & Culture Park—establishes a continuous commercial-oriented pedestrian spine running from Dongdaemun Station to the Dongdaemun History & Culture Park intersection. This elevated spine integrates arcades, terraces, and semi-outdoor spaces sheltered by a roof structure, thereby transforming what has traditionally functioned as a purely transitional corridor into a stay-oriented commercial and cultural realm.

Rather than merely enabling movement, the spatial configuration encourages users to pause, explore, and visually engage with the surrounding urban landscape. The combination of commercial programs, rest areas, and vantage points embedded along the route promotes a hybrid experience in which shopping, leisure, and observation occur simultaneously. As a result, the elevated pedestrian system becomes not only a connective infrastructure but also a curated urban promenade—one that supports extended dwell time, enhances pedestrian comfort, and reinforces the overall commercial vitality of the district.



Fig. 92

Figure 92: 2nd floor plan

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

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6.3.4 Mixed-Use Cultural Fashion Cluster

On the top level of the sixth-floor arcade, a rooftop garden—referred to as the Fashion Atelier Terrace—is established, incorporating a 260-meter promenade extending from Point A to Point B. The terrace accommodates designer studios, small-scale sewing workshops, co-working spaces, and retail programs, enabling designers to conduct the entire sequence of fashion production—design, fabrication, exhibition, and sales—within a single integrated environment.

Visitors can rest along the terrace while observing ongoing making and display processes, gaining direct insight into the spatialized production of fashion. The semi-outdoor configuration, constructed with a roof that shields users from rain and excessive solar exposure, provides a comfortable environment throughout the year. This setting also serves as a versatile cultural platform, capable of hosting fashion runways and a range of other public events.

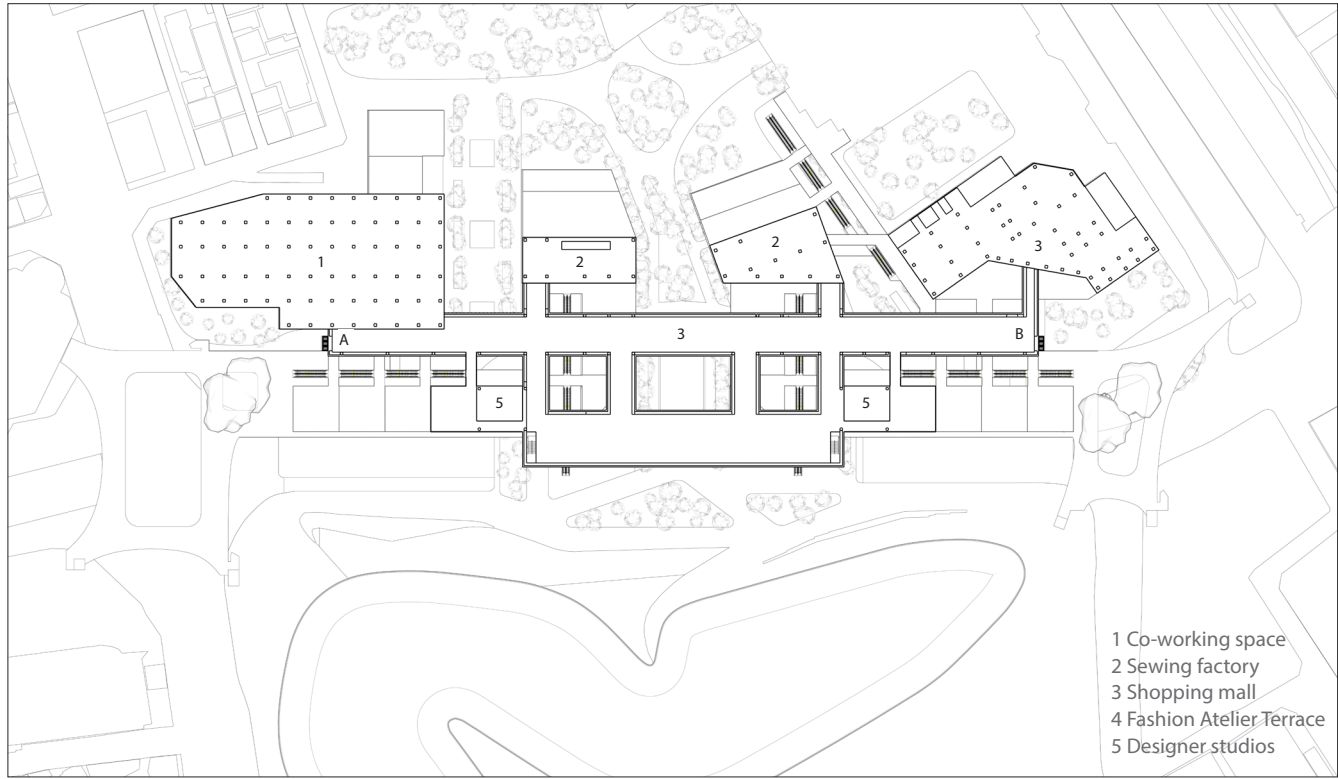


Fig. 93

Figure 93: 6nd floor plan
Figure Source: Drawing by Author

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The Fashion Atelier Terrace—a next-generation Dongdaemun fashion complex in which designers can undertake the full spectrum of activities ranging from garment production to exhibition, retail, and runway presentation—extends the project’s ambition far beyond conventional commercial revitalization. By consolidating these processes within a single, integrated environment, the terrace functions as an incubatory platform that supports emerging designers and strengthens the broader fashion ecosystem.

Furthermore, this spatial reconfiguration is expected to generate positive spillover effects across the surrounding urban districts. By fostering a productive and publicly accessible creative hub, the project contributes to repositioning Dongdaemun as Korea’s primary fashion district once again, restoring its historical significance while advancing its role within contemporary fashion culture and industry.



Fig. 94

Figure 94: Perspective view of Fashion Atelier Terrace

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

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Fig. 95

Figure 95: Isometric view of Master Plan

Figure Source: Drawing by Author

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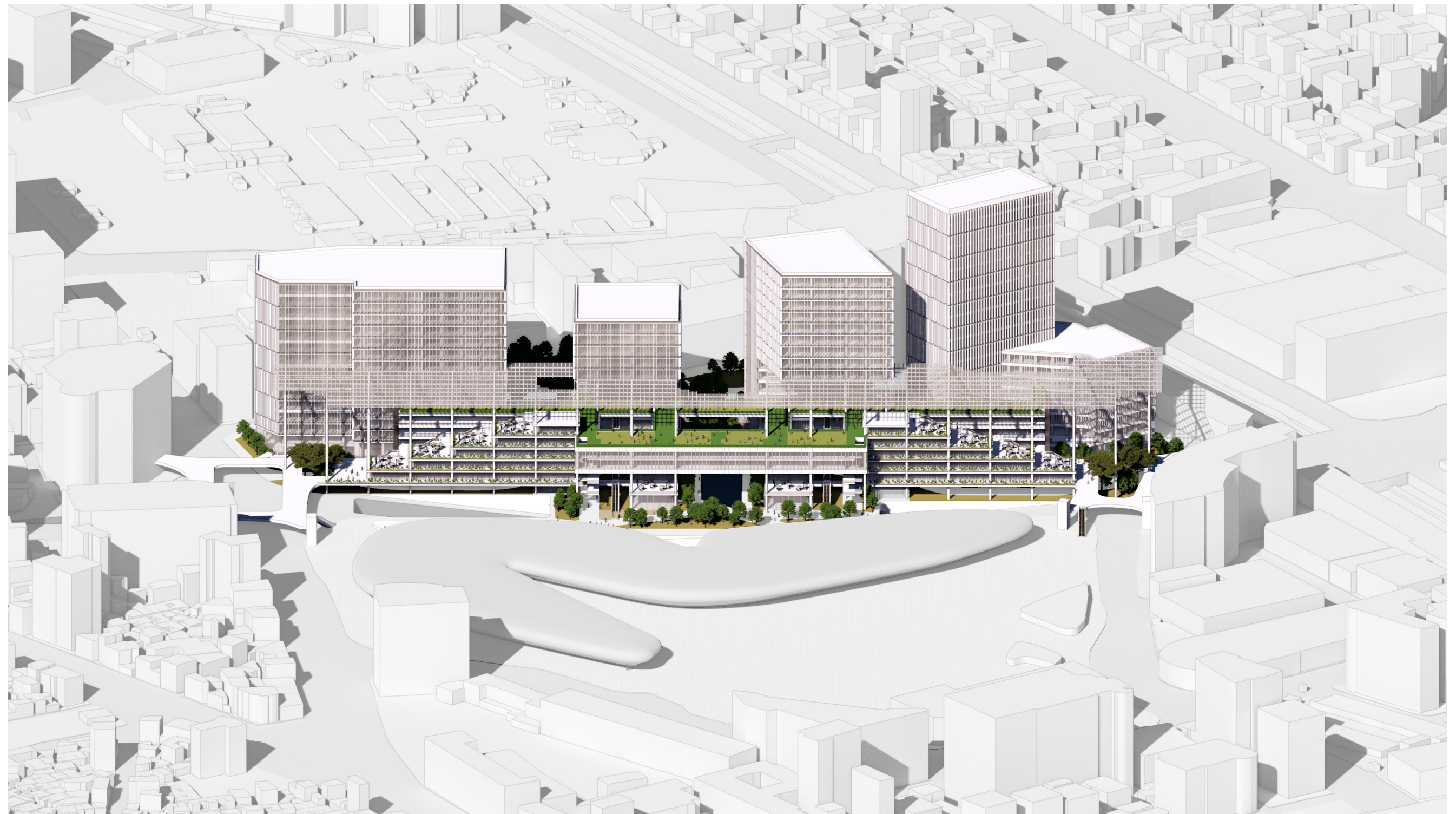


Fig. 96

Figure 96: Front view of Master Plan

Figure Source: Drawing by Author



CHAPTER 07: CONCLUSION

7.1 Conclusion

Figure 97: The photo of Commercial district in DongDaeMun
Figure Source: Photographed by the author

7.1 Conclusion

This study set out to explore the spatial and industrial revitalization of the Dongdaemun fashion district—particularly the area surrounding DDP—following its rapid decline after its historical peak. Through an examination of evolving consumption patterns and the emergence of hybrid cultural–commercial spaces, the research developed architectural and urban design strategies aimed at reconfiguring Dongdaemun as a contemporary fashion and cultural hub.

First, the theoretical review identified that Dongdaemun’s stagnation stems not merely from weakened commercial competitiveness but from its failure to adapt to structural shifts in consumer behavior—most notably the rise of e-commerce and the growing demand for experience-oriented, hedonic consumption. As offline retail environments increasingly evolve into hybrid cultural spaces that offer leisure, spectacle, and engagement, Dongdaemun requires a corresponding spatial transformation.

Second, international precedents demonstrated how declining or fragmented urban areas can be reprogrammed into vibrant public-cultural territories. Klyde Warren Park reconnected two previously divided urban districts by creating a deck park above a freeway, while the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II integrated disparate civic functions and public squares through an enclosed arcade. Both cases highlight the potential of expanding public open spaces and restructuring pedestrian networks to stimulate urban vitality.

Third, the assessment of Dongdaemun’s current conditions revealed high vacancy rates in shopping malls adjacent to DDP, narrow and visually congested pedestrian corridors, the absence of meaningful open spaces or greenery, and excessive internal commercial density—all of which

diminish spatial legibility and discourage pedestrian dwell time. Nevertheless, Dongdaemun retains a distinctive, cyclical industry structure—encompassing design, fabrication, production, and sales—positioning it as an ideal candidate for redevelopment into a hybrid cultural-production fashion cluster.

Fourth, the proposed design reconnects DDP and the adjacent malls by undergrounding a key segment of Jangchungdan-ro and creating a substantial public plaza above. A new arcade-based pedestrian spine links the four malls into a unified complex, while a flagship-store typology redistributes retail density outward, reducing congestion within existing buildings. The plaza incorporates greenery, water features, and cultural programs, transforming the district from a pass-through zone into a stay-oriented environment. Additionally, the stepped arcade establishes a commercial pedestrian axis that strengthens footfall and supports retail activation, while the approximately 260-meter Fashion Atelier Terrace—housing designer studios, sewing workshops, co-working spaces, and exhibition areas—functions as an integrated creative-production complex in which design, fabrication, presentation, and sales coexist.

Taken together, this research argues that Dongdaemun’s revitalization should not be conceived merely as commercial activation but rather as a broader transformation into a cultural-industrial complex grounded in restored urban infrastructure and strengthened publicness. The study underscores that contemporary regeneration strategies for declining urban commercial districts must extend beyond physical improvements to integrate industrial ecosystems, experiential structures, and spatial-cultural frameworks.

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Future research must articulate the technical implementation aspects not addressed herein—transportation engineering, structural and MEP systems, financial feasibility, and regulatory processes. Further work should also incorporate quantitative demand forecasting, economic-impact assessment, operational and phasing strategies, and models of collaboration among designers, manufacturers, and consumers. Such expanded investigation will be essential to ensuring that the proposed spatial framework can mature into a socially and economically sustainable fashion-industry ecosystem.

MODEL PHOTOGRAPH

Model materials: foam board, royal board, acrylic, 3D printing, LED strip light
Scale 300 :1

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-Focusing on Good Morning City, Hello APM, Migliore, and Doota Mall-

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THE CONTEMPORARY PROJECT

Bachelor's - SEJONG university

Research Proposal & Undergraduate Thesis

Jung-gu, Seoul

2025