

Re-reading the Pedestrian Mall: Race and Urban Landscape in the Memphis Mid-America Mall

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Keywords: pedestrian malls, Memphis, TN, civil rights, urban landscape, open work, relational aesthetics

The pedestrian mall became a fixture in declining American cities from the 1960s to the 1980s when landscape architects, municipal officials, and business associations created it as a design strategy to help downtown business districts compete with ascendant suburban malls, importing many of their spatial and programmatic strategies into the fabric of the city. Recent reassessments of pedestrian malls in planning journals have argued that factors such as tourism, climate, and even length contribute significantly to their ultimate success or failure. However, few have historically situated the mall-building phenomenon explicitly within the context of the civil rights movement, urban renewal, desegregation, and white flight—all factors that underwrote suburbanization and urban decline.

This paper reads one pedestrian mall—the Mid-America Mall in Memphis, TN (1976)—within the context of the city’s racial politics. The Mall was one of the longest in the United States at its construction, stretching ten blocks along the city’s Main Street and terminating at the pedestrianized Civic Center plaza. Utilizing abstract, repetitive forms first popularized by the landscape architect Lawrence Halprin, Memphis architects Gassner, Nathan and Browne designed the mall with a block-long water feature at its center, surrounded by “performance platforms” of varying sizes and heights.

In this paper, I propose two readings of the mall. The first focuses on the design and experience of the mall. Using theorists such as Umberto Eco and Nicholas Bourriaud, I articulate the emancipatory potential of its complex, abstract, repetitive forms for the individual visitor. Second, I read the development of the Mid-America Mall against the city’s Civil Rights-era protests and demonstrations, and argue that the design strategy served to disable the collective occupation of the street, discouraging large demonstrations from traversing established routes.

THE MID-AMERICA MALL, MEMPHIS, TN: ORIGINS AND CONTEXT

The Mid-America Mall was a 10-block-long pedestrian mall built on the north-south Main Street of Memphis in the mid-1970s and designed by local modernist architects Gassner, Nathan and Browne. The city commissioned the project in 1973, and it was constructed between 1974 and 1979. Extending from the Beale Street blues district at the southern end to the Memphis Civic Center Plaza at the northern end, the Mid-America Mall was intended to connect the city’s new Convention Center and government center with its most important entertainment district with a pedestrian-only space traversing the heart of its historic retail center, sitting just two blocks east of the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. The mall’s features were removed in the early 1990s when the city installed trolley line down the center of the street.

The Mid-America Mall was a relatively late entry in the twentieth century period of pedestrian mall-building in North America, which commenced with Victor Gruen’s design for the Kalamazoo Mall in western Michigan (1959), and which attempted to recreate an outdoor, pedestrian shopping experience like Gruen had known in Europe. The typology proved popular with city governments, particularly as many of them were underwritten by federal funding. During the years between 1959 and 1985, approximately 140 pedestrian malls were built throughout the United States, and today only about a third of them remain in existence.¹

The factors that motivated Memphis to construct the Mid-America Mall are essentially the same factors that underwrote the late-twentieth century fascination with mall-building as a whole. After World War II, the creation of freeway systems allowed automobile-owning workers to live farther and farther outside of the city, driving the creation of new suburbs and suburban shopping centers, thus draining the central business district of its traditional consumer base. Suburban sprawl was also driven by racial conflict in many American cities, with whites fleeing the city as Black communities’ demands to end to segregation were affirmed by the Supreme Court and gradually enacted in schools, public transit systems, and lunch counters across the nation. Urban renewal projects of the 1950s and 1960s further

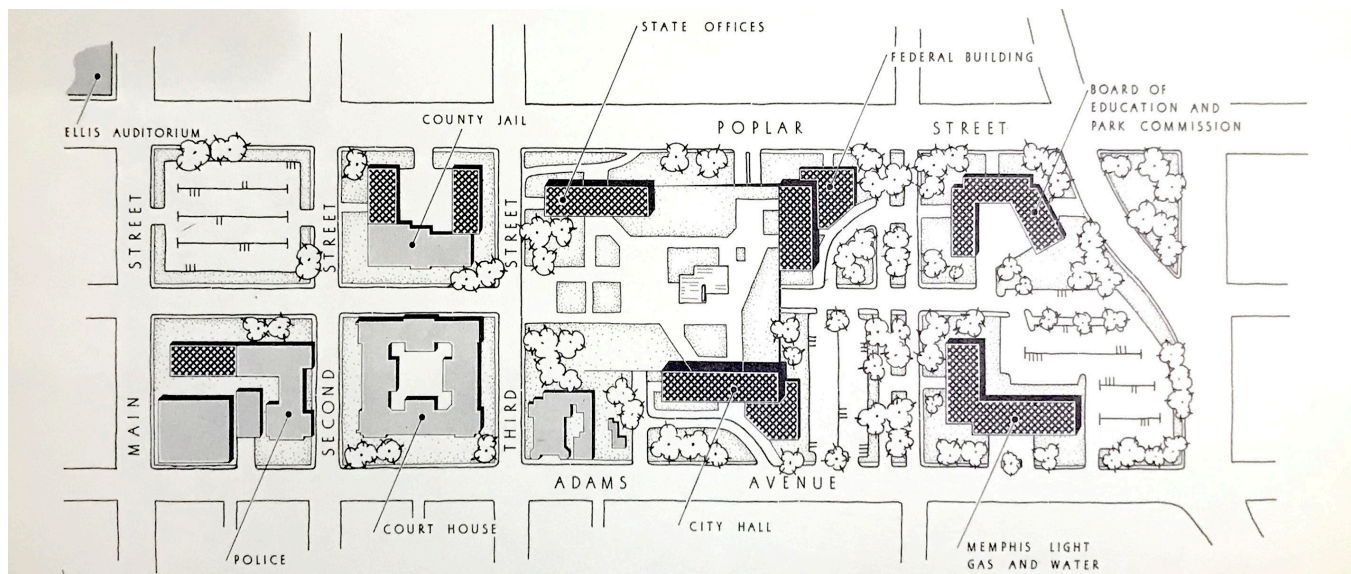


Figure 1. Proposed Civic Center Plan, from Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Report upon the Comprehensive Plan* (1955)

weakened the urban core, clearing so-called “blight” but without ensuring adequate replacement housing or commercial space. Over time, this led to large pockets of vacant land in formerly dense, vibrant commercial districts and residential neighborhoods. The situation was exacerbated in Memphis and other cities by aggressive annexation policies that incorporated new suburbs into the city, only to decentralize the city’s population and assume responsibility for their infrastructural improvements to the detriment of older parts of the city.²

The resulting shift in white middle- and upper-class families to the suburban periphery had devastating consequences for urban cores nationwide, and Memphis was no exception. As of the mid-1970s, greater downtown Memphis was described as “an area of crumbling warehouses and industrial districts; a maze of obsolete railyards, large public housing projects, the home of many of the city’s black population; and the man-made deserts implicit in fast urban renewal projects.”³ Main Street, Memphis’ historic commercial core, suffered from dwindling numbers of shoppers, workers, and visitors. Marcou O’Leary, and Associates (MOA), Washington D.C.-based planning consultants who completed a study and plan for downtown Memphis in 1973, found that “A view of Main Street, the principal shopping street in Memphis, presents a collection of buildings in a wide variety of sizes, conditions, and styles, a jumble of unattractive signs, a noticeable number of upper-story vacancies, and an expanse of pavement only half-heartedly maintained.”⁴ It was, they concluded, “old, unkept, and generally unattractive,” with an “exaggerated and pervasive community image of downtown as crime-ridden and unpleasant.”⁵ This view of downtown was inflected by the White community’s segregationist attitudes and distrust of African-Americans. As Black residents shopped downtown in greater numbers, Whites avoided it in equal measure. The closure of all

downtown hotels and the slow corporate exodus to the suburbs led to office and retail closings, all contributing to a feeling of desolation on the once-bustling streets. Shoppers complained about the inconveniences of patronizing downtown merchants, particularly the expense and inconvenience of parking, the dispersal of shops over several blocks, the lack of direct freeway access, and the run-down streetscape, pointing out that nothing was available downtown that couldn’t be had more easily and pleasantly in new suburban shopping malls that lined the east-west arterial of Poplar Avenue.

The idea to introduce a pedestrian mall into downtown Memphis originated with the city’s Downtown Association and Chamber of Commerce in the late 1960s. The gradual decline of the urban core at mid-century prompted business leaders to intervene in collaboration with the city government to address the main complaints that shoppers leveled at the worsening downtown experience. Moreover, they sought to build on the momentum of the city’s own new investment in downtown Memphis: the creation of a new Civic Center built in the mid-1960s.

Located at the north end of Central Business District, the Civic Center created a singular governmental service center that grouped a new City Hall, County Administration Building, Federal Building, and State Office Building around a vast plaza that was bisected by Main Street. The creation of the Civic Center was itself designed to bolster Downtown Memphis, an idea created under the progressive mayoral administration of Edmund Orgill, who engaged the St. Louis-based urban planners, Harland Bartholomew Associates (HBA), to develop a comprehensive plan (1955).⁶ HBA’s Civic Center plan comprised ten square blocks to the east of Main Street, placing the primary pedestrian plaza of the civic center at a site removed from the retail



Figure 2. Proposed street theater, Main Street Mall. Marcou, O’Leary and Associates, *A Mall for Downtown Memphis* (1972)..

core. [Fig. 1] This siting was designed to avoid the congestion of the still-active commercial center, and to take advantage of an existing urban renewal plan to clear the area of run-down, obsolete buildings. In the late 1950s, a volunteer group of designers from the League of Memphis Architects (LMA) further developed the scheme, orienting its more compact six-square block design along the north-south axis of Main Street where the police station and an important auditorium were already located, positioning the Civic Center as a terminus and anchor to the CBD.⁷ As they were constructed in the mid-1960s, the Civic Center buildings hewed closely to the LMA’s plan. The plaza design featured a large round fountain, forcing Main Street to bend around it. In addition, one block to the north, the Cook Convention Center also opened in 1968.

Attempting to build on the momentum of the Civic Center, business leaders visited cities around the United States and Canada in the late 1960s, seeking ideas to revitalize Downtown Memphis. Inspired by Minneapolis’ Nicollet Mall, the Fresno Pedestrian Mall, and other revitalization measures in St. Louis and Atlanta,⁸ Downtown Association leaders felt strongly that a pedestrian mall would draw shoppers back to downtown retail establishments. Using private funds, they hired Marcou, O’Leary and Associates (MOA) to study downtown’s existing buildings,

parking, traffic, and economic outlook, and to develop a plan for a Main Street Mall as well as a framework plan for the larger Downtown area.

DESIGNING THE MALL – AN OPEN WORK?

MOA proposed to concentrate retail outlets in the southern half of downtown Main Street along a pedestrian mall, thereby recreating the conveniences of a suburban shopping mall in the heart of the city. A 23’ wide island in the center of the street featured street furniture, pylons with integrated lighting and services, and canopied areas for commercial and community activities. At the center, across from Commerce Square, they designed a small stage with terraced seating for community productions intended to enliven the street scene. [Fig. 2] MOA utilized triangular forms to emphasize diagonal views and paths from one side of the street to the other, encouraging pedestrians along a meandering path. On the northern half of Main Street where they identified more office space than retail usages, they proposed a “partial mall” that retained vehicular traffic on either side of a narrower landscaped strip, essentially creating a boulevard that ran through the Civic Center to the Convention Center.⁹

The city hired Gassner, Nathan and Browne to develop MOA’s plan for the Main Street Mall into an implementable design in

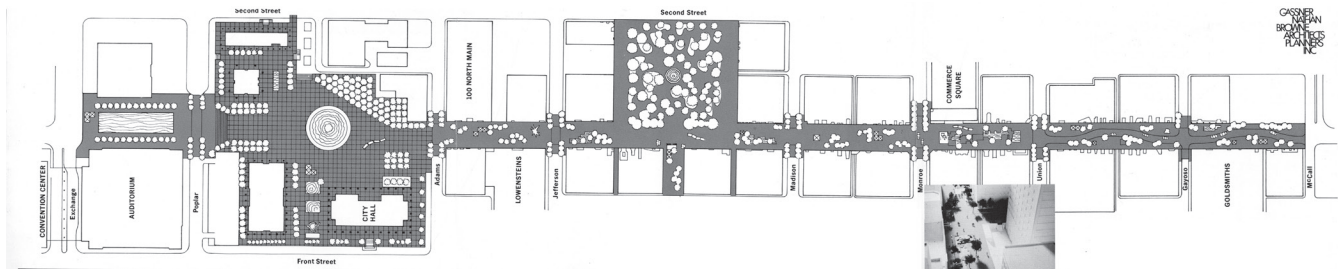


Figure 3. Mid-America Mall plan, Gassner, Nathan and Browne, untitled brochure (1974).

1973, and in the process, they made several significant modifications. Their scheme, developed by architect Louis Ponders, removed vehicular traffic from Main Street, but retained a meandering undelineated pathway by which emergency and delivery vehicles could access the right-of-way. Utilizing an 8"x8" dark grey brick as the predominant material of the ground plane and major forms, GNB transformed the street into an abstracted cubic landscape of fountains and platforms, accented by benches, planters, and kiosks in raw concrete and wood. To prepare for the design work, the firm's architects visited other pedestrian malls, such as the Sparks Street Mall in Ottawa, Canada (1967), and the Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis, MN (1967) designed by famed landscape architect Lawrence Halprin—the latter of which featured a curving vehicular lane limited to buses and taxi traffic, a form which Ponders reproduced in the Mid-America Mall design.

Recalling the repetitive rectilinear forms of Halprin's early work, such as in the Auditorium Fountain in Portland (1970) and Denver's Skyline Park (1972-5), GNB's design stacked the square brick into cubic platforms that were interspersed with fountains and water jets, and opened up pit-like rectilinear pools sunk into the ground plane. [Fig. 4] These were interspersed with trees, conventional wood benches, and concrete and timber canopies that lent variety to the otherwise austere streetscape. Unlike the rigidly defined island in the center of the street proposed by MOA, the elements in GNB's design were scattered through the streetscape, sometimes pushed to one side of the street or the other in order to maintain a meandering vehicular access path. The mall was further punctuated by large abstract sculptures, and a tensile fabric canopy that accommodated street performances, nodding back to MOA's amphitheater proposal.

The designers sought to create areas of interest and respite throughout the mall, allowing shoppers moments of repose as they stopped for a snack, to people watch, or to rest during their shopping excursion. The integration of multiple functional possibilities into one architectural strategy allowed for multiple interpretations, inviting visitors to interact with the forms in a more open-ended, creative, and mindful way. Visitors could choose whether to sit, lay, or climb on a platform; children could splash in the water features while ladies in high heels stepped

around them. Daring teenagers could jump from platform to platform, leaping over pools amid the rigidly gridded space created by the stacked bricks. Unlike the primarily visual interaction invited by more monumental, modernist fountain designs, the complex forms of the Mid-America Mall water features elicited kinesthetic interaction from passers-by.

In many ways, the participatory landscapes of the 1970s like the Mid-America Mall can be understood as "open works," described by Umberto Eco in 1960 as objects or environments that were both open to multiple interpretations as well as to multiple *performances*. That is to say, their openness is created through a degree of incompleteness or indeterminateness that allows for a variety of responses and interactions outside of pre-determined conventional forms.¹⁰ In the case of Mid-America Mall, this openness is most clearly manifested in the abstracted repeated forms that provide for a variety of functions without determining any particular function.

This widespread development in landscape design was part of a larger movement in literature and the arts, in which Roland Barthes' "death of the author" coincided with a "birth of the reader," highlighting the importance of audience participation and engagement in the "performance" of the work.¹¹ Nicholas Bourriaud's relational aesthetics offer a further framework by which to understand the design of the Mid-America Mall, and other landscapes like it. Bourriaud argues that "art is a state of encounter" – but the encounter is not simply between the viewer and the artwork, but with others who are brought together by art and whose interrelations are structured by that art.¹² Bourriaud's conception of relational art can be expanded to include relational *landscapes*, as "spaces where we can elaborate alternative forms of sociability, critical models and moments of constructed conviviality."¹³ Unlike the forms of participation proposed by Giancarlo de Carlo or the "Take Park" process utilized by Lawrence Halprin, in which the architect invites the public into the design process, landscapes like the Mid-America Mall invite a unique form of participation by presenting visitors with unfamiliar forms and risky physical conditions. This approach largely avoids conventions of symbol and archetype to offer visitors the possibility of emancipation from those conventions.



Figure 4. Scenes from Mid-America Mall, 1976-1982. *Memphis Press-Scimitar* newspaper morgue, Special Collections Department, University of Memphis Libraries.

MAIN STREET AS BLACK SPACE

A second interpretation of Mid-America Mall is possible when read against events that took place on Main Street and in the Civic Center Plaza just two years prior to its conceptualization by Marcou, O’Leary and Associates—events that unfolded at precisely the same time that the leaders of the Downtown Association formulated their plans for the mall. Downtown Memphis was not simply utilized by Black Memphians in the course of their daily lives, but it became the backdrop to the city’s most intense civil rights struggles. In the mid-1960s, Memphis was considered to be a city that had largely avoided the violence and upheaval of civil rights protests that occurred in cities across the region, including Birmingham, Little Rock, and Selma. Instead, during this time, Memphis desegregated schools, libraries, and other public spaces gradually and quietly in the hopes of keeping the peace among city residents. In fact, city leaders worked with editors of the city’s two major newspapers, *The Commercial Appeal* and the *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, to keep news of sit-ins and other protests out of their pages, thus keeping White suburban communities from learning about local conflicts.

The détente came to an end with the 1968 Sanitation Workers’ Strike.¹⁴ The city’s largely Black workforce of the Sanitation Department suffered low pay (far less than workers in other cities) and were denied overtime pay, they lacked the proper gear and facilities, and they worked with outdated and malfunctioning equipment. Workers were managed by a cadre of unsympathetic White supervisors whose ranks they were blocked from joining. Finally, the workers overcame infiltrating informants and retaliatory firings to unionize, but the city refused to recognize the union or engage in collective bargaining. The Sanitation workers’ dissatisfactions intensified in 1968, when conservative, anti-union Democrat Henry Loeb began his second (non-consecutive) mayoral term. Empowered by a new strong-mayor form of municipal governance approved in a 1966 referendum, Loeb appointed and controlled the Director of the Department of Public Works, forcing the department to walk back the concessions made to sanitation workers and other Public Works employees by the previous mayoral administration. The conflict came to a head when two Black sanitation workers were crushed to death inside of a malfunctioning garbage truck. The city offered meager compensation to the workers’ families, which prompted outcries that led to the strike.

The frequent, sometimes twice daily, protest marches of the sanitation workers and their allies were concentrated in downtown Memphis, often originating at the Clayborn Temple south of Beale street, proceeding up Main Street, and concluding at the Civic Center Plaza where Alfred Aydelott’s Brutalist design for the Memphis City Hall made for an imposing and symbolic backdrop for their demonstrations. Repeated meetings with Mayor Loeb and the City Council left workers empty-handed, as Loeb refused to accede to any of the workers’ demands. Seeking to add additional pressure, the NAACP organized a boycott of downtown

businesses. The organizers believed that business owners were well positioned to influence the mayor and city council, and they recognized that many government officials also had ownership stakes in Downtown businesses or buildings.

In mid-March 1968, civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. came to Memphis to bolster the sanitation workers and frame what some saw as purely economic demands squarely within the realm of civil rights. Speaking to a crowd of more than 15,000 people, King called for a general work stoppage for all Blacks in Memphis, and he planned to return the following week for a general strike and mass demonstration. Delayed due to inclement weather, King returned to lead the March 28 demonstration, during which workers carrying “I am a Man” signs followed the now-familiar route up Main Street to the Civic center. Along the way, however, the march turned riotous (whether because of disgruntled youth or covert FBI operatives) with shattered windows and looting along Beale and Main Streets. In response, Mayor Loeb declared martial law and called in 4,000 National Guard troops armed with bayoneted rifles. He imposed a strict curfew, essentially placing Black neighborhoods in east and south Memphis on lockdown. Despite these measures, workers continued marching, carrying their placards down Main Street with the menacing bayonets only feet away.

King returned to deliver his “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech on April 3, 1968, the day before he was fatally shot while standing on a balcony at the Lorraine Motel. Even King’s assassination did not move Mayor Loeb to negotiate with the sanitation workers. Protests and violence erupted in cities around the country. In Memphis, a massive demonstration of more than 20,000 people took place on April 8, during which marchers followed the well-trodden path to the Civic Center surrounded by National Guard troops and tanks. [Fig. 5] It was not until President Lyndon B. Johnson sent his Undersecretary of Labor James Reynolds to mediate that Loeb finally acquiesced to the union’s demands.

Media accounts of the protests were unsympathetic to the workers. Images that proliferated in the news depicted Black crowds facing off with the National Guard amid protests and violence in the city’s historic commercial core, solidifying White fear and mistrust of the Black community. These emotions extended to the urban fabric of the city itself. The negative trends affecting downtown accelerated, as the White population became calcified in their belief that the city was unsafe, riddled with crime, and largely the domain of the working class. In other words, Black. As a result, downtown merchants took a double hit when white suburbanites ceased shopping there and when black residents engaged in boycotts. These protests were not limited to the Sanitation Workers’ strike, but occurred during the 1969 Black Monday protests as well, when the Memphis NAACP demanded more than token school integration and representation on the school board. This resulted in massive student strikes,

renewed downtown marches, and a further boycott of downtown businesses.¹⁵

In the vacuum created by white flight, the city’s Black population came to constitute the majority of shoppers still patronizing downtown establishments. White residents explicitly cited the Black presence there as the reason for their hesitance to visit:

The niggers have just took [sic] over. I don’t have a thing against them. I am not trying to down them...If they could move the colored people out somewhere else, then maybe we would [go] down if we could be safe down there,’ one man said. [...] ‘You can see colored girls standing on the streets asking for anything. There’s just too much junk,’ a woman said.¹⁶

With the *de jure* segregation of public spaces no longer legally permissible, for the most part, Whites sought *de facto* segregation of the city through white flight,¹⁷ thereby leaving the downtown to those that remained due to economic or other factors, and in the process, ultimately recoding it as Black space.¹⁸

A SECOND READING: MALL AS BARRIER TO COLLECTIVE ACTION

In the context of downtown Memphis as a racially coded, politically fraught space, the meaning of Mid-America Mall, both its design and its reception, shifts profoundly. The emancipatory potential of “open work” urban landscapes is profoundly *individual*. One may enjoy the freedom to engage the forms or move through its spaces in nonpredetermined ways, or experiment with how best to occupy a brick platform while lunching with a companion or two. But its emancipation does not—it cannot—extend to the collective, especially not the longstanding emancipatory needs of Black communities in America. Indeed, the design of the Mid-America Mall can be illuminatingly read as a discouragement, and even a prophylactic, against the mass demonstrations associated with the Civil Rights movement.

When Black residents took to the streets in 1968 and 1969, Main Street and the Civic Center served as a potent backdrop for their demonstrations. There, they were surrounded by the lunch counters they had only recently been permitted to patronize, or the seat of city government that had only been opened to them by the 1966 charter reforms that jettisoned commission governance in favor of a council with members elected by district.¹⁹ The demonstrations filled the sidewalks and streets, radically transforming a space of commerce into a space of protest by filling it with marching bodies, signs, and chants—all to the exclusion of cars, buses, shoppers or workers. The individualism and consumerism of shopping was replaced by the collective action of protest, bringing with it the specter of violence—though whether one feared violence from demonstrators or the police was a matter of perspective.

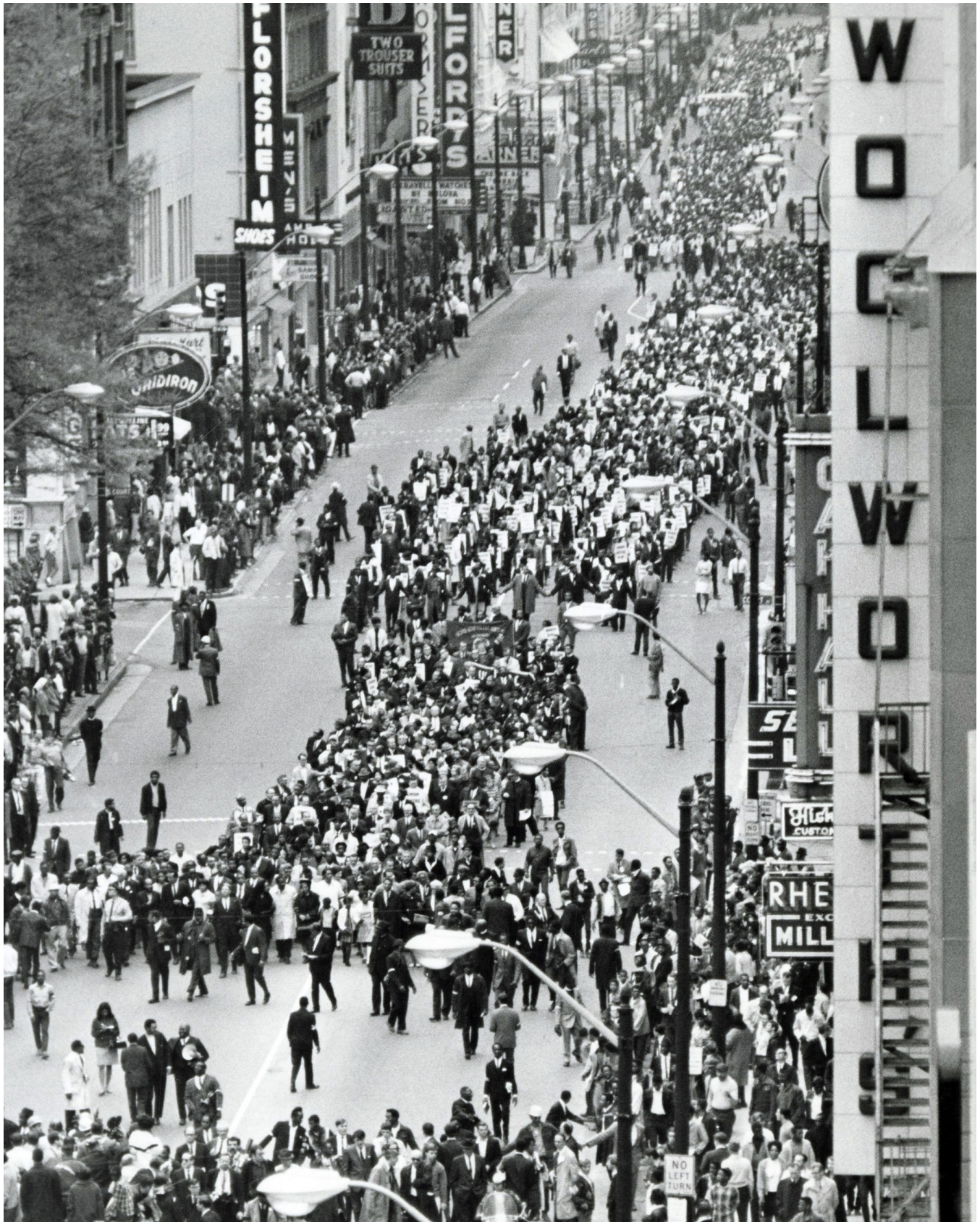


Figure 5. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial March, North Main Street, Memphis, April 8, 1968. Photograph by Barney Sellers. *Commercial Appeal* newspaper morgue, Special Collections Department, University of Memphis Libraries

In the wake of late 1960s protests, downtown authorities undoubtedly desired to avoid any replay of mass marches that so damaged the reputation of downtown Memphis and harmed businesses located there. In response, GNB's mall design filled up the street with benches, trees, poles and columns. It dissolved parts of the street with fountains that were little more than unprotected rectangular holes in the ground. As GNB designer Louis Pounders admitted, the Mall did not facilitate the assembly of large crowds, because there was "too much in the way" for large processions.²⁰ Moreover, the design proposed large areas of the mall to be filled with massive "fortress"-like aggregations of blocky forms of varying heights that were difficult to climb, particularly by a crowd moving *en masse*.²¹ By occupying the street with objects easily negotiated by individuals or small groups, but that were significant barriers to large groups, city officials and designers effectively eliminated the possibility for it to be used as a place of protest.

Neither interpretation of the mall—whether a platform for individual emancipation or a barrier to collective expression—has been explicitly articulated as an intention by the designers, city officials, or downtown businessmen who helped to create it. Yet, its effects are plain to see in its design strategies, photographs of the site, and newspaper accounts of its reception and continued regulation. The complex forms of late twentieth century urban landscapes were produced by architects who were often deeply invested in participatory processes, and who sought to provide designs that would enliven public space. The case of the Mid-America Mall demonstrates that the "public" addressed and facilitated by these designs was narrowly, racially defined and limited in ways that were palatable to municipal and business leader.

ENDNOTES

The author gratefully acknowledges the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, a grant from whom supported the research and writing of this paper.

1. Dave Amos, "Understanding the Legacy of Pedestrian Malls," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 86, no. 1 (2020). 15.
2. Roger Biles, "Epitaph for Downtown: The Failure of City Planning in Post-World War Two Memphis," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (1985). 279.
3. Joseph Weiler and Jefferson Riker, "Are Memphis Blues Fatal?," *The Commercial Appeal*, April 27, 1975.
4. Marcou, O'Leary and Associates, *Where Do We Go from Here: A Planning Program for Downtown Memphis, the Regional Center* (Washington, D.C.: Marcou, O'Leary Associates, 1971). 41.
5. *Ibid.* 44.
6. Harland Bartholomew Associates, *A Report Upon the Comprehensive Plan, Memphis, Tennessee*. (St. Louis: n.p., 1955).
7. League of Memphis Architects and Memphis Civic Center Advisory Committee, *Memphis Civic Center* (Memphis: n.p., 1959). See volume 3 for the design proposal.
8. In the late 1960s, the Downtown Association brought in speakers, such as Canadian planner Vincent Ponte, and organized trips to cities like St. Louis, Atlanta, and Minneapolis to generate ideas for the revitalization of downtown Memphis. These activities were widely covered in the Memphis Press-Scimitar, and collected in the University of Memphis Special Collections, Memphis Press-Scimitar morgue file 1081.
9. In a subsequent report, Marcou, O'Leary and Associates developed a number of other proposals for downtown Memphis, including a megastructure called the New Promenade that featured terraced housing stretching several blocks down the city's bluffs on the Mississippi River. O'Leary and Associates Marcou, Downtown Memphis: Plan and Program for Downtown Development (Washington, D.C.: Marcou, O'Leary and Associates, 1974).
10. See Chapter 1, "The Poetics of the Open Work," in Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, trans. Anna Conconi (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).
11. Roland Barthes, "Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).
12. Nichlolas Bourriaud, "Relational Aesthetics," in *Participation*, ed. Claire Bishop (London: Whitechapel, 2006). 162.
13. *Ibid.* 166.
14. I have drawn from accounts of the Sanitation Workers' Strike contained in the following texts: Justin Faircloth, "From Jim Crow to Gentrification: Race, Urban Renewal, Architecture and Tourism in the Urban South, Memphis, Tennessee, 1954-1991" (dissertation, University of Virginia, 2013); Michael K. Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King's Last Campaign* (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2008); Sharon D. Wright, *Race, Power, and Political Emergence in Memphis* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Taylor and Franis Group, 2000).
15. For more on the Black Monday protests, see Wright, *Race, Power, and Political Emergence in Memphis*. 71-74.
16. Joseph Weiler and Jefferson Riker, "Are Memphis Blues Fatal?," *The Commercial Appeal*, April 27, 1975.
17. For the distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* segregation, see Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York; London Liveright Publishing Corporation, a division of W.W. Norton & Company, 2018). vii-xv.
18. Faircloth similarly argued that White Memphians began to view downtown as "black space" in the years following the late 1960s civil rights actions in Faircloth, "From Jim Crow to Gentrification." 191.
19. Wright, *Race, Power, and Political Emergence in Memphis*. 60.
20. Louis Pounders (architect, ANF Architects, and project designer of the Mid-America Mall with Gassner Nathan and Browne), interview with the author, October 7, 2021.
21. Carol Coletta (President and CEO, Memphis River Parks Partnership, formerly community relations manager, Center City Commission, Memphis), interview with the author, October 19, 2021.