

NORTHLAND REGIONAL SHOPPING CENTER

Owner: Northland Center, Inc., subsidiary of J. L. Hudson Co.

Location: Suburban Detroit, Michigan

Completion Date: March, 1954.

Photo Credits: As shown on photographs

Aerial view: Michael Honos Photographic Studios

Mall view: ~~Michael Honos Photographic Studios~~ Ben Schnall

Floor plan: Tenant Layout, or Basement. (Either may be used)
See text incorporated, or printed below plan.

Biographical data:

Victor Gruen, senior partner Victor Gruen Associates, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago. Pioneer in regional shopping centers: Eastland, Detroit; Southdale, Minneapolis, others. Equally known for urban renewal, redevelopment projects: Midtown Plaza (Rochester, N.Y.); Fresno, Cal.; Paterson, N. J.; Stamford, Conn.; others. Creator of widely adapted "Fort Worth Plan." Partners: R. L. Baumfeld; Edgardo Contini; Ben Southland; Karl Van Leuven; Herman Guttman.

Photograph Release: Signed and attached.

GRUEN, Victor
Submitted for MID-CENTURY
ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA

Victor Gruen Associates were the architects for Northland Center. This firm is a partnership, Victor Gruen being the principal partner, with Rudolf Baumfeld, Edgardo Contini, and Karl O. Van Leuven, Jr., the other three partners.

Since the biographical form does not lend itself to an accurate description of this organization, we have taken the liberty of submitting additional biographical information of each of the partners, together with a history of the organization and other work performed.

The Northland Center project was handled by the Detroit Office under the direction of Karl O. Van Leuven, Jr.

ABOUT THE PRINCIPALS

VICTOR GRUEN was born in Vienna, Austria, and received his architectural training at the Technological Institute and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. He was certified as an architect in Vienna in 1929, and by 1932 he had started his own office.

During the following six years his practice flourished and expanded and covered a wide range of architectural and design fields: from store fronts to complete store interiors -- from apartment remodelling to the design of large residences. His interest in the inter-relationships between commercial and residential building led him into projects involving city planning and replanning, not only in Austria, but in Germany and Czechoslovakia. The more important and contributory aspects of his work were covered and are on record in a large number of European architectural magazines, and a monograph, "Victor Gruen and His Work" was published in Austria in 1935.

He left Austria in the spring of 1938 and started work in New York in the summer of the same year.

RUDOLPH BAUMFELD, who is in charge of the Los Angeles office, was born in Vienna and studied at the Technical Institute and the Federal Academy of Fine Arts. He was licensed as an architect in Vienna, and had an independent practice and offices in Austria and Czechoslovakia. From these offices he designed and supervised projects in most of the countries of Middle Europe.

RUDOLPH BAUMFELD, cont'd

Mr. Baumfeld is responsible for the coordination of general research programs in such varying fields as merchandising, analysis of city growth patterns, and traffic studies. He directs the design and planning of all projects handled by the west coast office.

EDGARDO CONTINI is the chief engineer and coordinates all engineering research, planning, and production in each of the offices. He was born in Italy and graduated from the University of Rome. He is a registered engineer in California and Michigan.

His experience ranges from industrial construction to city planning -- from the development of new structural techniques to the teaching of engineering principles as a basis for architectural design. He has put his imaginative but logical engineering approach to the problems of organizing and reorganizing city plans with which this office has been confronted.

KARL O. VAN LEUVEN, JR. was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and graduated from the University of California at Berkeley. He is registered as an architect in Michigan. After spending many years as a set designer and sketch artist in the motion picture industry, much of it at the Walt Disney Studios, and with considerable background in advertising and fashion design, Mr. Van Leuven joined Victor Gruen Associates in 1941.

KARL O. VAN LEUVEN, JR., cont'd

He directs the midwest office, located in Detroit, whose planning activities have ranged from shopping center recentralization plans for important department stores in many midwest cities, and complete programs for downtown area rehabilitation, to the detailed analysis of the merchandising patterns of specific stores or chains.

KARL O. VAN LEUVEN, JR.Professional Record

Associate, Victor Gruen, Architect
 In Charge of Detroit Office
 Director of Design, Planning, and Production

Education: University of California - graduated 1937 BA
 University of Southern California - graduate study 1938
 Art Center, Los Angeles - Industrial Design

Professional Information:

Registration:

Licensed Architect - Michigan and Indiana

Membership:

American Institute of Architects
 Michigan Society of Architects
 Engineering Society of Detroit

Teaching:

Woodbury College, 1938-39

Publications:

Articles on City Planning and Site Development,
 Shopping Center Planning, Store Design in
 various trade and technical publications.

Experience:

1937 - 1941	Universal, Republic, and Walt Disney Studios, Los Angeles, California. Motion picture set design, both animation and live action sketch artist, and layout.
1941 - 1943	Victor Gruen, Architect, Los Angeles, Calif. Responsible for design, development and coordination of working drawings and specifications for a large number of retail store buildings.
1943 - 1945	Walt Disney Studios, Burbank, California. Layout and technical direction for training films produced for the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.
1945 - 1946	Victor Gruen, Architect, Los Angeles, Calif. Chief draftsman responsible for design, development, coordination of working drawings and specifications, contract negotiations and supervision for several store buildings both new and remodelled.
1946 - 1950	Victor Gruen, Architect, Los Angeles, Calif. Associate in charge of all chain store new construction and remodelling projects, including a number of large reinforced concrete buildings. Responsibilities extended from preliminary planning to the completion of the job involved.
1950 to date	Victor Gruen, Architect, Detroit, Mich. Associate in charge of Detroit office. Responsible for directing and coordinating economic, population and trade surveys of the Greater Detroit metropolitan area, including land use studies and the design and planning of regional shopping center developments for the decentralization program of The J.L. Hudson Company department store. Working drawings for one of these projects have been completed, while advanced preliminary sketches and land use plans for others are now being made.

VICTOR GRUEN ASSOCIATES

Victor Gruen Associates is a planning team of architects and engineers, with offices in Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, Minneapolis, and San Francisco. It is actively engaged with planning and design in diversified fields of architecture and engineering.

The principals of the firm, Victor Gruen, Karl Van Leuven, Jr., Rudolph Baumfeld, and Edgardo Contini, who derived their experience from varied backgrounds, were brought together by the common belief that the combination of individual ingenuity with disciplined team work offers the best approach and the most successful answers to the complex questions to be faced in today's problems of planning.

Since his arrival in this country in 1938, the founder and head of the organization, Victor Gruen, has brought the vigor and vitality of his creative spirit to influence the commercial face of America.

His early work in New York received wide attention and publication. By 1939, Mr. Gruen had already begun to gather an organization around him and was working on a national scale with offices in New York and Los Angeles.

Under his dynamic, aggressive leadership, Victor Gruen Associates has steadily expanded the scope and range of its activities in a pattern of logical, orderly growth.

In the commercial field, their nation-wide activities in shop and store design led to the planning and construction of chain and specialty stores of almost every kind; to the design and development of department stores complete in every detail, from the structure itself to the merchandising and sales fixturing; and, finally, to the development of the completely planned shopping centers that are revolutionizing the shopping habits of America.

In the residential field, Victor Gruen Associates' practice has grown from the planning of residences and apartments to housing projects and to the planning of complete community developments which provide for all the requirements of modern living, anticipating the needs of tomorrow's pattern of life.

In the field of research and analysis surveys, investigations have been carried through for subjects varying from parking patterns and habits to the development of light-weight construction, from color coordination to studies concerned with the rehabilitation of the deteriorating downtown areas of our cities.

The work of Victor Gruen Associates has been exhibited at the San Francisco Fair of 1939, the Architectural League of New York at four different occasions, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. It has been published in leading architectural magazines in this country as well as in books and publications abroad.