2D23D: Management and design perspectives on retail branding

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to define the development and boundaries of the retailer brand primarily through the elements of identity and image. Two perspectives are introduced to explain the ways in which three-dimensional branding and sensory experiences of the retail brand can arise. One approach is marketing led; the other is based on design studies. The study assesses the development of retail branding, the areas in which sensory experience of the retail brand occurs and its implications for retailers. It concludes with new insights into retail branding and proposals for the subject to be studied across disciplinary boundaries.

Introduction

It has become increasingly evident that the branding of retailers is a complex multi-dimensional concept, in which the distinction between goods and services disappears as the "format becomes the brand" (Dawson, 2001). As part of this evolution the retail brand has moved beyond two-dimensional, visual expressions of format and product identity to embrace three-dimensional spaces of the store environment. The introduction of "retail theatre" in the 1990s, of multi-sensory experiences in department stores, shopping malls and in focused retailers typified by Niketown is evidence of the broadening of the concept.

It seems appropriate, therefore, to explore these developments through a synthesis of interdisciplinary study. There is evidence in at least some marketing departments of an enthusiasm for breaking out of their specialised "silo" to build a broader, synthesised understanding of the subject. Brownlie *et al.* (1999) propose a rethinking of marketing in its social context, a bigger picture of the social space marketing occupies and its taken for granted ideas. "Alternative" marketing may include new pliable and differentiated forms of knowledge, as discourses between management disciplines accelerate. Such an eclectic framework is supported by postmodern approaches in which metaphorical reasoning at least finds a place alongside the positivistic tradition (Brown, 1997). More specifically retail management studies, based on a fusion of geography and marketing, have tended to ignore the value of a historical dimension (Alexander and Akehurst, 1999).

Promotion of cross-disciplinary approaches is pedagogically desirable too as disciplinary boundaries become fuzzier; career paths often cross disciplinary boundaries, and cross-disciplinary learning increases students' problem-solving abilities (Alden *et al.*, 1991). Moves towards interdisciplinarity in teaching follows unease about the fragmentation of management courses into specialised components, marketing, accounting and so on. In a more general managerial context the nature of management is seen by Knights and Willmott (1997) to be changing. It becomes more problematical as management skills become more widely distributed, with more people being empowered and becoming more

131

autonomous. In this context the role of design in the visualisation and experience of retail brands has taken on greater significance. Not least because retail branding has an intrinsic, creative appeal to students in ways that quantitatively based subjects do not.

Branding

A positive or successful brand is defined as a name, symbol, design or some combination of these, which identifies the "product" of a particular organisation as having a sustainable differential advantage (Schmitt, 1999a). From its mid-nineteenth century origins, branding endowed a household product with special characteristics including its name, packaging and advertising and offered reliability and consistency to the consumer (Lury, 1998). Branding came to be understood as providing a unique mixture of benefits that satisfy rational needs, but also emotional ones, by facilitating and simplifying the consumer's choice process through behavioural shortcuts, habit and perception. In this way brand selection is based on experience and expectation; it appeals to a discrete group of buyers, indeed to consistently succeed it must maintain an affinity with a defined group (Fifield, 2002).

In the late twentieth century, the concept of branding expanded from its earlier, more narrowly defined features and benefits function. At a corporate as well as product level, the values of the brand and its visual cues have taken on greater significance. The attention of corporate brand managers has been directed to the creation of brand personality, the expression of values and culture; identity, the communication of personality through cues; and image, the perceptions of the brand, felt or thought, by its audiences (Pickton and Broderick, 2001). These three elements resonate throughout marketing and design studies, and it is the different ways in which their relationship to branding have both been interpreted and subsequently evolved that provide significant insights into retail branding.

For Baker (1994) image or personality is created by successful brands that the customer wants to buy. Aaker (1996) proposes that personality is concerned with consumers' self-identity and as such provides a metaphor to suggest the kind of relationship the consumer might enjoy with the brand. Nevertheless Schmitt (1999a) argues that Aaker treats branding primarily as identity, and misses out on the brand as a "rich source of sensory, affective and cognitive associations that result in memorable and rewarding experiences". In this broader sense identity should help to establish a relationship between customer and brand through a value proposition involving functional, emotive or self-expressive benefits. This is evident in the visual and graphic elements of identity proposed by Schmitt (1999b) through the media of publication, presentation, product, and property. The increasing significance of associations and symbols in the development and maintenance of the brand have affirmed this trend. Symbols provide cohesion and structure to identity, making it easier to gain recall. As a result values determining brand identity have shifted from product or store functionality to those of symbolic representations.

The creation of "image" too became increasingly important during the 1980s and 1990s, across both domestic and global boundaries (Goldman and Papson, 1996). During this period, consumer experience of shopping began to appear in both economic and marketing literature (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). Typical of this trend is Bell's (1999) discussion of the essential values of Woolworth's brand in experiential terms as a warm, friendly environment filled with family products. The concept of sensory experience as an essential element of marketing marks a further broadening of the role of the brand. As brand extensions take an increasing number of forms, both tangible and intangible, so they will themselves take on new communication functions. Such communication will be two-way and globally available extending beyond information to provide entertainment as well. Films, places, business schools, museums, major news stories, bring distinct images, associations, and experiences. In this environment Schmitt and Simonsen (1997) observe that "businesses that engage customers are those that afford them a memorable sensory experience that ties in with positioning of the company, product or services".

The most recent views maintain this pervasiveness of branding; the more so as it has become clear that values are created outside the individual brand. There is an

emphasis on the evaluation and selection of brand partners, driven at least in part through the shift of power to retailers (Hill and Lederer, 2001; Gadd, 2001; Ind, 2001). But such pervasiveness brings with it its own tensions; between the desire to be exclusive, and avoiding product line extensions with more widespread distribution, which could ultimately dilute the brand's value (Moore et al., 2000). From a wider, consumerist perspective it sustains opposition to the very nature of branding, brand management and the panoply of socio-cultural issues surrounding globalisation (Klein, 2001).

Development of retail branding: the managerial perspective

Studies of retailer branding from a management perspective have arisen out of product branding and consumer buying behaviour. Compared to product manufacturers, retailers were slow to take up both product and corporate branding reflecting the domination of manufacturers' brands in the products the retailer made or bought and sold under its own name. Nevertheless an element of branding had always been fundamentally evident in the house, or retailer brand name and the identity it achieved through its fascia and windows (Lury, 1998). In this respect the competitive advantages bestowed by retailer identities and loyalties go back a long way, emerging in nineteenth century rivalries between regional Co-ops (Alexander and Akehurst, 1999).

However, of the three brand concepts of identity, image and personality, identity has been the least researched. Although the association with retail branding is not explicit, personality and image relationships between products and retail environment were initially made through research into store patronage. Martineau (1958) first described the "personality of the retail store" that led to an acceptance that consumers "form thoughts and feelings" about stores that influence their shopping behaviour and loyalty (Porter and Claycomb, 1997). Store image, on the other hand, has been described as the "overall perception of a store perceived by consumers" (Keaveney and Hunt, 1992). It is derived from an individual's cognition and emotions freed from perceptions or memory inputs that

are attached to a particular store, and which represent what that store signifies to an individual (Baker, 1994). Such emotions can inspire excitement with the environment, and the desire to dwell in it can lead to repeat patronage (Wakefield and Baker, 1998). The consequences of combining distinctive image and personality can be found in successful fashion retailer brands (Birtwistle and Freathy, 1998).

The construction of store image comprises both tangible and intangible elements. These have been defined in multiple dimensions that combine the store's functional qualities with the psychological attributes the consumer relates to them. Linquist (1975) in an early review of store image studies found that "physical facilities" (the store environment) were one of nine major factors. Other dimensions typically include fashion, selection and quality of merchandise, customer services and sales personnel, and store atmosphere. However the role of design tends to be discussed less comprehensively, even though its importance has been emphasised in retailer differentiation strategies (Harris and Walters, 1992; Doyle and Broadbridge, 1999).

The tangibles: product brand development
Product image and retail image have been shown to be closely related in the context of buying behaviour (Davies, 1998). Brands provide informational cues for buyers about the store's merchandise quality, and favourable images of brands positively influence patronage decisions (Porter and Claycomb, 1997). Until the late 1970s own-brands used to communicate the store's low price position. However in the UK at least, retailers grasped the significance of their tradename in creating an image (Burt and Davis, 1999). As the management of store image became more important so the growth in retail advertising expenditure exceeded that of manufacturers' brands during the 1970s and early 1980s (Burt and Davis, 1999). Advertising enabled retailers to create a brand image to transfer the imagery to the physical products themselves (Davies, 1998). Strong store and corporate images, and the competitive advantage they create as retail brands, took on a new significance as retailers expanded into international markets (Burt and Carralero-Encinas, 2000).

Burt (2000) in assessing the evolution of retail brands within British grocery retailing identified the mid-1980s as a defining point in the development of "value added" brands. These are positioned to exceed the functional value of the product, for example through style innovations and design, product quality or store environment and staffing levels and skills (de Chernatony and McDonald, 1992). From the 1980s fashion retailing, too, shifted from passive distributor to expert channel co-ordinator of marketing activity, achieved by emphasis on product innovation and customer focus. Retailers came to recognise the value of own-brands as a means of reinforcing their market positioning, to communicate quality as well as value for money and their image has been supported by own-brands that provide consumers with additional psychological benefits (Moore, 1995). Sustainable competitive advantage was shown to be dependent on translating core values combining product, image and reputation into a coherent brand strategy (Birtwistle and Freathy, 1998).

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By the 1990s retailers invested in image through "high quality, standardised or conforming stores". Category management provided a more coherent approach to the visual impact of products through space allocation. There was, too, a growing awareness of the retail trade name in the minds of the consumer and re-positioning of the own-brands as higher quality products. These were re-packaged to emphasise the product in competition with manufacturers' brands rather than promote the corporate identity. Brand extensions included services, crèches, bag packing, coffee shops (Burt, 2000); although these very extensions can also obscure meaningful distinctions between products and store image (Corstjens and Corstjens, 1995).

As retail brands have encroached on manufacturers' brand space so there has been a reversal of manufacturers from different sectors into retailing to re-assert a degree of control over their brand image. Across different sectors Levi, Nike, Sony and Amoy have sought to both reinforce their identity and protect their product brand image through their own stores.

Intangible/psychological elements in store image

The second relevant group of studies to the branded environment and its image is found in the intangible and psychological elements of the store. Motivations for shopping and consumer expectations of the shopping experience are influential on the levels of pleasure experiences (McGoldrick and Pieros, 1998). The psychological impact of "the store's atmosphere creates a retail image in the shopper's mind", with the atmosphere influencing consumer behaviour in three ways, by creating attention, messages and an emotional, affective response (McGoldrick, 1990). Environmental cues including signage and exterior design as well as the internal environment have been found to be significant in the predictive decision making by consumers of service provision (Ward et al., 1992).

Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) work introduced early insights into the psychological influence of the retail environment. Donovan and Rossiter's (1982) observations on the modification of feelings subsequently developed these by the environment as a powerful determinant of in-store behaviour. Environmentally induced responses can be primary determinants of the extent of planned spending. For the recreational shopper, shopping can be a very enjoyable use of time without needing to make a purchase; a leisure time activity and a way of information seeking for quality, fashions and prices (Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980). Described as an "almost automatic decoding process" impulse buying seems to be reactive behaviour in immediate response to an environmental stimulus, where arousal leads directly to action (Rossiter and Percy, 1987). In this state consumers may engage in imaginative, emotional and appreciative consumption experiences.

Intrinsically motivated consumer behaviour is also typified by feelings of satisfaction, enjoyment, interest and pleasure. Play has been identified with flow experiences which are so enjoyable that doing replaces achieving (Havlena and Holbrook, 1986). Pleasurable absorption and losing track of time have been

noted in other studies that relate consumption to the arousal of sensory stimuli (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).

The use of different senses contributes to distinctive selling environments. Atmosphere has been created through the use of different senses; overwhelmingly through vision but also sound, and smell. A characteristic of larger retail spaces, such as department stores and shopping malls, is the promotion of vision as the key sense. Where the product itself is largely or exclusively concerned with information, such as mobile phone stores, information itself drives the experience. But the detachment of the visual experience from reality has led to a re-appraisal of the need to use other senses: in self-service environments, to touch and taste foods, to listen in music stores, to try on clothes. Touching products, trying them or tasting them by engaging their senses means that presentation becomes an important part of understanding the shop environment.

Sensory psychologists can help to create a feeling of "being at home" for shoppers. Sounds and smells can perform important, if not fully understood, roles in this respect. Music has been shown to influence browsing and traffic flow behaviour. Scents can create a perception of friendlier, higher class and better-managed store. Sephora, a leading perfume retailer in France has experimented with sensory experiences on several levels, by creating a "Temple of Perfumes" in its Champs Elysée store in Paris (Dupuis, 1998). But sensory experiences can be easy to copy. Starbucks can use exclusive coffee beans to make excellent coffee but other branded elements: its layout, atmosphere, and product range, are more easily imitated (Chan and Mauborgne, 1999).

To summarise, retail branding from a management studies' perspective is derived from marketing-led research into product marketing and the place of the store in determining buying behaviour. This has led to studies on store image and its impact on consumer behaviour, patronage, and loyalty. These also find support from research into measurements of service quality. The tangible elements of store image are evident in branded product studies, both within a store image context and in its own right, derived from a product marketing tradition. The intangible elements of store image have been researched in terms of consumer behaviour and psychology through store environment and atmosphere. It

is this group that provides more detailed insights into sensory experiences of branding.

The design tradition: branding and "experience" in a design context

Brand identity, although marginalised in retail marketing research, forms a strong theme for designers, because identity management "concerns visual and other sensory experiences" (Schmitt and Simonsen, 1997). In retailing, design is concerned with the environments in which people shop: "[it] is a means of communicating a message to people, and 'good design' ... must be a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to everything the shopper sees" (Michell, 1986). The appearance of today's stores owes much to the past application of design solutions to the needs of retailers as they have arisen: from department stores to self-service supermarkets, and lifestyle clothing retailers. Their design draws from both historical contexts and contemporary sources, for inspiration and materials, to create innovative store concepts.

From a historical perspective, sensory experience of the store environment has a long if inconsistent tradition, and one that is not explicit in the literature of retail branding. Department stores have been a source for creative design for well over a century providing large spaces in which to develop expansive shopping experiences. Founded in 1909, Selfridges provided the most complete sensual experience of its time. The 21-window façade featured pictorial fashion tableaux. Inside the store a hidden string orchestra and banks of flowers contributed to an ultimate sense of opulence (Pound, 1960). And if Selfridges drew on a US tradition then a French influence was also widespread. The Parisian Bon Marché store was copied across the country, with one enthusiastic store owner going so far as to paint his delivery vans in red, white and blue (Crossick and Jaumian, 1999).

The First World War brought an end to this level of retail brand experience. During periods of austerity in the 1920s and 1930s, developments in housing, transport and telephone communication enabled multiple retailers, such as Boots and Woolworths, to expand their businesses substantially. The main shopping streets in the UK came to be

135

dominated by chains of shops (Evans, 1997). The variety in appearance of shopping areas was reduced, and a commonality of style asserted, through the combining of ownership, and the conscious imagery of the expanding retail companies. Modernity in architectural design, led to simpler outlines and minimised motifs. The "feeling for the pure cube", with façades of glass supported by minimal structures, allowed more light and air to pass into the interior of new buildings (Pevsner, 1974) but, combined with the use of mass construction techniques, created ever more standardised approaches to store design.

'... By the 1980s the design remit became bolder still ... Store design was an integral part of successful multiple clothing retailers' strategies, leading the High Street towards both creative interiors and exteriors...'

The shortages of products and materials combined with the modest expectations of consumers in the 1940s and early 1950s constrained the design of both retail interiors and exteriors. However as new consumer markets emerged from the mid-1950s onwards, designers responded with the retail store identity affirmed through window displays, as typified by Dolcis's post-war double window frontages. Nevertheless a distinction was maintained between the external window display and interior layout. Within the store, design took on a functional role that extended well into the 1960s; its purpose to create sales-driven environments. Many fixtures were sent from manufacturers expressly to promote their products and point of purchase displays were directly related to selling products rather than complementing the store environment (Offenhartz, 1968). One of the first steps towards a designed interior came in 1961 with the "21 shop" in Woolards department store designed by Terence Conran for the style conscious teenager (Parsons, 2001). The integration of retail branded exteriors and interiors moved forward with Conran Design Group's Habitat. Launched in 1964 Habitat focused on a home lifestyle for young marrieds and singles that brought products and store design together.

Another development in the 1960s saw retailers increasingly explore brand communication, initially through a visual medium. It was often individualistic, undertaken by shop owners with little retail experience and was frequently graphic (art school) led, evident in Biba's art nouveau inspired logo. Department stores responded to Biba's lifestyle-led challenge with Miss Selfridge in 1968 and Harrods Way In. Top Shop at Peter Robinson Oxford Circus (1967) provided a seminal point in the expansion of the visual presence of the brand for clothing retailers through the consolidation of window and interior store design, which led to the expansion of the visual presence of the brand (Parsons, 2001) (see Plate 1). The start of a retail design discipline emerged as design companies and multiple retailers jointly developed a new style of shop. At this stage, the designer was faced with a fundamental task of creating a shopping environment that established appropriate perceptions with the retailer's targeted customers.

By the 1980s the design remit became bolder still: "store as design" came to relate consumer behavioural needs to functionality and branding. Store design was an integral part of successful multiple clothing retailers' strategies, leading the High Street towards both creative interiors and exteriors. These were evident in a wide variety of approaches in fashion retailing from the traditional look of Ralph Lauren to the minimalist use of colour at Jil Sander (Conran, 1996). Even W.H.Smith, a relatively conservative retailer, agreed that the future of "the High Street is entertainment, [it's] fun, and retailers have to realise this. That's what the whole design

Plate 1 Top Shop at Peter Robinson, c. 1970. Source: A. Parsons

thing is about" (Kay, 1987). Subsequent brand development became evident in merchandising effectiveness and lifestyle marketing communicated by a strong image to an "expertly defined target market group" (Moore, 1995).

Total identity

The significance of these developments in retail design had been quickly and graphically to identify shop units by their owners, market and trading position (Parsons, 2001). Graphics formed a key design resource in communicating brand identity to customers (Fitch and Knobel, 1990) through visual experiences. Logo and fascia design were established as the primary expression of identity, with the design of the logo becoming critical, especially where the store sought to re-establish its identity or create a new identity. In addition highly developed retail markets placed increasing pressure on the expression of retailer identity, where fresher, more desirable and more spectacular visual images have often been demanded to enhance the value of the brand (Olins, 1990).

The retail name and logo from the fascia logically continued into the design of the retail interior, capturing and summarising the retailer's brand values. The brand messages were developed inside the store, which added depth to perceptions encapsulated in the logo. A consistent approach across internal signage, store information, displays, packaging, carrier bags and ticketing typically drew from the corporate identity, using the same colour signals and typefaces to create a coherent image. But design also has a functionality, to display merchandise effectively using visual images, to instil trust, consistency and quality in the consumer's mind. As a result the store environment has come to communicate strong visual sensory experiences of the retailer's identity (Din, 2000).

Branding by identity: the food sector

Up to this point, retail brand design has focused on developments in the clothing sector. However, the food sector introduces a different perspective through the use of space to create new brand experiences. Food retailer identity was established through the use of graphics, combined with product-driven window displays. Inside the store the arrival of self-service in the early 1950s held fundamental implications for interior design

(see Plates 2 and 3). The disposition of space changed. Where the counter had formed a barrier, separating staff and goods from customers, self-service required an altogether different approach. Floor space needed to be used more flexibly, with products displayed within easy reach of customers. In parallel with clothing retailers supermarket design was sales driven, and its branding two-dimensional throughout the 1960s. The structure and space of urban supermarkets provided a backdrop through a fully glazed

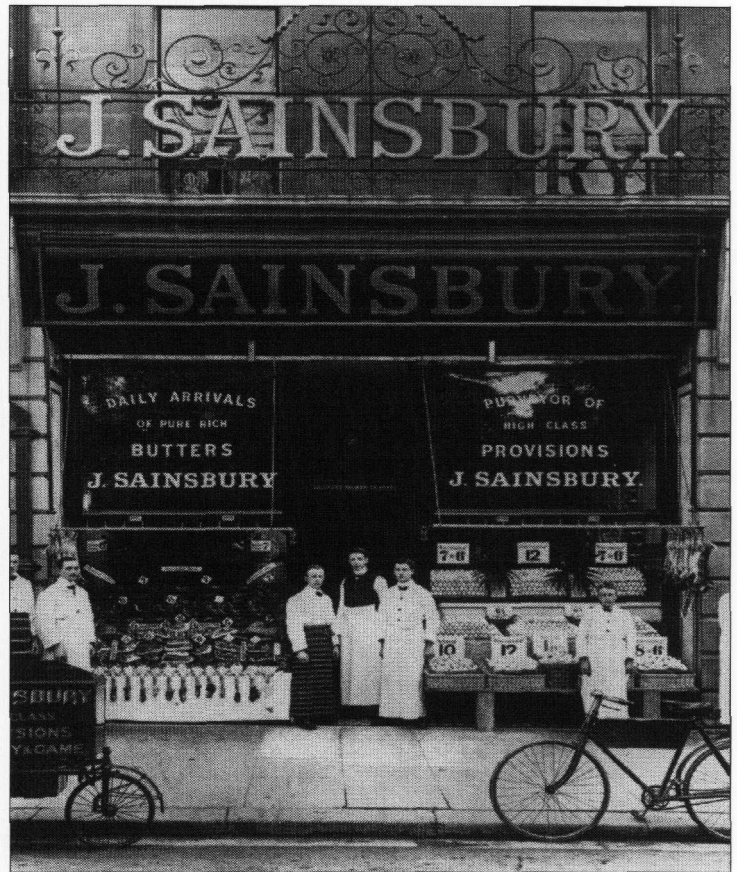Plate 2 J. Sainsbury grocery shop c. 1911. Source: J. Sainsbury plc

Plate 3 Self-service store environment c. 1954. Source: A. Kirby

front with tiled façade for the store signage. The stores were fitted mostly into standard shop footprints; typically a High Street site was restricted by its place in a mixed development with retail units on the ground floor and offices above (Kirby and Kent, 2002).

The development of Out of Town superstores offered more space and new design-led branding opportunities. The first was opened in 1967 and as competition for sites increased during the 1980s, external design became more visually and contextually demanding. In 1982 Tesco adopted the "Essex Barn" style supermarket architecture originally developed by Asda, built of bricks and pantiles and complete with clock tower. Its invented vernacular style within 20 years established itself as a visual "tradition" for this type of store (Kirby and Kent, 2002). Inside-out store design gave further emphasis to the maximisation of interior sales space and gave impetus to the development of retailer brands and services. These moved beyond the two-dimensional projection of visual identity into three-dimensional retail branding combining product development, and new sensory elements from in-store bakeries, fresh food displays, and cafes. Although delicatessen sectors had been introduced into Sainsbury's as early as 1970 (Seth and Randall, 1999), extended fresh food displays, particularly in fruit and vegetables provided opportunities for changes in presentation and store layout (see Plates 4 and 5).

The experience of retail space

The communication of a consistent retailer identity through exteriors and interiors is the outcome of the contemporary design process in which consumerist, psychological, and aesthetic elements are drawn together (Din, 2000). In this design context postmodern theories of consumerism have formed a significant element. The concept of retail space as serving a more abstract social need concerns the use and design of retail spaces in the store itself, and its extension into the wider shopping environment, typically the street, mall or centre. Such spaces are used for the consumption of products and services for different purposes. Shopping can be understood as a social activity, in which consumption is for play or enjoyment. The shopping environment itself reflects a diversity of forms. Different geographies of

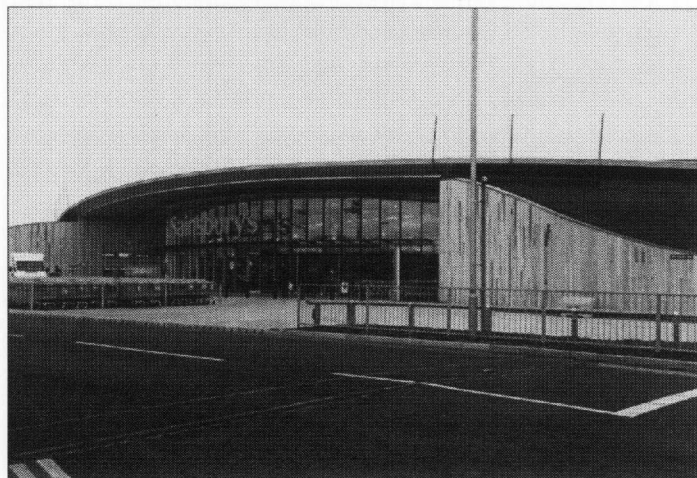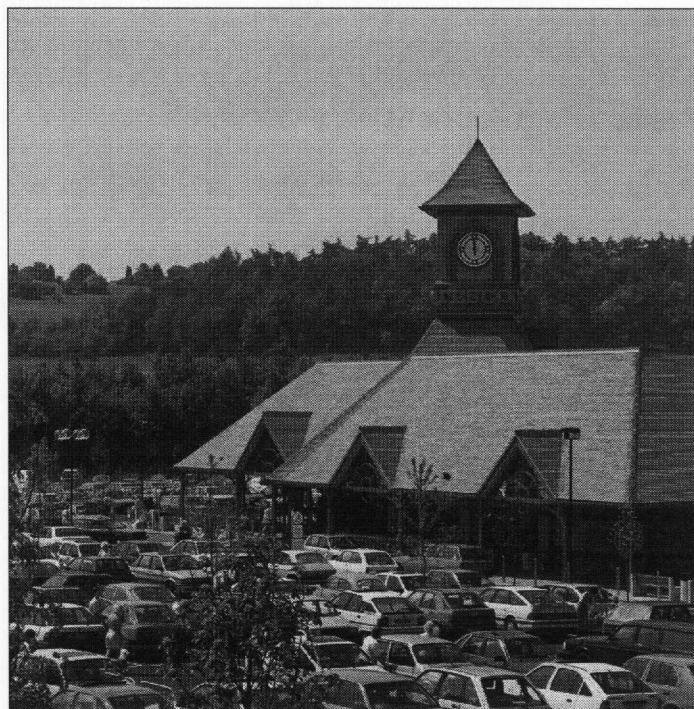Plate 4 J. Sainsbury, Greenwich. Source: A. Kirby

Plate 5 The "Essex Barn" architectural style, J. Sainsbury, High Wycombe. Source: A. Kirby

retailing, shopping malls, department stores, and supermarkets offer different kinds of shopping experience and demand different kinds of knowledge: new retail developments exploiting captured markets at airports and petrol station forecourts, taking consumption to the consumer in targeted shopping catalogues, and appealing to the "leisured consumer" in Disney and Warner stores, and at football club shops (Lowe and Wrigley, 1996).

Shopping centres and new designs for department stores in particular have taken on an experiential significance. Shopping mall design facilitates the shopper's adventure, in their quest for "difference", and price-related bargains. These consumers, as expert

semioticians, become adept at reading clues from the branding, packaging and point of sale material (Gabriel and Lang, 1995). Bluewater Park Shopping Centre (Plate 6) is distinguished by not merely its scale, but its social ambitions: "a monument to the enduring values of English culture" from a "belief in history as grounding the roots of a person's identity" to "belief in the outdoors". In many new shopping malls, such as Bluewater, the experience is one of leisure as much as retailing and is very much a deliberate theme in concepts such as the Rainforest Café.

Visual merchandising is fundamental to these environments. The designer must create customer "cues" to draw the customer into a more fulfilling experience (Carbone, 1999). In the redesigned Selfridges every floor is divided into "worlds" of related merchandise, and dedicated areas within the worlds must be immediately recognisable (see Plate 7). Opportunities for visual excitement have to be created within each world, requiring a graphics programme to be integrated into the overall design. The "theatre" developed by retailers and designers during the 1990s took experience of the retailer beyond material realities and visual imagery into retail as entertainment, and hedonism (Miller *et al.*, 1998). In order to be interactive and fun, retail space becomes a stage; the show draws in customers and allows the retailer to charge a premium price for what may be commodity products or services. Traditions of carnival, play, enjoyment, flaneurism – window-shopping – find a place here as the rational is challenged by the irrationality of postmodern consumption. Further influences lie beyond the physical environment. The impact of Internet shopping, and the increasing influence of interactive games design on Web sites may encourage "bricks and mortar" retailers to change the design of their stores to increase the leisure elements of the shopping experience.

But this pervasiveness has brought about a design-led reaction to brands, typified by a new wave of fashion retailers' minimal branding, hard to find stores, small stock assortments and enigmatic promotion. Miller *et al.* (1998) argue that as a consequence of the wealth of images around them consumers have become detached from the real world of real things. Spaces and places have taken on their own properties rather than acting as a background to the products themselves. Minimalist, or "non" branding seeks to redress this balance by creating product-led exclusivity (see Plates 8 and 9).

Moreover design has not been a central to all retail strategy. It has been more significant among retailers competing for impulse purchases and supplying the customers' wants rather than needs, where visual appearances matter as much as functionality. Whilst

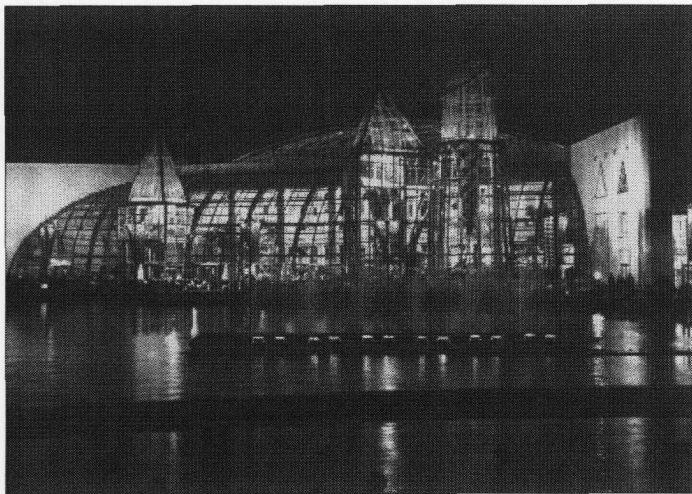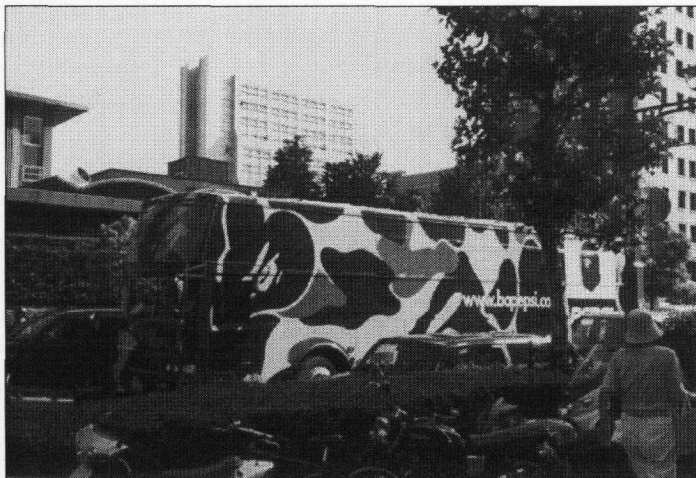**Plate 6** Bluewater Park Shopping Centre, Kent. Source: A. Parsons

Plate 7 Selfridges Department Store, London. Source: A. Parsons

Plate 8 Non-branding. A Bathing Ape store, Tokyo, 2001. Source: J. Baker

Plate 9 Non-branding. A Bathing Ape "camouflaged bus" promotion, Tokyo, 2001. Source: J. Baker

clothing stores and shopping centres attracted the most design attention, the other creations of the 1980s, the retail warehouse and, collectively, retail parks were largely immune from these design trends. DIY and electrical Out of Town retailing competed on cost, width of product range and accessibility to car borne customers rather than experience of their stores.

Conclusion: boundaries of the retail brand

The discussion of retail branding from marketing and design perspectives demonstrates the evolution of retail branding into its current complex and multi-dimensional state. Marketing has been concerned with analysis of both product and corporate branding on store image, and the impact of products and environments on store patronage and buyer behaviour. Design has evolved from a graphical, 2D approach in the creation of an identity, to the combined concept of external architecture and internal spaces.

This raises the significance of space in defining the brand experience. Department stores and more recently shopping centres have provided considerable scope for the development of experiential branding, and discussion of their place in consumption. The opportunities for postmodern eclectic consumer encounters are most evident in these environments due to the large spaces they occupy. Smaller lifestyle stores, typically multiple High Street retailers from Laura Ashley to Niketown and Starbucks, provide

more intense, holistic experiences; their limited space though constrains the possible range of experiences. And critically it constrains the opportunities to indulge in substantial new experiences. Novelty for these retailers in the short term concerns product additions, graphics, and other non-permanent materials that can be re-ordered, rearranged or re-presented. This is partly due to the very strength of their brand image and more prosaically the cost of continuous change.

Some retail spaces remain less evaluated by design: the discount food and particularly clothing retailers; the retail park "sheds". Some sectors and specialists are seemingly less amenable to consumption theories and the use of design-led brand experiences. Consider pharmacies, DIY, electrical and white goods stores, not to mention the staples of the suburban parade: pet shops, newsagents, Indian restaurants and charity shops. Different formats and sectors need further research to establish appropriate boundaries to their brand.

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