

Mr Joseph
Franchising Seminar, March 11, 1971
Victorian Employers' Federation

Jim Crockett: Ample parking
(2 min - one per 60 sq ft. of park space)
Part of a shopping centre bldg.
where can share parking.

Designing the Franchise Image from Architecture to Signs

I've been warned that all we speakers sh'd explain that franchising means a lot more than take-away foods. And really everyone knows that. Yet it's hard to convince anyone ... & the reason is that the Food Fran^{dis} outlets have

been vastly more conspicuous than any other franchise operations.

When Colonel Sanders built his first Kentucky Fried Chicken pavilion here, many Melburnians, especially those not familiar with the American strip developments on main city outlets, ^{highways} thought that they had struck something entirely new: an advertisement that was architecture, and vice versa. There had been gimmicky buildings enough in the past, heaven knows, but nothing quite like this. It was like a hoarding in 3D, or a t. v. commercial come to life.

Then more and more franchise enterprises opened — Red Beef and Ranch Barns, and so on — and the concept of an advertising architectural image became

familiar to everyone. As I said, I don't want to concentrate too much on food franchise outlets — because as we all know there are many other kinds of franchise — but food franchises unquestionably have the biggest architectural impact here now.

The Australian public responded in three different ways. Some took it in their stride: Just another phenomenon of modern living like singing commercials or oil slicks.

Some other people were offended, quite sincerely and deeply. They saw these buildings as the forerunners of a final devastating assault on the visual environment, which had been getting gradually more gimmicky, sordid and unbeautiful during the last twenty or thirty years. These advertising buildings seemed to them to be a natural follow through from a series of events including the decline of traditional styles, and taste, and the ruthless cropping or removal of trees to make way for wires — and so on: all the things that nestle messily under the umbrella heading of "The Great Australian Ugliness."

If anyone should think I'm being egotistical here, mentioning the name of a book of mine, I deny it. It's true that I wrote a book, 10 yrs ago but it was called "The Australian Ugliness". Now invariably it is called (by people who undoubtedly haven't read it) "The Great A.U." — which just goes to show our Australian sense of grandeur. Once we've got something it just has to be Great.

A third group of people liked this new kind of building. They spelt 'now' to the Monarch Mob: part of the neon-lit, candy-coloured flashing fun life.

Maybe the third group is the biggest spending group and so it really doesn't matter to any promoter about the second group, the squares who are offended. Anyway, no one can possibly please all the people all the time with any architecture. Yet, clearly, no advertisement can be classed as the greatest if it gives offence to a sizable body of people. And anyone who fails to appreciate the extent of public concern at this time over the state of the environment can have read a newspaper for two or three years. Environment is, of course, a current in-word, and it involves politicians and scientists of all kinds concerned with the pollution of our air and water. It also involves many people who are concerned with the appearance of our man-made world. To many of them — there can be no doubt — the franchise advertising architectural shows on the roadside are classed as classic examples of pollution of the visual environment. Such buildings do not attract these people, they repel them. And some of these people are not without influence.

Yet, in fact, it is difficult to draw a hard line between advertising architecture and, shall we say, "pure" architecture. Practically every building that is consciously designed — that is not a shed thrown up for a factory or storehouse — has a certain element of advertisement, of "look at me" in it. Certainly the houses of ^{some} many people who complain against the ~~good~~ Colonel's red-and-white striped roofs are almost as extroverted, if in a much subtler way. Many people who would claim to possess a high degree of good taste build and live in houses with multi-pane windows and arched veranda bressemeres and other trappings that were once known as Georgian but, since the British threat to pull out from South-East Asia, have become known as Colonial. These houses are painted white, not red and white in stripes, but the intended imagery or symbolism is identical to Colonel Sanders'. They make a pretence (which takes no one in, and is not expected to take anyone in) a pretence of evoking the gracious charm of sheltered

life in the late 18th Century. The good taste houses are every bit as phoney as the Kentucky Fried Chicken stalls — or, rather, more phoney, because the Colonel really doesn't pretend for a moment that his buildings are in old (American) colonial style. (Whoever saw red and white stripes like that in Williamsburg?)

Then, every commercial building — from a hotel up to the biggest office block — is required to have an advertising image. The image must be appropriate to the branch of commerce, but even in the most expensive, exclusive, apparently austere, stolid stone faced skyscraper it is there: it is telling the tenants and their visitors and potential tenants that this is a dependable conservative establishment of impeccable distinction and reliability.

When a new building project is under discussion, we all know that the soft underbelly of the hardest and most conventional board of directors can be tickled most effectively by a pretty picture. The potential advertising value of a projected building is likely to outweigh, in the end, figures in the feasibility study.

as shown in a colored perspective

Possibly because of a surfeit of the hyper-conservative, pompous, solemn sort of advertising architecture — those Benson & Hedges buildings of Millionaire's Hill, up on William Street — it has suddenly become fashionable to look for more unconventional visual interest in buildings. The generation gap, or cultural split, or whatever you call it, has attacked architecture as viciously as it has the administration of any university. If you happen to hear architects arguing these days, or sense an argument in some discussion on building which you may read in the press, what it is all about is this:

On the one hand there are the square older architects who build in the tradition. Not in the traditional styles — classic or Spanish, etc. — but in the tradition which considers every building to be a monument of some sort: a 3D work of art (incorporating, of course, commodity & firmness, or it would be sculpture and not architecture) but still a work involving controlled imagination and a

sense of design and order responding to known human needs. The very squarest of the older architects may even add the word taste, yet that word is pretty suspect so it's rarely heard these days.

Anyway, the monumental tradition of the older architects' approach covers a vast range of modern buildings; from our ambitious Victorian Arts Centre and Canberra's National Library — to the bland, bald, boxy skyscrapers of millionaires' hill — to the earthy, naked, fractured concrete of some of the younger architects' works which you may have noticed lately coming slowly into favour; Borland and Jackson's Malvern Baths, for instance, or Graeme Gunn's union building beside the Trades Hall.

But there is an opposition to the whole of that huge range of visual statements. The opposition classes all that in some such words as "The high culture of the elite" — some more elite than others. This opposition is made up, ~~as I've said~~, of those who may be doing most of the designing of most of the buildings in the last part of the 20th century: i. e. the rebel students and the untried graduates of today. They class all that kind of architecture as dead, or if not dead yet they are going to try to kill it. One of their spiritual leaders, a sort of Black Panther of architecture named Cedric Price, says: "I consider it unlikely that architecture and planning will match the contribution that Hush Puppies have made to society today." In short, they think that "establishment" architects are still living in an ivory tower, performing works of art, or taste (like the Arts Centre, or the Plumbers' Union building) which are utterly remote from what The People really want.

And what is it that the The People really want, in the rebels' opinion? Their suggestions take different forms, but the popular word for most of them is Pop. In other words, some ten years after the Pop movement was recognized in painting and sculpture — giant hamburgers and Campbell Soup cans and all that — Pop has come to architecture.

The characteristic food franchise outlet is perfect Pop. However, in the unlikely event that anyone should also want historical precedent for using architecture as an advertisement — some of the greatest architecture of all time had similar motivation. Consider the mediaeval cathedrals. They were the only conscious architecture in town. They reared up above the roofs of the tottering houses, and sent their spires towering into the sky not as an aid to worship but to attract worshippers from afar. They were the fried chicken shops of the Middle Ages.

I am not defending franchise buildings — the buildings that rely most heavily on the use of architecture as advertising. But neither am I condemning them. The first point of my argument is that they exploit architecture, and they are known to exploit it, and they are known to be having a big impact on the environment; and anyone who build them without taking that into consideration is taking a risk — not a great risk immediately, perhaps, but one which could build up.

My 2nd Point: a visual arch'd IMAGE is of immeasurable importance to a franchise operation. Face it: it's ALL that many franchisees get for their money — a magic image, not a magic image.

My next point is that franchise outlet — advertising architecture at its most uninhibited — is neither good nor bad per se. Neither good nor bad artistically, or socially, or environmentally. It can be bad, very easily; but it can also be good. The only sensible and real test is the quality of the design, the idea, behind the image.

SLIDE

(1)

To judge between good and bad one must evoke the same yardsticks as used for any architecture: integrity, inventiveness, sensitivity. Buildings can be anonymously, ^{technologically} modern, or nostalgic; inventively creative, or exploiting other people's and other era's inventiveness and creativeness. In a chart between these four poles one could plot every building, including every franchise building, in Australia, and in the world for that matter. *(Perhaps you might care to place your own taste X on this chart.)*

(2)

personally
If I dislike some food franchise outlets it is because they are unoriginal in concept, or crude in detail, or jarring in colour, or phoney tradition, or clumsy in their

③ introduction of signs, or because they are just generally amateurish — failing at their job. It is not necessary for advertising architecture to be any of those things — unoriginal, phoney traditional, crude, jarring, clumsy, or dumb. It is, as a matter of fact, a kind of architecture that lends itself more than most to imagination and invention — and to experimentation.

of advertising architecture

The best examples are to be found, naturally enough, where the most money is available; that is, where nations advertise themselves by means of architecture — at World Fairs. At Expo 67 and Expo 70 a number of pavilions produced striking, memorable images by the use of advanced technology or just brilliant ideas. At a grand scale they demonstrate precisely the kind of thinking that should go into franchise chain buildings, but very rarely does.

/ I should like how to show some pictures from Expos & from real life just to demonstrate different kinds of images — strong images — in architecture. (TAKARA) → KENTUCKY

SLIDES
↓
KENTUCKY

The strength of a good chain building lies ~~purely and simply~~ *mainly* in the strength or memorability of the image it creates. Yet the image must of course be appropriate ^{too} — appropriate not only to the product being sold but to various uses other than just the building. If the building image is strong enough there is no need for a giant screaming, moving sign as well out on the footpath edge. The signs can and should be coordinated, integrated, in the building itself. If a separate sign is essential to catch passing drivers' eyes, it should be a coordinated object — related by design and colour to the building. These are not only academic rules of design but also well-known advertising technique. The image should, further, be capable of lending itself to graphics — to a two-dimensional representation in all the paper work associated with the business. This, again, is only elementary advertising technique. Every piece of hardware or folding ware involved in the enterprise should be related to the image — by design, by lettering face, by colour, in short by STYLE. If it is not so related it is a loss to the cause. That seems so obvious it hardly needed saying, yet numerous franchise operations are still so crudely conceived on a visual basis that it is worth repeating. Type faces should not be mixed: a good one should be selected and retained for all uses. The colour scheme should be minimal and never

varied. The style of the shapes of all objects from the building and signs to packages should bear some relationship. (If all this sounds very complicated it is easily achieved by practically any qualified designer. He doesn't have to be Christopher Wren. The trouble is that some enterprises don't seem to feel the need of a qualified designer. But he is essential, and he should see to the consistency of the style.)

example of my own efforts at image design — but rather that I feel it my DUTY in a masochistic sort of way to show one — one that received a fair bit of publicity, and

Coordinated design thru signs/packages. Every item should keep hammering out the same style, the same image, to build up consistently and continually the most valuable asset any chain operation can have: to be remembered — affectionately if possible, but if not just to be remembered.

FISHBOWL
7-2

← to try to explain my motivations & aims. This is the first outlet yet built of an Australian franchise operation: fish shops known as the fishbowl. Tooke Rd, S.Y.

... our clients outlined their problem: a take-away fish shop — memorable image — adaptable to all kinds of sites, to new buildings & if necessary to remodelling of old shops.

Idea was not to imitate a fish bowl, but to make an arresting shape that was not unattractive yet had a memorable, recognizable connection with fish...
Then: Technique. Quite complicated: 60 triangles of curved fibreglass — all from the same mould — bolt together to make a sphere. We had to use the computer at M.U. to calculate the exact size & radius of the mould. Lights inside made it glow at night — swirlingly. Just about the time it was nearing completion a little storm of criticism developed: so much publicity — nearly all bad — that the place was widely known before it opened, and rushed as soon as it did open.

Obviously I must leave

the judgment to you. Main criticism: Not suitable for South Yarra... (3) ("exclusive") but of course, not designed for S.Y. but for anywhere... Others starting now, we frankly attempted a compromise — to make IMAGE but not too gaudy an assault on suburban environment. It's no arch'l masterpiece, but original rather than exploitative technology not nostalgia. ↗