

It combined office buildings with shops and theatres in an underground location. It became a model for later centres. In Montréal and Toronto some of these centres were linked with the subway systems, so that workers and shoppers could go directly from the subway to offices and stores without going outdoors at all. In later years Place Victoria and Place Bonaventure were built in Montréal, and the Toronto-Dominion Centre and the Commerce Court in Toronto. Most of them had outdoor squares for use in good weather, but the main idea was the "underground city". For millions of Canadians this was among the most important architectural developments of recent years.

Meanwhile, in the suburbs, other architects were responding in a similar way to the Canadian climate. Closed-in shopping plazas, with their climates controlled, began to crop up around the country. One of the most successful and the biggest, was Yorkdale, in suburban Toronto, with scores of shops, theatres and restaurants under one roof. The same idea was carried into a downtown centre with Midtown Plaza in Saskatoon, where an office tower, a community theatre, a convention centre and many shops were gathered together in one structure.

The architecture had an effect on the style of life. Sometimes families would go to the shopping centres for most of a day — to shop, to lunch at a restaurant, to see a movie. Young people made the shopping centres their meeting places, and often family events like wedding receptions took place in rented rooms at the shopping centres. Sometimes the country's leading artists were commissioned to provide paintings and sculpture for the shopping centres.

In many places the shopping centre became the community centre. From this you could also learn something about Canadian society. To an important extent it was focused on buying and selling — the shops were the centre of activity.

All of these buildings, from Place Ville Marie to the smallest indoor shopping centre, represented the creation of what might be called an urban consciousness. People were coming to see that cities could be convenient and