

= Southdale Center =

Southdale Center , colloquially known as Southdale , is a shopping mall located in Edina , Minnesota , a suburb of the Twin Cities . It opened in 1956 and is the oldest fully enclosed , climate @-@ controlled mall in the United States . Southdale Center comprises 1 @, @ 300 @, @ 000 sq ft (120 @, @ 000 m2) of leasable retail space , and contains approximately 123 retail tenants . The mall is partially owned by Simon Property Group and is anchored by Gordmans , Herberger 's , JCPenney , and Macy 's .

Victor Gruen , the center 's architect , designed the mall to challenge the " car @-@ centric " America that was rising in the 1950s . Since its opening in 1956 , Southdale has suffered through high vacancy rates and several store closures , but has been able to recover in recent years . Several additions have been performed on the building , including a 2011 renovation which involved the construction of a brand new food court . Southdale Center continues to use much of its original structure despite these renovations , and has been the host of several charity and community events throughout the years .

= = History = =

= = = 1954 ? 57 : Construction and grand opening = = =

Southdale Center was developed by the Dayton Company and designed by Victor Gruen , an Austrian immigrant and socialist . Gruen was a European @-@ style socialist ; he found individual stores in downtown venues to be inefficient , and the suburban lifestyle of 1950s America too " car @-@ centric " and wanted to design a building that would be a communal gathering place , where people would shop , drink coffee , and socialize , as he remembered from his native Vienna . Southdale Center was loosely modeled on the arcades of several heavily populated European cities and purposely included " eye @-@ level display cases " to " lure customers into stores " . Gruen imaged that Southdale would eventually include " a medical center , schools and residences , not just a parade of glitzy stores . " The first plans unveiled for the shopping center were announced in 1952 by Gruen and Minnesota native , Donald Dayton .

Groundbreaking for Southdale took place on October 29 , 1954 ; 800 construction workers were needed to build the three @-@ story , 800 @, @ 000 sq ft (74 @, @ 000 m2) , 500 acre center , which had 5 @, @ 200 parking spaces , 72 available tenants , and cost \$ 20 million to construct . Due to Minnesota 's harsh climate in the winter , Gruen constructed the center with a roof and air @-@ conditioning system capable of maintaining a comfortable temperature of 75 ° F (24 ° C) year round . The mall was originally anchored by Dayton 's , Donaldson 's , Walgreens , and Woolworth , the former of which also developed the center . Over 40 @, @ 000 visitors attended the grand opening ceremony for the center on the morning of October 8 , 1956 . An additional 188 @, @ 000 customers visited the mall throughout the following week .

The center was constructed to successfully bring the community together by " gathering art , culture and entertainment under one roof with retail . " The Dayton 's store was modeled after Dayton 's flagship store in Minneapolis , Minnesota . In November of 1956 , organic architect Frank Lloyd Wright visited the mall as part of a tour of new buildings in Minnesota ; he critiqued Southdale 's overall design , stating " [the] garden court has all the evils of the village street and none of its charm , " further criticizing several other buildings in nearby Minneapolis . He unfavorably added that Gruen " should have left downtown , downtown . "

= = = 1958 ? 90 : Additions , JCPenney opens , and new competition = = =

Over the early years of Southdale , several tenants and restaurants opened in the center . A restaurant called Sidewalk Cafe , was an " outdoor " -themed restaurant , even though the venue was fully enclosed ; Sidewalk Cafe was the first restaurant of its kind . JCPenney , a Plano , Texas

@-@ based department store , announced their interest in opening a location at Southdale Center . An addition to the mall was constructed , allowing JCPenney to open a 247 @,@ 902 square feet (23 @,@ 000 m2) store in 1972 ; it became Southdale 's third anchor store , following Dayton 's and Donaldson 's . Along with the new anchor store came an entire new mall corridor connecting JCPenney to the original structure of the mall .

During 1976 , construction of a new shopping center directly across the street from Southdale occurred . The construction resulted in the Galleria Edina , an upscale shopping center ; the new shopping mall increased competition with neighboring shopping centers . In 1987 , Donaldson 's announced the discontinuation of their chain of stores , which would shut one of the mall 's original anchors . Instead , Donaldson 's merged with local department chain Carson Pirie Scott .

= = = 1991 ? 2008 : Expansion , Dayton 's merger , and store closures = = =

In 1991 , Dayton 's announced plans to construct a significantly larger store directly north of their current location . These plans included the demolition of the original Dayton 's store to be replaced with more stores , plus a larger " garden court " , and the construction of various multi @-@ level parking garages ; these plans were eventually constructed and finalized in the early 1990 's . On June 30 , 1997 , Southdale Center was sold to the O 'Connor Group , a New York @-@ based real estate company for \$ 125 million , beating out a bid placed by General Growth Properties , a firm that owns several properties in the Twin Cities . Around this time , Southdale converted their basement into a singular anchor store , which became Marshalls ; surrounding the new anchor were several specialty shops and mall management offices .

During the early 2000 's , following fear of competition from nearby Eden Prairie Center and Mall of America , Southdale announced further plans to renovate the center again . A complete remodeling of the center occurred in 2001 , followed by a large addition to the southern half of the property ; the addition included a sixteen screen movie theater along with an entertainment district of restaurants and shops called " The District on France " . " The District on France " included several " upscale " dining options , including California Pizza Kitchen , The Cheesecake Factory , and Maggiano 's Little Italy . A renovation of the less @-@ traveled third floor also occurred , with the addition of teen @-@ geared stores ; this addition was called " Trendz on Top " .

Throughout the mid 2000 's , Southdale began struggling with maintaining a low vacancy rate . Mervyn 's , one of Southdale 's four anchors , announced that they had filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy , which would in turn close all of their Minnesota locations . After the closure of Mervyn 's in 2004 , several tenants followed and ended their leases as well ; national retailers like The Bombay Company , Crate & Barrel , Ritz Camera , and Select Comfort all announced closures of their Southdale locations . Talks of a Dick 's Sporting Goods filling the space formerly leased by Mervyn 's occurred , but those plans never took off and eventually dissolved .

= = = 2009 ? present : Ongoing renovations = = =

In February 2011 , Simon Property Group announced that Southdale would soon be anchored by Herberger 's , a local department store chain , and would lease the space previously used by Mervyn 's . Along with this announcement came the mention of a brand new food court to replace the nearly vacant one on the less @-@ traveled third floor , a housing development consisting of apartments and condominiums , and expanded retail . The food court 's construction would include six tenants , which was later increased to eight tenants . However , the new food court forced the closure of one of Southdale 's oldest tenants , Ralph 's Shoe Service , which originally opened at the mall in 1957 . Following several tenant terminations , the mall 's Marshalls anchor announced that their 40 @,@ 000 square feet (3 @,@ 700 m2) Southdale location would move to a different shopping center in Bloomington , Minnesota .

The new food court located by JCPenney was completed in 2012 and featured " upscale " dining options , such as Qdoba Mexican Grill and Smashburger ; several other projects took place , such as cosmetic changes for the mall and the construction of new corridors . Since 2015 , several stores

and businesses have opened up locations at Southdale Center . Gordmans , a Nebraska @-@ based discount retailer , filled the vacancy previous leased by Marshalls in July 2015 , followed by the opening of a 41 @,@ 500 square feet (3 @,@ 900 m2) Dave and Buster 's restaurant , filling the vacancy of the original food court . A Homewood Suites by Hilton resort was approved by the City of Edina and will be constructed in the shopping center 's northeast parking lot in June 2016 .