

**GRANDVIEW COMMONS TOWN CENTER**  
**COMMENTS TO URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION BY**  
**KEN GOLDEN, FEBRUARY 15, 2012**

**MY INTEREST/ QUALIFICATIONS :**

- Former alder/ Plan commissioner early advocate of new urbanism
- Worked with Veridian/Jeff Rosenberg on this neighborhood
- Lead sponsor of Madison's big box ordinance
- Asked by neighbors for opinion and ideas due to experience with Trader Joes
- Willing to assist in developing a constructive outcome for all- compromise

**PROCESS AND UDC ROLE AS I SEE IT**

- After this meeting the issue(s) and dispute will go back to neighborhoods and alders for resolution before it goes to Plan Commission
- I am hoping you apply our expertise and give direction/ possible solution on major issues and perceived/actual problem characteristics of current plan.

**PROBLEM CHARACTERISTICS/ PERCEIVED OR ACTUAL (what I see and hear)**

1. Size of store: Proposal is 58,000 sq. ft. seen as too big. I'm personally not as concerned with size as how it has been handled. I would point out though that Middleton Hills as a 40,000Sq. ft. Copps that is well hidden and valued.
2. Position of store on lot: Store is on middle/far side away from town center 150 feet from street. Nice walk way in middle but still far to walk. Developer cites \$1million phone box and slope problems as reasons- I'm not qualified to judge veracity of this. UDC needs to decide or get experts to evaluate.
3. Size of lot: There are no cross streets intersecting this lot as proposed. Can one between Big Dipper St. and Cottage Grove rd. be added instead of being an internal drive if store must remain where it is?
4. Big box format inappropriate for a traditional neighborhood: This store is a big box in form, mass and position; 1 story, door to parking lot and not to public street and uninspiring sides. Windows and materials are simply make up on underlying inappropriate model. Major design changes to appearance and materials needed. Solid ideas can be UDC's greatest contribution to this proposal. (see solutions, below, for my ideas)
5. Visibility of parking: While this is technically in compliance with big box ordinance, the parking lot's exposure to Cottage Gr. Rd. and its relation to public street are problematic- if retained, needs to be screened substantially.

6. Relationship of building to C.G.Rd. seems intended that C.G. rd is being treated as an "A" street with adjoining land uses not relating to it at all. Not characteristic of Madison's traditional neighborhoods (e.g. Willie, Monroe Sts.)
7. Number of parking spaces: 293 spaces for 58K sq. ft. means a ratio exceeding 5 per 1000 sq ft. traditional neighborhood projects typically provide 3.5-4 spaces per 1000.

SOLUTIONS/PRINCIPLES WORTH CONSIDERING- by UDC and then the neighborhoods, alders, developers and Roundys.

1. An anchor grocery would be an asset to the neighborhood and area. Trader Joes has helped the Monroe business district and neighborhoods tremendously.
2. The store should have more than one story- Require the building to be capable of supporting up to 3 stories.
3. The developer/Roundys should consider the viability of Middleton Hills model: 40,000 sq. feet might be a viable store and might permit other improvements.
4. The building needs to be totally redesigned and, if possible, moved: can it be closer to the town center and designed to appear to be more than one store by use of windows and materials.
5. Find a way to add "liner buildings to screen parking lot more.
6. Reduce parking to 3.5-4 spaces per 1000 for Grocery: if library and liner building create greater demand, add but add modestly.
7. Hide any parking lot that is exposed to a street: Use fencing, a brick wall as high as headlights and dense evergreen landscaping.
8. Consider adding a public street to site: In current site configuration, street might be between Ctge Gr. Rd and Big Dipper.

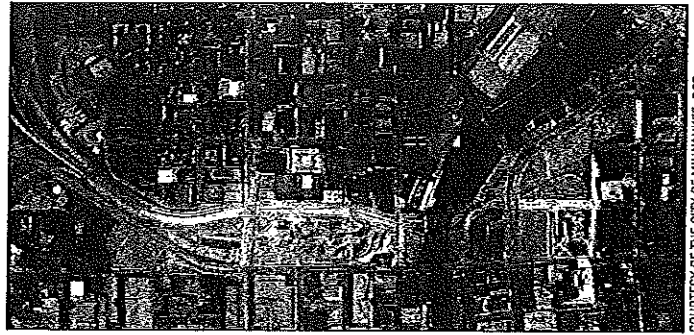
## SUMMARY

If UDC makes or suggests assertive changes of the type proposed, the commission should consider referring this item to a future meeting so any compromise between all parties can be reported back. However, UDC should provide some guidance and substantive input to the process in which the alders, neighborhoods and developers agree to participate.

After the plan's adoption, developer Barry Mandel pledged the launch of a \$100 million project that will replace a large tannery building with 500 condominium units and apartments overlooking the river. That seven-acre endeavor will include retail facing the street. Other developers are expected to build offices, shops, entertainment, and additional housing in the redevelopment area. Peter J. Park, planning director under Norquist and now manager of planning and development for Denver, told a CNU session in Chicago that the project demonstrates "the need to think about transportation and development simultaneously."

The cost of demolishing the freeway, constructing the boulevard, and building the new bridge was estimated at \$25 million, the bulk of it paid for by the federal ISTEA transportation program. Once the project got moving, the city extended the demolition two more blocks to the west. That brought in more land and more than doubled the expected value of real estate development, according to the Department of City Development. It also boosted the city's portion of the project's cost to about \$15 million. That sum will be recovered through a tax-increment financing (TIF) district in the redevelopment area.

Mayor Tom Barrett has requested that the plan's land-use section be amended to bar new tax-exempt uses in the redevelopment area unless they're approved by the Redevelopment Authority and the Council. Preventing tax-exempt development would ensure that the TIF district gets as much revenue as possible. Milwaukee County owns 16 of the acres to be developed, and the city owns less than 1 acre. Other



COURTESY OF THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE, DCC

From the air, construction of new streets is visible on the land left vacant from the road demolition.

land is owned by private owners, who have been in discussions about its development potential.

The county and the state governments contributed to the project's cost. The city controlled the uses and design standards. "It's been a long process," said Rozek, noting that the city and the county worked together on the plan and on land disposition. "It took five years from saying publicly it's something we should do to having a plan approved," she said. "When dealing with multiple jurisdictions, you have to be patient and take time to bring them all in."

Removal of the freeway is also expected to foster development of sites beyond the redevelopment area, such as Pabst City, a former brewery that is to become a combination of apartments, condo units, offices, retail, and entertainment venues. ♦

## Middleton Hills town center approved

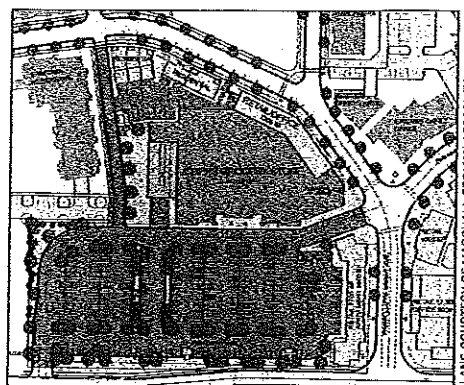
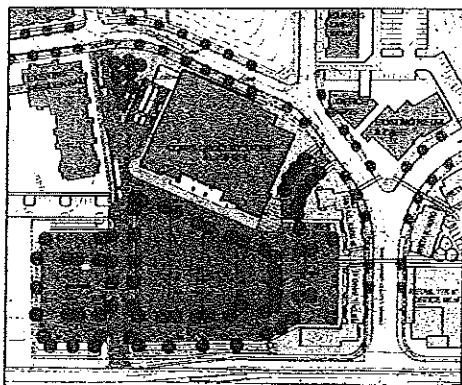
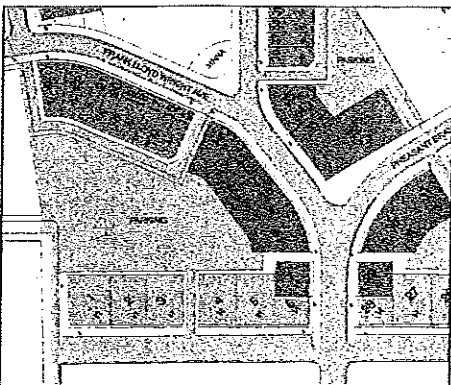
*Wisconsin project balances need for anchor store with sensitivity of impact.*

New urbanists are continually honing their strategies for how to make mixed-use town centers work. A great example is Middleton Hills, a traditional neighborhood development (TND) near Madison. When the project was designed 10 years ago, planners envisioned a series of individually owned small shops in the project's town center. In the last decade, the project has succeeded in its

residential build-out, but developers showed little interest in the town center. Dan Erdman, son of the late town founder Marshall Erdman, tried his hand at the town center and came up with a plan that included a 42,000 sq. ft. Copps Supermarket. "I, too, believed in the small store vision ... it didn't take long for retail reality to set in," he said in a presentation at CNU XII in Chicago. Erdman found community support for his plan but also strong opposition. Besides offering a much larger store than many resi-

dents wanted, the plan also included serious design flaws. The supermarket turned its back on the town's main street, and the plan called for delivery trucks to drive into the community, rather than accessing the store directly from the arterial. The final plan, a collaboration between Linville Architects and Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co., solved these problems with liner builders, a second (pedestrian-oriented) "marketplace entrance," and a new location for the loading dock. The plan was approved this May and was slated to break ground in July. The store is expected to open in May 2005. ♦

**Evolution of the Middleton Hills Town Center: from left, the original charrette plan showed small, individually owned commercial lots. The middle plan, drawn up for developer Dan Erdman, was more in line with market realities, yet it also included a large store backing up to the main street, and truck traffic in the neighborhood. The final plan, right, addressed aesthetic concerns while incorporating the supermarket.**



PLANS COURTESY OF MARSHALL ERDMAN ASSOCIATES

# Urban grocers proliferate

*Demographic and market conditions are causing supermarkets in the Washington, DC, region and elsewhere to modify their designs and fit walkable neighborhoods.*

ROBERT STEUTEVILLE

**A**trend towards urban supermarkets is evident even in this economic downturn. In the Washington, DC, area, at least 10 grocery stores with pedestrian-friendly design have been built or are moving toward construction.

Urban-format grocery stores are built mostly in transit-served, walkable neighborhoods — often where new urban development is taking place, says Brian O’Looney of Torti Gallas and Partners in Silver Spring, Maryland. The firm is working on a Whole Foods Market in North Bethesda, Maryland, with MV+A Architects, and on Safeways in Washington’s Georgetown and Tenleytown sections. All are urban-format stores; the first two are expected to open in 2010. The Tenleytown store is scheduled to start construction next year.

“We are definitely focusing on stores in our urban core and will not be building stores in urban areas that are growth dependent,” says Craig Muckle, manager of public affairs and government relations for Safeway’s Eastern Division. Safeway is one of North America’s largest supermarket chains with more than 1,700 stores, the company reports.

Parking is being reduced and is placed below or above the store — or in the interior of the block in urban-format stores. One or two sides of a supermarket are often lined with shops that activate the street and avoid presenting a blank wall to pedestrians.

One entrance to an urban-format store must open to a quality urban environment, O’Looney says. Supermarkets typically have two entrances, he explains. In the case of conventional stores, both entrances face parking. For an urban store, one entrance leads to parking and the other to the street.

Until recently, supermarket chains focused primarily on the suburbs. The business model involved rolling out the same store with parking in front, again and again. When supermarkets did build in cities, they plunked down the

same suburban box whenever possible. This approach worked as long as new growth was taking place primarily in the suburbs and the cities languished.

In the mid-1990s — just as the fortunes of cities began to shift — Whole Foods pioneered more urban formats, says Jim Voelzke, an principal with MV+A Architects of Bethesda. Whole Foods found an eager market — and Harris Teeter, Safeway, and Giant later followed with urban-format stores in the DC area, he says.

The region is not unusual, the architects say. Wherever the right conditions exist — good-quality urbanism and underserved markets — supermarket operators are now willing the break the old rules.

## EXPECTATIONS CHANGE IN THE SUBURBS

The housing meltdown has had a significant impact, says Seth Harry, an architect in Woodbine, Maryland, who has retail expertise. Supermarket operators can no longer build in the distant suburbs in the expectation that thousands of housing units will soon spring up to support the store. “That model is more or less dead,” Harry says. “Even the guys who built empires based on that model are recognizing that they are looking at a new paradigm.”

Meanwhile, cities have seen a resurgence in residential construction in the last decade, and the new residents are

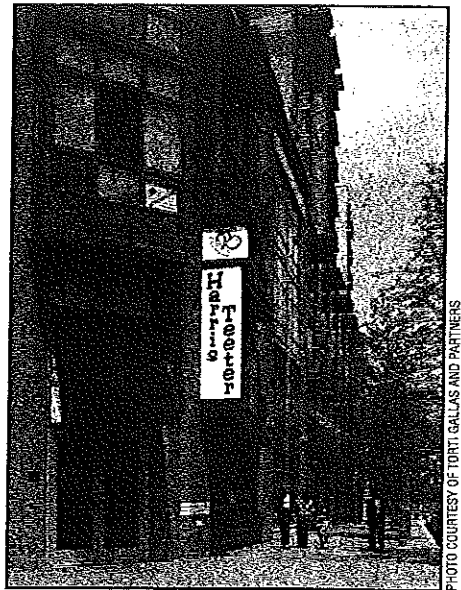


PHOTO COURTESY OF TORTI GALLAS AND PARTNERS

The Harris Teeter in the Village at Shirlington, northern Virginia, is a rare urban-format store without rail transit. But it is located in a mixed-use urban center.

bringing their retail dollars with them, Harry says.

Urban-format stores are mostly being built in affluent parts of cities, Harry adds. These areas have higher land values and often citizens and public officials that demand high-quality urban design. Taxes and payroll costs may also be higher, he notes. But urban centers offer many more affluent customers in close proximity to the store — and these areas are often underserved by retail, Harry says.

Muckle confirms that Safeway is pressured to place stores on the street in urban areas. However, he also notes that

Parking at the Safeway at transit-oriented Cityvista was reduced by 40 percent.

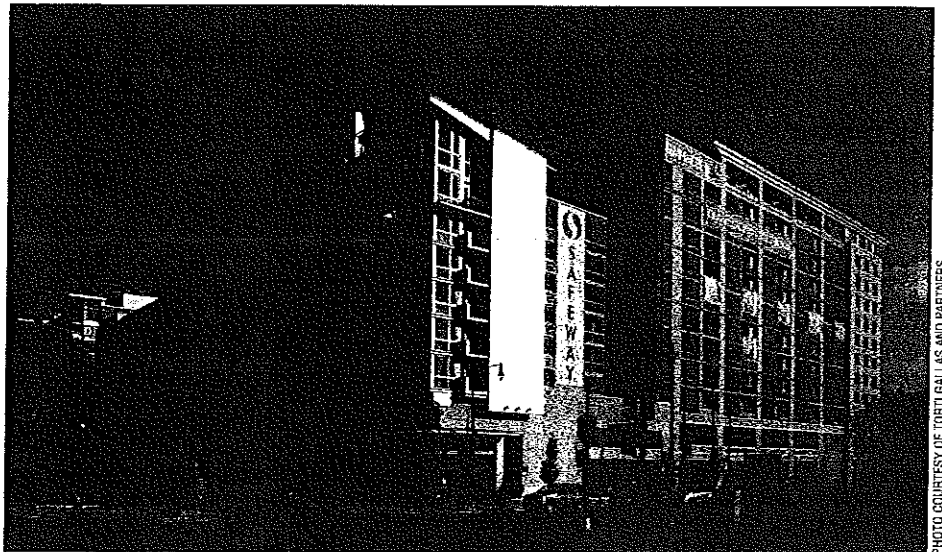


PHOTO COURTESY OF TORTI GALLAS AND PARTNERS

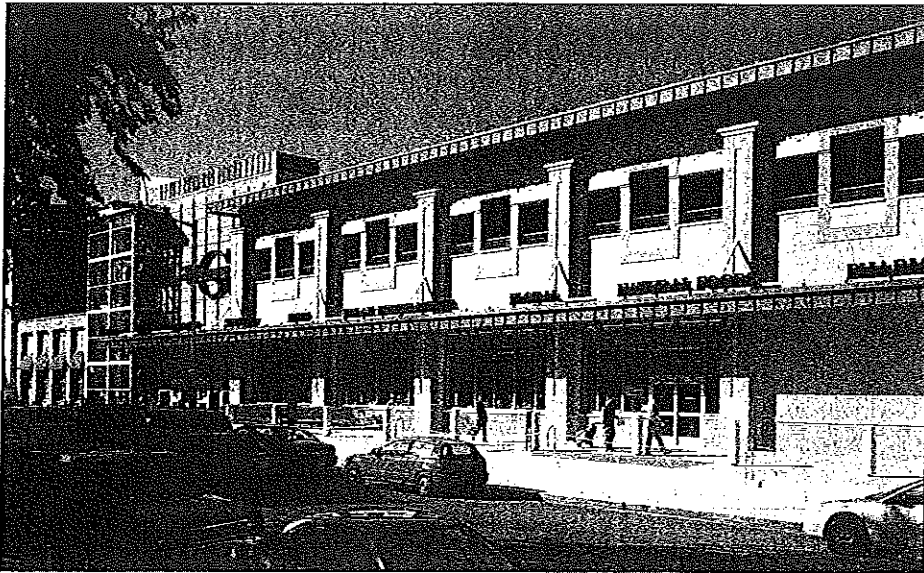


PHOTO COURTESY OF MV+A ARCHITECTS

Urban-format stores, like this one in Columbia Heights, are built to the sidewalk.

entitlements have come more quickly in recent years in DC. "There's a desire to see these things happen faster, shared by government officials and different constituencies," he says.

Supermarket operators are still reluctant to locate in poor sections of cities — and when they do, they tend to build conventional suburban stores on cheap sites like old warehouse properties, Harry says. "They will argue that you are lucky to have us here serving this demographic at all," he says. But, as urban formats "become more commonplace and store operators are more comfortable with the metrics of urban stores, the trend will work its way down to the less affluent areas," he predicts.

Parking is the biggest design challenge, Voelzke says. Operators use standard suburban ratios of 5 spaces per thousand square feet. This much parking is usually not necessary or economical in urban locations, where customers walk and take transit. Parking is usually cut to 4 per 1,000 square feet — and in medium- or high-density urban locations the number can be pared down to the 2s or 3s (per thousand square feet), he says. A Safeway in Cityvista, a transit-oriented project on 5th and K streets NW, DC, has a parking ratio of 2.9 per 1,000 square feet, Muckle reports.

In mixed-use projects, the rent paid by the supermarket may be subsidized and not reflect the full construction costs, Harry notes. A subsidy makes sense if the developer believes the supermarket will help to sell residential

units, he explains.

Depending on the construction that is required, costs can be substantially higher in urban locations, but they vary. "In some cases the costs are fairly similar," says Muckle. "We try to keep them down as much as possible." One key is to avoid the high cost of digging underground parking if possible, he says.

The interior layout of the urban stores hasn't changed much, O'Looney says — but a greater emphasis is placed on sales of high-quality produce and natural and prepared foods. The mindset of the shopper is different, Voelzke adds. People often shop daily at urban stores instead of weekly, and purchase less food per visit.

So far, the financials have been sound. "I see a continuation of this trend," Voelzke says. "I have yet to hear of a single store that has not been successful and able to meet reasonable expectations."

As long as walkable urban places are built from scratch or revitalized, more urban-format stores will follow, Harry says. In his view, the design of the store is driven by the urban fabric.

Mainstream supermarkets now realize that they have to rethink the placement of the parking in urban locations, O'Looney says. But it still takes an urbanist architect to convince most operators to accept other design refinements — such as including liner stores on two sides of the building, he adds.

The Georgetown Safeway is a good example of how that company's approach has changed. The store is under construction on the site of an older 45,000

square foot Safeway store with parking in front. The new 65,000 square foot store, geared to what Safeway calls the urban "lifestyle" market, is raised up a level with parking below. Small retail shops line the street and hide the parking.

#### BUILT EXAMPLES OF URBAN-FORMAT STORES

- A 55,000 square foot Safeway opened in 2007 at Cityvista, which also includes 685 rental units and another 75,000 square feet of retail. The grocery store space is 28 feet high, which allows for two levels of liner retail and restaurants — placed on two sides of the building. The third side has the main entrance and street windows that display the produce section. The fourth side has the loading dock. The parking is located below the store.

Cityvista is located in the NoMa (north of Massachusetts) neighborhood, which has seen construction of 8,000 apartments in recent years, according to Wikipedia. It's an example of how new urban development can drive supermarket location. Torti Gallas designed this store with Michael Marshall Architecture.

- A 42,000 square foot Whole Foods Market is situated under three stories of condominiums — 116 total — and a 10,000 square foot fitness center in Alexandria, Virginia. The building at Duke Street and Holland Lane sits on the northeast corner of the 80-acre, high-density, new urban Carlyle development — and near the Metro. MV+A's design, with sloped roofs and pilasters, responds to the historic architecture of the city as well as recent buildings — some modernist — in Carlyle, Voelzke notes. Three levels of parking, accessed by a rear alley, are below the store, which was completed in 2006.

- A 55,000 square foot Giant was completed in 2007 near the Columbia Heights Metro station in DC, a revitalizing neighborhood that won a CNU Charter Award in 2009. The store, with two levels of parking above, fills out a block that includes the reuse of the historic Tivoli Theater building and another new retail/office building. The supermarket and mixed-use building were designed by MV+A with materials and massing to complement the theater. The north face of the block is lined with three-story townhouses, reflecting the existing housing across Monroe Street. ♦

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# New Urbanism has come a long way in six years

PHILIP LANGDON

In March 2006, Rob Steuteville and I got together in Middletown, New York — midway between his home in Ithaca and mine in New Haven — and spent a few hours outlining what we hoped to cover in the next edition of the *New Urban News* best practices guide. The guidebook had already gone through three versions — an unrefined first edition published in 1999, a somewhat larger second edition in 2001, and a 2003 third edition that was widely accepted as a standard reference for the trend. We anticipated that the fourth might roll off the presses by the summer of 2007.

Instead, here it is June 2009, and the volume titled *New Urbanism: Best Practices Guide, Fourth Edition*, has just been published. It took this long because the guide has grown more than we anticipated — to 26 chapters spread across 448 pages. And the reason it has gained such heft is that in the six years since the third edition, New Urbanism itself has become a more comprehensive and sophisticated movement, with a wider set of objectives and a larger range of policies and tools to choose from.

"Sustainable development" has emerged as a priority. From the bucolic Woodson traditional neighborhood development in North Carolina to HOPE VI projects like High Point in Seattle and New Columbia in Portland, many of the most progressive walkable neighborhoods in the US are using permeable paving, rain gardens, and other devices that reinforce the natural systems. Sustainable urbanism has the potential to help address environmental problems — if enough practitioners (backed by clients) become fluent in these techniques.

The rural-to-urban Transect, an unfamiliar concept early in this decade, is now being incorporated into all sorts of undertakings. The Transect has given new urbanists a tool for communicating with the public and for tailoring all the major aspects of development — building heights, setbacks, planting, and open spaces among them — to suit the context of differing locales. Form-based codes are catching on, and the SmartCode is undergoing continual refinement as it's implemented by municipalities.

## PROGRESS ON NETWORKS AND THOROUGHFARES

Inch by painful inch, a growing sophistication is also coming to the design of street networks and major thoroughfares. Transportation engineers are learning about "context-sensitive" roadway design. Professionals are grappling with how best to measure street connectivity, and governments are considering whether to follow the example of cities and states that have adopted connectivity requirements.

Other kinds of progress since the Third Edition? "Liner" buildings — typically shallow structures containing stores, restaurants, apartments, and other engaging uses — are increasingly concealing the blank walls of big box stores, movie auditoriums, and parking garages. Liner buildings have become an important part of the urbanist's repertoire.

A more rational approach to parking has gained ground. Cities are introducing parking prices that vary by time of day, to modulate the parking supply. Today there's a better track record in reducing the need for parking to begin with. Strategies for mid-block parking — in various intensities and with differing uses — are multiplying.

Tremendous work has been done by new urbanists on building types, from courtyard housing to live/work units to back-to-back duplexes. This holds great promise as demographic trends increasingly favor urban and denser housing and the need for affordable and mixed-income housing grows.

There has even been some progress in the long-running battle between modern and traditional styles of architecture. The *Best Practices Guide* attempts, at some length, to sort out how and where modern and traditional styles function effectively. We concluded that New Urbanism has room for both traditional and contemporary forms of architecture — when the right conditions are met.

As time goes by, New Urbanism engages an ever larger variety of places, issues, and goals. Much of the world may not yet realize it, but the movement has come a long way since Seaside. Judge for yourself in the latest guide. ♦