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Out of the Attic

Landmark Center

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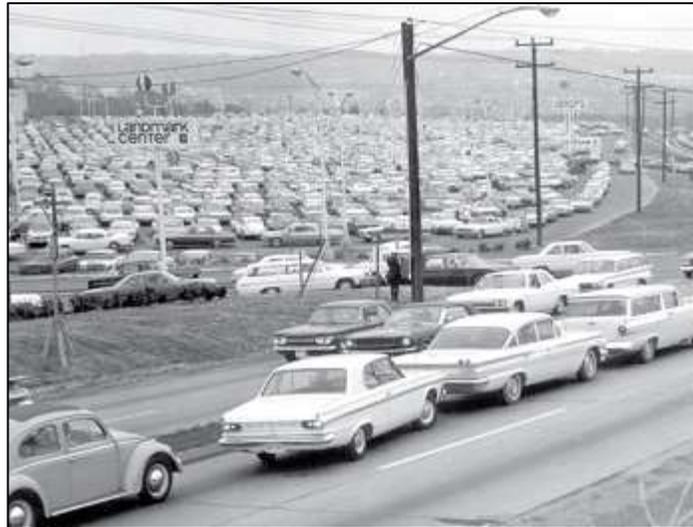
Image: Parking lot at Landmark Center, 1965. Photo, Office of Historic Alexandria.

Landmark Mall was first known as Landmark Center when it opened in 1965 at the intersection of Duke and Van Dorn streets. Advertised as the “the wonderful, the new and the ultimate in family shopping,” Landmark was an open-air shopping center featuring three large department stores, reportedly the only one on the East Coast to have three major stores at that time.

Sears and Hecht’s, located at opposite ends of the center and each with a standalone automotive center, opened on the same day, August 4. Woodward & Lothrop opened on October 11, the official grand opening day for Landmark. These anchor stores were joined by more than 30 other shops and establishments, including a bank, optometrist and S&W Cafeteria.

Even with 4,000 parking spaces, traffic conditions around Landmark were challenging when it first opened, as this photograph taken along Duke Street indicates. Representatives from Hecht’s (visible in the upper left corner) and Sears estimated that more than 15,000 cars came to Landmark for the grand opening.

In 1984, Landmark was purchased by an Australian company and almost immediately announced plans to renovate the shopping center. Other older shopping centers in the region were undergoing major redevelopment at that time, like Parkington in North Arlington becoming Ballston Common Mall. In the late 1980s, renovations estimated at \$140 million began at Landmark, transforming it into an enclosed, three-story mall. The anchor stores remained in their original locations, but some long-time tenants like S&W closed and did not return.



“Out of the Attic” is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as “Marking Time” and explored Alexandria’s history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into “Out of the Attic” and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.



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These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by Amy Bertsch, former Public Information Officer, and Lance Mallamo, Director, on behalf of the Office of Historic Alexandria.