

BASCO SHOWROOM

Architects: Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc.

Location: Northeast Philadelphia, PA

Client: BASCO, Inc.

Area: 38,500 sf

Construction Cost: \$966,000

Completion: 1976

What do you do with a building that is 16 feet high and 1,100 feet long, with only two doors and no windows? In this project for a catalog department store chain, we were asked to “beautify” this building, a decrepit, abandoned 1950’s shopping mall. The budget and schedule were tight. The client wanted us to create a positive roadside presence for the building from the nearby major highway, a task made more difficult by its below-grade siting and distance from the road.

The vast space of the parking lot coupled with the unrelieved banality of the architecture suggested a design of bold communication rather than one of subtle expression. Using a fresh manipulation of scale and color, we developed the store’s logo into evenly spaced, steel framed, aluminum sheathed letters, 34 feet high by four feet deep and used the building as a contrasting “backdrop.” These five monumental letters leap out to connect the driver to the store. The letters B-A-S-C-O have become the architecture of the roadside landscape and as a result, a well-known landmark that has served the company well.



