ABSTRACT

SPORTS IN THE CITY: THE ARENA AS COMMUNITY CENTER

By Scott Edward Stewart Robinson

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the phenomenon of sport in the society and to investigate the importance of the sporting facility in the urban fabric. Specifically, the analysis focuses on the sport of hockey and its impact on the lives of Canadians and Canadian culture. Time was spent touring the province of Ontario in order to experience first-hand the implications of the sport, and visits were made to multiple arenas during two distinct time periods: during the summer off-season, when the buildings would be less utilized, and during the winter, when the buildings experience a daily infusion of activity. The ultimate goal was to analyze the usage and context of these facilities and apply the intricacies and personalities of each into a prototypical hockey arena that was a complement to the city, the people, the athletes, the spectators, the urban fabric, and the sport itself.
SPORTS IN THE CITY:
THE ARENA AS COMMUNITY CENTER

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Dr. William and Marilyn Robinson. Their undying love, support, and encouragement have allowed me to follow my dreams and achieve my goals with confidence. In good times and bad, in tears and laughter, they have always stood as a pillar of strength in my life.

This thesis is also dedicated to the person who has been my savior and beacon of hope, my loving wife Krystal. Her constant vigil over me during sleepless nights, stressful days, and times of inspiration and emptiness is the primary reason for the completion of this work. I would be lost without her, and will love her always.
SPORTS IN THE CITY: The Arena as Community Center

“Sport is a language we all speak. Sport is a mirror. Sport is life. Through sport we might know ourselves.” David Guterson, “Moneyball!” (1994)

“Spectator Sports are the central features of modern urban society, and it is the stadium which is the prime 20th century container of the urban crowd.” John Bale, “Sport, Space, and the City” (1993)

“Canadians may seem undemonstrative and reserved, but not at a hockey game. We may seem isolated and distinct one from another, we may seem non-patriotic, but not at a hockey game. Hockey helps us express what we feel about Canada, and ourselves. It is a giant point of contact, in a place, in a time, where we need every one we have — East and West, French and English, young and old, past and present. The winter, the land, the sound of children’s voices, a frozen river, a game — all are part of our collective imaginations. Hockey makes Canada feel more Canadian.” (Ken Dryden, Home Game: Hockey and Life in Canada, 18, 19)

Foreword

The decision–making process in selecting a thesis topic can be difficult when considering the breadth of topics that students are exposed to in their architectural education. So many projects or ideologies over the course of a six-year time period are worthy of further study and evaluation. How then, did I arrive at this thesis?

Having been born in Canada, and being an avid sports fan and athlete, the combination of architecture and sports has been something that I have desired to study for most of my life because it is a matter that affects me personally. By combining the two most important aspects of my life into a thesis, a road was paved that allowed me to learn more and investigate deeper into the topic than would have been otherwise. Furthermore,
as a labor of love, the subject would be enjoyable, and would provide a rewarding experience both academically and personally.

But passion and interest alone do not create a credible architectural thesis. I asked the following questions in order to determine the feasibility of this matter: What underlying threads between sports, my heritage, and architecture could be made? What does the sport mean to Canadians? How did this occur, and why? With the national passion that Canada holds for the sport of hockey, how did the sport’s “national pastime” status affect, and be affected, the urban landscape? How is the sport present in the Canadian community? What is the relationship that hockey and ice sports have with the built world? Is the arena, given the importance of its internal activities, a part of the community landscape, and how does it function as a container of the urban crowd? How does the construction and design of the arena affect how the community views the sport and the building? What is the landscape of sports facility construction, and what can be done to enhance the spectator and communal experience in and around the arena to bind it to the urban fabric? And finally, what is unique about the arena in Canada, and is it different from its counterparts in the United States?

These questions formed the foundation and guide for the research and the design process. Once this was determined, the need to investigate the definitions of sport, community, society, and history was apparent. The road selected would bridge a number of academic disciplines, from architecture and design to sociology and psychology, and would culminate in a design that attempted to pay homage to these studies and implement them successfully.
Analysis of Sport and the Community

Sport is an essential part of the rhythm of society. From the financially lucrative media-hyped landscape of the professional game to the leisure activities of a father and son playing catch, sport defines how we spend our leisure time, and subsequently, how we often dictate our lives. How many other aspects of mass society can so easily cut across political, ethnic, social, and economic categorization? It affects, both directly and indirectly, an overwhelming majority of us, whether we choose to participate in sport or not. From the professional athlete, to the droves of “soccer moms,” to the couch-potato fan, sport ingrains itself into our daily activities. While it would be naïve to assume that sport represents an entirely positive coalescence of these categories, it nonetheless provides a platform of common ground. George Sage classifies sport as:

...an institution that provides......observers with a convenient laboratory within which to examine values, socialization, stratification, bureaucracy – to name a few structures and processes – that also exist at the societal level. The types of games people choose to play, the degree of competitiveness, the types of rules, the constraints on the participants, the groups that do or do not benefit under the existing arrangements, ...and the reward system in sport provide us with a microcosm of the society in which sport is imbedded. (Etizen and Sage, Sociology of North American Sport, Fourth Edition, 14)

If sport is a microcosm of society, then the constructed environment in which these sports exist is equally descriptive. The sport facility or stadium is a tangible object that has urban ramifications: it visibly reflects and typifies the pulse of the community in which it exists. Decisions made on the architecture of the stadium, its placement on its
site, and its interaction within the existing urban fabric are deliberate, intentional, and unique to that community. The stadium primarily exists as the built manifestation of a community’s reflections upon its sporting identity. Sport sociologist John Bale states: “the stadium can not only generate a love of place, a sense of loyalty, a place-bonding and other kinds of localism, but also some stadiums have become what amount to sacred places, worthy perhaps of future protection and preservation like other revered monuments of yesteryear” (Bale, Sport, Space and the City, 3). The localism that Bale describes emphasizes the importance of the facility upon its community, as a major sporting facility can often “put a city on the map.” A city is not considered an important one in the eyes of many if it does not have a professional stadium. Cities and towns that do build them have provided a landmark that conjures this localism. When the team wins, it can often be heard that “WE won,” not “the team won.” The stadium provides community social bonding, and for some cities, sports provide their only true social and communal ritual. (Bale, 56) It also acts as a figurative home – something that is sacred in the community’s heart. “The home [stadium], like the home town, may be plain, lacking in architectural distinction or historic glamour, yet we resent an outsider’s criticism of it” (Bale,70).
This is not trivial. Because of the magnitude American society places on sport, the stadium often functions as a civic landmark or monument, as John Bale described in the previous paragraph. It often acts as an advertisement of the community’s identity and self-image both for outsiders or visitors as well as its own residents. Functionally, there are very few buildings that experience the mass-congregation of people on a regular basis. Bale writes, “spectator sports are the central features of modern urban society, and it is the stadium which is the prime 20th century container of the urban crowd” (Bale, 9). This point alone reinforces that stadium’s importance in the societal fabric, as it can also act as the main town-gathering center for events not exclusive to the sporting realm – fairs, conferences, political rallies, concerts, etc., all are held at stadia due to their seating capacity.

What the stadium generates, then, according to sociologist Yi-Fu Tan, is a sense of “Topophilia” – literally meaning, “love of place” (Bale, 64). A human being’s effective emotional ties with the material environment are powerful feelings that cannot be underestimated. Tan regards place attachment as a contribution towards the quality of life in a given community. An unidentified British football (soccer) fan testifies to this Topophilia: “Sealand Road [a venerable British soccer stadium] has been part of my life for 30 years; it’s just more than a football ground, it’s a way of life not just to me but to thousands of people alive and dead whose life has revolved around a match at The Stadium. Its more than bricks and mortar, its almost something spiritual” (Bale, 64). Treating the sporting facility as a building that possesses an air of divinity is an extreme example of Topophilia, but it is vitally important nonetheless. Many fans view the stadium as a quasi-cathedral, and sports are their religion – a vehicle that provides
identity, hope, love, and sense of purpose. Sport “shares many similarities with religion: each seeks perfection, each is built on discipline, they involve an integration of the mind and spirit, and they have established rituals and symbols related to people, places and procedures. [Sport] like the Church possesses ceremony and liturgy – that is, the game itself and enclosed space consecrated to a cult” (Bale, 65).

The comparison of sport to religion and of stadia to cathedrals reinforces the presence of the stadium as a civic monument. In medieval European towns, the cathedral functioned as the epicenter of cultural and spiritual activity. The cathedral was the most recognizable and most dominant structure in the town, a building that controlled and influenced its surroundings. The stadium acts in the same fashion nowadays: “It is in the stadium that modern urban rituals take place; it is the floodlights of the stadium, not the spire of the cathedral that more often that not act as urban landmarks and points of reference” (Bale, 3). In the example of the medieval town, a traveler knows he is approaching the city because the spires of the cathedral tower above everything else, giving a visual identifier for people. Bale’s analogy of the stadium floodlights inspires the same visual iconography. At the conclusion of the movie Field of Dreams (directed by
Phil Alden Robinson, 1989), for example, the camera pans up and away from the lighted ball field, exposing a never-ending string of automobile headlights driving towards the field. The lights of the ball field amongst the infinite fields of corn act as a point of reference that completely dominates the landscape.

Traditionally, sporting facilities have been very masculine structures. They portray images of strength, control, and dominance over the landscape, lending credibility to Sage’s theories on hegemony in sport: “[hegemony] refers to a society in which dominant groups that control the critically important economic and political institutions of a society also have principal access to the other social institutions” (George Sage, Power and Ideology in American Sport: A Critical Perspective, 20). This machismo of the stadium, and subsequently the hegemonic practices of those who control the stadium, causes the facility to conquer its surroundings literally and metaphorically. Also, sport is representative of the competitive, warrior instinct of the male psyche, and the fortress-like design of the modern stadia invoke an image of the Roman gladiator battling in the Flavian Amphitheatre.

Arguments for a sports facility’s importance in the community often paint an idyllic image of these structures – a building that draws a heterogeneous community together in harmony. But the hegemonic practices of the American capitalist society can cause stadia to be extremely isolationist. For example, the manners in which professional stadia have imposed themselves within their region (environmentally, economically, and socially) have changed noticeably over the past fifty years. These differing approaches, ranging from selective site location and target marketing (i.e. suburban stadium placement, where they catered exclusively to the mobile, white, middle class), to public
funding and seat licensing (excessive dependence upon the public’s disposable income can result in the inability of the common man to participate in stadium sports), all are adverse consequences of sports in a capitalist society. Negative qualities, while unfortunate, further strengthen the importance and significance of the stadium on its surroundings and its community – the stadium is one of few buildings that can simultaneously draw both the ire and praise of any given city. It is the only building type that can impact every social, economical, and cultural category.

The majority of stadia (by stadia, I refer not only to football- and baseball-type outdoor facilities, but to indoor venues and arenas as well) built in recent decades do not seem to reflect this importance to their community; rather, they often are built purely for making a profit. Riverfront Stadium (and its brethren in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Kansas City) is a prime example of the introverted facility that turns its back on its surroundings, while concentrating on filling the owner’s pockets. While stadia of the past also sought rapid income, more consideration was given to the impact on the streetscape. Creating stadia that ignore their communal obligation does irreparable disservice to the landscape and to the people (due, in part, to the permanence and construction cost of these structures). Shibe Park in Philadelphia in its prime was a true community facility, but it fell into disrepair and burdened the north Philadelphia landscape for over thirty years before it was torn down. (Kuklick, *To Everything a Season*). It can be argued, while the facility was demolished over twenty years ago, that Shibe Park continues to negatively affect the social makeup of its former community.
History, Theory, and Foundation

Hockey’s Beginnings: Development, Growth, and the Ruling Class

The sport of hockey shares its origins with other modern major sports in that it possesses similarities of the leisure activities of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The modern incarnation of the sport, though, has no direct evolutionary line, as is the case with the other major 21st century sports. Hockey has its roots in three European games – Hurley, an Irish game played with a ball and broad sticks, Shinny, a recreational ice game found in Europe that was heavily imported to the Maritime Provinces of early Canada, Rugby, and the Native Canadian game of “stickball”, or “La Crosse” as the French colonists dubbed it. These three European leisure activities were brought from the British Isles to Canada during the colonization era, and at first remained an exclusive outlet for the aristocracy and wealthy elite. Lacrosse, considered by the elite to be an inadequate and barbaric form of leisure for a god-fearing socialite, remained an activity for the lower classes and ethnic groups. The separation of these two social classes, and the subsequent dominance of the white upper class in the development of organized and amateur sport, produced the modern game of Hockey. Furthermore, modern hockey, while possessing ancestral incarnations, truly formed with the emergence of urban industrialized society and capitalism. “The real origins of the game…are synonymous with the beginning of hockey’s institutional development,” (Grunau, Hockey Night in Canada, 37) rather than and evolutionary progress from a “hockey pre-cursor” to “modern hockey”.

British and French Colonists were the driving force behind the development of sport, and subsequently hockey, in Canada. What we refer to as “sport” in the modern
sense was non-existent in the colonization era; sporting endeavors existed as leisure activities that commonly had a direct reflection upon social status and a particular group’s religious affiliation. These leisure activities were allowed to exist on the basis that they aided in the pursuit of Godliness and wholesomeness. Calvinists and Puritans of the New England colonies and Methodists of Ontario saw excessive displays of leisure and bodily expression as activities that led to wickedness and sin. They adhered to the theology of a rejection of worldly and personal pleasures and believed that the day should be spent in pursuit of the wholesome life: hard work, introspection, study of the Bible, and prayer. The belief in predetermination drove these strict controls. They believed that after the Fall from Eden, mankind was tainted, and God, through Christ, saved a small few for salvation, damning the rest. Because their fates had been predetermined, it was concluded that earthly pursuits had no bearing on salvation, and by following the rules of life outlined above, one could determine if he was one of the chosen. Leading a spartan yet upright life was believed to be a sign of God’s possible acceptance into Heaven. This ideology held strength, albeit in lesser forms as decades progressed, as society in the New World grew.

While a large number of colonists held to the notion of the circumvention of public activity, there was a larger non-Calvinist Protestant population that practiced self-control and pseudo-puritan thoughts that saw the New World as an opportunity to continue the British and French sporting life. These dissenting Protestants allowed innocent amusements like ball games, hunting, fishing, and martial sports. These activities all provided a sense of use, and the games that were played were viewed as activities that would strengthen the body and mind, thus improving the community.
Martial games were especially condoned, in spite of their aggressiveness and violence, for it provided for the defense of the colony. (Gorn, A Brief History of American Sport, 1631) This was evident in one form in the game of Hurley:

“...the game was singularly violent, and such contests no doubt became ready opportunities to settle old personal grudges or larger community rivalries. Gentlemen arranged the matches...these were great men, local nobility or gentry, patrons in the community, whose largesse helped secure the loyalty of their baseborn neighbors. Such games were social glue, binding men together [within] an intensely hierarchical social system.” “Hurling helped prepare men for war, for the game required that players know the terrain and opponents’ movements...” (Gorn, 1628)

Ultimately, it was these ideologies that allowed the evolution from leisure activity to sport commence: sport bypassed the regulations of strict religious life by promoting sport not as a game, but as a moral building tool. The acceptance of leisure was also buttressed by the expansion and development of religious thought in the New World. Elliot Gorn describes this evolution as such: “…the Protestant ethic did not simply fade with the seventeenth century, but rather it washed over communities in successive waves. The various religious awakenings that swept through peoples lives … always contained a powerful element of Protestant self-control, … [but] neither harsh frontier conditions or Puritan hegemony obviated pleasures of the flesh.” (Gorn, 1631)

Hockey subsequently developed under these auspices. The game’s precursors displayed the sport as a combination of the activities allowed by the various societies: a means of strengthening the body, a pursuit of masculinity, and a way for the established elite to socialize. However, in this era, “hockey” was still a leisure activity. The climate of the Canadian colonies dictated the formation of these activities as well – because the
temperature stayed below freezing four to six months out of the year, ice games were a natural product.

Hockey, and the introduction of ‘modern’ sport in general, was a direct and wholly dependent result of the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of an industrial society. In pre-industrial times, the sun and the seasons governed the workday of the predominantly agrarian society. Leisure time was nonexistent in the lower, working classes, and was only attainable by the aristocracy and those who had the means to construct their own daily schedules – hence the formation of the elite sporting clubs. With the coming of the Industrial Revolution, the agrarian schedule became obsolete, for now the clock, not the sun, governed the workday. Because of this, there now existed a significant portion of the day that became ‘free’. It was this leisure time, or post-work time, that formed the basis for the evolution of hockey and sport into its modern manifestations. The establishment of a market driven urban society promoted a separation of work and leisure, (Gruneau, 39) and subsequently spurred the formation and rapid growth of the middle class.

Precursors to the sport, as stated before, had existed in various forms outdoors mostly with elite participants, though due to the climate of the region, folk games were also based on skating on ice. The primary ancestor to hockey did not occur until after the Industrial Revolution when technology allowed the construction of recreational skating rinks indoors. The first indoor rink, Montreal’s Victoria Rink, can be considered the birthplace of the sport. The smallish dimensions of the indoor rink of 200’ by 85’ (compared to the spatially endless dimensions of outdoor lakes, ponds, and rivers)
defined the size of the playing surface – dimensions that are still used in North America in this day and age.

A second result of the industrialization of society was the acceleration of capitalism, and hockey was a direct beneficiary of this. The first hockey teams were formed from the social and sporting clubs of Canada, and the first recorded hockey game in 1875 was a formally scheduled and marketed event between two clubs. (Gruneau, 37). The game occurred in the evening, allowing Montreal citizens to spend their vacant post-work time as spectators at a sporting event. The game spread from that point on, and by 1877 there were three hockey clubs in Montreal, as well as clubs in Ottawa,
Quebec City, Kingston, and Halifax, and the social clubs were quick to embrace the sport. By 1886, a number of Montreal’s wealthy and prominent social clubs had formed a formal city championship, and subsequently formed Canada’s first formal league – the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada (AHAC). An article in the Montreal Gazette called for the development of the game: “we should take the initiative to develop hockey as a national pastime and to give it a higher standard of excellence, both as a game and in the eyes of the public.” (Gruneau, 38)

The fact that Montreal was the epicenter of the sport’s development is no coincidence; the city directly had ties to the establishment of industrialized society in Canada. Beginning in the 1850’s and 1860’s, Montreal became the financial capital and trade center of Canada, and the explosion of industry in those decades further accelerated Montreal’s ascension. The Montreal Telegraph Company, established in 1847, greatly aided in Montreal’s rise as well. Subsequently, when the advent of railroad came to Canada, the integral like between Montreal and Toronto furthered the growth of the city and the region, because trade goods could now more quickly be distributed over land rather than the St. Lawrence River. This urban growth directly led to the increased participation of the expanding middle class in sporting activities (Gruneau, 39). While the elite club teams occupied the media and financial attention, hockey began to trickle down to other social categories. The strongest example of this was the formation of church teams in urban areas, and town teams in rural parts of Quebec, Ontario, and the Maritimes, as well as any new communities that had developed in the west once railroad connections had been established. By the 1890’s, most municipalities had formed “hockey-like” intra-town and intra-church leagues and tournaments based on the game as
it existed in Montreal, even in spite of the fact that codified set of rules had been established at all.

While the middle class was finding an outlet in hockey to occupy their leisure time, the old precepts of strict religious society from the colonial era still had a foothold on society, although not nearly with the rigor as before. In industrialized Canada, these concepts manifested themselves in the form of *amateur sport*, and the intense promotion of amateurism. The promoters of amateurism, once again the white ruling class, upheld the ideals of sport as a gentlemanly and worthwhile activity. They saw that industrialized society had produced a generation of inappropriate behavior and immoral conduct. (Note: This advocacy of gentlemanly behavior was formally recognized through the presentation of the Lady Byng Trophy, a chalice still awarded in the NHL today for the player most exemplifying fair play and commendable behavior.) The expansion westward fueled by the increased immigration of ethnic groups only worsened their fears. Leisure, reminiscent of Calvinist thought, was to be an activity that enabled one to better himself in society. Common rituals that appeared with the free time given by industrial society such as excessive drinking, gambling, fighting, and cursing found their way onto the ice and the streets and quickly became synonymous with hockey and sport.

“The growing concern over irrational leisure linked a fear of moral disorder with economic expediency. The drinking, merrymaking, and sometimes-disorderly recreations popular among the emerging urban working class came to be seen as activities that disrupted the daily routine of business by encouraging absenteeism, debt, and subordination. As a result, governments made play in the streets illegal, heavily regulated tavern locations and hours, and controlled alcohol consumption at public events." (Gruneau, 52)
To circumvent the negative aspects of an urban society from staining the now national game, amateurism was hailed as the morally straight and gentlemanly institution. The AHAC was founded as a strictly amateur league that upheld the morals of society. Professionalism, though in its infancy at this time, eventually became a threat as Canada grew, but at this time it was viewed in the same light as the disorderly conduct that amateurism was trying to disavow. Secondly, amateurism was a way for the white elite class to maintain control and dominance over the growing working classes. An amateur was defined as, “one who never has competed in any open competition or for public money, or for admission money, or with professionals for a prize, public money, or admission money, nor has ever, at any period of his life taught or assisted in the pursuit of athletic exercises as a means of livelihood, or is a laborer or Indian.” (Gruneau, 52) Professionals and the concept of accepting money for athletic endeavors contradicted the Protestant value system of thrift and self-restraint, and although Canadian religious “society” had put its faith in people to choose between ‘improving’ activities and ‘wasteful hedonism’, professionalism began to present a significant enough threat that these rules were created and enacted. (Gruneau, 59) To further instill the notions of amateurism, the Amateur Athletic Association of Canada (AAAC) was formed in 1884 to explicitly promote its beliefs in hockey and all of Canada’s other sports, major and minor, including curling, baseball, rowing, and football. The moral entrepreneurs of the AAAC promoted rational recreation, claiming that sport was not a public spectacle, rather, was a worthwhile leisure time activity.

Amateurism firmly established itself in the late 1800’s, and this accelerated the acceptance of hockey as a national game and a community function. Because the early
leagues, both for the social elite (the AHAC) and the industrial, church, corporate, and town teams of the working classes, hockey became a sort of community glue. Contests between rival towns, companies, ethnicities and religious organizations acted as vehicles of local and institutional pride, bringing people together to root for a common goal. Intratown leagues further heightened the social bonding by pitting community versus community. Although this concept is standard in the modern day, these amateur town teams were actually comprised of townspeople (the home team truly was the ‘home’ team), and the contests originally defined the term “us vs. them”. Community identity, therefore, existed, grew, and fell with the success or failure of their local “hockey boys”. In fact, the attachment to members of the team in a possessive nature is evident in modern hockey as well. While teams nowadays are comprised of professionals from multiple Provinces (and multiple countries), Canadians continue to refer to players as “their boys”.

The importance of the community to hockey that amateur play had established ultimately led to its downfall on the national scale, and fostered the emergence of early professional sport. Working class town pride, church pride, ethnic pride, etc., was influenced based on the outcomes of hockey contests. This fact furthered the importance on winning, as reputations and personal image was at stake. Winning quickly became the primary goal of local hockey, and when the true ‘home’ team could not field a competitive group of skaters, leagues began to experience a glut of “ringers” or professional paid hockey “mercenaries”. These ringers would roam from town to town, season to season, looking for work and teams to play on, though those teams that hired their services vehemently denied their existence publicly. After a while, most teams
covertly hired ringers for their rosters, yet continued to denounce professional play and tout the principles of true amateurism all the while.

Losing games and tainting the character of the town, again, was one reason that amateurism failed, but losing also contradicted the ‘institution’ of manliness and toughness that ruled nineteenth century sport. Losing, especially in a combative sport like hockey, carried a connotation of effeminacy; a trait to be avoided at all costs for any man that desired to be important in his community. Furthermore, the threat of losing to other social and ethnic groups became increasingly unacceptable to teams – if a Catholic team beat a Protestant team, or if a poor team beat a team of wealthier socialites, the strikes on the loser’s reputations and esteem was devastating. Teams treasured their individuality, and a visioned loss of superiority was threatening to their way of life. (Gruneau, 67) Winning became a vehicle for towns, churches, teams, and fans alike, to demonstrate power when none was possessed otherwise. Hockey therefore became a tool for the working class to overcome their challenges of life and, for a brief moment, hold a theoretical dominance over a group of superior social standing. The importance of the tool was given further substantiality due to the strict social hierarchy of the times – there were few ways for a member of the working class to work his way up the social ladder and make an impact on society through traditional methods. Factory workers, generally speaking, were destined to work in a factory, farmers begat farmers, and so on, and hockey became an opportunity for someone to improve his status by using his physical traits and God-given athletic ability.

As the sport expanded and the competition for public recognition increased, the monetary price for sustaining superiority on the ice began to impact teams. Facilities,
equipment, travel, and time away from work cost money, and this price tag was necessary to field a competitive team – if a challenge from a rival was issued and there wasn’t enough money available to even accept the challenge, the reputation of the team and/or town took a greater hit than if the team had lost the game. Teams now, since hockey had now caught on as a spectator sport in the United States, found themselves accepting challenge matches not only from local towns, but also from professional teams in Pittsburgh, Detroit, Erie, New York, and New England cities. (Gruneau, 75) Professional sport had existed for decades in the United States, and the Protestant view against playing sport for monetary pay that had been firmly planted in Canadian life during the 1800’s was not an issue south of the border. The influence of the American style, as well as the indomitable pressure of American money, began to be felt in Canada in the 1890’s, as teams began to lose amateur players to United States professional players during these times. By then, most upper level teams in Canada had been paying players under the table, while publicly denying that professional players had invaded their rosters. But they could not financially compete with the type of money being offered players to come to the United States and play. In order to prevent further player loss, two Canadian leagues, the Eastern Canadian Amateur Hockey Association and the Federal Hockey League “allowed” teams to stock their rosters with professionals, but still continued to maintain the front of amateur ideals. (Gruneau, 75) The advent of capitalism had spawned the modern incarnation of hockey and amateur play in the 1880’s, and it would ultimately lead to its demise (at least on a national scale) a few decades later.

For the amateur game, money was there to be made. By the end of the century, key games involving prominent amateur clubs could count on thousands of paying
spectators. Seeing this sustained attendance at games, companies saw the hockey game as the perfect outlet for advertisement of their goods. Advertisement, a relatively new phenomenon in Canada in the 1890’s, though it had existed for decades in the much more financially driven and capitalistic United States, began to dominate the media during the last decade of the century (Gruneau, 82). This corporate involvement in games served a dual purpose – companies could advertise their goods to the targeted market, while advertisement dollars helped to fund teams for their necessary travel and equipment expenses, for monies collected as gate receipts could no longer support team operations. But as the financial stakes increased, it became harder for amateur clubs to maintain their integrity, their talent pool, and their existence to the professional leagues.

The professional game was also buoyed by a change in the method of land ownership by the Canadian government, forced by the growth of capitalism. The commodification of urban space, where “everyday commoner land ownership instead of the church, the Crown, or the elite class caused money to be necessary to maintain sport” (Gruneau, 56). Land was needed for use and for play – The Victoria Rink in Montreal was originally built by a wealthy landowner as a private ‘club’ for use by the upper class only. After realizing the profit potential of charging admission for use of the facility, the Rink was opened to the public, and the first contest described previously was allowed to occur. For example, the number of commercial and public rinks in Montreal increased dramatically between 1880 and 1890. Businessmen subsequently “came to believe that they could make money by staging challenge contests of various types on tours aimed at large urban arenas” (Gruneau, 63). Furthermore, the commodification of goods and the workforce also led to the emergence of the professional game. “Tools that had once made
at home or bartered for were now mass produced, and a portion of a worker’s wages were now spent on those purchases” (Gruneau, 58). If money was being spent on necessary items as a commodity, then the existence of leisure time and weekends would mean that another portion of those wages would be spent on sport and entertainment, a concept that came to fruition soon after. The influence of capital and individualism from the United States aided this philosophy of attracting the working class wages. They were seen to attach themselves more to US commercialism and entertainment, while the Canadian old-school elite still maintained the principles of British gentlemanly practices and amateur play. It was this exploitation of the middle and lower classes that allowed professional hockey to take its place as the dominant market and method of team organization during the turn of the century.

By 1908, professional hockey in Canada had been exposed, as teams could not keep the disguise of amateur play forever. “With the formation of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association [even though the word ‘amateur’ still found its way into the title of the league] the organizational and philosophical separation of amateur and professional hockey was complete,” (Gruneau, 77) because, in part, the CAHA was the first serious attempt at forming a truly national standard league, something that the principles of the amateur institution could not attain. Once pro hockey, in principle, was allowed, the landscape saw an explosion of new teams, leagues, and associations of openly professional players. Helping this explosion was increased media coverage, as newspapers were dedicating a separate section to sports coverage, and as the railroad reached all the way to the pacific provinces, coast-to-coast telegraph wire services aided in the media being able to reach a broader audience (and allowed companies to advertise
to a broader market) (Metcalf, Alan, *Canada Learns to Play*, 54). In 1909, the professional National Hockey Association was formed, (the grandfather of the National Hockey League / NHL) and within two years became the premier professional league in the nation.

However, the establishment of the pro game as the status quo of upper level hockey began to destroy the ability of small town teams to financially keep pace with larger cities. Since money now drove the operation of a team, bidding wars erupted for the best talent. Small market teams were forced to pay higher salaries to players to entice them to play for a city that possessed fewer creature comforts than high profile cities. (Gruneau, 80) As a result, elite professional teams began to fold in the small market cities, though amateur hockey, even though it was no longer the league that captured the national attention anymore, remained a strong institution in smaller cities.

The economic situation during the First World War escalated the division between the “have’s and the have-not’s”. Wealthy teams commanded and hoarded the best talent, saw significant profits from gate receipts and advertisements dollars, while small market teams continued to slowly die. The greed of the times came to a head as wealthy NHA owners, confronted by the bad economies of the smaller teams, as well as competition from senior amateur leagues and incessant bickering about league expansion, broke away from the NHA and formed the NHL. The four owners established their own league consisting of the Protestant and English speaking Montreal Wanderers, the Catholic and French speaking Montreal Canadiens, the Ottawa Senators, and the Quebec Bulldogs (though the Quebec franchise, experiencing financial trouble, sold out and became the Toronto Arenas soon after) (Metcalf, 65).
During the ‘Roaring Twenties’, the fortunes of the new NHL improved, as did the entire landscape of hockey. “Hockey was swept up in the growth and dynamism of the US and Canadian post-war boom development” (Gruneau, 93). By 1927, the NHL had expanded to ten teams, had accepted expansion franchises in the United States (allowing the NHL to benefit from the glut of money available in the US during the Twenties), and a new professional league (the WCHL) had formed successfully in the western provinces as well as the States of Washington and Oregon. The amount of money that was assessed for admission to the NHL exploded by 8000%. From HNIC, page 93:

1919 - Toronto Arenas sold for $2,000
   Toronto St. Patrick’s admitted for $5,000
1920 - Quebec Bulldogs reactivated, immediately bought by Hamilton for $7,500
1921 - Montreal Canadiens sold for $11,000
1924 - Canadiens sold again to The Molson Brewing Co. for $15,000
1924 - Boston admitted for $15,000 entry fee
1925 - Hamilton Tigers moved to New York for $75,000
1926 - Chicago franchise added for $150,000 fee
1927 - Conn Smythe buys Toronto St. Pats and changes to Toronto Maple Leafs for $160,000

Furthermore, the WCHL, comprising of teams in Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, and Saskatoon forced the NHL to compete with three major professional leagues for players (including the PCHA, formed in 1910 with teams in Seattle, Portland, Vancouver, and Victoria – though the PCHA ran into financial trouble and merged with the WCHA to
form the WHL in 1924. Subsequently, the WHA found it could not compete with the NHL, and folded in 1926, with Chicago purchasing the Portland team, Detroit absorbing the Victoria team, and Boston signing players from other teams.) Hockey was becoming a financial behemoth fueled by the economic prosperity of the decade – financial success that influenced all social classes. The wealthy NHL owners were directly reaping the benefits in increased working class wages. Higher worker wages promulgated a more liberal spending philosophy by the middle and lower classes, and that dollar quickly found its way to the entertainment sector. Because of the national appeal of hockey, the sport saw the greatest increase in spending per capita than any other entertainment industry (Gruneau, 97).
“Hockey Night in Canada” and the Beginnings of the National Dream

Hockey has long been dubbed as Canada’s sport, and has romantically been called, in various incarnations, everything from “the Game of our lives” (Peter Gzowski) to “our common passion” (Ken Dryden – Gruneau, 2). The beginnings of the sport’s history before the formation of the National Hockey League demonstrate how the game started to weave its way into the ever-increasing leisure time of Canadians. Though the professional game (and subsequently money) was controlled by a small percentage of the population – namely the white, wealthy, Protestant, ruling class – the sport also blossomed as an amateur game. The professional game captured the all the media attention of the early twentieth century and captured the dreams and visions of Canadian citizens, but if it were not for the presence of the amateur game at all the local levels – from Pee Wee leagues to senior citizen leagues, the professional game would not have succeeded. Amateur hockey was the fuel that the professional game eagerly consumed.

As the consumer oriented and festive culture that the Roaring Twenties embodied came screeching to a halt with the American stock market crash of 1929, Canadian’s leisure time and disposable entertainment dollar vanished as well. People no longer could afford to spend money at entertainment events because every dollar was a precious commodity, both for the working public and the various company owners who paid their wages. As a result, working hours occupied a larger percentage of the day and hourly pay decreased accordingly. The long hours for little pay left the common man little room for “luxury activities” like attending professional hockey when the workday mercifully came to an end.
In spite of the bleak economic landscape that defined the 1930’s, hockey survived, and the pro game, despite suffering some damage during the Great Depression, outlasted the Thirties and emerged as strong as ever when World War II reversed the negative effects of the previous decade. This can be attributed to three facts; facts that ultimately saved the NHL – that the established amateur system was exploited, that national radio and media coverage of NHL games kept the dominance and presence of the NHL burned into Canadians minds even though they were not as likely to attend games as was the case in the Twenties, and third, it was the construction of new sports facilities for the NHL teams that helped professional hockey expand its influence among the middle class.

The wealthy class established professional hockey as its domain, controlling it while reaping the financial benefits of their ‘toy’. When their working class market disappeared in the Thirties, it was the elite class that financially kept the league from suffering the same fate as many other industries during the hard economic times. While pro hockey depended upon the middle class dollar, its emergence in the Twenties was also advertised as an upper class diversion as well – something that could be attended after a night out at a restaurant or on nights when the theatre did not seem as an enticing activity. The upper class quickly latched on to hockey as a worthwhile activity and attendance at games became a legitimate social event. Because the percentage of lower class citizens attending games decreased, crowds at pro games for all intensive purposes became predominately upper-crust. As the upper class discovered that they could socialize with their peers at games, tickets became a hot item as the desire to “be seen” at games heightened. This emergence of hockey game attendance as a pseudo “social club”
akin and equal in principle to the traditional Polo, Yachting, Fox Hunting, and Golf clubs of the upper class financially kept the NHL afloat and saved the league.

Also keeping the NHL as a viable business was the exploitation of the amateur game system of local towns and communities. It has been previously established that the NHL owners presided at the top of the social and economic food chain of hockey. Because of their financial clout and influence, the ‘cartel’ of owners could assert their influence and desires over the entire Canadian hockey landscape.

Bidding for talent was one example of how the professional game eventually had come to dominate the amateur game. Wealthier cities and teams could afford to outbid their poorer and smaller adversaries for the best players, which historically led to the pro game abandoning the small market community and becoming an exclusive large market presence. During the depression, however, this bidding process and salary escalation was contradictory to the necessary conservative business practices of the decade. Although the NHL had money to pay upper-level salaries for the best players, bidding wars and forced salary escalation would ultimately lead to financial ruin, and owners recognized this threat early on. They subsequently used their dominance and power to create the Minor League feeder system – one that is still in existence today. Though small market amateur teams had been paying players for some time now, they did not have the deep pockets of the pro game, and while they could not win a bidding war in principle, they could force those with money to pay a higher salary than desired. In an effort to curtail rising salaries, the amateur teams were forced to become affiliated and subservient to pro teams. Pro teams used their amateur brethren as developmental farms and player ‘holding’ centers. When necessary (when a star player in the pro game was injured, for
example) the NHL could “call-up” a member of the farm team for temporary assignment to the father team. The NHL team controlled the comings and goings of these players, and dictated which players would be assigned to which amateur teams, because each NHL team controlled multiple amateur franchises. For allowing the parent teams to establish this control over the operations of their teams, the amateur clubs were financially compensated for their troubles. This compensation served two purposes: it kept bidding wars to a minimum, because there were no longer any outside alternatives for player’s services. Secondly, it kept the amateur clubs in business during the harsh economic times. Because amateur clubs, though the principles of “pure amateurism” no longer existed, were not primarily in the business of making money, they would have suffered a quick and untimely death during the depression unless there existed an assisting party. The NHL feeder system provided this source of income, and even though this system is a clear example of the dominance of money and capitalism over “purity of the sport” and community hockey, it turned out to be a mutually beneficial process. If it were not for the need for the cartel of NHL owners’ to continue to make money, organized hockey in Canada may have been destroyed during the Great Depression.

The feeder system further reinforced the NHL’s position as “the” hockey league in North America during this time, and the maintenance of this system after the conclusion of the depression allowed the NHL (and the wealthy owners) to continue their dominance. What the system accomplished (for the benefit of hockey’s survival in the 1930’s) was the elimination of any competition. When money was abundant during the post-World War II boom, the ‘humanitarian but self-serving act’ of this system evolved into a totalitarian command of the entire sport of hockey in Canada. Though it will be
investigated later, the system allowed the rich to get richer, and any potential competition in the form of new professional leagues had little chance of survival because the NHL had essentially cornered the market for talent and teams.

What transpired with the middle class during this time? Attending live games had temporarily become the domain of the rich, but professional hockey became more popular than ever for the rest of Canada during the depression even though the people didn’t possess the financial means to actively witness games. It was the technological emergence of radio on a national scale that fostered this boom in popularity. A new radio program developed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and sponsored by Imperial Oil soon became the nexus of the spirit and dreams of the Canadian population (Gruneau, 105). Each Saturday night, the coast-to-coast broadcast of “Hockey Night in Canada” allowed the general public to maintain their involvement in professional hockey.

If the pre-1900 population of Canada was plotted on a map in order to show which parts of the country were inhabited, one would find invariably that an overwhelming percentage inhabited the St. Lawrence River ‘valley’ and the southern Ontario peninsula formed by Lakes Erie, Ontario, and Huron. When, in the early years of hockey’s existence, early leagues tagged themselves as a ‘national’ league, in effect the adjective ‘national’ actually consisted of southern Ontario and Quebec, and occasionally Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Primarily due to geography and climate, locations farther north and west of these inhabited areas existed as frontier land and areas still occupied by native Americans. As can be assumed, the areas west of Ontario did not possess any of the modern accoutrements of the larger cultural centers of Toronto, Montreal, Hamilton, Windsor, Halifax, Quebec City, et.al. These areas developed a
significant infrastructure and culture during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and as an obvious result, the sport of hockey established itself in these ‘modernized’ areas after the industrialization of the country.

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway between 1881 and 1885 brought the frontier provinces rapidly into the modern world. “The CPR was primarily constructed to satisfy the province of British Columbia, which had agreed in 1871 to become a part of Canada on the condition that a railway be built from eastern Canada to the Pacific coast within ten years. The CPR also was designed to open up the prairies of western Canada to settlement and agricultural development, and to serve as part of a transportation system for increasing trade between Britain, Canada, and East Asia.” (John A. Eagle, The Canadian Pacific Railway and the Development of Western Canada.) The CPR now unified the country from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, and as the railway brought technology, trade, and industry, it also brought the culture and entertainment of the east. Soon after the completion of the railway, with the gates to the west open, the prairie and pacific Provinces experienced rapid growth and population increases. However, the railway also brought with it the expansion of the eastern media, and radio coverage of professional hockey through the “Hockey Night in Canada” vehicle reached over two million homes (Gruneau, 100) nationwide by the early 1930’s (the entire national population of Canada in 1930 was 10,377,000, ([http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/Population/demo03.htm)] therefore the broadcast reached about 20% of the entire country.)

Though “HNIC” broadcast all of Canada’s teams’ games, the early years of the program are best known for the pageantry and aura of Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto
from the golden-voiced play-by play of Foster Hewitt. Arguably the greatest sportscaster in Canadian history (and in North America if the U.S. market was more familiar with his work), he painted images of gallantry, drama, and epic from the broadcast gondola high above the ice in Toronto. If a survey of adult Canadians were to be taken asking what they remember about hockey growing up, an overwhelming majority would acknowledge that crowding around the radio to listen to his broadcasts was a vivid and precious memory. Though a child of the television generation, Richard Gruneau’s memories of the broadcast still ring true about the program’s iconic importance:

“We also have vivid recollections of youthful fandom and hero worship...of pleading with our parents to allow us to stay up to watch Hockey Night in Canada. These memories of sights, sounds, and feelings are the stuff of nostalgia. But they are also the stuff of identity – part of the attachments that [we] have to the places, times, and social influences that shaped our developing conceptions of self,” and “Perhaps the strongest of all our feelings of commonality came when we watched Hockey Night In Canada on Saturday nights. Even at an early age the TV program made us feel like part of a national community” (Gruneau, 2).

It can be taken as fact that the broadcast brought an entire nation together once a week during the long Canadian winter, but why had this necessarily occurred? During the depression as has been discussed, the existence of the available entertainment dollar for the common man was nonexistent. Radio provided an inexpensive alternative to
purchasing game tickets. Being able to follow and listen to the Maple Leafs’ season from the warmth of a family’s own living room and avoiding the incessant and oppressive cold of the Canadian prairie was an obvious and welcome innovation. Recalls Dick Beddoes, a journalist, “Our little world was brightened by those broadcasts. They were money from home at a time when there was no money at home or anywhere else. In retrospect, we didn’t know how rich we were to be so well entertained on Saturday nights.” (Charles Wilkins, Canadian Geographic, Jan/Feb 1994, p. 36) Because of hockey’s popularity, the weekly broadcast became a family event, one that children like Gruneau considered a treat to partake in. For people who had ventured westward and left their homes in Ontario or Quebec, the national broadcast allowed them to keep their connections to the world back east. To further quote Gruneau: “Hockey Night in Canada began to create for hockey, in particular NHL hockey, a deeply rooted, almost iconic place in Canadian culture, regardless of the fact that the NHL had become a continental league dominated by US money.” (Gruneau, 101)

Furthermore, Hockey Night in Canada gave people something that was scarce during the Depression: a romantic sense of hope. Life was hard, money was scarce, work was long, and leisure was at a premium, but listening to Foster Hewitt every week gave the victims of the economy a diversion from their lives. It provided the perfect form of escapism, because it was a time that brought family and friends together and allowed them the brief opportunity to forget about the bleak outlook on life that defined the 1930’s. In this sense, the NHL ought to be thankful for the Great Depression, because while its popularity grew, NHL hockey had succeeded achieving a mythological status. Hockey not only existed as a capitalistic product in the largest cities of Canada, but it
existed now in the minds, imaginations, and dreams of a struggling nation hanging on Hewitt’s every word. It allowed the public a readily accessible medium to follow their heroes. This hero/player worship was a natural by-product of sport and mass-media. Following the dramatic exploits of players such as King Clancy (a legendary Maple Leaf regarded as the Babe Ruth of the early NHL) and others brought people together around the radio. Community exists on multiple levels – within a family, within a social group, within a geo-political boundary, but the weekly broadcast succeeded in creating a national community that most every Canadian male automatically connected with. The mythology broke across traditional ethnic and social class divisions as well – it gave people from different backgrounds, different races, and different social standings a common ground to stand on. Even people who did not have an affinity for the sport could no longer avoid its omnipresence in Canadian society, for it pervaded not only the printed media, but idle conversation as well. Another aspect of the broadcast reaffirmed the continual social battle between the English speaking and French speaking communities of the nation. With HNIC, the entire nation could get caught up in the epic struggles between the English Toronto Maple Leafs and the French Montreal Canadiens – a figurative cultural war that exists to this day. This gave the people yet another community with which to associate and bond, and by promoting the cultural contests between the two teams, the distinct communities of Quebec and Ontario were ostensibly brought closer together.

It is an obvious conclusion that the presence of HNIC fostered an explosive growth of new fans; most importantly with young children of the generation. These children would carry on their reinforced memories of the radio broadcasts and pass them
onto a new generation of Baby Boomers following the end of World War II in 1945. It is also a grave understatement that HNIC quickly became the CBC’s most popular show (Gruneau, 105).

Foster Hewitt provided the young Dominion of Canada a voice into the drama of the NHL, but the stages on which the dramas were acted out that was the final piece of the puzzle that saved professional hockey from the Depression. These stages also aided in providing a sturdy foundation on which the NHL built its empire in the post-war years. The ten-team league that entered the Depression emerged from it a six-team league – the Ottawa Senators folded in 1935, the Montreal Maroons in 1938, the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1930, and the New York Americans in 1942. This left the NHL with the following teams – the Montreal Canadiens, the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Boston Bruins, the New York Rangers, the Detroit Red Wings, and the Chicago Blackhawks. In order to establish themselves as legitimate franchises, and in order to extract as much money as possible from ticket sales, each of these teams constructed large capacity arenas during this era. Though most were built during the boom times of the 1920’s (The Olympia in Detroit 1927, Chicago Stadium 1929,
Madison Square Garden III in New York 1924, The Montreal Forum 1924, Boston Garden 1928); only Maple Leaf Gardens was constructed during the height of the Depression, a fact that has assisted in the Gardens in becoming the iconic Cathedral of NHL hockey. “For decades, even in the middle of summer, people have come from all over the country just to take a look at the place,” says Don MacKenzie, who from 1946 to 1990 was the Gardens’ building superintendent. “I used to show lots of them around inside, and as they’d get out into the seating area I’d notice that a kind of reverence would come over them, and they’d get quiet, and I’d see them staring up into the rafters as if they were in a cathedral or something” (Wilkins, 33) That it actually was built in that era is a miracle unto itself, and because of this the relationship of Canadians to this arena share a common bond, as the Gardens, thanks in large part again to Foster Hewitt and Hockey Night in Canada, became a separate room in every radio-listening Canadians household during the Depression. Recalls Jack Warner, a lifelong Leafs fan and a survivor of the Depression: “During the thirties we’d gather around the radio on Saturday nights and listen to Foster Hewitt’s broadcasts from the Gardens. Even though we couldn’t see what
he was talking about, we seemed to know what it all looked like: the game, the building, the players.” (Wilkins, 33)

The arena, in essence, became a built manifestation of the love of a sport that encompassed so many Canadians during a harsh time.
The Importance of the Arena in the Community

The example of Maple Leaf Gardens can serve universally as to how the hockey arena found its place in society – both physically and emotionally. As stated previously, MLG maintained a mystical sense of place to many Canadians living outside the established communities surrounding the eastern Great Lakes. People constructed their own images of what the arena looked like through radio broadcasts, and, more often than not, when they made ‘pilgrimages’ to Toronto to visit the Gardens people have voiced that it was even more beautiful than they had dreamed. Furthermore, the importance went beyond the actual stylistic nuances of the building, for the symbolic representation that the arena maintained was possibly even of greater importance than the color of the seating or the height of the roof. Its importance in its urban surroundings, both to its immediate neighbors, to the city in general, and to the psyche of the people pervaded the actual design. Upon visiting MLG for the first time in his life in 1993 after listening to the radio and watching on television for 40 years, Jack Warner and his wife Martha of Carlyle, Saskatchewan reveled in its presence and their imagined image of the building: “The first thing that struck me when we walked out in to the big bowl of seats was the space. There were no posts! I’d always imagined there would be. We were a little bit in awe of it all. It was everything I expected it to be and more. We’d gotten to the Gardens, and Jack had fulfilled a dream” (Wilkins 33).

However, the professional setting of Maple Leaf Gardens is not exclusive to this type of symbolic meaning. Smaller arenas exhibit similar attributes in the community like the cathedrals of the NHL. Minor league arenas and local rinks, while they lack the
glamour and glitz of the NHL arenas, still arouse a sense of belonging and place in the views of Canadians. Arenas, in many communities, can become the center of social activity. They are viewed as a symbol of a vibrant community; towns without arenas are not considered ‘healthy’ and successful. In many ways, the local arena fuels the religious reverence associated with the professional facilities, for it is in these facilities where the purity of the modern version of amateur hockey is still maintained. While capitalism and professional hockey overtook the amateur game and relegated it to the municipal stage, the NHL could not survive without the existence and maintenance of local amateur hockey.

Ken Dryden has successfully demonstrated in his book: “Home Game, Hockey and Life in Canada” how the local arena serves as the iconic, social, and cultural center of town – all of which are only understandable once the fact that the sport is fundamentally important to the vast majority of men, and an increasing number of women in Canada. Part of this is due to the climate of the country and the long harsh winters that are common. Part of it is a clinging to the sport that “put Canada on the map” and helped the ‘local boys’ make it big in the United States. Much of this, as previously shown, was due to the depression and its ramifications, but generations hence still are dependent upon the sport. Each community needs a place to gather and feel like a community, to remind itself that it is a community. A local arena is spirit-building, and in a time of enormous change, both economically and socially, every bit of spirit that can be mustered is needed. And they are plentiful – Dryden notes that there are 459 indoor rinks in Saskatchewan and 660 arenas in Ontario. Their importance can be seen specifically from the sheer numbers that have been built.
“If you lose the rink,” says Scott Mundt, a retired power company employee who now acts as a volunteer at a local arena, “people’ll lose interest in the town and start looking other places. It’s just as important as the elevator.”

“It’s the backbone of the community,” says Don Harris, “That’s what draws people to town”.

“We know of other towns who have lost their rinks. They die overnight. It’s the grand central gathering place for the young and old. The young come to skate and the older citizens come in to watch. The arena is the gathering place for the winter months,” says Walter Kyluik, a local school principal.

“It’s a baby-sitting place too. Families leave their kids there and they’ll do something else. And the children? They know they’re looked after. They have a place to go,” says Alfons Hajt, whose son played with the Buffalo Sabers for fourteen seasons.

Dave Roberts, a former resident of Fielding, Saskatchewan, says this of the loss of his town’s arena when it became unsafe from age and the community could not fund a new facility: “….then our curling rink went. Then our grocery stores started to go and gradually the school went and then our post office. All we have left now is a community hall that gets used once or twice a year for a stag party or a meeting…three families live in Fielding now and the rest is all deserted empty buildings” (all, Dryden, 15).

Why are these images of the arena so strong in these people’s minds? Two points answer this question, the first is described by Ken Dryden in this passage on ‘why hockey is important to Canada’:

“Canada is such an improbable country. The immensity of the land overwhelms. Only a few scruffs of trees and buildings distract the eye from its utter space. The land separates and disconnects, place from place, person from person. What links
it all together seems so hopelessly outmatched. The broad winding rivers that brought in fur traders, the ruler-straight railway lines that brought settlers in and their grain out, the highways, the power lines, the RV antennae and TV dishes — such fragile threads to bind this far-flung land and its people. All serve to connect in some way, but these cannot create the bond. What ties us together must be a feeling that travels the waters and pavement and airwaves and steel: things we have in common, things we care about, things that help us make sense out of what we are. It is a hard-won feeling. So much about Canada sets us apart — distance, topography, climate, language, European rivalries and cultures. The country can seem so contrary to destiny and good sense that at times we ask ourselves, “Why bother?” Canada has never worked seriously at developing the traditional instruments of community: the icons of nationhood — flag, constitution, monument — the myths, legendary figures, events and commemorative dates. Without such evidences of nation worship, without focal points for community expression, it can seem we lack a sense of nation. It can seem that what sets us apart is stronger than what holds us together. It can make our bonds seem frail. It can make us weak when we are not. It matters little what the icon is, what the myth is about. For American nationhood, a bronze statue, the Statue of Liberty, is important, a story about a future President and a cherry tree gets passed on from generation to generation. An icon is nothing more than a symbol. It embodies and evokes what a nation feels about itself and offers its people the too-rare opportunity to express what they really feel. Canadians may seem undemonstrative and reserved, but not at a hockey game. We may seem isolated and distinct one from another, we may seem non-patriotic, but not at a hockey game. Hockey helps us express what we feel about Canada, and ourselves. It is a giant point of contact, in a place, in a time, where we need every one we have — East and West, French and English, young and old, past and present. The winter, the land, the sound of children’s voices, a frozen river, a game — all are part of our collective imaginations. Hockey makes Canada feel more Canadian” (Dryden, 18, 19).

Secondly, as many sociologists have noted in the past two decades, sport (in all incarnations, though in this case hockey) is an integral and essential part of advanced society. John Bale states that “sport is one of the many things that are done once survival is assured and is a plausible reality only to people who have satisfied their more pressing needs.” (Bale, Landscape of Modern Sport, 39) Sport acts as an indicator of the cultural, racial, social, and economic barometers of the times. “Sport provides an excellent vehicle to explore such historical problems as the rise of industrial capitalism and the emergence
of urbanization.” (Riess, Steven: *The American Sporting Experience*, 10) Therefore, it is a natural to draw the following conclusion from these ideas: if sport is an integral part of culture, then the sporting facility is equally important in the context of culture and the community. The hockey arena, as the residents of Saskatchewan described by Dryden will testify, is vitally important to their identity.
Analysis of the Sporting Facility / Arena

Having studied the history of the sport and its importance in Canadian society, as well as the arena’s role in the fabric of the community, focus now shifts to the design and internal workings of the arena. What makes an arena function as the essential community center? What specific examples of arenas can be used as barometers for the eventual design of a prototypical “communal” facility?

The summer of 2000 and winter of 2001 was spent touring and analyzing a multitude of venues primarily in Ontario, Canada, and a select few in the United States as well. Because of the importance that Canadians place on hockey, ice sports, and the arena, logic would dictate that the method in which these facilities are planned, constructed, and placed into the landscape would serve as exemplary case studies. As stated previously, Ontario alone contains more than 660 arenas, so a criteria for study needed to be established:

- The facility needed to house a professional team
- The facility needed to be located in an urban or semi-urban setting
- The facility needed to serve some community function in addition to the professional team

By using these three qualifiers, the numbers were reduced greatly, for a majority of the arenas were purely local buildings that would not have experienced the duality of serving both a professional franchise and community recreation. But in Canada, the Junior Hockey system – a system that acts as professional development leagues or “farm teams” – is also very wide and expansive. There are over 60 teams at various levels of Junior Hockey in Ontario alone. The decision was made to confine the study area to the
greater Toronto area, and to focus on teams in the Ontario Major Hockey League – the OHL. This league represents the upper echelon of developmental leagues in the Junior system, and is the first true professional experience. The players drafted into the OHL, having forfeited their right to attend and play for a University team in the US or Canada, hail from smaller non-professional Junior League teams, high school teams, community teams, and church league teams. Players talented enough to play in the OHL have the opportunity to be drafted into mainstream hockey, including the NHL and its feeder teams.

The intriguing aspect that made the OHL facility worthy of study was the method of community involvement in the team’s fortunes. It would be safe to say that most teams in Canada, irregardless of their level of play, enjoy solid support at the “fan” level, whether they are ticket-buying fans of a Major team or parents of a teenager in a youth league. The OHL, however, takes boys away from their homes and places them in host-families during most of the year. These host-families voluntarily act (though they are compensated by the team) as surrogate parents for the young player, providing (again with team support) accommodations, food, transportation, schooling, work, and guidance for the away-from-home player. This relationship casts a much different light on the definition of “community involvement” in a hockey team.

The OHL spreads out over the entire Province, with teams in the far northern sections like Barry, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, and Sault Ste. Marie. Deciding once again to try to limit the team selections to the greater Toronto area, the following five franchises and buildings were used:
• Brampton Battalion – The Brampton Recreational Center - new facility with strong community recreational involvement

• Mississauga Ice Dogs – The Hershey Center - a new facility and new expansion team to the OHL with a community recreational facility

• Oshawa Generals – The Oshawa Civic Center - an older team with an older mix-use facility.

• Windsor Spitfires – Windsor Arena - across the river from Detroit, Windsor plays in the oldest facility in the league, a single ice sheet barn constructed in the 1930’s. This point made Windsor necessary to study even though it was outside of the Toronto demographic.

• Kitchener Rangers – Kitchener Memorial Auditorium – an older team with an older facility expanded recently to increase community recreation.

These buildings were visited twice each, once in the summer during the professional “off-season” in August when the only activity would be community driven, and once again during the season in February, when winter sports season was in full swing. The intent was to view two vastly different levels of activity in and around the facilities. If an arena complex was well-designed and well thought out, in theory, it should function adequately during periods of reduced activity as well as function smoothly when overloaded by people attending a professional contest. Contrastingly, a poorly executed facility may remain devoid of life during the off-season due to problems with site selection, parking, internal functions among other issues. It may also fail during the peak season in similar ways such as an inability to sensically handle large crowds or, in extreme cases, remain empty because it does nothing to attract the seasonal throng of ice-seeking Canadians.
Brampton, Ontario

![Image of Brampton Aerial Photograph](Image courtesy of terraserver.com)

Known affectionately as “The Bunker”, The Brampton Recreational Center (BRC) sits off of highway 427 on the southern edges of the city. Brampton, a major producer of chemicals and electronic and aerospace equipment, is a city of over 230,000 [approximately 20 miles](http://encarta.msn.com/encarta/contents.asp?ti=0632A000)
west-northwest of Toronto. “The Bunker”, the home of the Battalion OHL team, was constructed in the mid-1990’s as a combination ice facility that signified recent trends in arena construction in Ontario. Housing three full size recreation rinks plus the 5,000 seat main rink, the Center acted as a focal point of Brampton hockey and the Brampton community.

![Figure 12: The Bunker](image)

Overall, the BRC was a very successful community sporting facility despite some major criticisms regarding site and exterior architectural design. It is obvious that the facility was built under a limited budget, as attention to the materials of the exterior skin was given little importance. The exterior was cold, as the predominant and inexpensive materials of concrete and grey corrugated steel paneling wrap the building. This treatment of the exterior did little to welcome the fan, athlete, mother, or friend to The Bunker. The architects did attempt to provide color to the exterior building within their seemingly limited budget by placing blue, purple, and yellow dryvit panel features around the entryways. The presence of color in these locations identified and celebrated the entry points as well as they can, and gives some life to the cold exterior. However, the
nickname of the BRC, despite the architect’s attempts at working within a limited means, more aptly described the impression left upon the onlooker.

Further adding to the feel of separation from the community was the selection of site – once again driven by cost issues. The building was adjacent to an on-ramp cloverleaf near highway 427. This cheap and otherwise unused land on the outskirts of town was not an ideal location for a community “center”. While the site gave excellent automobile access from the highway and the southern sections of Brampton, it seemed more of an appendage of the city rather than a ‘heart’. Not only did the arena sit in an expanse of cleared highway land, but it also sat in a sea of asphalt parking spaces. This expansive surface parking was a natural result of the cheap and readily available land. However, when the arena was empty, the vast expanse of surface parking isolated the building further from the rest of the town.

However, there were other arenas that were visited that failed much more in this regard than did The Bunker. Although the BRC’s site left little to be admired, the overall negative impact was mitigated by a number of points. As stated before, the facility was
engulfed in a sea of surface parking lots. Across the street to the west sat a large residential neighborhood, the primary savior to the poor site selection. Having this neighborhood in such close proximity served two purposes: it brought potential users within walking distance of the arena, and it allowed the arena to become an actual member of the entire neighborhood. Many sporting facilities that exist in a sea of parking do not have this associative context and subsequently act autonomously upon the landscape – like a frontier army outpost in the middle of the open prairie. The residential neighborhood softened the site. Secondly, the presence of a large commercial area less than a mile to the north accentuated the site much in the same way as the neighborhood. The strip of typical highway-exit commercial establishments, including fast-food restaurants, super stores such as Wal-Mart, Home Depot, and Target, and strip shopping
malls brought more potential users close to the site. The increased traffic and activity generated by the commercial strip helped activate the otherwise stagnant patch of highway land at the BRC. Restaurants also provided a location for people to congregate after activity at the BRC was done – establishing another connection the BRC to the strip. Finally, the BRC was visible from the commercial street. This visual connection seemed to lessen the distance between the two objects, and actually filtered out the presence and noise of the highway to the west.

As stated before, the true success of the Bunker was its internal layout and functions – so much so that it offset the negative implications of exterior skin and site selection. The driving concept of the BRC was freedom of movement. The designers produced a wonderful plan that allowed a true feeling of openness - both visually and functionally.

The building was constantly active during both visits - whether or not there was a pro game being held in the main rink. While the four recreational rinks naturally aided
the year-round draw of people to the building, the method in which the spaces were laid out is the real accomplishment of the BRC. The rinks were arranged off of a wide central hallway that immersed the onlooker in the activity occurring on each rink. A quick turn of the head through the open hall allowed one to witness action on each of the ice surfaces, and this immersion generated a sense of excitement because of the constant activity. All of the necessary amenities were located around the perimeter of the rinks in a way that complemented this “immersion”. Strategically placed locker rooms, information stands, pro-shops, skate-shops, vending machines, and general concessions allowed parents to keep their children in constant view while they were on the ice. Overlooking the three rinks on the second floor was an observation deck and a sports bar and grille. The observation deck provided yet another point of view for onlookers while it enhanced the experience on the ground floor by creating visual stimulation above the standard visual plane. The sports bar accomplished this as well, but went a step further in that it overlooked the recreational rinks on one side and the professional rink on the other. This allowed the sports bar, a place of gathering and socialization for the community, to act as the central feature of the Arena. Metaphorically this was a powerful statement in the design of the facility – socialization acts as the tie between the two different functions, not function.
Other arenas may have separated the two areas completely by not allowing a visual connection between a community area and a profit driven professional area. In this example, the dollar would be the controlling factor – an admission fee must be paid in order to merely look at the professional rink. The BRC not only shuns this idea through the use of the sports bar, but the patron was allowed to freely pass between the two areas as well: the main concourse of the professional rink links directly to the main hallway of the community rink. On game day, a time where access is severely restricted for the paying fan to the main concourse, the fan at the BRC was only hindered by a friendly employee stamping the back of the ticket-holder’s hand - giving them unfettered access to the entire arena.

The professional rink was also complimentary to the driving idea of the arena. By only seating 5,000 fans, the management was assured of an attendance that “felt” sold out – whether or not there were actually 5,000 people in the seats. The small capacity allowed the construction of the risers to be more sharply angled. By increasing the slope, there was a greater sense of intimacy within the space. People could visually connect with a fan across the ice easier than if the slope was lower – the higher vantage point allowed more of the arena to be observed at once. The lower capacity allowed the roof to be much lower and avoided the cavernous feeling that a high roof in facilities that hold 20,000 can generate. Finally, the sports bar on the end of the rink had an open balcony, allowing patrons to casually watch the professional game while sitting around a table, playing pool, watching TV, or other social activities not typically assigned to watching a live sporting event.
The main concourse surrounding the pro rink was the final piece in the successful design of the BRC. While the exterior of the building was cold and generally lifeless, the main concourse was lively, colorful, and stimulating. Open four sided concessions, vending stands, merchandise vendors, and four sided hall-of-fame displays created points of activity that were freely accessed. Rather than merely providing support functions to the main rink, the concourse was an activity unto itself – children were even seen playing games with balled-up hot dog wrappers and toy novelty sticks in the concourse. By improving the level of activity and excitement outside the rink, the excitement inside the rink was positively affected as well by giving the fan more things to look at. All of the visual stimuli interestingly increased my awareness and involvement in the game – it would seem logical that so many things happening would distract me from the event on the ice, but this was not the case whatsoever.

The time spent at the BRC was enjoyable. Walking around the hallways and concourses, interacting with other people present, watching the pro game as well as the recreational games created a warm sense of involvement in the community. Visitors, fans, and athletes were not onlookers to the action– they were participants in the action, and this difference was the true genius of the Brampton Recreational Center.
Mississauga, Ontario

Traveling west on the QEW highway, one finds the small metropolis of Mississauga, one of Toronto’s largest suburban areas. Mississauga “is a rapidly growing industrial city; major manufactures include telecommunication and aerospace equipment, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, motor vehicles, appliances, steel and rubber products, and plastic and paper goods. Lester B. Pearson International Airport, the largest airport in Canada, is in the northeastern part of the city” (http://encarta.msn.com/encarta/Contents.asp?pg=2&ti=761570528).

Upon first inspection, the Hershey Center, the newest arena in the OHL, seemed strikingly similar to the Brampton Recreational Centre. The buildings were both constructed after 1995, both sit on cheaper land next to a highway interchange, both operated under limited budgets judging by the treatment of the exterior materials, and both were planned as multi-functional community centers with multiple sheets of ice. When I looked at the plans of the Hershey Centre for the first time, these similarities fundamentally seemed stronger, regardless of the Hershey Centre’s smaller size.
Arriving at the arena, I immediately realized that the similarities between the two buildings existed on paper only. The Hershey Center demonstrated little regard for community and social planning, both internally and in the landscaping surrounding the building.

While the BRC existed in a large expanse of paved, cheap land, it possessed something that the Hershey Centre sorely lacked: context. The area surrounding the Hershey Centre was devoid of human intervention and activity. The closest residential area was a yet-to-be-completed apartment complex over two miles away, and the closest commercial area was farther still. The only connection to human activity was the expansive industrial areas to the immediate north, west, and east of the arena – areas that were unsightly, relatively unkempt, occasionally abandoned, and completely unwelcoming. Warehouses, truck docks, and industrial offices did not foster a sense of communal warmth, and the landscape around the Hershey Centre blatantly exemplified this. The aforementioned sea of parking spaces provided the only major landscaping feature around the area – concrete curbs and saplings planted in parking lot islands did little to enhance the feel of the grounds. While the BRC also exhibited a
similar immediate surrounding of parking, the facility had other features to alleviate the coldness of open surface parking. The Hershey Center did not have this saving grace.

The facility’s closest neighbor, Iceland Mississauga, a large arena complex directly south of the facility, contained many of the community features that the Hershey Centre lacked. It can be gleaned that this dichotomy was intentional – the Hershey Centre was to serve as the professional facility while Iceland Mississauga would cover the community needs. In fact, this relationship was listed as an advantage to the site selection: the building intended to hold a “…synergy with Iceland Mississauga, a new 4 rink arena located directly to the south of the proposed site, and other recreation facilities planned adjacent to this site”. (http://www.city.mississauga.on.ca/hersheycentre/site.htm) When analyzed, this proposed synergy did not exist, and the relationship between the two buildings actually detracted from the overall site context. The two arenas competed against each other for importance in the community. If the architects of the arenas truly wanted to infuse this section of
Mississauga with life and vibrancy, then one facility should have been erected. As it stood, the two competing buildings detracted from each other, and lessened their importance on the site. During days where there was no professional game at the Hershey Centre, the building sat lifeless while the influx of community activity occurred at Iceland. When the Hershey Centre was active, then Iceland was devoid of activity. It is the connection of community hockey and professional hockey that benefited the BRC, and as a result the building was infused with life and activity. By separating the functions of the theoretical “community arena complex”, the 70 acres of land was developed and essentially wasted. The development would have been more successful, and would have benefited Mississauga more effectively, if a method to create one true community facility was investigated. By doing this, more land would have been available for other uses: uses that could have helped place the site more in context rather than assume the role as a barren expanse of land placed in a predominately industrial area.

When the parking lot at the Hershey Centre was full during a game, the presence of cars did seem to activate the arena, but not the landscape and certainly not the
community. The full lot gave the sense of a major event happening inside the building, that there was something of importance occurring behind the doors that was worthy of my attention. But the feel of the grounds themselves around the arena was as lifeless as it was when empty.

The arena, on paper, acted as a community center. It had one large rink for the professional team and major events and a secondary rink for community use. Both had separate entrances but could be accessed internally as well. The community, or recreational, surface had typical amenities for such an arena – concessions, a small shop, locker rooms, and a lobby space.

However, if the BRC was used as a barometer for other community facilities, then the Hershey Centre did not match the qualities of the BRC in this regard either. Perhaps the multiple ice surfaces at the BRC helped enhance the feeling of community – since multiple games could be viewed simultaneously from a single location, it allowed the onlooker to become engaged with more people in more areas. The Hershey Centre’s public area felt as lifeless as its surrounding parking lot. The space around the community ice sheet was spectacularly
uneventful and utilitarian in décor, color, and atmosphere. Because of this and the lack of surrounding exterior context, the Hershey Centre was a community facility in name and concept only.

The main rink, on the other hand, was minutely successful for its intended use. While the interior felt “new” and lacking character, it was a comfortable place to watch a game, and if the Ice Dogs were not bottom-feeders in the standings, a fully attended game would have been quite arousing. The seats, upholstered a deep red, caused the empty building to keep a dark, theatre-like setting to it. This feature both accentuated and hindered the “feel” of the interior. It gave the seating bowl a more formal, dignified atmosphere – a common feature in some newer facilities. Combined with the low-lying heavy-steel truss roof system, the interior was quite intimate. Luxury box suites were located at the top of the 20 or so rows of seating – far enough to be private but close enough as to not alienate the suite-holders from the general seat patrons. Vomitories provided a mid-bowl entry, so one entered the arena bowl close to the playing surface – this helped provide a greater sense of intimacy as well. The mid-level walking concourse allowed patrons to walk around the perimeter of the arena bowl in close proximity to the ice.

While the feel of the Hershey Centre main rink was intimate, its formality prevented it from generating much excitement and electricity when viewing a game.
Ultimately, the intimate theatre style approach to the atmosphere was the main culprit. The relatively low rake of the bowl, a typical theatre feature, caused the fan to feel farther away from the action, and caused them to worry more about looking past the person sitting in front of them. While the Hershey Centre roughly had a similar seating capacity than the BRC (5,400 compared to 5,000), the latter’s higher rake made the fan feel more “on top” of the action, looking down upon the ice and not out towards the ice. I felt a part of the action at the BRC, as opposed to feeling like I was viewing a performance “somewhere out there” at the Hershey Centre. When the main arena lights were on during an event, the building still remained dark due in part to the great depth of the roof trusses – the “dead space” within the trusses was so great that light seemed to get lost in the expanse.

The final internal failing of the Hershey Centre was its isolation. The only way to view the ice was if you were sitting in your seat. If you wanted to get something at the concession stand or use the restroom, once you left your seat and passed through the vomitory, you were cut off from the activity. There were no external views of the main rink, no overlooking balconies or eateries; only the tunnel view from the main concourse through the vomitories. Because of this, the implication of “community” was once again diminished. A patron at the arena could not feel that they were part of a larger group and a feel connection to the other fans and players when the spaces provided were inherently segmented and partitioned from each other.

Ironically, many of the observed problems with the arena were intended and listed as strong points and advantages prior to construction. Pulled from the facility’s website
The site was chosen because it offers the following advantages:

- visual exposure from Highways 403, 410 and 401
- potential for additional facility development
- synergy with Iceland Mississauga, a new 4 rink arena located directly to the south of the proposed site, and other recreation facilities planned adjacent to this site
- availability of site servicing
- large, contiguous land mass in an urban setting
- flexibility in site programming (no residential neighbours)
- ease of development of this site (no significant site constraints)
- availability of public transit
- proximity to airport, hotels, restaurants, shopping and the City Centre
- access from the freeway system and arterial road network.

These listed advantages would have been successful if the site had been developed differently. It was advantageous to be located close to transportation and major arteries, but because the site wasn’t located close to people who would use the building, then the advantage was nullified. The potential for further site development did exist, and it would seem possible that the dysfunctional relationship between the two facilities could actually spur a change in the light-industrial setting around the Hershey Centre. If more reason was given for people to visit the space, then potentially housing and shopping areas could begin to find their way into the area. But when the site was visited, this potential seemed to be of little consolation for the present situation. In fact, points five and six listed above specifically addresses the problem. While a “large, contiguous land mass” may lend to some flexibility in future construction, it is specifically the lack of “residential neighbours” that disconnects the facility from the community.
Oshawa, Ontario

Figure 25: Oshawa Aerial Photograph (Image courtesy of terraserver.com)

A half-hour drive east of Toronto brought one to the industrial port city of Oshawa, on the north shore of Lake Ontario. The city of over 136,000 is noted for its manufacturing of automotive parts and the headquarters for General Motors Canada (http://encarta.msn.com/encarta/Contents.asp?pg=2&ti=761552106).
The Oshawa Generals, most famous for producing NHL superstar Eric Lindros, play in the Oshawa Civic Auditorium, an older, multi-use facility a few blocks from the center of town. The complex, containing grass sport fields, a civic pool complex, and an indoor multi-sport recreational facility (containing tennis and squash courts, a 225m indoor track, a 6 lane swimming pool, and a fitness center) as well as the ice arena, acted as the hub of community recreational activity in Oshawa.

The facility was extremely successful in its interaction with the community, even though its main focus was not hockey – a departure from the focus of the two previously discussed facilities. The only ice surface, the main 4,205-seat arena, was not the dominant feature of the complex. By doing this, the facility sent a distinct message to the community that it would welcome all sports and all patrons, regardless of their recreational pursuits. While the feel of a hockey / ice sport center was lost, importance of other sports was gained. The result was a presentation of a comprehensive recreational facility where baseball, softball, soccer, swimming, and fitness were given equal consideration within the confines off a professional hockey facility.
The expanse and acreage of such a multi-use facility could have threatened the connection to the community and created a barren space much like the Hershey Centre. That was not the case in Oshawa for a number of reasons. The facility was not located on cheap land directly off of a super highway – it was placed within the existing urban fabric of the city, and was close to residential and commercial areas. As an older facility, land had not been stripped and removed of trees to accommodate construction, and the landscape surrounding the area was mature. The complex was truly a part of Oshawa.

But as a monumental presence as a hockey facility, the Civic Auditorium failed, though it was never seemed to be intended as such. Its presence as a true community recreational facility was its sole purpose, and its schizophrenic nature diluted any one of the sports from taking center stage. Was it a hockey facility? Was it a pool? Was it a baseball / soccer complex? It was none of them and all of them at the same time. Under different circumstances this seeming lack of focus would have been disastrous, but because of its sympathetic context within the urban fabric, the schizophrenia was
curtailed. While this neutral presence of the multiple sports is successful in its neutrality, the true success of the complex was the dynamics of the hockey arena’s interior.

The ice portion of the facility was the second-most intimate of the facilities that were visited. Due in part to the lower seating capacity than other arenas, the seating bowl was smaller and had a lower rake than many other arenas as well. While the lower rake normally would have produced an unpleasant result (like the Hershey Centre), there were a number of other aspects that offset this potential negative. The extremely low roof was the main feature that added intimacy to the interior. Standing at about 25’-30’ above the ice surface, the white-painted shallow truss brightened the interior and accentuated the stadium lighting. By intensifying the lighting conditions, the arena avoided the darker theatre-like setting of the Hershey Centre. Further, the main concourse, concessions, and circulation areas were all in direct view of the ice. People could lean against railings around the entire arena’s perimeter while standing on the concourse and not miss a minute of the game. This was a particularly nice feature – going to get a hot dog was not a chore, as you were engaged with the on-ice activity the entire time instead of passing through a vomitory and becoming disengaged with the spectators and players. You were free to walk around the concourse and experience

![Figure 28: Seating chart](image-url)
different viewing angles as well. The open concourse added to the buzz of activity in the arena while you were seated, too. The constant motion of people around the concourse provided another viewing experience besides the game. I noticed myself consistently switching my eyes between the game and the concourse – the incessant activity surrounding me became absorbing, and complemented the spectator experience.

The second feature that helped overcome the lower rake was tightness of the seating treads and risers. From measurement, the tread and row depth at the Brampton Center was about 31 inches. At the Hershey Centre, the depth was about 33”. At the Oshawa Civic Auditorium, the treads measured about 28”. While a difference of two or three inches may seem negligible, it is enough space to drastically alter the comfort level of a seated spectator. At 33”, there is just enough room in front of the knee (while sitting) to allow other people to pass in front of you by shifting your legs. At 31”, you must stand to allow people to pass, but there is sufficient room between the knee and the seat in front of you. At 28”, the knee (on a 6’ tall person) is touching the back of the seat in the next row while seated comfortably. In *Stadia: A Design and Development Guide*, the authors state that the minimum recommended tread depth should be 780mm, or 30.7” (page 129). It would be reasonable to deduce that the 28” depth is inadequate and uncomfortable, and detracts from the overall viewing experience of the fan.

Something happened, though, when other factors cast a positive light on the facility that turned this negative into an asset. While watching a game, even though my knees were touching the seat in front of me, and allowing people to pass by me was a chore, the crowdedness of the seating areas *added* to the overall experience. The explanation for this contradiction was quite apparent during the course of the game.
Initially, the positive atmosphere of the arena was augmented by the brightness of the lighting, the perimeter ice-view concourse, and the intimate roof. The crowded feeling of the stands also added to this positive aura. By not providing plush seating, people seemed more inclined to get out of their seats, stand, and cheer while following the on-ice action. The constant motion of sitting and standing in reaction to the various scoring opportunities during the game made my experience much more engaging than if I had been seated the entire game. This seemed to be the crowd’s means of participation in the game itself, and it complemented the home-team’s performance.

A scoring opportunity on the ice resulted in an energetic but controlled chaos in the stands. A shot on goal caused people at that particular end of the arena to stand. By having one mass group standing at once in excitement at the potential goal, voices were raised. Seeing this activity, the people on the opposite end of the arena, next to the defensive goal, reacted by standing themselves, wanting to be a part of the activity opposite them. Ultimately, the majority of the arena was engaged in a never-ending “up-and-down” dance that greatly added to the overall excitement of the game.

Being in close proximity to other people was not as uncomfortable as had been expected either. Even though there were strangers seated all around me, I did not feel that the tight dimensions infringed on my ‘personal space’ - the imaginary space around my body that caused personal discomfort and unease when breached by another person’s personal space. It was interesting to note the change in the volume of my personal space as I walked around the building. At the concession stands, where the crowd was light and there was a distinct gap between people standing in line, anyone who violated this large imaginary space made me feel uncomfortable. As I walked around the concourse, I
noticed that my personal space expanded because there was more room to maneuver, and fewer people to encounter. When I began the process of walking down aisles to find my seat, the crowds became much denser. As a result, my personal space / comfort level was reduced incrementally and proportionately with the density of the crowds. By the time I sat down with people packed in around me, my personal space had shrunk to the area immediately in front of my face and body, and the close proximity of those around me did not make me uneasy. This minimal amount of personal space and a minimal zone of comfort made the seating areas extremely intimate and quite sociable. It was harder to ignore the shouts and conversations of the people around me, subsequently, I was drawn into them and often engaged my neighbors. At the Hershey Centre, where the seats were plush, large and tread measurements were more ”comfortable”, I felt the need to ignore the presence of my neighbors, and kept to myself.

Oshawa was not a monumental building, it was not a new building, and it was not a true hockey building. The lack of a separate community ice surface reduced the sport’s presence in the area and the passive nature of the facility did not portray the same “event destination” image as both Brampton and Mississauga. However, because the Oshawa complex was intended to serve a different purpose, it cannot be truly measured against its brethren. The lessons to be learned from Oshawa are the successes of the internal systems of the ice arena. While it is not flashy and dilapidated from age, the arena is a testament to an engaging, exciting, and electric hockey venue.
About an hour west of Toronto, the tri-city of area Kitchener, Guelph, and Waterloo is the third largest metropolitan area in southern Ontario behind Toronto and Hamilton. Its population of 178,000 supports industries in “automobile parts, packaged meats, textiles,
furniture, electrical equipment, and metal, leather, and rubber goods. Insurance companies also play an important role in the city's economy”
(http://encarta.msn.com/encarta/Contents.asp?pg=2&ti=761560117)

The Kitchener Rangers, the local OHL team and one of the most successful teams in the league, are a bit of an anomaly in that they are publicly owned. This has allowed the Rangers to define themselves as a true “community” team, as all season-ticket holders weigh in the decision-making process for the team:

_The first five years saw the team roll along with a take-charge leader in [Eugene] George until the NHL collectively agreed to drop its "sponsorship style" of junior teams in 1967. The New York Rangers then offered the team to Mr. George for $1, a token receipt to assume the financial and overall responsibility of the team from then on. The modest George, realizing the community importance of the Kitchener Rangers, instead turned the team over to the community; in essence, to its season ticket subscribers. And so, the Rangers had landed as a publicly owned team. George and fellow colleagues strategically set up a volunteer Directorship, which included key Executives, which still holds true today (among all eligible season ticket subscribers). The Rangers are backed today by their unique strategy; a 40-person Board of Directors to which 9 Executive positions are elected as key duties including Finances, Policies, Charities, and a Hockey Committee among others. Today, the Rangers have enjoyed great success at the turnstiles as an OHL attendance leader. The team attracted a record 162,000 plus fans in 1999-00, an average of 4,750 per game. The Rangers provide an excellent family atmosphere with programs and promotions targeted towards families and corporate clients._
From: http://www.kitchenerrangers.com/Team.asp

While all other OHL teams involved the community in public relations efforts and sponsorships, the situation with Kitchener redefines the term community focused. Because the city allowed townspeople and season-ticket holders to have a say in the operations of the team, the community therefore has a vested interest in the success and future of the team. The public involvement was unprecedented in this league. The
ownership structure also contradicted the formal make-up of professional hockey as it had existed since the advent of professionalism. Hockey had been demonstrated to be a business right from the beginning, a tool with which weathy upper-class owners increased their profitability and bottom line. While the Kitchener model did not assume that profitability was of less importance, it did successfully steer the cash flow into a broader pool rather than one person. The business side of hockey sat wholly in the hands of the public, and it made hockey all the more important to the community in the Kitchener area.

The Aud as it is know in town, or the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium, is also a bit of an anomaly when compared to other OHL arenas. Brampton and Mississauga were relatively new facilities each built from the ground up as one facility. Oshawa, while older, was constructed in the same fashion. Kitchener was a renovation of an old facility.
combined with a modern retrofit and expansion. The duality in architectural styles and ages of the building sections provided for an unusual end result.

The original building, and current main rink, was a post World War II classical revival auditorium. Stone and concrete materials adorned the exterior and were used to compose a straightforward quasi-Parthenaic arena, with a major celebrated entrance on either end. When the building was renovated and expanded in the late 1970’s (judging by the architectural brick style), the exterior of the original auditorium was kept intact; the expansion removed only the eastern main entrance. The addition’s exterior was relatively stale: Windowless brick walls covered the entire perimeter. The only architectural feature was the cross-axial public entrance – situated and organized in a similar fashion to a cathedral’s transept. A small space frame structure supported a glass entry canopy and atrium space through this cross-axis. The addition held two public ice sheets, a separate public entrance, and other amenities (concession area, pro shop, meeting rooms, etc.) off of the south end. The final result was an odd relationship between mid century classical revival and late century modernism.

The discrepancy between styles was a questionable decision. Was the unadorned addition done so to not overwhelm the classically simple original wing? Did the architect feel that by designing a more intricate façade, he would create a competition between old and new? This argument is clearly evident when observing the entire Aud from the side. While neither section genuinely speak and relate to each other, they do not diametrically oppose each other either. The architect was successful in maintaining that the original auditorium remained the focus of the building. By creating a bland, monolithic enclosure for the addition, attention is drawn away from this section. Though not completely
resigned to allowing the addition to lose its identity completely to the historical wing, the glass atrium entry space drew enough attention to distinguish the addition from its neighbor. If the opposite had been done and the addition had been an ornate and multi-faceted structure, the internal functions would not have been appropriately reflected on the skin.

While the language between the historical and the modern may have been congruous, the overall presence of the facility on the site was less than spectacular – though it could also be concluded that this was intentional, and successful, as well. The point of the building was its interior functions. The eye was immediately drawn to the glass entry canopy (as it was the only external feature). There was no point to behold the rest of the building; if you were coming to the Aud’s public area, this entry marked your destination and it drew you inside quickly. The surroundings were ignored due to this direct absorption of traffic. While the architect theoretically may have respected the discrepancy between the two styles, the end result was a bland and boring presence in the community. Except the inviting and powerful main entry to the classical original building, the unremarkable structure was not welcoming or inviting. It did not relate to its surroundings or to the community at large.
Internally, the original auditorium was completely renovated to modernize the rink, seats, restrooms, lockers, and mechanical spaces. The original roof, while painted and cleaned, was retained as well – a positive and sensitive preservationist gesture. This helped the interior maintain an “old feel” to it, while everything else inside was new. The arena seating bowl and its dimensions felt very similar to Oshawa – except for the higher roof here. The backed seats were hard but comfortable; there was enough knee room, though someone passing by caused you to stand. The slope of the stands was of “moderate” incline – not as steep as Brampton but not as shallow as Oshawa. The view onto the ice felt more “sporting-like” than the theater setting of Mississauga because of this moderate rake. The capacity of just fewer than 5,000 provided an intimate setting. Overall it was a positive hockey experience and was a good place to watch a game.

The new addition was drastically different in décor and style than the main rink. Everything about the addition felt new and clean. The central atrium space was well lit, planters and greenery were strategically placed around the lobby, and the use of primary colors on the floor and walls made a comfortable and warm space. This center space was an anomaly too. Other
arenas, generally speaking, were cold. Concrete block walls and neutral colors complemented the building use - an *ICE* arena. Some buildings, such as Brampton, created successful public spaces and used color, but the overall palette and mood was still cold. The central atrium at Kitchener was a very warm and comfortable space, and the shadows cast by banners hanging in the skylight added to the cozy nature of the space. It was successful in that it was a comfortable *community* space, but it didn’t evoke images of a *hockey* space. If some of the signage and other ice-sport oriented décor was removed, the interior could have been an entry space to a library or an office building.

The atrium did, however, provide a curious contradiction to the two public ice sheets, which were mostly viewable simultaneously through a glass wall. You could sit in the atrium and watch games on both ice sheets – though this was a visual connection only. A glass storefront wall separated all other senses from the ice. At Brampton, the onlooker was immersed in the entire experience – the sounds, sights, and smells of the arena were all available from the
walkways. This immersion allowed the onlooker to become part of and contribute to the arenas internal energy. By separating the ice from the common space, Kitchener created a disparate and separatist space. This aided the warmth of the atrium by removing the cold of the ice sheets, but it detracted from the overall experience internally.

From a site standpoint, The Aud’s surroundings gave the potential for a very activated space. Situated slightly on the edge of the downtown area, the residential building boom following the War enveloped the site in a middle-class neighborhood on three sides. The fourth side was a combination of parking surface and athletic fields – in fact, in addition to a couple of baseball fields, a very small football stadium adorned the grounds of the Aud. The potential here was dramatic – it was located across the street from its potential users – something that Oshawa and Mississauga sorely lacked, and Brampton only adequately possessed. The complex was close to a major thoroughfare as well, and a small commercial strip was also in close proximity to the arena. The Aud had a strong communal and urban context, and was by far its strongest feature. The connection to the community was perfectly amplified by the location of the facility. Kids could walk to the arena from the nearby neighborhood, allowing the Aud to function as a hangout for local youth. In the summer, the additional usage of the baseball and athletic fields further enhanced its standing as a community rec center. This was evident during both visits to Kitchener: in the winter months, the atrium space and the two ice sheets were full of activity. Equipment bags lay all over the floor, and groups of mothers conversed while their kids ran around and played. The on-ice activity was broad ranged, from ice hockey games featuring players of all ages to figure skating lessons. In the summer months, I witnessed youth soccer games, teenage track practice in the football
stadium, and youth tee-ball games on the diamonds. In both cases, there was an extraordinary amount of ancillary activity as well. Groups of friends could be seen playing tag in the adjacent fields while their older brothers participated in the organized sports. Kids could also be seen crowded in the arena’s pro shop ogling over the latest pair of skates or carrying on typical child hero skits – Gretzky passes to Messier, he shoots, scores!! This non-organized activity was what gave the building life and energy. It activated the internal and external spaces. It drew people’s attention. It overcame, ultimately, the laissez-faire treatment of the building’s architecture.

Kitchener left me feeling unfulfilled and caused me to pose the question, “what if?” What if the architecture had been more engaging? What if the central public spaces were comprehensively involved with the rest of the rinks? Would this have further complemented and enhanced the strong communal presence of the Aud? In the search for a true community oriented hockey and ice facility, one that complements the town, the urban fabric, the landscape, transportation, architecture, and the sports themselves, I felt that if these issues had been more thoroughly planned out, Kitchener would have been a model facility. The toughest component to fulfill successfully, from visiting numerous facilities, was the selection of site. If the building had been intelligently placed then the other components would have been easier to achieve and more effectively instituted. Kitchener’s site was by far the most sympathetic to the urban landscape and the community. This aspect alone allowed the adequate infusion of activity into and around the building. Spectators and users were virtually guaranteed to be present because of its location. Augmenting this was the ownership structure of the team. The public shareholder system allowed direct community involvement in the team’s operations
instead of a single wealthy owner dictating the goings-on. By accomplishing this, the
presence of the team and the facility were mentally present in the minds of the
community when away from the facility – The Aud was a physical, emotional, and
business presence in Kitchener.

The architecture and space planning ultimately was the problem with this facility.
Externally, the architect’s treatment of the old auditorium space clashing with the new
addition was successful, but as stated before, unspectacular. While the new addition
respected the historical section by not overshadowing it or drawing attention away from
it, the Aud’s site presence and overall aesthetic suffered because of the bland treatment of
the façade. Internally, while the professional rink was completed quite well – it allowed
a dynamic view of the ice and allowed a social setting conducive to fan enjoyment, the
treatment of the public sections left much to be desired. There was no fluidity to
circulation or attention paid to social interaction. Parents were separated from their
children. Casual spectators were limited in their viewing experiences. The space was
highly partitioned and fragmented. If this space had been more thoughtfully planned, the
relationships between each of the facets of the Aud would have been exemplary.
Windsor, Ontario

Figure 35: Aerial Photograph of the Detroit / Windsor area. (Image courtesy of terraserver.com)

Windsor, whose regional population topped 278,000 in 1996 (http://encarta.msn.com/encarta/Article.asp?mod=1&pg=6&ti=761570952), is the second home of automobile manufacturing in Canada. DaimlerChrysler, the city’s major employer, constructed its Canadian headquarters and primary assembly plant in Windsor. Located directly across the border from Detroit and separated by the Detroit river, the
city offers an alternative tourist base to the greater Detroit area. Augmenting the region’s passion for ice sports (there are over 26 arenas in the region alone) (http://www.guide2detroit.com/icerinks.shtml), Windsor offered shops, casinos, restaurants, outdoor recreation, and a riverfront park. The city was also home to the oldest facility in the OHL - Windsor Arena was constructed in the 1920’s and has served as home to many teams, including the Detroit Red Wings of the NHL. The building’s purpose was exclusively a professional rink, as the single surface offered no community rink or community gathering place. A schedule of upcoming events posted on the wall listed dates only for the Windsor Spitfires, the resident OHL team – no local competitions or open skating dates were listed. The building and its treatment of the urban fabric did not seemingly attempt to be something it was not – it advertised and presented itself solely as a “hockey barn”, and nothing else. This was a vast departure from the other OHL buildings that were visited – each attempted to become part of the community by allowing internal public access and usage. The buildings were primarily professional rinks, but the true purpose behind the life of the building was the community.

However, the Windsor Arena, although vastly different form the other arenas’ methods, was a “community rink” as well. It was an icon of the city of Windsor – a living museum artifact reflecting the history of the community. Its usage and internal activities
were not community oriented, but as a symbol of Windsor, the building was very much a part of the community. This was the only facility that functioned in this manner – the only facility where the building acted as a true urban landmark. While the Arena may not hold the same urban presence as Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto, but the underlying concept is similar. The Arena represented 77 years of Windsor history – no building, no matter how successful the planning or design was, could replicate this highly important feature. Bob Duff of The Windsor Star wrote about the beginnings of the building in his article *Time to Retire Historic Windsor Arena*:

When the rink at the corner of McDougall and Wyandotte held its first major event, the hockey world watched with curious interest. It was billed as the Stanley Cup final which was never played, this Nov. 26, 1925 battle between the Victoria Cougars ad the New York Americans. Locals simply billed it as a long-overdue event. Considered an engineering marvel at the time, Windsor Arena cost $200,000 to construct. Ground was broken in May, work completed in September. Its opening was the cause for delight, since other area rinks were natural surfaces. “Surely, Santa Claus has arrived a month ahead of schedule,” noted the Nov. 7, 1925 edition of the Windsor Star. “Windsor and its surrounding municipalities have hoped that one day, an artificial ice stadium would grace its lands.

The Arena had arrived with much fanfare and its mere presence was vitally important to the recreation and leisure of the community. It could be argued that such an ‘engineering marvel’ would have given Windsor its place on the map – elevating the city’s reputation to a ‘major-league city’ and a source of increased

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**Figure 37: Seating Bowl**
pride and patriotism. This signature moment in Windsor’s history was represented and manifested in the construction of the Arena, and the fact that the building has remained in use since 1925 is a testament to its status as an urban and social landmark. Because of its age and history, Windsor Arena introduced a vitally important new characteristic to my tour of these arenas – nostalgia.

Frankly speaking, my first impression of the building was that it should be condemned. The exterior was bland, the building occupied its entire city block, leaving no exterior gathering space, the interior concourses were dark and disheveled, and the main seating bowl was rickety, cold, and uncomfortable. The roof leaked, judging by the four or five buckets sitting on the ice surface when I visited and paint was peeling off the trusses and wooden bench seats. The locker rooms were small and cramped, partitioned with painted concrete block and lit with uncovered fluorescent tubes. The building did not present itself well.

But as I continued to tour the building, my impression of it radically changed: Windsor Arena was an incredible hockey arena. A clipped newspaper article posted near the main entrance, entitled “Don’t Close the Barn Door”, validated my attitude change. In it, author lamented the proposed demolition of the Arena to make way for a new building.
Apparently, there was a major push underway to retire the antiquated building that had consumed much debate and media coverage. Another article from The Windsor Star newspaper, entitled “Cherry Defends City Gem”, described Canadian hockey and broadcasting legend Don Cherry’s feeling toward the Arena. “This is a gem. I know I shouldn’t say that. Because (Spitfires coach) Tommy Webster and everybody are after a new building, but this is hockey. It’s got a good feel. You come in here, you almost feel hockey. I love an arena like this.” He continues, “‘The new buildings, they have no soul’, he continued, including his own team’s home, the Hershey Centre, in that assessment.” “This place has got character. Look how close the people are here to being on the ice. You go to the new ones and they’re miles back.” In The Barn’s Main Value is the Memories, by Marty Gervais from the Windsor Star says this about the building: “Its hockey past is steeped with greatness and the Barn has served those heroes well. Yet the old place is not good enough, shout the critics. It certainly has had its problems. Some minor, others more serious.” “And certainly one might argue the hallways may be cramped, and, yes, you might stumble on the steps negotiating your way to your seat, but this is still home.” “And if your kid of eight or nine winds up getting a chance of playing a Windsor Minor Hockey game here, believe me, it’ll be special. It’ll feel like playing at Joe Louis Arena.
It’ll mean they’re skating on the ice where the great ones have played. That means something.”

It may be cliché, but when I sat in the empty arena, absorbing the history of the building and the age of the structure, the echoes of years past and heroes long gone were quite evident. The feel of the seating bowl was steeped in history, and in a word, magical. I never experienced the same sensation in any of the other arenas visited for this research – not Brampton, not Mississauga, not Oshawa, not even the Air Canada Center, the Toronto Maple Leaf’s spectacular new building. These buildings, when empty, never prompted an emotional response when visited. The living antique of Windsor Arena prompted a strong emotional reaction – a reaction to its history and to its architecture.

From a technical standpoint, what made this arena so endearing? It exhibited all of the features of intimacy that helped create an environment conducive to excitement. The backless wooden bench seats were small, hard, and narrow - this allowed the same social interaction and fan idiosyncrasies that occurred at Oshawa. The rake was steep, and the tread depth was very shallow – a mere 26 inches, allowing the fan to feel on top
of the action much in the same way as Brampton. However, a discomfort created by this small distance and hard bench seating seemed to often outweigh the intimacy that it provided. I frequently noticed people shifting in their seats and standing up to stretch more frequently here than any other arena. The short knee-to-back distance especially victimized tall people. It would seem that the minimum threshold for this measurement would be the Oshawa condition rather than the Windsor distances. But the intimacy that this cramped spacing created was plainly obvious.

The fan entered through one main vomitory that spilled out a few feet from the boards, right at ice level. All other facilities were entered through vomitories above the ice surface. By placing the entrances within touching distance of the playing field, there was an automatic connection between fan and player. In some places, people could stand along the boards while play was going on. This vantage point was not present in any other facility and it allowed passers-by to watch a game inches from the players.

The small size of the buildings dimensions also enhanced the intimate feeling. The combination of the steep rake and the smallish capacity (the arena only held 4,500 people) the overall depth of the grandstands brought the exterior walls closer to the ice than the other arenas. This decreased the overall volume of the arena, a feature noticeable when the people seated on the opposite side of the ice seemed within speaking distance.

The concourses underneath the bleachers, as to be expected, were also narrow and cramped. The age of the building showed here more than any other space. Signage and graphics had not been updated in quite some time judging by the font and artistic style they presented. Pipes ran continuously overhead the length of the concourses, missing the
top of your head by only a foot or so. Concession stands were cut into the side of the concourses, and wooden shutter doors closed them when not in use. The lighting was dark and intermittent, one of the main features that aided the cramped feeling. Everything about the concourses was a stark difference from the generally broad and bright spaces that could be found in the more modern facilities. While all of these features would have seemed to paint a negative picture of the spaces, and it was easily conceded that the amenities were sub-par and outdated, there was something strangely comfortable about this space.

Nostalgia. Everything that could have been a disastrous problem or deficiency in a modern arena was mitigated by this powerful emotion. From the seats to the lockers to the concourses to the physical condition – this and more were blatantly sub par. However, every problem demonstrated the 77 years of history and 77 years of memories. The building, as stated before, was a living museum, and this fact alone made Windsor Arena a beautiful and magical place. Eventually, it will be torn down and replaced by a modern arena, one that is profitable and more comfortable. But, as Don Cherry realized, it will never capture the same feeling and have the same soul as this venerable barn.
CASE STUDY CONCLUSIONS AND DESIGN APPLICATION

My experiences at the OHL arenas provided a vast insight into the problems, successes and desires for sporting facilities in Southern Ontario and allowed me to assemble the personalities of each facility into a prototype design list. The Eight Commandments, as I shall call them, are a direct result of lengthy observation and analysis of these facilities. The intent was to create a checklist of criterion to use in the construction of a new facility. While, in a given circumstance of site, it may be impossible to satisfy every item on this list, the Commandments are to be used as guidance and suggestion, not law. If flexibility and compromise are not integrated into the design and planning of the facility, then problems can and will arise, and the arena will ultimately fail in its attempt to become a true community facility.

Having said this, the ultimate purpose of the prototypical arena undertaken for this project was as a showcase for professional sport. Inherently, this creates problems and contradictions to the concept of a “community facility”. But I feel that after visiting the OHL arenas and studying at length the history of hockey in Canada and the birth and development of professional hockey, adherence to my Eight Commandments will allow a successful and unique compromise to be created. The professional nature of the arena will complement and enhance the community side and vice-versa. When this symbiosis is achieved, the end result will be an attractive, engaging, exciting space that enhances the street activity and urban life of a given community.
The Eight Commandments on Design for the Prototypical Arena

An Arena shall:

1. Acknowledge the history of its intended sport.
2. Acknowledge the history of its community.
3. Serve as urban and civic monument. Give a sense of place, “Topophilia”
4. Externally invigorate its surroundings, urbanistically and socially.
5. Internally not inflict dominant social control over people and not confine them to a pre-determined social seating arrangement.
6. Provide multiple varieties of experiences through the building design.
7. Maintain legitimate profitability.
8. Provide a positive, engaging, and electric atmosphere, and encourage spectator participation rather than spectator observation.

The following chapters will address each of the listed points and describe the reasoning and thought processes that were used to create the list.
Commandment #1: An Arena acknowledges the history of its sport.

Hockey is a sport that has over 200 years of history behind it. It evolved and grew over that time and became the predominant sport in Canadian culture. This fact demands that the past become a factor in the future planning of the sport. Why is this so?

A fundamental characteristic of the human species is its recognition of the past. Families keep genealogical trees of their ancestors, statues of historical figures are placed in prominent public plazas in cities and towns, modern television news media routinely produces “Year in Review” documentaries at the close of each calendar year. The past helps people connect with their purpose in life and gives them a sense of belonging. The past helps give insight into the future – the American stock market is based on this very fact. The past, and its various incarnations like nostalgia, are powerful societal characteristics. In a building that, according to John Bale, is the container of the modern urban crowd, the emotions and connection to the past of that urban crowd should be recognized. The history of the sport, in a manner to be determined by the designer and unique to the individual facility, is vitally important to the success of the arena in urban life.

History was met with varying degrees of success in the arenas of the OHL and the NHL. It was clearly evident upon visiting the facilities from both leagues that the importance of history speaking to the design and planning was seen in the end product. When the original six arenas of the new NHL were built in the 1920’s and 1930’s, they were state of the art facilities that could pack more people into one building than any other in its day and age. Most owners took the opportunity to create an urban experience with the arenas, and as the dominant buildings in their area, assured that the architectural
stylings signified both the power of the NHL and the subsequent wealth and influence of
the local team. Professional hockey during the construction of these arenas had only been
in existence for approximately one decade – very little time for the sport to establish a
sense of history and importance in the cityscape, culture, and country. The facilities were
a bold and forward thinking gesture for a relatively new function.

As the NHL grew to 24 teams in the 1980’s, five of the original six arenas were
still in use (Madison Square Garden III had been replaced by MSG prior to this). Over
the past sixty years, these arenas had witnessed countless numbers of games,
championships, goals, wins, losses, and players. Like a fine wine, these arenas
historically grew better with age. The venerability of the buildings instantly resurrected
memories and created a strong sense of nostalgia for those who attended events at the
arena – or even the casual passerby.

In the present day, hockey has become an extremely large business, where
millions of dollars per day exchanges hands in the operations of the 30 teams presently in
the NHL. To maintain their profitability, many teams have been constructing new homes
that provide amounts of revenue unheard of in years past. The last of the original arenas
in operation, Maple Leaf Gardens, closed its doors in 1994 as the team moved to a more
‘profitable’ venue. Because of their age and size, owners had hit the ceiling for extracting
the maximum amount of money from the facilities for years. The older buildings could
not be affordably renovated to provide more seating and more of the very profitable
luxury amenities that are standard in modern arenas. The demolition of the original
arenas caused much angst in the community as their connection to history was taken
away from them.
The surge of arena construction during the past ten years has followed the same philosophy as the construction eighty years previously: they are designed and built primarily and exclusively to maximize profits. Acknowledging that this is a supremely important function of a modern arena, it should not be the foremost purpose. While the original arenas were essentially the first of their kind, those built in the past ten years have over eighty years of professional hockey history preceding them. This history often is not immediately recognized in their architecture; the arenas have not been around long enough to conjure the images of history and nostalgia by simply existing. On the other hand, the original six arenas easily conjured these emotions simply by maintaining a street presence. These new professional facilities have an obligation and duty to recognize their predecessors. While referring to baseball stadiums, writer Brian J Neilson’s thoughts on early 20th century structures speaks to this responsibility:

*The striking memorability of these ballparks derives from the extraordinary variety of their particulars and their settings within a commonly known built idiom. Each one was the unique product of its circumstances and of the architectural dialog between two opposed forces: the diamond, the outfield, and the stands pushing outward, and the surrounding streets and structures containing them. Each of these parks, rather than being conceived as a free standing object in its own space, is part of a continuous web of facades of similar materials forming blocks, linked by streets, woven into neighborhoods. These new parks were not only urban but urbane, acknowledging the pre-modernist principle that cities are (or should be) a continuous fabric of harmonies and resonances, not an assemblage of isolated monuments”* (Neilson, from Raitz, The Theatre of Sport, 41).

More often than not, this requirement is seemingly ignored, and the design focuses on profit, comfort, and the wealthy. This is not to say that all modern arenas need to possess an aura of nostalgia, where a direct and literal translation between the two eras is the
concept of the design. As the second section will investigate, the arena needs to be
sensitive to its surroundings and vernacular: a design proposal for Quebec City should
inherently be different from a proposal for Los Angeles. An arena that does not consider
historical antecedents, in effect, insults and disparages the struggles and evolution of the
sport from its beginnings on the ponds of Ontario and Quebec.

Nostalgia is an easy and often effective way to accomplish this task. By
architecturally creating modern equivalents to past styles, the designer can bypass
decades of life. Colors, finishes, ornament, font styles on signage, etc. are tools that the
“nostalgia designer” uses to create this illusion of venerability. The paragon example of
this is the American baseball stadium in Baltimore, Maryland. Camden Yards at Oriole

![Figure 41: Oriole Park at Camden Yards, Baltimore, Maryland (Image courtesy of The Ballpark Book)]

Park, opened in 1993, is what modern designers call a “retro” stadium. The abundant use
of brick in a contrived neo-classicist revival manner allowed the building to blend in with
the surroundings of the old harbor in Baltimore. Other external features like extensive
Romanesque arcading and wrought iron fencing added to this illusion. Internally, the
architect created a smaller seating bowl with views and vistas closer to the field than
many of its competing ballparks. This established a better sense of intimacy – a quality
present in classic ballparks like Yankee Stadium in New York and Fenway Park in Boston. From a site standpoint, the stadium welcomed and accepted the old B&O Warehouse adjacent to the building, and allowed it to actually become part of the viewing experience by maintaining a clear, open view to the warehouse’s skin.

But is this the correct way to accomplish the recognition of history? Camden Yards itself was commendable in this regard because it was the first of its kind to acknowledge history in a modern facility through the total use of nostalgia. Also, it fit into existing the urban fabric of Baltimore and complemented its surroundings. But what was appropriate for Baltimore should not be appropriate for other cities. Camden Yards spawned a movement of “retro” style American baseball stadiums – each using the same architectural stylings to invoke “instant” history. By doing so, these Baltimore knock-offs disparage baseball at large, the communities and stadia by falsifying the image of the sport. The stadia became more like Disney World than sporting facilities – their false images and phony “forced” nostalgia create the same illusion of place much like the famous theme parks. In time, their novelty will wear off.

Recently, Disney renovated its “Tomorrowland” theme area in Orlando because it had grown outdated and ineffective – the magic hard been lost. Nostalgia, therefore, cannot be the primary design parti of a prototypical sporting facility – baseball stadium or hockey arena.

Figure 42: Riverfront Stadium in Cincinnati, Ohio (Image courtesy of The Ballpark Book)
Many new stadia were constructed in the United States in the 1960’s and ‘70’s. Cities like Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Cincinnati, and St. Louis all built new facilities to replace venerable and dilapidated historical facilities during this time. These stadia all demonstrated a number of ‘signs-of-the-times’: the expansive modernist use of concrete and the modernist embrace of high technology (manifested in the building’s abilities to physically transform themselves from one use to another.) At their time of construction, they were cutting edge facilities; glistening concrete jewels that announced the emergence of the city as a “major league” destination. As history showed, however, these multi-use concrete bowls were blemishes on the landscape and greatly harmed the quality of life in their areas. While the reasons for this are many, the applicable reason for this Commandment was that these concrete behemoths did not respect and acknowledge the history of the sports that they held.

The stadia in these cities are nearly identical in layout, look, and size. They were near-symmetrical bowls that could accommodate two major sports (American football and baseball), as well as a number of other activities (soccer, circuses, concerts, and other similar outdoor events). The original intention was admirable – save taxpayers money by building one facility to house many functions, thereby ensuring that the one building would remain in use for a majority of the calendar year and ensure a financial return. The

Figure 43: Veterans Stadium in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Image courtesy of The Ballpark Book)
original intent proved to be naïve and counter productive in the long run, and soon the
teams that paid rent in the stadia were complaining that the facility was no longer
sufficient. Many of the complaints and problems were spawned by the inherent problems
of facilitating multiple uses. Baseball and American football require vastly different
specifications – the playing fields are drastically different, which affects the optimal
seating configuration, which affects the sightlines, which affects the placement of
concourses and restrooms, etc, etc. This domino effect of problems between “baseball
mode” and “football mode” were a result of the lack of historical recognition – baseball
deserved to be played in a facility that was optimized and geared toward baseball only.
Football's’ different requirements dictated that it should be played in a facility specific to
football. By trying to accommodate both sports, the end result was multi-million dollar
stadium that was neither a football stadium nor a baseball stadium. How can the rich
history of baseball be demonstrated in a schizophrenic facility that has no primary
function? If people are interested in nostalgia, then the history of the teams should be
displayed in the building so those fans can immediately connect with the past. This
museum-like quality is essential for this Commandment and should be a primary
programming element for any new facility. If the dual-use facility is built, the exhibition
of two team’s histories, while potentially interesting, reduces the overall experience on
THAT day for THAT event. A baseball game should be a total baseball experience,
likewise with any other sport. Anything that directs attention and focus away from that
sport disrespects everything from that particular sport’s history to the overall fan
experience to the impact on the surrounding areas.
In the subject matter of this thesis, hockey arenas are often combined with a secondary sport – basketball. While the requirements for each sport are not as drastically different than that of baseball and football, the differences between the two do impact each other. Much of the specific and technical requirements to improve arenas (or stadia) will be discussed in a later section, but the point illustrates how the duality can be counter-productive to the individual sports.

The OHL arenas in Ontario satisfied this Commandment with varying degrees of success. Brampton, as a hockey only facility and a strong community facility, complied satisfactorily. In addition to the community areas, a large and publicly accessible Hall of Fame area on the main concourse allowed a connection to the past. The intimate setting, smallish feel of the bowl, and narrower concourses mimicked older facilities as well – without trying to replicate a historical style a la Camden Yards in Baltimore. Mississauga failed this test, for there were no connections to historical qualities – both architecturally and visually. In the facility’s defense, the Ice Dogs, as the newest expansion team in the league, had not been around long enough to warrant a team “Hall of Fame”. It would have been an embarrassing move to try and concoct a false Hall of Fame with old pictures of random or nameless players and teams just to create an effect. A possible solution to this would have been a large area dedicated to youth and community hockey - while not necessarily “historical”, it achieves the museum like exhibit that can be found at other successful arenas that do have a strong historical context. Furthermore, the architectural design did not satisfy this Commandment either, as the broad concourses, wide treads, and stuffed seats presented a theatrical and not sporting atmosphere.
Kitchener, besides its architectural problems regarding old vs. new, was successful. The adaptive reuse of the original auditorium was a stroke of genius and the preservation of old team photos and records along the concourse of the old arena allowed a strong connection to the past. While the community section was devoid of this feeling, the strength of the professional arena overcame any other negatives. Oshawa, as an older facility, felt historical, and the older architectural stylings aided this feeling. A small museum area allowed an adequate visual connection to the past, and the intimate architectural design allowed the bowl to retain an “old” feeling. The arena was not glamorous or overflowing with nostalgia, but it possessed enough atmosphere to pass the first Commandment.

Windsor, an anomaly in many regards, was an exemplar of this Commandment because it was a venerable old barn. The qualities of the buildings design should serve as a case study for future arenas to try and achieve a Camden yards like nostalgia. As noted many times previously, the building was inadequate for the needs of the team and the community due to its age and condition, but it didn’t need visual displays or Halls of Fame – the building itself was a museum. Windsor most definitely acknowledged the history of the sport.
Commandment #2: An Arena Acknowledges the History of the Community

One of the main points of this thesis is to create a prototypical arena that activates the urban fabric in which it is located. Many arenas and stadia built in the past 40 years have proven to be detractors to the urban fabric and welfare of the city – consequently, they lower the excitement within the arena. The massive stadia discussed in the previous section, including others in New Jersey, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Washington DC, did little to aid the city in which they were built. If an arena is to attract, complement, and invigorate the city in which it is built, it must in some way recognize the history of the community. This can be done in a variety of manners, but it must somehow be present.

The stadia and arenas of the 60’s and 70’s, as stated before, detracted from the urban fabric primarily because they ignored the core of the city. These decades saw the expansion of the city boundaries outward and the mobilization of the middle class to the suburbs. The improvements made to automotive transport - both in the automobiles themselves and the roads they traveled on - allowed the middle class to travel further and more frequently in a given day. Says Karl Raitz,

“Like shopping malls, linear strip development, and freeways, the new detached baseball stadiums contained unresolved tensions of Post-War American urbanism. How could the centripetal and compressive forces essential to true urbanity be reconciled with the centrifugal forces unleashed by private mass-auto mobility? (They could not.) The seemingly irresistible imperatives of Corbusian exploded space, a reductionist fascination with Bauhaus inspired ‘pure’ forms...and the seductive call of convenience found a broad consensus...among many Americans” (Raitz, The Theatre of Sport, 55)
Subsequently, families in search of more land and “greener pastures” fled the urban city center for the tranquility of the countryside. With the flight of the white middle class, the city lost its economic stability – urban residences saw increased vacancy rates that spawned a reduction in rents. The city became a desolate and empty shell devoid of residents, businesses, and vitality. Cincinnati, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Kansas City, and Detroit, to name a few, all saw an abandonment of urban life for the open spaces of suburbia. In each of these cities, historical urban sporting facilities were torn down to accommodate and facilitate the suburban flight. The new stadia were built either in the suburbs or close to the newly constructed Interstate Highway system to allow the middle class to drive to games.

One point that was learned from the visits to the OHL arenas was that a successful community facility was located close to its potential users. Brampton, Oshawa, and Kitchener all were built within close proximity to residential areas. By having this close relationship, the distance to travel to the arena was minimalized. This allowed a theoretical greater connection to the arena because it was close and accessible whenever the desire arose. Confirms John Bale, “public sports facilities should be as close to their potential users as possible in order to maximize pleasure from the sports experience and to minimize travel. The concentration of public sports outlets in areas of high density population is therefore desirable…” (Bale, *Sports Geography*, 79). This concept was behind the placement of the 1960’s era stadia in the city’s outskirts. By placing the stadium close to the potential users (in this case the ticket paying fans) and along major lines of transportation, the owners hoped to maintain their financial viability, maintain or
improve attendance levels, and remove the game-day experience from the degenerating conditions in the urban core.

This concept at the time sounded noble and sensible albeit shortsighted. While the suburban stadium and arena was located close to the user fans, ironically, they were removed from the pulse community. The heart of activity in any city, whether it is a large city like Toronto or a small town like Oxford, Ohio, occurs in the downtown area – it is the center of business, the economy, and the life of the city. Therefore, traditionally, the strongest sense of community is felt at the city center and the urban core. When the sports facility is placed in the city center both parties prosper. “Professional sport is good for the image of the inner city. Indeed, riveting a stadium to the downtown area of the US city is seen as a potent source of urban regeneration and urban machismo. Just as place pride goes into a winning team, the revitalized inner city requires images of growth, dynamism, and progress, images which are held to be more than physical structures alone” (Bale, 154). The larger population of the city center would theoretically enhance the activity at the sporting facility and adjacent areas, and the crowds that are drawn to events at the facility would subsequently enhance the businesses and areas surrounding the stadium. By removing a major container of the urban crowd away from the urban core, the mutually beneficial relationships between the two were severed.

In order to facilitate the higher number of cars travelling to the games, arenas and stadia were often placed in the middle of vast seas of parking lots – a move that removed any sense of urban context from the site. Also because these facilities were often built next to Interstate highways on relatively cheap land, buildings that were in close proximity to the stadia often were warehouses and industrial buildings – a neighborhood
far less inviting and community oriented than areas in the urban core. The Meadowlands complex in East Rutherford, New Jersey is a paragon example of this process. Less than 20 miles outside of Manhattan, the sports complex was built on cheap swampland in order to attract both the suburban New Jersey crowd and urban New York crowd by means of a major highway. The three facilities at the complex – Giants Stadium (American football) Continental Airlines Arena (hockey and basketball) and the Racetrack (horse racing) are placed in a massive expanse of asphalt surface parking lots.

![Image of Meadowlands complex](image.png)

**Figure 42: The Meadowlands complex in northern New Jersey (Image courtesy of [www.terraserver.com](http://www.terraserver.com))**

The surrounding swampland provides even more of a barren landscape to the complex. Regardless of how the facilities functioned internally, the external treatment of the stadia
destroys all communal connectivity between sport and society. The Meadowlands would not survive without the car – it is impossible to walk to the arena – an advantage that is standard in an urban core setting. By removing the pedestrian from the equation, all life is removed from the landscape as well. Mississauga’s arena was a prime OHL example of this philosophy – even though it was only built in recent years. My experience there proved the problems that exist at the Meadowlands. I felt no connection to the city and town of Mississauga, and the barren landscape surrounding the arena left the site dull and lifeless.

Contrary to the suburban model, the urban sports arena provides the facility with a strong sense of history and connection to the community. The perfect example of this in Canada, as mentioned in previous sections, was Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto. The Gardens sat in a dense urban fabric allowing people to walk by and interact with the arena on a daily basis – even if they never set foot inside the building. By merely walking past the building, the Gardens (and subsequently the sport of hockey) became a part of their life and a part of their urban experience. This situation did not exist in the suburban model as the pedestrian was removed from the site. The Gardens was allowed to grow up with the city of Toronto, and because it has stood for so long, many generations of Torontonians have come to recognize the landmark on the corner of Church St. and Carlton. Maple Leaf Gardens and the Toronto Maple Leafs have become synonymous with the city and the community.

However, because of the fact that the Gardens is a very old building, like Windsor Arena, the building itself acts like a museum of the city’s development. It does not need to find a gimmicky architectural design to mimic history and give a sense old age and
warmth. Windsor Arena was a massive time capsule of the past seventy years of Windsor’s growth. Maple Leaf Gardens functions in the same fashion. A new facility faces a tougher time in achieving a connection to the history of the community.

How can this be accomplished? It must be recognized that actual “history” cannot be replicated. Any sort of faux-historicism will only prove to be a fashion that eventually will fall out of style – something that can be harmful to the urban fabric. In order to acknowledge the history of the community, the arena must logically complement the city and ensure the prospect of a bright and community focused future.

First of all, the arena must be located in a central area of the urban core. If attention and care is given into the site selection process, the end result will enhance the city landscape much in the same way that the Gardens continues to aid Toronto’s streets. The suburban stadium model shows what happens to the landscape when urban context is removed from the site. By placing the arena in a central business district, both parties will be benefit. The arena will foster growth around the building in the form of commercial development – restaurants, shops, etc. The arena acts as a draw to the downtown area also. By bringing 18,000 people to the
core on a semi-nightly basis, the stability of the downtown economic situation is strengthened. In this sense, the arena should act almost as an urban monument, or even a tourist attraction. Landmarks evoke images of the city in which they are located and become part of the city’s identity – the Empire State Building, the St. Louis Arch, the CN Tower, Independence Hall, or even the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City. Or, from a sports perspective, Madison Square Garden, Yankee Stadium, Fenway Park, Wrigley Field, The Montreal Forum, Maple Leaf Gardens, or Boston Garden. These buildings are essential to the cities histories and futures and act as major attractions by bringing in tourists and out-of town fans.

Secondly, by placing the arena in the urban core, the sports facility will actually be located closer to its potential users. This contradicts the suburban model again. In that model, the arena was placed in suburban areas in order to attract more affluent clientele but was removed from the majority of the rest of the city. By having a centralized location, the entire city would benefit from the arena. If the city employs a public transportation system, then the urban core is further enhanced. People from all parts of the city, both urban and suburban, can utilize the transportation system, discourage the use of cars, encourage the presence of pedestrians, and help in the success of the future of the inner city, thereby acknowledging the history of the community.

Lastly, as partially demonstrated by the example of the Kitchener Rangers, the community must be involved in the existence in the arena. This does not specifically mean echoing the economic model of Kitchener Memorial Auditorium, however, although public ownership would be an ideal situation. The local involvement may be defined through a community built facility, where townspeople make up the workforce
that constructs the arena. This would give a strong sense of pride and personal ownership in the building itself. The sense of ownership would be advanced if the employees of the completed arena were townspeople as well.

Another means to establishing public involvement would be to hold local events at the building. Most of the OHL arenas did this in some fashion, including youth and adult hockey leagues and skating sessions - this type of involvement should be standard for any community arena. The facility must become the center of sporting activity for the community. High school or local college teams and tournaments must call the arena home, holiday sport festivals must be held, skating shows and performances must be scheduled, and pick-up games must be allowed to happen. These activities would occur in the entire facility as well – as was the case in Brampton and Mississauga, the professional main rink was closed to the public during off-hours; public involvement was confined to the designated public areas only. This ends up being counterproductive. If the main rink is the focus or jewel of the facility, then denying access to the main attraction for most of the time disassociates the public from the facility. The main rink should be opened up for the entire day’s operations. If security is a concern and foot traffic is not feasible for access to the main rink, then the building must be designed in such a way that the ice is perpetually visible. A mere visual connection (through windows or balconies or similar means) will generate the desired sense of connection to the public. This was the primary success of the 2nd floor sports bar at Brampton – it allowed a simultaneous view of both areas from a space that encouraged socialization. The main rink, therefore, became a part of the public space, even if people were physically not allowed inside the area during the day.
Openness, as a general design concept, should be an integral part of the facility on an overall scale. This extends beyond opening the main rink up to inner concourses and public spaces – the entire facility should open up to and welcome its surroundings. Most single rink professional facilities, like Maple Leaf Gardens, Joe Louis Arena in Detroit, or every other NHL building, are inaccessible to the public during most of the year. This fosters a feeling of segregation from the public at large – especially if the facility was constructed in a vast sea of parking lots as seen in the suburban stadia model. Denying access removes integration into the urban fabric. A true community center would be open all day every day and provide a reason for entering the space. The designer should take every effort to provide openness both inside and outside the arena. This concept has proven successful recently in American baseball stadia. Camden yards in Baltimore and Comerica Park in Detroit are two examples of this. In these stadia, an open street-level and street-accessible plaza above the outfield wall provides continual uninterrupted viewing of the entire seating bowl. An office worker running errands, a mother walking her baby, teenagers skateboarding through the streets, or tourists visiting the city can all get a glimpse or a professional sporting facility (the proverbial baseball cathedral) without buying a ticket for a game. While it goes without saying that the indoor arena has much different design constraints than an open-air baseball stadium, it would behoove the designer and the building if the same philosophy was studies an implemented into the hockey arena.

It would be a mistake to create a historically themed arena to try and acknowledge the history of the community, and it is impossible to recreate the nostalgia of a seventy-year-old arena in a new facility. But the importance of the Second Commandment should
not be taken lightly – it is vitally important to the success of an arena. The many above suggestions can provide a facility with a sense of respect for the community and allow the arena to become involved with the lives of the townspeople. If this is accomplished, the end result will prove to be a more genuine acknowledgement of the community’s history than any Disney-esque theming ever could.
COMMANDMENT #3 – An arena shall serve as urban and civic monument. It shall give a sense of place, or “Topophilia”.

Commandment 3 is a natural extension of the Commandment #2. If the arena has successfully recognized the history of its sport and of the community, and care has been given into the relationship of the building with the site (i.e. – it has achieved the status as a ‘cultural monument’), then the designer’s next challenge is to ensure that the building acts as a monument within the urban context. Webster’s Dictionary defines the term “monument” as “…a memorial stone or building erected in remembrance of a person or event…an identifying mark…” (Page 549). In this application, however, the term monument carries a much broader definition. It involves the presence of the building as a civic “destination place”, as a building that carries significant importance in the layout and structure of the city grid, and as a recognized gathering place for the urban crowd. There are many examples of monuments that are comparable to this philosophy, but a “monument” with the massing and size of a multi-surfaced hockey arena presents a different scenario. In the United States, edifices such as the Washington Monument in Washington DC, The Statue of Liberty in New York, or even something as unique as the Rocky Balboa statue in Philadelphia all serve as identifying marks in the city – but all are minimal in scale and size compared to a sporting facility. The key is in the treatment of the building’s massing and recognition of the streetscape and city grid as well as its psychological presence as a monument. Specifically, it is its monumentality that is important as well.
As discussed in previous sections, Topophilia literally means, “love of place”. It speaks to the love and sense of emotional attachment that people feel towards a certain building or space. Generating a sense of topophilia is essential if a true community facility that is a fixture in the urban fabric is to be created. Urban monuments are generally public spaces. They encourage pedestrian activity, provide a sense of history, and often act as a major node in the layout of the city. Monuments can assume various forms; parks, sculpture, open space, architecture, fountains, etc. can serve in the role. It is entirely possible for the sporting facility to act in this way as well. As mentioned in the previous section, many of the older arenas in the NHL function in a similar means. Maple Leaf Gardens is a premier monument in the Toronto streetscape and prior to their demolitions, Chicago Stadium and Boston Garden were seen in a similar fashion.

It has been previously discussed how the modern sporting facility can be equated to a cathedral and the experience at the stadium, for some, can be a religious experience. It is this type of presence in the landscape that can elevate the arena to “monument” status in the minds of people. The town cathedral is viewed often as the center of culture and activity in the city. The spires of the cathedral, in pre-industrial age times, were frequently the tallest structures in the city’s skyline and caused the church to become the main visual icon of the area. Once again, the lights of the stadium act in a similarly in this century - the stadium becomes the main visual icon in modern times. (In the case of the indoor arena, since there are no exterior field floodlights, this feature is often replicated by the use of rotating spotlights; much like would be seen at a Hollywood style grand event). By achieving this stature, the arena qualifies as “an identifying mark” in the urban fabric, according to Webster’s.
This was one area where the OHL arenas lagged. Because their intent was for junior professional hockey and their integration into the landscape, the “monumentality” of their presence often was subdued. Windsor Arena’s venerability gave it a strong psychological monumentality, but because of its lackluster exterior treatment, it was a poor physical presence. Brampton, when viewed from the major highway, had a very strong physical presence, but its psychological monumentality was small because it was located far from the urban core. Mississauga had neither a strong physical or psychological presence because it disappeared into the landscape – an unacceptable trait for a major urban container. I was always left feeling asking myself “what if” at the OHL buildings. What if a facility as dynamic as Brampton had been located closer to the center of the town? What if Windsor’s exterior had treated the streetscape with more attention and excitement? These would have been glorious facilities that would have achieved a true sense of psychological monumentality.

The second aspect of this Commandment deals with the actual building presence and its physical make-up as a “monument”, or in other words, its massing. It may seem slightly contradictory to state that a prototypical arena must be “monumental” while simultaneously being sensitive to its surroundings. This would be true, but in the context established by the previous two Commandments, the physical monumentality in this case evokes a different image – one of sympathy for its surroundings while still maintaining a strong individuality. Regardless, this is the goal that must be achieved, for ignoring of one of the two mentioned characteristics, as will be shown, can provide a sub-par result.

Older arenas, like Maple Leaf Gardens, were fortress-like structures that imposed their will upon their surroundings. When the Gardens was constructed in the 1930s, it
was by far the largest building in its vicinity – in fact, the area around Church and Carlton Streets in the Depression looked quite similar in density to present day Kitchener and the area surrounding The Aud. Two or three story brownstone residential row housing and street side commercial areas surrounded the Gardens much like the 1950s era residential neighborhood enveloped Kitchener’s building. In both cases, the arena was the dominant presence on the site – though the Gardens was a much more imposing building than The Aud ever could have been.

The fortress-like quality of The Gardens ultimately was an alienating and unwelcoming characteristic. The planar masonry walls, the thin bar-like windows, and the relatively unornamented décor of the exterior presented a solid and impassable image to the streetscape. This design was consistent with the purpose of the new arenas of the early 20th century – build a facility that protected the owner’s interests, generated a new flow of revenue, and kept the proletariat (or non-white middle to low income classes) masses outside. (The residential areas surrounding the Gardens were not highly affluent, so the need to keep these people out was important to Conn Smythe.) If looked at only from the paradigm of the Depression Era, The Gardens is hardly an exemplary facility.

What does make the building worthy of praise is how the city grew around the gardens, and how these changes meshed well with the design schemes of the building. When looked at from a 21st century perspective, the Gardens is warmer and more fitting within its surroundings. It is no longer the most dominant structure in the area – in fact, there are many high-rise office buildings in adjacent lots that dwarf the Gardens nowadays. It presents itself as a pause in the intense verticality of modern Toronto by maintaining a comparably low roofline. Even though the exterior of the Gardens remains
as spartan as it was in the Depression, the surrounding context change has drastically altered the relationship between arena and street. Its presence is subtler, it is more integrated, and it actually is more impressive. The Gardens in 2002 is the old building on the corner that reminds us of days gone by, the lone remaining original building on its block. The nostalgia emanating from its doors can be felt a block away. Because of this the entire city block is elevated to a higher level of importance and integrity within the local fabric.

“The late Stan Obodiak, MLG’s publicity director from 1957 to 1984, often referred to the yellow brick edifice as “the most famous building in Canada.” And the label may not have been far from the truth. During the 1980’s, Toronto tourism officials reported that they got more requests for directions to MLG than any other building or tourist site in the area.” Charles Wilkins, Canadian Geographic, Jan/Feb 1994, page 33,34.

It is this relationship that should be captured and applied to a prototypical arena.

The arenas of the OHL, as stated before, did not achieve this level of monumentality. Windsor Arena came closest because it was the only true urban facility – all of the other buildings were either outside of the central business district or suburban. Of the remaining buildings, only Kitchener came closest to this level, but it, too, is a fringe-urban facility. It can only be left to the imagination of how incredible some of these arenas would have been if they had been closer to the urban core and more integrated into the structure of the city.

The theoretical facility should not dominate the landscape or draw undue attention to itself. To properly become an integral part of the community and its internal structure, a bold “look-at-me” selfishness would destroy the intended harmony with the landscape.
The massing and size of the building should take into consideration its neighbors and surroundings and not inflict an oppressive control over them. The treatment of the façade should also take into consideration the context in which it exists and be respectful of its neighbors as well. A “community” facility would accomplish this. The building should appear more welcoming and inviting than the steadfast solidity of the Gardens. It could, in fact, open itself up to the street much in the same fashion that the outfield plazas at Comerica Park and Camden Yards exposed the baseball fields to the public. This would allow a direct visual connection between exterior public space and internal semi-private space. If possible, a direct view of the ice and/or seating bowl would be a groundbreaking feature for a hockey arena.

The proposal presents an interesting conundrum – where is the line drawn between the invisibility of Mississauga and the overbearing dominance of 1930s Maple Leaf Gardens? How can an arena establish itself as monumental while meshing itself respectfully into the existing streetscape? This apparent paradox is why the establishment of the Eight Commandments was formulated in the first place – to provide a design guideline for the “perfect” arena. Has there been a recently constructed arena that has balanced this inherent dichotomy? In my travels and research, there has not, though it must be acknowledged that the advancements made in baseball stadia in recent years have at least provided a basis for study.
Commandment #4 – An Arena Shall Invigorate its Surroundings, Urbanistically and Socially.

A natural extension of the previous Commandments, this concept addresses specifically the immediate surroundings of the prototypical arena. The “sensitively monumental” structure, in the urban core, assumes a responsibility for activating the space around it, otherwise it would not act as a true community center –or even a worthwhile urban project.

Many cities in the past twenty years have built new professional sports facilities in order to revive a certain area of the urban core that is suffering from plight and decay. The sports facility is frequently chosen as the urban savior because, by drawing a large crowd to the downtown area on a consistent basis, ancillary businesses will germinate and property values will rise. Ultimately, the hope is to raise the quality-of-life in the vicinity of the professional facility.

It is interesting to note that the stadium is chosen as the method towards urban revival over many other more culturally oriented public structures. A city without a quality major museum, performance hall, library, symphony, ballet, etc., cannot be considered a “major-league” metropolis. These cultural icons are essential to the survival of the city and its viability as an economic, social, and cultural destination. But what provides the sporting facility with the greater sense of urban importance, (to the extent that the public often votes to fund the construction of a facility with hundreds of millions of tax dollars) is twofold – the crowds they generate and the television exposure that professional sports provides.
There has been much debate in the media over exactly how beneficial a pro sports facility is to urban renewal, as evidenced by this publication, “What are the Benefits of Hosting a Major League Sports Franchise” by Jordan Rappaport and Chad Wilkerson. (Economic Review – Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City – First Quarter 2001).

The two publications provide insight into the economics behind stadium construction, public funding, and economic renewal. Major League Losers attempts demonstrate that the expenditure of public money for professional sports teams is counterproductive because instead of spurring new growth around the new stadium, dollars are merely shifted from other locations to the new site, causing economic decay in the abandoned locations. The argument has merit, but as ‘What are the Benefits…” concludes, while the feasibility of spending of tax dollars depends upon the particular city, and there are examples where stadia have not fulfilled the promise of renewing an area, there are city-wide issues that could be more important:

“Quality-of-life benefits are rarely explicitly included in the debate on using public funds to attract and retain a major league sports franchise. Acknowledging that the main benefit from hosting a team comes from the improved metro-area quality of life should help to value this contribution. Residents and elected officials who understand that the benefits of a sports team are the same sort that flow from parks, zoos, museums, and theatre can decide on their own how much hosting a major league team is worth.”

Both arguments provide valid evidence toward a subject matter whose scientific actuality than can be termed ‘fuzzy’ at best. To boil the argument down to its most fundamental level, both authors would most likely conclude that a city without a sports team and sports facility is not better off than one with those amenities.
Assuming for this study that the arena does in fact foster new growth and redevelopment opportunities for an urban area, then the architecture and planning of the facility must be done in a way to ensure the highest level of site activation and excitement. The arena must attract pedestrians to the area around the site. It must provide people with enough activity to hold their interest when the professional team has an off day. It must provide some exterior gathering space for crowds to mass. And it must allow surrounding businesses and spaces to take advantage of the crowds drawn to the arena. This level of activity is natural for downtown sporting facilities, notes John Bale: “…such sporting occasions are among the most important components of the centrality of large cities. The mega-structures which often contain them being not only symbolic of, and contributing to, the life and personality of places but, more importantly, from an economic perspective, enlarging the movements of transients between cities and hence contributing to the wealth and economic dominance of the city” (Bale, Sports Geography, 112).

These items can be accomplished in a number of ways. Pedestrian traffic, as opposed to the suburban stadium model (vehicular traffic) is vital. One common problem with facilities that can hold 10,000 or more people is what to do about parking. In an ideal setting, automotive transportation would be eliminated form the picture, but realistically, parking is a problem no matter how pedestrian-oriented the building is. Traditionally, parking is handled by constructing large surface parking lots surrounding the stadium. This method was the bane of the suburban stadium – the expansive contextless lots destroyed all sense of connection with a community. Parking garages, while a partial solution, cannot be completely relied upon because of their high cost of
construction. Therefore, the prototypical solution to the parking problem is to construct strategically placed garages and small lots in and around the vicinity so that the destination is within comfortable walking distance (usually about a quarter- to a half-mile). The scheme would also utilize existing lots in the area as well. By forcing a large percentage of patrons to walk to the arena, the businesses and public spaces along that walking route would ostensibly receive a boost in activity. Restaurants and bars can be common establishments along this route because they traditionally feed off of stadium pedestrian traffic. John Bale further comments that “Central Business District (CBD) oriented sports facilities may make an important contribution to the urban tax base since the increased revenues from sport and its associated land uses help offset the loss of inner city tax revenue resulting from the suburban {flight} of activities such as offices and manufacturing and of middle / upper class income residents” (Bale, 122). Combine these businesses with attractive public green spaces to rest and sit, and walking the route to the arena becomes engaging activity unto itself. This can do nothing but enhance the life and prospects of the area surrounding the sporting facility.

Examples exist that accomplish this feat. Maple Leaf Gardens, and its replacement Air Canada Center, Madison Square Garden in New York, and even the new Nationwide Arena in Columbus, Ohio (a shining example of an arena spawning positive urban redevelopment) all provide an invigorating pedestrian experience while nurturing the growth of the surrounding area. They are excellent examples or urban core facilities that successfully satisfy this Commandment.
Commandment #5 – An Arena Shall Internally not inflict dominant social control over people and not confine them to a pre-determined social seating arrangement.

This rule focuses on the internal seating arrangement of the arena and ultimately how it affects the fan experience. There are multiple ways to address the standard shape of the stadium-seating bowl, but the best methods follow the underlying theme of the Commandments of accessibility, openness, and overall experience.

From the days of the first professional hockey game at the Victoria Rink in Montreal and days where hockey was a form of entertainment for the wealthier classes, fans have purchased tickets providing them access to specific parts of the arena. In these early times, the best tickets were those at mid-ice, and the wealthiest patrons could be seen in these sections exclusively. Price levels for other tickets generally became more affordable as one moved around the corners of the rink. This model, in its basic form, holds true to this day. But with the creation of exclusive seating and luxury areas for higher-paying patrons and corporations, the common fan finds that their accessible space allowed by their ticket purchase is not as broad as once had been. To a point, this financial segregation of people detracts from the overall experience at a sporting contest.

While the wealthy classes may have supported hockey in its early days, it is the middle and lower classes that spawned the explosion of hockey in the country. If people had not been playing the game on streets and frozen ponds, then the NHL never would have survived. The common fan is the bread and butter of professional sports. Without
their support and interest, professional sports would most likely die away. This has been a noticeable problem in recent days. With ticket prices to games so high in this decade (tickets for a Maple Leafs game range in price from $40 to $535 – from www.ticketmaster.ca), the typical family is priced out of the arena. In fact, the design of arenas nowadays focuses of placement of suites and higher-priced club seating over general admission seats. A glaring example of this economic and class segregation is Phillips Arena in Atlanta. In this configuration, the architect has chosen to lump all of the luxury suites together forming on enormous “wall of suites” on one side of the ice. Other than a handful of rows at the edge of the hockey dasher boards this expansive glass façade takes up the entire side of the arena. Phillips Arena is a paragon example of an “us vs. them” or “rich vs. poor” segregation of seating. This glass behemoth, a glorified modern version of a emperor’s box in a Roman amphitheatre, destroys the internal atmosphere and caters exclusively to the rich patron. When viewing a game from the “glass monster”, the rich patron is treated to an optimal line of sight to the ice. Furthermore, because there are no suites on the opposite side of the ice, the throngs of fans in the seating sections creates a buzz of excitement to witness. The constant motion of heads, the sitting and standing of fans following the flow of the game,
and even people rising from their seats to use the facilities gives the suite holder activities other than the game to experience. This constant movement of the eyes around the arena heightens the excitement level of the viewer, and ultimately produces an engaging atmosphere more conducive to sporting events. What does the fan seated in the general admission sections experience? A blank, cold, reflective, and visually dead monolith. The suite tower is an atrocity. It does not promote any of the previously discussed Commandments, and does not foster any sense of excitement. It detracts from the fast-paced action on the ice. It blocks the view of people on the concourse. It cuts off major portions of the arena’s perimeter from exploration by the common fan. Its purpose is singular in every aspect: to cater exclusively to the wealthy fan.

To correct this point, the arena must learn from its baseball brethren. Once again, facilities like Camden Yards in Baltimore or Comerica Park in Detroit provide exemplary open spaces and allow people to view the game from many different places in the stadium. In Detroit, for example, a fan can leave his seat to go purchase an item at the concession stand in the main concourse and never lose sight of the field of play. The concourse is completely open on one side to allow people traversing the concourse to leisurely stroll the perimeter of the section and absorb the game from many vantage points. They can lean up against a wall in one section, get a beer and a hot dog and watch the game from a 42” high drink rail in another section, purchase programs from a vendor while watching the game in another section, and even continue to see the game while walking right out of the restroom. Furthermore, a fan can walk all they way around the stadium and watch the game from open plaza platforms in the outfield sections as well – all areas of the stadium are open for exploration.
Luxury box seats, areas usually set aside for 12-16 patrons who pay a substantially high fee for seasonal use of these “stadium living rooms” are usually segregated from the common public concourses at most facilities. (Luxury suites in their traditional application are the bane of the prototypical arena for they establish a “rich vs. poor” separation within the seating bowl.) “From the spectator’s perspectives, sitting in a [luxury] box may be more comfortable but lacks the greater sense of community which is obtained from standing on the more exposed [seats]. It should be stressed that this is not a condemnation of comfort per se, but an indication that dissatisfaction can result from more comfortable forms. With glassed in suites…sport is reduced to a theatrical spectacle” (Bale, 169). Even at the new Air Canada Center, box holders and suite holders reach their seats via a private staircase and elevator. The only time a regular ticket holder engages these people are when they are visible from their seating locations, otherwise, the ‘rich’ patrons are secluded and removed from the proletariat masses. Acknowledging that people who pay the much higher prices for the comfort of suites are afforded higher levels of privacy, convenience, luxury, and security, the total separation of social classes is a feudalistic nightmare. Fragmentation of space and setting
destroys the communal atmosphere of a facility. At Comerica Park, the problem has been solved with aplomb. Suite holders still have their physical separation and security from the common man, but the entrances to the suites are open and exposed to the main lower concourse. The *direct visual* connection between the two sections is a stroke of genius – it satisfies the economic requirements of the modern stadium while maintaining a level of intimacy and community by allowing as many areas of the interior to be experienced *en masse*.

This type of solution was part of the reason the Brampton Recreational Centre was so successful. The fan was allowed to explore the arena and view it from many areas. One was also allowed to leave the professional rink, enter the community facility, and then re-enter the professional rink at their leisure. The various seating areas allowed multiple vantage points, and the publicly accessible sports bar allowed a unique view of the arena as well. The same can be said for Oshawa as well – the wide top-level concourse allowed you to walk completely around the rink while the game was in session. Concessions were located on the outside of the concourse to allow people to continue to watch the game. The other facilities, including Windsor and Mississauga, forced the fan to walk through a vomitory into a confined and closed in concourse – completely removing him from the game experience.

Another feature of the design of baseball parks that should find its way into the seating bowl of an arena is the ‘party plaza’. This large area of uninterrupted space allows people to stand, mingle and socialize in a public area while within direct view of the game. Having this congregational space offers a vastly different game experience than being confined to an 18’ wide seat. The sports bar balcony in Brampton achieved this to a
degree, but its effect would be more noticeable if it were not exclusively accessible through the bar itself – an open area off of the main concourse would have attained the desired result. In my experiences at games, these are some of the most popular places for people to ‘hang out’ and congregate. And it is not just confined to a party plaza, open spaces where fans can stand and watch the game are extremely popular as well. At Pittsburgh’s new football facility, Heinz Field, people can always be seen standing shoulder-to-shoulder along a series of catwalk ramps at one end of the stadium. There are no seats in this area, and there isn’t a concourse behind them, but because they offer a different viewing angle and provide a place to explore the stadium, they are constantly full.

At the very least, having unique characteristics to the personality of the seating bowl differentiates one particular arena from another. All too often, the interior bowl of one arena cannot be distinguished from another arena – they are symmetrical, complete bowls with no variation in shape or size. Having a unique design to the interior gives the arena its own sense of identity. Being able to recognize a particular arena by the makeup of the interior is a powerful characteristic to the buildings significance in the community. This is another feature of the baseball stadium that should be adapted to the indoor arena. The outfield composition and overlooking B&O Warehouse instantly identifies Camden Yards and the city of Baltimore from other stadia. The Green Monster instantly identifies Fenway Park in Boston from any other city or stadium, likewise with Yankee Stadium (The façade and scoreboard), Wrigley Field (the green ivy outfield wall), or PacBell Park in San Francisco (the arcaded right field wall just a few feet in front of the harbor). These
characteristics make each stadium a unique experience and allow them to maintain their individuality. Which directly leads to…
Commandment #6 – An Arena shall Provide Multiple Varieties of Experience Through Design.

The symmetrical bowl should go the way of the dinosaur for it has no place in professional sporting facilities. They have no personality and do little to enhance the fan experience at games.

This Commandment draws upon features of several of the past five. It utilizes the openness of the arena internally and externally, the sense of monumentality of the structure and massing, the surroundings and urban context of the site, and the shape and seating arrangements of the interior bowl. The correct combination and implementation of these components can yield the foundations for an invigorating community experience. This Commandment is the final architectural directive for the prototypical arena.

As the cliché states, “variety is the spice of life”, it is also a fundamental of sports architecture. Multiple experiences and variations in design make a building more interesting to inhabit. If this were not the case, then people would be living in sterile, monolithic boxes, or in repetitive, homogenous spaces. Our homes are decorated in order to remove sterility and bleakness from our lives. Decoration allows the freedom of expression, and it allows individuality. People take great pride in how their home is arranged and how it expresses many attributes of their personality that otherwise could have been hidden. “The ambition garden architect is willing to go to great lengths to create magical worlds which constantly surprise the visitor. To what extent can the same be said of those who build stadiums? All too often the stadium seems to be becoming a
bland containerized structure. Gardens so often become high art and stadiums become high-tech” (Bale, 52).

The same thought process applies to the sporting facility, for as John Bale had previously outlined, the stadium acts as a home for many fans, and they take great pride in its existence. Is it any wonder why Windsor Arena, now that a new facility has been proposed, has seen a surge in emotional support in the media in recent years? Essentially, many citizens of Windsor feel like their “home” is being destroyed – it is very personal to them. Their arena is an expression of their passion for sport, and their attendance at games is their demonstration of solidarity with their local team. Bale also states “…there is simply more to enjoy in landscapes with a variety of elements than in those with few in number” (Bale, 42). The prototypical arena, then, aims to provide the most interesting and personable home as possible for its inhabitants.

The symmetrical concrete bowl, therefore, is the antithetical to these traits. Says John Bale, “The sports saucer possesses few landscape elements, at its worst the overall ensemble tends to be one of unrelieved sterile concrete. Because of such limited variety within the ensemble of the high-tech stadium the need for interest and [artificial] arousal of spectators might need to be manipulated by installing electronic scoreboards and music” (Bale, Sport, Space, and the City, 32). A completely enclosed repetitive seating section provides little for the fan to become engaged with – it is akin to the sterile monolithic house described above. It does not allow the arena to create its own personality and individuality. Breaking away from this practice is new for an indoor arena. Because the goal of the owner is to maximize revenue generated from the facility, the architect is directed to install as many seats as physically possible to extract more
money from fans. While the owner’s equation of more seats equals more money is fundamentally true, there are other methods to achieve the desired result. Commandment #7 will specifically address these methods, but for the immediate discussion, the maximization of seats is one of the reasons behind the multitude of symmetrical concrete bowls in existence.

If seats are reconfigured in such a way that the total stadium capacity does not take a substantial loss, then the arena has the potential to create a personality. American football stadia, by nature, exist exclusively as concrete bowls – the interiors of many football stadia look comparable to other football stadia. The new stadium in Denver for the Broncos franchise, however, bucks this trend by creating an undulating upper deck – there are sections of seats that are 10 or more rows higher than other sections. This rearrangement was obviously a strategic move – the higher sections of the undulating curve occur at the 50-yard line and most desirable seats. The low parts of the curve occur in the corners – the least desirable sections to sit. On one end of the stadium, the bowl has been broken. A large open area looks out upon the surrounding landscape, allowing the exterior of the stadium and the mountains bordering Denver to become a part of the stadium scenery and decoration. The end result is a more exciting venue than, for example, Giants Stadium in New Jersey, where the introverted, monolithic, oppressive, and symmetrical bowl provides little for the fan to get excited about. Denver’s stadium is a destination venue, even a tourist attraction. Giants Stadium is just a big, ugly bowl.

If football facilities can break the mold of symmetry, then the indoor arena can forge a new path as well. The first attempt, Phillips Arena, as described previously was a failure, but it was at the very least an attempt to leave behind the cohesive bowl. In order
to create a multitude of experiences that enhance the identity of the building, the designer is challenged to vary the way the bowl is configured. If a visual connection to the landscape, like Denver’s view of the surrounding areas, is possible, then capitalize on it. What better way to integrate the sporting facility into the community by creating an exhibit of the community streetscape? This way, the energetic activity of the street is drawn into the seating bowl. The combination of the two powerful energies could create a very powerful atmosphere. Windsor Arena, even though it is over 70 years old, is not a bowl – one of the reasons why the old barn has so much character. Brampton, with the sports bar balcony and seating area dominating one end of the rink, is a partial bowl, but nonetheless a successful design. The bar acts as a break in the monotony of symmetry and gives fans something else to look at. Mississauga’s seating area was a complete bowl as well, another reason why the interior of that facility felt so flat and lifeless. John Bale recalls British soccer fan Steve Redhead in the 1986 issue of Foul Magazine: “Utopia is a spotless concrete bowl lined with thousands of little blue plastic seats, lots of clean toilets, a restaurant, a sports complex, piped muzak, and 22 clean-cut, goal hungry young zombies…on a plastic grass pitch…Bollocks to their visions!! It is on those cold, forbidding terraces that you find the central nervous system of football from which adrenalin rises and the lifeblood flows” (Bale, 43).

Once again, baseball stadia already have figured out this solution. Granted, the asymmetrical dimensions of a baseball stadium differ from the regular shape of the hockey rink (or in Denver’s case, the American football field) and allow a more varied seating section. But the treatment of the rooflines and outfield sections has proven that variety is the “spice of stadia” as well. The integration of the urban context (the B&O
Warehouse) into Camden Yards has given that stadium a distinct personality. The short right field wall barely shielding the San Francisco waterfront is a dynamic feature of Pac Bell Park. From a personal standpoint, my wife, who is genuinely not interested in sports and such issues, validated this Commandment while attending two separate baseball games. While watching a game at Cincinnati’s Riverfront Stadium, my wife was more interested in conversing with her friend sitting next to her and enjoying the wares of the beer and hot dog vendors. When asked why she didn’t pay much interest in the actual baseball game, she replied that because we sat in the upper deck she felt like the game was occurring “100 miles away” and wasn’t fun to watch. Also, she mentioned that the inside of the stadium was “boring” and there wasn’t much around her to keep her interest because she wasn’t a big baseball fan. A year later, while attending a game at Kaufmann Stadium in Kansas City, she mentioned, without any prompting from me, after the first inning, “Man, what a difference there is in this stadium!” She was reacting to the close
proximity of the upper deck seats to the playing field and the treatment of the outfield wall. At Kaufmann, the outfield is devoid of seating sections and opens itself up to the grassy landscape behind it. The architect designed a series of waterfalls, fountains, and pools in the outfield that were active during the whole game – a pleasing and soothing image to look at. These unique architectural qualities generated a level of excitement in a non-sports fan that a sterile stadium could not. The beauty of the interior of Kaufmann Stadium actually turned my wife into a sports fan for a short period. Not the team, or the game, or the players, or the amenities, but the stadium itself had this impression upon my wife. And the images and memories generated by the stadium were burned into her memories. Later on that evening, while I was watching SportsCenter on ESPN, highlights of the game we attended that day came on. The first images that were shown were of the waterfalls in the outfield. Instantly, my wife recognized these images and associated them with the stadium – “That was Kaufmann Stadium they just showed, right?” The baseball stadium had established its own identity. Now, whenever my wife thinks of baseball and Kansas City, she will immediately recognize and think about the unique qualities of Kaufmann Stadium. These sporting spaces provide a variety of design nuances that create truly interesting vistas. There is no reason why this same philosophy cannot be included in the design of the hockey arena.
Commandment #7 – An Arena Shall Maintain Legitimate Profitability

Money. Even in a thesis where design, context, community, and experience are encouraged to overcome the heavy-handed dominance of the dollar, realistically it must be acknowledged. If the arena cannot feasibly support itself, then the prototypical arena is just that – a prototype. Reality dictates that revenue, while it shouldn’t be the primary concern, is nonetheless a vital component of the sporting facility. Suites are necessary even if their presence creates social segregation. Club seats are necessary, even if they foster a partitioning of the classes. In the present day, income is imperative for the survival of the arena and without it, communities would lose their modern-day cathedrals.

Figure 47: A suite at the Air Canada Center

Initially, the design and construction must be prudent and cost-effective. It does no good to create a modern “Taj-Ma-hockey” (Wilkins, 30) so grand and ornate that the very maintenance of the facility becomes a financially draining proposition. In this sense, the construction and design process must proceed like any other architectural project – value and savings to the client are essential. A smartly implemented design will accommodate ease of construction, coordination, operation, and maintenance.

Arenas, because of their use, are constant energy drains – maintaining a sheet of frozen ice during the heat and humidity of a summer’s day can be an expensive and
energy-intensive process. Consideration and initial cost must be directed towards easing the resource drain that an arena creates. Materials and building control systems need to be coordinated in order to maximize the insulative qualities of the exterior skin. Systems such as a water purification and ionization system allow water to freeze at higher temperatures thus reducing the overall cooling load on the building – an avenue for cost savings. The use of masonry or artificial insulation systems rather than large expanses of metal can aid in maintaining the thermal envelope of the building as well. Attention to these items will reduce the operations budget of the facility and aid in maintaining a stable profit margin.

As mentioned in the previous section, the ultimate direction of the owner is to maximize their revenues generated from the arena. This usually manifests itself in the inclusion of the greatest number of seats allowable by the site. While it is not the intent of this research to suggest that by removing large swaths of seats to expose the arena to new vistas is fiscally prudent, there are ways to augment the profit derived from ticket sales so that the seating bowl configuration could become more flexible.

First, lets examine the revenue generating outlets at a modern NHL facility. Air Canada Center, Toronto’s gleaming new arena, is a perfect example of the modern profitable facility. Below is a list of areas and spaces that create cash flow for the owner:

- Advertising placards consume every square inch of the dasher boards.
- Advertising signs and billboards are plastered over much of the space on the fascia panels and exposed walls and scoreboards.
- 18,800 seats in hockey configuration - $40 to $535 per seat per game
- 1,020 Club Seats
- 40 Platinum Level Lounge areas (super-suites with rinkside seating) - $350,000 per year fee.
- 65 Executive Suites - $160,000 to $300,000 per year
- 32 Theatre Suites - $80,000 to $180,000 per year
- 16 Loge Suites on 2 levels - $60,000 to $130,000 per year
- A specially reserved 200 seat gondola (a carryover from a feature at MLG)
- 40 Expanded concession stands serving unique and restaurant style menus
- 3 members only exclusive ice-view restaurants and bars
- Expanded merchandising areas, including a large retail store
- 140,000 square foot office tower
- An on-site micro-brewery
- On-site and off-site catering services
- Naming rights for entry gates paid for by corporations
- An admission-based museum

(all figures taken from www.theaircanadacentre.com)

All of these features provide the owner with ample points of income. But a common theme between each of the listed items (other than the perpetually opened retail store) is that they only generate revenue while an event is taking place. There are 41 home dates during hockey and basketball seasons. Assume for the sake of argument that there may be 15 concerts at the arenas per year, 5 skating performances, and possibly 3 conventions totaling 5 days each. Also take into consideration that performances and conventions will require 4 days each for setup and breakdown of sets, stages, etc.

Figure 48: The prestigious Platinum Bar at the Air Canada Center
With all of this activity, the arena still stands empty and closed to the public for approximately 112 days during the year, or just under 1/3 of the available booking dates.

But a facility such as Air Canada is primarily a single-use professional facility, meaning that it can only hold one event at a time. One of the main focuses of this thesis is to evolve the professional arena from a closed limited use structure to a constantly active community hub. If Air Canada Centre had been constructed with the community as a priority rather than he resident sports team, the owner could open up a new and fruitful source of income.

Imagine a marriage of Air Canada Centre and a facility like the Brampton Recreational Centre. In addition to the ‘main events’ taking place at the primary rink, the other community rinks would spur income and activity during those 112 off days as well as the entire calendar year. Rec leagues, community concessions, pro shop usage, ice fees, high school teams and tournaments, college teams and tournaments, and a full time restaurant / bar are a few of the activities that would generate perpetual cash flow. More people passing through the doors of the facility generate more money, akin to the typical owners philosophy of stuffing as many seats into the bowls as possible.

If such a guideline is followed where the community accentuates the bottom line of the arena, then the importance placed upon total seat capacity could be slightly lessened. By doing this, then the possibility for creating a unique hockey setting is reinforced. With these shackles removed, the architect would be free to open the building up more and allow attributes of the prior six Commandments to become reality.
Commandment #8 – The Arena Shall Provide a positive, engaging, and electric atmosphere, and encourage spectator participation rather than spectator observation.

The final Commandment is essentially a check or validation. If the previous seven laws have been followed and implemented successfully in some degree, then the arena should theoretically satisfy this final law. The final atmosphere that an arena generates, from an architectural standpoint, is predicated upon the success of the design and planning qualifiers. If the guidelines listed previously are not successful in their implementation, it would be safe to say that the atmosphere and spectator involvement will be compromised.

Adherence to the Commandments provides the owner of a team and the city leaders in which the team resides the best possible solution to providing a profitable and viable foundation for assembling a winning team. By doing so, the arena has meshed itself harmoniously within the urban fabric, it has promoted growth and opportunity for businesses surrounding the arena, it has given a reason for people to enter the urban core – helping promote a positive image and higher quality-of-life in the city center. It has created a destination that can spawn tourists and out-of-town fans to travel to the city. It provides the community with a sense of local pride and ownership and given the local people a vested interest in the well being of the arena. It has encouraged pedestrian traffic and aided the environment by reducing the reliance upon automotive traffic. It has helped the image of ice sports by creating a single use facility designed specifically to enhance
the fan experience with hockey or skating. It has provided a method for the wealthy owner to give back to the community by offering a venue for their daily use, recreation, and entertainment, thus giving the taxpayer a tangible and useable result for their investment.

Commandment #8 should be the goal of any sporting facility, no matter what the sport. It may sound silly to imply that a stadium could not provide a home field advantage for a home team, but there are many examples of this type of facility out there. It would be reasonable to single out Riverfront Stadium in Cincinnati as one. My wife did not feel engaged with the game at all, and did not participate in cheering for the home team. It would also be safe to assume that she was not the only person in the stadium who felt this way. If there are people sitting in the stands that are disinterested in the game, how can the stadium foster a home field advantage? Riverfront is a prime example of a stadium that fosters spectator observation. Interestingly, it is worth noting that Riverfront fails to satisfy the Commandments on numerous occasions:

- As a dual use facility (baseball and football), it does not recognize the history of the sport.
- Because it is located on former industrial land along a major highway, it is falls under the suburban stadium model – it does not recognize the history of the community.
- While it is a large structure, the stadium is not a psychological monument because people do not view the stadium as a source of pride.
- It does not invigorate its surroundings – the stadium is flanked by surface parking lots for hundreds of yards.
• It is not profitable – the stadium, from personal experience, rarely sells out, and is only used less than 100 days per year.

• Because it is a symmetrical concrete bowl, it does not deliver multiple varieties of experience. The stadium looks the same no matter where you are in the stadium.

• Ultimately, Riverfront fosters spectator observation.

Contrastingly, Kaufmann Stadium, using the same example, is a facility that inspires spectator participation, as proven by my wife’s reaction at a Royals game. Kaufmann does not satisfy every Commandment either, but it satisfies many more than Riverfront, leading to a better overall experience:

• It is a baseball only facility, so it honors the history of the sport.

• It does not have a strong connection to the community, since it inherently is a suburban model stadium.

• It does not invigorate its surroundings – it is surrounded by parking lots and little else.

• It provides multiple experiences through a good internal design.

• Because of its internal beauty, it functions as both a physical and psychological monument – people enjoy Kaufmann.

• By providing multiple areas from which to view the game, the stadium does not inflict strong dominant control or partitioning of the classes.

• It is not very profitable; games rarely sell out.

• Ultimately, Kaufmann fosters fan participation.
Kaufmann can be regarded as a success because, above everything else, it is a fantastic stadium to watch a baseball game from. It does fail in some areas, but because the architecture is strong, the stadium is strong, and the weaknesses of the facility are easily forgotten about.

Let’s compare the two most discussed OHL arenas, Brampton and Mississauga, from a basic level:

- Brampton and Mississauga are community oriented hockey-specific facilities
  - Advantage: Even

- Brampton is located close to its users and invites people onto the site, Mississauga is placed far away from users and has little life in the site.
  Advantage: Brampton

- Brampton is “monument” on the fringe of the urban core and is the first building seen when exiting the highway. Mississauga is not a “monument” because it’s site placement removes it from the urban fabric and public consciousness. Advantage: Brampton

- Brampton draws many users to the site and takes partial advantage of commercial areas in close proximity. Mississauga has no site context and does little to invigorate its surroundings. Advantage: Brampton

- Brampton and Mississauga both have multiple sheets of ice for community use 365 days a year, enhancing their profitability. Advantage: Even.

- Brampton allows multiple vistas from which to view a game and allows fans access to the whole facility. Mississauga is a standard seating bowl and allows people access to most areas during a game. Advantage: Brampton
• Brampton provides areas to explore and walk around. Mississauga does not.
  
  Advantage: Brampton.

• Brampton fosters participation; Mississauga fosters observation. Advantage: Brampton.

Because Brampton satisfies a great deal of the Commandments as opposed to Mississauga, it is a successful facility. This assessment equates when my observations and visits to the facilities are taken into consideration. Simply put, Brampton was a fun place to watch a game; Mississauga was not.
Conclusions from the Eight Commandments

The time observing the activity at the arenas on Ontario, coupled with visits to the multiple baseball and football stadia in both Canada and the United States formed a strong foundation for the formation of these laws. Having concluded the analysis and application of the Commandments to the arenas that I visited, and after compared the analysis against my personal observations, I feel that the Commandments provide a strong, solid, and accurate guide for the development of a prototypical arena, or any sporting facility for that matter. Adherence to the underlying philosophies will ultimately produce a successful and active public facility. But the Commandments, despite their name, must be flexible. It is possible for a facility to shirk some of its responsibilities and still maintain a level of success – like Kaufmann Stadium. It is also assumed that since one of the major precepts for the sporting facilities is to encourage site-specificity, it could be impossible to accomplish every task in a given situation. These points are acknowledged. But to intentionally ignore the precepts of the Commandments will allow the monstrosities of the 1960s and 1970s to be repeated; this would be a crime to the sport, to the community, and to the fans.
The Design Process and Site Selection

The tools for this thesis had been established; the final task was to apply them to a design project. Using the Commandments as a guide, the site selection process started. The first question posed, which country to apply the Commandments to, proved to be a difficult decision. In Canada, the trend among professional facilities fell in line with the precepts of the Commandments. Brampton, Kitchener, and other facilities were community oriented and benefited the city fabric. It is a given, in Canada, that the facility would be adequately used; attendance at games and at community functions would be guaranteed. In Canada, following the adage from the movie Field of Dreams, “If you build it, they will come” is especially true of ice facilities. It would not be an incredible challenge, therefore, to create a successful prototypical facility in Ontario because an active participation would be ensured. But, because of this heavy involvement in ice sports, the success of the facility would be assured.

Constructing a Canadian-styled arena in a country where ice sports are not the all-consuming activity would be an immense challenge. In the United States, the level of participation in a hockey / skating facility seen north of the border is anything but guaranteed. Because of this, the importance of the architecture and planning are supremely embellished – to draw people into the facility in the same way that they would in Canada, the facility must rely upon a keen sense of design. From an altruistic standpoint, building such a vibrant facility in the United States in order to promote the sport in a “foreign” land provided more incentive. The decision was made to find a site in the United States.
Having said that, the opportunities to find an appropriate location to test the Commandments were vast. Should I introduce the sport to an area completely removed from the climate usually associated with hockey, like the American sun belt? Should I impose these philosophies in an American hockey hotbed, like New England or Minnesota? Ultimately, the site I chose was done so for three reasons. In the greater New York City / New Jersey area, hockey is present at various levels. It has a strong NHL presence (three teams exist in the New York area), but a small presence at the community and high school level. (New Jersey, a state of 8,414,350 people [www.encarta.com] has over 332 high schools, only 64 of which have hockey teams [www.njo.com]). The potential for development of a strong hockey base in this area is viable because the seeds are already planted. The importance of the architecture and planning could elevate the sport from the small community levels presently to a tight community activity. This made more sense than attempting to apply the Commandments to a completely foreign area like Arizona. In this location, the sport is so unfamiliar and unrecognizable that it would take much more than just a strong architectural design to foster the growth of the sport.

The second reason for choosing the northern New Jersey area was my familiarity with the region. Having grown up in Morris County, in the heart of northern New Jersey, I am familiar with the community make up of the area. This familiarity and comfort with the region would be advantageous in the design process – I would be able to assess and analyze impacts the design would create in the region much more easily than I could in a foreign location. Choosing a specific parcel of land on which to build would be easier as well because I would easily be able to understand the arenas impact on the local community and urban fabric.
Thirdly, the state of “community” in New Jersey is vastly different than in other states in the union. There is no centralizing city in the state. Because of its proximity to two of the largest cities in the United States, New York and Philadelphia, much of the state of New Jersey could be considered suburbs of the two metropoles. Northern New Jersey acts similarly to a New York suburb, while southern New Jersey acts as a suburb of Philadelphia. Most states have nodal cities to define their structure – Ohio has Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Toledo as defining urban hubs. Massachusetts has Boston and Springfield. New Jersey, however, has Newark (a city which really could be called a part of New York), and Trenton and Camden (essentially parts of Philadelphia). This left me searching for areas with a uniquely “New Jersey” spirit. Three cities qualified for this category, Atlantic City, New Brunswick, and Morristown.

Figure 49: The west streetscape of the Morristown Green

Atlantic City was quickly discarded because of its reputation as primarily a tourist Mecca and gambling destination over a tight and independent society. The skewed community model would not seem conducive to fostering a sporting facility of this nature.

New Brunswick, in the central part of the state, is the home to Rutgers University, the largest college in the state. It is located near the mouth of the Raritan River, the largest waterway in the state. Because of the atmosphere a college town presented (a young, athletically active population), the city was a viable option. Its revitalizing
downtown area is centralized on the riverbanks, and a community arena could have served as a strong tool for further development in the urban core.

The city of New Brunswick could not compare, however, to the intriguing community that existed in the city of Morristown. A city about 32 miles from Manhattan, Morristown could probably be considered the center of northern New Jersey in every sense. While the official population of the city proper is just over 18,000 (www.encarta.com), the regional area’s population is far greater. The city acts as a transportation hub along the states commuter rail lines, and has access to the interstate highway system. It is the county seat and headquarters for many corporations. But the most intriguing quality of Morristown was its strong sense of history, community, and town layout. During the Revolutionary War, Morristown acted as the strategic headquarters for George Washington’s army. This history is visibly evident throughout
the city’s naming procedures – streets, public spaces, buildings, and parks are named after historical figures. This common thread has bound the community together.

The most interesting aspect of Morristown’s case for site selection was the layout of the street grid in the center of the city. Like many colonial era towns, a public park marked the center of the city’s structure. The Morristown Green, as it is called, dated back to before 1758, and is the most distinguishing feature of the city:

It is the center of the town’s traditions and activities...by the time of the Revolution the activity on the Green was intense...meetings [were held] at which the citizens came out openly against the King and boldly appointed men to meet with delegates...to form the Continental Congress. The Morristown Green is not just a pleasant plot of ground, it is an oasis in a world of brick and concrete. Dedicated by the actions of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in 1816, continued by a community spirit and saved from commercial avarice by public and common consent, the green has survived throughout the test of years and stands today as a heritage of the past. (www.morrisig.com/vgreen/mrgreen/htm).

The area surrounding the Green proved to be just as provocative. Many of the buildings had been in existence for well over 100 years: the sense of community history was deep. There were major structures within the immediate vicinity that could provide an interesting context to the new arena: The Morris County
Courthouse (in existence in various incarnations since 1778), and the Presbyterian Church (in existence since 1793). The application of Commandment #1 to an area with this type of history would be an interesting process.

On the northwest corner of the Green, termed the Most Dramatically Changing Corner by Cam Cavanaugh (In Lights and Shadows, Morristown in Three Centuries, 1994, page 297) the former Macy’s department store building had sat vacant for over a decade. On this prime urban location, the presence of a vacant and unused building caused blight on the historical streetscape surrounding the Green. This corner had been the hub of social activity throughout the development of the town: “McAlpin Hall [the name of the building that has occupied the site] became the place to give a social function, and the building was an excellent address to have.” (Cavanaugh, page 297) Just a few feet north of this corner, three 15-story office buildings, a hotel, a mall and two multi-level parking garages were constructed in 1983. Less than a quarter mile away to the southeast was the Morristown Train Station providing a direct link to the urban areas to the east and a
connection to New York City. The presence of over 300 years of history in one section of the site coming into close proximity to modern urban renewal and multi-story towers was a perfect meshing of architectural styles. The neighboring commercial establishments and businesses, as well as the existing infrastructure to support a mass of people added to the intrigue of the site. The vacancy presented itself as a perfect location for a facility that intended to spur social and community activity. The northwest corner of the Green in Morristown, New Jersey was ultimately selected as the site for the prototypical arena.

Figure 57: Morristown circa 1920 (Image courtesy of In Lights and Shadows)
Morristown Arena

The need for ice facilities in New Jersey is apparent – of the 64 high schools with teams in the state, there are only 21 places for them to play. Combined with other typical activities at a local rink (rec leagues, free skating, skating lessons, hockey practices, etc), ice time is at a premium. The area needs another facility to utilize, and needs a premier facility to centralize the ice sports landscape in New Jersey. Presently, there is no minor league hockey team in the state, the closest franchise is the Philadelphia Phantoms. With the presence of 4 NHL teams in the area (The New York Rangers and Islanders, the New Jersey Devils, and the Philadelphia Flyers), it could be argued that there is a saturation of professional hockey in the area. This would be accurate if the mindset of a minor-league team were not based on community. Minor league teams, as evidenced by the teams in Ontario, enjoy a strong local town following – they advance the competition between actual communities within the region, as opposed to major metro areas. With a community as tight and as urban as Morristown, the possibility of a successful minor league team surviving in the city is substantial.

Since the site had been selected, fundamental elements of the arena’s program needed to be established. The first element, as seen in the OHL arenas, was to plan multiple ice surfaces. One surface would function primarily as the main professional rink and the other would accept functions of the community. Given the site constraints – it was prime real estate in the core of Morristown’s Central Business District, the arena could not afford to be an expansive complex as seen in Brampton. The parcel of land in question in New Jersey was much smaller. In order to accommodate multiple ice
surfaces, some selective demolition of existing buildings needed to occur. Flanking the vacated Macy’s building were two 1970’s era single story buildings. Their presence on the streetscape prompts a negative reaction – in a city full of rich colonial history and venerable turn-of-the-century 3-4 story brick structures, the single story modernist structures did not fit. Even in the shadows of Headquarters Plaza, the aforementioned 1983 15-story skyscraper complex, the structures did not fit. It was decided to remove these structures from the area in order to increase the size of the arena’s lot. By doing so, the footprint of the building increased to a comfortable 175,000 square feet.

With the intent to create the arena as a destination right off of the main Town Square, the buildings internal activities would need to include more than just ice facilities; ancillary uses must be allocated to keep the project viable. The project could take criticism for removing existing businesses from the area around the site when the purpose of the urban arena was to encourage business growth in the area. Retail space would be included in the program of the new arena to offset the loss of these existing businesses.

With the cramped nature of an urban plot of land, the decision to incorporate two sheets of ice rather than 3 was an easy but disappointing decision. Ideally, following the Brampton model, more ice equals more activity and more people. But the site, even if the footprint was 175,000 square feet, could not support 3 surfaces of ice and all of the supporting functions in a professional arena. By only having 2 sheets then, the openness of the facility and internal connection between the two areas of the building became paramount. They could not function independently as an area A and area B; rather, they must function as one facility. By changing the hierarchical structure of the two rinks, the
arena should function as a cohesive unit. Even at Brampton, with its internal successes, there was a distinct partition between community area and pro area. In the spirit of Commandment #5, creating a singular space that connected the two sheets would, in theory, allow the exploration of the arena to achieve new levels of accessibility. A direct visual connection between the interiors of the two areas would be an interesting design.

With the lack of a minor league team in the area, and the need for a premier community facility (where high school or local college championships and state tournaments could be held), the size of the arena was determined. Many of the OHL facilities averaged about 5,000 to 7,000 spectators in the main rink. NHL caliber facilities in this era averaged 16,000 to 19,000 seats. Because of the dense urban nature of this section of New Jersey, and because the arena would act as a centralizing force for New Jersey hockey and as the home of a minor league team, the capacity of the arena in hockey configuration was set at 10,000 people. If the facility desired to host a concert of even basketball, the capacity could max out at about 12,000 for these other events.

Returning to the streetscape, analysis of the existing context yielded a unique situation. As Cam Cavanaugh pointed out, the corner of this plot of land was probably the most important one in the city. As one turned the corner from the Green (Park Place West) around the site onto Speedwell Avenue (where Headquarters Plaza is located) the architectural context changes. On the Green, there is a strong expression of colonialism and early century architecture. Around the corner, the atmosphere changes to a dominating presence of late 20th century corporate modernism. The vacant Macy’s building and the corner in general, therefore, function as the fulcrum point between two separate areas in the history of Morristown. It is a logical realization that whatever the
treatment of the façade of the new arena, it must act as a transition between these two independently styled areas. By connecting these spaces with a transition piece, the importance of the corner itself is reinforced, and the language along the streetscape is clarified. The ‘missing link’ on the corner can serve to introduce the corporate activity of Headquarters into the centralizing space of the Green.

This was an interesting anomaly of the site. When visiting the area and observing the flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the area of the corner, Headquarters was ostensibly cut off from the Green. Even though the two areas were only a couple of hundred feet apart, the streetscape and flow of traffic had cut off the spaces. Pedestrian traffic frequently circulated around the Green and continued down streets on the other corners, but not this one. Traffic coming out of Headquarters, which included a mass of people due to the tall office buildings, was dense. But because of the placement of parking structures and the shops on Speedwell Avenue, the street activity occurred from the front steps of Headquarters northward. There was about a 200’ void in street activity between the two areas; a void that included part of the proposed site. Augmenting this scarcity in traffic, and presenting an even further interest in the site, was a hardscaped public plaza just north and across the street of the corner site. It can be assumed that the plaza area was meant to draw people to the area and serve as a congregational point to help connect Headquarters to the Green. But, because of the traffic flow anomaly, the plaza was a dead space. The only people who passed through the plaza were doing so in order to access the HQ parking garage on the other side of the plaza, not to spend time in the plaza. If the new arena helped transition between the two spaces in the city, then this dead plaza could be taken advantage of and re-introduced as a benefit to the streetscape.
The orientation of the arena, both internally and externally, needed to respond to the characteristics of the street as described above. In order to achieve a harmonious relationship between internal arena space and active street space, the placement of the ice sheets was important. Although the two surfaces are connected to each other and meant to function as one space, the implications and natural qualities of a pro arena and a community arena are inherently different – how each impact the activity on the street is different as well. The pro arena will have to be able to handle the mass entering and exiting of people within a short time frame. The level of pressure on the street is concentrated into specific time frames where normal formulas for calculating foot traffic do not apply. The pressure on the street during an event is intense. The urban arena must also rely upon its surroundings to aid in the handling of this pressure. The pro arena, therefore, was chosen to be oriented towards Headquarters Plaza. The proximity of parking garages, open public plaza space (which could serve as a temporary holding room for the game crowd) and the fact that there were open spaces for business development along Speedwell Avenue made this orientation sensible. Furthermore, as the professional game in this day is centered on money and profit, the philosophical connection between the professional rink and the corporate offices in Headquarters Plaza made sense. The community rink, thusly, made sense to be oriented towards the Green. Because the Green had been the focus of the Morristown community for centuries, having the community-oriented side of the arena focused towards this history was a logical decision as well. The rink would augment the community activity on the Green, and the aura and presence of the Green would help root the new facility into urban fabric.
The connection with the history of the city and the history of hockey was a perfect combination.

Having oriented the ice in a way that accentuates the site characteristics, the focus of the building needed to respect the site. Contrary to the planning characteristics of many arenas, the focus of this arena is not the competition surfaces, but the community/public space within the arena that supports the playing surfaces. This change in focus is essential to the development of a professional facility that integrates itself into the urban and social fabric of the city. Instead of the ‘draw’ to the building being the game itself, the ‘draw’ is now the social spaces. The congregational space within the arena (connecting the two rinks) is the showcase of the building. By focusing on this space, people not normally interested in hockey would be exposed to a much different setting than if they walked into the Air Canada Centre. They are walking into an inviting public space with hockey as the underlying theme, not a hockey space with sociability as an underlying theme. The difference between the two is remarkable in application. By altering the structure of the activity, it is my belief that hockey itself will actually benefit more, even though it is not the ‘center stage’ of the facility. This thinking mimics my wife’s impressions of baseball stadia. As a non-sports fan, the architecture needed to accomplish something remarkable to hold her interest – she was not interested in the baseball game by itself, she was interested in the experience. The building needs to create a reason to bring the non-fan into the stadium in order to showcase their sport. By having the community space as the focus of the Morristown arena, the non-fan has a reason to enter the space even on days where they may not be attending a game. Once they are
"...the [arena] can not only generate a love of place, a sense of identity, a place-bonding and other kinds of localism, but also some institutions have become what amounts to sacred places, worthy of protection and preservation like other covered monumnet..."

- John Bale: "Sport, Space, and the City"

Figure 58: Street Level Plan
"It is in the arena that modern urban rituals take place; it is the floodlights of the stadium, not the spire of the cathedral, that more often than not act as urban landmarks and points of reference."

- John Bale: "Sport, Space, and the City"

Figure 59: 2nd Floor Plan
"If it's the backbone of the community... that's what draws people to the area."

"It's the grand central gathering place for the young and old. The young come to skate and the older citizens come to watch."

"It's a baby-sitting place too. Families like to leave their kids there and they'll do something else. And the children? They know they're looked after. They have a place to go."

Don Harris, Walter Ryjulik, and Alkins Haft
Radisson, Saskatchewan

Figure 60: 3rd floor plan
"...few people think of [arenas] as landscapes. But these are among the most human of landscapes, making up part of our unwitting biography, reflecting our values, our aspirations, and even our fears in tangible, visible form."

- John Bale, "Landscapes of Modern Sport"

Figure 61: Street Elevations
"Spectator sports are the central focus of modern urban society and it is the [arena] which is the prime 20th century container of the urban crowd..."

- John Bale, "Sport, Space and the City"

Figure 62: Building Sections
inside the space, then hockey has a chance to showcase its sport to try and win the non-fans interests. A facility that can accomplish this feat is truly remarkable. Camden Yards has achieved this status. Yankee Stadium and Fenway Park have achieved this level. Nationwide Arena in Columbus has the potential for achieving this connection. Few others have.

Once inside the building, how can the space accomplish this feat? For this building, the plan presents a number of features. First, the front section complements the sidewalk space. In this section of the Green, the width of the sidewalk is a narrow 15’. This dimension is too small to accommodate an increase in foot traffic associated with a hockey game. But because much of the entire street façade is placed at this distance from the street curb, the plane of the existing buildings must be maintained to preserve the integrity of the streetscape. The inside section of the arena augments the sidewalk by creating a lateral circulation space. In order to keep pedestrians from the street, the main ticket booth is placed on this façade – allowing people to purchase tickets right on Park Place West, enhancing the street activity. A pro shop, containing equipment, merchandise and paraphernalia is placed on the corner of the building with entrances to the street and the arena. This retail space should act in the same way as the ticket booth, providing a level of street activity and allowing a penetration into the arena space as well.

In order to separate the functions of the arena, the primary community space was placed at the street level, while much of the game-oriented activities was placed on level 2. But unlike other facilities, the two areas are not independent and isolated from each other. The street level space will be occupied by sitting areas (similar in fashion to a hotel lobby or atrium), a coffee shop of similar food service, a display of community and pro
hockey history and involvement, children’s activity and play spaces, and the community locker rooms. For youth games and rec leagues, this space would be constantly active with children, parents, and players. The food service allows pedestrians or people in the offices around the area to grab a snack or lunch, drawing more people inside the building. Comfortable seating areas allow parents a place to socialize with other parents while their children are waiting for their ice time. Pool tables provide activities for adults and teenagers. The street level is a communal ‘recreational’ space.

The second level public space, which has a direct visual connection to the lobby spaces and to the first floor through an open atrium, holds a microbrewery, restaurant, retail space, and multi-purpose room. This space has a direct visual connection between the community rink and the pro rink. During a pro game, for example, a person can get up from their seat and purchase an item from the concession stand. The layout of the floor allows that person to continue to pay attention to the pro game, observe people sitting at the bar and restaurant, walk over a few feet and look down upon the community rink, and walk over to the open atrium space and observe the activity on the street floor below. The fan has the freedom to absorb the entire facility at their leisure. By doing this, the pro arena is visually accessible during the entire business day – in most facilities the casual fan cannot even get a glimpse of the playing surface of a pro facility on an off-day. As suggested in the Commandments, this separation alienates the fan from the team and the facility. By opening up the vistas of the pro rink while providing a simultaneous view of the community rink, the fan is allowed to absorb the entire facility at once and establish a personal connection to the arena.
Philosophically the visual connection between the two areas demonstrated that the two forms of hockey – pure amateurism and pure professionalism – are fundamentally equal in importance. True, the professional game carries a longer list of requirements and necessary amenities to ensure its success. True also, that the space and size of the professional facility will most often dominate the size and footprint of the recreational rink. And, true, the professional game generates an astronomically higher amount of money than the amateur game. But what this arena design accomplishes is the creation of one space for both functions. The roots and origins of hockey are grounded in the community – therefore, in order to acknowledge and respect the history of the sport, the community space is given as much priority as the professional space.

The main rink, even though now it is not the primary focus of the arena, must be designed in such a way that it satisfies Commandment #8. By removing the rink from the center stage, as stated previously, I feel that the final result will yield a stronger and more engaging arena than under past methods of construction. For the design and makeup of the rink and seating bowl, many features of the intimate OHL were drawn upon.

One of the facets that made Windsor, Oshawa, and Brampton so successful was the treatment of the cross-section of the bleachers. The rake, or slope, was much higher in these arenas than in others. This yielded a feeling of intimacy and closeness to the ice. For Morristown Arena, the rake is the maximum allowable by code, meaning the tread depth is narrower than in typical situations. The lower deck’s dimensions include a tread depth of 30” and a riser height of 18”-20”. This allows a steeper slope and a closer connection to the ice – the fans are on top of the action.
The seating bowl, in fact the entire east side of the arena, has been opened up. The bowl does not continue around this section of the arena. By doing this, the sterility of the bowl is broken, and it allows fans a different view of the interior. Opening up the end allows the arena to possess a uniquely Morristown feature that can give the arena its own identity. In this design, the first 3 or 4 rows of seating along the boards have been eliminated. In its place is a 6’-8’ wide space for fans to walk around and view a game inches from the action. Fans can lean against the glass, converse with their friends in a group, and cheer from a point of the seats that is usually reserved for high-priced ticket holders. The common fan, in this case, has the best seat in the house. None of the OHL or professional arenas offer this amenity because they are too concerned about placing higher priced seats in these areas. What has been established at this arena is what was discussed in the final Commandments. The community sections of the facility support the welfare arena to a point where the internal configurations of the professional seating bowl are flexible. By allowing the typical fan (or family) to watch a game from this close of a vantage point is a groundbreaking move for a revenue generating facility. It establishes a unique identity for this building. Take the example of my wife’s reactions again. If she were to attend a game at this facility and noticed the fans standing along the boards and pounding on the glass, and then saw highlights of the game on TV later on, she would be able to equate the standing fans with the Arena. Seeing standing fans along the boards means that the game is occurring in Morristown.

But in addition to giving the arena a personality, it opens up the arena even more for exploration by the fan. This 8’ space around the glass has been augmented in the east end by a vast “party plaza” designed in the same vein as those seen in baseball stadia.
This area is designed to be a shallow stepped deck with standing height drink rails to lean against. The open area allows fans to stand in groups in a larger fashion than the board sections. People can, once again, converse with each other, move around freely instead of being confined to a seat, and watch the game at their leisure instead of being forced to focus your attention in one direction. A comparable example is seating arrangements at a bar. If a group of 4 people stand around a table or in an open area, they can face each other and keep their attention focused on the game. If the four people sat at the bar, the arrangement forces them to be anti-social. They are forced to look in one direction and they cannot comfortably make eye contact with somebody two chairs down from them. The area would not be sparsely populated, either. In the example of Oshawa, I noted that because the fans were in closely spaced together, the level of social interactivity was increased and people’s personal space was reduced. In a bar setting, this is also the case. People standing around a crowded bar talking to each other have a smaller personal space than an empty bar, allowing more people to inhabit the space comfortably. The plaza space in the east end of the stands would mimic this bar arrangement, and judging by the numbers of people inhabiting these spaces in other facilities, this will probably be the most popular space in the building to watch the game. The party plaza concept allows them to watch the game more comfortably – and in this case greater comfort equals more enjoyment.

Tickets for this section would be sold day-of-game only. By doing this, the price would be controlled (the chance of scalpers asking for outrageous prices would be reduced) and make the popular space (usually reserved for richer patrons) more accessible to the common fan. This is would ultimately produce an endearing quality to
the arena – people know they can go and enjoy a game, get great seats, and not have to spend a fortune to attend a major sporting event. It would also aid in producing a more vocal and interested audience. In many cases, higher-priced lower bowl seats are purchased by corporations and given out to clients, business contacts, or employees as favors or benefits. Frequently the people that receive these complimentary tickets are not as “into” the game as people who had purchased the seats themselves. In two NHL games in particular that I attended, this was obviously the case. One NHL game, I actually received complimentary seats in the lower section, and while the game itself was exciting, the emotion of the crowd was relatively blasé. In a separate game at the same NHL arena, there had been an advertised special for this particular game where upper deck fans received upgrades to sit in the lower sections. The more “blue-collar” (although this connotation is a gross exaggeration) fans much more noise, vocally followed the crescendos and decrescendos of the game, and made their presence felt. As a direct result of this, the game was much more interesting to watch – the cheering by these people produced a domino effect amongst other people. This ‘monkey-see-monkey-do’ behavioral characteristic is common at sporting events: I have noticed on many occasions that people are more inclined to participate in cheering if people around them are doing so. This removes the veil of uncomfortability associated with cheering – people do not feel like they are making a fool out of themselves if they are protected from ridicule by associating their behavior with a group.

The “common” fan frequently has a vested interest in following the game as well. Two acquaintances of mine who purchase tickets to St. Louis Blues contests notice the difference in the types of fans as well. “People who buy tickets to games, they’re pretty
expensive, so they want to make sure they enjoy the game since they shelled out a lot of cash for the seats. If I spent seventy-seven bucks for a game, I’m not going to sit on my hands, I am going to have fun.” (Interview – C. Bosche, 2001) “The guys who sit on the glass that get their tickets from a company don’t cheer at all. They act like they’re at the theatre – and lots of times they’re really not even fans, they just came because the tickets were free.” (Bosche) The sentiment echoed by my acquaintance was apparent in the games that I attended. If attending a sporting event is a form of entertainment, then it is logical to assume that people want to get the best level of entertainment for their dollar. As he mentioned above, people who paid for the seats usually are fans, and have a vested interest in the outcome of the game, Cheering helps them become involved in the game and provides a certain level of entertainment.

This type of atmosphere is the purpose behind opening up these lower seating sections and standing areas to genuine fans. They will enhance the atmosphere of the game exponentially. This creates a domino effect – people who enjoy themselves at a game are more likely to attend in the future. If the atmosphere provides a high level of enjoyment and excitement, they know that attending a game at Morristown’s arena will be a worthwhile experience for their dollar. A dull or blasé crowd will not foster the level of excitement necessary to create this type of “repeat business”. The party plaza and standing room boardside sections will generate this feeling in a distinctly Morristown fashion.

However, Commandment #7 states that an arena shall maintain profitability. This translates into the absolute necessary presence of higher priced seating. In order to accomplish this and keep sections of traditionally expensive seating available for lower
prices, the high-priced seats need to be relocated. In this design, they have been moved to the upper level. Club level seating, or seating on a balcony, generally have a better overall view of the game than seats rinkside. Seats on the glass are right up against the action, but do not have a broad view of the ice. Seats on a club level are farther from the action, but have a better overall vantage of the playing surface. The decision was made for this design to remove the premium seats from rinkside to a separate balcony. This may seem to contradict Commandment #5 by socially segregating the space, but this is an area where flexibility and compromise must be used. The more energetic and vocal fan, by placing them closer to the action, will aid in boosting the overall arena atmosphere. The premium seats, while they have a better view of the ice and a more private setting, will be able to feed off of the excitement below them. This model works better than an opposite scenario – if the premium (and typically more quiet) seats were rinkside and the “common” fan was placed higher up, the overall excitement level is reduced. The activity around the ice is not as high, and the cheering by the fans in the upper sections will not be heard in the lower sections; it will get lost in the rafters.

The upper deck will be able to accommodate the level of privacy and luxury that is associated with premium seating. But they will not be secluded from the general concourse – the suites and club concourses will be in direct visual contact with the main concourses as was seen in Detroit’s Comerica Park. This will satisfactorily comply with Commandments #5 and #7 and achieve the desired result for the atmosphere in the bowl.

Another area seating section that generally removes fans from quality seating areas is the space allocated to the press and media. In all of the OHL arenas except Brampton, the press was located at mid-ice. In this smaller arena, most seats are within
acceptable distances to the ice (generally anything over 200’ from the eye to the ice is too far – Sheard & John, 166). Therefore, upper deck seats are still in close proximity to the ice producing excellent viewing. Why should the press and media, who do not pay for these seats, occupy prime mid-ice seating sections? At Morristown, the press will be located at the closed end of the ice, leaving the mid-ice sections for fan seating. The vantage point that the media will have will still be close since the arena size is smaller than NHL arenas. By doing this, more fans are placed in better seats, the arena avoids the potential problem of the Philips Arena “wall of glass”, and the shape of the interior bowl becomes more interesting by removing the monotonous standard bowl configuration from the worst seating sections.

The lower floor of the arena (underneath the lower seating sections) will be treated differently than the standard arena. Typically, areas underneath the stands are reserved for arena maintenance and operations. In order to accommodate the economic feasibility of the arena, special ‘bunker’ suites were placed adjacent to the main community lounge. These bunker suites serve two main purposes – to provide a high level of luxury for the higher-paying fan, and to reduce the segregated effect of suites in the seating bowl by placing them out-of-sight. Possessing all of the modern-day amenities, such as closed-circuit high definition televisions, Internet and data access, catering, concierge and beverage services, and high-end comfortable furnishings. The suites will not have a direct view of the ice, but fans in these areas will have small designated seating sections at mid-ice adjacent to the glass. By incorporating potentially “quiet” corporate fans into the masses of ticket-buying fans, the corporate fan is encouraged to take direct interest in the game.

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The north and west sides of the first level will contain the arena operations spaces and team facilities. Chilling plants, HVAC rooms, electrical and transformer rooms, water purification systems, Zamboni storage and maintenance, and workshop space will occupy the west side. The loading dock situated in the interior of the city block will directly accommodate these back-of-house areas. The team facilities will take up the remainder of the space on the lower level. Home team amenities include a circular locker room (to provide a better discussion area for coaches), shower and toilet facilities, equipment room with proper humidification and HVAC systems, weights and aerobic fitness rooms, and sports medicine facilities (including the head trainers office, training tables, hydrotherapy, and stream room and sauna.) Other rooms included are coaches offices and conference rooms, players lounge, laundry facilities, a smaller visiting team locker with restroom facilities, and coaches offices. There will be a small interview room and video broadcast room in this level as well. Other support spaces, like the scoreboard control, will reside on the north side of the arena on the main concourse level.

Another unique feature about the interior of the main arena occurs because to the site constraints. On the northern side of the arena, Cattano Avenue turns and cuts closer to the ice. In the area that would otherwise be occupied by seats, the exterior wall will contain a large video wall and out-of-town scoreboard. This feature will mask the oddly shaped wall shapes created by the site and take advantage of wall space that would not exist otherwise. The video wall will provide a fan-interactive experience unrivalled at any other arena of this size and mimic the electronic wizardry often seen in NHL arenas. This “draw” will help to attract fans by providing a visually stimulating experience – a quality of Commandment #6.
The final major feature of the public interior space is the treatment of the community rink. As previously explained, the rink will be in plain sight of the main concourse. This allows the fan at a pro game to explore and experience a different brand of hockey in one singular space. The visual connection between the two areas will make for a dynamic spectator space. On the second level there will be 9 rows of freely accessible walk-down seating (for about 800 people) to observe the activity on the community rink. Also, the 2nd level microbrewery / restaurant will provide dining tables adjacent to both the pro rink and community rink allowing diners to eat, socialize, and watch the on-ice activity.

The features and programming elements of this arena were assembled in order to evolve the Commandments established from extensive research into tangible form. The reality of this structure in the academic world, in my opinion, provides the sporting arena with a method to truly integrate the community in the structure’s activity while establishing a theoretical platform for real-world arena development. Modern professional facilities, in order to maintain their legitimacy in a world faced with increasing resistance from the public, could use this example to transform the image of the professional facility.

* * *

The façade of the Morristown Arena was composed to cohesively mesh with its surroundings and draws upon the existing energies of the city streetscape. Connecting the storied history of the turn-of-the-century buildings located on the Green to the steel-and-
glass construction of Headquarters provided the opportunity for a dynamic façade solution – but it needed to operate under the auspices of Commandment #2. Constructing an arena that clashed and turned its back on the rich warmth of the Green would disrespect the city’s history. However, constructing a faux-historical arena would create a Disney-esque movie set effect, also disrespecting the history of the city. Compromising between the two seemingly contradictory treatments required a firm sensitivity to the site without compromising the activity of the interior of the building.

The final design saw a singular façade transform itself as it turned the all-too-important corner of Park Place West and Speedwell Avenue. Starting out on the Green as a historically sensitive façade (meshing and connecting with the existing structures), the skin morphs and evolves itself into a 21st century building.

Peter Eisenmann once said in an interview with Architecture Magazine (June, 1999) that a stadium needed to reflect the era in which it is built; that by creating a time-capsule architecture the building itself is denigrated. I agree with Eisenmann in part – the stadium should reflect the era in which it was built unless it creates a situation of discord and disharmony on the existing landscape. Eisenmann surely would feel no hesitancy to create the antithesis to Commandment #2 – a physically strong and dominant modern fortress that casts a disparaging shadow on its environs. In what would amount in this site analysis to the clichéd 800-pound gorilla, Eisenmann’s philosophies would tear apart the fabric of one of the most historical towns in the original 13 American Colonies.

The Arena, by recognizing its surroundings and creating a connection between two disparate architectural styles reenergizes the previously barren corner. The morphosis creates movement and flow around the corner no matter what direction one approaches
from: traveling south the skin eases you back into the heritage of the Green, traveling north you are accelerated through the town’s history to arrive at the prosperous present day. All the while one is drawn around the corner; the building gradually opens itself up to the outside. This exposure reflects the differing architectural styles as well. The heavier, warmer look of the Green elevation is less transparent and reveals itself to the street less than the highly transparent elevation on the modernish Speedwell Avenue. The transparency of the building aims to enhance the activity on the street and sidewalk by revealing the internal activity of the arena. People walking along the concourses, traveling up the escalators and elevators, sitting in the community lounge, or even playing on the ice itself are all within direct visual contact to the street. This marries the two otherwise individual spaces. People on the outside are aroused by the activity and buzz inside, maintaining a connection to the sport of hockey the entire time, while the people walking around the concourses are perpetually exposed to the street activity and historical antecedents to the arena. Essentially, the arena and the Green are one space. This relationship is mutually beneficial – and the result is a sporting facility that connects to its surroundings and becomes a part of the urban fabric like no other sporting facility has.

Morristown Arena was designed to be a prototypical hockey arena. By no means is it a perfect facility, but the arena strives to achieve a specific goal. By focusing its attention on the Morristown specifically, the area around the chosen site, and the community at-large, the viability of a major sporting facility in a non-major city is ensured. The Arena attempts to reorient the attention of the building’s purpose; ultimately strengthening the entire building’s presence. By removing some attention from the typical
modern definition of “arena”, the attachment of the community, the financial integrity, and the feasibility of the arena is actually enhanced. The Commandments of the Prototypical Arena make this possible.
The 4th Period

Sport is an integral part of our society, one that connects and binds. Hockey is an integral part of Canadian society, one that draws an entire nation together. The social harmony and closeness that surrounds hockey is unique in the sporting world – from the players to the community that supports the players, the sport fosters camaraderie and friendships. The sporting facility should reflect these qualities – it should bring the community together and connect them with sport. Too many facilities in this day lose track of this goal and become obsessed with the financial side of the sport. In doing so, the sporting facility becomes a blight on the urban landscape. Sport should enhance the city in the same fashion that it enhances the lives of the players and supporters, by invigorating and activating the area in which it exists. This thesis explored the inner workings of hockey in Canada, and how the arena functioned in Canadian society. This model, and the resulting design Commandments that were conceived from this study, will help guide the designer to create a facility that creates a symbiotic relationship between city, sport, and society. By following the precepts and fundamentals of the Commandments, sport (in this case, hockey) will have the opportunity to touch, influence, and guide children and adults alike. Sport should be a part of everybody’s experience in his or her lifetime; the sporting facility should provide the means to cherish and nurture that experience in a respectful dignified manner.
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