

**Ministry of Tourism,
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Conservation Review Board

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**Ministère du Tourisme,
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DELIVERED

Mayor and Members of Council,
City of Toronto,
City Hall,
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor and Members of Council:

August 30, 1990

**Re: Proposed Designation of Maple Leaf Gardens under Part IV
of the Ontario Heritage Act**

This is our report pursuant to Section 29 (12) of the Ontario Heritage Act concerning the proposed designation of Maple Leaf Gardens under Part IV of the Act for architectural and historical reasons

The Board conducted a public hearing on December 7 and 8, 1989 and January 25, 1990. Appearing for the City of Toronto was Mr. John Phillips and appearing for the objector, Maple Leaf Gardens Limited, was Ray O. Kallio.

The Board had the benefit of a number of exhibits which are in the Board's files. Witnesses giving evidence in support of the City's intention to designate the property were Mr. William N. Greer, B.Arch., M.S., O.A.A., F.R.A.I.C., R.C.A. and Professor John William Michael Bliss, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.S.C.

Appearing in opposition on behalf of Maple Leaf Gardens Limited were Anne M. de Fort-Menares B.A., M.A., M.Phil., and Ain Allas, B.Arch., B.E.S.(Arch.), M.R.A.I.C., O.A.A. As well, Patricia McHugh, then a member of the Toronto Historical Board, appeared and gave evidence in support of designation of the property.

The case raises issues of some difficulty as to whether the property should be designated for architectural reasons. and, particularly, whether it should be designated for historical reasons.

A large hearing room in the Metro Convention Centre was reserved for the hearing in order to provide sufficient capacity for the members of the public who were anticipated to wish to express their views on the matter. The public hearing was advertised. No members of the public attended the hearing on any of its three days or expressed any desire to speak either for or against the proposed designation. This contrasts with many hearings of the Board where the public, sometimes in substantial numbers, is present, concerned and heard with respect to proposed designations.

Background

Maple Leaf Gardens is included on the City's Inventory of Heritage Properties. At its meeting of February 24, 1988, the Preservation Committee of the Toronto Historical Board recommended that the property be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and on March 23, 1988 the Toronto Historical Board adopted that recommendation. On May 18 and 19, 1989 City Council adopted the recommendation that it state its intention to designate the property, known as 438 Church Street, under Part IV of the Act.

The Short Statement of Reasons for the Proposed Designation is as follows:

The property at 438 Church Street, known as Maple Leaf Gardens, is recommended for designation for architectural and historical reasons. Maple Leaf Gardens, since its construction in 1931, has been the home of the Toronto Maple Leafs, where radio coverage of "Hockey Night in Canada" began and was broadcast by Foster Hewitt for almost fifty years. As well, it has been the arena for a variety of events and public gatherings including the protest rallies of the Depression, skating carnivals, the circus, the opera, concerts and numerous sports events. The buff brick structure with stone trim was designed by Architects, Ross and Macdonald, with Jack Ryrie and Mackenzie Waters, Associate Architects. The architectural design successfully combines both art moderne and art deco styles, giving scale and interest to the rectangular form of the building. Important features of the exterior include varied form on the elevations, the great dome with crowning lantern, surface setbacks at top of comers, fenestration arrangement and metal sash. Other significant elements include the stone banding at the second, sixth and roof levels, stone window spandrels, trim around entrances and former shopfronts and the flagpoles. Simple masonry brickwork patterns with corbelled courses at the comers, around the windows, and on the first floor base are also important. The concrete structure and the significant engineering of the steel truss system supported on four comer piers, provides spectators with a clear view of the ice surface, unobstructed by column supports in the interior. Maple Leaf Gardens is a fixture in Toronto's public life and is well known throughout Canada.

We should state that, as set out in our decision concerning the designation of the Runnymede Theatre; in the City of Toronto, unlike many other municipalities, it has not been the practice to provide long or substantial reasons for designation of properties. In the absence of comprehensive and detailed reasons for designation, it is difficult if not impossible for a property owner to know what alterations may or may not be made to the structure without securing the permission of City Council. That difficulty, arises equally, for the Chief Buildings Official who must decide whether or not he may issue permit without the permission of Council or, alternatively, whether prosecutions may properly be commenced for alterations that may not require a permit that have been instituted without a permit from Council.

The practical result of this omission by the City, in contrast to the care that is taken in many other municipalities, for all practical purposes is to vest uncontrolled and perhaps arbitrary discretion in the hands of the Toronto Historical Board and Council with respect to the matter of alterations. That is clearly not the intention of the Act. Although the City's practice has not yet been challenged in Court and although the Board has expressed its concern about the practice on other occasions to the City, we have not yet recommended that a property not be designated because of this practice of substituting a wide range of discretion for the detailed and objective menu that is contemplated by the Act.

In this case, in particular, although much of the evidence as to the architectural significance of the building related to the function of the interior volume as an amphitheatre, that issue is not clearly articulated to in the Short Statement of Reasons for Designation and the City might therefore not be able to resist an effort to fill the interior of the space with structures devoted to other uses.

We understand that the City is developing the practice of providing detailed Reasons for Designation but it has not done so in this case.

Architectural

The building was designed by Ross and Macdonald, Architects, and Jack Ryrie and Mackenzie Waters, Associates.

Its architecture is described in the following terms in a Heritage Property Report dated December 19, 1989 prepared by the Toronto Historical Board (Exhibit 7).

Maple Leaf Gardens displays a massive rectangular plan which includes six-storey elevations along Carlton, Church and Wood Streets, rising to 15 stories in the centre of the roof of the building. The concrete structure is clad with yellow brick and trimmed with artificial stone. The exterior was fashioned in a form that mixed features of the Art Deco and the Art Modeme styles popularized in the second quarter of the 20th Century. The design displays the vertical character, hard edges, recessed planes, vertical strip windows, and low-relief geometric ornament of the Art Deco, with the horizontal banding and streamlined look of the Art Modeme giving texture to the building's elevations. In this use of new features of the Art Modeme in combination with the tradition of classicism (with base, shaft and attic stories) found in the architects' other buildings, Maple Leaf Gardens appears as a progressive building with appropriate prestige. The elongated facade on Carlton Street is arranged in a series of setbacks under a stepped parapet roof. The outer corners of each section display horizontal banding. The length of the wall is emphasized by stone band courses above the first floor and beneath the attic storey and the parapet. Three entrances are centered in the wall between the commercial units (mostly closed in the 1960s). Directly above, the vertical strip windows rise through two stories and feature decorative stone spandrels.

On either side of the centre section, the wall is stepped back twice in progressively wider sections. Each section features pairs of flatheaded windows set in the second through the fourth floors. The fenestration is divided by incised vertical panels and decorated with corbels. Another set of entrance doors is situated on the left (west) end of the facade.

The Church Street elevation features a similar outline, with two floors of paired flat-headed windows, below two-storey vertical strip windows. The shop fronts here have also been closed in. The exterior has a solid integrity of design where decorative features are minimal. These features are not merely visual embellishments, but add a stylish completeness to the monumentality of the building and reflects the prestige the sport of hockey holds in Canadian culture.

When Maple Leaf Gardens opened, the media raved about the interior space with its unobstructed view of the ice surface for all spectators. The Telegram proclaimed "History in the making! First impression on entering the new home of the Leafs is one of vast expanse and altitude. The top row on the east is a city block from the top row on the west." The clear span roof truss was technically advanced for its era: one corner was pinned, with the remaining three resting on metal rollers,

thereby allowing expansion and contraction according to the climate. The roof structure was comprised of a complex system of braced and arched ribs which framed and diagonally crossed the interior space. The resulting vault, expressed as a 60,000 square foot dome on the exterior, supported the roof cladding while removing the need for interior columns blocking the sight lines. The enormous and heavy corner girders were fabricated on the building lot, as the equipment of the era was incapable of transporting them to the site. This was a progressive feature for a National Hockey League arena. Boston Gardens, built only a few years earlier, had columns which obstructed the spectators viewing of the game. The Chicago Stadium and the Detroit Olympia also included interior columns, as well as the Montreal Forum until the recent restructuring of its roof.

Maple Leaf Gardens has continued a tradition of progressive adaptation and innovation. In 1947 herculite glass was added over the boards, the first installation in the world. Four elevators were introduced in the 1950s. The elevators, capable of carrying 20,000 passengers per hour, were the first of their kind installed in a sports facility in North America.

Minor alterations to the arena since its construction were the replacement of the original marquee in 1948, and the unfortunate closing of most of the stores on Carlton Street in the early 1960s. During the latter decade, interior additions included office space and two mezzanine levels, a new press box, and 962 seats. Upgrades included the lighting, the sound system, the escalators, the rink boards, the dressing rooms, and the concession stands. Box units have also been added during recent interior renovations. It is far from being outdated as a functioning spectator facility, including its use as a more than adequate hockey venue.

The alterations over time have always kept Maple Leaf Gardens up-to-date. In the "Happy 50th Anniversary, Maple Leaf Gardens" tribute in the November 20, 1981 issue of The Hockey News, broadcaster Foster Hewitt reflected that 'everything done to the building in the old days has stood up quite well without many changes. It is a building which has been admired and respected and became one of the mainstays of Toronto. The construction was done well - but done cheaply.'

Context

Maple Leaf Gardens is situated on the northwest corner of Carlton and Church Streets. The jog in Carlton Street to align the road with College Street almost conceals the arena from Yonge Street, yet approaching from the west, the Gardens is a visual surprise upon turning a slight curve to view the architectural features of the building. Maple Leaf Gardens is related to the T. Eaton Company College Street Store at 444 Yonge Street, designed by the same architects (in association with Sproatt and Rolph) in 1928-33. Eaton's, the original owner of the arena site, ultimately encouraged the construction of Maple Leaf Gardens to attract people to the area. The company planned to turn the Yonge, College and Carlton Streets intersection into a major commercial node, which it is today although Eaton's is no longer there. The original Eaton's department store was lavishly devised as an upscale emporium whose interior and exterior design reflected the merchandise, and provided a counterpoint to the equally large, yet restrained arena. While Maple Leaf Gardens and Eaton's share an adherence to Art Deco and Art Moderne influences, the buildings reflect the interpretation of the styles to suit different uses.

Maple Leaf Gardens was one of the earliest large buildings in the area, and it has always fitted into its neighbourhood context. As the adjacent streets have changed with the appearance of larger and taller buildings, the form and architecture of the Gardens

increases in stature as an asset in the area. As viewed from the north from an apartment complex, the Gardens is an appealing backdrop with its visible texture and detail. Approaching from the south and the east, it has an equally impressive appearance, being much more refined in architectural design than many of its neighbours which have been built in recent years. The monumental yet finely detailed building relates well to the street in a manner that was originally well articulated by the shop fronts spaced along the Carlton and Church Street elevations. The main entrance with its marquee is a restrained focal point of the design.

In his testimony Mr. Greer was of the view that the importance the building from an architectural perspective was not that it was the first or only or typical example of its kind or work of the architects in question but rather that the building is an effective and attractive expression of the client's program and its intended use.

He advised that the esteemed Montreal firm of Ross and Macdonald had engaged Jack Ryrie and Mackenzie Waters in Toronto in designing the building. The building was developed during the depression, in 1931, and was completed in 5 months and 12 days. He stated that the building contains a spectator space of unusual significance. Most of the 16,000 spectators can have an intimate relationship with what is going on in the arena area. The building remains largely as it was built. It is a square building, cross-shaped and the building itself bears an integral relationship with the roof structure which forms almost a domed area over the interior space.

The architects used a classical detailing, related to brick and concrete. The design is not segregated from the use or from the form. It is an expression of modernism where design follows function. The detailing reflects the brick use, which in turn reflects Toronto. Although it is a full 15 storeys in height, by virtue of its design it appears to be much shorter. Although the use of the street was carefully planned and the building was designed with shop fronts, the current infilling of those shop fronts is not compatible with the form and the design of the building.

Mr. Greer felt that the interior space is remarkable and unlike other arenas of its time.

The Gardens has continuously and progressively adapted to changing needs.

He stated that it is a fine looking building expressing its architectural features and its brick texture is representative of Toronto.

Mr. Greer is of the opinion that the building is architecturally significant in terms of its context, materials and type. The building is specifically detailed and carefully put together with appropriate materials. It is a building of quality and a work of architecture, not a brick box.

He felt that significant buildings do not have to be embellished and that this building reflects a marrying of classical design and simplicity. He was not troubled by the contention that the building does not express one design label rather than another but instead, reflects a mixture of styles; because, in his view, it is use of materials, the reflection of elements of style that make it significant. In heritage terms, he felt that this was a notable building in the City of Toronto and said that it is an unique design for what it is, the interpretation of the use and function of the building and as how the architect would treat the facades of the building, the entrances and so forth and how it meets the ground.

In his view, when you come to the building you have a great feeling. The building has a reality and is symbolic of its usage. It creates an intimate relationship between the individual and the event and it is that feeling between the building and the event, its use, and its context that create the integrity of the building.

He said that the integrity of the architectural design is functional and intact and is apparent insofar as the use of the building is concerned. The form follows its function and the building functions for the exact purpose for which it was designed. The interior and the exterior go inevitably together.

Patricia McHugh, the author of a guide book to Toronto architecture, wrote;

The Gardens has been discounted as a 'very big brick box'. That is exactly what it is meant to be. Following the flamboyantly picturesque forms of the late 19th Century ... there evolved an interest in creating a modern, simplified-looking architecture, an architecture specifically of and for the 20th Century Machine Age. Buildings were to demonstrate both a rationale phase in science and technology, and a romantic phase in speed and the roar of engines. They were to be straightforward and unadorned, massive and streamlined.

With its rigorous geometry and commanding bulk, its steel and reinforced concrete frame, its record-breaking five-month construction time, and indeed its very function as a place to honour deftness and speed, I KNOW OF NO BUILDING IN TORONTO THAT SO PERFECTLY EMBODIES THE SPIRIT OF ITS TIME. When it opened on November 12, 1931, Maple Leaf Gardens was counted as the most splendid arena on the North American Continent.

Anne M. de Fort-Menares, on the other hand, who gave evidence on behalf of Maple Leaf Gardens Limited. disagreed completely. In her report filed as Exhibit 11 she stated in part

Externally, Maple Leaf Gardens the building comprises a six-storey, articulated box in yellow stock brick, measuring 349'10" on the (south) Carlton and (north) Wood Street frontages, and 282' on Church Street and the western alley. The box is banded horizontally into a first-floor base, four floor middle, and a top, consisting of attic and parapet. The main block of the wall surface - the middle - is redesigned as a coherent unit rather than sub-divided into the appearance of floors. Across the main south front and the north back, the box is massed into a biaxially symmetrical sequence of seven-bay frontispiece and two slight planar recessions on either side, each two bays wide. The roofline steps down the height of the frontal, parapet to erode the bulk at the corners, but the horizontal is firmly controlled by a broad belt course in stone below the second-storey and sixth-storey levels that wraps around the whole building.

The Church Street elevation is treated above the ground (i.e., first) floor level as a sequence of pier and fenestration bays the full height of the middle section, regular in rhythm except for additional fenestration at the ends.

Four rows of horizontal stone banding delineate the base and an attic below the parapet. The corners of each plane are accentuated by horizontal banding in raised brick.

Fenestration is rigidly confined within strong verticals, symmetrically grouped across each elevation. The brick and stone decoration and recession of the glazing constitute the chief ornament of the building. Spandrels are fluted, banded stone in the seven principal bays and brick in the groupings of the secondary planes on the front, which represent circulation space on the interior, and brick along the side; the windows of the central elevations on all three facades are formally composed with thin, sharp corbel courses in brick tightly framing the sash

The structural steel roof by the Dominion Bridge Company originally comprised four trussed, arch ribs braced by a series of trusses arranged in a rectangle around the auditorium space, and carrying the roofing ribs on which Co-Steel roof decking was laid. The arches frame diagonally over the central space and meet in a central pin 140 feet above the ice surface, freeing all seats from columnar obstruction. The main ribs and lowest tier of trusses rest on concrete walls at each corner of the building. Beyond the area of the vault, the flat roof is carried on trusses or girders. Construction is rivetted, not arc welded, although the latter technique, which reduced material and increased rigidity, has been known since 1920.

The interior structure of the Gardens was not considered innovative or pioneering. The promotional annual report on the use of structural steel which discusses the construction of the Gardens, written by an engineer with the Canadian Institute of Steel Construction, described some of the features of the structure before asserting, ...no really new features have been introduced in the use of structural steel in the past year. Rather, the advantages of the steel roof deck installed on the building were enthusiastically described as light in weight, speedy to construct, and low in first cost. A new roof was put on in 1986....

The building has been almost continually renovated since it opened in 1931, the major alterations affecting the architecture being the marquee (1948), the construction of new offices and addition of 962 seats (1962), closing and/or modernization of shop fronts (ca. 1963), the addition of a new press box, and north and south mezzanine galleries (1966), sandblasting of the exterior (ca. 1970), the installation of a new truss and private boxes, and the replacement of the roof (ca. 1986). In addition, the lighting, rink boards, escalators, sound system, dressing rooms, concessions, message boards lavatories, most fixtures and seating, all represent new or replacement material.

Consequently the principal points of contact which the user has with the building are contacts with new material which is not original to the building.

Aesthetically the results have been detrimental. The marquee is without finesse. The modern shop fronts are abrupt and inappropriate in character, the transparent entrance gates are unsuitable, and the infill walling of closed shop fronts is grotesque. The Church Street and Carlton Street elevations, which are the only areas of physical contact with the pedestrian, have suffered the worst. The pedestrian experience of the building is accordingly barren and unpleasant....

Maple Leaf Gardens is the strongest and bulkiest form in the area. Its presence on the Church Street stretch is monolithic and for the majority of hours it is not in use for a public event, it is, therefore, deadening. The northern Wood Street elevation provides

boulevard parking and a modest garage entrance into the Gardens; major loading is through the Church Street docks....

In her architectural assessment of the building, she stated in her report,

Architectural evaluation comprises many components. A building may be significant as the best, first, last, only one of its kind, or just typical. It may be the work of prominent architects or craftsmen; it may have intrinsic value or support a context. Integrity is essential. The interplay of factors unique to its evolution and situation contribute to its 'significance'. In recognition of the relativity of cultural development, the Ontario Heritage Act was drawn up to encourage individual communities to determine what constitutes 'significance'

It is not the first of its kind or the first work by these architects: the Mutual Street Arena of 1912 by Ross & MacFarlane, then Ross & Macdonald, was its predecessor in function and authorship. The arena was demolished in November, 1989.

It is not the best example of the work of these architects or of the style: Eaton's College Street store of the same year by the same architects is far superior in architectural and urban design.

It is not the first or only of its style: although the history of this period in Toronto is incompletely documented, the Adelaide Street Concourse Building of 1928 and the Tip Top Tailors Building of 1929 are just two which may be mentioned as representing fuller, more advanced examples of the stylistic influences.

As a typical example of the modest application of the style to utilitarian buildings, Maple Leaf Gardens suffers from the use of brick, found also in warehouse and manufacturing buildings of the period (i.e., the Crosse & Blackwell Building on Lakeshore of 1928). The effect of brick, comprising obsessively individual units, hand laid, was antithetical to the essential aesthetic of the Style Moderne, which relied on the contrast of crisp, impeccable planar surfaces which reduced the human presence to a tooled edge. Such an approach is exemplified by Kertland's Automotive exhibition building of 1929.

Contextually Maple Leaf Gardens destroyed the earlier scale of the area and does not relate in terms of material, articulation, or function to any of the buildings presently around it. On Church Street its presence is a sudden sheer wall without amenity in an area of setbacks and parking lots; on Carlton the effect is similar: even though more of the buildings on Carlton extend to the streetline, they are permeable, consisting of a smaller frontages and a variety of uses, entranceways and materials.

In addition, she was of the view that there are a number of more important examples of the style of the building and that, in any event, the building was difficult to apprehend as a piece of architecture. She felt that the changes in the building had altered the general aesthetics and in her view, "it's pretty ugly as you walk along". The pedestrian experience is uncoordinated and unpleasant. The permeability of the building has been removed and its integrity compromised, She felt that the building sticks out and spoils Church Street and contributes to the incoherence of the area.

She felt that the experience is related to the use of a building but in this case that the outside was unrelated to the inside. The Gardens, in her view, is known as a place from which broadcasts are transmitted and she felt that the building did not commemorate hockey.

Historical

Mr. Greer gave evidence based on the report of the Toronto Historical Board, (Exhibit 7) regarding the history of the construction of Maple Leaf Gardens.

It was built during the Depression when materials were in short supply. He referred to the cooperation between Maple Leaf Gardens Limited and the 1,300 workers who were prepared to take 20% of their wages in company shares. This financial arrangement enabled the project to be completed in 5 months and 12 days, a remarkable feat. The project employed over 750,000 bricks, a typical, Toronto building material, 850,000 board feet of lumber and 14 miles of underground piping in order to control the ice surface. The building was designed primarily as a hockey arena and as a home for the Toronto Maple Leafs, The well-known "Hockey Night in Canada" broadcasts were transmitted from the Gardens. It was also used for skating carnivals, the New York Metropolitan Opera, circuses, boxing, wrestling, lacrosse, tennis, political rallies, lectures, pageants, balls and music concerns of various types. Highlights included appearances by Winston Churchill in 1933, the Metropolitan Opera beginning in 1952, Elvis Presley in 1957, and the Beatles in 1964. There have been over 100,000,000 patron visits since the Gardens opened in 1931. The heritage property report of December 1989 indicated that, in addition, "the site was associated with the short-lived Rebellion of 1837."

Concerning the objections to the designation, it was Mr. Greer's view that the Gardens is not an institution; it is a building; "a place where you go"

Dr. Bliss, a history professor at the University of Toronto referred to the Gardens as "the gem of the National Hockey League." He referred to the speed of construction as a "media event" and advised that the opening of the Gardens coincided with the expansion of radio across Canada for "Hockey Night in Canada" which became the most popular radio program and later the most popular television program in Canada.

The greatest heritage importance of the Gardens in Dr. Bliss' opinion is that it is "the cathedral of Canadian Hockey in its golden age", when the National Hockey League was emerging to become North America's dominant expression of the game. Dr. Bliss advised that hockey is a sport that is central to the Canadian spirit and that that is acknowledged even by people who do not enjoy the game. In his view, "if any building in the world is identified with hockey it is Maple Leaf Gardens".

He said that there were only two teams to cheer for if you wanted to cheer for a Canadian team, the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Montreal Canadiens. They were the best teams in the National Hockey League in its heyday when it demonstrated "far and away the best hockey in the world" .

It is his view that, except possibly for the Parliament Buildings, there was no better known building in Canada between 1931 and 1967 or "another sporting arena in the world with the exception of Yankee Stadium that played such a central role in the history of a sport deemed integral to the national culture".

It is Dr. Bliss' evidence that, "we are a young country with few symbols of our fragile nationality. If in 1989 we no longer believe that Maple Leaf Gardens is a historically significant building, if we are happy to let it disappear under the wreckers' ball then we might as well give up." Regarding the objection that it is the "institution" of hockey which is important rather than this particular building, he advised that the building takes on historical significance because of the events that have taken place in it and that it was his opinion that the "man on the street" would say that Maple Leaf Gardens is a building" rather than an abstract institution. It is his opinion that games are not mere sporting events and he said that "it is rash to deny the significance of sporting events, especially hockey, as central to the Canadian culture." Hockey was played at its best by the Maple Leafs in Maple Leaf Gardens. He referred to the Roman Coliseum to illustrate how a sporting arena can become identified with cultures and stated that the uniqueness of Maple Leaf Gardens is that the building has been identified with the Canadian culture and that the Gardens is the home of Canada's sporting culture just as the Parliament buildings is the home of Canada's political culture.

Whether or not the building could be effectively used today, did not in his view impact on the historic significance of the building. He was of the view that hockey is part of the fabric of Canada and that the building, therefore, is part of the Canadian cultural fabric which was, in part, the result of the excellence of the hockey played in it. He was of the view that from an historical perspective, it is was impossible to divorce the building from the event. He felt that the building should be designated on its historical significance alone.

As to the historical significance of hockey, it was his view that the fact that people think hockey is historically important makes it so. He stated that in the history of 20th Century Canada, hockey is important in the aspirations of young Canadians, and referred to the first Canadian-Soviet games when Paul Henderson excited the national psyche by scoring the winning goal.

In his view the building is of national significance in contrast with the former Mutual Street arena which was merely of local significance.

He felt that there would be a major public outcry if the building were demolished and that its aura would be maintained most appropriately if it remained as a hockey arena rather than if it were converted to a different use .

The proposition that a sports field or sports arena can be significant historically because of the sport that is or was played in it or on it may be astonishing but Dr. Bliss was of the clear view that Canadian children played hockey, communities are obsessed with hockey, people spend weekends playing hockey and nights around the radio and television listening to hockey games and it was this identification with hockey that to a large extent made one realize that one was in Canada rather than in the United States

Dr. Bliss felt that a reasonable society makes every effort to preserve items that people think are historically significant. He said that we are a young fragile country and our identity is not as clear as that of other nations. We do not have a separate Canadian language but we do have a sport. He felt that hockey was Canada's major sporting achievement and that that sport and the building enshrining it at its best was indeed historically significant.

Patricia McHugh, an architectural journalist with an Art History degree felt that a building as new as 10 years old could be considered historically significant.

ne de Fort-Menares gave evidence in opposition to designation, not only for architectural reasons but also for historical reasons. As mentioned above, she is an architectural historian. Her "Statement of Objection" dated XII.89, was filed as Exhibit 11. She was concerned with the issue of how we measure historical importance, i.e., is everything that happens history? It was her opinion that hockey events that take place in the National Hockey League constitute a series of "planned repetitive low context" events performed in multiple locales worldwide not generated by the architecture or space which can be broadcast or recorded and re-enacted and that these events are entertainment and as such are not historic.

She referred to the personal experience shared by members of a crowd, relating it to the heightened religious-type experience which is greater than the individual would sense in his isolation and which, she stated, is an inadequate substitute for religion which previously fostered personal associations with a larger community. She was of the opinion that there could be a danger in this greater communality empowerment which comes from mass spectator events and concerns, making people who are alienated and isolated and feel their life may be meaningless, seek a larger group identity through mass assemblies which are being made technologically possible to unprecedented limits. It was her view that this greater group experience did not mean that assemblies in which it was generated were historic. She felt that personal biases and nostalgia were insufficient bases on which to ascribe historical status to a building and that one needed a perspective, a historical distance in order to provide sufficient perspective in order to be able to determine whether a building was or was not historically valuable.

Something does not, in her view, become historical merely because a lot of people do it. One needs criteria such as age value factor, location of an important historical event (not low context repetitive events), the first thing or the oldest house or some other criteria in order to determine historical significance. Important events such as battles could be commemorated by a plaque and events that transcend their locations could be commemorated in halls of fame or museums.

She pointed out that many women do not identify with Maple Leaf Gardens as part of their national culture. In her view the now-demolished Mutual Street arena was more important from an historical point of view insofar as it relates to hockey. She was troubled by the lack of critical analysis or the establishment of criteria by the City in proposing to designate the Gardens.

If the Gardens were recommended to the Ontario Heritage Foundation for a heritage easement, it would be her recommendation, probably, that the province not hold a heritage easement. She felt that the recreation that took place in Maple Leaf Gardens was really a matter of social history, similar to health and education and that social history was best commemorated by such items as videotapes, etc. rather than by buildings.

Ain Allas, Architect, gave evidence and filed a report (Exhibit 13) in opposition to the proposed designation. It was his evidence that the building's limitations, together with the development of newer, or specialized facilities in the City have caused many of the events that formerly were located in the Gardens, to relocate to more appropriate or newer venues and that this loss of events places the viability of the building in jeopardy. In his report he referred to the fact that from a peak in 1974, 274 events, the number of functions at the Gardens has declined annually to approximately 100 in the past year and that what remains viable for the current Gardens are hockey, ice shows, wrestling and certain concerts. A further reason for the decrease in events has been the lack of proper facilities required for particular users. The building has virtually no off-loading or receiving areas making it very difficult to stage large exhibitions and even major concerts. Large trucks

cannot be moved directly onto the ice surface, again at discouragement of any prospective users. Concession facilities are limited and there are few opportunities for expansion. Wheelchair access seats are limited, elevators and the opportunities for same are limited and the building was never designed for extensive summer use with current air conditioning and so forth.

He pointed out that surrounding development has precluded the achieving of parking or loading areas for the Gardens and that, being residential in character, it is incompatible with the Gardens. He pointed out that the City has taken no steps through its site plan or other powers, to provide for lay-bys or support areas for the Gardens. In its planning decisions approving nearby projects, he pointed out that the City has not had regard to the Gardens and to the demands and impacts generated by its use, particularly as compared with other facilities such as the Sky Dome. He felt that designation might preclude adaptive reuse of the building and encourage demolition. Designation might also preclude adapting the Gardens to current appropriate standards for its principal use.

His evidence was extensive and helpful in addressing the reality issues of the practical feasibility of retaining the Gardens in the context of designating under the Ontario Heritage Act. It is noteworthy that the City has not produced a program or studies of various scenarios that would make retention of the building viable and if it is the real wish of the City to in fact preserve the Gardens it may be appropriate to undertake a study of how this might be done in practical terms.

Findings

(1) Architectural

The Gardens is not the first enclosed arena, nor is it constructed of the "finest" materials nor perhaps is it the best work of the architects involved, nor is it an example of the purity of any particular school of design, but we find that it is an artistic and powerful, yet economic and humane expression of its program and purpose. it is the "core" building to a central and unifying animation of Canadian culture over a significant period of time.

(2) Historical

Many would find the proposition that the endless round of hockey games is the stuff of history, to be not only astonishing but repugnant, but that is the clear and uncontradicted view of Professor Michael Bliss, the only professional historian who gave evidence, and we accept that opinion.

We are attracted by the view of Anne de Fort-Menares that the cultural significance of hockey may be best commemorated and preserved in videos and films and broadcast tape rather than by designating any particular arena under the Ontario Heritage Act. Although the public did not express interest in the designation of the property at the hearing, on balance, we feel that the 'cathedral' concept as set forth by Professor Bliss relates to the intent of the present Act.

Recommendations

- (1) That the property be designated for both architectural and historical reasons.
- (2) That the Toronto Historical Board be requested to conduct further research into the location of the only armed skirmish of the 1937 Rebellion in Toronto to determine if possible whether it took place on, or close to, the site of Maple Leaf Gardens and that, if so it be referred to in the Reasons for Designation.
- (3) That the Reasons For Designation specify clearly the importance of the amphitheater quality of the interior space.

This report is hereby submitted to you for your consideration and for such action as you consider to be appropriate and desirable.

(Original Signed by)

Michael B. Vaughan, Q.C.
Chairman

Judith Godfrey
Member