

**Conservation
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**RE: CITY OF CAMBRIDGE - INTENTION TO DESIGNATE
GALT ARENA GARDENS, SHADE STREET, CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO**

Robert G. Bowes, Chairman
Gerald Killan, Member
Conservation Review Board

January 31, 1995

Introduction

The hearing was convened at the Historic City Hall of the City of Cambridge on January 31, 1995, pursuant to section 29(8) of the Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990, Ch. 0.18, for the purpose of reporting to the Council of the City of Cambridge, whether, in the opinion of the Board, on the basis of the evidence heard, the property known municipally as "Galt Arena Gardens" should be designated by by-law under the Act, an objection having been raised by Isobel Buchanan, a Cambridge resident.

Notice of this hearing was given under the Act in the *Cambridge Reporter* on December 22 and December 29, 1994 and on January 5, 1995, the relevant affidavit by a member of the Board's staff being Exhibit #1.

The Board informed those present that it had had the opportunity to view the property and the surrounding area prior to the hearing.

Mr. John Cosman, Solicitor for the City of Cambridge, presented the case for the City. He was assisted by Lori Hishon. He called three witnesses: Valerie Spring, Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) Coordinator; Jim Quantrell, Archivist for the City of Cambridge; and Paul Sapounzi, an architect with the firm of C.A. Ventin, Architect Limited.

Isobel Buchanan, the objector, presented her case.

Public statements were made by Alan Buchanan and Don Lawrence, residents of the City, by Catherine McGarry, President of Heritage Cambridge, and by Lynn Campbell, Chair of the Cambridge LACAC.

The Case for the City of Cambridge

Mr. Cosman referred to the Notice of Hearing and entered evidence of ownership of the property by the City, noting that it had foreclosed in 1929 on a mortgage it had held. He also provided a chronology of events covering the building of the arena, the foreclosure and the activities surrounding the proposed designation which led to the hearing. He called his first witness, Valerie Spring.

Witness: Valerie Spring, Cambridge LACAC Coordinator

Ms. Spring has been working with the LACAC for 7 years. She located the subject property on a map of the city, noting that it is adjacent to Soper Park. She reviewed the Heritage Policies of the Official Plan of the City, stating that a property must generally meet 2 out of 12 evaluation criteria (5 historical, 7 architectural) to merit designation. The arena meets 4 of the criteria: 2 historical and 2 architectural. These are:

Historical

- (i) it is a good representative example of the work of an outstanding local architect and is well-preserved
- (ii) it is a well-preserved example and illustration of the city's cultural history

Architectural

- (i) it is a well-preserved, representative example of a method of construction now rarely used
- (ii) it makes an important contribution to the streetscape of which it forms a part.

Thus, the Gardens meets the requirement of architectural and/or historical interest of both the Official Plan and the Ontario Heritage Act.

Ms. Spring noted that the Official Plan also contains policies covering Heritage Conservation Districts and the use of a City heritage fund and stated that Council had been supportive of LACAC's activities, designating 90 properties to date and putting in place one Heritage Conservation District. She pointed out that the City owns a number of designated heritage buildings, e.g., the fire hall, the market building and the city hall. She noted the fact that the Galt Arena Gardens was not on the LACAC inventory of heritage buildings and indicated that the inventory was not an exhaustive list. She reviewed the process by which Council and its Committees, on the recommendation of Heritage Cambridge, had moved to designate the Gardens. She closed by stating her opinion that the Galt Arena Gardens was a cultural resource for the community.

Witness: Jim Quantrell, Archivist of Cambridge

Mr. Quantrell, the City's second witness, explained that in the late 19th and 20th centuries, Galt saw itself as a forward-looking community, a leading town of the county. The Galt Arena Gardens, erected in 1922, must be seen in this context as a monument to the future, an indication that Galt was special, had great facilities and was a home of champions. For it was in 1921 that Galt had won the intermediate hockey championship, although the finals had been played in Preston because of inadequate facilities in Galt. The Galt Amateur Athletic Association took charge of fundraising for a new facility and, with the help of a loan from the town, erected an arena which became the home of four Allen Cup championship teams, teams which also helped to establish Canada's hockey reputation at the international level. Over the years, the arena was the venue for a variety of events such as concerts, religious meetings, circuses and figure and speed skating. Through the Galt skating races, begun in 1931, almost every school child in Galt skated at the arena. The place of the arena in the community was well-illustrated in a 1944 promotional publication for the town, designed to attract new businesses and residents. In this publication, the Galt Arena Gardens was displayed as a major public amenity of the community.

In response to queries from the Board, Mr. Quantrell stated that, where previous arenas had been barn-like and intended primarily to provide shelter and keep the snow off the ice, the Galt Arena Gardens was an entertainment facility, more like a theatre, and was a step beyond other arenas of the time. A major improvement was in the lighting. Arenas of the day were notorious for lighting which was either dim or unreliable or both.

Witness: Paul Sapounzi, Architect - C.A. Ventin, Architect Ltd.

The City's final witness was architect Paul Sapounzi. He described the building's designer, F.C. Bodeley of Brantford, as a mature architect, who imported different styles into the Scottish-Presbyterian community of Galt. The Gardens is a building of Edwardian style with an art deco flair. Edwardian features include the roughly-chiselled stone base, the two rustic towers and the finely-carved limestone on the top of the towers. Art deco is a 20th-century expression of the classical style. This style is reflected in the curved parapet walls and the curved tops of piers.

Mr. Sapounzi opined that the durable limestone was probably quarried in Elora, near Guelph, and pointed out that this stone appears in many other local buildings.

The Gardens was one of the first public buildings in Galt to have such a "grand" steel structure. This use of steel was more common in industrial buildings. The Gardens, with its leisure orientation, is the only grand example of Edwardian architecture in Cambridge.

The link to Soper Park, which was constructed about the same time as the Gardens, is another aspect of the importance of the building to the architecture of Cambridge. Soper Park was designed by Frederick Todd, who has been described as the father of Canadian landscape architecture. The idea behind the urban park was the creation of a garden oasis in an urban setting. The arena is a backdrop to Soper Park and is linked to the park architecturally through the building's scaled-down parkside facades. The arena joins with the lawn bowling and pool facilities in the Park and with the Park itself to make a leisure complex.

Mr. Sapounzi went on to point out how, in the case of the Galt Arena Gardens, the architectural advances of the industrial revolution, with its steel structures which allowed buildings to go higher with less material, were used to respond to the architectural challenges created by the growing popularity of hockey in the early 20th century. Hockey was originally played outside and the first enclosed structures for hockey were barn-like. As hockey became more popular, a new typology of architecture was needed. The puck was small and difficult to see. The ice needed to be put in a bowl, surrounded by graduated seating, and needed to be well-lit. Access and a controlled climate were important. Mr. Sapounzi noted that the Gardens was built to accommodate one-third of the population of Galt. Hockey was becoming theatre and drama and needed to be housed in an appropriate structure. The Galt Arena Gardens attempted to meet these changing needs and aspirations.

Mr. Sapounzi stated that one way of developing a new typology was to borrow from existing models for other uses. He postulated that in this case Bodeley may have looked at the market building model and used the St. Lawrence Market in Toronto as a prototype. He discussed other examples of new era arenas such as Maple Leaf Gardens (using the postal building model) and New York's Madison Square Gardens. The Galt Arena Gardens is one of the early examples of the new type of hockey arena in Ontario and is a prototype arena in the development of the architecture of hockey.

Mr. Sapounzi addressed the changes made to the building over the years, stating that most alterations had been additive. Key details could be uncovered by simply removing the additional material. He felt the masonry was in good condition and that the arena had been built to last hundreds of years with proper maintenance.

In response to a Board query about the life expectancy of the structure if it were maintained in its present condition, Mr. Sapounzi felt that the building might deteriorate in 50 to 60 years. The Board further asked if the building could still function as an arena if the modern addition for dressing rooms were removed. Mr. Sapounzi replied that a space use analysis would be necessary before the question could be answered but that he had been able to do similar things with other buildings.

In summing up the case for the City, Mr. Cosman concluded that the evidence speaks for itself in support of the designation of the Galt Arena Gardens for its historical and architectural interest. He presented the Board with the report of the Conservation Review Board on the hearing on Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto, which had supported the designation of that property.

The Case for the Objector

The objector, Isobel Buchanan, reviewed her activities in opposing the intention to designate. As well as writing her original letter of objection, she attended a meeting of the Planning Committee, met with the LACAC Coordinator and presented a second letter of objection to Council. Her reasons for objecting, as outlined in her letters, included the following: the building is unattractive, as is the site; the LACAC recommendation for designation is an unsubstantiated opinion; the "towerlets" and stone detailing do not constitute any architectural distinction; many buildings with similar features exist but are not worth saving as heritage; it would be costly to reconstruct the exterior and the interior would have to be refurbished to comply with safety codes. She mentioned that a figure of \$4 million for restoration and interior renovations had been suggested at a council meeting. Mrs. Buchanan went on to state that too much money had already been spent on the building over the years and that most people in the community are opposed to the designation of the building. She recommended that it be sold.

Under cross-examination, Mrs. Buchanan stated that she had not found the material provided to her by Valerie Spring to be useful because there was not much to it, but that she had not asked for additional information. In response to Mr. Cosman's query if she would support designation because of historical and architectural interest if no more money were spent on the building, she replied, what would be the purpose if it would just be a shell. Further, Mr. Cosman established that while Mrs. Buchanan felt she could have brought a petition or a group of people to the hearing to demonstrate the unpopularity of designation, she had no hard evidence to substantiate this opinion.

Other Presentations

Don Lawrence - Cambridge Resident

Mr. Lawrence was opposed to the designation. He felt a new convention centre and arena would be a better use of the site. The city needed a seventh ice pad. If the building is controlled by "heritage", the ice pad removed, and the structure turned into a historical site, then the city would lose one of its existing six ice pads. Mr. Lawrence asked what good would the building be to the city if it was just a shell. He felt that it would be costly to fix up the interior. The current dressing rooms were not compatible with the rest of the building and the existing streetscape was unattractive.

Alan Buchanan - Cambridge Resident

Mr. Buchanan spoke of his design and engineering experience and raised a number of points in his presentation. Don't refurbish something for which there is no need. Don't keep heritage equipment or structures if they can't be maintained. He queried why the Gardens was not on the heritage inventory and asked why we were dealing with use when we were only discussing the shell. He felt designation could result in spending the most and getting the least and talked about the cost of compliance with modern codes. The cost of maintenance should be weighed against the cost of demolition and site reclamation. He mentioned that many historical sites are privately owned and suggested this one could be offered for sale.

Catherine McGarry - President of Heritage Cambridge

Heritage Cambridge had put forth the suggestion that the Gardens be designated. The Gardens is part of the cultural fabric of the community and means a great deal to many people. The proximity of the arena is important to the residents, and particularly the children of the immediate neighbourhood. Heritage Cambridge feels the Gardens fits the criteria for designation under the Heritage Policy of the Official Plan. Ms. McGarry spoke of the work of Heritage Cambridge to preserve structures which can show local children the early history of the community and what life was like then, giving them a sense of continuity. She mentioned that often people who oppose preservation of a historic building which is in bad condition consider it with pride as a showpiece after it has been rehabilitated. She pointed out that it is often more expensive to demolish and build anew than it is to rehabilitate what you have.

Lynn Campbell, Chair, Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC)

Ms. Campbell lives in the area near the Gardens and feels that the arena helps to define the neighbourhood. Cambridge is a city of neighbourhoods. The Gardens anchors Soper Park. She stated that the arena facility was a mecca for Waterloo and Wentworth Counties. She went on to say that LACAC was very excited about the proposed designation and saw the Gardens as a historical and cultural icon of the community. Ms. Campbell mentioned that the City's Parks Recreation and Open Space Task Force had looked at alternatives for the future of the Gardens which ranged from upgrading to low maintenance to demolition.

Findings

The Board finds the Galt Arena Gardens to be of historical and architectural significance and to be part of an evolving historical recreational complex through its links to Soper Park.

Interesting historical and architectural information on the Gardens was presented at the hearing. If more of this information had been easily available earlier in the debate on the future of the building, it may have made a positive contribution to the public dialogue.

There seems to be confusion in the community concerning the nature and intent of designation and the role of the Reasons for Designation. The Board observes that this is a recurring theme at hearings. Municipalities and their LACACs need to strive constantly to inform the public that it is property which is designated and that the Reasons for Designation delineate features and aspects for preservation and provide a guideline for discussions of change to the property.

Lastly, the Board finds it timely to consider the heritage significance of the Galt Arena Gardens when a review of the City's recreation and open space resources and needs is also under way.

Recommendations

1. That the Galt Arena Gardens be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act for its architectural and historical interest.
2. That the City regularly distribute and make available information on the nature and intent of designation and the role of "Reasons for Designation" (e.g., Architectural Conservation Note #2, "Reasons for Designation", Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation).
3. That the City have available easily accessible back-up information on significance and Reasons for Designation early in the process of a proposed designation.
4. The Board encourages the City to incorporate the heritage significance of the Galt Arena Gardens and its links to Soper Park in its recreation and open space planning to ensure that the Gardens will continue to serve as an effective resource for the residents of Cambridge.

(Original Signed by)

Robert G. Bowes
Chairman

Gerald Killan
Member

LIST OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit #

- 1 Affidavit of Notice of Hearing from Board
- 2 Clerk's Notification to Members of Municipal Council
- 3 Proof of Ownership of the Property - Deed of Foreclosure No. 31975
- 4 CV of Valerie Spring
- 5 City of Cambridge Official Plan - Heritage Conservation Policy, pages 57-62
- 6 Photo - Galt Shade Street Arena under construction circa 1921 by Wm. Loft
- 7 LACAC - Minutes of Meeting #12-93 - December 16, 1993
- 8 LACAC - Minutes of Meeting #1-94 - January 20, 1994
- 9 Report to LACAC of January 20, 1994 - Valerie Spring
- 10 LACAC - Minutes of Meeting #2-94 - February 17, 1994
- 11 Minutes of Planning and Development Committee, April 5, 1994
- 12 City Council - Minutes of Meeting #7-94 - April 11, 1994
- 13 Planning Report of April 5, 1994 - Valerie Spring
- 14 CV of Jim Quantrell
- 15 Package of newspaper excerpts, *Galt Daily Recorder*, circa January 1922
- 16 Excerpt from James Quantrell, *The Galt Arena Gardens (Cambridge Reporter, September 1989)*
- 17 *This is Galt*, circa 1944, excerpt on Public Building
- 18 CV of Paul Sapounzi
- 19 a/b collage of photos of site; collage of photos of other sites for context of preceding images

- 20 Mrs. Isobel Buchanan's Letter of Objection of June 13, 1994
- 21 Mrs. Isobel Buchanan's Letter of Objection of September 23, 1994
- 22 Maple Leaf Gardens decision of Conservation Review Board, August 30, 1990