



## Part I

### Developmental History



**WISCONSIN**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Figure 14: Field House Exterior  
(Wisconsin Historical Society 1933)





## Historical Background and Context

The University of Wisconsin in the city of Madison was established in 1848, the same year Wisconsin achieved statehood. The area at the west end of the isthmus, atop what is now called Bascom Hill, was established as the campus. The first classes began in 1849 and the first building, North Hall, was completed in 1851.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the 1860s, physical education was not included in the curriculum of the University of Wisconsin – Madison. After the Civil War, the university reorganized under the Morrill Act of 1862, which authorized land grants to state universities to support agriculture and mechanical arts. Under the act, the university was also required to provide “military tactics” under the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> By 1870 a wood building, the Old Gym and Armory, was constructed on Bascom Hill for this purpose. By the 1880s, with the university’s growth and its establishment of physical educational classes, the Old Gym and Armory was too small, but continued to be used until it burned in 1891.<sup>3</sup> Plans for a new, larger gym and armory building were approved by the state legislature in March 1891.<sup>4</sup>

The new building, or the “Red Gym” due to its distinctive color, was completed in 1894. Designed by the local firm of Conover and Porter, the building was constructed in the Romanesque Revival style, with a design largely inspired by the Eighth Regiment Armory in New York City. When the building opened it featured a large, open drill hall, locker rooms, a bowling alley, swimming tank, and a balcony running the length of the drill hall. It was the largest open space in the city of Madison and was frequently used for university and city functions, and became the home for UW-Madison basketball.<sup>5</sup>

Sports teams were a part of American universities since the 1850s; organized sports generally developed in tandem with the rise of physical education. The University of Wisconsin – Madison established its first intercollegiate sport, a baseball team, in 1870.<sup>6</sup> Other sports, such as football and basketball, quickly found a place at UW-Madison.

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin* (Madison, Wis.: Jim Feldman, 1997), 10–11.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Miller, “University of Wisconsin Armory and Gymnasium” (City of Madison Landmarks Commission, Landmarks and Landmark Sites Nomination Form, September 1994), 8, [http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/landmark/nominations/169\\_716LangdonStreet.pdf](http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/landmark/nominations/169_716LangdonStreet.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 31.

<sup>4</sup> Miller, “University of Wisconsin Armory and Gymnasium,” 9.

<sup>5</sup> Miller, “University of Wisconsin Armory and Gymnasium,” 13.

<sup>6</sup> Steven D. Schmitt, “A History of Badger Baseball,” *University of Wisconsin Press*, July 28, 2017, <https://uwpress.wisc.edu/books/5458.htm>.

The first basketball team was established in 1898 under Dr. J.C. Elsom, and the team played its first game in March 1899 in the Red Gym.<sup>7</sup> By the 1910s, however, the student population of UW-Madison had risen to 2,000 students and basketball games were a large attraction within the city. The Red Gym could only seat 2,240 and would often overcrowd to fit the large number of people attempting to see the game. The Stock Pavilion, constructed to house the university's horses and host statewide livestock shows, was completed in 1909 and contained the largest auditorium in the city. However, it was used for indoor recreational space and graduation ceremonies and was not suitable for basketball use.<sup>8</sup> A new venue was needed for UW-Madison basketball to grow.<sup>9</sup>

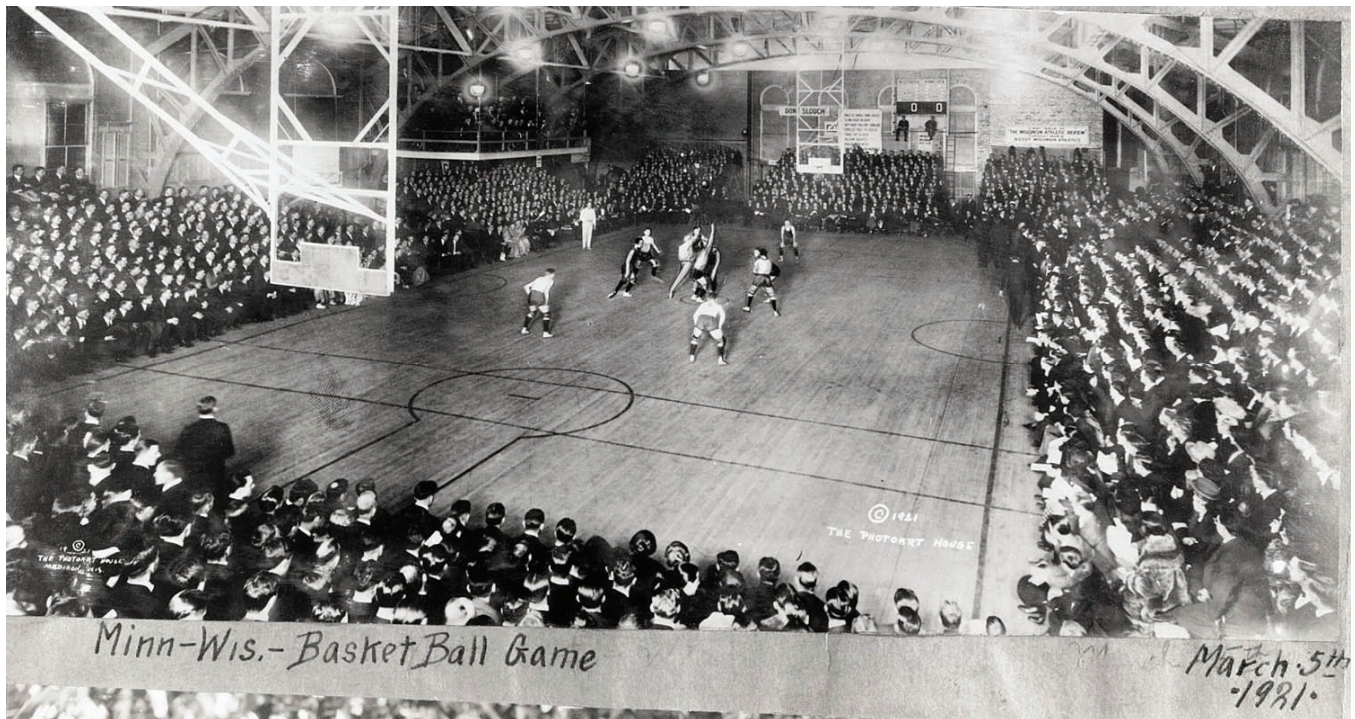


Figure 15: University of Wisconsin basketball game at the Red Gym (UW Archives 1921)

<sup>7</sup> "History of Wisconsin Basketball," University of Wisconsin Athletics, n.d., [https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/10/22/MBB\\_1022150405.aspx?id=1060](https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/10/22/MBB_1022150405.aspx?id=1060).

<sup>8</sup> Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 115–16.

<sup>9</sup> Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 213.



## Chronology of Development and Use

Although many in the public had called for a new venue for sports and recreational use on the UW-Madison campus, the construction of the Field House to replace the Red Gym took almost 20 years to complete. As early as the 1910s spectators and coaches found the Red Gym was too small for their events, and basketball coach Walter “Doc” Meanwell reportedly called the space a “foul-smelling rat trap.”<sup>10</sup>

The major push for the Field House was taken up by new Athletic Director George Little.<sup>11</sup> Little was appointed both athletic director and football coach in 1925. He carried out both duties until the fall of 1927, when he appointed Glenn Thistlethwaite as football coach and turned his focus to the athletic directorship. That same year he developed a massive \$3 million master plan for the athletic facilities on campus, including replacement of the Red Gym. Though he was at first successful getting a portion of his plan through the state legislature in 1927, the project was pocket vetoed by Governor Fred Zimmerman. Little then turned to the UW Board of Regents to fund the Field House at the south end of Camp Randall, the new football stadium on the west side of campus completed in 1917. The regents approved a loan of \$350,000 through a dummy corporation that was used to fund other large-scale projects on campus.<sup>12</sup>

The building design and construction was influenced by many different players. The building was designed by State Architect staff William F. Stevens and John Knudsen, under the direct supervision of State Architect Arthur Peabody. Peabody began his career at UW-Madison as the campus architect and was appointed State Architect in 1915. During his role as campus architect, Peabody worked closely with Warren Laird and Paul Cret from the University of Pennsylvania to develop the first comprehensive campus plan in 1908. Although only portions of the plan were executed, the influence of Laird and Cret on the design of campus buildings aided the design and use of Renaissance Revival style of the Field House.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 214.

<sup>11</sup> Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 215–16.

<sup>12</sup> Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 213–14.

<sup>13</sup> National Register of Historic Places, University of Wisconsin Field House, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin, 8–6, National Register #98000829; University of Wisconsin - Madison, *Campus Master Plan Technical Document 2015 Campus Master Plan Update* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin - Madison, 2015), 40.

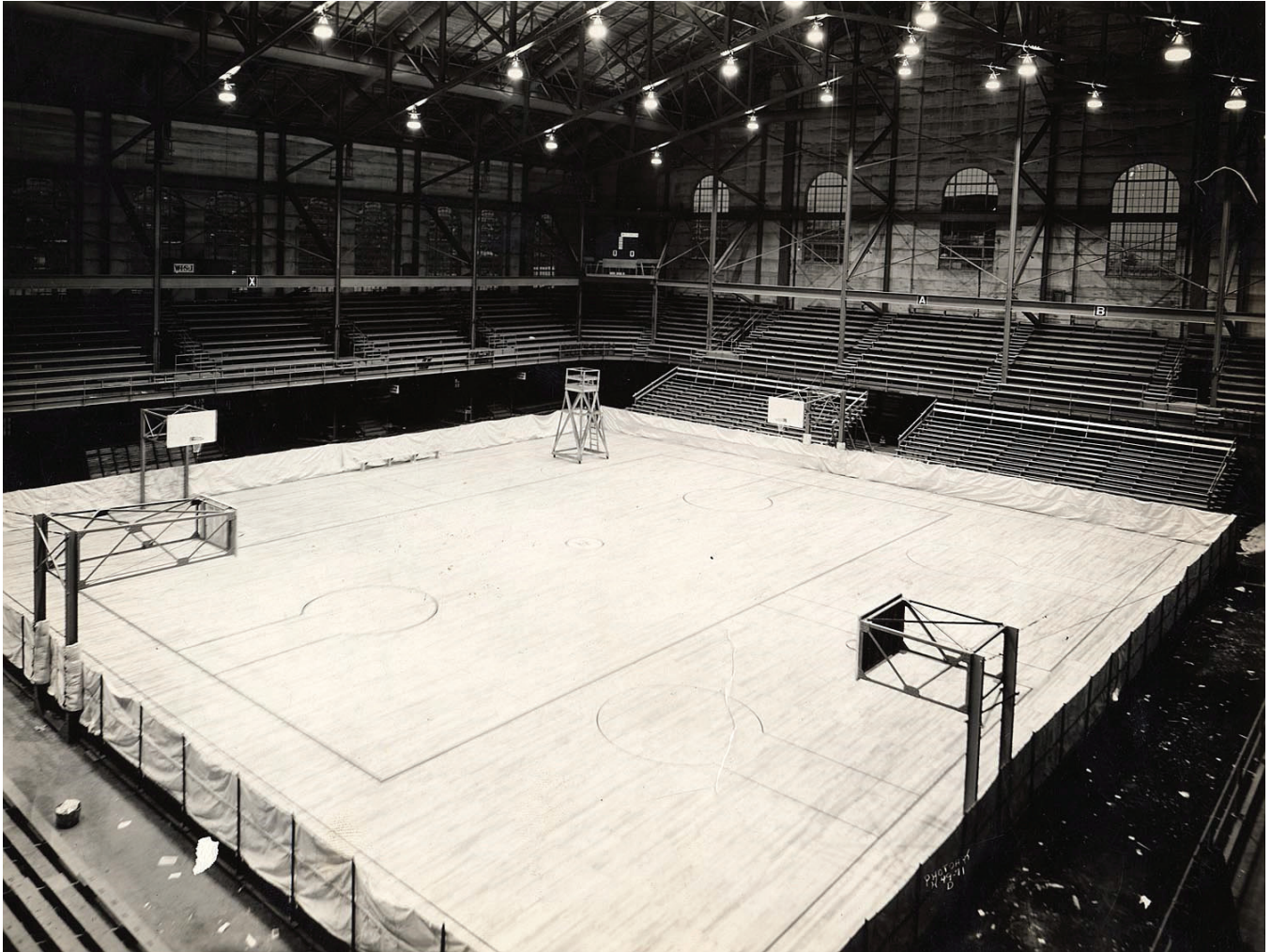


Figure 16: Interior of Field House after construction  
(UW Archives 1930)

The design of the Field House was completed and approved by the Board of Regents in May 1929. A contractor from Racine, William Christiansen, and an excavation firm from Madison, Quinn Construction, were hired to complete the building by the start of basketball season in 1930. The exterior featured classical inspired detail and skylights along the roofline, and the facade was clad in Madison sandstone. The interior of the building had a large central arena with a dirt floor and one-eighth-mile cinder track. Portable flooring was made available for the different types of sports that would use the facility. Although initially planned with a second-floor balcony seating area, it was removed from the original plan due to cost. The building opened and was dedicated in front of a capacity crowd of 8,600 people at a Wisconsin versus Pennsylvania basketball game on December 18, 1930.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 214–15.



While the push to construct the Field House was primarily for an updated athletic venue, the space was also used by the university and the larger community for important social events. In 1931 the winter graduation ceremony was moved from the Stock Pavilion to the Field House. Throughout its history the building was also used for events such as concerts, graduations, public speeches, and conferences. The building was an important gathering space for the city as many traveling dignitaries spoke in the building, including John F. Kennedy, Jesse Jackson, and the Dalai Lama.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 17: University of Wisconsin graduation ceremony  
(UW Archives 1933)

<sup>15</sup> “Facilities - UW Field House,” *University of Wisconsin Athletics*, n.d., [https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/08/21/GEN\\_2014010133.aspx](https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/08/21/GEN_2014010133.aspx); Barbara Wolff, “The Barn’s Last Party - UW’s Winter Grad’s Retire Field House as Commencement Sit,” *Wisconsin Week*, December 10, 1997, Field House, University of Wisconsin Archives.

The construction of the Field House allowed the university more space for new sports, most notably boxing. Although boxing intramural matches were held, the first intercollegiate team was established in 1933 by George F. Downer, the Athletic Publicity Director, who also hired the first boxing coach, John J. Walsh, in 1934. Over the next 27 years the boxing team had 93 victories and nine unbeaten seasons, one of UW-Madison's most successful sports. Matches typically packed the Field House, with crowds regularly between 12,000 and 15,000. The sport was ultimately ended by the regents at UW-Madison when a boxer, Charles Mohr, died after a match. Shortly after, other schools in the NCAA also voted to discontinue the sport, and boxing is no longer competed at a collegiate level.<sup>16</sup>

As the decades moved on, athletics at the University of Wisconsin – Madison continued to grow and change, and the Field House's capacity became an issue. Although the size of the Field House was initially mocked in the press for being so large, even being called “Little’s Folly,” it quickly became evident that there were still too few seats for games. In September 1936 the athletic department began developing a plan to install the second-floor balcony that was in the original plans. It was funded through a loan and a Public Works Administration grant. Completed in 1939, this brought the seating up to 15,000. In 1974 the WIAA announced it was seeking another site to hold its high school state wrestling and basketball tournaments due to the inadequate facilities at the Field House. UW-Madison sprang into action to address the issues and hired the firm of Potter, Lawson and Pawlowski to remodel the facility, which included the addition of basement locker rooms, the installation of a permanent floor, and updates to floor seating.<sup>17</sup>

By the 1990s the Field House was frequently cited by the fire department for overcrowding. The facility could not handle the crowd size for basketball games, and many also suggested the facility would prevent UW-Madison from fielding a top NCAA basketball team. After a long, public debate, under the direction of Athletic Director Pat Richter, it was determined the building would be phased out for basketball and graduation ceremony use and a new building, on the opposite side of campus, would be constructed.

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<sup>16</sup> “University of Wisconsin-Madison Boxing: 1933-1960,” *University of Wisconsin Athletics*, n.d., [https://uwbadgers.com/documents/2016/8/25/UW\\_Boxing\\_History\\_all.pdf?id=19520](https://uwbadgers.com/documents/2016/8/25/UW_Boxing_History_all.pdf?id=19520); “A Fond Look Back at the Field House,” *Kohl Center*, January 1998, 6, Field House, University of Wisconsin Archives.

<sup>17</sup> Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 215–16.



The Kohl Center, completed in 1998, met the modern needs of a basketball arena and also served as a new venue for hockey. The Field House held its last winter commencement ceremony in December 1997 and its last basketball game in January 1998.

After the construction of the Kohl Center, the Field House became the primary home for women's volleyball and men's wrestling. The women's volleyball team first played in the Field House in 1977, when it hosted the Big Ten Tournament, but played sporadically in the building until 1986, when it became their official home. The building has undergone some renovations in recent years to accommodate the success of the women's volleyball team, including a remodel of the locker room and training facilities.<sup>18</sup>



Figure 18: University of Wisconsin basketball game in the Field House (UW Archives 1995)

<sup>18</sup> "Facilities - UW Field House."

### **Alterations**

The Field House is remarkably intact and generally retains original layout and features. Some minor alterations have occurred over the years to account for changes in venue needs. The first, major alteration was the addition of the second-floor balcony in 1939 to increase the capacity.

No other major alterations are known to be completed until the 1974 renovations that were initiated by the threat of the WIAA to move to another facility for high school tournaments. Completed in 1976, the original foundation of the building alongside the court was dug out to create several new locker room spaces, a permanent floor was installed, and the temporary seats that lined either side of the court were removed and replaced with moveable stadium seats.

By 1980 the building was reroofed to remove the original center skylights, which would collect condensation and drip down onto the floor.<sup>19</sup> Other alterations included a new interior lighting system in 1977 and a new four-sided electronic scoreboard in the early 1990s.<sup>20</sup>

Under Athletic Director Barry Alvarez, further renovations were taken in the 2000s. In 2005, as part of the improvements to Camp Randall, the north end of the field house was remodeled with updated restrooms, a new media room, and an opponent locker room on the lower floor. In 2006 the locker rooms and team room for women's volleyball were remodeled for modern conveniences such as a large-screen projection room and wireless internet. Most recently, in 2013 a new wooden volleyball floor was installed.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> While multiple sources say that the skylights were removed and roofed over in 1940, aerial photos through the late 1960s appear to show the skylights in place. A newspaper article indicates that in 1940 the Works Progress Administration (WPA) planned to reinforce and roof over the skylights; however, it is unclear to what extent this project was completed. Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 216; "Stadium East Dorm Nears Completion," *Wisconsin State Journal*, June 9, 1940.

<sup>20</sup> Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 216; National Register of Historic Places, 7–5.

<sup>21</sup> "Facilities - UW Field House"; Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 216.



## Field House Timeline

### 1920s

- 1925 – George Little is named University of Wisconsin athletic director and begins to draw up plans for new athletic facilities on campus.
- 1927 – Little begins fundraising with the Board of Regents after a bill for funding the construction of athletic facilities was pocket vetoed by the governor. Little reduced his plans to the construction of the new Field House.
- 1929 – The regents approve the plans for the Field House and construction begins in September.<sup>22</sup>

### 1930s

- 1930 – Construction of the Field House is completed. The opening basketball game to dedicate the building is played on December 18 with Wisconsin defeating Pennsylvania 25-12.<sup>23</sup>
- 1933 – The first boxing match at the Field House is attended by 3,500 people.<sup>24</sup>
- 1936 – The second floor balcony of seating is installed to increase seating from 8,600 to 15,000.<sup>25</sup>
- 1936 – The Wisconsin Centennial Industrial Exposition is held in the Field House in June and July.<sup>26</sup>

### 1940s

- 1940 – The building is reroofed.
- 1941 – The first of two NCAA Tournament basketball games are hosted at the Field House. The Badgers would go on to win the NCAA Tournament title.<sup>27</sup>
- 1947 – The NCAA National Championship Boxing Tournament is held in the Field House.
- 1948 – Governor Oscar Rennebohm kicks off the Wisconsin Centennial celebration with a speech at the Field House.

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<sup>22</sup> Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 213–14.

<sup>23</sup> Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, *Postcards from the Field House 1930-1998* (University of Wisconsin, n.d.), 2.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Ehrmann, “Knocked Out in Its Prime,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, January 13, 1998.

<sup>25</sup> Arthur Hove, “The Old Barn, Remembered,” *The Kohl Center*, January 1998, 6.

<sup>26</sup> Melvin E. Diemer, “University of Wisconsin-Madison Field House,” July 1936, Melvin E. Diemer Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM87670>.

<sup>27</sup> Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, *Postcards from the Field House 1930-1998*, 4.

### 1950s

- 1950 – President Truman gives a national “peace” address.<sup>28</sup>
- 1952 – Senator Robert A. Taft gives a speech prior to the Wisconsin’s April presidential primary.<sup>29</sup>
- June 1953 – The Field House hosts the University of Wisconsin’s 100<sup>th</sup> commencement.<sup>30</sup>
- April 1959 – Boxing trials for the 1959 Pan-American Games are hosted at the Field House. During one notable bout, Amos Johnson beats future gold medal winner Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali).<sup>31</sup>

### 1960s

- 1960 – UW hosts the NCAA boxing tournament. Boxer Charles Mohr collapses at the end of his fight and later dies from a brain hemorrhage, leading to the end of the boxing program at the university.<sup>32</sup>
- 1960 – John F. Kennedy gives a campaign speech in October during the 1960 presidential campaign.
- 1965 – Bob Hope hosts the University of Wisconsin – Madison homecoming show from the Field House.<sup>33</sup>



Figure 19: John F. Kennedy speaking at the Field House  
(UW Archives October 23, 1960)

### 1970s

- 1974 – The WIAA calls for renovations to the Field House. Completed in 1976, the renovations include a permanent floor, permanent lower-level bleachers, dressing rooms and concessions below the bleachers, and refurbished cosmetic features.<sup>34</sup>
- 1974 – The Field House begins to be used for women’s intercollegiate sports, replacing the 1918 Women’s Field House, which was located just north of the Field House.
- 1975 – The first varsity women’s basketball game is held in the Field House on January 11. The UW-Madison women beat the UW-Green Bay team 45-33.<sup>35</sup>
- 1977 – A new lighting system is installed.

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<sup>28</sup> Arthur M. Vinje, “President Harry S. Truman Visit,” May 14, 1950, Arthur M. Vinje Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM65357>.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Vesey, “Taft in Madison,” March 26, 1952, Richard Vesey Photographs and Negatives, Wisconsin Historical Society, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM48283>.

<sup>30</sup> Arthur M. Vinje, “UW Graduation In Field House,” June 19, 1953, Arthur M. Vinje Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM80551>.

<sup>31</sup> Ehrmann, “Knocked Out in Its Prime.”

<sup>32</sup> Ehrmann, “Knocked Out in Its Prime.”

<sup>33</sup> Hove, “The Old Barn, Remembered,” 7.

<sup>34</sup> Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 216.

<sup>35</sup> Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, *Postcards from the Field House 1930-1998*, 10–11.



### 1980s

- 1984 – A new audio system is installed.
- 1986 – The Field House becomes the official venue for the University of Wisconsin – Madison women’s volleyball team.<sup>36</sup>
- 1988 – Desmond Tutu speaks at the Field House.
- 1989 – The Dalai Lama speaks at the Field House.<sup>37</sup>

### 1990s

- 1996 – Jesse Jackson speaks at the Field House.<sup>38</sup>
- 1998 – The Kohl Center opens and becomes the primary basketball venue, although the Field House continues to host smaller athletic events.<sup>39</sup>
- 1998 – The Field House hosts the Brunswick Intercollegiate Bowling Championships.<sup>40</sup>

### 2000s

- 2009 – Updated bleachers are added to the west side of the building.<sup>41</sup>

### 2010s

- 2013 – New wood floor is installed to accommodate the volleyball team.<sup>42</sup>
- 2015 – Locker room facilities renovated.
- 2018 – Upper deck bleachers are improved to meet modern safety codes and portions of the upper deck reopen for the first time since 2007.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> “Facilities - UW Field House.”

<sup>37</sup> Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, *Postcards from the Field House 1930-1998*, 12.

<sup>38</sup> Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, *Postcards from the Field House 1930-1998*, 12.

<sup>39</sup> “Facilities - UW Field House.”

<sup>40</sup> Andy Baggot, “When Striking Out Is Good,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 16, 1998.

<sup>41</sup> “Facilities - UW Field House.”

<sup>42</sup> “Facilities - UW Field House.”

<sup>43</sup> Dennis Punzel, “Badgers Volleyball: Demand for More Seats Spurs UW to Open Field House Balcony Next Season,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, December 13, 2017.

### Biographical Sidebars



Figure 20: Doc Meanwell  
(UW Archives 1912)

#### “Doc” Meanwell

Doctor (Doc) Walter Meanwell was born in Leeds, England, and attended Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore to earn his medical degree. He initially came to the University of Wisconsin – Madison as a doctoral candidate in public health and coach for collegiate wrestling. Meanwell was hired in 1911 as the head coach for University of Wisconsin men’s basketball. He was not a basketball player himself but devised a signature style of play using zone defense and short passes that remains influential in the sport to this day. He also emphasized the importance of sports medicine and physical fitness.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwell became a very successful and widely known coach, winning seven national championships in his first ten years of coaching. As the basketball team’s popularity soared, the crowds surpassed the capacity of the Red Gym, where games were held. In response, Meanwell teamed up with Athletic Director George Little to call for the construction of a new Field House. When the newly built Field House was dedicated in 1930 with an inaugural basketball game against Pennsylvania, Penn’s athletics manager boasted, “The name and fame of your coach, Dr. Meanwell, is no longer confined to the boundaries of your state. He has truly become a national figure in the fastest-growing sport there is.” Meanwell retired as a coach in 1934 and Harold “Bud” Foster, a former All-American University of Wisconsin player, replaced him.<sup>45</sup> Meanwell served as Athletic Director at University of Wisconsin – Madison from 1933 to 1935, and following that worked as a medical doctor in Madison until he died in 1953.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> “Walter ‘Doc’ Meanwell,” *University of Wisconsin Athletics*, n.d., [https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/08/21/GEN\\_20140101848.aspx](https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/08/21/GEN_20140101848.aspx).

<sup>45</sup> National Register of Historic Places, 8-2-8-4.

<sup>46</sup> “Walter ‘Doc’ Meanwell.”



### Arthur Peabody

Arthur Peabody was born in Eau Claire and earned his degree at the University of Illinois. He practiced architecture in Chicago and Wichita, Kansas, before returning to Wisconsin in 1905 to take on the role of Campus Architect at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. As the Campus Architect, together with Warren Laird and Paul Cret of the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture, Peabody completed a master plan for the University of Wisconsin – Madison campus in 1909. In all, he designed 60 campus buildings during his 10-year tenure.<sup>47</sup>

In 1915 Peabody became the State Architect of Wisconsin. While in that role he collaborated with and oversaw Laird and Cret on the design of a number of important pre-World War II campus buildings, including the Field House.<sup>48</sup> He supervised the design of the Field House, which was completed by State Architect staff members William F. Stevens and John Knudson.<sup>49</sup>

Peabody served as State Architect until his retirement in 1937, designing more than 70 buildings for the state and university campus. These included Camp Randall Stadium, the Memorial Union, Wisconsin General Hospital (now the Medical Sciences Center at 1300 University Avenue), and the State Office Building (1 W. Wilson Street). He lived in Madison until his death in 1942.<sup>50</sup>



Figure 21: Arthur Peabody  
(Wisconsin Historical Society)

<sup>47</sup> “Arthur Peabody, FAIA,” NCARB, n.d., <https://www.ncarb.org/about/history-ncarb/past-presidents/arthur-peabody-faia-wisconsin>.

<sup>48</sup> National Register of Historic Places, 8-6-8-7.

<sup>49</sup> National Register of Historic Places, 7-1.

<sup>50</sup> “Peabody, Arthur 1858-1942,” *Wisconsin Historical Society*, n.d., <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS11617>.



Figure 22: Warren Laird  
(University of Pennsylvania)



Figure 23: Paul Cret  
(Wikipedia 1910)

### Warren Laird and Paul Cret

Warren Laird was born in Winona, Minnesota, and studied architecture at Cornell University, continuing as an instructor at Cornell after graduation. He also traveled Europe and worked at architectural offices in Minnesota, Boston, and New York before becoming the director of an early architecture program at the University of Pennsylvania. Paul Cret was born in Lyons, France, and studied architecture in Lyons and Paris before moving to Philadelphia to become a Professor of Design.

By the early twentieth century, Laird and Cret were nationally renowned architects and professors at the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture. In 1908 the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents commissioned a master plan for the campus and selected Laird and Cret as consulting architects on the plan. In collaboration with Arthur Peabody, Laird and Cret completed the master plan in 1909. The three worked closely together to design many campus buildings in a signature Renaissance Revival style. The Field House is one of the best examples of this collaborative process. Peabody consulted with Cret on the plans and they drew on Laird and Cret's design principles to feature large, deeply inset, rounded windows; decorative limestone and terra cotta details; and recessed panels on the building facade.<sup>51</sup> Other important University of Wisconsin – Madison buildings that Laird and Cret designed include the Agricultural Chemistry Building (now the Hector F. DeLuca Biochemistry Building), Lathrop Hall, the Stock Pavilion, and other prominent university buildings on Bascom Hill. One of the most influential aspects of the master plan was its stipulation that all new buildings constructed on the east side of campus be clad in uniform sandstone; along with the extensive use of the Renaissance Revival style, this brought architectural continuity to the University of Wisconsin – Madison campus.<sup>52</sup>

Laird and Cret each received many accolades in their careers. Notably, Laird was a founder and president of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture and was named an honorary fellow of the American Institute of Architects before his death in 1948.<sup>53</sup> Cret became one of Philadelphia's most influential architects and was particularly well-known for the civic and commercial buildings and memorials his firm built nationwide. He received many architectural accolades, awards, and honorary degrees.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Feldman, *The Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 214.

<sup>52</sup> National Register of Historic Places, 8-6-8-8.

<sup>53</sup> Emily T. Cooperman, "Laird, Warren Powers (1861-1948)," *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, n.d., [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/21437](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/21437).

<sup>54</sup> Sandra L Tatman, "Cret, Paul Philippe (1876-1945)," *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, n.d., [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/22472](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/22472).



### George Little

George Little became Athletic Director and head football coach at the University of Wisconsin – Madison in 1925. He held this dual position for two years before bringing on a new football coach so he could focus on administrative work. Little developed a \$3 million master plan for athletic buildings on campus; however, due to political pressure and financial limitations he ultimately scaled back his request to the Board of Regents to \$350,000 for a Field House, which he made in partnership with University of Wisconsin – Madison basketball coach Doc Meanwell.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to the Field House, he oversaw construction of several other important athletics facilities including the expansion of Camp Randall by thousands of seats and practice fields for additional sports. He also promoted intramural sports through a program he called Athletics for All.<sup>56</sup> Little left the University of Wisconsin – Madison in 1932 for Rutgers University, where he served as Athletic Director. By the end of his career he was inaugurated into the National College Football Hall of Fame and became executive secretary of the National Football Foundation.<sup>57</sup>

He died in 1957, but his legacy lives on in the Field House.<sup>58</sup> A *Madison Capital Times* article described that, “The Fieldhouse stands as a Little monument, for it was through his efforts, extending over several years, that the building was finally begun...”<sup>59</sup>

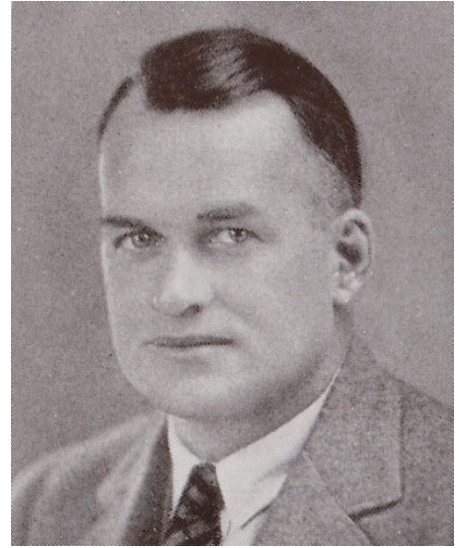


Figure 24: George Little  
(*Michiganensian Yearbook* 1925)

<sup>55</sup> National Register of Historic Places, 8-3.

<sup>56</sup> “The Effects of ‘Play for Plays Sake,’” *UW Archives and Records Management*, n.d., <https://www.library.wisc.edu/archives/exhibits/campus-history-projects/health-and-fun-shall-walk-hand-in-hand-the-first-100-years-of-womens-athletics-at-uw-madison/the-effects-of-play-for-plays-sake/>.

<sup>57</sup> Don Kopriva and Jim Mott, *On Wisconsin! The History of Badger Athletics from 1896-2001* (Champaign, Ill.: Sports Publishing, LLC, 2001), 48; “Badgers in the College Football Hall of Fame,” *University of Wisconsin Athletics*, n.d., [https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/8/21/GEN\\_20140101422.aspx](https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/8/21/GEN_20140101422.aspx).

<sup>58</sup> “Little, George Edkin,” *Wisconsin Historical Society*, n.d., <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Name/NI59300>.

<sup>59</sup> Jim Clark, “U.W. Fieldhouse, Built in 1930, Soon Proved Its Value,” *Madison Capital Times*, n.d., University of Wisconsin Archives.



Figure 25: Pat Richter  
(UW Athletic Department)

#### Pat Richter

Pat Richter, a Madison native, played baseball, basketball, and football at Madison East High School. He attended the University of Wisconsin – Madison, where he lettered in all three sports, and played in the National Football League (NFL) for the Washington Redskins for eight seasons. Richter then returned to Madison, earned his law degree at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, and eventually became Vice President of Personnel at the Oscar Meyer Corporation.<sup>60</sup> It was only after a successful career there that Richter took on the role of Director of Athletics at the University of Wisconsin in 1989. He stayed in that position for more than 14 years.

Richter is widely recognized as turning around the Athletic Department in terms of finances, fan support, and team success from a low point in the late 1980s. Under his direction the department took on several large-scale building projects, including the Kohl Center. It also added three new women's sports to become Title IX-compliant. The Badgers won 49 Big Ten team titles and three national championships, earning a wide reputation for athletic and academic excellence. Richter hired Barry Alvarez as the football coach, and that team's success under his leadership re-ignited Badger fandom across Wisconsin. When Richter retired in 2004, he was the longest-serving Athletics Director in the Big Ten. He resides in Madison to this day.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Tom Oates, "In a Class by Himself: Five Decades Later, Pat Richter Still Is No. 1," *Madison.com*, December 12, 2010, [https://madison.com/sports/high-school/in-a-class-by-himself-five-decades-later-pat-richter/article\\_b55e7126-034c-11e0-8c14-001cc4c03286.html](https://madison.com/sports/high-school/in-a-class-by-himself-five-decades-later-pat-richter/article_b55e7126-034c-11e0-8c14-001cc4c03286.html).

<sup>61</sup> "The Richter Era," *University of Wisconsin Athletics*, n.d., [https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/08/21/GEN\\_20140101626.aspx](https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/08/21/GEN_20140101626.aspx); "Pat Richter, Director of Athletics, University of Wisconsin," *University of Wisconsin Athletics*, n.d., [https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/08/21/GEN\\_20140101963.aspx](https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/08/21/GEN_20140101963.aspx).



Barry Alvarez

Barry Alvarez, the current Athletic Director at University of Wisconsin – Madison, is from Langeloth, Pennsylvania. He played linebacker and was a leading tackler at the University of Nebraska for renowned football coach Bob Devaney, where he earned both bachelor's and master's degrees. Alvarez's own football coaching career began at the high school level before he started as an assistant coach at the University of Iowa in 1979. From there he became a linebackers coach and, eventually, assistant head coach at Notre Dame. Pat Richter brought him on as head football coach in 1990.

As the Badgers football coach for 16 seasons, Alvarez helped turn the football program around, winning games and dramatically increasing attendance at Camp Randall Stadium. In the 1990s he coached three Big Ten and Rose Bowl champion teams and was named Big Ten Coach of the Year and National Coach of the Year.

Overall, he is the winningest football coach in the school's history. He has been elected to the College Football Hall of Fame. In 2004 he became the University's Director of Athletics, and in 2005 stepped down as head football coach to focus solely on his new role.

He is celebrated for his success heading the athletic department; during his tenure, the Badgers have won 14 team national titles in six different programs and maintained a reputation for academic excellence. He also spearheaded Badgers Give Back, a program that facilitates student-athlete community outreach efforts.<sup>62</sup>



Figure 26: Barry Alvarez  
(UW Athletic Department 2017)

<sup>62</sup> "Barry Alvarez," *University of Wisconsin Athletics*, n.d., [https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/8/21/GEN\\_2014010145.aspx](https://uwbadgers.com/sports/2015/8/21/GEN_2014010145.aspx).

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

### Site and Context

The site is primarily accessed by pedestrians as there is limited parking available on the property for spectators attending sporting events. Entry gates into the Field House are positioned at the southeast (Gate B) and southwest (Gate C) corners of the building. Sidewalks along Little Street, Monroe Street, and Breese Terrace lead pedestrians to the plaza area at the floor level of the Field House. The site is surfaced with both bituminous and concrete pavement on the east, south, and west sides. The entire north side of the site is consumed by Camp Randall Stadium. Vehicular traffic enters the parking lot from Breese Terrace.

The topography is relatively flat with an approximate 6-foot drop from the south plaza down to the sidewalk along Little Street and a 10'-foot drop from the south plaza to the parking lot in front of Kellner Hall to the east.



Figure 27: Field House South Elevation  
(River Architects July 12, 2018)



Figure 28: Baseball Team  
(UW Archives 1949)

### Architectural Description

Towering to just over 100' tall, the Field House is a classic representation of Renaissance Revival architecture and provides a strong presence to the corner of Monroe Street and Breese Terrace. Featuring local quarried stone from the Madison area, the structure measures approximately 200 feet wide by 235 feet long and is nearly five stories in height. Its symmetrical facades feature masonry pilasters that bring an architectural order to its large-scale massing. Located in a north-south orientation, the Field House serves as the backdrop to the south end zone of Camp Randall Stadium.

The primary south elevation along Monroe and Regent Streets is divided into five bays and features two primary entrances and three secondary entrances that have been added and/or modified from the original design. At 113 inches in height, the lower pedestal of the south facade consists of a 38" high glazed terra cotta plinth, 61 1/2" high rubble stone dado, and 14 1/2" high cornice. The massive rubble stone pilasters rise 50 feet upwards to an ornamental terra cotta frieze trim which measures 34 inches in height. The upper gable pediment is capped with an 81-inch-tall glazed terra cotta cornice and coping. Within each bay, arched-top windows measuring 139 inches wide by 333 inches tall, feature two operable sashes. A side-pivot sash can be found in the lower corner of the window unit, while a center pivot hopper unit can be found just above the mid-point of the window assembly. Constructed of steel framing, the windows are subdivided into 168 individual panes of glass. Unique to the south elevation only, glazed terra cotta balconies can be found at the sills of the windows located over the two primary entrances.



Figure 29: Field House South Elevation  
(River Architects July 12, 2018)



The three central bays of the south facade feature single window units that measure 24 inches wide by 78 inches tall. The tilt-out lower sashes are operated by a chain on the interior and are still in working order.

Original to the Field House, an ornamental cartouche featuring a “W” to represent the University of Wisconsin can be found on the south elevation. The cartouche is constructed of terra cotta and represented in the school colors of red and white. The cartouche is an iconic feature of the building’s exterior character and is now the iconic feature of the University’s branding.

The west and east elevations are similar in design to one another and feature five central bays of equal size while the north and south ends provide projected entrance massings that anchor each end of the facade. These entrance portals consist of large-scale terra cotta units that surround the original wood door and window frame. Similar to that of the south elevation, masonry pilasters of similar size divide the elevation and are capped with a masonry entablature consisting of a 10-inch-high terra cotta architrave molding, 41-inch-high frieze, and 38-inch-high terra cotta cornice. Rubble stone parapets measuring 68 inches in height are capped by terra cotta copings which sit atop the protruding entrance pavilions.

Arched-top windows measuring 114 inches wide by 237 inches tall, feature two operable sashes similar to that of the south elevation. A side-pivot sash can be found in the lower corner of the window unit, while a center pivot hopper unit can be found just above the mid-point of the window assembly. Constructed of steel framing, the windows are subdivided into 94 individual panes of glass.



Figure 30: Graduation  
(Wisconsin Historical Society 1955)



Figure 31: Field House Upper Window  
(River Architects May 3, 2018)



Figure 32: Field House North Elevation  
(River Architects July 12, 2018)

The north elevation of the Field House has been modified the most over the course of the building's lifespan. The entire original bleacher section has been removed (2004) and new seating has been constructed along with additional hospitality areas. The original window openings remain intact as the stadium seating is not connected to the north facade. Similar to the south elevation, the north facade also features the "W" cartouche at the center of the upper pediment.

The interior is functional in design and has served the needs of the University since its beginning. Although its original construction did not feature the number of spectator seats or hospitality spaces we see today, much of the Field House's original interior historic fabric is still intact. The roof structure features open-web steel trusses spanning the width of the 200-foot volume and includes the original 2 ¼" x 4" wood decking material.

Although original light fixtures can be found at various locations, much of the lighting has been updated. Modern-day LED fixtures illuminate the arena floor. Historic spot lighting along with the original balconies and lighting pully systems remain intact.



Figure 33: Field House Interior  
(River Architects July 12, 2018)



As noted earlier in this report, the red interiors are not original to the building and were added as part of the renovation project in the mid-1970's.

Concrete floors added in 1976 can be found throughout the interior of the Field House. The wood arena floor was installed in 2013.

There is a mixture of seating types included in the Field House. The first and second balconies consist of fixed wood bench seats while the ground floor seating on the north, west, and south sides are fixed metal seating over tiered concrete. The ground floor seating along the east side of the Field House consists of a movable section of bleachers, which provides additional volleyball court practice surface.

The scoreboard system hung from the roof structure directly over center court was installed in 2017, replacing the former scoreboard, which was installed in 1997. A project in 1992 provided a new scoreboard and additional support members to the roof framing.



Figure 34: Sports Show  
(Wisconsin Historical Society April 11, 1945)



Figure 35: Spot Light  
(River Architects July 12, 2018)

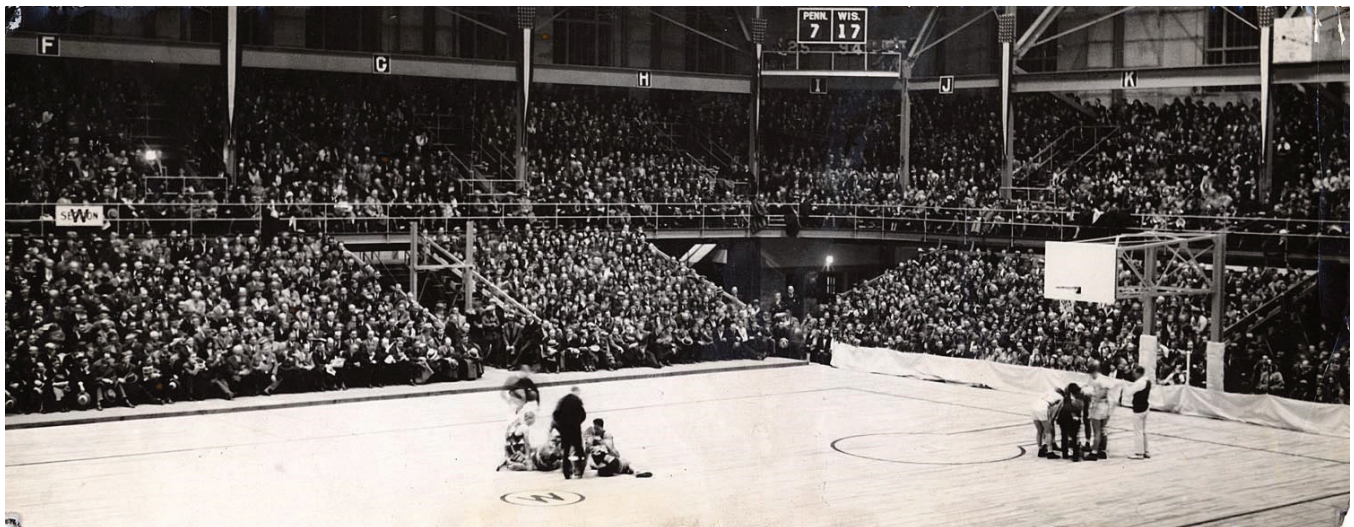
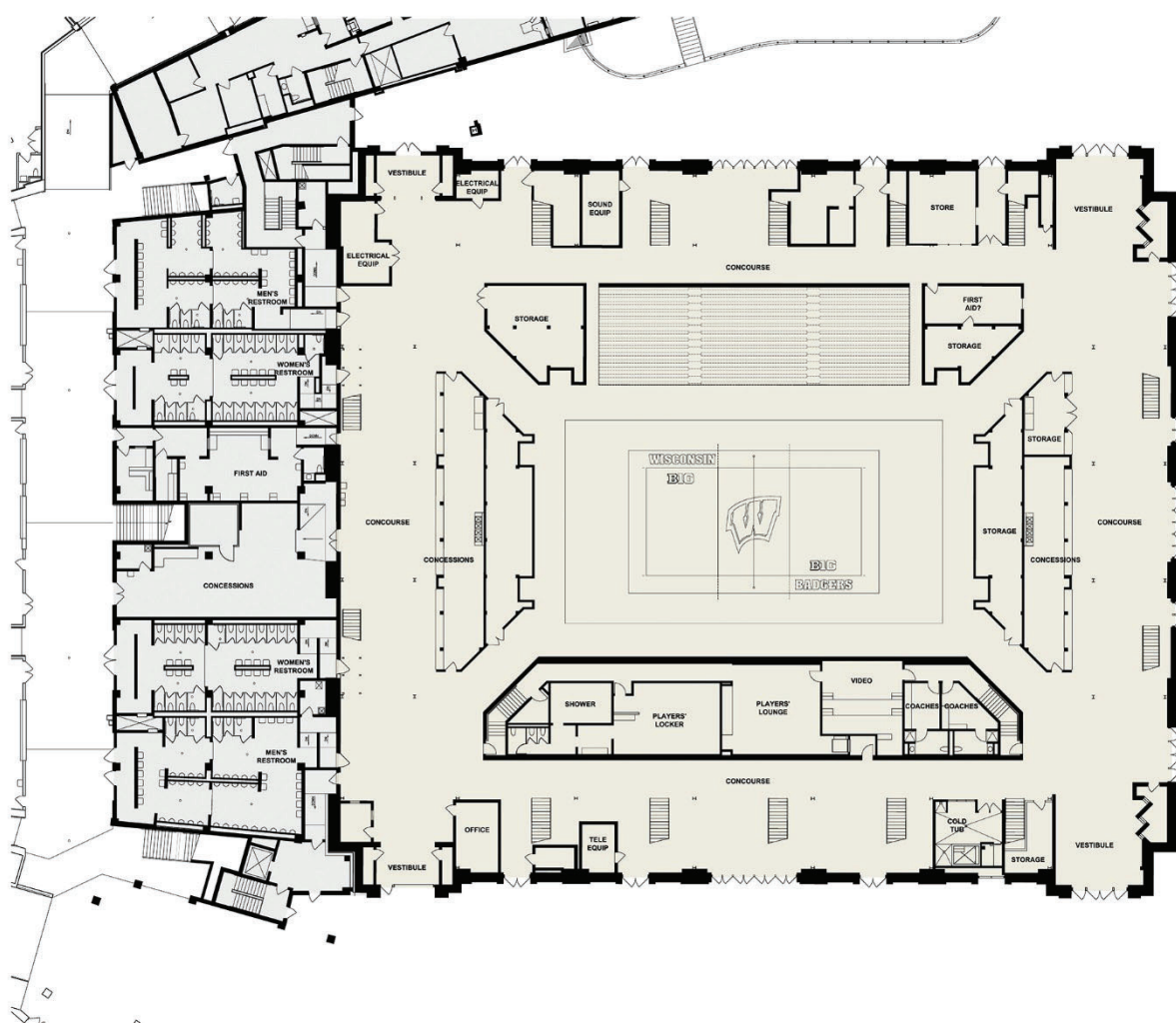
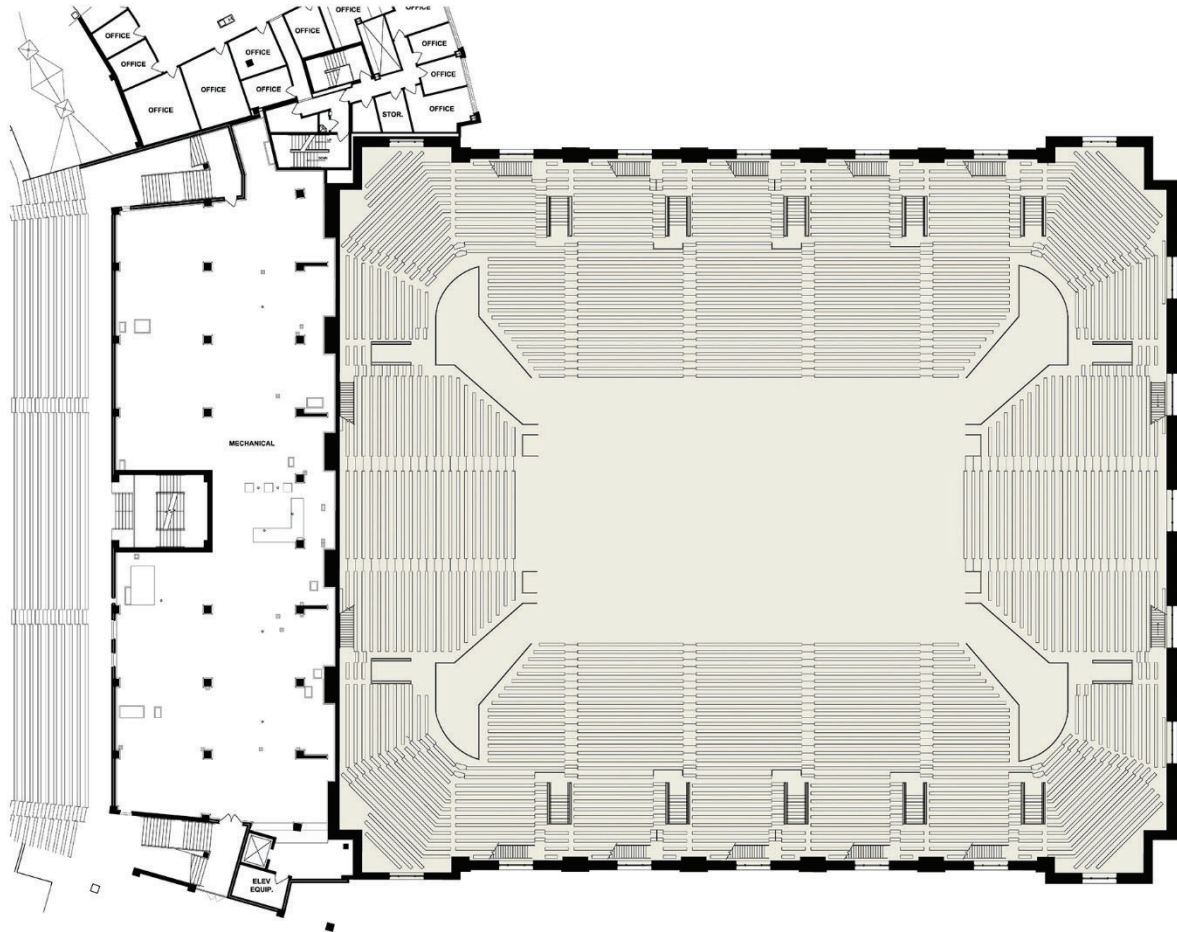


Figure 36: Dedication Basketball Game  
(UW Archives December 18, 1930)

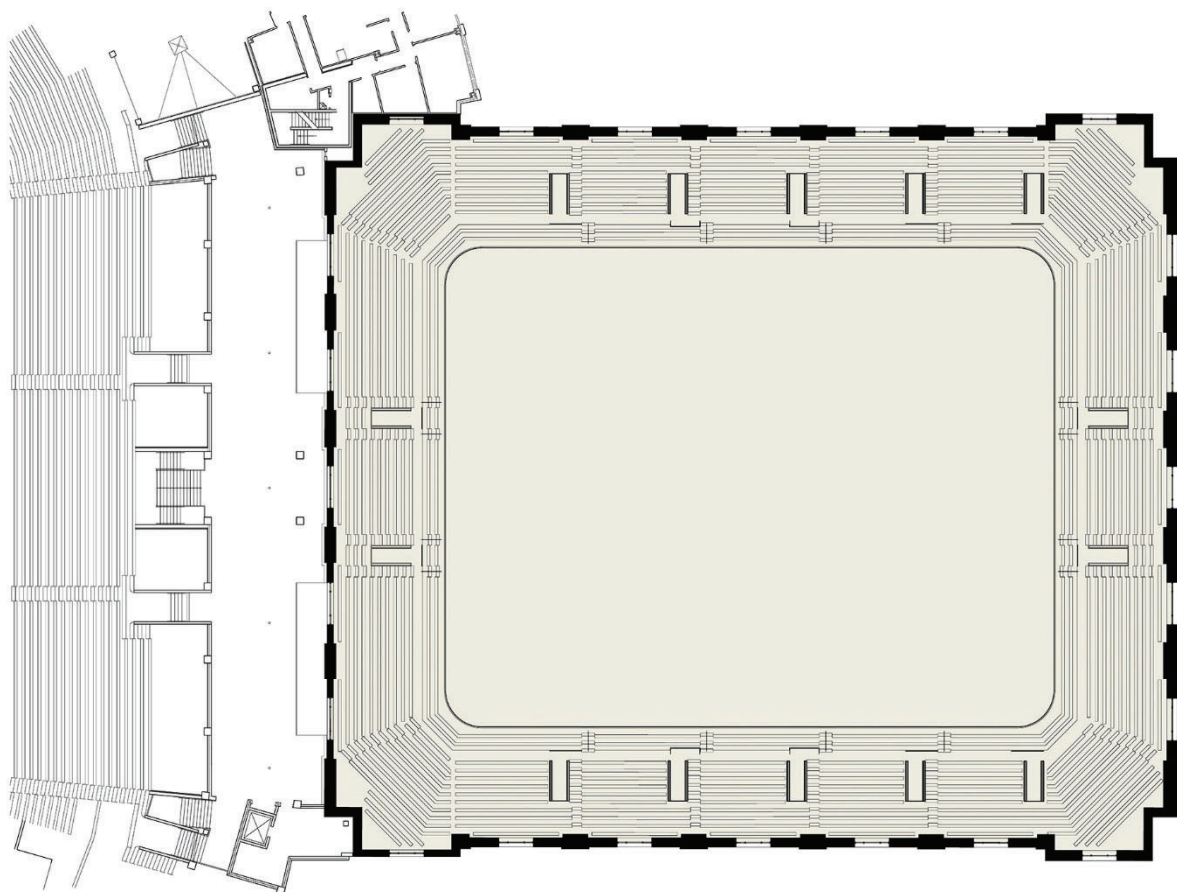




**GROUND FLOOR PLAN**

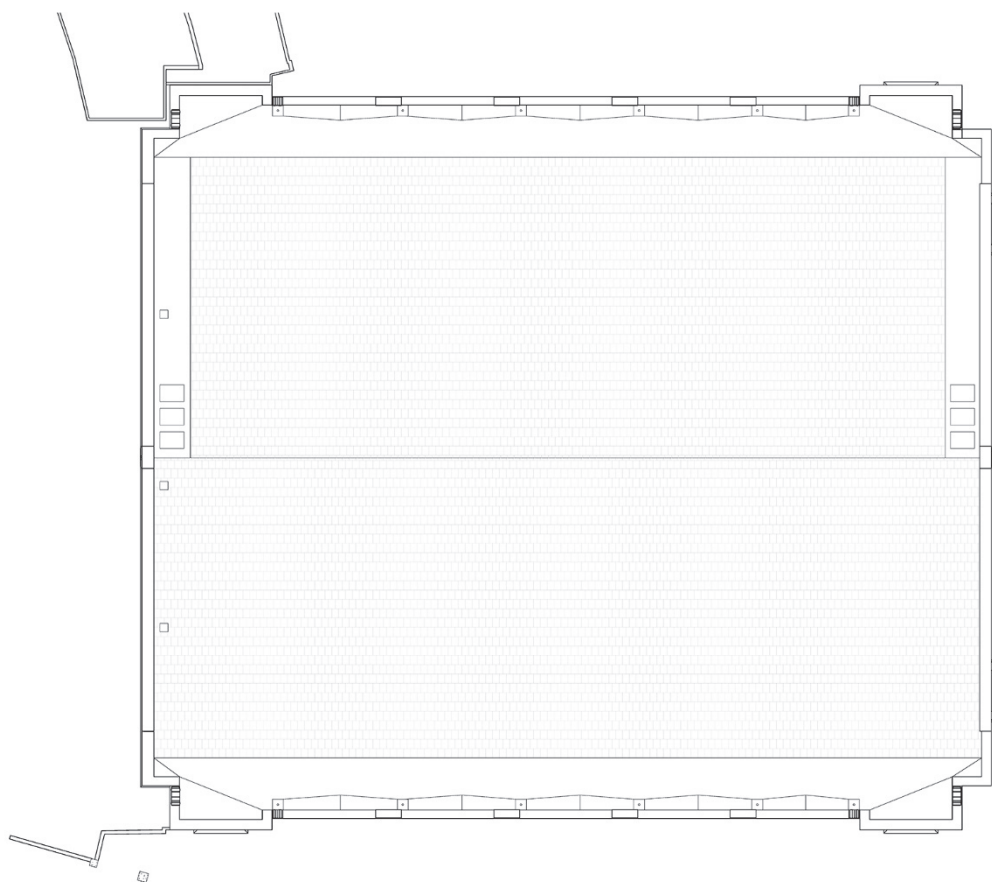


**FIRST BALCONY FLOOR PLAN**

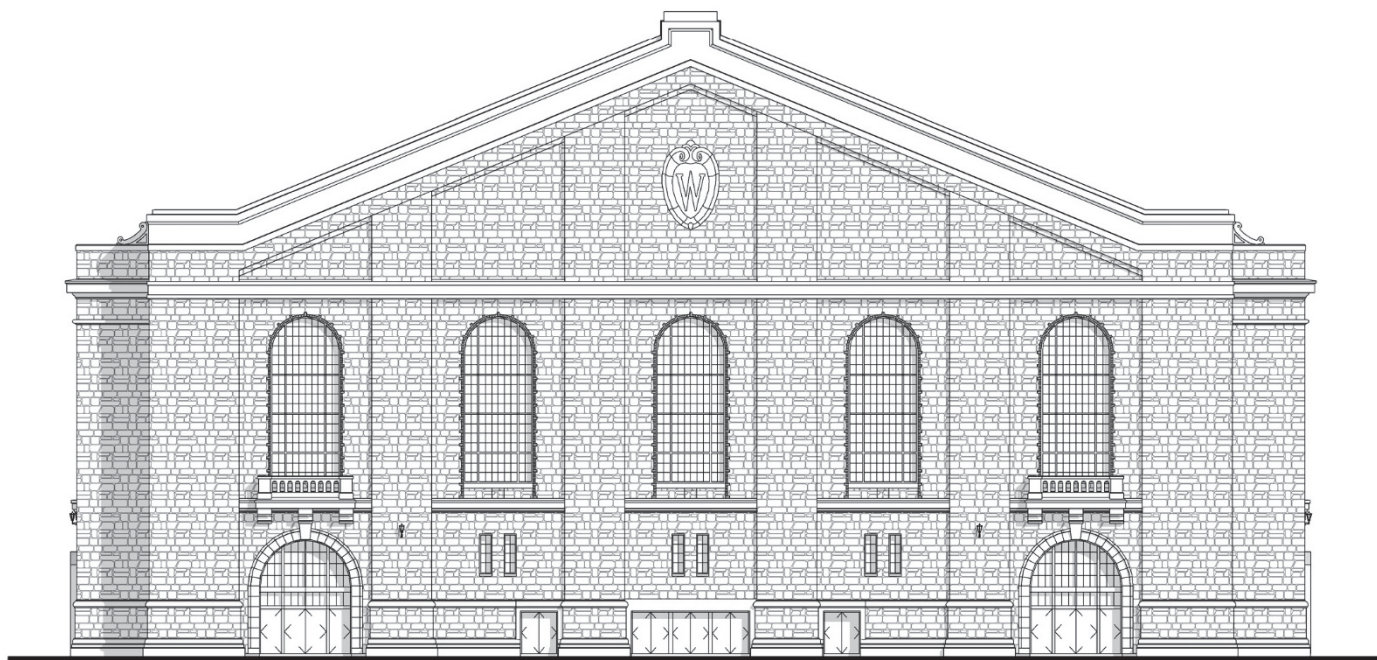


**SECOND BALCONY FLOOR PLAN**

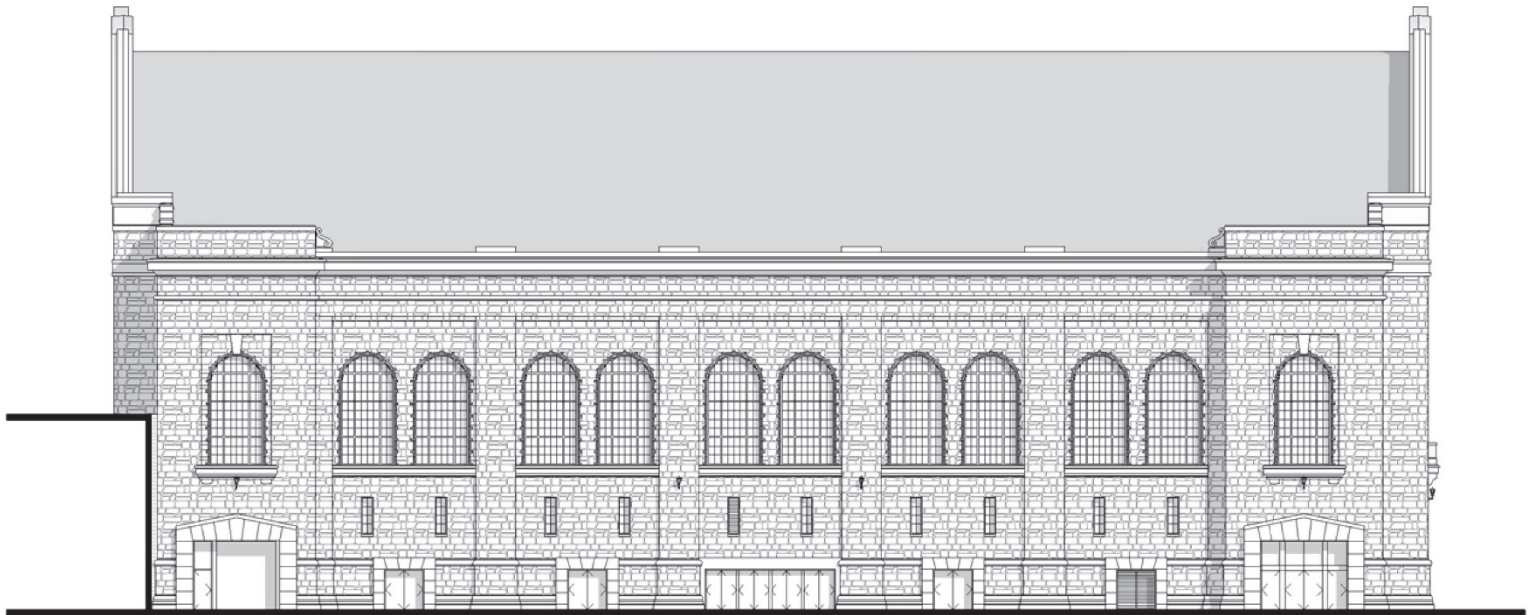




**ROOF PLAN**

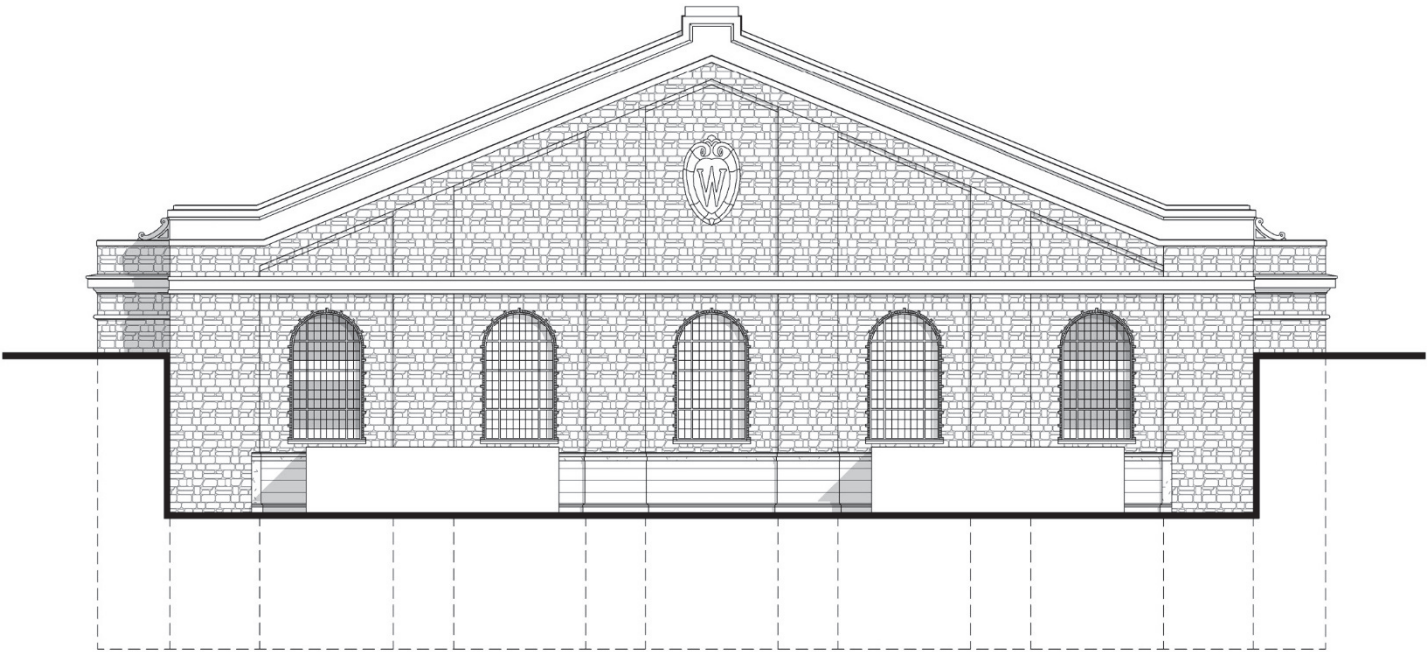


**SOUTH ELEVATION**

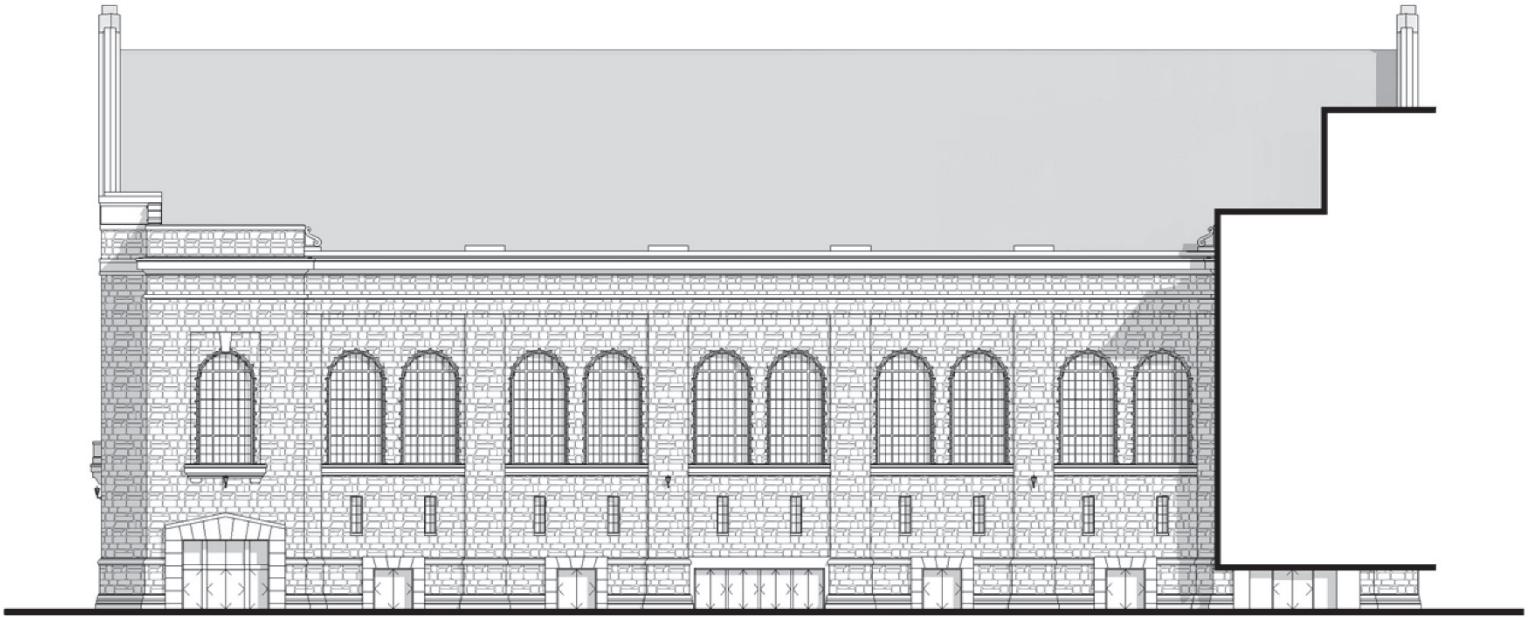


**WEST ELEVATION**





**NORTH ELEVATION**



**EAST ELEVATION**

### **Evaluation of Significance**

The Field House, completed in 1930, was primarily built for the expanding athletics program of the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Throughout its history the building has also been used for large, important, community and civic gatherings and graduation ceremonies. It retains a high degree of integrity, possessing all seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. There have been some minor alterations to both the exterior and interior of the building throughout the years. For the exterior, some of the entrances have been enlarged to accommodate the large crowds that flocked to the building when it was used for basketball and boxing events. Additionally, the original skylights at the center of the roof were removed. Alterations to the interior include the addition of locker rooms and the alteration of the original ticket offices. The Field House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1998 and as a local Madison Landmark in 2009 for its association with important recreational and cultural events and for its Renaissance Revival architectural style. The period of significance for the Field House begins in 1930 and stretches to 1947.<sup>63</sup>

#### *Entertainment and Recreation Significance*

The Field House was originally constructed for the University of Wisconsin basketball team, but quickly became a multi-purpose space used for other university sports and important cultural events. Constructed during a time when the athletic program was expanding, the building also became the home for the university's successful boxing program. It is an important and significant resource for the University of Wisconsin athletics program. Additionally, as one of the largest open performance spaces within the city of Madison, the building hosted a number of large-scale community events such as graduation ceremonies, music performances, conferences, and public speaking engagements.

#### *Architectural Significance*

The Field House is an excellent example of the Renaissance Revival style designed under the direction of State Architect Arthur Peabody. The building has character-defining features of the style, including the simple basilican form of the building, classically inspired exterior such as the simulated ground story and much grander second story, classically inspired limestone entrances, large bays divided by pilaster strips, parapet walls, and a terra cotta frieze on the south (main) facade.

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<sup>63</sup> The end of the period of significance in 1947 appears to coincide with the National Register guidelines that “50 years is used as the closing date for periods of significance where activities begun historically continued to have importance and no more specific date can be defined to end the historic period.” National Park Service, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin, 1997), 42.



## CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The following section provides an in-depth look at the issues that need to be addressed in the event of any future restoration efforts taking place at the Field House. The main focus of this section of the report relates to the physical integrity of the structure. The building and grounds were reviewed primarily through the use of visual inspection and photo documentation. Drone photography was utilized to reach higher areas of the exterior while investigative demolition was isolated to the windows in order to collect data relative to the panes of glass and their originality. The results of the investigation are contained in the pages that follow with items noted and organized in a manner to incorporate all the work needed, regardless of any prioritization or magnitude. This condition assessment also documents any alterations or modifications that have been made to the building that are outside the period of significance (1930-1947). Dates of these interventions are noted whenever possible.



Figure 37: Field House East Elevation  
(River Architects July 12, 2018)



Figure 38: Field House South Entrance Balcony  
(River Architects May 3, 2018)

The evaluations and recommendations contained within this report should be re-evaluated prior to starting any work to ensure the accuracy of the information provided. Depending on the sequence of any future restoration or preservation efforts, it is possible that additional work may be necessary.

The following evaluation pages are divided into separate sections highlighting the site, exterior, interior, structural, and building systems. Suggested treatment recommendations have been prioritized and are included in Part 2 of this report.



Figure 39: Field House East Elevation  
(River Architects May 3, 2018)