

THE DEMOLITION OF BOSTON GARDEN:  
AN EXAMINATION OF SPORTS STADIA IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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by  
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## ABSTRACT

The closing and subsequent demolition of Boston Garden in 1995 marked the end of an era in a city steeped in history. Boston, Massachusetts is a place that proudly displays its colonial-era and 19<sup>th</sup>-century architecture interspersed amongst a 21<sup>st</sup>-century cityscape. Often overlooked, however, is the city's iconic 20<sup>th</sup>-century structures, whose impact on the cultural identity of the city rival that of its predecessors. It was in this vein that Boston Garden saw a massive push for redevelopment, resulting in the creation of the FleetCenter, today known as TD Garden.

The following discussion is an historical case study of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century Boston sporting venue that was demolished and redeveloped. The life and death of Boston Garden, former home of the Boston Bruins of the National Hockey League and Boston Celtics of the National Basketball Association, among many other sports teams and functions outside of sports, provides an in-depth look into the world of historic preservation, and why specific buildings are or are not preserved. An extensive look at Boston Garden perfectly displays the complexities behind large-scale, real-estate development, and the role individual ownership groups, city officials, the current political environment, and many other factors have on the decision-making process.

Boston Garden arose as the city's preeminent sporting and exhibition hall during a time that citizens, politicians, and decision makers longed for progress and acceptance as a 20<sup>th</sup>-century American city. Boston's seemingly never ending desire to escape its storied past carried into the 1980s and 90s as a strong push for redevelopment and redesign occurred throughout the city. This thesis follows this arc as it relates to Boston Garden, which found itself as one of the poster children of Boston's push for modernity. The city's push for redevelopment from the 1960s through the 1990s, which included the Massachusetts Miracle and the Big Dig, resulted in a need for economic boosters in various neighborhoods. Boston Garden was seen as an opportunity for economic vitality in the North End section of Boston. The purposeful lack of preservation as it relates to Boston Garden, therefore, poses an important question of whether or

not the stadium truly deserved attention from private and public preservation sectors. The purpose of the thesis seeks to examine if the historical, cultural, and architectural significance of Boston Garden warranted preservation, which can then be applied to various other historic sports venues across not only the United States, but the globe.



## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Michael LaFlash was born and raised in Worcester, Massachusetts. Upon graduation from Villanova University in 2015, he sought to use his B.A. in History, eventually finding the field of Historic Preservation. Prior to pursuing a Masters degree, Michael worked as a teacher and gained his first exposure to preservation with the non-profit Preservation Worcester in his hometown.

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I would also like to give a special thank you to Richard Johnson at the New England Sports Museum for his help in providing photographs of Boston Garden, as well as the staff at Columbia's Avery Library for helping provide sources. As well as Darrell Harrington, Alexander Zamarro, and Sarah LaFlash for providing photographs.

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## INTRODUCTION

The closing and subsequent demolition of Boston Garden in 1995 marked the end of an era in a city steeped in history. Boston, Massachusetts is a place that proudly displays its colonial-era and 19<sup>th</sup>-century architecture interspersed amongst a 21<sup>st</sup>-century cityscape. Often overlooked, however, is the city's iconic 20<sup>th</sup>-century structures, whose impact on the cultural identity of the city rival that of its predecessors. It was in this vein that Boston Garden saw a massive push for redevelopment, resulting in the creation of the FleetCenter, today known as TD Garden.

This cultural identity can be seen in the city's various commercial and residential districts, its theaters, and its sporting venues. At present, one of the most defining features of Boston's identity is its professional sports prowess. An historical role that traces back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, each of the four major sports franchises that call Boston and its greater metropolitan area home have maintained high levels of excellence in the last two decades. Their role in the foundation of professional sports and the growth of the industry throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, demonstrates the city has more ties to sports history than its recent trophy display case. The impact of sports history on the cultural identity of Boston, therefore, cannot be understated.

The following discussion is an historical case study of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century Boston sporting venue that was demolished and redeveloped. The life and death of Boston Garden, former home to the Boston Bruins of the National Hockey League (NHL) and Boston Celtics of the National Basketball Association (NBA), among many other sports teams and functions outside of sports, provides an in-depth look into the world of historic preservation, and why specific buildings are or are not preserved. An extensive look at Boston Garden perfectly displays the complexities behind large scale real estate development, and the role individual ownership groups, city officials, the current political environment, and many other factors affect the decision-making process.

Information retrieval for this thesis was conducted primarily through archived and previously printed materials. The history of Boston Garden and the causes for its demolition was developed through the use of local newsprint throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Boston Garden and individual team issued programs, and various biographies of the “Garden Legends.” Further information was taken from academic theses from Cornell University and various Boston based colleges, such as Boston University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and historical texts retrieved from the Cornell University Library and Boston Public Library. Research into Boston’s zoning and historic preservation undertakings included oral interviews. Industry professionals who had direct involvement with Boston’s redevelopment process and preservation efforts in the 1980s and 1990s provided information to the author in December, 2018 and January and February of 2019. These interviews were conducted in both Boston, Massachusetts and Albany, NY, as well as through telephone conversations and e-mail correspondence.

As is demonstrated throughout this work, the historical importance of Boston Garden is unquestionable. *The Demolition of Boston Garden* seeks to uncover just how a building so highly regarded, historically and culturally, in a city that maintains its history in such high regard can be lost with minimal opposition to its redevelopment. Chapters one, two, and three examine the life and death of Boston Garden. While chapters four and five focus on both the outside factors resulting in the arena’s redevelopment and the preservation efforts that resulted in its demise. The first chapter describes the North Station area as it was before construction of the hybrid train station/arena in 1928. The chapter then discusses the major corporations and role players key in the development of Boston Garden. The chapter concludes with documentation of the lay-out and materiality of both North Station and the arena that towered above it.

Chapter two then details the historical importance of the arena, explaining why it became one of the most iconic buildings in Boston. By examining the activities and organizations that called Boston Garden home, the historical narrative traces the chronology of the building from its opening night through the early 1980s. The important role each event and team played in

building the Boston Garden brand illustrates just why Bostonians flocked to the arena, cementing its place in the annals of both the city and sports history.

Expanding upon the historical narratives of the teams and individual “Garden Legends,” chapter three examines the arena in the 1980s. This chapter primarily focuses on the various plans and attempts to either rehabilitate or redevelop the site. Replete with large amounts of fanfare and publicity, including damning testimonies from senators and retired athletes, the 80s redevelopment plans posed significant opportunities to see how Boston Garden would play a role in the expanding desire to build a “new” Boston, a notion previously associated with the city’s Urban Renewal efforts of the 1950s and 60s. These plans ultimately led to Boston Garden’s transformation into what is now the TD Garden in the mid-1990s.

Chapter four moves away from the Garden itself, focusing on the various outside factors that came into play and ultimately aided in the demise of the arena. The chapter seeks to answer the question of what was happening in the city throughout the 1980s and if those events played a part in Boston Garden’s demolition. As a result of Urban Renewal initiatives, Boston’s movers and shakers once again sought to alter the city’s landscape to aid in its desire to become modern and world class. Large scale undertakings, such as the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel project, commonly referred to as the “Big Dig,” and the Boston Redevelopment Authority’s citywide re-zoning campaign set the tone for all other development projects throughout the city at the time. All undertakings were supported by the “Massachusetts Miracle,” a regionally based economic boom. Most importantly, all of these outside factors played a significant role in the New Boston Garden Corporation’s desire to construct a “new” Garden.

The fifth chapter discusses the attempted preservation, or lack thereof, of Boston Garden, as well as the lasting impact the arena’s loss has had on the city. Boston’s proud historical tradition, including its relation to the field of historic preservation, has led to the rehabilitation and active reuse of countless properties stretching from Cambridge to Dorchester to the North End. This chapter asks the question, what were Boston’s preservationists focusing on while the Garden’s future was in peril? The chapter concludes with an historical overview of the

preservation of another historic Boston based stadium, Fenway Park. Lastly, the conclusion takes into account all of the information provided to explain the lasting impact of Boston Garden and what its loss means to the city.

The demolition of Boston Garden was just one example of stadium “updating” that has been a constant in the world of sports throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-centuries. The Garden joined the unfortunate company of Pittsburgh’s Forbes Field; New York’s Madison Square Garden III, Ebbets Field, and Polo Grounds; and Chicago’s Comiskey Park and Chicago Stadium. What sets the Garden aside from the rest, however, was its noted historic value and its location in not only one of the most historic cities in America, but also one of the most ardent sports cities in the country. Most important was the timing. All the other stadiums, aside from the two in Chicago, were demolished between 1960 and 1971; meaning they were not afforded the same level of preservation intervention as the modern sites. The demolition of Boston Garden, however, was not a failure of preservation, nor was it the cause of greedy owners. Instead, it was an amalgamation of numerous citywide initiatives and an aged, run down facility that appeared to have reached the end of its use.

# CHAPTER I

## THE NEED FOR A TWENTIETH CENTURY ARENA: THE DEVELOPMENT OF BOSTON GARDEN

Although millions of pages are dedicated to sports events every day, often overlooked are the places – the stadia, arenas, coliseums, etc. where the activities occur. In no city does that statement ring more true than in Boston, MA, where sports reign supreme in the social consciousness. And perhaps no sporting venue in Boston has soaked up more historic moments than the former Boston Garden. Constructed by the Madison Square Garden Corporation of New York City, NY in 1928, Boston Garden, originally known as the Boston Madison Square Garden, served as home to the Boston Celtics of the NBA, the Boston Bruins of the NHL, as well as various other professional and semi-professional franchises. Boston Garden also hosted numerous other events, such as political rallies and concerts, for the better part of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century. Over its 70-year lifespan, the Garden accumulated such a mystique that the opposing teams found it almost inevitable that the “Black and Gold” or the “Green” would win the game. The myth of the Garden went so far as for opposing coaches and players to believe, in basketball at least, that there were “little green men” in the arena helping the Celtics achieve victory.<sup>1</sup> This is best summed up by the Celtics’ league-best sixteen championships attained during the lifespan of the arena.

Boston Garden’s history can be traced back to the foundation of rail lines in the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century, long before the creation of the Celtics or Bruins. The creation of this historic venue most closely follows the path of three companies at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the Boston & Maine Railroad, the Boston Arena Corporation, and the Madison Square Garden Corporation. Each of these corporations plays an important role in the founding, construction, and eventual

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<sup>1</sup> Joe Fitzgerald, “How the Garden Grew,” *Courtside Magazine: The Final Game, Official Game Program & Magazine*, April 21, 1995, p. 11-12.

success of Boston Garden. These three companies eventually pass the torch on to the individual entities that helped the Garden mystique grow.

### ***The Boston & Maine Railroad***

The importance of the railroad to the economy of Boston and New England as a whole cannot be understated. Numerous railroad corporations carved out their place in the annals of the region's history, some even growing to a nationally recognized scale. One of those companies was the Boston & Maine Railroad (B&M), the largest of New England's railroad corporations.<sup>2</sup> The B&M serviced passenger and freight trains along 4,000 miles of track that connected five states – Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont, and extended into Canada.<sup>3</sup>

The Boston & Maine Railroad was officially chartered on June 27, 1835 with the intention of linking Boston, MA with Portland, ME. The original route of the company was small. Its growth occurred by acquisitions and mergers. The B&M's most important additions came at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Beginning with the acquisition of the Boston & Lowell Railroad, which stretched as far west as Keene, NH, the B&M then went on to purchase the Worcester, Nashua & Portland Railroad, which linked Worcester, MA with Portland, ME, providing another line north. This was soon followed by the acquisitions of the Northern Railroad, connecting Concord, NH to White River Junction, VT, and the Concord & Montreal. The last major acquisition of the B&M was the Fitchburg Railroad, providing access to the Hoosac Tunnel in western Massachusetts. All of these companies were acquired, or tracks leased to the Boston & Maine Railroad, between 1880 and 1900.<sup>4</sup>

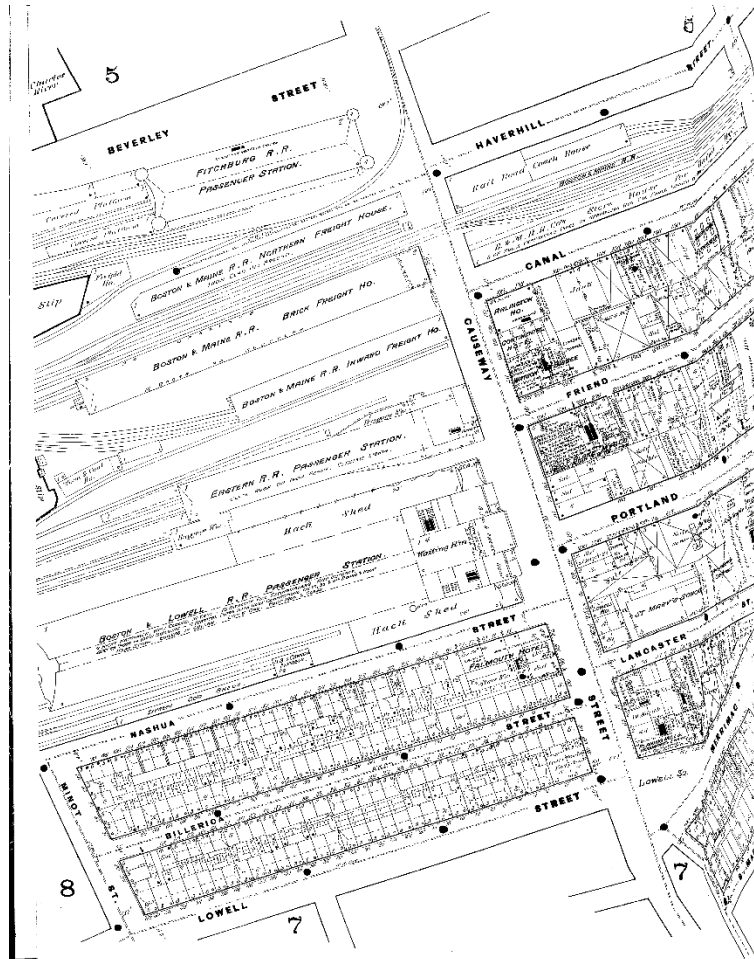
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<sup>2</sup> "Boston and Maine Railroad, The B&M," American-Rails.com, accessed Dec. 5, 2018, <https://www.american-rails.com/boston-and-maine-railroad.html>.

<sup>3</sup> "New North Station of the Boston and Maine Railroad at Boston," Boston & Maine Railroad Promotional Pamphlet, 1928.

<sup>4</sup> "Boston and Maine Railroad, The B&M," American-Rails.com, accessed Dec. 5, 2018, <https://www.american-rails.com/boston-and-maine-railroad.html>.

Boston's Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show that the Boston & Maine Railroad owned land on Causeway Street as early as 1885. The map below shows that B&M did not offer passenger service on the site, although the Fitchburg and Boston & Lowell companies did.



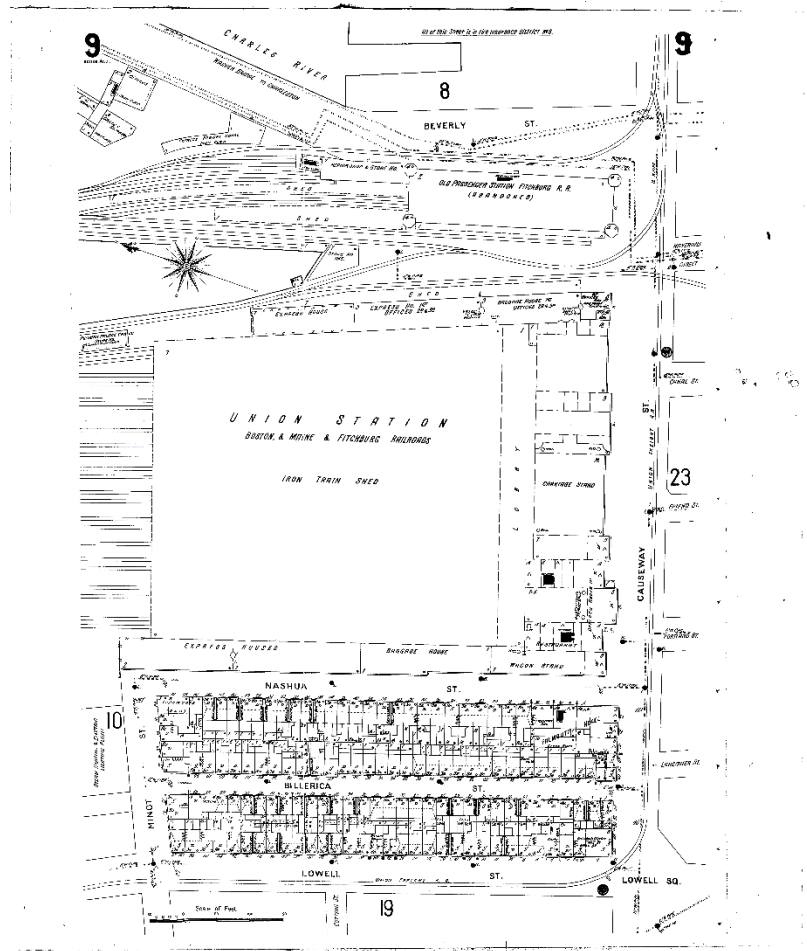
**Figure 1: 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map**

*Causeway St. has historically been the home to numerous rail companies. Boston & Maine's territory in the North End was originally flanked by that of the Fitchburg Railroad and Boston & Lowell, two companies B&M would later acquire.*

*Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*

By 1895, the Boston & Maine Railroad had grown large enough to warrant the construction of a larger facility on Causeway Street. In 1893, B&M's Union Station opened to passenger service, as seen in the following Sanborn Map. The station was known locally as North Station.





**Figure 2: 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map**

In 1893, B&M opened their first passenger station on Causeway St. North Station, properly titled as Union Station, remained until a new North Station, complete with an arena above, was built in 1928. The title Union Station refers to union between the B&M and Fitchburg Railroad, which was not fully acquired by B&M until 1900.

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

The Boston & Maine Railroad maintained its status as New England's premiere rail line into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Over 24-million passengers annually passed through North Station, while over 300 trains brought people and freight throughout New England, New York, and north to Montreal.<sup>5</sup> After World War II, however, the Boston & Maine's business dwindled.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "New North Station of the Boston and Maine Railroad at Boston," Boston & Maine Railroad Promotional Pamphlet, 1928.

<sup>6</sup> "Boston and Maine Railroad, The B&M," American-Rails.com, accessed Dec. 5, 2018, <https://www.american-rails.com/boston-and-maine-railroad.html>.

### ***The Boston Arena Corporation***

The popularity of winter sports in New England, such as ice hockey, ice skating, skiing, and curling, was well established by the early-20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1924, *Harper's Bazaar* went so far as to refer to the region as America's Winter Playground, playfully mocking New England's "America's Summer Playground" advertising moniker.<sup>7</sup> Fifteen years before *Harper's Bazaar* declared the region a sports haven, developers and sports enthusiasts sought to expand New England's winter sports market by creating the region's first indoor ice skating rink. With the groundbreaking ceremony at 3:30 pm, on October 11, 1909, the construction of Boston Arena was underway.<sup>8</sup> Boston Arena was designed to be the largest under-cover ice rink in the United States, set to house ice sports, such as ice hockey, curling, and ice skating.<sup>9</sup> The Arena officially opened on April 16, 1910 without much fanfare or any major celebratory ceremony. Instead, an ice show officially welcomed Bostonians to the world of indoor winter sports.<sup>10</sup> Designed by Funk and Wilcox Company architects, the arena covered more than 51,000 square feet at the time of its completion on St. Botolph Street in Boston's Back Bay.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "Winter Sports in New England," *Harper's Bazaar*, Vol. 57, Issue 2546, Dec. 1924, p. 42.

<sup>8</sup> "New Rink Designed: Work on Boston Arena, St Botolph St. Begins Next Monday," *Boston Daily Globe*, Oct. 9, 1909.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Katy Fitzpatrick, "New Season Brings Renovated Arena for Northeastern," USCHO.com, Oct. 2, 2009, accessed Feb. 27, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20100109213027/http://www.uscho.com/news/college-hockey/id%2C17170/NUHuskieslookingforwardtorenovatedArenanewseason.html>.

<sup>11</sup> "Hockey Teams to Use New Rink: Boston Arena, Now Nearing Completion, Will Have Immense Ice-Surface and Seats for 5000," *Boston Daily Globe*, Jan. 17, 1910.



**Figure 3: Boston Arena Postcard**

*The Funk and Wilcox designed Boston Arena was Boston's first indoor ice arena, opening in 1910. After various renovations, the Arena remains on St. Botolph Street today, as Northeastern University's Matthews Arena.*  
*Source: From the Author's collection*

Perhaps more impressive than Boston Arena's size was the building's plumbing system, providing the state of the art technology, that was essential to the rink's freezing process. 55,860 lineal feet of 1 ¾-inch pipe, laid out in 77 sections were placed in the Arena to control the process.<sup>12</sup>

Ice at the Arena will be formed by the direct ammonia expansion system. Ammonia is compressed and then expended in coils submerged in tanks of brine composed of chloride of calcium solution. This is all done in the engineering building shut off from the main building, obviating all danger of fumes reaching the audience. From the tanks the brine is pumped through a long series of pipes in the "pit," over which is formed the ice surface, at a temperature of from 6 to 10 degrees, Fahrenheit.<sup>13</sup>

The idea of a permanently frozen rink was still a relatively young one; the first artificially frozen ice rink was The Glaciarium in Chelsea, England in 1876.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "Building to Be Pushed: Skating and Curling Under Cover Will Be Possible in Boston Within a Short Time," *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 29, 1909.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> "The Manchester Real Ice Skating Rink Company," Rusholme & Victoria Park Archive, accessed Nov. 5, 2018. <http://rusholmearchive.org/ice-skating-in-rusholme>.

Construction of Boston Arena began with the adjoining engineering plant, followed by the main arena and the head house. Heating and ventilation were also incorporated into the Arena's original design. The engineering plant provided all the electricity for the new venue.<sup>15</sup> Aside from the engineering marvels, Boston Arena's most interesting aspect was its Spanish-inspired arched entrance, flanked by twin towers stretching over 50 feet high (seen in Figure 3 above). These remained but were later covered by a basic brick façade. Those who passed through the entrance found an equally impressive ornate, colorful Victorian-inspired lobby behind it.



**Figure 4: Boston Arena Façade**

*The original, ornate Funk & Wilcox designed arched entrance to Boston Arena was covered by this simple brick façade in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Renovations made during Northeastern University's ownership, uncovered the original arch, incorporating it into the new design.*

*Source: "Matthews Arena," Massachusetts Historical Commission, MACRIS Inventory Form*

Predating, though often paralleling Boston Garden's historical and cultural legacy, much of Boston Arena's impact lies in its relation to the world of sports. The Arena hosted events at

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<sup>15</sup> "Building to Be Pushed," *Boston Daily Globe*.

the high school, collegiate, semi-professional, and professional levels in a myriad of different sports, such as track, boxing, basketball, ice skating, curling, and ice hockey. On Dec. 1, 1924, the Boston Bruins made their NHL debut at the Arena, defeating the Montreal Maroons 2-1.<sup>16</sup> On Nov. 5, 1946, the Arena hosted the first-ever game of the Boston Celtics, then a member of the newly formed Basketball Association of America.<sup>17</sup>

The Boston Arena also served as the original home for one of the city's most important, and historic, sporting events: the Beanpot. The first Beanpot Hockey Tournament, a competition between Harvard, Boston College, Northeastern, and Boston University to determine the best hockey team in Boston, took place at the arena between December 26 and 28, 1952.<sup>18</sup> Harvard's victory marked the only time the tournament was held in the Arena;<sup>19</sup> no tournament was held in 1953, and from 1954 on the Beanpot was held in Boston Garden, a tradition that continued throughout the remainder of the Garden's life.<sup>20</sup>

Boston Arena furthered its legendary position by also hosting non-winter sports related events. Most prominently were the scheduled fights involving boxing legends, such as Jack Dempsey, Gene Tunney, Joe Lewis, and Boston native Jack Sharkey, at a time when boxing was one of the most profitable and publicized sporting events.<sup>21</sup>

### ***The Madison Square Garden Corporation***

The Boston & Maine Railroad's history and the establishment of the Boston Arena provide only part of the early history of the Boston Garden. The third piece to the story is provided by the Madison Square Garden Corporation and the role "Tex" Rickard, the ambitious

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<sup>16</sup> Julian Benbow, "No. 1 Michigan State Pays a Visit to Historic Matthews Arena," *The Boston Globe*, Dec. 18, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Jack Barry, "Stags Nose Out Celtics 57-55 in Hoop Opener," *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 6, 1946.

<sup>18</sup> Leonard M. Fowle, "Bean Pot Tourney: B.U. Faces Huskies, Harvard Plays B.C." *Boston Daily Globe*, Dec. 26, 1952.

<sup>19</sup> Leonard M. Fowle, "Harvard Sextet Beats B.U., 7-4; Wins Bean Pot Hockey Finale," *Boston Daily Globe*, Dec. 28, 1952.

<sup>20</sup> Bob Holbrook, "Hockey, Basket Ball, Track Opens Busy Sports Week at Garden: Bean Pot Hockey Tourney Tonight," *Boston Daily Globe*, Jan. 11, 1954.

<sup>21</sup> "Matthews Arena Summary and History," Northeastern University, accessed Nov. 5, 2018. <https://nuhuskies.com/sports/2010/1/28/matthewsarena.aspx>.

and eccentric boxing promotor, played in the rise of the arena industry. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, New York was a Boxing Mecca. Rickard knew that “the man who controlled the largest arena in the east would control the promotion of every great sporting spectacle to come.” Madison Square Garden was that arena, and controlling it meant millions.<sup>22</sup>

In his youth, Rickard wound his way through various jobs, including ranch hand and Texas marshal. In 1895, Rickard left the southwest to take part in the Alaskan Gold Rush.<sup>23</sup> It was on his trip north that he gained his nickname, when a sailor on the steamship from Seattle to Alaska called him “Tex,” which members of a theatre troupe onboard then began to use, causing the name to stick.<sup>24</sup> Rickard was unsuccessful as a prospector, but very successful in the gambling industry. First working in a gambling shack in Circle City, Alaska, and later owning a chain of gambling houses in Alaska, California, and Nevada, he became very wealthy.<sup>25</sup>



**Figure 5: George "Tex" Rickard (left) seen with good friend and boxing legend Jack Dempsey (right).**

Source: Jones, Leslie. "Jack Dempsey and promotor Tex Rickard." Photograph. 1917. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/b56456947> (accessed February 19, 2019)

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<sup>22</sup> Colleen Aycock and Mark Scott, *Tex Rickard: Boxing's Greatest Promoter* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland Press, 2012), p. 118.

<sup>23</sup> Chad S. Seifried and Ari de Wilde, "Building the Garden and Making Arena Sports Big Time: 'Tex' Rickard and His Legacy in Sports Marketing," *The Journal of Macromarketing*, Vol. 34 Issue 4, Dec. 1, 2014, p. 454.

<sup>24</sup> "Rickard Gained Nickname in Gold Rush," *New York Times*, Jan. 7, 1929.

<sup>25</sup> Seifried, "Building the Garden," p. 454.

Rickard's eventual destiny at MSG really began during his time in Nevada. Tex, having recently visited New York's Madison Square Garden II to attend a boxing match, saw the draw of the sport as an opportunity to bring money to towns out west. Rickard staged a fight in Goldfield, NV, at the time the largest city in Nevada, to show off his skills in promoting, using two strategies, one of which became a standard in boxing. He awarded the fighters a purse of \$30,000, presented in \$20 gold bars. Tex had recalled a postcard from bankers in Nome, AK that featured gold bars as an enticement to bring people to the city. He successfully used the same trick to bring the boxers to the remote Nevada town.<sup>26</sup> Rickard then turned to promoting the fight itself. He incorporated a second idea into the Goldfield fight that he would continue to utilize throughout the remainder of his career, enticing female audiences. Tex recognized the additional money generated by females, as well as the positive press that was associated with their inclusion.<sup>27</sup> The Goldfield fight, dubbed "The Great Fight of the Century," exceeded all expectations. Following the three-hour match, fought in over 100-degree heat, both Rickard and the sport of boxing were thrust into the national spotlight.<sup>28</sup>

In 1920, Rickard and others, including John Ringling of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, purchased the rights to operate Madison Square Garden from the owner, New York Life Insurance Company. Tex believed he could promote a number of events, including boxing, which he saw as the main event, and the budding sport of ice hockey.<sup>29</sup> He signed a 10-year lease with New York Life, soon becoming the first to make operations at the arena consistently profitable, using a steady flow of events throughout the year, such as the circus, rodeos, bicycle races, horse shows, and of course boxing.<sup>30</sup>

In May of 1924, the New York Life Insurance Company notified Rickard and Ringling that their lease was being cut short. New York Life decided to demolish MSG to build a commercial building in its place. On May 6, 1925 the wrecking ball hit the "Old MSG," and

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<sup>26</sup> Aycock, *Tex Rickard*, p. 38-79.

<sup>27</sup> Seifried, "Building the Garden," p. 454.

<sup>28</sup> Aycock, *Tex Rickard*, p. 74-75.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 155.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 157.



newspapers eulogized the downfall of the historic Diana statue, perched atop its tower.<sup>31</sup>

Insistent upon continuing his dream of controlling promotional events in the eastern seaboard's largest city, Rickard and Ringling set out to build a new MSG, one that would surpass the old in every way. What he accomplished with the third iteration of Madison Square Garden, which was no longer located at Madison Square, but instead at 49<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, became a haven for athletes and sports enthusiasts alike. The 18,000 seat arena cost a total of \$5.6 million, and featured a six-day bicycle race as its opening attraction on Nov. 24, 1925. Rickard, as well as architect Thomas W. Lamb, designed Madison Square Garden III as a house for boxing that could also accommodate hockey, basketball, track, and various conventions.<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 6: Madison Square Garden Postcard**

*The success of the third iteration of Madison Square Garden sparked Tex Rickard's dream in developing a national chain of Madison Square Garden's similar in nature to the theater chains that had grown throughout the 1910s and 1920s.*

Source: "Madison Square Garden 1879-1968, [nycurbanism.com](http://nycurbanism.com), accessed 2/19/19.

<https://www.nycurbanism.com/new-blog/msg/>.

The decision to hire Thomas Lamb to design the grand arena was not done by accident.

The famed theater and movie palace architect had already designed numerous auditoriums

<sup>31</sup> Aycock, *Tex Rickard*, p. 158-161.

<sup>32</sup> "History of Madison Square Garden," New York Rangers, accessed Nov. 7, 2018.  
<https://www.nhl.com/rangers/team/history-of-madison-square-garden>.



throughout New York, New England and the rest of the country by 1925, including the historic Mark Strand Theatre on Broadway (built 1914).<sup>33</sup> His knowledge of acoustics, seating arrangements, and site lines, would have been extremely valuable assets to Rickard, who desired to give his audiences the best possible experience. Lamb's exterior design (as seen in Figure 6 above) was not unlike his theaters. The extravagant entrances and marquees, which appear to be more appropriate for a classically designed theater as opposed to the modern structure he designed, were perhaps the most telling reminders of his prominence in the theatrical sector. Retaining the services of Lamb to design the 25,000-seat arena, would not be the last time Tex ventured into the theater world for one of his stadiums.

The founding of the new MSG, coincided with the creation of the Madison Square Garden Corporation (MSGC). The company, funded by what Tex referred to as his "600 millionaires," not only helped fund the construction of Madison Square Garden, but also its day-to-day operations. Allen A. Weck, of Allen A. Weck & Company, headed MSGC, while Rickard maintained a twenty-year lease on the building, and received an annual salary of \$30,000 to fill the arena.<sup>34</sup> His first major achievement was securing an NHL franchise for MSG. The New York Americans were the first hockey team in New York City to use the arena, having been awarded their franchise in the 1925-1926 NHL season.<sup>35</sup> Following the success of the Americans at MSG, Rickard believed the city and stadium could support a second team.<sup>36</sup> "Tex's Rangers," officially titled the New York Rangers, played their first game at the arena on November 16, 1926.<sup>37</sup>

Never one to sit idly by, with the completion of his "monument," Tex sought to expand his empire.<sup>38</sup> After achieving his dream and attaining the rights to MSG, Rickard sought to

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<sup>33</sup> "Rickard Enlarges New Garden Site," *New York Times*, June 20, 1924.

<sup>34</sup> Aycock, *Tex Rickard*, p. 166.

<sup>35</sup> Eric Zweig, *Art Ross – The Hockey Legend Who Built the Bruins* (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Dundurn Press, 2015), p. 181.

<sup>36</sup> Seifried, "Building the Garden," p. 463.

<sup>37</sup> "1926-27 New York Rangers Schedule and Results," Hockey Reference, accessed Nov. 7, 2018. [https://www.hockey-reference.com/teams/NYR/1927\\_games.html](https://www.hockey-reference.com/teams/NYR/1927_games.html).

<sup>38</sup> Aycock, *Tex Rickard*, p. 153.

develop a network of Madison Square Gardens across the nation.<sup>39</sup> Tex knew precisely where to look for his first franchise location, Boston, Massachusetts.

### ***The Development of Boston Garden***

The original Boston & Maine Union Station on Causeway Street was built in 1893 as a temporary, “make-shift” terminal intended for just ten years of service. The old North Station, however, remained on Causeway Street well beyond its tenth year due to financial difficulties at B&M.<sup>40</sup> Thirty-five years after construction, Boston & Maine’s Union Station finally saw the end to its temporary status as plans for a “new” North Station began.<sup>41</sup>



**Figure 7: Boston & Maine Railroad Union Station**

*The “temporary” 1893 B&M Union Station was originally slated to stand for ten years, while funding for a permanent station was raised. As a result of financial difficulties the station remained on Causeway Street until 1928.*

*Source: Marr, Thomas E., -1910. "Union Station." Photograph. 1884. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/9593vd43k> (accessed February 19, 2019)*

One of the first plans for a new station came from Boston-based landscape architect Charles W. Eliot II in 1925. Eliot was also a city planning consultant and the grandson of the noted Harvard University president of the same name. His scheme involved creating a thoroughfare to relieve traffic tensions in the area caused by railroad transportation problems.

<sup>39</sup> Seifried, “Building the Garden,” p. 464.

<sup>40</sup> “New North Station Only Part of Plan,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Feb. 19, 1927.

<sup>41</sup> “Old North Station Famous Landmark in Railroading,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 20, 1927.

The idea was presented during a hearing at the State House, and required the relocation of North Station across the Charles River. The Eliot Plan obviously never passed its planning stages.<sup>42</sup>

Further plans to develop a “modern terminal” began in earnest in early 1927. The decision to build the station “together with a big modern hotel, on the site of the present North Station” was announced in February 1927 by the Metropolitan Planning Division chairman, Henry I. Harriman.<sup>43</sup> He discussed the plans with the State Legislative Committee on Ways and Means in support of a bill that would authorize the City of Boston to borrow money for the construction of a new road, which would connect the Charles River Dam to Causeway Street, and widen that thoroughfare.<sup>44</sup> In November 1927, the B&M Railroad announced its plans to build a new North Station on its present site, facing a widened Causeway Street, that included a convention center/sports arena above it, with a new hotel to the west and an office building to its east. The project was estimated to cost \$10,000,000 to complete.<sup>45</sup>

Development of North Station-Boston Garden has been attributed to many people, including Homer Loring of the Boston & Maine Railroad, George C. Funk of Funk & Wilcox, and of course Tex Rickard. James M. Walsh, unlike the other three, is a name that is rarely, if ever, discussed in relation to the building. Walsh, a Boston born real-estate developer, examined the area surrounding North Station in 1927 and quipped to himself, “Here is a chance for the Boston & Maine to build a fine new station, a hotel and an auditorium.”<sup>46</sup> Mr. Walsh believed that the location of North Station and accessibility to the station provided an ideal opportunity for the railroad company to invest in the new hybrid complex. As he put it, “It would be instantly accessible to persons getting off Boston & Maine trains.... People could leave their homes in the suburbs after supper, come down on special trains, sit in the auditorium at the North

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<sup>42</sup> “Plan of Charles W. Eliot 2D to Relocate North Station,” *Boston Daily Globe*, March 10, 1925.

<sup>43</sup> “New North Station with Large Hotel Planned,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Feb. 18, 1927.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> “B&M. To Spend \$10,000,000 on New North Station,” Special from the Boston News Bureau, *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 16, 1927.

<sup>46</sup> “Walsh of the North Station No Mystery: Real Estate Man Says He Sold Improvement Idea to B. & M. and Interested New Yorkers,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Feb. 7, 1928.

Station with their friends and go home on special trains. It looks like a sound idea.”<sup>47</sup> The most important part to Walsh’s development idea was summed up even more simply, “There’s money in it for the railroad.”<sup>48</sup>

James Walsh’s importance to the construction and development of North Station-Boston Garden cannot be understated. If not for him, the Boston & Maine Railroad might have only built a new train station, and not the arena and hotel, which he accomplished by persuading the company to use the station’s air rights.<sup>49</sup> Hypotheticals aside, Walsh’s greatest impacts may very well be his decision to seek external help by hiring George C. Funk of Funk & Wilcox to draw up a tentative plan of the new station with the auditorium and a hotel to be presented to B&M officials.<sup>50</sup> Walsh also decided to contact Tex Rickard of the Madison Square Garden Corporation to see if he would be interested in leasing out the arena. Rickard was already interested in Boston as a potential MSG site and he went so far as to contact various hotel companies to gauge their interest in running the hotel upon its completion.<sup>51</sup> James Walsh may have started out as the “mystery man” who sold the North Station improvement plan to B&M, but he unfortunately turned into the “forgotten man,” whose impact on the stadium’s development has fallen by the wayside. Despite his overlooked stature, Walsh remains an important player in the history of the Garden’s completion.<sup>52</sup>

Following the initial development stages of the new North Station, B&M officials were able to move into the design and construction phases. For the design of the station, B&M retained the services of George Funk and the Funk & Wilcox Company. George C. Funk and Fredric S. Wilcox, both graduates of Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s architecture department, were primarily known for their designs of various commercial and apartment

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<sup>47</sup> “Walsh of the North Station No Mystery: Real Estate Man Says He Sold Improvement Idea to B. & M. and Interested New Yorkers,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Feb. 7, 1928.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> W.E. Belcher, “Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum,” *Engineering News-Record*, Vol. 102, No. 9, Feb. 28, 1929, p. 339.

<sup>50</sup> “Walsh of the North Station No Mystery,” *Boston Daily Globe*.

<sup>51</sup> “Rickard Here to Seek Arena Site,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 7, 1927.

<sup>52</sup> “Walsh of the North Station No Mystery,” *Boston Daily Globe*.

buildings throughout the Boston area.<sup>53</sup> The pair, much like Thomas Lamb, were also known for their work in theater design. Having built theaters throughout Massachusetts, such as the Somerville Theatre in neighboring Somerville (built 1914, placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990),<sup>54</sup> the Strand Theatre (1917) in Lowell, MA, a second Strand Theatre in the Upham's Corner (1918) section of Boston's Dorchester neighborhood, the Ware Theatre (1920) in Beverly, MA, and a third Strand Theatre (1920) in Belmont, MA,<sup>55</sup> Funk and Wilcox would have had a strong familiarity with acoustics, site lines, and auditorium design standards. The two also had previous experience designing an arena, having drafted the plans for Boston Arena in 1910. Noted railway station architects Fellheimer and Wagner, designers of Buffalo's Central Terminal, Cincinnati's Union Terminal, and Springfield, MA's Union Station, were brought on as associate architects.<sup>56</sup>



**Figure 8: 2019 View of Somerville Theatre**

*The 1914, Funk & Wilcox designed Somerville Theatre located in Somerville's Davis Square displays the architects' Moderne/Neo-Classical style which is present in a great deal of their surviving buildings.*

*Photo courtesy Sarah LaFlash*

<sup>53</sup> Funk, who graduated with honors from MIT in 1905, went on to design various other arenas during his time partnered with Wilcox. These included the Wonderland Greyhound Park in Revere, MA (1935), the Epsom Downs racing post in England, and arenas in Paris, France and Buenos Aires, Argentina. "George C. Funk: Revere Racing Director was Noted Architect," *Boston Daily Globe*, June 14, 1949.

<sup>54</sup> "Somerville Theatre, Registration Form," National Register of Historic Places, Entered in the National Register Jan. 26, 1990.

<sup>55</sup> "Strand Theatre Block, MACRIS Inventory Form," Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information Service Inventory, No. BLM.1028, Jan. 17, 2003.

<sup>56</sup> Linda Oliphant Stanford, "Railway Designs by Fellheimer and Wagner, New York to Cincinnati," *Queen City Heritage*, Fall 1985, p. 23.

Tex Rickard also played a role in the design of the stadium. Rickard desired to build upon his MSG designs and have the stadium built specifically for boxing. In order to do so, he petitioned that the seats, even those in the balcony sections, be as close to the center of the arena as possible, so that the fans could “see the sweat on the boxers’ brows.”<sup>57</sup> Even though Rickard would have no way of knowing that the stadium would come to be dominated by hockey and basketball fans, his design input gave Boston Garden one of its most endearing qualities.

The *Engineering News-Record* reported upon completion of the station that the work had been done without any major incident or accident.<sup>58</sup> That may have been the case in construction, but there was a legal issue that occurred throughout the first few months of 1928. Late in December 1927, B&M stockholder Edmund D. Codman of Boston filed an injunction against the Boston & Maine Railroad and their construction of the new North Station.<sup>59</sup> It was Codman’s belief that the new arena violated the B&M charter by constructing more than just a train station. Codman and his lawyer, Conrad W. Cooker, argued that the costs of constructing the arena and hotel were not the responsibility of the company, and they should simply build the station.<sup>60</sup> Although the injunction hearings did not interfere with the construction of the Garden, they did pose as a serious threat and pushed forward a vote in the Massachusetts legislature to allow for the construction of the station and arena.<sup>61</sup>

Demolition of the old, temporary B&M Union Station occurred concurrently with the construction of the new terminal.<sup>62</sup> Construction of the new building was undertaken by the firm of Dwight P. Robinson & Company Inc., with W.J. Backes serving as chief engineer.<sup>63</sup> North Station opened to the public on November 15, 1928 in a ceremony that included President Calvin Coolidge, former President of the Massachusetts State Senate, turning the lights of the building

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<sup>57</sup> Stewart F. Richardson and Richard J. LeBlanc, *Dit: Dit Clapper and the Rise of the Boston Bruins* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), p. 54

<sup>58</sup> Belcher, “Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum,” p. 344.

<sup>59</sup> “Asks Court Stop Building of Arena,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Dec. 20, 1927.

<sup>60</sup> “Holds \$3,000,000 Reasonable Cost,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Jan. 24, 1928.

<sup>61</sup> “House Passes North Station Arena Bill,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Feb. 28, 1928.

<sup>62</sup> “New RR. Station Going Up as the Old is Coming Down,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Dec. 6, 1927.

<sup>63</sup> Belcher, “Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum,” p. 344.

on by a switch from Washington D.C.<sup>64</sup> Train service began with the “Line of the Minute Man,” which travelled west, connecting Boston to Troy, NY.<sup>65</sup>



**Figure 9: North Station-Boston Garden and North Station Industrial Building Under Construction**  
Construction on Boston Garden began in 1927, followed shortly thereafter by construction on the North Station Industrial Building (seen to the right) and finally the Hotel Manger (not pictured).  
Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum

Two days later, the Boston Garden opened. Prior to the event, it was announced on October 31, 1928 that the arena above North Station was to be named Boston Garden, shortened from Boston Madison Square Garden, in honor of its parent company in New York who attained the lease to the stadium.<sup>66</sup> The opening night ceremonies took place on November 17, in an event the *Boston Globe* declared “unparalleled in sporting history.”<sup>67</sup> The opening ceremony began with a somber performance of “Taps,” honoring the dead soldiers of America’s past wars, and the singing of the National Anthem by Jessica Schwartz Morse of the Chicago Civic Opera Company. The ceremony also included a theatrical performance of trumpets and rifle firing from the Crosscup-Pishon American Legion Post, a greeting from Massachusetts’ Secretary of State Frederic W. Cook, representing Governor Alvan T. Fuller, a presentation of flowers to

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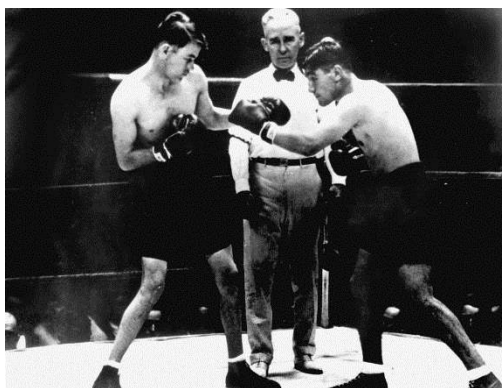
<sup>64</sup> “Coolidge Opens North Station,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 15, 1928.

<sup>65</sup> “New North Station of the Boston and Maine Railroad at Boston,” Boston & Maine Railroad Promotional Pamphlet, 1928.

<sup>66</sup> “Name New Arena Boston Garden,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 1, 1928.

<sup>67</sup> “Throng Opens Boston Garden,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 18, 1928.

Garden operators, and other musical and oratory performances.<sup>68</sup> The main event of the night was a showcase of the arena's original purpose (seen right). An unofficial title bout between Dick "Honey-Boy" Finnegan, a local fighter from Dorchester, and featherweight champion Andrè Routis, of France; Honey-Boy won the 10 round fight in a unanimous decision, cementing his place in Boston sports history.<sup>69</sup> The Garden complex was completed with the constructions and openings of the North Station Industrial Building at 150 Causeway Street on February 2, 1929,<sup>70</sup> and the Hotel Manger on August 30, 1930.<sup>71</sup> The Hotel Manger would later change hands and become the Hotel Madison, its most commonly used name.



***Figure 10: Local fighter "Honey-Boy" Finnegan defeated featherweight champion Andrè Routis to officially open Boston Garden on Nov. 17, 1928.***

*Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Frances J. Connolly, "Honey of a Fighter," in *A History of Boston Garden: A Diamond Jubilee, 1928-1988* (Boston: Boston Phoenix Inc.), p. 15.

<sup>70</sup> "Open North Station Industrial Building," *Boston Daily Globe*, Feb. 2, 1929.

<sup>71</sup> "New Hotel Manger Opens Its Doors to Public," *Boston Daily Globe*, Aug. 31, 1930.





**Figure 11: 1930 Aerial Photograph of Boston Garden Complex**

*This 1930 aerial photograph shows the completed Boston Garden Complex with North Station-Boston Garden at center alongside the Hotel Manger (left) and North Station Industrial Building (right).*

*Source: Fairchild Aerial Surveys, Inc. "North Station. Boston and Main [sic] Railroad." Photograph. 1930.*

*Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/6h4410681> (accessed February 19, 2019)*

### ***The Materiality and Layout of North Station-Boston Garden***

Boston & Maine's North Station was described in its promotional brochure as an "imposing" example of "modern American architecture, solid in proportions, simple in detail... [and] a major convenience for the public."<sup>72</sup> The mixed-used property certainly stood out among other contemporary Boston buildings. Stretching nearly 440 feet along Causeway Street with a depth of 170 feet from the curb line on Causeway Street to the stations train gates, North Station's size alone made the building an imposing one.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Stanford, "Railway Designs by Fellheimer and Wagner, New York to Cincinnati," p. 10.

<sup>73</sup> Belcher, "Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum," p. 339.



**Figure 12: Ca. 1930-1945 North Station, Boston, Mass Postcard**

*This postcard details the main façade of the station, as well as its connection to the adjacent Hotel Manger.*

*Source: "North Station, Boston, Mass." Card. Tichnor Bros. Inc., Boston, Mass., 1930. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/0p096w54b> (accessed February 19, 2019)*



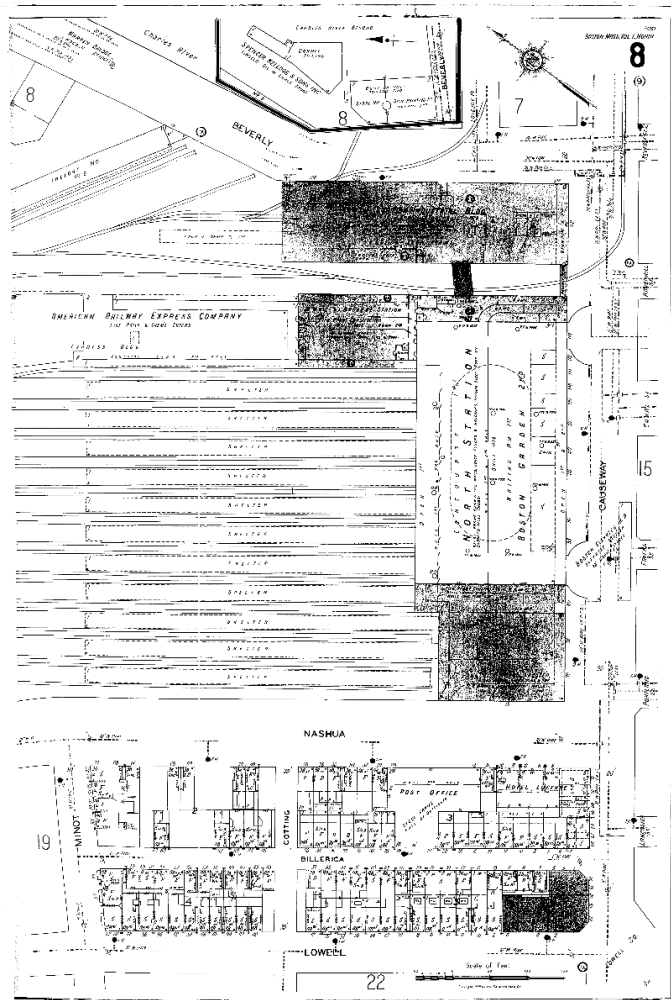
**Figure 13: 1929 Aerial Photograph of North Station-Boston Garden**

*This 1929 Aerial view of North Station-Boston Garden shows the Boston Garden complex before the completion of the Hotel Manger in 1930. It also displays Funk & Wilcox's Art Deco façade with the iconic North Station Boston Garden signage above.*

*Source: Aero Scenic Airviews Co. (Boston, Mass.). "Boston Gardens, North Station. From 800 feet." Photograph. 1929. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/9593vd276> (accessed February 19, 2019)*

Site design of North Station-Boston Garden was important. The 1927 Metropolitan Planning Division plans for the area called for the demolition of the old North Station, and the city's acquisition of land from B&M to increase the width of the streets surrounding the property. Thirty-five feet was added to the width of Causeway Street, while 52 feet was added to

Nashua St. This increased both streets to the size of 110 feet x 92 feet, including sidewalks.<sup>74</sup> Improvement was needed because any new station would increase traffic to that section of North Boston, and traffic in that area was already an issue.<sup>75</sup> The increased width of Causeway Street also improved the design of North Station. In order to accommodate the drop-off for passengers, Funk & Wilcox incorporated an arcaded front, covering the sidewalk of the Causeway Street façade.



**Figure 14: 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of North Station-Boston Garden**

This Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the drastic changes seen on Causeway Street following the completion of the new station/arena. Also noticeable is the ramp connecting North Station to the North Station Industrial Building, highlighted in black. The ramp was a noteworthy feature of the complex due to its use by the circus, allowing for the elephants and other animals to enter the adjacent Garden.

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

<sup>74</sup> Belcher, "Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum," p. 339.

<sup>75</sup> "Plan of Charles W. Eliot 2D to Relocate North Station," *Boston Daily Globe*.

The height and weight of the building required considerable attention to the foundation. The steel frame, brick building was built on a new base that utilized parts of the existing foundation from the old North Station. Although the wood piles used as the foundation of the 1893 station were found to be in excellent condition, the size of the new terminal required concrete piles with cast-iron bases.<sup>76</sup>

During the design process the building was specified under Boston Building Code as an Assembly Hall.<sup>77</sup> The specification signified to the engineers the precise parameters a building of that style and size would need to follow. Nearly 4,000 tons of structural steel were required to construct the station and arena. While 15,000 cubic yards of concrete was poured, 1,518 concrete piles built, and 600,000 bricks used along the exterior.<sup>78</sup>

Acoustical Engineer Clifford M. Swan provided a careful study during the design stages to aid in the construction of the building's roof. Desiring a roof that would act as a sound-deadening element and allow for the use of the arena for various types of entertainment, the final design utilized a 1" thick layer of Excelsior Board, also known as Wood Wool, a product made of wood cells and used for sound and thermal insulation. The excelsior material was chemically treated to be fireproof. Above the Excelsior Board was a 2 ½" thick reinforced gypsum slab, covered by asbestos roofing material.<sup>79</sup> Studies into architectural acoustics were still relatively young by the time of Boston Garden's construction. By the 1920s, the scientific studies had produced a large number of materials and systems used in the building process.<sup>80</sup> Although Excelsior Board was more popular in Europe than it was in the United States, the product saw a large increase in production in the 1930s.<sup>81</sup> It provided yet another state-of-the-art feature to the coliseum.

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<sup>76</sup> Belcher, "Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum," p. 340.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p. 341.

<sup>78</sup> "Throng Opens Boston Garden," *Boston Daily Globe*.

<sup>79</sup> Belcher, "Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum," p. 343.

<sup>80</sup> Anne E. Weber, "Acoustical Materials," in *Twentieth-Century Building Materials: History and Conservation*, ed. Thomas C. Jester (McGraw-Hill Companies: Washington D.C., 1995), p. 262-264.

<sup>81</sup> Mike Botting, "New Strands to the Wood Wool Story," *Wood Based Panels International*, June 1997.

The Causeway Street façade was the most ornate portion of the exterior. At the ground level, an arcaded sidewalk welcomed patrons into the station. The seven arches showcased the exterior's use of buff brick and its Art Deco ornamentations. The arches were supported by brick pillars that stood on a Vermont granite base. The interior of the arcade also featured the same buff brick as the exterior, along with Vermont marble and a domed ceiling finished in a light buff stucco. Ornamental lighting fixtures illuminated the arcade.<sup>82</sup>

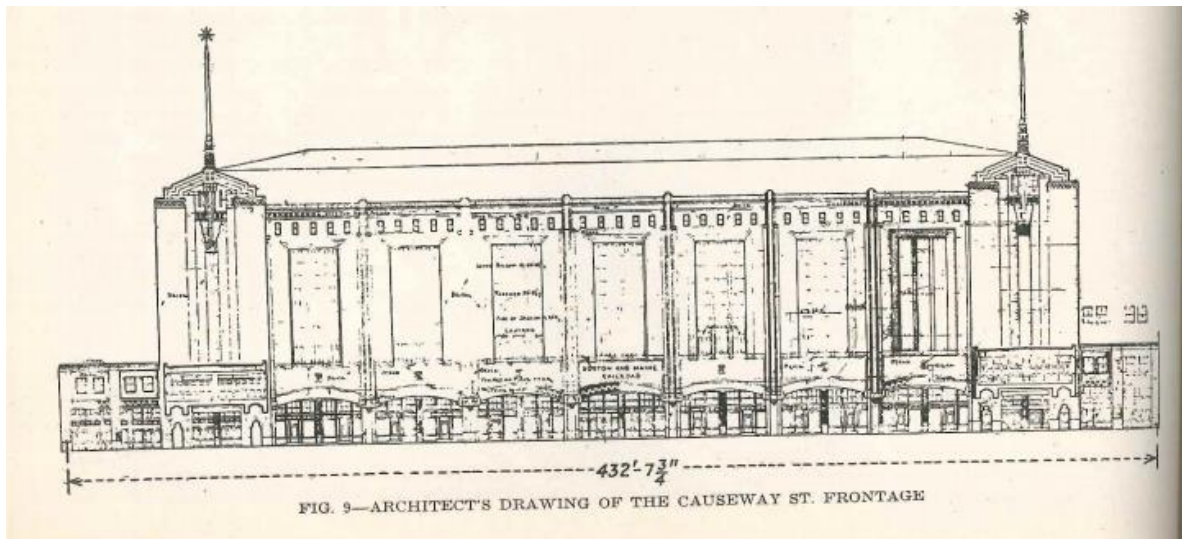
Along with the arcaded sidewalk, Art Deco designs dominated the brickwork seen on the two identical towers that flanked the building, accented by the seven tall window sections located above the arcade. Three 40-foot-wide entryways welcomed passengers and sports fans into the station. Two of the entrances were located at the base of the towers, while the third was at the center of the arcade.<sup>83</sup> At the top of the center portion was a simple cornice. In the early years of the arena, the right hand side of the center portion housed the iconic North Station-Boston Garden sign, which lit up and indicated the night's event. This sign was replaced by 1965 with a billboard, which memorably featured an advertisement for Budweiser. The North Station-Boston Garden sign was relegated to the cornice, just below the billboard. The architectural drawing below and photographs of the Causeway Street façade displays these various aspects.

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<sup>82</sup> "Boston Gets First Glimpse of Arcaded Front of Boston & Maine's New North Station," *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 5, 1928.

<sup>83</sup> "New North Station of the Boston and Maine Railroad at Boston," Boston & Maine Railroad Promotional Pamphlet, 1928.





**Figure 15: Architect's Drawing of Causeway Street Main Façade**

Source: "Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum," *Engineering News Record*, Feb. 28, 1929



**Figure 16: 1929 Night View of North Station-Boston Garden**

The North Station-Boston Garden sign, seen here in 1929 stood above the Causeway Street Facade until the 1960s, when a billboard replaced it.

Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum



*Figure 17: By the end of its life, the Causeway Street facade of Boston Garden, seen here in the early-1990s, saw the installation of new signage, including various Budweiser/Bud Light advertisements*  
*Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*

The Boston & Maine station was located on the first floor and mezzanine levels of the building. The station and mezzanine had a combined ceiling height of 22 feet, with the Boston Garden arena located above that. Staircases on either end of the station led to the mezzanine, which was recessed from the main concourse and was accented with simply designed wrought-iron railings.<sup>84</sup> The B&M station was built to accommodate roughly 90,000 passengers per week. To accomplish this, a waiting room of 40 feet x 260 feet and a concourse of 60 feet x 440 feet were constructed. The Station was finished with terrazzo flooring, marble wainscoting, and California stucco, a then-recently developed brand of stucco headquartered in New Jersey, on the walls and ceilings. The stucco was tinted and textured for aesthetic appearances, and the ceilings were paneled. The concourse contained the train announcement boards, the 16 window ticket offices, information bureau, Western Union Telegraph Company, telephone room, travelers' aid, parcel-check room, baggage-check room, express office, New England States Exhibition spaces and various stores and rentals. The mezzanine above contained the ticket accounting office,

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<sup>84</sup> "New North Station of the Boston and Maine Railroad at Boston," Boston & Maine Railroad Promotional Pamphlet, 1928.

travel bureau, Pullman office, B&M Transportation Company, motion picture display rooms, toilet and rest rooms, barber shop, beauty parlor, and other rental spaces.<sup>85</sup> A few of the rooms within the station were lined with a special sound-absorbent plaster. The ticket office and information booth on the concourse, as well as the telephone rooms, required this special feature to deaden the noise, so as not to disrupt the other offices and the patrons within the concourse and waiting room.<sup>86</sup> The various businesses and offices featured inside North Station changed ownership and function throughout the lifespan of the station.

Twin groined arches connected the concourse and the waiting room. The arches were viewed as one of the most dominant interior features of North Station, and reinforced the symmetrical layout. Beyond the concourse was the 23-track rail yard. Each platform served two tracks with one of the more unique components of the “modernized” station: the baggage ramps. These were located at the center of each platform and extended to an enclosed overhead bridge connected to the baggage room, located in the adjacent North Station Industrial Building. The unique baggage ramps successfully kept the movement of baggage entirely out of the way of the station’s foot traffic.<sup>87</sup>

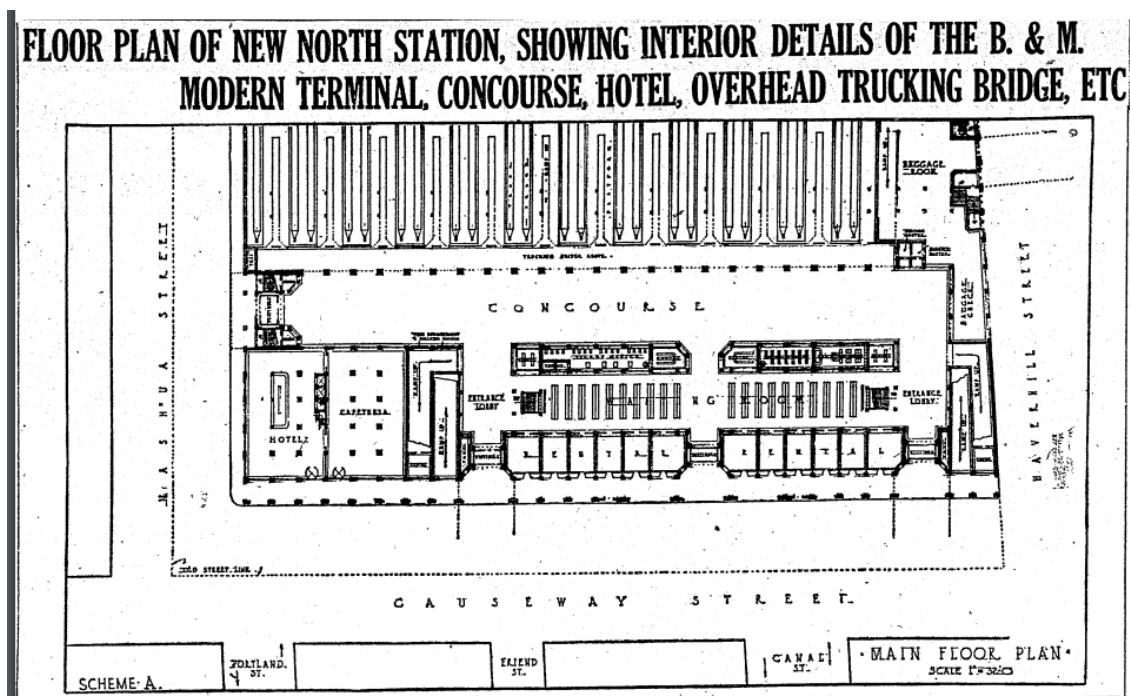
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<sup>85</sup> Belcher, “Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum,” p. 339-344.

<sup>86</sup> “New North Station of the Boston and Maine Railroad at Boston,” Boston & Maine Railroad Promotional Pamphlet, 1928.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.





**Figure 18: Floor Plan of North Station Concourse and Terminal**

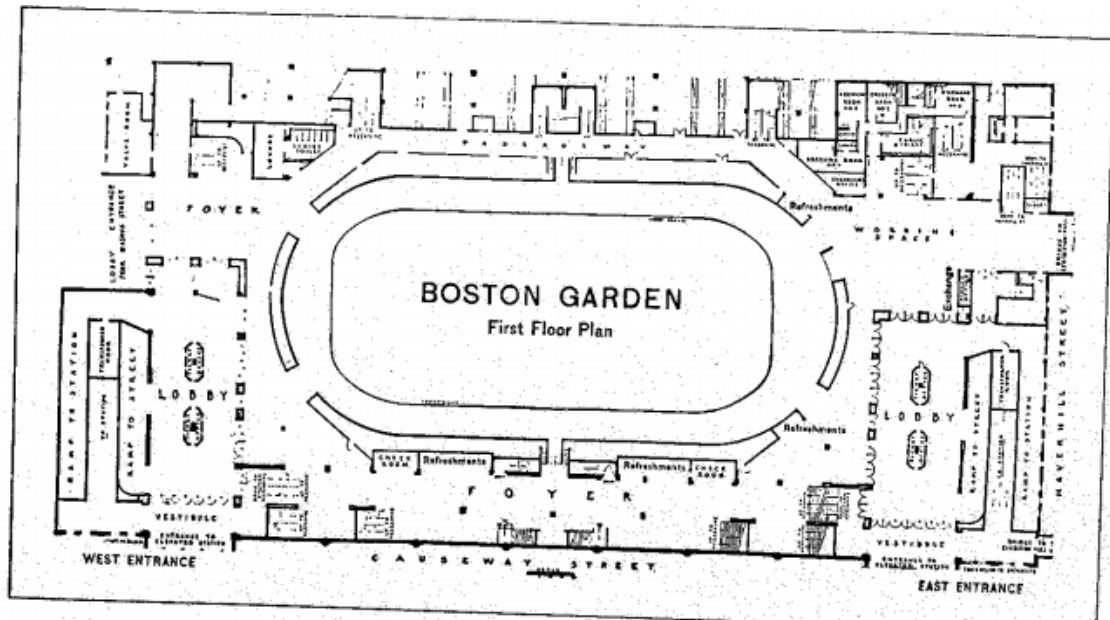
Source: "Floor Plan of New North Station," *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 16, 1927

The arena above the station was accessible from ramps and stairs located at both ends of the building. It had a height of 95 feet to the ceiling (68 feet from the floor to the steel rafters), was 360-feet long, and featured a depth of 205 feet.<sup>88</sup> The dimensions of the Garden are interesting because of their narrowness. Boston Garden extended back roughly 35 feet above the rails at the rear of the station. The length of the extension was a big part of the design discussion, as the locomotive's exhaust was at risk of entering the Arena.<sup>89</sup> The narrow features of the stadium, however, aided Tex Rickard's design preferences. The seating, especially the first balcony, was constructed closer to the arena center, placing the fans right on top of the action, precisely as Tex wanted. The first balcony housed the Garden's Press Box, located in

<sup>88</sup> "The Boston Garden: New England's Greatest Indoor Arena & Exhibition Hall," Promotional Booklet, The Boston Madison Square Garden Corporation, 1930.

<sup>89</sup> Belcher, "Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum," p. 339.

section 61 at the center of the Causeway Street side of the building. The stadium also featured a second balcony, which many claimed was in “touching distance of the rafters,”<sup>90</sup> that served for many years as home to the Gallery Gods, a loyal Bruins fan base.<sup>91</sup>



**Figure 19: Boston Garden First Floor Plan**

*As a modern early 20<sup>th</sup> century sports stadium, Boston Garden provided fans with every modern amenity, such as bathrooms and dressing rooms, in a modern design, as shown here in Boston Garden's floor plan.*

*Source: "The Boston Garden: New England's Greatest Indoor Arena & Exhibition Hall," The Boston Madison Square Garden Corporation*

The Garden's lobbies and foyers matched the material of the downstairs train station, and were finished with marble terrazzo floors. The walls, however, were of a smoothed plaster instead of the stucco finish. Painted, smooth surface terra cotta tile was also seen throughout the interior walls of both the arena and station. Perhaps the most important interior feature of the arena was the open ceiling section, which showed the building's steel roof trusses, painted an

<sup>90</sup> Belcher, "Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum," p. 339.

<sup>91</sup> Marvin Pave, "Roger Naples, Stalwart Bruins Fan Who Led the Gallery Gods, Dies at 97," *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 16, 2017.

aluminum color.<sup>92</sup> In an attempt to utilize the available space of the arena, the Garden Corporation and the individual team's hung celebratory banners and pennants from the trusses.

Marketed as "New England's Greatest Indoor Arena & Exhibition Hall," Boston Garden demanded the most state-of-the-art mechanical and electrical services for an increasingly sophisticated 20<sup>th</sup>-century public.<sup>93</sup> Large fans in both the station and the arena supplied fresh air and heating throughout the year. As indoor smoking was common, ventilation became a major focus of the design and construction. In the arena, air supply was driven downward from the roof and exhausted at the arena level, to ensure that no fan would be looking into a cloud of smoke. Conversely, fans at the station level ventilated the smoke up. All of the air used for ventilation was filtered through air-flushed air filters and then passed through heating stacks controlled to permit any desired temperature within a 40 degree range of the exterior temperature.<sup>94</sup> Though typically held to 70 degrees, there was no air conditioning in the station or arena.<sup>95</sup>

Plumbing was heralded by the *Engineering News-Record* as the "best modern sanitary plumbing" available. Toilets and rest rooms were available in all of the station, mezzanine, and the arena's lower and balcony levels. The restrooms had tile wainscot and terrazzo floors, and featured adjoining lounge rooms for women, whenever possible. The most important piece of plumbing in the building, however, was the 13 miles of piping in the arena floor that controlled the brine freezing systems for the arena's ice. Similar to the process used to freeze the Boston Arena ice, the brine-piping system pushed the chemicals through the pipes to freeze the water within hours.<sup>96</sup> The piping froze the entire 191 feet x 83 foot rink.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Belcher, "Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum," p. 343.

<sup>93</sup> "The Boston Garden: New England's Greatest Indoor Arena & Exhibition Hall," Promotional Booklet, The Boston Madison Square Garden Corporation, 1930.

<sup>94</sup> Belcher, "Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum," p. 343-344.

<sup>95</sup> "The Boston Garden: New England's Greatest Indoor Arena & Exhibition Hall," Promotional Booklet, The Boston Madison Square Garden Corporation, 1930.

<sup>96</sup> Belcher, "Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum," p. 343-344.

<sup>97</sup> Gerry Monigan, "Debate Over Size of Rinks Rises to Surface," *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1987.

The final “modern” features of North Station-Boston Garden were the electrical facilities. The electrical operating center was located in the station master’s office on the first floor of the station. It powered more than 4,000 volts of lighting, telephones, telegraph equipment, as well as the arena’s clocks and speaker systems.<sup>98</sup> Top-of-the-line early 20<sup>th</sup>-century radio hookups, necessary to broadcast the various events, and telephone and telegraph services, complete with direct Western Union and Postal Telegraph wires, allowed journalists and patrons alike the opportunity to contact their offices at a moment’s notice.<sup>99</sup>

The overall layout of Boston Garden is worthy of note, as it played a significant role in the need to redevelop the property sixty years after its opening. With a main floor surface stretching 243 feet long by 110 feet wide, the oval arena floor was more than sufficient at 26,730 square feet to host any event the MSGC deemed necessary.<sup>100</sup> The Garden’s unique design layout was done to accommodate various seating arrangements for the various events the arena held. The historic seats, memorably painted yellow to match the Bruins sweaters, could be set up for boxing and hockey, concerts and religious ceremonies, as well as circuses. Boston Garden had a maximum capacity of 19,274 people during conventions, concerts, operas, political and religious meetings, boxing, wrestling, and public functions. Capacity was 14,734 people when seats were removed to accommodate the circus, rodeos, horse shows, hockey games, bike racing, tennis matches, track meets, basketball games, and polo matches. Seating capacity at Boston Garden could be separated as follows: Floor – 3,070, Ringside Floor – 4,264, Stadium (Lower Level) – 5,365, First Balcony – 5,094, and Second Balcony – 1,500. Seating capacity and totals fluctuated based on event and yearly changes to the facility. As per Tex Rickard’s requests, unobstructed sight lines and visibility for all Boston Garden patrons was of the utmost priority.<sup>101</sup> Ironically, obstructed views, caused by the posts holding up the balconies, would play a

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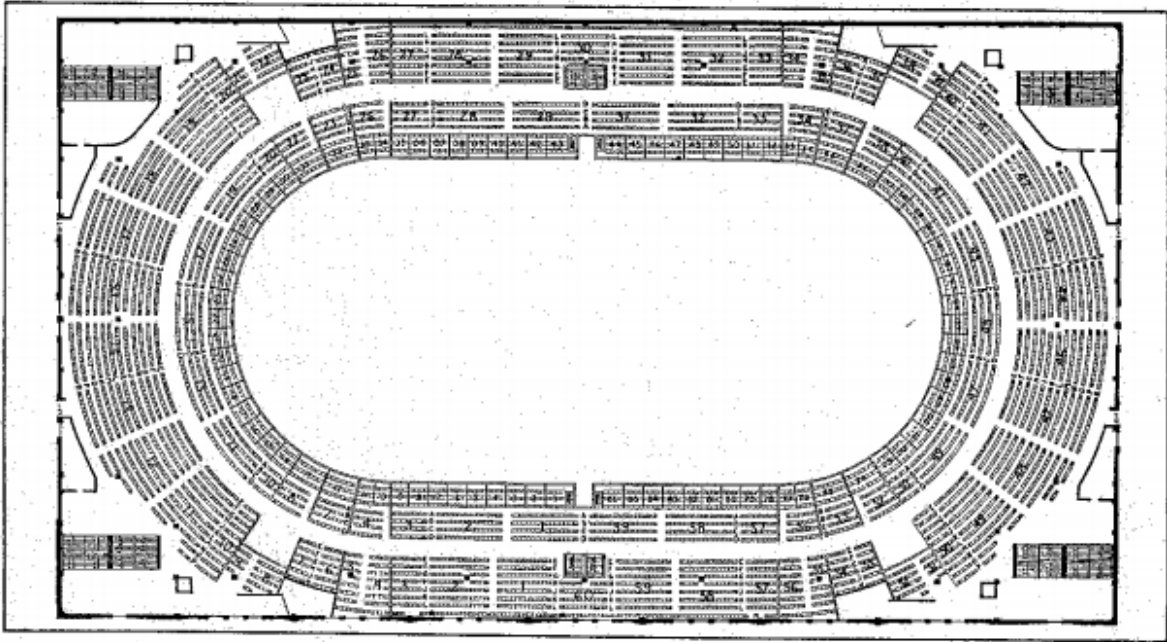
<sup>98</sup> Belcher, “Old North Station at Boston Replaced by a Modern Structure Including a Coliseum,” p. 344.

<sup>99</sup> “The Boston Garden: New England’s Greatest Indoor Arena & Exhibition Hall,” Promotional Booklet, The Boston Madison Square Garden Corporation, 1930.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

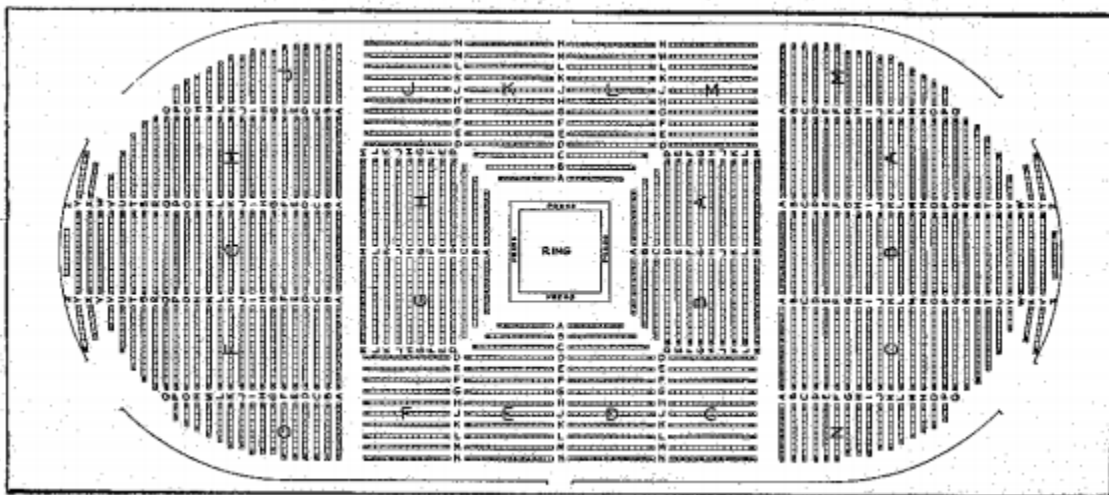
<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

significant role in the desire to “update” the Garden. The following seat charts show the various layouts of Boston Garden:



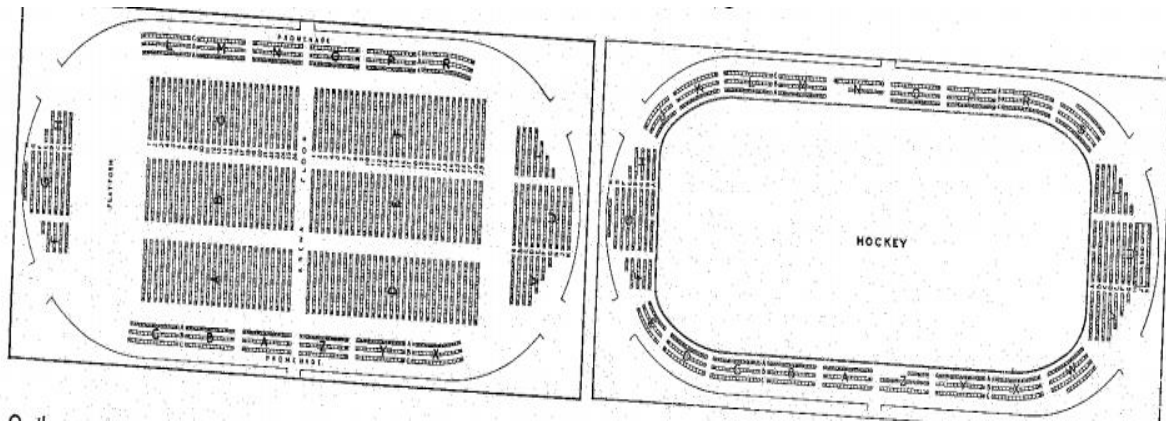
**Figure 20: The lower ring of Boston Garden allowed for over 5,000 seats without obstructed views.**

Source: “The Boston Garden: New England’s Greatest Indoor Arena & Exhibition Hall,” promotional booklet, The Boston Madison Square Garden Corporation



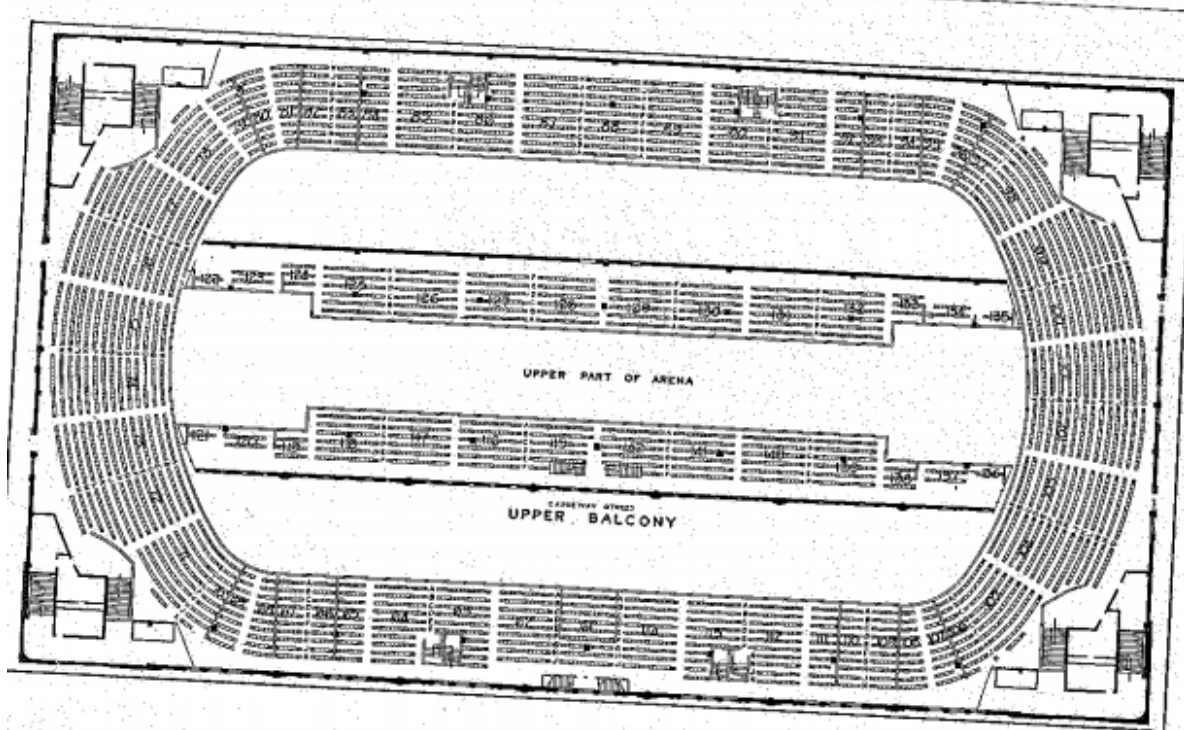
**Figure 21: Boston Garden's original purpose, Boxing, placed seats along the arena floor, allowing fans and media to have an up close look at the sport.**

Source: “The Boston Garden: New England’s Greatest Indoor Arena & Exhibition Hall,” promotional booklet, The Boston Madison Square Garden Corporation



**Figure 22:** Speaking engagements (left), such as political rallies, religious events, and college graduations also placed seats along the arena floor. Hockey (right), however, required use of the entire floor section.

Source: "The Boston Garden: New England's Greatest Indoor Arena & Exhibition Hall," promotional booklet, The Boston Madison Square Garden Corporation



**Figure 23:** Boston Garden Upper Balcony Plan

As per "Tex" Rickard's wishes, the seating arrangements at Boston Garden allowed for all patrons to see the sweat on the athlete's brows. The Upper Balcony of the arena adhered to this. It also contained the Press Box for the arena, located at center in section 61 on the Causeway Street side of the stadium.

Source: "The Boston Garden: New England's Greatest Indoor Arena & Exhibition Hall," promotional booklet, The Boston Madison Square Garden Corporation



**Figure 24:** *The Boston Garden Score Clock, seen here at a 1950s Basketball Luncheon, was installed some-time in the 1940s, and remained above the arena floor until its replacement in the late 1960s.*

*Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*



**Figure 25:** *1972 Boston Celtics vs. New York Knicks at Boston Garden. Photo shows updated scoreboard which would remain in the Garden until its demolition.*

*Source: Grant, Spencer. "Celtics/NY Knicks basketball action, Boston Garden."*

*Photograph. 1972. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/4j03cz701> (accessed February 10, 2019)*

Similarly to any other aging, in-use structure, Boston Garden demanded various alterations and updates throughout its lifespan. As new technologies and modern amenities became available, Garden ownership changed the arena as was deemed necessary. One of the most noteworthy alterations that occurred was the updated scoreboard that hung over the center of the arena floor. Originally, no scoreboard dangled from the rafters. Instead, a public address system hung in the center. Photographic evidence shows that by the mid-1940s a new score clock was installed that featured analog clocks to countdown the time left in periods for all fans to see. This score clock, seen at the top of Figure 24 taken some time at a Garden Luncheon in the 1950s, was eventually replaced in the late 1960s by the iconic scoreboard (seen in Figure 25 above right), which notably featured a Dunkin' Donuts advertisement at its base towards the end

of its time in the arena. Other alterations to Boston Garden revolved around making the experience more enjoyable for guests, such as the transformation of the second balcony, home to the Gallery Gods since 1937, into luxurious corporate boxes.<sup>102</sup> Architectural and mechanical merit aside, the truly impactful legacy of Boston Garden always laid in the activities that the “sports palace” held throughout its 70-year run.

With construction completed and the opening ceremonies concluded, Boston Garden brought the city into the 20<sup>th</sup>-century as it related to the world of sports. The modern amenities of the arena provided a spectacle for Bostonians to come see, while the train station below provided easy access for those outside the city. However, it was not the building that provided the grand spectacle that made Boston Garden one of the most well-known sports stadiums in the country. Instead, it was the sports and activities that went on inside that made the Garden New England’s greatest indoor sports arena and exhibition hall.

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<sup>102</sup> Pave, “Roger Naples, Stalwart Bruins Fan who Led the Gallery Gods, Dies at 97.”



## CHAPTER II

### NEW ENGLAND'S GREATEST INDOOR SPORTS ARENA AND EXHIBITION HALL

The true impact of the Garden came not from its imposing architectural features, but instead its historical impact on a city steeped in history. The events that took place in the arena captivated the hearts and minds of Bostonians, New Englanders, and at times the entire nation. Beginning with boxing, this chapter explains the importance of marquee fixtures that routinely sold tickets. Since those events were not available nightly, it was important for any arena management group to fill in the rest of the calendar with subsidiary events, such as the circus. The original idea of Boston Garden as a boxing venue quickly changed as hockey and basketball dominated indoor sports at both the professional and amateur levels. Even with this shift from boxing to hockey and basketball, the initial notion of marquee events continued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup>-century. The result was the scheduling of many non-athletic events, such as religious ceremonies, political rallies, and concerts that complemented their sporting counterparts, and increased the value of the arena. From the very beginning, with its opening night festivities, the Garden cemented its position as Boston's premiere sports venue. By the 1980s, however, Boston Garden's future was as uncertain as it was during its development.

Many of the individuals, events, and teams that routinely appeared at the Garden deserve their own histories. Many already have been the source of extensive study, either through biographies and history texts, documentaries, or team-based programs. The historical analysis of each team or singular event is done to show the impact on the stadium itself; i.e. what increased its historic value. The history, therefore, has been shortened. What is explained, is the foundation of the team or event, their first performance at Boston Garden, and an examination of the important people and moments that took place over the course of the century.

#### ***Boxing, the Circus, and Other Early Attempts to Fill the Calendar Year***

Under the leadership of Tex Rickard and the Madison Square Garden Corporation, the Garden opened as a boxing venue. The success of the Garden's opening night's main event

between Dorchester, Massachusetts native “Honeyboy” Finnegan and World Featherweight Champion Andre Routis, cemented its place in the annals of Boston sports history as the premiere indoor sporting venue. Following that bout, boxing remained a consistent part of Boston Garden’s annual schedule of events.

The 1920s through the 1940s at Boston Garden witnessed some of the earliest superstars in the sport of boxing. Jack Sharkey, a local fighter originally from Binghamton, NY and former Heavyweight Champion of the World, had three fights there between 1935 and 1936, all against local New England fighters.<sup>103</sup> The great Joe Louis defeated Al McCoy, a Mainer, by corner retirement in five rounds in 1940, the fight was arranged by local Boston promoter Rip Valenti.<sup>104</sup> Boxing was such an important part of Boston Garden’s early years that even benefit fights were big draws. In his only appearance at the Garden, Jack Dempsey, one of boxing’s most historic fighters, served as a special guest referee for Rip Valenti’s 1934 Christmas benefit show.<sup>105</sup> Another noteworthy night at the Garden associated with boxing, was the suspension of activities on January 9, 1929 in honor of the untimely death of Tex Rickard, who laid in state at MSG.<sup>106</sup>

The highpoint of boxing at Boston Garden, however, came in the 1950s and early 1960s, when boxing legends such as Rocky Marciano, Carmen Basilio, “Sugar Ray” Robinson, and the “Raging Bull” Jake LaMotta each amazed crowds with their power and skill. LaMotta had a slew of earlier Boston-based fights, both at the Garden and in other venues; Boston Arena and the old Boston Mechanics Building for example, in the 1940s.<sup>107</sup> His 1952 defeat at the hands of Roxbury’s Norman Hayes, a local black fighter, was the Raging Bull’s final fight in Boston. This fight also prompted a rematch in Detroit just a couple months later, which LaMotta won.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> “Jack Sharkey Boxing Record,” boxrec.com, accessed March 5, 2019, <http://boxrec.com/en/boxer/10616>.

<sup>104</sup> “Joe Louis v Al McCoy, Monday 16, December 1940 Event,” boxrec.com, accessed March 5, 2019, <http://boxrec.com/en/event/13657/19828>.

<sup>105</sup> Happy Fine, “Boxing: A Showplace of Champions,” in *50th Anniversary of Boston Garden: 1928-1978*, ed. Happy Fine (Boston: Colonial Classic Productions, 1978), p. 51.

<sup>106</sup> “Boston Garden to Close During Rickard Services,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Jan. 9, 1929.

<sup>107</sup> George Kimball, “Ring Masters,” in *Boston Garden: Banner Years 1928-1995* (Sports Publishing Group Inc.: New York, 1995), p. 31.

<sup>108</sup> “Jake LaMotta Boxing Record,” boxrec.com, accessed March 5, 2019, <http://boxrec.com/en/boxer/9030>.

Similarly to the early years, fights involving big names were often arranged by a local promoter, typically Sam Silverman, and included a local Boston- or New England-based challenger.<sup>109</sup> “Sugar Ray,” for instance, lost two Middleweight title fights to Brookline’s Paul Pender in 1960. Silverman promoted both.<sup>110</sup>

With all the star power that came through the arena it is easy to see how boxing was viewed as a main draw at the arena. It was two local fighters, however, that held Boston’s true affection. North End native Tony DeMarco won his Welterweight title over Johnny Saxton on April Fool’s Day, 1955, making him a local celebrity.<sup>111</sup> The announced attendance at the fight was close to 12,000 people. The fire marshal, however, was put on notice, because there was actually something close to 20,000 inside, most rooting for DeMarco. Unlike today’s heightened sense of security, it was relatively common for people to sneak into Boston Garden using the fire escapes.<sup>112</sup> DeMarco’s heroics, particularly his Garden title fight, eventually led to a statue in the North End in his honor.<sup>113</sup>



**Figure 26: Tony DeMarco in bed at the Statler Hotel Boston following his title bout with Johnny Saxton.** Source: Jones, Leslie. "Tony DeMarco in bed at Statler after Saxton fight." Photograph. April 1955. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/rr172b24b> (accessed February 19, 2019)

<sup>109</sup> “Silverman, Ring Promoter, Killed” *New York Times*, July 10, 1977.

<sup>110</sup> “Paul Pender v Sugar Ray Robinson, Friday 10, June 1960 Event,” boxrec.com, accessed March 5, 2019, <http://boxrec.com/en/event/16540/23545>.

<sup>111</sup> Don Stradley, “DeMarco Hoodwink Made Saxton the April Fool,” ESPN, April 1, 2008, accessed Feb. 10, 2019, <http://www.espn.com/sports/boxing/news/story?id=3322331>.

<sup>112</sup> Bud Collins, “Boxing in Boston Garden,” in *Banner Years: The Official History of the Boston Garden*, directed by Peter W. Ladue, VHS, 1994.

<sup>113</sup> Matt Conti, “Tony DeMarco Statue Unveiled at Historic Ceremony in North End,” *North End Waterfront*, Oct. 20, 2012, accessed Feb. 10, 2019. <https://northendwaterfront.com/2012/10/tony-demarco-statue-unveiled-at-historic-ceremony-in-north-end-photos/>.

No other fighter had more bouts at Boston Garden than Newton's Joe DeNucci. He made his professional debut on March 30, 1957 against Charles Smith, also a Boston-based fighter, at the Garden. Between that victorious evening and 1973, when he retired, DeNucci took part in 23 fights in the stadium. Amassing a Garden record of fifteen wins, four losses, and four draws, DeNucci cemented his place in Boston sports lore.<sup>114</sup> At the time of the Garden's closing in 1995, DeNucci stated, "I fought more fights at the Garden than anyone, and I'm proud of my career. I was ranked in the top 10 when there was only one champion, and I was never knocked down at the Garden."<sup>115</sup>

Though Boston Garden hosted numerous boxing matches, some more memorable than others, it never reached the same level of notoriety as Madison Square Garden.<sup>116</sup> The final years of boxing in the arena continued to bring in stars of the sport, including "Marvelous" Marvin Hagler, another local fighter, who resided south of Boston in Rocky Marciano's hometown of Brockton, also known as the "City of Champions" due to its affiliation with the two storied boxers. As time went on and the draw of boxing diminished, so too did the number of matches held at the Garden. As Tex Rickard had proven with his MSG scheduling, various other events could be used to keep the arena financially afloat. Indoor bike races, indoor track meets, indoor tennis, indoor football, and even indoor baseball, among other marketed events were all used to draw fans, and more importantly their money, to the arena.<sup>117</sup>

Perhaps the most important and longest tenured "side" events hosted at the Garden were the Circus and ice shows. Because of John Ringling's association with the MSGC, circus events at any Garden property were considered inevitable. It was not until May, 1929, however, that the Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey circus ditched its Big Top for the Garden rafters. The circus would appear in the Garden every subsequent year.<sup>118</sup> The history of ice shows, unlike

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<sup>114</sup> "Joe DeNucci, Boxing Record," boxrec.com, accessed March 5, 2019, <http://boxrec.com/en/boxer/11410>.

<sup>115</sup> George Kimball, "Ring Masters," p. 31.

<sup>116</sup> Shanna McCarriston, "The History of Boxing at Madison Square Garden," *Sporting News*, Dec. 15, 2018.

<sup>117</sup> Francis J. Connolly, "1928-1947," from *A History of Boston Garden: A Diamond Jubilee, 1928-1988*, p. 25-29.

<sup>118</sup> Happy Fine, "Boston Garden: House of Magic," in *50th Anniversary of Boston Garden: 1928-1978*, ed. Happy Fine (Boston: Colonial Classic Productions, 1978), p. 3.

that of the circus, has a direct link to Boston Garden thanks primarily to the brilliance of Walter A. Brown, Manager of Boston Garden, founder and owner of the Boston Celtics, owner of the Boston Bruins.<sup>119</sup> While his father was still Manager of Boston Garden in 1936, a position Walter would later inherit, he saw an ice skating floor show performed in the lobby of a Philadelphia hotel. Brown enjoyed the show and signed the group of 16 skaters up for a week long-run at the Garden. Brown's father, George, informed his son that if the show did not pack the Garden, then he better be packed. Following an extremely positive response from Boston's skating fans, the show, which was eventually titled the Ice Follies, was booked for a return engagement.<sup>120</sup> Ice skating shows remained a prominent fixture in Boston Garden's schedule every year. The shows featured iconic skating legends, such as Sonja Henie and Peggy Fleming, among many others.<sup>121</sup> The Ice Follies led the way for other ice skating spectacles, such as the Ice Capades and the more recent Disney on Ice, which remain annual events at the Boston Garden's successor, TD Garden.

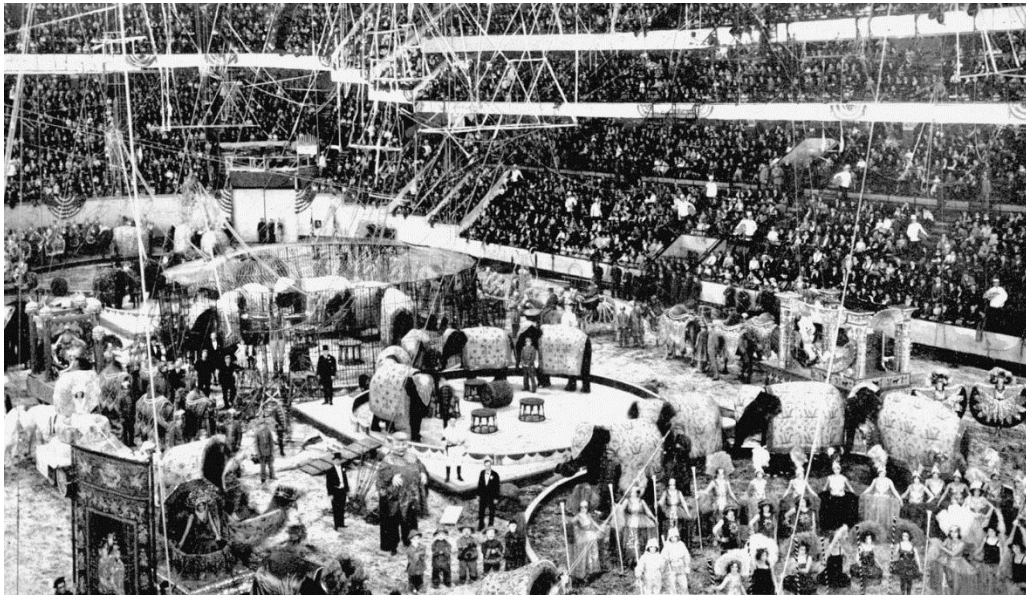
The following photographs display the various uses of Boston Garden throughout the early parts of its existence. A select few events remained annual fixtures in the Garden's schedule.

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<sup>119</sup> "Walter Brown, Builders – Biography," *Hockey Hall of Fame*, accessed Feb. 10, 2019. <https://www.hhof.com/LegendsOfHockey/jsp/LegendsMember.jsp?mem=B196202&type=Builder&page=bio&list=ByName>.

<sup>120</sup> Fine, "Boston Garden: House of Magic," p. 3.

<sup>121</sup> "Beautiful Moves," in *Boston Garden: Banner Years 1928-1995* (Sports Publishing Group Inc.: New York, 1995), p. 19-23.



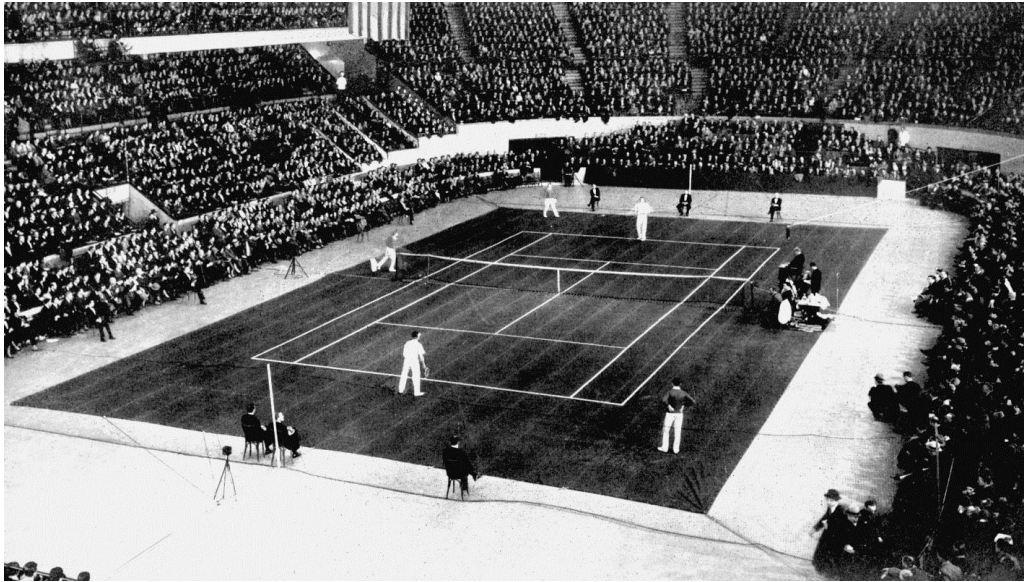
***Figure 27: John Ringling's association with the Madison Square Garden Company created a partnership between Boston Garden and the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus that resulted in annual appearances by the famed show.***

*Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*



***Figure 28: Ice Skating shows such as the Follies and Ice Capades found a welcoming home at Boston Garden throughout the 20th century.***

Source: Grant, Spencer. "Boston Garden ice skating show, Boston Garden." Photograph. 1971. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/jq085k349> (accessed Feb. 19, 2019)



**Figure 29:** *Indoor Tennis was not a frequent occurrence at the Garden, but the Tilden-Kozeluh Match, pictured above, between "Big Bill" Tilden and Czech champion Karel Kozeluh brought in more than 15,000 fans.*  
 Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum

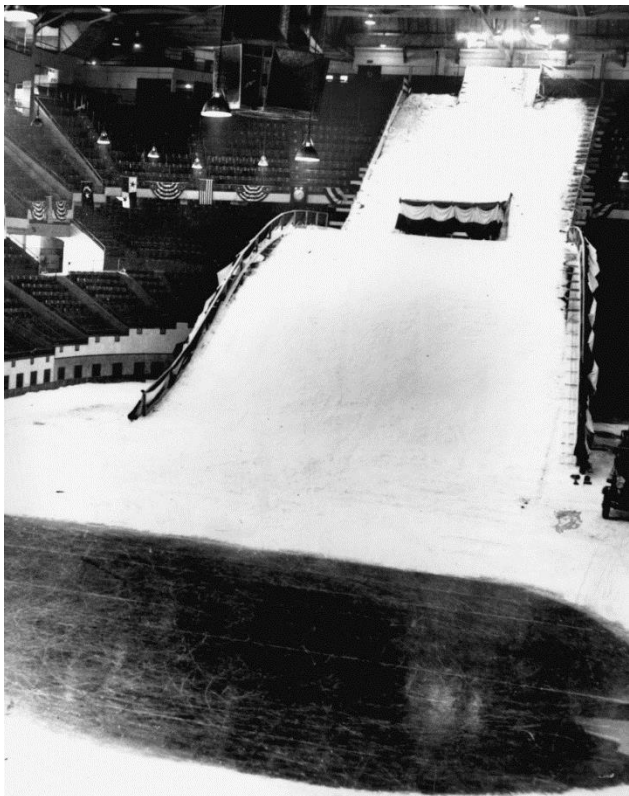


**Figure 30:** *Bicycle Racing was a common event in the early years of both Boston Garden and its predecessor Madison Square Garden in New York City.*  
 Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum





**Figure 31:** *The Rodeo, similarly to the circus, became a fixture at Boston Garden. With the rodeo, western stars, such as Gene Autry, brought their showmanship on horseback into the arena.*  
 Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum



**Figure 32:** *One of the more unusual events held at Boston Garden, was the Ski Jump at the 1935 Boston Garden Winter Exhibition, an idea to fill seats concocted by Walter Brown.*  
 Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum

## ***Hockey and the Boston Bruins***

If Boston Garden was built for boxing, the Bruins and their die-hard fans, 14,500 strong, did not know that. One of the Original Six franchises of the NHL, the Bruins were founded four years prior to the Garden opening. The team's popularity showed from the start how impactful professional sports could be on a locality. Just three days after the Garden officially opened, the Bruins played their first game in the new facility. Much to the dismay of the Garden Faithful, the Bruins lost that opening night match to the Montreal Canadiens by a score of 1-0.<sup>122</sup> This would mark the Garden's first foray into the much discussed Bruins-Canadiens rivalry.<sup>123</sup> The crowd at that November 20, 1928 match was the largest ever to witness a hockey game in Boston at that time.<sup>124</sup> Most importantly, the Garden's layout proved to be successful, not only for boxing, but also for hockey. Tex Rickard's desire to have every fan "see the sweat on the brow of the boxer," had turned into the ability for fans to be directly atop the action for a hockey game, with the front row of the upper balcony almost directly over the expensive seats at the main floor.<sup>125</sup>



***Figure 33: On Nov. 20, 1928, the Boston Bruins hosted their first official game at Boston Garden. Despite the 1-0 loss to the Montreal Canadiens, the Bruins went on to win the Stanley Cup in that inaugural Garden season. Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum***

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<sup>122</sup> "Fans Crash Doors in Boston Arena: Fifteen Thousand People See Canadiens Defeat Bruins by 1 to 0," *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 21, 1928.

<sup>123</sup> "Boston Bruins Rivalry, Our History," Montreal Canadiens, accessed Feb. 10, 2019. <http://ourhistory.canadiens.com/opponent/Boston-Bruins>.

<sup>124</sup> "Fans Crash Doors in Boston Arena," *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 21, 1928.

<sup>125</sup> Zweig, Art Ross: *The Hockey Legend Who Built the Bruins*, p. 200.

The first year in the Garden is one defined by triumph. In that fateful 1928-1929 season the Bruins, headed by owner Charles F. Adams and coach Art Ross, christened the new stadium with their first Stanley Cup championship, defeating the New York Rangers.<sup>126</sup> Despite this victory, that year also saw a minor legal drama between the Bruins and Boston Garden and the ownership group of Boston Arena, former home to the club. In late 1928, the Bruins announced that they would move full time to Boston Garden, which the Boston Arena owners deemed a breach of contract. The Arena demanded \$400,000 as compensation.<sup>127</sup> This would mark the first of numerous disagreements between the two venues, until the MSGC, under the direction of the Boston Garden Arena Corporation, merged with the New Boston Arena Company. Upon completion of the merger, the Boston Arena Company became the Boston Garden Arena Corporation, and divorced entirely from the Madison Square Garden Corporation. Henry G. Lapham headed the new corporation, while George V. Brown assumed the role of Executive Vice President and General Manager.<sup>128</sup>

With their opening season championship, the Bruins began a longstanding tradition of excellence that resulted in five more championships before Boston Garden was closed. Interestingly, the 1929 Stanley Cup championship did not result in the raising of a banner, a tradition that would become synonymous with the Garden, and ultimately one of its most enduring legacies. Team president, Charles F. Adams, announced prior to their home opener against the Rangers that no ceremony would take place, and the game would begin with the traditional announcement of players.<sup>129</sup> The banner raising tradition, which historically has occurred before the start of the champions first home game of the following season, instead began on November 14, 1939. In their home opener, following their 1938-1939 Stanley Cup championship season, the Bruins, with the help of NHL president Frank Calder, raised the NHL

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<sup>126</sup> John J. Hallahan, "Boston Clinch World's Title," *Boston Daily Globe*, Mar. 30, 1929.

<sup>127</sup> "Adams, Bruins, Sued by Arena," *Boston Daily Globe*, Jan. 8, 1929.

<sup>128</sup> "Garden and Arena Finally Merged," *Boston Daily Globe*, Dec. 12, 1936.

<sup>129</sup> John J. Hallahan, "Capacity Crowd Expected at Garden as Stanley Cup Holders and Champions of 1927-1928 Clash," *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 19, 1929.

champion's pennant above the team bench.<sup>130</sup> This started a tradition that continued at the start of the 1941 season, followed by the 1971 and 1973 seasons. It also began a Garden tradition that would become far more regular with the Garden's other tenant, the Celtics.

The Bruins and their passionate fan base watched as some of the greatest hockey players of all time donned the Black and Gold jersey of the team, the original Brown and Yellow sweaters changing to Black in the 1934 season.<sup>131</sup> With Hall of Famers such as Eddie Shore, Cecil "Tiny" Thompson, Frank Brimsek, Lionel Hitchman, Milt Schmidt, and Aubrey "Dit" Clapper the early years of the Bruins set up the team, and the Garden, for sell-outs and annual Stanley Cup contention. These players began a great hockey tradition in Boston that led to many more greats pulling the iconic Spoked B over their heads. From Bobby Orr to Johnny Bucyk, and Phil Esposito to Gerry Cheevers, completed by the likes of Terry O'Reilly, Ray Borque and Cam Neely, Hall of Famers dominate the history of the Big Bad Bruins, and each one called the Garden home. Perhaps the most memorable of them all included the lifting of three players onto the shoulders of not just their teammates, but also the opposing team's players. On February 10, 1942, the famed Bruins' Kraut Line, consisting of Milt Schmidt, Bobby Bauer, and Woody Dumart, were raised onto the shoulders of the remaining Bruins players and their hated rivals, the Montreal Canadiens. This was done as a sign of respect, as all three Canadian-born skaters were playing in their final game before enlisting into service with the Royal Canadian Air Force.<sup>132</sup>

Another iconic moment came in the 1970 when Bobby Orr "flew through the air" after scoring the goal that gave the Bruins their first Stanley Cup in 29 years, and gave the sports world one of its most memorable photographs. The Orr championship was shortly followed by

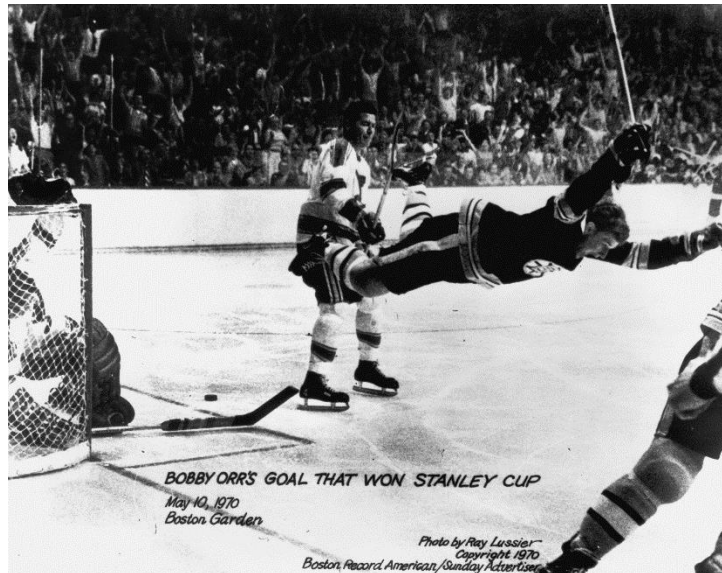
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<sup>130</sup> Gerry Moore, "Bruins Take Blackhawks in First Home Game of Hockey Season," *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 15, 1939.

<sup>131</sup> Eric Russo, "The Evolution of the Boston Bruins Sweater," [nhl.com/b Bruins/news/the-evolution-of-the-boston-bruins-sweater/c-290032176](https://www.nhl.com/b Bruins/news/the-evolution-of-the-boston-bruins-sweater/c-290032176), June 21, 2017, accessed Feb. 10, 2019.

<sup>132</sup> Dave Stubbs, "'Kraut Line' of Bruins Honored Before Going to War," [nhl.com/news](https://www.nhl.com/news/kraut-line-of-boston-honored-before-going-to-serve-in-world-war-ii/c-286584294), Feb. 10, 2017, accessed Feb. 10, 2019.

the Garden's first and only time hosting the NHL All-Star game in January 1971.<sup>133</sup> The Bruins gave Boston countless memorable moments that stretch from Stanley Cup victories to breaking color barriers. The players and moments all hold a significant place in the annals of Boston Garden, and each aided in its achieving historic status.



**Figure 34: The famous "Flying Goal" of Bobby Orr won the 1970 Stanley Cup Final for the Boston Bruins, their 4th championship.**

*Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*

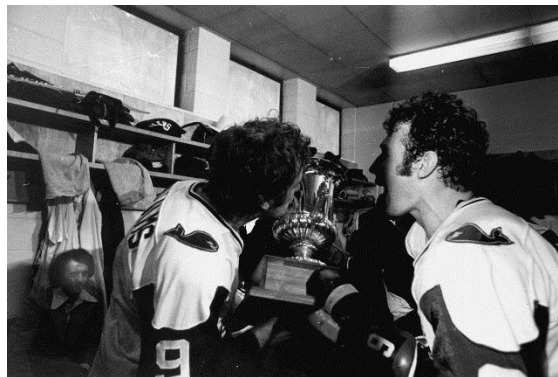
Although the Bruins were the most famous hockey team to call the Garden home, they were not the only one. Other teams, both professional and amateur, were booked at Boston Garden as a means to fill the schedule and assuage the hockey-crazed Bostonians. From the Walter Brown-coached Boston Olympics of the Eastern Hockey League in the 1940s, to the Boston Braves of the AHL in the 1970s, there was plenty of hockey to be found at either the Garden or Boston Arena. Perhaps the most important subsidiary team to play at Boston Garden was the New England Whalers of the World Hockey Association (WHA).

Founded in 1971 to compete with the NHL, the WHA found success poaching players from the NHL. The New England Whalers, created that same year, called Boston home from 1971-1974, splitting time at the Garden and Boston Arena. They won the 1973 Avco World

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<sup>133</sup> "The Whole Story," in *Boston Garden: Banner Years 1928-1995* (Sports Publishing Group Inc.: New York, 1995), p. 67.

Trophy as WHA champions. Many former Bruins players believed that if not for the WHA, their team would have won far more than just two Stanley Cups in the 1970s. Bruins star Derek Sanderson said, “The old Garden didn’t get what she deserved.”<sup>134</sup> Despite their success on the ice, the Whalers found it difficult to be a successful organization in Boston. The Bruins-run Boston Garden routinely gave the NHL team, as well as the NBA’s Celtics, the more optimal dates and times for their games. Allowing for the Whalers to pick from the scraps at both the Garden and the much smaller Boston Arena, the franchise began to search for a new home in 1973. Following a yearlong relocation process, the Whalers decided to stay in New England and move to Hartford. The decision was made easier by the fact that the Whalers would get a brand new \$30.5 million stadium, the Hartford Civic Center, all to themselves. Excitement from the fans also aided in the process, as the team sold 4,000 season tickets before they played a single game.<sup>135</sup> The success of the WHA forced the NHL into merger discussions at the end of the 1970s. When the two leagues finally merged in 1979, the Whalers were one of the few teams integrated into the expanded NHL.<sup>136</sup>



**Figure 35: The New England Whaler's followed in the Bruins footsteps, winning the 1973 Avco World Trophy as WHA champions.**

Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum

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<sup>134</sup> Derek Sanderson, “Tell the Lions the Christians are Ready...” in *Banner Years: The Official History of the Boston Garden*, directed by Peter W. Ladue, VHS, 1994.

<sup>135</sup> Tom Hine, “Whalers’ Hockey Comes to Hartford Civic Center,” *The Hartford Courant*, Oct. 24, 1974.

<sup>136</sup> “The New England Whalers, Photo Gallery,” *The Hartford Courant*, accessed Feb. 10, 2019.

<https://www.courant.com/sports/hockey/hartford-whalers/hc-new-england-whalers-gallery-photogallery.html>.

Despite the number of professional and semi-professional hockey teams that played at the Garden, none could compete with the popularity of the Bruins. Amateur hockey, on the other hand, was able to draw a consistently large number of fans. From high school to college, hockey at the Garden was always a special occasion. No tournament or individual game matters more to the city than the Beanpot Hockey Tournament. The four-team tournament, which pits Boston's four NCAA Division-1 hockey programs against one another, was founded in 1952.<sup>137</sup> Since Harvard won the inaugural contest at Boston Arena, the historic tournament, which still continues today, remains the city's most iconic amateur sports competition.<sup>138</sup> The Beanpot officially moved to its permanent home in Boston Garden in 1954.<sup>139</sup> The founder of the tournament was none other than Walter Brown, who once again sought to fill vacant dates in the stadiums' calendar and sell tickets.<sup>140</sup> Like the Bruins, and as will later be explained the Celtics, the Beanpot adds its own layer of history to the Garden. The most memorable was the 1978 tournament. Occurring concurrently with the infamous Blizzard of '78 that struck the northeast with record snowfalls, that Beanpot included an unusual intermission in play. Due to the blizzard, roughly 200 fans and Garden employees were left inside the stadium, after being informed about the dangerous travel conditions outside. They slept in the arena until conditions grew more favorable. During the 72-hour stretch indoors, fans also found food, which was taken from concessions and delivered from a nearby bakery, while others watched television and searched for beer in the Blades and Boards Club beneath the Garden. Twenty-three days later Boston University defeated Harvard to win the Beanpot.<sup>141</sup>

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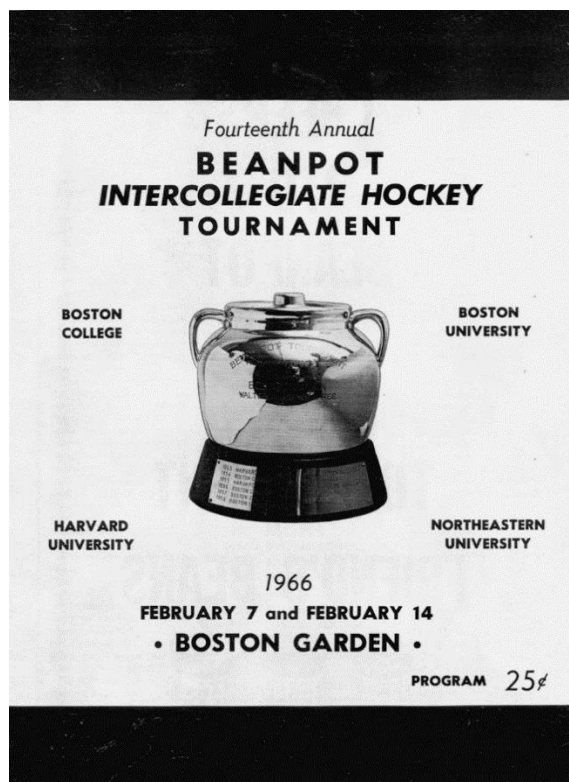
<sup>137</sup> Fowle, "Bean Pot Tourney: B.U. Faces Huskies, Harvard Plays B.C."

<sup>138</sup> Fowle, "Harvard Sextet Beats B.U., 7-4; Wins Bean Pot Hockey Finale."

<sup>139</sup> Holbrook, "Hockey, Basket Ball, Track Opens Busy Sports Week at Garden, Bean Pot Hockey Tourney Tonight."

<sup>140</sup> Bernard M. Corbett, *The Beanpot: Fifty Years of Thrills, Spills, and Chills* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), p. 2.

<sup>141</sup> Rich Fahey, "Marooned at the Garden: Memories of '78," *The Boston Globe*, Feb. 3, 2008.



*Figure 36: The Beanpot Hockey Tournament between Boston's four NCAA Division-1 hockey programs, became one of the most iconic events at the Garden beginning in 1954.*

*Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*

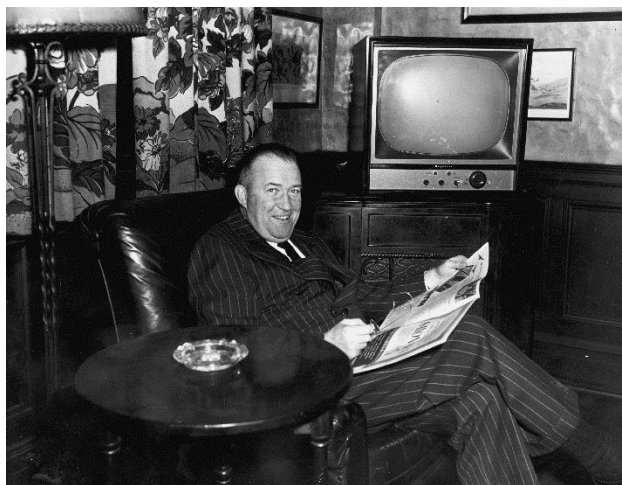
### ***Basketball and the Boston Celtics***

“When we started, the New England area didn’t know basketball,” Arnold “Red” Auerbach stated. “We had to go through many years of holding clinics, teaching the game. This was strictly a hockey, football and baseball area... We were just a tenant [in the Garden], even though Walter Brown owned the team.”<sup>142</sup> Basketball was first played at the Garden on February 13, 1929, in a match between the Boston Whirlwinds and the Renaissance Five of New

<sup>142</sup> “Painted the Town Red,” in *A History of Boston Garden: A Diamond Jubilee, 1928-1988* (Boston: Boston Phoenix Inc.), p. 38.



York.<sup>143</sup> The game, however, would not take hold in New England until the 1940s and 1950s, following the clinics and exhibitions that Red discussed.<sup>144</sup>



**Figure 37: Walter Brown, Boston Celtics Owner**

*Walter Brown, seen here seated in his office, developed the Boston Celtics as an opportunity to fill dates in the Garden when the Bruins and boxing were not scheduled. His work in creating the team and the league, which eventually became the NBA, led to his enshrinement in the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, MA. Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*

Walter Brown did not develop the Celtics basketball team until 1946, upon the establishment of the Basketball Association of America.<sup>145</sup> Prior to the creation of the team, the sport in New England was played at the collegiate level. It was the routine sellouts of college basketball doubleheaders at the Garden, another idea of Brown's, that led him and other arena owners across the country to seek to start another professional league, the National Basketball League. There had been various other attempts at professional basketball, though the depression, a lack of ticket sales, and World War II kept them from becoming significant.<sup>146</sup> Similarly to the Bruins, the newly ordained Boston Celtics began play at Boston Arena, shifting between both the Arena and Garden throughout the schedule. The Celtics would continue this practice through 1955, when their stay at Boston Garden became permanent. The Celtics, however, did not have

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<sup>143</sup> "Basket-Ball Game at Garden Feb 13," *Boston Daily Globe*, Feb. 5, 1929.

<sup>144</sup> "The Cousy Breakthrough," in *A History of Boston Garden: A Diamond Jubilee, 1928-1988* (Boston: Boston Phoenix Inc.), p. 39.

<sup>145</sup> "Hall of Famers, Walter A. Brown," National Basketball Hall of Fame, accessed Feb. 10, 2019. <http://www.hoophall.com/hall-of-famers/walter-brown/>.

<sup>146</sup> Dan Shaughnessy, *Seeing Red* (New York: Random House, 1994), p. 50-51.

a great deal of success in their early years and were constantly belittled by the likes of the Red Sox, Bruins and Holy Cross Crusaders NCAA basketball team. Holy Cross, a small college west of Boston in Worcester, MA, won an NCAA title in 1947 and routinely played at the Garden.<sup>147</sup> The fledgling professional sport continually required gimmicks and heavy public relations to maintain attendance totals. One idea, concocted by Walter Brown, NBA Publicist Haskell Cohen, and NBA Commissioner Maurice Podoloff, resulted in the creation of the NBA's annual All-Star Game. Held on March 2, 1951 at Boston Garden, the All-Star Game saw a significant increase in attendance, with 10,094 fans showing up to watch the Eastern Conference defeat the West, 111-94.<sup>148</sup> The Garden went on to host the All-Star game three more times in 1952, 1957, and 1964.

The Celtics of the late 1940s and early 1950s were a far cry from the 16-time champions, known as much for their black converse sneakers as they were for their dominance of the sport. In this period, the team was known only for two things: one being the wizardry of their young point guard, Bob Cousy, who starred at Holy Cross, and the makeshift court built for the team's use at Boston Arena. In 1946, basketball had already been played in the Garden, but the Arena had not yet hosted a game, and needed a court to play on. Walter Brown, in control of both the Garden and the Arena, ordered a court from an East Boston lumber company. The company informed Brown that due to post-World War II lumber shortages the floor would have to be constructed using scrap lumber. The company also advised Brown that due to the numerous short pieces of wood, the floor would look nicer built in a parquet style. Walter Brown ordered the parquet floor,<sup>149</sup> paying \$11,000.<sup>150</sup>

The Parquet did not make its Garden debut until 1952, following the sale of Boston Arena to a New York based group.<sup>151</sup> Playing on what Red called, "the most famous basketball

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<sup>147</sup> Dan Shaughnessy, *Seeing Red* (New York: Random House, 1994), p. 67.

<sup>148</sup> Richard Goldstein, "Haskell Cohen, 86, Publicist; Created N.B.A. All-Star Game," *New York Times*, July 3, 2000.

<sup>149</sup> Jay Lindsay, "Fans Bid Goodbye to Celtics Parquet Floor," *South Coast Today*, Dec. 23, 1999.

<sup>150</sup> "The History of Parquet," in *A History of Boston Garden: A Diamond Jubilee, 1928-1988* (Boston: Boston Phoenix Inc., 1988), p. 71.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

floor in the world,” and with young stars like Bob Cousy, the Celtics’ dynasty began to take shape.<sup>152</sup> The permanent addition to the Garden rotation also marked a new undertaking for the Garden’s famed Bull Gang, the maintenance crew responsible for prepping the arena for its various events. The Bull Gang was responsible for laying out and dismantling the 256 individual sections of the playing floor before and after each game.<sup>153</sup> The mysticism and lore behind the famed floor grew so much throughout the remainder of the Garden’s life that many believed the Celtics players, particularly Cousy, knew where the dead spots in it were, and that they were able to direct opposing players into the spots so they could steal the ball.<sup>154</sup> The importance of the court went so far as to have implications in popular culture.<sup>155</sup> The original Boston Garden Parquet, however, was routinely updated, receiving new sections year after year. It existed in some semblance until 2015, when a new NBA rule dictated all courts be updated every 10 years, and the court was removed from TD Garden.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> “Painted the Town Red,” p. 38.

<sup>153</sup> Jimmy Golen, “Everything New at Celtics’ Arena – Except the Floor – Boston Won’t Part with Famous Parquet,” *The Seattle Times*, Sep. 17, 1995.

<sup>154</sup> “The History of Parquet,” p 71.

<sup>155</sup> The Parquet played a significant role in the Season 10, Episode 8 episode of the popular television show *Cheers*, titled “Where Have All the Floorboards Gone?” In the 1991 episode, the characters argue with Celtics’ star Kevin McHale about the amount of bolts that it takes to secure the floor; the answer was 988. Golen, “Everything New at Celtics’ Arena – Except the Floor – Boston Won’t Part with Famous Parquet.”

<sup>156</sup> Adam Himmelsbach, “Celtics Debut New Parquet Floor,” *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 29, 2015.



**Figure 38: Celtics in action at Boston Garden vs. New York Knicks.**

The Celtics' legendary Parquet court maintains its status as the most famous basketball court in the world.

Source: Grant, Spencer. "Celtics/NY Knicks basketball action, Boston Garden." Photograph. 1972. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/5138jk793> (accessed February 19, 2019).

Similar to the Bruins, the Celtics history is dominated by Hall of Fame players and Hall of Fame moments. None of the 16 championship banners that hung so visibly above the Parquet would have been possible if not for the heroics and stellar play of stars like Bob Cousy, Bill Russell, Tommy Heinsohn, JoJo White, Dave Cowens, John Havlicek, and Bill Sharman. The list continues through the Big Three era of Larry Bird, Kevin McHale, and Robert Parish. The Celtic tradition, which was predicated on winning through strong team play, was best summed up by R. Joseph L'Italien, director of Garden Operations, who noted after the Celtics had won their sixteenth championship in 1986, "It looks crowded [in the rafters] but we probably can fit another [banner] in if we move 1984, 1981 and 1976 down closer to 1974 and 1969. I'm sure we'll find room for it."<sup>157</sup> Once again, similarly to the Bruins, when the Celtics won their first championship in 1957 they had no banner raising ceremony. Instead, their initial victory was commemorated by a presentation of license plates bearing the names and number of each player, awarded by then Massachusetts' Governor Foster Furcolo.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>157</sup> Michael Madden, "A Garden Hangover," *The Boston Globe*, June 10, 1986.

<sup>158</sup> "Gov. Furcolo in Tribute to Celtics," *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 1, 1957.



**Figure 39: The Big Three**

*Boston Celtics' Big Three of Larry Bird (right), Kevin McHale (left), and Robert Parish (center) continued the Celtics' tradition of winning into the 1980s. Each eventually had their numbers retired to the rafters. Parish, however, had his ceremony in the "new" Garden, the FleetCenter.*

*Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*

Following that initial victory in 1957, the Celtics would go on to become the “winningest” team in the history of the sport. The team accumulated eleven titles in a thirteen-year span, stretching from 1957-1969, including a string of eight championships in a row from 1959-1966. There for the whole ride of 16 victories was the man who designed it all, Red Auerbach, who had the number 2 retired in his honor on January 4, 1985.<sup>159</sup> Throughout this historic run, the Garden played host to some of the most iconic moments in basketball history. It was on the Parquet in April of 1965, when Johnny Most cried out that “Havlicek Stole the Ball,” winning the Celtics the 1965 Eastern Conference Finals.<sup>160</sup> In May 1987, Larry Bird stole an inbounds pass and assisted on Dennis Johnson’s layup to win Game 5 of that year’s Eastern Conference Finals.<sup>161</sup> The Garden also played home to two iconic games that did not go according to plan for the home team. With 21 seconds remaining in the 1982 Eastern Conference Finals’ Game 7, and the Celtics down 14 points to the Philadelphia 76ers, the Garden

<sup>159</sup> “Boston Celtics Retired Numbers,” *nba.com/Celtics*, accessed Feb. 11, 2019. <https://www.nba.com/celtics/history/retired-numbers>.

<sup>160</sup> “Havlicek Stole the Ball, 100 Greatest Moments in Sports History,” *Sports Illustrated*, accessed Feb. 11, 2019. <https://www.si.com/specials/100-greatest/?q=61-havlicek-stole-the-ball>.

<sup>161</sup> “Bird of Prey,” 100 Greatest Moments in Sports History, *Sports Illustrated*, accessed Feb. 11, 2019. <https://www.si.com/specials/100-greatest/?q=95-bird-of-prey>.

Crowd began to chant “Beat LA! Beat LA!” Although the Celtics would lose the game and the Easter Conference title to Philadelphia, the crowd wanted nothing more than for their rivals from the west to lose in the NBA Finals. The chant would live on in sports history as a rally cry for any team competing against Los Angeles.<sup>162</sup> The second came in a Celtics victory over the Chicago Bulls in the 1986 playoffs, when Michael Jordan of the Bulls scored 63 points against the Cs in their thrilling double-overtime victory. Jordan’s performance led *Boston Globe* reporter Bob Ryan to quip, “It was Michael Jordan who won the hearts and minds of the Garden crowd,” and Larry Bird to state “It’s just God disguised as Michael Jordan.”<sup>163</sup> The Garden also played host to what is considered by many to be the greatest game ever played. The triple-overtime victory by the Celtics over the Phoenix Suns in Game 5 of the 1976 finals. The 128-126 outcome included a blown 22-point lead, five players fouled out, and the most unlikely of heroes, Glenn McDonald. Bob Ryan once again penned the epitomizing quote, noting, “What do you say after you’ve seen the greatest game of professional basketball ever played? That there should have been two winners? That it would have been a bargain at \$250 courtside? That no matter what happens in the final two games of the 1976 playoffs, two teams with heart are competing in the finals? That perhaps rarely in the history of any professional sport have so many incredible clutch plays been turned in during one game by so many people?”<sup>164</sup>

If the Garden was built for boxing, and hockey took it over, it was basketball that solidified its legacy as a sports palace. The iconic and historic moments, the multitudes of great players, all developed the Boston Garden mystique and hysteria that caused teams to lose before the game even started. The myths of “little green men” were not about leprechauns guiding or misguiding shots, it was about a team with one goal in mind, win.<sup>165</sup> And the Celtics cemented Boston Garden as the home of champions.

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<sup>162</sup> “The Day for ‘Beat LA,’” in *A History of Boston Garden: A Diamond Jubilee, 1928-1988* (Boston: Boston Phoenix Inc., 1988), p. 71.

<sup>163</sup> Bob Ryan, “The Show is Jordan’s – But Celtics Steal It,” *The Boston Globe*, April 21, 1986.

<sup>164</sup> Bob Ryan, “Celtics Win, 128-126 – in Triple OT: Sports,” *The Boston Globe*, June 5, 1976.

<sup>165</sup> Fitzgerald, “How the Garden Grew,” p. 11-12.



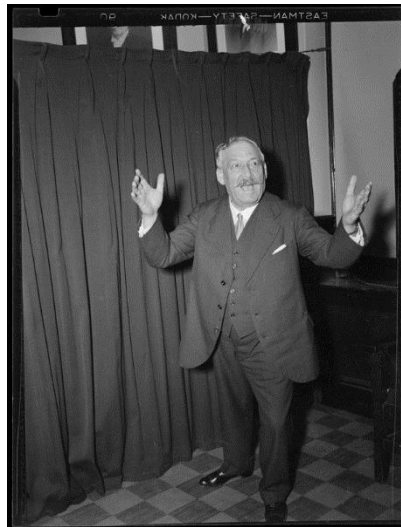


**Figure 40:** 1995 Converse advertisement showcasing the exact location of the various iconic moments to occur on Boston Garden's Parquet floor.

Source: "Boston Garden Banner Years, 1928-1995: A Lifetime of Memories, Grand Finale Edition," Sports Publishing Group Inc., New York, NY, 1995.

### ***Non-Athletic Events at Boston Garden***

Boston Garden was not solely used as a sports venue. As Tex Rickard and Walter Brown scheduled events throughout the year to maintain business at their arenas, non-athletic events provided an excellent opportunity to put butts in the seats. Aside from the circus and rodeos, there were political rallies, religious events, and concerts. These activities opened the gates of the Garden to crowds that may not have otherwise utilized the arena for its sporting events, and provided the Boston Garden ownership groups with some excellent attendance records and publicity in the local papers.



***Figure 41: English Evangelist Gipsy Smith broke attendance records at Boston Garden during his three week stay in 1929.***

*Source: Jones, Leslie. "Gipsy Smith, evangelist, in action at the Boston Arena." Photograph. November 10, 1935. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/nz807106g> (accessed February 19, 2019).*

Some of the earliest of these events were Christian religious gatherings, such as Evangelical Revivals. One in particular from March of 1929 was a record setting event, in which over 152,000 people entered the Garden over a three week span to listen to British evangelist Gipsy Smith (seen left).<sup>166</sup> Put on by the Committee of One Hundred, Smith's record breaking run in Boston included discussions of support for law enforcement officers, and a push for salvation. Smith concluded his speech in the Garden exclaiming that he would meet each of his

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<sup>166</sup> "Gipsy Smith's Three-Weeks Audience Totaled 280,500," *Boston Daily Globe*, March 25, 1929.



attendants in Heaven, stating, “If you get there first, pray for me. I’m going there, not because of my self-righteousness, but because I am saved by the wave of grace.”<sup>167</sup>

Aside from the impressive attendance numbers generated by Gipsy Smith, religious ceremonies were not overly frequent at the Garden. Though the events extended into the 1950s and have been common aspects of local graduations held in the arena, the popularity of religious events did not exceed attendance at other activities.<sup>168</sup> Still, one more significant religious based event held at the Garden was the live broadcast of Pope Pius XII’s speech to the Eighth Congress of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. The speech and Pontifical Mass were attended by 20,000 people, and were followed by an address by the Archbishop of the Diocese of Boston, Richard Cushing.<sup>169</sup>



**Figure 42: On March 31, 1949, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill spoke at MIT's Mid-Century Convocation.**

*Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*

Following the success of speaking engagements, the Garden began scheduling political rallies. Politicians from both of the major parties, as well as foreign diplomats, addressed Bostonians with their agendas. From gubernatorial races to presidential races, Boston Garden

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<sup>167</sup> “Gipsy Smith Closes His Record-Making Revival,” *Boston Daily Globe*, March 25, 1929.

<sup>168</sup> “Archbishop Saluted by Organized Labor,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Oct. 17, 1953.

<sup>169</sup> Paul M. Kennedy, “Pope Pius Speaks to Boston Parley: Bad Reception Mars Talk from Rome,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Oct. 27, 1946.

hosted some of America's most notable politicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt drew a crowd of 25,000 at a pre-election rally in 1940. Thomas Dewey drew an equally impressive crowd four years later in his race against FDR. Foreign dignitaries such as Irish Prime Minister Eamon De Valera spoke in 1948, while Winston Churchill filled the building for a speech at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Mid-Century Convocation in 1949. Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon also addressed Garden crowds during Ike's presidential campaigns.<sup>170</sup> None, however, mattered more to the people of Boston than the night before the 1960 presidential election when John F. Kennedy fought through throngs of admiring Bostonians to reach the stage at his pre-election rally. A former aide noted, "The Boston Garden was the wildest place in all of the country that night. We had been to 237 cities in 44 states in 10 weeks. We'd traveled 77,000 miles – and finally we were back to Boston... Once we were through Logan Airport and through the tunnel it was wild. We inched our way through the North End."<sup>171</sup> The crowd of almost 20,000 adoring supporters applauded for eight minutes when the future president and Boston native took the stage in front of the people that had backed him and his family for the better part of half a century.<sup>172</sup> Other presidents and politicians have since graced the Garden Faithful, both at Boston Garden and its successor, with their political rhetoric. None meant more to the crowds than Kennedy that night in 1960.

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<sup>170</sup> "The Political Scene," in *Boston Garden: Banner Years 1928-1995* (Sports Publishing Group Inc.: New York, 1995), p. 9-15.

<sup>171</sup> "Homecoming for JFK," in *A History of Boston Garden: A Diamond Jubilee, 1928-1988* (Boston: Boston Phoenix Inc., 1988), p. 53.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*



*Figure 43: Crowds inside and out lined up to witness presidential candidate John F. Kennedy of Boston at his pre-election night rally at Boston Garden on Nov. 7, 1960.*

*Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*

The Boston Garden also hosted musical events. With the growth of Big Band and Swing music, aided by stars such as New England's own Rudy Vallee, the Garden found yet another use as a concert hall. Music at the Garden became a big hit when Jazz legends, like Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey packed the house.<sup>173</sup> The early successes with the Big Bands, eventually paved the way for the Garden to host some of the greatest names in music history. The Grateful Dead and Jethro Tull performed at the stadium more than any other acts.<sup>174</sup> Local favorites Aerosmith and The J. Geils Band wowed crowds, while The Beatles made their first appearance in Boston at the Garden in 1964 playing only a 31 minute set that many couldn't hear due to screaming fans.<sup>175</sup> Elvis played his only Garden show in November of 1971. During the performance, he proved why was dubbed The King as he commanded a stage presence that only Elvis could produce. Noted *Rolling Stone* critic Jon Landau described that night in Boston,

<sup>173</sup> "Homecoming for JFK," in *A History of Boston Garden: A Diamond Jubilee, 1928-*, p. 53.

<sup>174</sup> Richard Johnson, Interview with Author, Jan. 4, 2019.

<sup>175</sup> James Isaacs, "Rock On," in *Boston Garden: Banner Years 1928-1995* (Sports Publishing Group Inc.: New York, 1995), p. 51-53.

opening his piece with “He stands there in a black jump suit with gold spangles and an orange cape. When he stretches out his hands the cape forms a half sun under his outstretched arms and he looks like the true king of rock ‘n’ roll. He parades in front of 15,000 people and waits for the applause to wash over him and it comes as it always does and as he knows it will.”<sup>176</sup> The list of greats who stepped on the Garden stage, echoes the lists of hall-of-fame athletes who called the arena home. Two notable moments in Boston Garden lore come from the venue’s use as a concert hall. The first, and perhaps the most meaningful of all Garden concerts was held on April 5, 1968, the night after Martin Luther King Junior’s assassination. While the rest of the country experienced mass rioting, James Brown performed his hits during an extremely powerful and moving evening. Although only 2,000 people attended the concert, it was broadcast live in an attempt to keep citizens off the streets. At one point during the show, James Brown called Boston Mayor Kevin White on stage to assist in his plea to urge the city to remain calm.<sup>177</sup> James Brown’s Boston Garden performance has since been dubbed the “Night James Brown Saved Boston.”<sup>178</sup> Four years after Brown kept the peace, Mayor White was once again forced to maintain calm at the Garden. The night of July 18, 1972, the Rolling Stones were scheduled to perform with Stevie Wonder as their opening act. Heavy fog, however, diverted the band’s plane to Warwick, RI, where Mick Jagger was promptly arrested following a physical altercation with a paparazzo. Mayor White calmed the tense crowd, with the help of Stevie Wonder who continued to play his opening set to the crowd, assuring them that the Stones would arrive. When Mayor White announced to the stage, “I called and I got them out – and they are on their way,” the Garden erupted as if the “Bruins had won the Stanley Cup,” recalled music promoter Don Law.<sup>179</sup> The Stones eventually took the stage after midnight, opening with their hit “Brown Sugar.”<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Jon Landau, “In Praise of Elvis Presley,” *Rolling Stone*, Dec. 23, 1971.

<sup>177</sup> Isaacs, “Rock On,” p. 55.

<sup>178</sup> “The Night James Brown Saved Boston,” directed by David Leaf, DVD, 2008.

<sup>179</sup> Isaacs, “Rock On,” p. 55-57.

<sup>180</sup> “Boston Garden Concerts,” in *Banner Years: The Official History of the Boston Garden*, directed by Peter W. Ladue, VHS, 1994.



**Figure 44: The Beatles only performed in Boston twice**

*They are seen here in their only appearance at Boston Garden on Nov. 12, 1964, which lasted only a half an hour.*

*Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*



**Figure 45: On Nov. 10, 1971, the "King" made his only appearance at Boston Garden**

*Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*



**Figure 46: The Rolling Stones at Boston Garden, 1975**

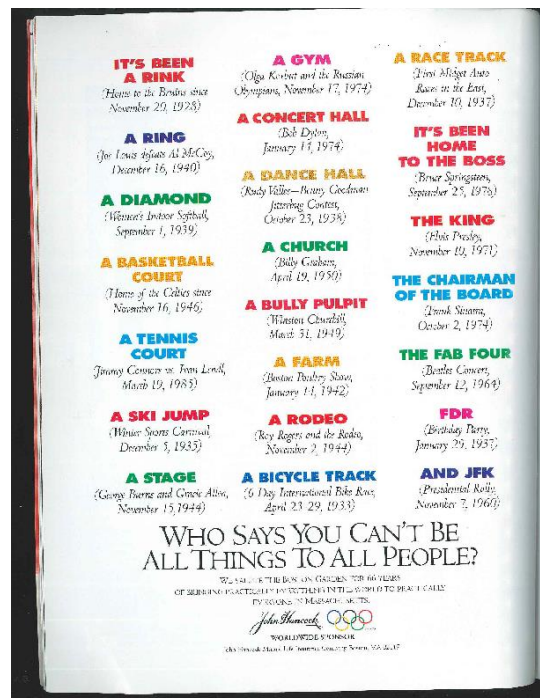
*The Rolling Stones, seen here at their 1975 Boston Garden show, supplied one of the most memorable evenings in Boston Garden history in 1972 when they were detained in Warwick, RI, delaying their appearance until after midnight. None of the crowd left the arena while waiting for their arrival.*

*Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum*

Similarly to political rallies and concerts, during World War II, the Garden served as home to War Bond Rallies in support of the US war effort. Throughout the war years, Hollywood celebrities would grace the stage performing and pleading for people to buy bonds. Stars, such as Bob Hope, Cary Grant, Jimmy Cagney, Claudette Colbert, Olivia de Havilland, Groucho Marx, and Joan Blondell, entertained packed houses of 20,000 people in the Red, White and Blue decorated arena.<sup>181</sup> From athletics to non-athletic events, Boston Garden always found a way to get people into the historic wooden seats.

### *An Uncertain Future*

The numerous uses of Boston Garden displayed the arena's adaptability. The advertisement from John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company of Boston included below accurately sums up the "chameleon" like nature of the venue, and how important adaptation was to its economic survival, especially in its early years.



**Figure 47:** 1995 John Hancock Insurance Co. advertisement detailing the numerous uses of Boston Garden between 1928 and 1995.

Source: *Boston Garden Banner Years, 1928-1995*, Sports Publishing Group, Inc. New York, NY, 1995

<sup>181</sup> Connolly, "1928-1947," p. 30.

The historic run of Boston Garden, stretching through the highly advertised and marketed “Banner Years,” did not end until 1995, when the stadium was closed forever. The iconic and memorable moments that occurred within truly were soaked up into the fabric of the arena, ever-present thanks to the banners that hung above and the memories of the patrons that routinely found solace and excitement inside the arena.

As the once proud state-of-the-art modern arena continued to age, so did its state-of-the-art mechanisms. The next chapter will illustrate just how the development of a “new” Boston Garden occurred. Unfortunately for the nostalgic and loyal fans of Boston Garden, as the 1980s proceeded, the time had come for the owners of the aging and increasingly decrepit arena to actively discuss a change of venue; one that would be deserving of a progressing Boston and its world-class sports teams.

### CHAPTER III

#### FALL FROM GRACE: THE DEMOLITION OF A SPORTS PALACE

As Boston Garden neared its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the activities inside the arena remained much the same. The Celtics maintained their high-level of performance, complete with three NBA Finals championships (1981, 1984, and 1986) in five appearances behind the stellar play of Larry Bird. The Bruins also excelled, reaching two Stanley Cup finals with the help of Ray Bourque by 1990. Concerts, ice shows, circuses, and many other Garden standards remained annual fixtures. The sports, however, began to take a back seat to the increasingly glaring inadequacies of the aged palace.



**Figure 48: Boston Garden 60th Anniversary Pin**

*By the 60th Anniversary celebration of Boston Garden in 1988, the Bruins and Celtics had combined to win 21 championships and develop a winning culture inside the historic arena.*

*Source: From the Author's Collection*

Early attempts at constructing a new arena to take over as Boston's entertainment center began in the 1960s. Plans and desires to build a new Boston Garden, however, did not fully take off until the 1980s when the stadium began to show its age. With various mechanical failures, issues with overheating, and a visually noticeable lack of maintenance, the growing need for a change in venue prompted early alternatives for the Garden's owners and tenants, primarily through attempts to relocate the Bruins and Celtics. In the '80s, involvement from members of the Massachusetts' government, at both the state and local levels, quickly resulted in full-scale redevelopment plans from private firms, such as the Roz Gorin/Paul Tsongas-designed Gateway Center, as well as from Garden ownership, with their Boston Garden Center plan. Despite the



highly publicized redevelopment opportunities of the mid-1980s, no plan was chosen until the end of the decade. The subsequent construction of the FleetCenter in the early 1990s brought about the end of an era in Boston. Following a highly publicized and marketed final season in which fans and former players were able to thank Boston Garden for all the memories it provided, the once-grand sports palace was reduced to rubble, giving way to the new arena just nine inches away.

### ***Early Attempts for a New Arena***

The beginning of the end of Boston Garden can be traced to the 1960s with the creation of the Greater Boston Stadium Authority (GBSA). In 1962, the Massachusetts Legislature authorized the city to raise \$50 million in bonds for the creation of the tax-exempt agency to examine the need for sports stadia in Boston. The main goal of the GBSA, which was chaired by Boston Patriots owner William H. Sullivan, was to develop a permanent home for the Patriots football team, although initial belief was that any suggested plan of action would render Boston Garden obsolete.<sup>182</sup> At the height of the GBSA's popularity in 1966, the Patriots frequently played games at Boston University Field, Harvard's Coliseum, and Fenway Park. They were in need of their own stadium.<sup>183</sup> The Greater Boston Stadium Authority proposed their most significant plan before the state Legislature in May of 1966, calling for a \$98 million stadium complex on 28 acres at South Station, adjacent to the Southeast Expressway, I-93, and the Massachusetts Turnpike, I-90. Building on air rights from the New Haven Railroad, and presumably acquiring properties in the way, the proposal included a main stadium that could seat 55,000 for football and 45,000 for baseball and featured a retractable roof. It also included a new air-conditioned 18,000 seat arena for hockey, basketball, indoor track meets, and conventions; 5,400 new parking spaces located in a new garage, as well as surface parking; an office building;

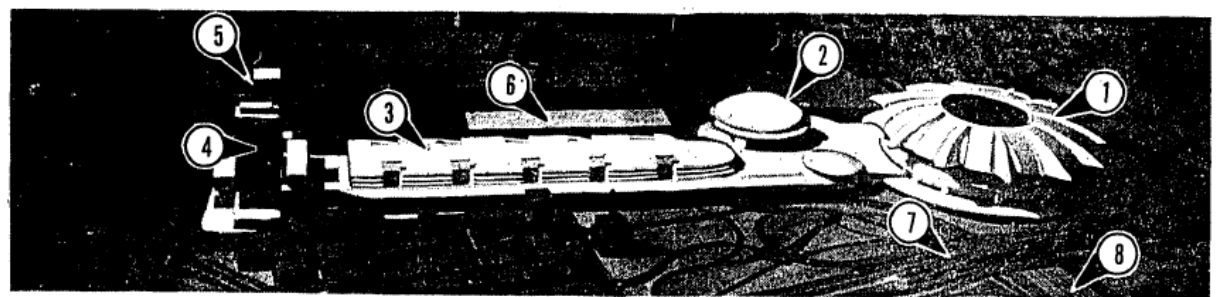
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<sup>182</sup> Ernie Roberts, "A Boston Stadium: Everybody Wants One... But... What's Proposed," *The Boston Globe*, May 29, 1966.

<sup>183</sup> Joseph A. Koblinsky, "Mayor Sets Trap Play for Stadium Authority," *The Boston Globe*, April 11, 1965.

a hotel; and an addition to South Station, all of which would have been financed by general revenue bonds.<sup>184</sup>

Questions surrounding the cost of the complex, as well as what taxable properties would have been taken by the development, led to the gradual phasing out of certain aspects of the plan, such as the Red Sox involvement. On March 23, 1970, the Boston City Council voted against the plan, 7-2, ending the GBSA. Sullivan eventually moved his Patriots to their present day home in nearby Foxboro, Massachusetts in 1970.<sup>185</sup>



**The Stadium Complex the Authority Offers**

The Layout: 1—the Stadium; 2—the Arena; 3—the Garage; 4—the Office Building; 5—the Hotel; 6—present South Postal annex, planned addition; 7—Southeast Expressway; 8—Mass. Turnpike extension, all on 28-acre site in South Station area.

**Figure 49: 1966 Greater Boston Stadium Authority - South Station Stadium Complex**

The plans for the South Station Stadium Complex showcase the 55,000 seat stadium at right, with the 18,000 seat arena directly adjacent, and the original South Station complex at center.

Source: *The Boston Globe*, May 29, 1966

Serious discussions about the redevelopment, or rehabilitation of Boston Garden itself did not take place until the Adams family decided to sell their ownership shares of the Bruins and the Garden in 1974. Weston Adams Sr. initially sold the two entities to the Storer Broadcasting Company of Miami, who owned and operated Channel 38 in Boston, which broadcast the Bruins games at the time. Within 18 months, Storer sold its shares to the Jacobs' brothers of the Delaware North Company for just \$2 million, with an agreement that the new ownership group would assume the \$3 million mortgage on the Garden. The purchase agreement also included a

<sup>184</sup> Roberts, "A Boston Stadium," *The Boston Globe*, May 29, 1966.

<sup>185</sup> Hayden Bird, "How the Boston Garden and Fenway Park Almost Fell Victim to 1960s 'New Boston,'" boston.com, Aug. 22, 2016, accessed Feb. 12, 2019. <https://www.boston.com/sports/new-england-patriots/2016/08/22/map-showing-bras-ambitious-1966-plan-remake-boston-sports-venues>.

clause that the Jacobs' would extend the Bruins television contract with Channel 38 for an extra five years. The shift from the Storer Company to Delaware North is important to note for the Garden. In their short time as owners of Boston Garden and the Bruins, the Storer group distanced themselves from a city-backed desire to move the Celtics and Bruins into a new stadium at South Station. The idea of building an arena in the South End was a continuous, yet always dismissed, dream of Boston's movers and shakers. Rather than move the team, the Storer Company desired to renovate the existing Garden. Before anything could be put into action, though, Storer began to sour on the business side of professional sports, and proceeded to sell the team in August 1975.<sup>186</sup>

Celtics ownership issues would also come into play in the final decades of Boston Garden. At the same time the Adams' family and Storer group were selling the Garden and the Bruins, the arena's other tenant was dealing with a similar fate. In April 1972, Irving Levin and Harold Lipton purchased the Celtics for \$3.7 million, but were forced to give up their ownership because of an NBA Board of Governors vote refusing to approve the purchase. Levin and Lipton were both on the Board of Directors of the National General Corporation, and because then-owner of the Seattle SuperSonics Sam Schulman was also on the National General board, the league would not allow the sale. Instead, Levin and Lipton swung their sale to New England Whalers owner Robert J. Schmertz, and included a provision in their contract that stipulated the two had an opportunity to buy back half of their Celtics stock if and when their ownership was approved. Two years later Levine and Lipton again gained control of the team.<sup>187</sup>

The merry-go-round that was Celtics' ownership did not stop with Levin and Lipton. In 1978, Levin decided he wanted to venture back to his home in southern California, desiring to bring the Celtics along with him. Understanding that the NBA would never accept the relocation of one of their biggest franchises, Levin proceeded to trade franchises with the John Y. Brown owned Buffalo Braves. Upon swapping franchises, which also included a player trade that

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<sup>186</sup> Will McDonough, "Buying and Selling the Bruins: Who Profited?" *The Boston Globe*, Feb. 23, 1977.

<sup>187</sup> "Celtics' Owner Dispute is More Confused than Ever," *The Tuscaloosa News*, June 22, 1974.

brought future Hall of Famer Nate “Tiny” Archibald to Boston, Levin moved the Braves to San Diego, rebranding them as the Clippers.<sup>188</sup> Following the trade between the Celtics and Buffalo, ownership once again switched from Brown to Harry Mangurian, who by 1983 had once again sold the Celtics to a new group headed by Don F. Gaston.<sup>189</sup> Mangurian, in his short tenure as owner, plays a very significant role in the redevelopment of Boston Garden, especially as it pertains to the Celtics.

### ***The Need for Change***

Understanding just exactly who was in command of Boston Garden and the two organizations that called it home is a very important aspect in the overall story of the arena’s redevelopment. Perhaps more important is the need to understand why the Garden demanded change in the first place. When Delaware North assumed control of Boston Garden in 1975, the building was approaching its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and its age was beginning to show. Issues at the Garden ranged from extreme temperatures, with no air-conditioning, to a general lack of cleanliness. Cramped and uncomfortable seating was noted, as were problems with mice and rats inside the stadium. Issues even involved the arena’s smaller, non-regulation sized rink.<sup>190</sup> In short, the major reasons for the need to update Boston Garden were poor maintenance, outdated facilities, and the inability of the managers of the facility to make changes that would please the crowds.

In the summer of 1984, Boston Garden was once again thrust into the national spotlight, hosting the NBA Finals between the Celtics and their fierce rivals the Los Angeles Lakers. The Celtics won the series with a Game 7 victory on the Parquet, giving Larry Bird and the team their second title of the decade.<sup>191</sup> The Celtics’ victory, however, did not translate to a victory for the city, especially not in the eyes of Paul Tsongas, the then junior senator representing the Bay State. Roughly one month after the clinching game, Tsongas, speaking to local government

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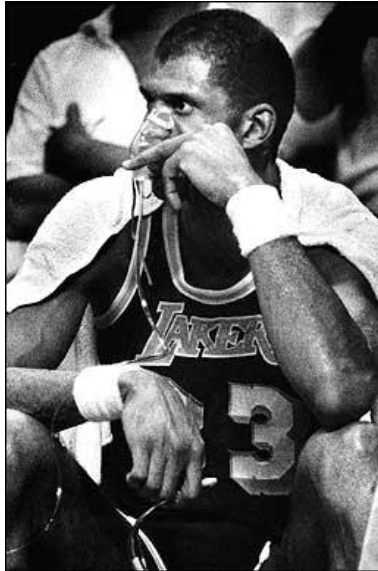
<sup>188</sup> Peter May, “Freaky Friday, N.B.A. Style: When the Clippers Were the Celtics,” *New York Times*, May 22, 2012.

<sup>189</sup> “Boston Celtics Sold to Don Gaston,” *The Nashua Telegraph*, Aug. 10, 1983.

<sup>190</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with Author, Dec. 13, 2018.

<sup>191</sup> Dan Shaughnessy, “It’s Another Banner Year; Celtics Hoist Flag No. 15,” *The Boston Globe*, June 13, 1984.

officials at Northeastern University, very frankly voiced his disapproval with the Garden and its inadequacies, stating “I felt a sense of shame that all around the country people were looking down on us, watching the [NBA Championship] games being played in 97 degrees and people feeling that Boston was still back in the 50s.” He continued, “But I also had a sense of euphoria that this may have made a case for building a new arena.”<sup>192</sup>



**Figure 50: Gasping for Air (Conditioning)**

*Los Angeles Lakers' Center Kareem Abdul-Jabbar required an oxygen tank to combat the high temperatures at Boston Garden during the 1984 NBA Finals.*

*Source: "Gasping for Air (Conditioning)," boston.com, accessed 2/19/19.*

*<http://archive.boston.com/business/gallery/historyofac?pg=9>*

Senator Tsongas's displeasure with the Garden began sometime around 1981, following on the heels of separate Bruins and Celtics attempts to relocate out of the city. His main complaint, aside from the usual arguments of ill-maintenance and outdated amenities – no air conditioning – centered on economic motivators for the city. Tsongas noted in April of 1981 that the basic problem of Boston Garden “is one of economic development. If the [new] arena is not built there will be an obvious void in the quality of life... If this matter is not resolved now it will have to be done later under more adverse conditions.”<sup>193</sup> With the backing of powerful

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<sup>192</sup> Ed Quill, “Tsongas Says the Garden is Embarrassment,” *The Boston Globe*, July 1, 1984.

<sup>193</sup> Andrew Blake, “Arena Committee to Get Briefing,” *The Boston Globe*, April 9, 1981.

Massachusetts' politicians such as Paul Tsongas, state involvement in the quest for a new arena surpassed that of even the Garden's owners, who were content in the current arena.

Why was Senator Tsongas so interested in developing a new Garden? On the one hand, he was not a Boston native like Senator Ted Kennedy or Representative Tip O'Neill. In fact, he was from Lowell, MA. Tsongas is primarily remembered for his active role in historic preservation, he is one of the people most associated with the creation of the Lowell National Historic Park.<sup>194</sup> It was the senator's economic views that explains why he so closely associated himself with the cause for a new Boston arena. Described as a "neo-Republican," despite his Democrat allegiance, Tsongas sought to invigorate the economy by growing companies, with the cost of capital as the most important aspect to economic growth. Lowering the costs of capital, therefore, would expand the desire to invest in businesses, and help maintain economic stability and growth.<sup>195</sup> Tsongas believed that a "new" Boston Garden would spark investment and development in the North End, successfully transforming the area into an economic force in the city. With no documentation of structural damages, and complaints of heat and rats being the only substantial issues, Tsongas's vision of economic revitalization was the true desire to update the arena.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Garden's inadequacies and outdated features were even more noticeable than they were in the early part of the decade. Senator Tsongas's proclamation in 1984 that Boston Garden was a "national embarrassment" may have been an overly dramatic exaggeration at the time, but the problems of 1984 did not lead to repairs or updates. In the spring of 1988, during Game 4 of the Stanley Cup Finals between the Bruins and the Edmonton Oilers, with the score tied at 3 apiece in the second period, a power outage cancelled the game. The lights literally, and at that moment figuratively, went out on the Garden.<sup>196</sup> This was not the first time a power failure had been an issue. Two years prior, it was

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<sup>194</sup> Sarah Rimer, "Hometown Recalls Paul Tsongas as Hero Who Inspired Renewal and Pride," *New York Times*, Jan. 23, 1997.

<sup>195</sup> Michael Kramer, "The Political Interest: Who Has the Best Plan for Fixing the Economy?" *Time*, March 2, 1992.

<sup>196</sup> Francis Rosa, "Bruins 3, Oilers 3: Then the Blackout," *The Boston Globe*, May 25, 1988.

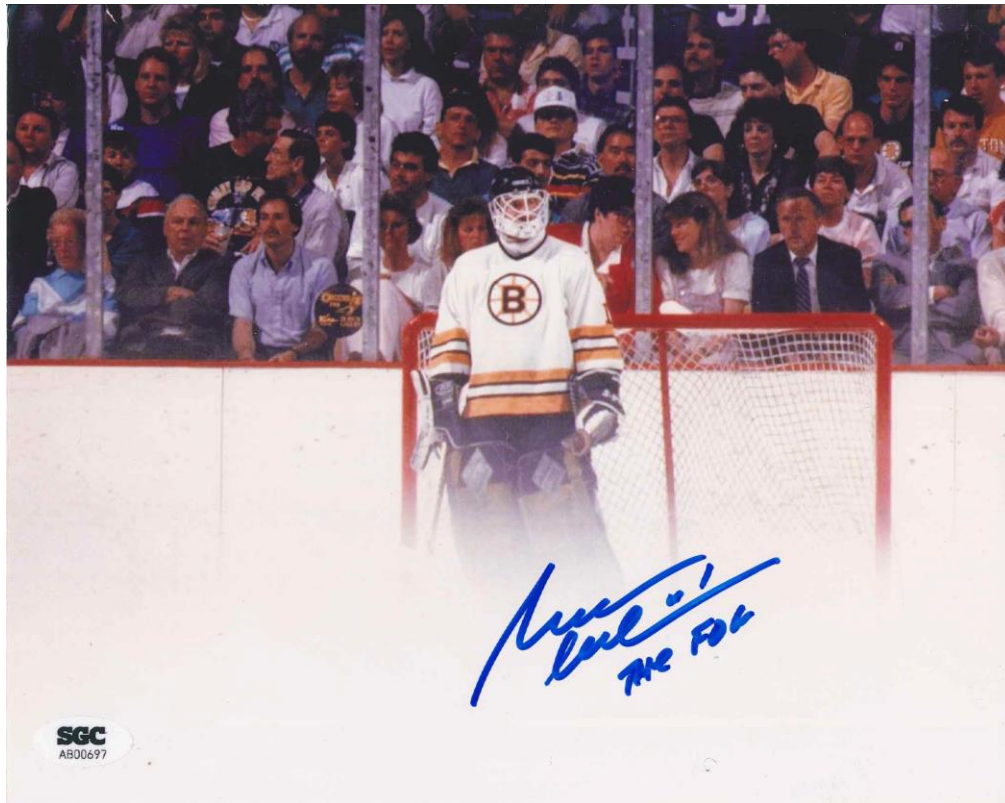
reported that within an eight-day span the lights had gone out twice. Fortunately for the Bruins and Delaware North, both of these infractions occurred either during a practice session or before that night's game began.<sup>197</sup> This time, however, the power failure took place during one of the most important and most highly publicized times of the calendar year, in the national spotlight.

The power outage on that fateful night might have been excused or easily corrected if the only issue with the Garden were its faulty electrical mechanisms. During that very same game on May 25 between the Bruins and Oilers, the issue of heat in the arena became more visible than ever before. Extreme temperatures in the Garden were not a new phenomenon. People had been complaining about high 90s and even triple digit temperatures inside the building for years. This problem was particularly noticeable during Celtics' games in the middle of June, perhaps seen as some sort of twisted fate for having the team make it that far in the season year in and year out. During that Bruins game, however, it wasn't sweat beating down the brow of the athletes that the fans saw, it was instead a thick layer of fog. A total of five times during the second period, that same period when the lights turned off, play was stopped so that the players could skate around the ice to dissipate the fog that accumulated above the ice, caused by the competing temperatures of the ice surface and Garden interior.<sup>198</sup> It was clear on that late spring day in 1988 that the once mighty Garden had truly fallen.

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<sup>197</sup> Francis Rosa, "Power Failure Gives Bruins Light Workout," *The Boston Globe*, Dec. 20, 1986.

<sup>198</sup> Rosa Francis, "Bruins 3, Oilers 3: Then the Blackout."



**Figure 51: “The Fog”**

*During Game 4 of the 1988 Stanley Cup Finals between the Bruins and Edmonton Oilers, the temperatures inside Boston Garden caused a layer of fog to appear at ice level. The game was subsequently cancelled due to power outages inside the stadium.*

*Source: From the Author’s Collection*

### ***Early Alternatives to a New Garden***

By the mid-1980s, it was clear to most in Boston that the Bruins and Celtics would have a new home at some point. Sites in various locations around the city, most of which were located in either the South End or, as Senator Tsongas suggested, in the North Station area, were proposed at different points in the early 1980s.<sup>199</sup> All of them were passed over in favor of rehabilitation and continued use of the venerable Garden. The most noteworthy alternatives in the early 1980s were not new development plans in Boston, but rather relocation plans for both the Bruins and Celtics.

Franchise relocation in sports was nothing new. Each of the four major sports had experienced relocation of multiple franchises. The Boston Braves of the MLB’s National

<sup>199</sup> Andrew Blake, “Architects Refine Plans for Hub Arena Complex,” *The Boston Globe*, April 17, 1981.



League relocated to Milwaukee, WI following multiple years of declining attendance in March of 1953.<sup>200</sup> The Braves were followed some twenty years later, when the New England Whalers, fresh off their WHA championship victory, announced their move from Boston to Hartford, CT.<sup>201</sup> The difference when examining the Braves and Whalers is that neither team was the dominant franchise in their respective sport. By contrast, the impact of the loss of either the Bruins or Celtics on Boston culture would have been as detrimental as the loss of baked beans or the Boston accent.

Notions of relocation began for the Celtics long before the Bruins contemplated the idea. Rumors of a possible movement routinely swirled the Green for two reasons: First, the team did not own the Garden, only leased the space; second, the Celtics team was seemingly always for sale. One of the earliest rumors came in 1970 when the Long Island-based Nassau County Coliseum opened.<sup>202</sup> This was quickly dispelled as nothing but a rumor.<sup>203</sup> The C's once again faced relocation talk in 1972 when Irv Levin purchased the team for the first time. Since Levin was a Southern California native it was believed that he would want to move the team to San Diego, which he would eventually do with the Buffalo Braves.<sup>204</sup>

Gossip and rumors turned into serious concerns for Boston-based Celtics fans between 1980 and 1983. Under the ownership of Harry Mangurian, tensions between the Celtics and the Boston Garden ownership surfaced. On March 4, 1980, the Celtics filed a \$2 million lawsuit against the New Boston Garden Corporation, asking for damages and injunctive relief “to remedy past and continuing breaches of the lease under which the Boston Celtics Corporation presents professional basketball games at the Boston Garden.” In response to the suit, Red Auerbach was quoted in the *Globe*, saying “Wrong after Wrong has been piling up and we finally had to take a stand.”<sup>205</sup> The suit and complaints arose at a time when the Celtics were

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<sup>200</sup> “Tribe’s Move Caps Boston’s Demise as Sports Center,” *Daily Boston Globe*, March 15, 1953.

<sup>201</sup> “Move of Whalers Could Hurt Hub Building Plans,” *The Hartford Courant*, Jan. 8, 1974.

<sup>202</sup> “Celtics’ Move Rumor without Confirmation,” *The Boston Globe*, March 28, 1970.

<sup>203</sup> Bob Ryan, “Celtics Squelch Move Talk,” *The Boston Globe*, Sep. 16, 1971.

<sup>204</sup> Barry Cadiga, “Local Bidder Has His Doubts: Celtics to Stay – Maybe,” *The Boston Globe*, May 2, 1972.

<sup>205</sup> Will McDonough, “Celtics Suing Garden,” *The Boston Globe*, March 5, 1980.

actively seeking a new arena in the Suffolk Downs section of East Boston, and were negotiating the final year of their lease. Garden ownership, however, wanted the Celtics to sign a long-term lease in the hopes that it would aid in their negotiations with the city to renovate Boston Garden. The Celtics issues with the arena rarely publicly mentioned their dislike of the Garden or its inadequate amenities, rather their desire to be equally treated by Garden ownership.<sup>206</sup>

Talks about the Suffolk Downs arena eventually fell through and the Celtics remained at the Garden, while seeking more options. As early as May, just two months after filing their lawsuit against the New Boston Garden Corporation, the Celtics had agreed to become partners with the Ogden Corporation in the construction and development of an 18,000 seat, \$20 million arena in Revere, Massachusetts, just north of Boston.<sup>207</sup> Despite talks getting serious with Revere, financing issues stalled progress until the idea was finally scrapped.<sup>208</sup> Discussions about a potential relocation to Hartford, began in earnest in 1980, during discussions about a temporary residency.<sup>209</sup> The Celtics had used Hartford's Civic Center as a home away from home since 1975, and with their strong attendance totals it was thought to have been a possibility as either a permanent or temporary location.<sup>210</sup> So it was only natural that when Harry Mangurian put the team up for sale in 1983, because he was fed up with the way the Celtics were treated by the Garden ownership, speculation arose about whether Hartford would provide an owner and relocation.<sup>211</sup>

The Celtics obviously never moved out of the Garden, and continued to lease their time throughout the remainder of the building's lifespan. Senator Tsongas repeated his demands that the state build a new publicly funded arena.<sup>212</sup> As serious as the relocation threats were, they did not hold the same amount of weight as the Bruins potential plans to leave the city. Unlike the

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<sup>206</sup> Will McDonough, "Celtics Suing Garden," *The Boston Globe*, March 5, 1980.

<sup>207</sup> Will McDonough, "Arena Plan: Celtics Put Up \$3m for Starters," *The Boston Globe*, May 14, 1980.

<sup>208</sup> Will McDonough, "Financing Still Hinders Celtic Arena," *The Boston Globe*, Feb. 26, 1981.

<sup>209</sup> Neil Singelais, "Celtics Weighing Temporary Move Out of State," *The Boston Globe*, June 27, 1980.

<sup>210</sup> Michael Arace, "Celtics in Hartford: Diminishing Returns End of an Era Today at Civic Center?" *The Hartford Courant*, March 27, 1994.

<sup>211</sup> Terese Karmel, "Try This: Hartford Celtics," *The Hartford Courant*, May 26, 1983.

<sup>212</sup> Paul Tsongas, "A New Arena? Still Hoping After All These Years," *The Boston Globe*, June 18, 1984.

Celtics, the Bruins were never mired in rumors of relocation, but did conduct serious discussions with a small New Hampshire town, roughly 35 miles north of Boston. During the winter of 1980-1981, the Delaware North Company entered into discussions with Salem, New Hampshire exploring the potential of relocating the team to the \$50 million Rockingham sports complex and horse racing facility.<sup>213</sup> Since the NHL constitution does not require a relocation vote from the Board of Governors on moves under 50 miles, the Bruins would be free to move to southern New Hampshire if the team so desired. Boston Garden president Paul Mooney discussed the possible relocation, stating, “We have a 52-year-old building that needs renovation, and the city of Boston has made no earnest effort to help in the renovation.”<sup>214</sup> The Bruins potential move north never materialized due to issues with the state of New Hampshire and its unwillingness to approve Delaware North’s proposed plans, which included state aid in funding the new complex.<sup>215</sup> Rather than foot the entire bill for the New Hampshire arena, Delaware North and the Bruins decided it was best to stay in Boston Garden.

With both the Celtics’ and Bruins’ failing to secure opportunities at alternative sites either in or outside of Boston, the teams settled for renovation, or the possibility of redevelopment of the Garden. Renovation plans were floated. One, costing \$12 million in 1979, was approved by the New Boston Garden Corporation and required the collaboration of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA).<sup>216</sup> Various other renovation opportunities were floated as alternatives to arena plans, designed without the Garden ownerships approval or participation. In response, Garden president Paul Mooney reiterated the ownership group’s stance: “Our position has not changed. We still feel the most realistic thing is to allow us to renovate our present building. It’s more practical and it makes more sense.”<sup>217</sup> Renovation plans were routinely put off, however, keeping the notion of a new arena a relatively strong possibility.

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<sup>213</sup> Bob Kinsley, “\$50 million Rock Complex Moves Ahead,” *The Boston Globe*, Dec. 2, 1980.

<sup>214</sup> Michael Madden, “Q. Why Do Bruins Want to Move?” *The Boston Globe*, Jan. 29, 1981.

<sup>215</sup> “Plan Withdrawn to Move Bruins to New Hampshire,” *New York Times*, June 25, 1981.

<sup>216</sup> Will McDonough, “Sports Log: Garden Corp. Approves \$12m Renovation,” *The Boston Globe*, May 2, 1979.

<sup>217</sup> Will McDonough, “Arena Plan Ready: Sports Facility Faces Opposition,” *The Boston Globe*, Dec. 5, 1984.

### ***State Interference: The Push for Redevelopment***

Senator Paul Tsongas' public comments against the Boston Garden certainly brought the outdated arena to the public's attention. With the development of an Arena Committee, which the senator co-chaired, possible redevelopment plans became a constant part of Boston's news cycle in the early 1980s. The Tsongas-run committee of 25 politicians, businessmen, and sports leaders was created to develop plans for a new publicly operated arena in Boston to fill any void left by the Bruins and the Garden if the team left for Salem, NH. A secondary concern of the committee was to develop convention space for the city because the 1963 Hynes Convention Center was going through some significant financial troubles at the time. Tsongas and his arena committee believed that the economic possibilities of the North Station area would allow for convention and arena space, while the original Hynes building could be used for private industry purposes.<sup>218</sup>



**Figure 52: Senator Paul Tsongas**

*Sen. Tsongas (standing) of Lowell, MA made headlines throughout the early 80s, advocating for the development of a "new" Boston Garden. His desire to redevelop the arena was due to economic purposes. Source: "Senator Paul Tsongas speaking at an Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) meeting." Photograph. 1980. Digital Commonwealth, <https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth-oai:1n79mz89m> (accessed February 24, 2019).*

Within a year of the Arena Committee proposal, the Massachusetts' state government set out to handle the convention space issue head on. In June of 1982, Governor Edward King

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<sup>218</sup> Blake, "Arena Committee to Get Briefing."

signed the Tregor Bill into law. Though the bill involved provisions to stabilize city financing and funds for police and firefighter salaries, it also required the city to sell the Hynes Auditorium for \$15 million, and Boston Common Underground parking garage to the state, while also providing bond issues of up to \$100 million for the renovation and expansion of the convention center. The Tregor Bill also created the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA).<sup>219</sup> With the creation of the MCCA, the state fully embraced Boston's growing need to expand convention space; a notion that completely eclipsed the desire to build a new arena by 1982. In response to the arena-convention center conundrum, state administration and finance secretary David Bartley stated, "The arena is important. But a convention center for Boston has to be the No. 1 goal. The governor [Ed King] is wholeheartedly in favor of it. I see it coming this year."<sup>220</sup> The new and expanded John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center was not officially announced until 1986.<sup>221</sup> The 450,000 square foot convention center, enough space to handle 22,000 people, officially opened on January 21, 1988.<sup>222</sup>

The push for a new publicly-funded arena was not deterred by the superseding convention center plans. Tsongas's 1981 arena proposal was extensive enough to include a proposed name from an advertising partner, Sheraton, and continued to be pushed forward in the early 1980s.<sup>223</sup> When Michael Dukakis regained power as governor for a second time, defeating John Sears in 1982, he again ignited arena talks by adding an arena committee to the MCCA.<sup>224</sup> Under the control of the Convention Authority, an arena feasibility study was conducted in 1984. In this proposal, the Arena Committee set out to complete seven criteria:

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<sup>219</sup> Charles Kenney and Laurence Collins, "Tregor Bill Signing is Likely Today," *The Boston Globe*, June 29, 1982.

<sup>220</sup> John Powers, "The Sport of Building: Hynes Edges Out Arena," *The Boston Globe*, May 2, 1982.

<sup>221</sup> Robert A. Jordan, "The New Hynes: Expansive Enough?" *The Boston Globe*, May 11, 1986.

<sup>222</sup> Gregory A. Patterson, "New Hynes Convention Center to Open Today," *The Boston Globe*, Jan. 21, 1988.

<sup>223</sup> Connie Pryzant, "Sheraton Buys Arena Name," *The Boston Globe*, Aug. 14, 1981.

<sup>224</sup> Andrew Blake, "Dukakis Appoints Arena Committee," *The Boston Globe*, June 14, 1983.

1. Establish an Arena Authority with powers to build, finance, own and operate the multi-purpose arena and related parking facilities.
2. Build a New 16,000 Seat Arena on a site behind the existing Boston Garden.  
Construct a total of 1,500 parking spaces adjacent to an in conjunction with the Arena.
3. Increase the Hotel (Room Occupancy) Tax Statewide by 2.3% from 5.7% to 8.0% to address arena, convention and tourism promotion needs with the bulk of the hotel tax funds going to the State as general revenues.
4. Pledge the Hotel Tax Increase within the Route I-495 Area to back the bonds sold to finance the construction of the Arena. Finance the parking facilities through bonds backed by parking revenues.
5. Establish a Tourism and Convention Fund with an annual allocation (one-tenth of the room occupancy tax statewide in a base year of 1981 to be the initial level of funding) to be used to promote tourism and to help defray the operating costs of municipally-owned convention and auditorium facilities.
6. Pursue an Expansion and Modernization of Hynes Auditorium by expanding onto the City-owned portion of the Ring Road and into Prudential commercial block C.
7. Replenish the Commonwealth's Existing Convention Fund to provide the 70% State share of the Hynes expansion and modernization cost with the City of Boston contributing the balance of funds needed.<sup>225</sup>

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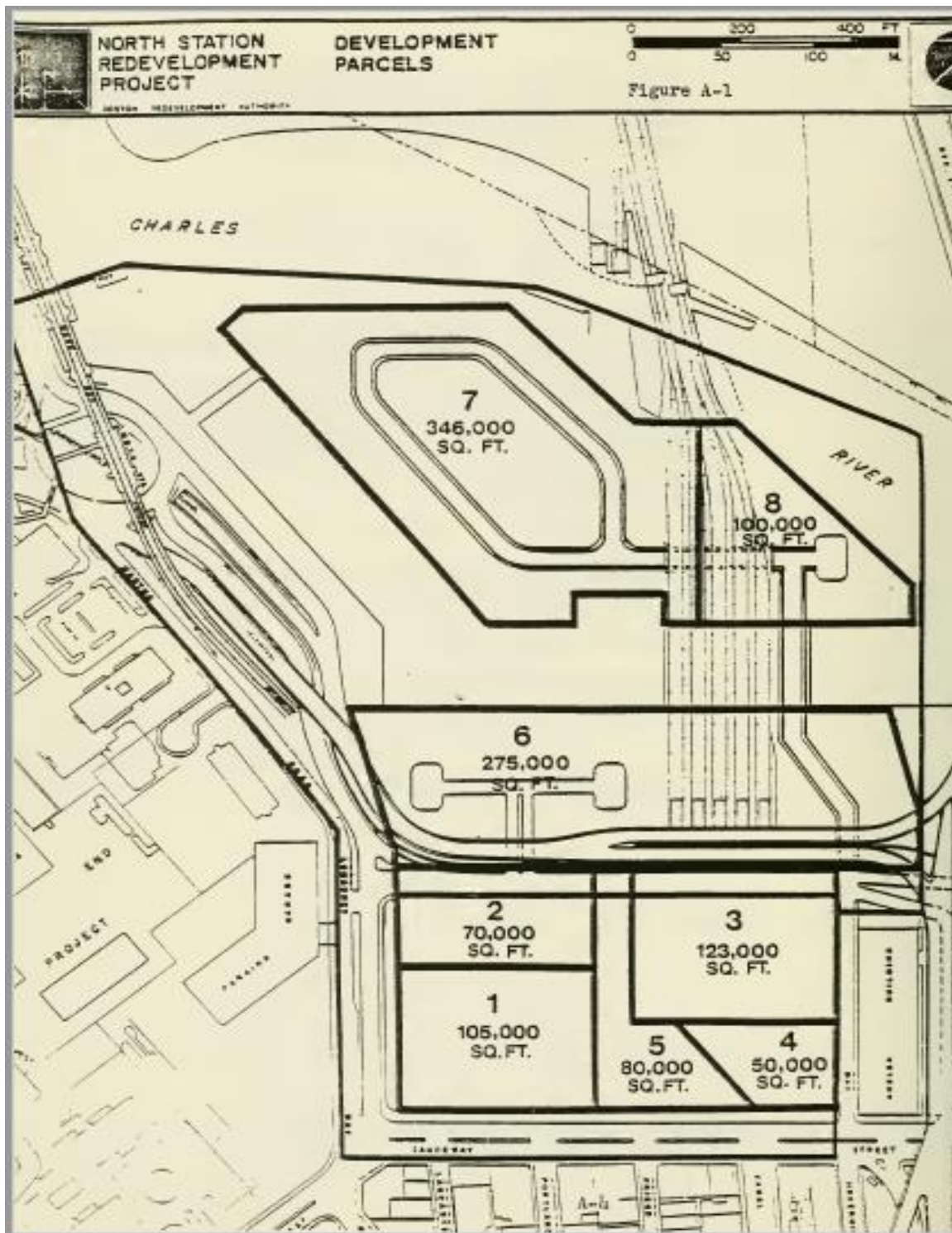
<sup>225</sup> North Station Urban Renewal Project: Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Nov. 30, 1983, p. C-4.

The state-run arena would, therefore, be built as an Urban Renewal project with the aid of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and other government organizations. With the Commonwealth's desire to expand the economic productivity of the city, particularly in the North Station area, the MCCA Arena proposal's Environmental Impact Report noted, "If these recommendations are not pursued, Massachusetts will face the loss of badly needed revenues and business amounting to millions of dollars."<sup>226</sup> The state's arena plan, proposed in full in 1984, was deemed by many in the government as the best and most financially viable option, costing only \$141 million.<sup>227</sup> At that same time the state's arena proposal was made public, private firms began to publish their own plans in regards to the Garden and how that particular section of the city could be as successful as any other.

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<sup>226</sup> North Station Urban Renewal Project, EIS, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Nov. 30, 1983, p. C-1.

<sup>227</sup> Laurence Collins, "Bulger: No Hope for Private Arena," *The Boston Globe*, May 22, 1985.



**Figure 53: 1983 North Station Redevelopment Project**

*The 1983, North Station Redevelopment Project, Development Parcels display the vast amount of land available for a “new” Boston Garden.*

Source: North Station Urban Renewal Project, EIS, Boston Redevelopment Authority.



### ***Gateway Center: The Roz Gorin, Paul Tsongas Plan***

Senator Paul Tsongas grew tired of the slow moving political process surrounding a publicly funded arena by 1984.<sup>228</sup> Following a diagnosis with non-Hodgkins lymphoma in 1983, Senator Tsongas decided not run for the senate again in 1984, instead pursuing a career as a private lawyer.<sup>229</sup> His departure from the public realm did not result in a departure from his deep-rooted desire to see a new arena in the North End. Tsongas teamed with Rosalind Gorin of H.N. Gorin Associates to develop a prominently advertised possibility for the city and New Boston Garden Corporation to consider. Gorin and Tsongas announced their plan for what they called “Gateway Center” in late 1985.

Gateway Center was designed by Kohn, Pedersen, Fox of New York, at a cost of roughly \$1.2 billion, but was reported to cost closer to \$2 billion.<sup>230</sup> Encompassing 5.6 million square feet in the exact location of Boston Garden, the plan for the mixed-use complex called for a new 15,500 seat arena, costing \$79 million; two 35-story towers, two more 43-story towers and one final 7-story building for office space; retail space in an arcade along Causeway Street; a 3,500 car parking garage; a 500 room, 19-story hotel; and residences located in one 40-story high rise and two 9-story buildings. Seventeen floors at the top of the two 43-story office buildings would also be dedicated to apartments, while the top nine floors of the hotel would contain condominiums.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Paul Tsongas, “A New Arena? Still Hoping After All these Years.”

<sup>229</sup> “Ex-Senator Gets Transplant,” *New York Times*, Sep. 5, 1986.

<sup>230</sup> Terri Minsky, “Gorin’s Complex Arena Plan,” *The Boston Globe*, Feb. 12, 1985.

<sup>231</sup> “Garden Plans Compared,” *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 12, 1985.



**Figure 54: Gateway Center from the West.**

*The Gorin designed Gateway Center features various components, including the residential, hotel, and office towers seen at the front of this design model. The new Boston Garden arena is located behind the central tower.*

*Source: Gateway Center, Environmental Impact Statement, H.N. Gorin Associates Inc., 1985*

Gorin's ambitious plan was scheduled to take twelve years to complete. The first of five construction phases could have begun as early as 1987 if the plan were accepted by the BRA, Delaware North, and any other interested party.<sup>232</sup> The Gorin plan was widely publicized due to its extremely extensive undertaking, as well as its hefty price tag, all of which was to be privately financed. Publicity for Gateway Center exponentially increased with the public endorsements of both the Boston Celtics Corporation and Bruins Legend Bobby Orr. The Celtics joined the Gorin bid in October 1985, when debate between the three major redevelopment proposals was at its height. Celtics' co-owner Alan Cohen made a tame and unceremonious comment about the

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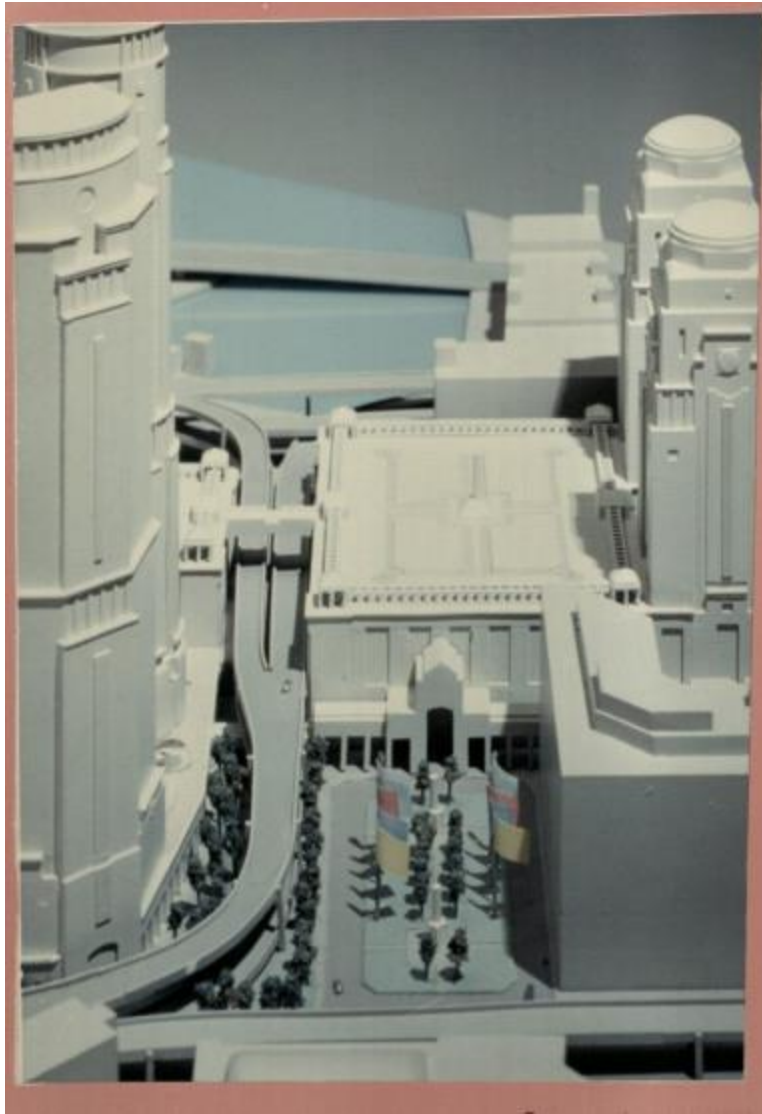
<sup>232</sup> "Garden Plans Compared," *The Boston Globe*.

matter, stating, “The Celtics will support Rosalind Gorin in an attempt to build a new arena.”<sup>233</sup> The team’s decision to side with Gorin, as opposed to the state or the then recently announced Boston Garden Corporation design, should have come as no surprise to anyone involved, especially when considering their strained relationship with Garden ownership. Bobby Orr’s approval of the Gorin plan, however, was a big blow to Delaware North and its project. As one of the most important players in Bruins history, as well as one of the most significant athletes in Boston, Orr’s voice carried a lot of weight. To have him side against the team that he played for was a stance many others would not have taken. In an Op-Ed piece in the *Globe*, Orr voiced his displeasure with the Garden itself, making particular note of the lack of air conditioning as a need to build new, while also explaining that the Garden’s plan was simply a “rerun of those other plans we’ve been promised in the past.” According to Mr. Orr, the choice of which proposed plan was best for the city and its people, was “simple,” noting that Gateway Center “would at last make Boston not just a sports capital, but also a world-class entertainment and convention magnet.”<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Will McDonough, “Celtics Join Gorin in Bid for New Building,” *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 24, 1985.

<sup>234</sup> Bobby Orr, “The Fans and Players Deserve a New Boston Garden,” *The Boston Globe*, Jan. 21, 1986.



**Figure 55: Gateway Center Arena,**

*The Arena portion of Gateway Center, seen at center, would have only been a minor part of a much larger development project. Gateway Center's \$2 billion price-tag, which included a significant amount of property takings, ultimately kept the project a dream.*

*Source: Gateway Center, Environmental Impact Statement, H.N. Gorin Associates Inc., 1985*

Despite the fanfare and public excitement, the Gorin plan contained several questionable financial assumptions. One issue was the cost for takings and demolition needed for the project, with a projection of over \$60 million just to guarantee property rights for the arena.<sup>235</sup> The concerns about the project forced Gorin to submit a second proposal to the state in November

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<sup>235</sup> James M. Rose, "Gateway Center Seen as Costly Arena Project," *The Boston Globe*, April 10, 1985.

1986, which would only build a civic center at North Station for \$75-80 million.<sup>236</sup> Gorin believed that her two plans made perfect sense for the city, and would have brought millions of dollars in taxable businesses and revenues without costing the taxpayers and money.<sup>237</sup> Her plans had one significant flaw: she did not own or control leases on the parcels of land on which she wanted to develop.

### ***Boston Garden Center: The New Boston Garden Arena Corporation Plan***

In 1985, as Roz Gorin and Paul Tsongas were preparing to publicly announce their Gateway Center Plan, the New Boston Garden Arena Corporation, owners of Boston Garden, were also preparing to disclose the details of their own plan for a privately financed mixed-use arena complex. Unlike the Gorin and MCCA plans, the Garden plan, known as “Boston Garden Center,” sought to re-use and develop around the historic arena.



**Figure 56: Boston Garden Center**

*The Boston Garden Center shown in relation to the North Station area, with the proposed Tip O'Neill Federal Building adjacent.*

*Source: Boston Garden Center Promotional Booklet, New Boston Garden Corporation, 1985*

“The fix-it plan” as Bobby Orr derogatorily referred to it was a joint effort between the New Boston Garden Corporation and the Lincoln Property Company.<sup>238</sup> Lincoln Property and

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<sup>236</sup> Will McDonough, “Gorin Submits New Garden Plan,” *The Boston Globe*, Nov. 21, 1986.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> Orr, “The Fans and Players Deserve a New Boston Garden.”

the Garden Corporation were introduced to one another by Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Thomas “Tip” O’Neill.<sup>239</sup> The Congressman had previously supported Tsongas and the early 1980s Arena Committee in their desire to build a publicly funded stadium/convention center. When Garden officials expressed interest in designing a privately financed arena complex of their own, Tip was ready to aid them. The Boston Garden Center multi-use development property called for \$325 million to renovate the facility and install air conditioning, new lighting, new elevators and escalators, and new rest rooms and concession stands. In addition, a 300 room hotel, 1,500 car parking garage, shopping mall, office complex, and “one of the world’s most breathtaking atriums” were to be built. The hotel and office space were to be directly connected to the Garden through the atrium, and housed in one 30-story tower, a second 25-story tower and the 15-story hotel.<sup>240</sup> Boston Garden Center was designed by Cannon/Yan of New York.<sup>241</sup>

The design and promotional information on the project included the Tip O’Neill Federal Building, which was under development in 1985. The inclusion of hotels, which were involved in both the Gorin and Boston Garden Center plans, would therefore replace the Hotel Madison, which was demolished to make way for the Tip O’Neill building. The promotional booklet for Boston Garden Center further touted the project as one with “respect for the history, sensitive to neighborhood needs and a catalyst for future development.”<sup>242</sup> Boston Garden Center was the only major redevelopment project that included reuse of Boston Garden’s historic resources. Due to funding and a lack of agreement between all parties involved, none of the three proposed plans of the mid-1980s went beyond the planning stages. With various other outside factors, development of a “new” Boston Garden remained in limbo until the end of the decade.

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<sup>239</sup> Laurence Collins, “Garden Owners Near Deal on \$325m Plan,” *The Boston Globe*, April 3, 1985.

<sup>240</sup> “Boston Garden Center Promotional Booklet,” New Boston Garden Corporation, 1985.

<sup>241</sup> “Garden Plans Compared,” *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 12, 1985.

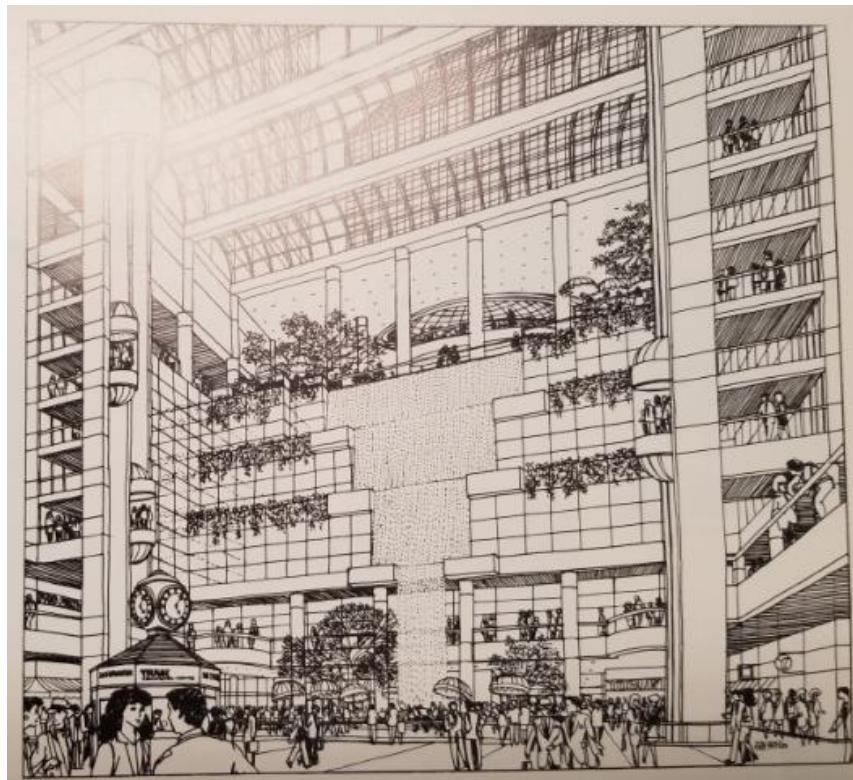
<sup>242</sup> “Boston Garden Center Promotional Booklet,” New Boston Garden Corporation, 1985.





**Figure 57: 1985, Building Section display of Boston Garden Center.**

*Source: Boston Garden Center Promotional Booklet, New Boston Garden Corporation, 1985).*



**Figure 58: 1985, Interior Design of Atrium Section at Boston Garden Center.**

*The John Portman-esque neo-futuristic atrium of Boston Garden Center expanded upon the atria made famous by the South Carolina-born architect. His tower-based designs, complete with central atria were common throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, influencing architects throughout the world. One such example can be found directly next door to Boston Garden in the Tip O'Neill Federal Building.*

*Source: Boston Garden Center Promotional Booklet, New Boston Garden Corporation, 1985*

### ***1988-1993: Finally, a “New” Garden***

Gorin, the MCCA, and the Garden Corporation all waited until 1988 for a decision on any arena development to be made. Mayor Flynn finally reached a decision following the embarrassment of the Stanley Cup Final blackout, in which he designated the New Boston Garden Corporation as developer, contingent upon the company paying \$20 million to the city to use the air rights to construct the site and reach an agreement with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority on other financial matters.<sup>243</sup> When a “request for proposal” was issued by the BRA on the North Station-Boston Garden area in the mid-1980s, it was assumed that a project would be underway at some point, and further believed that any project would result in the demolition of Boston Garden.<sup>244</sup>

Changes on Causeway Street began in 1983 when the BRA purchased the Hotel Madison for \$2.2 million. The building, which was constructed in 1930 as a part of the grander Boston Garden Complex, had been vacant since the hotel closed in 1976. Designed by Funk & Wilcox, the same architects as Boston Garden, the hotel was a memorable place in Boston history since it routinely housed many of the famous athletes and celebrities who came to perform at the Garden, including the Beatles in 1964.<sup>245</sup> In just 9.7 seconds, the 53-year-old hotel came crashing down in a scheduled implosion on May 15, 1983. An estimated 26,000 people came out on that Sunday morning to witness the downfall of the once-magnificent hotel, with more watching on television.<sup>246</sup> Shortly thereafter, construction began on the Tip O’Neill Federal Building, which opened in 1986.

Alterations continued on Causeway and in the Boston Garden Complex throughout the late 1980s and 1990s.<sup>247</sup> The New Boston Garden Corporation plan of 1988 was delayed and

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<sup>243</sup> Brian C. Mooney, “Gorin Says She Has Not Been Told of Arena Decision,” *The Boston Globe*, June 11, 1988.

<sup>244</sup> David Carlson, Interview with Author, Dec. 17, 2018.

<sup>245</sup> “Hotel Madison, MACRIS Inventory Form,” Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, Identification No. BOS.1630, June, 1980.

<sup>246</sup> Michael K. Frisby, “In 9.7 Seconds, Madison Hotel was Gone,” *The Boston Globe*, May 16, 1983.

<sup>247</sup> The third and least heralded component of the complex was constructed in 1929 to serve as an office building and storage facility for the Boston Garden entities. Also known as the Analex Building or Garden Annex, the North Station Industrial Building, noteworthy for its ability to house both the Parquet floor and circus animals, had been rarely renovated and maintained by the late 1980s. In 1988, however, the property was taken by the Commonwealth



criticized to the point that in November of that year, the chances of it being completed for 1992 were put at 50-50. Issues holding up construction included the negotiations with the MBTA on subway tunnels and underground parking. Since the Garden Corporation was responsible for all above ground construction and the MBTA responsible for all below ground construction, the conflicts between the two entities were detrimental to the success of the project. The scheme was still a large mixed-use design project, with a hotel, condos and office space, costing \$632 million.<sup>248</sup>

By 1990, plans for the new Boston Garden, had decreased in overall size to include solely a \$142 million arena, with the possibility of a separate real estate deal to provide the other components.<sup>249</sup> The notion of a new Garden once again hung in the air until 1992, when questions about financing were finally answered. Prior to this point, the financing was going to be split between the ownership group, which pledged \$35 million, \$15 million of which were set up to come from profits on concessions at Boston Garden over a five year span, and \$100 million from municipal revenue bonds.<sup>250</sup> Like so many other plans regarding the redevelopment of the Garden, those fell through. On May 7, 1992, the first news that progress would finally move beyond planning stages was announced. Using a consortium of three local banks – the Bank of Boston, Fleet Bank of Massachusetts, and the Shawmut National Bank – construction would be financed with loans, costing absolutely nothing to the taxpayers of Massachusetts.<sup>251</sup> The green light to the project was officially given on February 25 of that year when the Massachusetts legislature passed a bill allowing for construction on the \$160 million arena to begin in June.<sup>252</sup>

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of Massachusetts as part of the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel Project and condemned. (Paul Hemp, “State Must Pay \$70m for Garden Annex,” *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 10, 1992) Despite its future demolition being a certainty, the North Station Industrial Building survived the Garden, and was not demolished until 1997. (North Station Industrial Building, MACRIS Historic Resources Form, Identification # BOS.1632, June 1980)

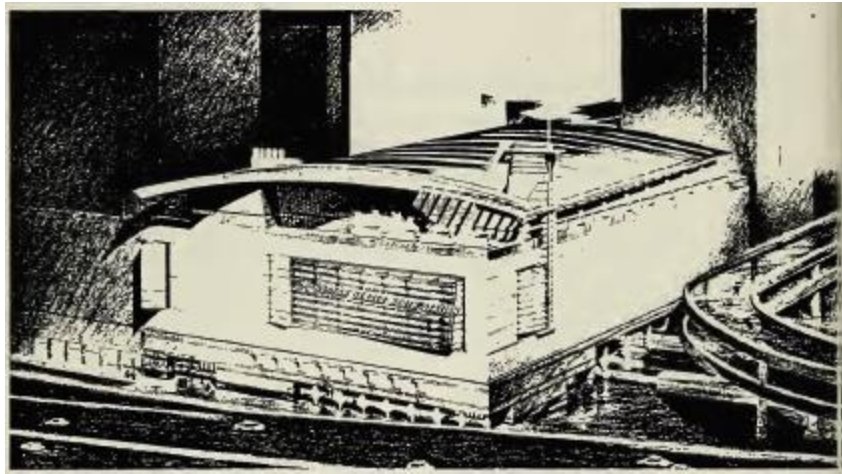
<sup>248</sup> Steven Marantz, “Planning Delays are Said to Imperil ’92 Opening of New Boston Garden,” *The Boston Globe*, Nov. 8, 1988.

<sup>249</sup> Brian C. Mooney, “Arena Plan Takes on Power Player Long-Delayed Bid for New Boston Garden May Hinge on Effort of Investment Firm,” *The Boston Globe*, April 14, 1990.

<sup>250</sup> Jerry Ackerman, “New Cash for Boston Garden Concession Money Added to the Pot,” *The Boston Globe*, Sep. 28, 1991.

<sup>251</sup> Fox Butterfield, “After Long Wait, New Boston Garden Planned,” *New York Times*, May 8, 1992.

<sup>252</sup> “New Boston Garden Plan Finally Gets Green Light,” *New York Times*, Feb. 26, 1993.



**Figure 59: 1990 Architect's Rendering of the New Boston Garden.**

*This exact design would be utilized five years later.*

*Source: New Boston Garden Development Draft EIR, New Boston Garden Corporation, 1990*

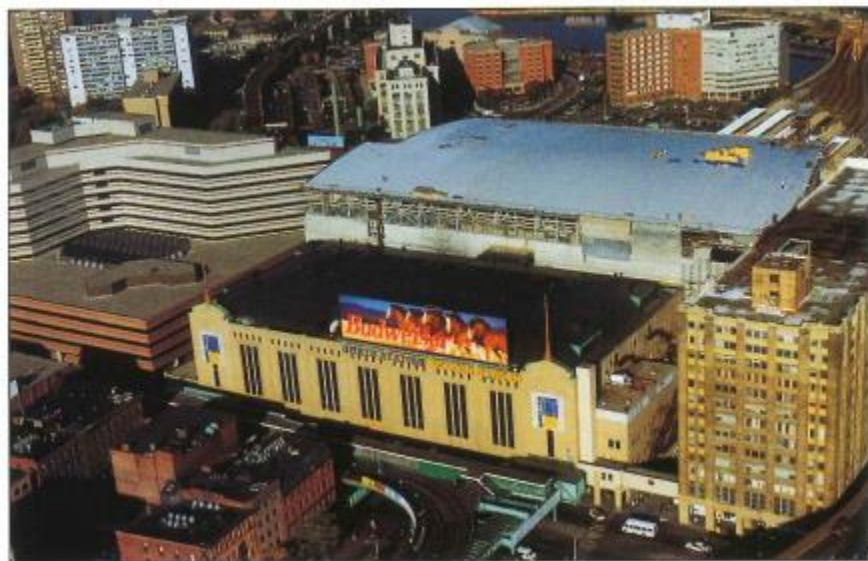
### ***On to the FleetCenter***

Construction of what was to become the FleetCenter began in April, 1993, occurring only 9 inches behind the moribund Boston Garden, one foot away from the North Station Industrial Building, and eight feet away from the I-93/Storrow Drive on-ramp. Originally named the Shawmut Center, the name was changed before the arena opened, following the purchase of Shawmut bank by Fleet.<sup>253</sup> Morse Diesel International constructed the Ellerbe Becket design.<sup>254</sup> Due to the tight quarters, construction on the FleetCenter needed to occur from the inside out. The first step was to build a platform forty-five feet above sea level, the exact height of the arena floor. Once that was done, everything else could follow suit. From the walls to the roof and eventually the interior, everything was inserted, including the ever important labyrinth of pipes required to freeze the ice.<sup>255</sup>

<sup>253</sup> Aaron Zitner, "A Bank Shot for New Garden High-Interest Bidding to Name Arena Reportedly Yields Shawmut Center," *The Boston Globe*, May 15, 1993.

<sup>254</sup> "TD Garden Facts at a Glance, About TD Garden," *tdgarden.com*, accessed Feb. 13, 2019. <https://www.tdgarden.com/about-td-garden>.

<sup>255</sup> "The Building of the Building," in *Opening Night, FleetCenter* (New York: Sports Publishing Group, Inc., Sep. 30, 1995), p. 11-12.



**Figure 60: Construction of the FleetCenter**

*Construction of the FleetCenter commenced while the old Boston Garden was still in use. The front wall of the FleetCenter stood only 9 inches behind the Garden.*

*Source: Opening Night, FleetCenter, 1995, p. 14*

Despite public proclamation that the project would be completed without taxpayer's money, only the arena portion would be built with private funds in the form of loans. The underground parking garage and Green Line track lines cost roughly \$100 million, and both were funded by the MBTA, which is a public entity.<sup>256</sup> Because construction of the garage occurred first, one of the unique design aspects was the construction of the oval shaped arena on top of the rectangular underground portion. The solution was a five to seven foot thick base 35 feet above the rail platforms, where special columns were built to form the radial structure.<sup>257</sup> The Green Line would not move under the FleetCenter from its elevated Causeway Street platform until 2005, following completion of work in the area on the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel Project.<sup>258</sup>

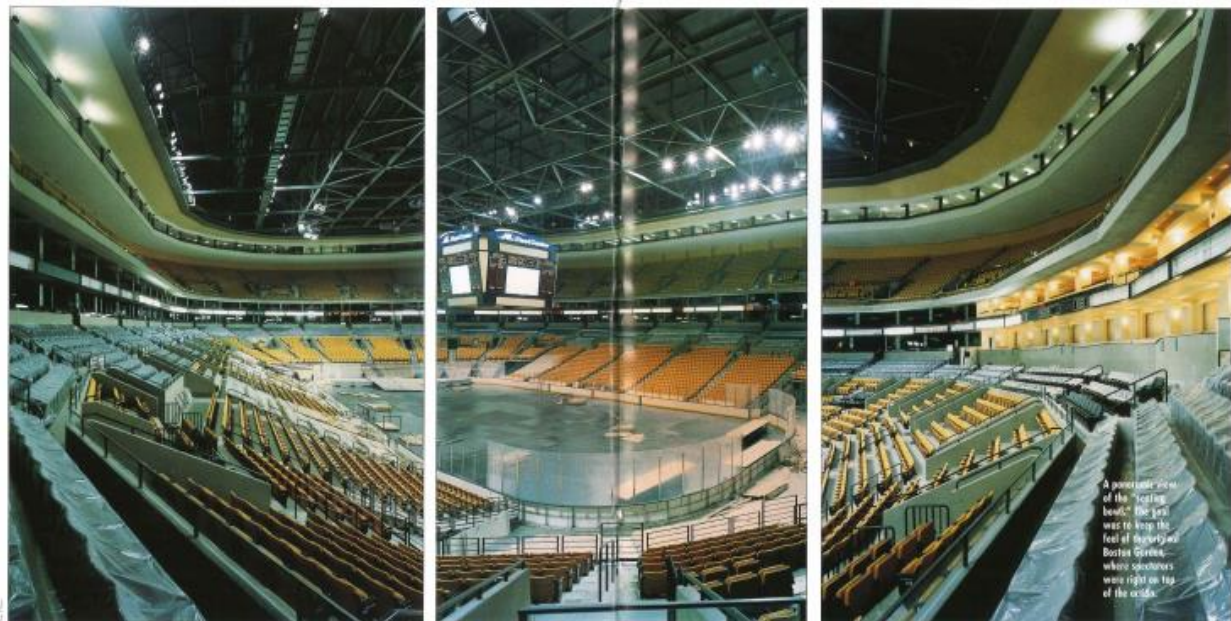
The completed FleetCenter measured 162 feet in height, and 468 feet in length, and had a depth of 300 feet. With a total of 755,000 square feet, the arena featured 39 permanent

<sup>256</sup> Richard Kindleberger, "Public Price Tag for \$160m FleetCenter Still in Dispute," *The Boston Globe*, Oct. 16, 1995.

<sup>257</sup> Bob Cutting, "Inside Out: An Unusual Approach to Designing and Building the FleetCenter," *The Boston Globe*, Sep. 24, 1995.

<sup>258</sup> Mac Daniel, "Lechmere, Science Park Stations Reopen," *The Boston Globe*, Nov. 11, 2005.

concession stands, 34 restrooms, 104 executive suites, 2,442 club seats, and 135 ledge seats. At maximum capacity the new stadium could hold 19,580 persons; with 18,854 for basketball and 17,565 for hockey.<sup>259</sup> Most importantly for the ownership and for the new crowds, the new FleetCenter was comfortable and modern. As owner Jeremy Jacobs put it, “Boston Garden was traditionally considered a place not to go to expect human comfort. The FleetCenter will have a different expectation level... It won’t be hot and sticky, and it won’t be cold and drafty.”<sup>260</sup> Not everything was new and original. A few items from the old Garden were transported into the new arena. The most important was the parquet floor, the “only court” fit for the Celtics.<sup>261</sup>



**Figure 61: FleetCenter Interior**

*The completed FleetCenter interior increased the maximum seating capacity for all events, as well as modernized the seating and technology. Most importantly, the arena added premium seating and executive seats.*

*Source: Opening Night, FleetCenter, 1995, p. 22-23*

<sup>259</sup> “The Building of the Building,” p. 11-12.

<sup>260</sup> Don Aucoin, “The Future Has Arrived: The FleetCenter is a \$160 Million Invitation to the Imagination,” *The Boston Globe*, Sep. 24, 1995.

<sup>261</sup> Mike Szostak, “Celtics Journal - New Parquet Floor Will Replace the Venerable Signature Surface,” *The Providence Journal*, Nov. 23, 1999.



The FleetCenter did not have many significant exterior architectural features upon opening. This was primarily due to the fact that construction of the arena had to allow both the Celtics and Bruins to continue play in Boston Garden. The result of this, however, was a completely barren façade along Causeway Street when the Garden finally came down.<sup>262</sup> The FleetCenter did, however, feature a unique tower at the back that lights up whenever an event is being held inside. A time capsule was also placed into the corner-stone of the building, containing items that reflect Boston in the 1990s; it will be opened on June 5, 2045.<sup>263</sup>



**Figure 62: FleetCenter Tower**

*Due to the need to keep Boston Garden open during construction of the FleetCenter, the exterior of the arena did not feature many significant architectural features, except for the rear tower, which lights up when events are being held inside.*

*Source: Opening Night, FleetCenter, 1995, p. 18-19*

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<sup>262</sup> David Carlson, Interview with Author, Dec. 17, 2018.

<sup>263</sup> "The Building of the Building," p. 13.

Before the stadium officially opened, Bruins and FleetCenter owner Jeremy Jacobs proclaimed, “This will be the first of what perhaps is going to be a renaissance in the quality of facilities in Boston. In time, you’re going to see the Red Sox and the Patriots in new facilities. But it’s going to be led by the Garden.”<sup>264</sup> The opening-night ceremony for the FleetCenter took place on September 30, 1995. Performances from James Taylor, Patti LaBelle, and Nancy Kerrigan highlighted the evening’s events.<sup>265</sup> The celebration of the new stadium continued throughout the year, particularly during the NHL All-Star game, which had been awarded to the new stadium a few years prior. Unfortunately, the FleetCenter did not bring luck to its tenants in its inaugural year. Neither the Celtics nor Bruins advanced to the playoffs. In fact, the FleetCenter, which underwent name changes to both TD Banknorth Garden and TD Garden throughout the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, would have to wait until 2008 to add to the rich Boston tradition of banner raising.

### ***“Thanks for the Memories”***

Before the opening night festivities could take place at the FleetCenter, officially closing the Garden became a priority for the Boston community. In those final years at the old arena, commemoration and memorialization took the place of championship celebrations and high stakes playoff games. Just weeks before of the announcement of the FleetCenter’s financial plan, the Garden Faithful watched as one of their all-time favorites had his jersey number retired to the rafters, supplanting his position in both Garden and Boston sports lore. Larry Bird Night, held on February 4, 1993, was not followed by a basketball game. It was a night dedicated solely to one of the greatest players to ever step foot in Boston Garden.<sup>266</sup> Jersey retirements were not unique events at the Garden, especially for the Celtics, as seven Bruins and fifteen Celtics from the glory days of their Banner Years had already ascended to their place in history prior to Bird. The Celtics also retired the numbers 1 and 2, in honor of Walter Brown and Red

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<sup>264</sup> Aucoin, “The Future Has Arrived: The FleetCenter is a \$160 Million Invitation to the Imagination.”

<sup>265</sup> “The Building of the Building,” p. 28.

<sup>266</sup> Michael Arace, “A Night to Remember: Nothing Sketchy About what Bird Meant to Game,” *The Hartford Courant*, Feb. 5, 1993.

Auerbach respectively, commemorating the work of the great owner and coach.<sup>267</sup> Two more jersey retirements would follow Bird prior to the arena's closing, with Bird's teammate and future Hall of Famer Kevin McHale's number raised to the rafters just a year later in January of 1994.<sup>268</sup> The final jersey retirement, however, was not a celebratory occasion. Following the untimely death of the Celtics' young and budding star, Reggie Lewis' #35 was placed alongside the greats of old.<sup>269</sup> The Lewis jersey retirement seems almost too fitting for the final memorialization before the final games were played.



**Figure 63: Larry Bird Night, February 1993**

Larry Bird, pictured embracing Erving "Magic" Johnson of the Los Angeles Lakers, celebrated his jersey retirement night in February 1993. By that time, the Garden was no longer a place to fear, but instead a place to memorialize.

Source: Photo courtesy Richard Johnson, New England Sports Museum

Before closing ceremonies could take place, the Garden had to host its final events, with record crowds hoping to get their last looks and memories of the once great sports palace. As numerous journalists wrote articles, many of which read like obituaries of a lost loved one, the Garden witnessed the final Beanpot, at which Boston University, the team with the most tournament wins to that point, came out victorious. In addition, there were scheduled final concerts, the final skating show, the final Celtics game, and lastly the final Bruins game, a

<sup>267</sup> "Retired Numbers," Celtics History, *nba.com/Celtics*, accessed Feb. 14, 2019. <https://www.nba.com/celtics/history/retired-numbers>.

<sup>268</sup> Michael Arace, "Big Moment is Within His Reach: 32 Next Number Goes Out to McHale," *The Hartford Courant*, Jan. 28, 1994.

<sup>269</sup> Frank Dell'Apa, "The Halftime Tribute Focuses on Positive," *The Boston Globe*, March 23, 1995.

playoff loss to the New Jersey Devils.<sup>270</sup> The yearlong memorial to Boston Garden concluded in September 1995, leading up to the long-awaited FleetCenter opening. In a two-period exhibition match on September 26 between the Bruins and Montreal Canadiens, the same two teams that christened the Garden in 1928, it was not the score that was important, although the B's did win in a 3-0 shutout. Instead, on a night that one local sports writer described as "filled with pageantry, salutations and fond memories," the real show came after the conclusion of the final horn.<sup>271</sup> The "Last Hurrah" as it was dubbed, featured one final meaningful moment for fans and athletes alike. When the game ended, Bruins greats from the 1930s to the present day, skated back onto the Garden ice for the final time. Wearing retro jerseys from their respective playing days, Bruins legends such as Ray Bourque, Terry O'Reilly, and Phil Esposito all skated around waving to fans and soaking in the moment. There was the moment when Bourque helped Normand Leveille onto the ice. The former Bruin suffered a debilitating stroke before his career could get off the ground.<sup>272</sup> Nothing on that ceremonious evening trumped Bobby Orr's actions. As the fans poured out of the Garden, Orr remained on the ice for nearly 11 minutes, simply skating around. Bobby Orr was the man the fans wanted to see most, the Garden was his building to close.<sup>273</sup>

In a year that featured an extensive marketing campaign, headlined by phrases such as "Banner Years" and "Thanks for the Memories," the Garden Faithful were not disappointed in their attempts to get one last memory inside. The fans were also able to take a piece of memorabilia home with them, commemorating their final trips to the Boston institution. Garden ownership was quick to capitalize on the final season, selling anything from t-shirts, souvenir hockey pucks, pins, cups, and many other tchotchkes that the nostalgic fan would want in their collection. Boston Garden hosted its final event, its funerary service, on September 29<sup>th</sup>. Hosted

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<sup>270</sup> Dan Shaughnessy, "Fitting End to Beanpot at Garden," *The Boston Globe*, Feb. 14, 1995; Mike Shalin, "Ray's Wait Grows Long," *The Boston Herald*, May 15, 1995.

<sup>271</sup> Bud Barth, "Bruins Near Perfect in Garden Finale," *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, Sep. 27, 1995.

<sup>272</sup> Richard A. Johnson and Brian Codagnone, *Images of Sports: The Boston Garden* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), p. 120.

<sup>273</sup> Dan Shaughnessy, "Orr Ushers Out an Era, an Arena," *The Boston Globe*, Sep. 27, 1995.



by WBZ channel 4, the final evening featured interviews and performances by Garden Legends and local celebrities. In what can be seen as eulogies for the deceased, Celtics, Bruins, politicians local boxers and musicians each gave their final word on the arena and what it meant to them.<sup>274</sup> Boston-born singer Livingston Taylor closed the ceremony with a re-worked rendition of “Thanks for the Memories;” fittingly enough as his brother James, opened the FleetCenter the very next night.<sup>275</sup> The following memorabilia commemorating the final season, were available for purchase through the Boston Garden or second hand sellers:



**Figure 64: Boston Garden Banner Years Marble Puck Paperweight.**

Source: From the Author's Collection



**Figure 65: Celtics pin commemorating their final game at Boston Garden on April 21, 1995**

Source: From the Author's Collection

<sup>274</sup> “The Final Evening’s Events,” in *Boston Garden: Banner Years, 1928-1995, A Lifetime of Memories, Grand Finale Limited Edition* (Sports Publishing Group Inc.: New York, 1995), p. 32.

<sup>275</sup> Dana Bisbee, “A Garden-Full of Memories – Thousands in Rousing Farewell to Arena,” *The Boston Herald*, Sep. 30, 1995.



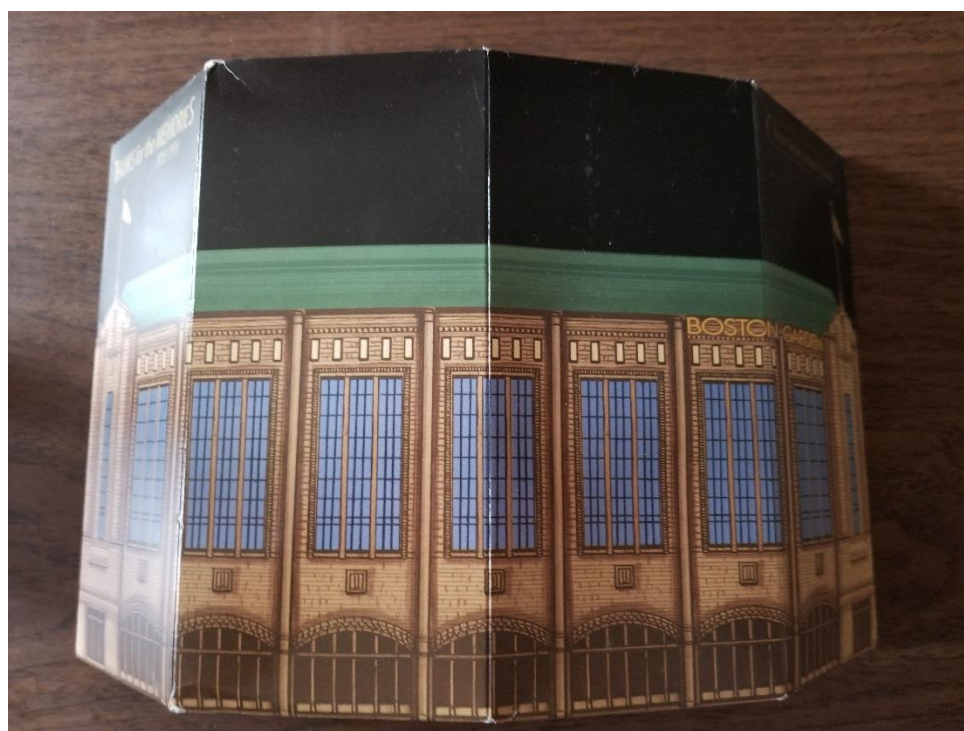
**Figure 66: Boston Garden "The Last Hurrah" Commemorative Bruins Puck.**

*Source: From the Author's Collection*



**Figure 67: Boston Garden "Thanks for the Memories" Commemorative Bruins Puck**

*Source: From the Author's Collection*



**Figure 68: Boston Garden "Thanks for the Memories" Commemorative Bruins Puck**

*Source: From the Author's Collection*





**Figure 69: Boston Garden "Thanks for the Memories" Commemorative T-Shirt**  
Source: From the Author's Collection

Demolition of Boston Garden began in September of 1997.<sup>276</sup> The slow year-long effort to rip apart the arena could be seen by anyone walking or driving past the North End, with the massive structure taken apart section by section. Not all was lost however, alongside the aforementioned parquet floor, various other important artifacts were taken elsewhere, such as the iconic scoreboard, which found a new home in the Arsenal Mall in Watertown, MA.<sup>277</sup> Fans also had the opportunity to get an official Boston Garden brick, either by paying for one at the FleetCenter shop, or simply stealing one from the construction site.<sup>278</sup> The arena was completely gone by the end of 1998, and with it the memories of a rich Boston tradition that began 70 years earlier when President Coolidge turned the lights on in 1928.



**Figure 70: Official Boston Garden bricks were available to fans, either through purchase or theft**  
*Source: From Author's Collection*

The demolition of Boston Garden and construction of the FleetCenter served as an example of Boston's desire to transition from an antiquated and outdated place to a world-class, 21<sup>st</sup>-century city. Just as Senator Tsongas and Bobby Orr noted during their campaign for a new arena in the early 1980s, the new facility signaled the beginning of a new era. FleetCenter and Boston Garden were not the only changes seen throughout the city. Significant redevelopment projects occurred in Boston throughout the 1980s and 1990s, each a piece of a "new" Boston.

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<sup>276</sup> "The Garden Closes Doors for Last Time – Demolition Set to Begin," *Bangor Daily News*, Sep. 30, 1997.

<sup>277</sup> Dan Shaughnessy, "Where's the Garden Scoreboard? Hanging Out At the Mall," *The Boston Globe*, Dec. 12, 1997.

<sup>278</sup> "Rubble-Robbers Fence Hot Brick from Boston Garden," *Boston Business Journal*, June 8, 1998.





**Figure 71: Demolition of Boston Garden**

*Demolition of Boston Garden was not completed until 1998. The slow process of tearing down the historic arena left a daily reminder for those passing by.*

*Source: "Looking at the Old Boston Garden," boston.com, accessed Feb. 24, 2019.*

*<https://www.boston.com/news/local-news/2015/06/19/looking-at-the-old-boston-garden>*

CHAPTER IV  
THE GARDEN UP ON THE HILL:  
BOSTON GARDEN AS THE CULMINATION OF CITY AND STATE PLANNING

A considerable amount of discussion is required to complete a real-estate development deal of the magnitude of the North Station-Boston Garden redevelopment. Private and public funds are often required. The public funds require political involvement on both the state and city levels. Alternative players, those not directly linked to the project, also seek to benefit from the deal, adding extra layers of negotiations, and alterations to the fine print. Aside from those negotiating the terms of the redevelopment, one aspect of any large development deal that is often overlooked, or even ignored, is the role played by what is going on economically and politically in the specific locality at that time.

In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Boston was continually adapting and changing. The historically proud blue-collar city with dozens of textile mills in the region declined in the 1950s. Subsequent attempts at urban renewal throughout the middle of the century, such as the demolition of the West End, the transformation of Scollay Square into Government Center, and the construction of the Central Artery elevated highway, served as attempts to revive downtown Boston. The economic comeback, however, was not accomplished through the development of a “new” city. Instead, it was led by the city’s educational institutions, hospitals, and biotechnology. These played a very large role in what was dubbed the “Massachusetts Miracle,” an economic boom in the late 1980s. The “Massachusetts Miracle” once again opened the door to private investment inside the city, leading to two major state and citywide undertakings that were aimed at aiding Boston’s push towards becoming a world-class city. The megaproject known as the “Big Dig” was a joint effort by all three levels of government, local, state, and federal, that resulted in the submersion of the Central Artery. Meanwhile, the Boston Redevelopment Authority was undergoing its extensive rezoning of the city, geared directly towards welcoming new construction.

Although on the surface the shift from industry to a service based economy and the city/state projects of the 1980s seemingly have very little to do with a private company's desire to build a new sports arena, each of the previously mentioned factors played a significant role in Delaware North's desire to redevelop the site. The story as to how the Boston Garden shifted to the FleetCenter, therefore, cannot be fully conveyed without detailing what exactly was going on around the city and region at the time of the development process.

### ***Urban Renewal in Boston***

Boston's economic decline following World War II resulted in a lack of new construction, a diminutive and aging core business district, decaying residential neighborhoods, and a serious issue with congested roadways.<sup>279</sup> As suburbanization attracted city residents into surrounding areas, city, state, and federal governments searched for ways to ensure the survival of the American city. The solution was to improve housing and transportation with new facilities. Boston's post-World War II activities included the demolition of the West End, the transformation of Scollay Square into Government Center, and the construction of the John F. Fitzgerald Expressway, more commonly known as the Central Artery.

Boston's Urban Renewal story begins and ends with the cautionary tale of the West End. The West End has a very similar historical background to the rest of the city. After the marshes that separated the West End from the North were filled in, the West End developed into a residential neighborhood. Working class tenement housing dominated the area, while the signature Boston row houses of the upper class were interspersed throughout.<sup>280</sup> The growth of the West End resulted in a proud neighborhood that some historians have compared to European villages in terms of make-up and cultural styles.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Christopher Rhein Kehoe, "The History of the Central Artery Expressway Boston, MA – 1907-1990," Master's Thesis, Cornell University, Jan. 1991, p. i.

<sup>280</sup> J. Charles Swift, "New Fields and Beyond: The West End, 1630-1900," in *The Last Tenement: Confronting Community and Urban Renewal in Boston's West End*, ed. Sean M. Fisher and Carolyn Hughes (Boston: Bostonian Society, 1992), p. 22.

<sup>281</sup> Herbert J. Gans, "The Urban Village Revisited: The World of the West End Just Before Its Destruction," in *The Last Tenement: Confronting Community and Urban Renewal in Boston's West End*, ed. Sean M. Fisher and Carolyn Hughes (Boston: Bostonian Society, 1992), p. 18.

The eclectic ethnic background of the West End decayed during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century into what Boston city officials referred to as a “slum.” This classification spelled the doom of the neighborhood, and set up the desire to raze the properties to replace them with luxury housing, worthy of affluent residents who wished to move back into the city. The Housing Act of 1949, expanding upon the 1937 Act, sought to relieve post-World War II housing shortages, while also targeting blighted areas.<sup>282</sup> Housing, therefore, became the first target of Urban Renewal practices nationwide. By the late 1950s, the West End was a logical choice for redesign.

Under the direction of Mayor John Hynes, the demolition of the West End began in 1958. Thousands of West Enders were displaced as their homes were taken through eminent domain. Instead of maintaining and preserving the historic neighborhood, the West End was developed into a mixed-use area, replete with high-rise housing and commercial properties.<sup>283</sup> The actions taken in the West End have led many, including noted urban planner and author Chester Hartman, to declare the slum clearance revitalization efforts as a failure, “not only in the West End but nationwide.”<sup>284</sup> In the West End, only one tenement house, referred to as the “Last Tenement,” remains, located at 42 Lomasney Way.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> “Blighted” neighborhoods in cities across the country were often impacted by neglect and lack of maintenance as a result of both the Great Depression and World War II. This impacted historic neighborhoods in lower-income centers, such as the West End, more than any other. Michael Tomlan, *Historic Preservation: Caring for Our Expanding Legacy* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2015), p. 49.

<sup>283</sup> Thomas H. O’Connor, “The Urban Renewal Chronicle: The Politics of Urban Renewal in Boston,” in *The Last Tenement: Confronting Community and Urban Renewal in Boston’s West End*, ed. Sean M. Fisher and Carolyn Hughes (Boston: Bostonian Society, 1992), p. 60-67.

<sup>284</sup> Chester W. Hartman, “Lessons for Urban Planners,” in *The Last Tenement: Confronting Community and Urban Renewal in Boston’s West End*, ed. Sean M. Fisher and Carolyn Hughes (Boston: Bostonian Society, 1992), p. 73.

<sup>285</sup> Eric Moskowitz, “Boston’s Last Tenement an Island Awash in Modernity,” *The Boston Globe*, Aug. 16, 2015.





**Figure 72: The Demolition of the West End**

1959 aerial view capturing the extent of demolition in Boston's West End during the Urban Renewal era.

Source: *Boston Globe*, accessed 2/19/19. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2012/01/07/westend-gallery/JLOcNOKJPDAmWVaFNU6q8K/story.html?pic=1>

By contrast, the transformation of Scollay Square into Government Center is widely viewed as both successful and beneficial to the city. Scollay Square, similarly to the West End, developed an extremely negative reputation as Boston's red light district. Unlike the West End, Scollay Square did not feature the displacement of thousands of long-term residents. Ironically, some of the families displaced by the Scollay Square redevelopment had only recently moved there following the loss of their homes in the West End.<sup>286</sup> In total, sixty acres and seventy-three buildings in Scollay Square were targeted for demolition in order to build Government Center in the 1960s. The area was the perfect embodiment of Boston's economic downturn in the post-war era, as businesses declined by 39.2 percent between 1947 and 1957, employment decreased by 23 percent over that same time, and 18.6 percent of total floor space was vacant as of 1959. With further decreases in property value paired with the blighted and ill-reputed neighborhood, Scollay Square was essentially a poster child for Urban Renewal commercial redevelopment.<sup>287</sup>

<sup>286</sup> Thomas H. O'Connor, *Building a New Boston: Politics and Urban Renewal 1950-1970* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), p. 199.

<sup>287</sup> Daniel A. Gilbert, "Why Dwell on a Lurid Memory? Deviance and Redevelopment in Boston's Scollay Square," *Massachusetts Historical Review*, Vol. 9, 2007, p. 106.

By the 1960s, Urban Renewal initiatives expanded beyond simply addressing issues of housing and blight. City planners across the country, therefore, sought to establish new downtown retail sectors that could compete with suburban shopping malls, as well as office complexes that would bring more employment into the cities. In September 1960, the Eisenhower Administration provided funding for a federal building to be erected in downtown Boston. Shortly thereafter, the Massachusetts state legislature followed suit, providing money for a new city hall on the same site.<sup>288</sup>

The principal idea of the Government Center plan was to unify the offices of the federal, state, and local government into one area. The result was the construction of a new city hall, the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Federal Building, and the massive City Hall Plaza that surrounds it. City Hall, designed by Gerhard Kallmann, is one of Boston's most divisive structures, due to its Brutalist design. Yet, City Hall remains one of the city's most important properties and a reminder of the Urban Renewal era.<sup>289</sup> Its importance was recently summed up by one Boston based preservationist, noting that City Hall is one of the few buildings she would sit down in front of, in order to block any bulldozer aimed to demolish it.<sup>290</sup>

As with any new development that requires the demolition of existing resources, some historic and aesthetically significant buildings were lost. Scollay Square's history as an entertainment district was noticeable through the various theatres and commercial properties seen throughout the now non-existent streets.<sup>291</sup> The successful creation of Government Center shows the positive effects of Urban Renewal during the 1950s and 60s. Most Urban Renewal projects, however, tended to be more like the West End development, as opposed to that of Government Center.

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<sup>288</sup> Daniel A. Gilbert, "Why Dwell on a Lurid Memory? Deviance and Redevelopment in Boston's Scollay Square," *Massachusetts Historical Review*, Vol. 9, 2007, p. 106.

<sup>289</sup> Dennis Hevesi, "Gerhard Kallmann, Architect, is Dead at 97," *New York Times*, June 24, 2012.

<sup>290</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with the Author, Dec. 13, 2018.

<sup>291</sup> Gilbert, "Why Dwell on a Lurid Memory?" p. 133.



**Figure 73: Government Center**

*Boston's Government Center, with City Hall at center, was a successful example of Urban Renewal's expansion from housing and transportation redevelopment to commercial initiatives, geared towards bringing commerce back to city centers.*

*Source: Cushing, George M. "Government Center." Photograph. 1968. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/00000304q> (accessed February 19, 2019).*

The West End and Government Center projects were not as large in regards to land size, demolition, and the overall lasting impact as the construction of the John F. Fitzgerald Expressway. Plans for the Central Artery in the early years a simple grand boulevard connecting North and South Stations began as early as 1907 in the heyday of the City Beautiful movement.<sup>292</sup> Various surveys, plans and reports led to the Maguire Report, submitted to the Joint Board for the Metropolitan Master Highway Plan on February 1, 1948. The Report called for a “system of expressways to accelerate traffic flow in the area and a distributing facility, generally referred to as a Central Artery, for downtown Boston.”<sup>293</sup> The extensive and well researched plan, completed and submitted by the Charles Maguire Company of Boston, featured not only the design and need for a highway in Boston, but also the effects of construction on the city, and its surrounding towns. In total, twenty-three cities and towns, in addition to Boston,

<sup>292</sup> Kehoe, “History of the Central Artery Expressway Boston, MA,” p. 18.

<sup>293</sup> Charles Maguire and Associates, “1948 Master Plan for The Boston Metropolitan Area,” prepared for Massachusetts Department of Public Works, (Boston: 1948), p. 9.

were incorporated into the study, encompassing a total area of 380 square miles.<sup>294</sup> The Central Artery took eight years to construct at a cost to the Commonwealth of over \$650 million, officially opening for travel on June 24, 1959.<sup>295</sup>

The development of Boston's highway infrastructure predates the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, which authorized the federal government to pay 90% of the total cost of the highway, leaving 10% in state funds. The act transformed the Urban Renewal movement, allowing for land takings for the purpose of transportation construction.<sup>296</sup> Although Boston's Central Artery did not utilize Eisenhower's federal funding, the results were no less dramatic. The highway infrastructure also included the construction of the Massachusetts' Turnpike, I-90, which directly connected with the Central Artery, as well as Rt. 128 and I-95, which outlined the periphery of the city. The negative effects of the Central Artery's construction on the city of Boston, however, were so profound that some believe the city is still reeling from its damages and the aftermath caused by it.<sup>297</sup> As the Artery did exactly what its name inferred, it cut through various neighborhoods with an elevated and below grade thoroughfare that required land to build its access ramps at the ground level.

Debate around the Artery's path of destruction came to the fore in the early 1950s as plans for the six-lane highway route emerged. The expressway sought to take the land controlled by various commercial and residential properties, while also cutting the historically Italian neighborhood off from the remainder of the city. It was during these initial meetings that representatives of the Boston & Maine Railroad, still owners of North Station-Boston Garden at the time, voiced their concern over the proposed route of the highway, specifically the location of the Charles River Bridge and its proximity to the station/arena.<sup>298</sup> The Committee to Save the

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<sup>294</sup> Charles Maguire and Associates, "1948 Master Plan for The Boston Metropolitan Area," prepared for Massachusetts Department of Public Works, (Boston: 1948), p. 10.

<sup>295</sup> Kehoe, "History of the Central Artery Expressway Boston, MA," p. 1.

<sup>296</sup> Tomlan, *Historic Preservation*, p. 63.

<sup>297</sup> Anthony Flint, "10 Years Later, Did the Big Dig Deliver? The \$15 Billion Project is a Road Paved with Failures, Successes, and What-Ifs," *The Boston Globe*, Dec. 29, 2015.

<sup>298</sup> Hans Bleiker, "Augmentation and Meta Process: A Strategy for Responsive and Responsible Decision-Making by Public Agencies," (Ph.D. Diss., MIT, 1972), p. 505.

North End formed in March, 1950, vehemently opposing the projected route of the expressway, and focusing a great deal of attention on “‘campaigning, canvassing, and taking surveys,’ with the preparation of an alternative route for the artery.”<sup>299</sup> The committee also worried about the preservation of the “historic shrines” located in the North End.<sup>300</sup> The preservation advocacy was spearheaded by Frederick Langone, a member of the Committee to Save the North End who would go on to represent that area in Boston’s Common Council. Mr. Langone was the first to outline how the artery would damage to the fabric and vitality of the area. On Nov. 7, 1950, the first notices of land takings were posted. Fifty North End parcels were taken through eminent domain, and even though protests soon followed, the Artery’s construction and the demolition it required was underway.<sup>301</sup>

Following the completion of the first segment, construction on the second began. This section stretched from “Fort Hill Square through the Garment and Leather districts as well as Chinatown, and ended at Kneeland Street.”<sup>302</sup> When plans for this section were made public in 1953, residents of the various areas took up arms almost immediately.<sup>303</sup> Various organizations including the Chinese Merchants Association, the Department of Public Works, the mayor’s office, the governor’s office, and outside firms each debated the proposed routes. The controversies surrounding the exact path stretched into 1954. Unlike the North End controversy, newspapers began to publish stories about the effects of the Artery as it related to Chinatown business. Finally, in March 1954 Governor Herter and Mayor Hynes released a joint statement announcing their decision. Takings in Chinatown were announced in January of 1955 at the start of construction. Due to the constant protests of the Chinatown and Leather and Garment District’s residents and business owners, Mayor Hynes acquiesced and fought for the depression

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<sup>299</sup> Robert C. Bergenheim, “Citizens Hit Highway Site in North End,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 1, 1950, p. 1.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> Kehoe, “History of the Central Artery Expressway Boston, MA,” p. 61-63.

<sup>302</sup> Leo Demarsh, “The John F. Fitzgerald Expressway Boston Central Artery,” *Traffic Quarterly*, Oct. 1956, p. 454.

<sup>303</sup> Bleiker, “Augmentation and Meta Process: A Strategy for Responsive and Responsible Decision-Making by Public Agencies,” p. 516.

of specific sections of this route, which he did not do in the North End, saving many of the properties that otherwise would have been destroyed.<sup>304</sup>



**Figure 74: Boston's Central Artery**

*The Central Artery cut Boston in half, separating communities like the North End from the remainder of Boston. Its path of destruction was also a major point of contention in Urban Renewal Boston.*

*Source: Grant, Spencer. "Central Artery, Customs House and North End waterfront, downtown Boston."*

*Photograph. 1973. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/p2676v980> (accessed March 19, 2019).*

The history of the Central Artery serves as a reminder of the painful demolition and change caused by Urban Renewal efforts. Even though the highway construction resulted in some improvements, such as the creation of Storrow Drive, which in the plan was referred to as an "embankment road" along the banks of the Charles River, the overall impact of the highway was very invasive.<sup>305</sup> The outcome of the Artery debates and controversies also contributed to

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<sup>304</sup> Kehoe, "History of the Central Artery Expressway Boston, MA," p. 91.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid, p. 45.

the successful protests in the 1960s surrounding the proposed Inner Belt highway that would have connected Roxbury and Somerville.<sup>306</sup>

These three projects serve as the premiere examples of Boston redevelopment prior to the 1980s, when the future of the Boston Garden was being debated.

### ***The “Massachusetts Miracle:” An Economic Shift***

While the Urban Renewal projects were underway, a shift took place in Boston’s commercial activity. This shift would provide the entire New England region with the economic boom it had been waiting for since the end of World War II. The “Massachusetts Miracle” was the direct result of Boston’s educational institutions and the growth of the regional tech industry due to Defense Department contracts. From the late 1970s through 1988, the Massachusetts’ economy ballooned to give the state one of the nation’s lowest unemployment rates and a high level of per capita income.<sup>307</sup> Massachusetts’ educational institutions are among its greatest assets. In the late 20<sup>th</sup>-century, however, this was not clearly defined. The blue-collar nature of the industry and shipping was closely tied to the labor force. Historically important universities such as Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), however, were producing top-of-the-line research. The Department of Defense needed these specialists and provided research grants to faculty and students to aid in the development of defense technologies.<sup>308</sup> These defense research and development grants led to the formation of various labs and research facilities throughout the Cambridge and Boston area. This educational led to more private sector initiatives in the region.<sup>309</sup> By the mid-1980s, nearly 3,000 high-tech companies were located in the state, many of them located along the Route 128 corridor.<sup>310</sup> This highway, ironically, was the result of the Central Artery Urban Renewal project. The growth of the tech industry in the

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<sup>306</sup> Kehoe, “History of the Central Artery Expressway Boston, MA,” p. 45.

<sup>307</sup> Jack Tager, “The Massachusetts Miracle,” *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* Vol. 19, No. 2, Summer 1991, p. 111.

<sup>308</sup> Susan Rosegrant and David Lampe, *Route 128: Lessons from Boston’s High Tech Community* (New York: BasicBooks, 1992), p. 24.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid, p. 113.

<sup>310</sup> Rosegrant and Lampe, *Route 128*, p. 8.

state resulted in the production of various household products, such as the desktop computer and the microwave. The tech industry further expanded in the early 1980s with the increase in defense spending during Ronald Reagan's presidency.<sup>311</sup>

The Massachusetts Miracle reinvigorated the Commonwealth's economy so much that it held the nation's record for the lowest unemployment rates of the 1980s. High-tech and service industries accounted for 97.6 percent of all jobs created in the Commonwealth between 1979 and 1983.<sup>312</sup> As it relates to Boston in particular, the greater metropolitan area netted 62.3 percent of all new high-tech jobs created in the state between 1980 and 1984.<sup>313</sup>

Economic declines in the "Miracle" years could be seen as early as 1984 when the first decreases in high-tech based employment were recorded.<sup>314</sup> Over-investment in several large companies, as well as the nationwide recession that began in 1987, made an impact. The shift in consumer preferences to personal computers was fully embraced in Silicon Valley, California, but disregarded by Massachusetts-based tech firms. In an article on New England's economy in the 1980s from the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, authors Lynn Brown and John Hekman noted that the "specialization [in the tech-industry] may make the region highly sensitive to cyclical swings in investment spending; when the country catches a cold, New England will have pneumonia."<sup>315</sup> New England did catch pneumonia and developed an extremely high unemployment rate, which was estimated to have cost the work force over 275,000 jobs over a two-year period ending in 1991. Even though the recession was affecting the entire nation, it hit Massachusetts harder than most due to their large reliance on the technology that supported the local economy.<sup>316</sup>

Though the "Massachusetts Miracle" was a short-lived economic boom that came to a crashing halt, it did result in the state's shift to an "Eds and Meds" based economy, which has

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<sup>311</sup> Rosegrant and Lampe, *Route 128*, p. 138-139.

<sup>312</sup> Tager, "The Massachusetts Miracle," p. 119-120.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid, p. 126.

<sup>314</sup> Rosegrant and Lampe, *Route 128*, p. 171-172.

<sup>315</sup> Lynn E. Brown and John S. Hekman, "New England's Economy in the 1980s," Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, January 1981.

<sup>316</sup> Rosegrant and Lampe, *Route 128*, p. 175-176.



continued into the 21<sup>st</sup>-century. Boston's reliance on its educational institutions, which goes far beyond just Harvard and MIT, and the medical and technological research has turned into an economic model that other municipalities have followed. The "Miracle" itself may be a bit of a misconception, or even just a marketing tool for the 1988 presidential hopeful Massachusetts' Governor Michael Dukakis, but it marked a shift 40 years in the making.<sup>317</sup>

### ***The Big Dig: The Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel Megaproject***

The most important outside factor to the Boston Garden's demolition, however, had nothing to do with an increased desire to build a new facility. Instead, the loss of the Garden was the result of the desire to reconnect a city torn apart as a result of renewal changes. Enter the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel Project, more commonly referred to as the "Big Dig."

The notion of demolishing and submerging any elevated highway may be seen as ludicrous. When that highway was built only thirty years prior and cost upwards of \$650 million, the idea seems even more outlandish. With all that in mind, throughout the 1980s planning for the deconstruction and submersion of Boston's Central Artery took place. Upon completion in 2006, the megaproject had been in various stages of planning and construction since 1983 and cost a whopping \$15 billion.<sup>318</sup> The Big Dig, more importantly, was an opportunity to reunite the city and rectify, in one way at least, the damages to the various neighborhoods, particularly the North End and Chinatown, committed during the Urban Renewal construction of the Central Artery.

As early as 1980, a mere 21 years after the John F. Fitzgerald Expressway had welcomed its first travelers, engineers pronounced the overly congested highway's structural failure imminent. By the 1990s, the Artery carried 200,000 vehicles per day, making it one of the most congested highways in the country.<sup>319</sup> Because of the concerns about integrity, in 1983 the

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<sup>317</sup> Rosegrant and Lampe, *Route 128*, p. 177.

<sup>318</sup> David Luberoff and Alan Altshuler, "Mega-Project: A Political History of Boston's Multibillion Dollar Artery/Tunnel Project," John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Revised Edition, April 1996, p. I-1; Flint, "10 Years Later," *The Boston Globe*, Dec. 29, 2015.

<sup>319</sup> Flint, "10 Years Later," *The Boston Globe*, Dec. 29, 2015.

“architect” of the Big Dig, Massachusetts’ transportation secretary Fred Salvucci, brought the idea of the depressed highway to Governor Dukakis.

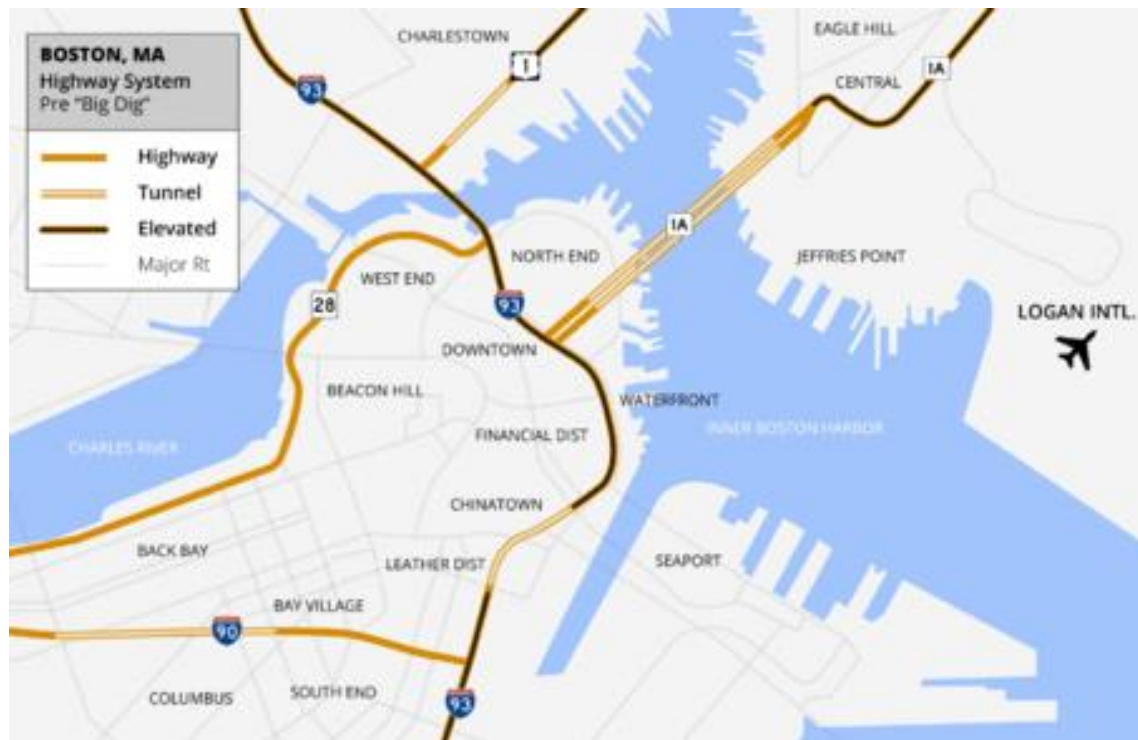
An examination of the political back and forth that took place over the next 10 years provides an exhausting look at how the bureaucratic system works when all three levels of government, local, state, and federal, interact on one specific project. The historical overview of the project, including its numerous stages of planning and the elongated political process to secure funding as well as agree on the project’s plan, was expertly detailed in David Luberoff’s thesis entitled “Mega-Project: A Political History of Boston’s Multibillion Dollar Artery/Tunnel Project.” In the thesis, Luberoff explains how political turnover at the state level held up the project throughout the 80s and early 1990s, until William Weld’s election as governor. He also goes into great detail about how the funding for the project was estimated in 1994 to reach somewhere between \$8 and \$9.8 billion.<sup>320</sup>

Primarily using federal interstate construction funds set aside with the aid of Massachusetts’ Representative and Speaker of the House, Thomas ‘Tip’ O’Neill, as well as state highway funds, the project was finally able to get underway in 1991. Construction and budget issues held up completion for 15 years.<sup>321</sup> When all was said and done, the megaproject successfully, albeit over budget and behind schedule, depressed the elevated Central Artery into the Thomas ‘Tip’ O’Neill Tunnel; replaced the empty land left behind after the deconstruction of the elevated expressway with the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Parkway; constructed a third tunnel in Boston Harbor connecting the MassPike I-90 with Logan Airport, named the Ted Williams Tunnel; and built a new bridge over the Charles River between the North End and Charlestown, the Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Memorial Bridge, replacing the aging Charlestown High Bridge.

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<sup>320</sup> Luberoff, “Mega-Project,” p. V-47.

<sup>321</sup> Steve LeBlanc, “On Dec. 31, It’s Official: Boston’s Big Dig Will Be Done,” *The Washington Post*, Dec. 26, 2007.



**Figure 75: Pre-Big Dig Boston Highway System**

Prior to the Big Dig, the elevated Central Artery, I-93, was the only major highway route in Boston proper.

Source: MRJARichard, "Boston's Highway System Before and After the Central Artery/Tunnel Project, Nov. 22, 2015, accessed March 19, 2019.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big\\_Dig#/media/File:Boston\\_Highway\\_System\\_Pre\\_Post\\_Big\\_Dig.gif](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Dig#/media/File:Boston_Highway_System_Pre_Post_Big_Dig.gif)



**Figure 76: Post-Big Dig Boston Highway System**

Beyond depressing the Central Artery, the Big Dig also added a third tunnel in Boston Harbor, the Ted Williams Tunnel, extending the Massachusetts Turnpike, I-90, to Logan Airport in East Boston.

Source: roadtraffic-technology.com, "Boston's Big Dig, Central Artery/Tunnel Project, Massachusetts," accessed March 19, 2019. [https://www.roadtraffic-technology.com/projects/big\\_dig/big\\_dig12](https://www.roadtraffic-technology.com/projects/big_dig/big_dig12)

### ***Boston Redevelopment Authority Rezoning***

The impact of the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel Project potentially stretched beyond the affected neighborhoods and industries. With this in mind, the proactive leader of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), Sean Coyle, set out to redesign Boston's out of date Zoning Code.<sup>322</sup> The rezoning efforts began with a trial run on Boylston St. in 1984, shifting focus in 1985 to install an overlay district in the Midtown Cultural District, adjacent to Boston Common along Tremont and Boylston Streets. Following the successes in Midtown and on Boylston St., the BRA proceeded with their rezoning efforts, examining the different trends in the various neighborhoods they sought to rezone. For example, in some areas building height was a factor, while in others the type of industry, or active preservation of the existing fabric were of note. The project excluded very few districts. Among those not to be touched were the Financial District, the Back Bay, and Beacon Hill.<sup>323</sup> One of the sections of the city to be rezoned was the North Station Economic Development Area. This particular zone was included to stimulate the economy in the neighborhood, while also providing for height increases. Ultimately, the rezoning of the North Station-Boston Garden parcel played a significant role in the redevelopment of the stadium.

Unlike the Big Dig, the rezoning project was not affected by governmental overhaul. Boston's mayors in recent history have had longer tenures than the mayors of the past. Working under Mayors Kevin White and Thomas Menino, the rezoning initiative remained a priority for the city. Throughout the process it was important for the BRA to be transparent and clear, as their work could be targeted by citizens and businesses alike as unfair and unwarranted. The rezoning effort, however, was deemed integral to the future of the city, especially considering the possibility of a new city plan, which would have replaced the out-of-date 1965 master plan. The new plan never came to fruition.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> David Carlson, Interview with the Author, Dec. 17, 2018.

<sup>323</sup> David Carlson, Interview with the Author, Dec. 17, 2018.

<sup>324</sup> David Carlson, Interview with the Author, Dec. 17, 2018.

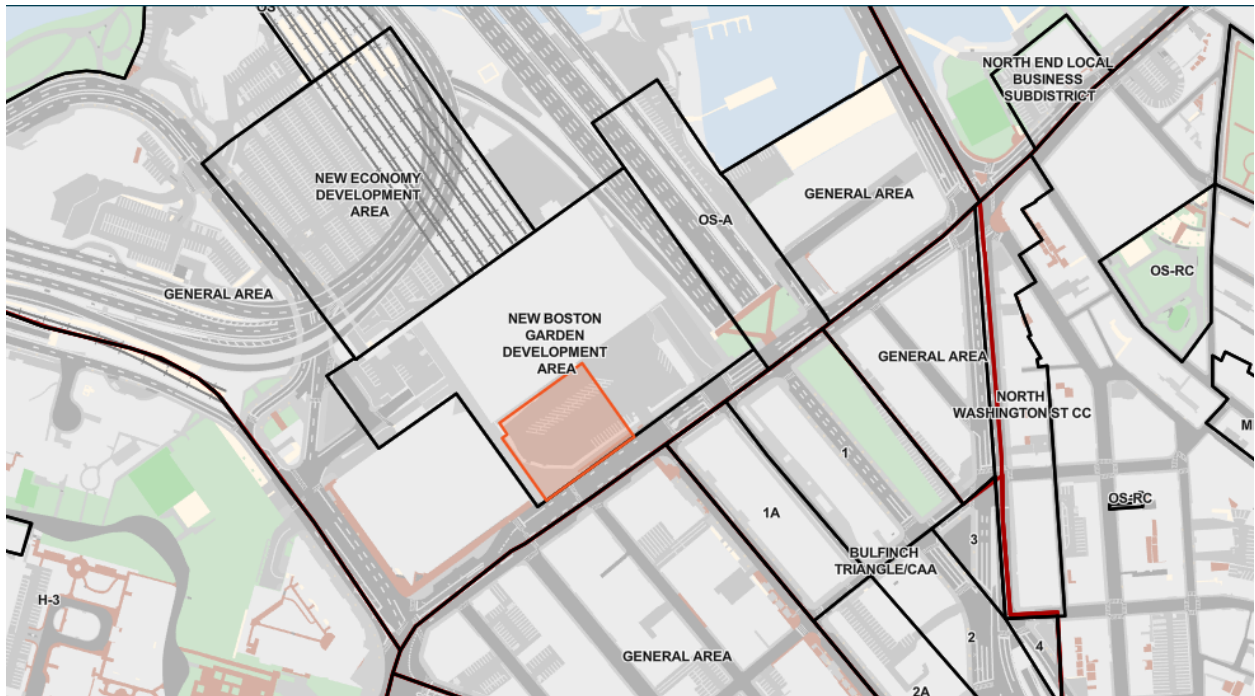
The BRA rezoning effort is particularly germane, due to the rezoning of the Bulfinch Triangle Historic District and the North Station Economic Development Area. Bulfinch Triangle's preservation and the zoning application that followed is discussed more in depth in next chapter. Both zoning codes, however, have a direct impact on the redevelopment of North Station-Boston Garden.

The North Station Economic Development Area, whose line of demarcation is located on Causeway Street due to the location of North Station-Boston Garden, was put in place primarily to add more height to the buildings in the district. As opposed to the Bulfinch Triangle Historic District, which strictly states its purpose as to “preserve the historic and architectural character of the Bulfinch Triangle District,” this meant that demolition of the stadium was a foregone conclusion.<sup>325</sup> The North Station Economic Development Area was surveyed and rezoned following a request for proposal that resulted in the Gorin and New Boston Garden Center Plans in the mid-1980s. As a part of this request it was presumed that present Garden would be demolished.<sup>326</sup> This information, made the wording of the zoning code even more adaptable to the possible changes that might occur.

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<sup>325</sup> BRA Zoning Code Article 46: Bulfinch Triangle District.

<sup>326</sup> David Carlson, Interview with the Author, Dec. 17, 2018.



**Figure 77: The North Station Economic Development Area,**  
*Denoted here as the New Boston Garden Development Area, the North Station Economic Development Area was purposely separated from Bulfinch Triangle and other zones to aid in the then ongoing plans to redevelop the arena and station. With its boundary on Causeway Street, the development node increased the maximum height allowable, as well as the types of industry.*

*Source: Boston Planning and Development Agency, Zoning Viewer, accessed March 19, 2019*

Under Zoning Code Article 39, the purpose of the North Station Economic Development Area is to:

... direct downtown development in a way that promotes balanced growth for Boston; to channel growth away from congested areas and toward underutilized sites; to create a gateway to the city by rail and highway from the north; to create a mixed-use district which includes office, retail, research and development, biomedical, institutional, residential, and sports facility and entertainment uses; to provide an area of the downtown to enhance the expansion of Boston's biomedical and research and development sectors; to create a complex of facilities and services which will foster economic growth in Boston and throughout the region; to increase the number of jobs in those sectors of the economy likely to employ Boston residents; to promote the creation and incubation of new research and development businesses and uses along with facilities supporting such uses; to create a functionally and architecturally unified district which is compatible with the North End and the Bulfinch Triangle; to create vistas and access to the Charles River; and to create new recreation space along the Charles River.<sup>327</sup>

Article 39 also dictates, as a part of the July 31, 1997 amendment to the code that the building heights vary depending on where exactly the building is located. The New Boston

<sup>327</sup> BRA Zoning Code Article 39, North Station Economic Development Area.



Garden Development Area, located within the North Station Economic Development Area, allows for a property with an as-of-right building height of four hundred feet. This was a big part of the original reason to rezone the North Station area.<sup>328</sup> Raising the height restrictions makes even more sense when recalling both the Gateway Center and Boston Garden Center redevelopment plans, and their inclusion of high-rise office and living quarters.

Among the most notable facets of Article 39 is that one of the purposes of the development is “to enhance the expansion of Boston’s biomedical and research and development sectors.” This was put into the wording of the code just in case the biomedical field grew beyond Massachusetts General Hospital’s campus in the West End and their research facilities across the Charles in the Charlestown Navy Yard. Deputy Director of Urban Design at the Boston Planning & Development Agency, formerly the BRA, explained the addition of the biomedical clause, stating the “thinking at the time was to use the arena for Bio-Tech, since ‘Eds and Meds’ was, and still is, the big thing.” Mr. Carlson further noted that the “recession of the 1990s kind of stopped the flow [of Mass General’s growth] a bit.”<sup>329</sup>

The inclusion of North Station-Boston Garden in the new zoning code was simply one more reason to believe that the property would be razed and a new Garden built in its place. By adapting the zoning code, the BRA was able to dictate what exactly would be built in its stead, noting the previously discussed alternative redevelopment plans from the 1980s that feature various mix-use facilities, as well as the exact specifications of the building. Various amendments to the code were added throughout the 1990s, paralleling the FleetCenter development timeline.

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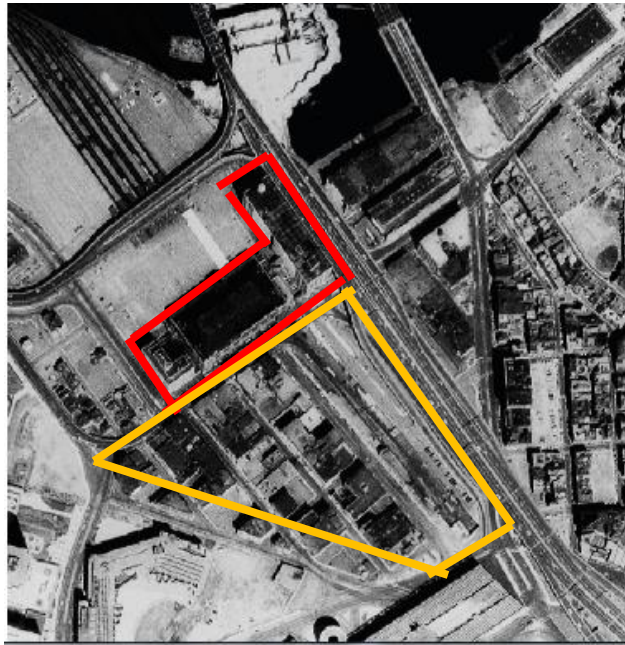
<sup>328</sup> David Carlson, Interview with Author, Dec. 17, 2018.

<sup>329</sup> David Carlson, Interview with Author, Dec. 17, 2018.



### ***North Station-Boston Garden in Relation to Boston's Political and Economic Change***

Each of the large projects that have formed the changing city had an effect on Boston Garden and the grander scale Garden Complex, including the Hotel Madison and the North Station Industrial Building. The overlap between each of the four also played a significant role in the growth and impact of each individual undertaking, for example how the Big Dig allowed for the increased participation of planners, preservationists and architects that aided in the rezoning process. Therefore, it can be deduced that North Station-Boston Garden's redevelopment runs parallel with Boston's Urban Renewal practices, the emergence and culmination of the Massachusetts Miracle economic boom, and the large-scale projects of the Big Dig and the BRA's rezoning. The push to develop the "new" Garden in the mid-1980s was done at a time when the city was ready, willing, and able to enter into the modern era, and build a new Boston as a world-class city. Any new Boston Garden, i.e. the FleetCenter, would have been a significant addition to this rebranding attempt.



**Figure 78: 1978 Metro Boston Aerial Photograph**

*The close proximity of the Big Dig and the Bulfinch Triangle to the North Station-Boston Garden Complex, seen in the red box, played a significant role in the redevelopment of the site by the early 1990s. The submersion of the Central Artery, seen at the center of the photograph, resulted in the demolition of the North Station Industrial Building, located at the far right of the red box. The preservation of the Bulfinch Triangle, located across the street from the Garden within the gold border, served as the primary focus of Boston based preservationists during the rezoning and redevelopment period of the 1980s.*

*Source: Boston Planning & Development Agency, accessed 4/30/19. <http://www.bostonplans.org/3d-data-maps/historical-maps/the-boston-atlas/aerial-photos>*

Examining the direct impact closer, the repeated postponement of the “new” Garden’s official announcement resulted in an attempt to redevelop during the early-90s recession, as opposed to the “Miracle.” The FleetCenter’s funding, therefore, emerged as a ray of hope for future development in the city. Throughout the recession, New England-based banks stopped providing loans after suffering significant losses from bad real estate investments in the Miracle years. The FleetCenter’s funding, by three individual loans from banks all headquartered in New England, therefore, signaled a possible end to the economic distress. Ira Jackson, a Senior VP at the Bank of Boston, said of the loans that they “show [the banks] have regained confidence in themselves, and the region is ready to reinvest in itself.”<sup>330</sup>

<sup>330</sup> Butterfield, “After Long Wait, New Boston Garden Planned.”

The effects of these outside factors remained even beyond the completion of the FleetCenter and subsequent demolition of the Garden. Though not directly linked to the Big Dig construction, the submersion of the elevated Green Line on Causeway Street, a fixture of the area since before North Station-Boston Garden opened, was implemented following the completion of the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel Project. It was made possible due to the effects of the megaproject, continuing the trend of modernization in the city.

The FleetCenter was officially announced as a result of the continuous changes noticeable throughout the Boston region. The North End's role in the Big Dig megaproject, and the desire to update the area to play a significant role in Boston's economic future, each played a major part in Delaware North's redevelopment timeframe. The conscious effort amongst the city and ownership group to redevelop the Causeway Street-Charles River node ultimately provided the perfect opportunity to demolish North Station-Boston Garden, and bring Boston sports into the design plans for the modernized city. What remains in question, however, is just why exactly did Boston's preservation professionals do next to nothing to petition the stadium owners and city officials to preserve and reuse the historic arena.



**Figure 79: TD Garden, originally known as the FleetCenter, in relation to the Leonard P. Zakim Bridge**  
This photograph details the close proximity of the Garden's location to the route of the Big Dig. Parts of the Zakim Bridge were built in the location formerly occupied by the North Station Industrial Building.  
Source: *The Boston Globe*, Sep. 8, 2013, accessed 2/19/19.  
<https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/09/07/gold-lights-zakim-bridge-come-with-personal-story/qggAiwhFgdlghQbiakR47M/story.html>

CHAPTER V

THE NEXT VULNERABLE RESOURCE:

BOSTON'S PRESERVATION EFFORTS IN RELATION TO BOSTON GARDEN

Given Boston's massive development projects in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as well as considering the historical and cultural importance of Boston Garden, it is fair to question just why a city with such a reliance on its history could have let one of its more notable structures be demolished. It is too simple to place blame on a greedy ownership group, demanding a modernized venue for personal gain, or selfish city and state officials, benefitting economically or in the polls from the outcome of the new development. One could just as easily blame the preservationists who were too slow to act and never fully organized. The answer to the question of *why* there was a lack of preservation as it pertains to the Boston Garden, however, is far more complicated than that. The Garden's demolition was not result of clerical oversight or ignorance, but instead of a conscious decision by the preservation community to focus its attention elsewhere.

Preservation is a game of give-and-take. Efforts to preserve structures should be calculated and pursued by professionals on a case-by-case basis. Former Massachusetts' State Historic Preservation Officer Judy McDonough firmly believes in this exact sentiment. According to Ms. McDonough, this is a "very important lesson for preservationists... To try [to preserve], but don't waste people's time. Look at the next one that's vulnerable."<sup>331</sup> This is not to say that no efforts should be made, and in the case of Boston Garden early efforts were indeed made. Rather judgement on whether or not to pursue a full-fledged preservation effort, one that would undoubtedly cost a lot of time and money, as well as a great deal of political debate amongst the public, must be decided upon. It is, therefore, in Boston's proud historical tradition, which includes a significant installment in the annals of historic preservation, that the preservation efforts, or lack thereof, that defined the final years of the Garden's history, must be

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<sup>331</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with the Author, Dec. 13, 2018.

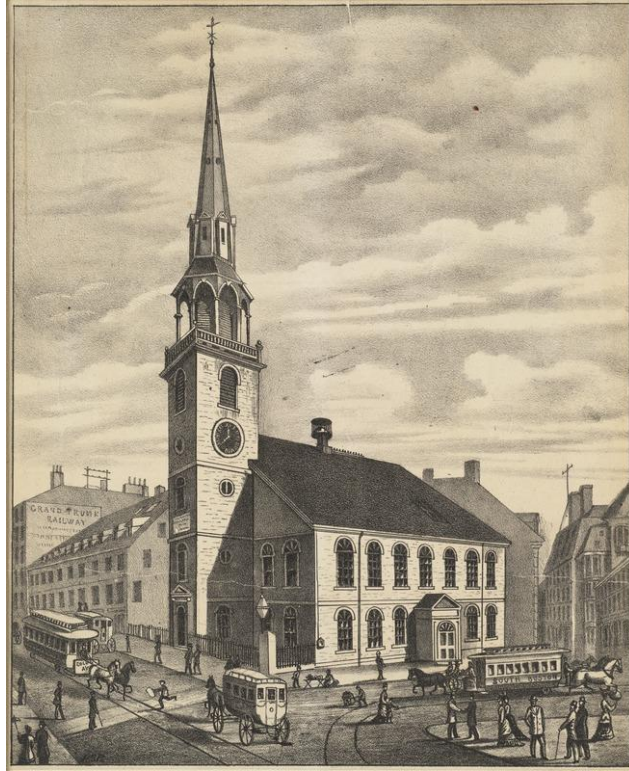
traced and understood. Then, the question of what other properties were deemed more important than Boston Garden, in this case the Bulfinch Triangle District, can be asked in order to figure out what drew attention away from the news of the stadium's redevelopment. Finally, the question of whether or not lessons were learned from the loss of Boston Garden affected the preservation community moving forward can be answered.

### ***Boston's Ancestral Jewels: An Overview of Boston's Preservation History***

As is the case with any city's preservation origins, it was demolished and lost resources that impelled the desire to preserve. With the demolition of the John Hancock house on Beacon Hill in 1863, those concerned with architecture, history, and art became more active when subsequent threats arose. If any silver lining could be found in the demolition of the Hancock House it would be the increased awareness paid to other at-risk historical landmarks, primarily those with ties to the fight for American independence. The first subsequent preservation test in Boston arose thirteen years later, during the country's centennial celebration. The Old South Meetinghouse, built around 1730, held significant importance as one of the places that hosted town meetings leading up to the Revolutionary War. By 1876, however, its congregation had largely moved outside the city, and following the Great Fire of 1871 the entire area was targeted as a location ripe for redevelopment. Remembering the loss of the Hancock House, Bostonians rallied to petition the government and the church's congregation to provide them with an opportunity to raise funds to preserve the site. With an anonymous donation of \$100,000 by Mary Hemenway, Boston's wealthiest woman, Old South Meetinghouse was saved at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. Other preservation successes followed that of the church, including that of the Massachusetts State House and the old Boston State House.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> Tomlan, *Historic Preservation*, p. 8-9.



**Figure 80: Boston's Old South Meetinghouse**

*The Old South Meetinghouse began the preservation movement in Boston in the 19th century, developing a formula for the city and others to follow.*

*Source: Haskell & Allen. "The Old South Church." Print. 1871. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/37720r06s> (accessed February 19, 2019)*

What came out of the Old South Meetinghouse preservation battle was an important lesson for future generations, both in and outside New England, on how to go about documenting and preserving historic resources. Documentation of the site's history—including key dates, events, individuals and changes to the site—remain important in preservation to this day.<sup>333</sup> Early preservation attempts across the country primarily focused on properties that held significant historic value to the creation of the United States, for example the Paul Revere House in Boston, or the various "Washington Slept Here" homes. Boston-based theologian Rev. James Freeman Clarke exclaimed that the sites in the city were important, not only to those who may have been there at their period of significance, but also to the future generations of Americans and Bostonians. As Rev. Clarke put it, "these monumental buildings are Boston's ancestral jewels,

<sup>333</sup> Tomlan, *Historic Preservation*, p. 8-9.

held in trust by us, to be handed down to our posterity.”<sup>334</sup> The preservation field had found its beginnings at a time when national pride was at its utmost importance, and Boston was at the forefront.

Prior to governmental involvement in preservation, private Bostonians put it upon themselves to protect the historic fabric of the city. Following the successful preservation of Old South Meetinghouse, the Bostonian Society was founded in 1881 to ensure the preservation of Boston’s Old State House, built in 1713. Due to demolition threats, and a proposed relocation to Chicago, the non-profit organization took it upon themselves to maintain the building and educate the public about Boston’s historic past; the oldest public building in Boston also contains a Revolutionary era museum and library.<sup>335</sup> The Bostonian Society, however, only focused on one, albeit very important, property.

Shortly after the Bostonian Society was formed, William Sumner Appleton, a Harvard educated resident of Boston’s wealthy Beacon Hill neighborhood, expanded upon his interest in history and antiquities, joining the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (NSSAR). While with the NSSAR in 1905, Appleton assumed an active role in the preservation of the Paul Revere House, the oldest house in Boston, in the city’s North End. He served as Secretary of the Paul Revere Memorial Association. It would take another five years for Appleton to realize his life’s calling. Following the 1909 preservation of the Jonathan Harrington House in Lexington, MA, Appleton formed the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA). Since its beginning in 1910, SPNEA has purchased, rehabilitated, and preserved historic homes in the region, always demanding that they financially support themselves, either through rent or commercial use. For example, the first house purchased by the Appleton led non-profit, the c. 1670 Swett-Ilsley House in Newbury, MA, was originally leased as tea-house. Known today as Historic New England, the “oldest and largest

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<sup>334</sup> Michael Holleran, *Boston’s “Changeful Times”: Origins of Preservation & Planning in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 84.

<sup>335</sup> “About the Bostonian Society,” Old State House, accessed March 21, 2019, <https://www.bostonhistory.org/the-bostonian-society>.



regional heritage organization in the nation” maintains the mission of its ambitious founder, monitoring historic properties in five of the six New England states. William Appleton is fondly remembered as the “nation’s first full time preservation professional.”<sup>336</sup>

The early impact of Boston citizens on the preservation movement is clearly evident through the individual successes of Old South Meetinghouse and the Old State House, as well as the work of William Sumner Appleton. Moving into the Urban Renewal era, various other private non-profit organizations followed suit. Founded in 1960, Historic Boston Incorporated (HBI) started as a self-described “rescue mission” to preserve Boston’s Old Corner Bookstore, a 1718 mixed-use brick building located on the corner of Washington and School Streets. The historic property, which housed a number of booksellers and publishing companies throughout its lifespan, was scheduled for demolition to make way for a parking garage. The concerned group acquired the building, restored it, and maintained its usage with retail shops and commercial offices. The success of the Old Corner Bookstore, prompted HBI to become a non-profit real estate development company in 1979, focusing their attention on the necessary preservation of numerous properties throughout Boston and its surrounding towns.<sup>337</sup> In 1978, before HBI shifted their approach to real estate development, the Boston Preservation Alliance (BPA) was formed. At that time, there was no singular entity working to promote preservation throughout the entire city. Instead, the numerous organizations, such as the aforementioned Committee to Save the North End, worked in their respective neighborhoods. The BPA, therefore, sought to unify the various organizations. When it formed in 1978, the alliance held an informal association with 25 different Boston preservation organizations. Shortly thereafter, the BPA began their advocacy work, growing membership totals and spreading the news of at-risk buildings throughout the city; the Boston Stock Exchange Building was their first effort in 1979.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> “Founder and History,” Historic New England, accessed March 21, 2019, <https://www.historicnewengland.org/about-us/mission-leadership/>.

<sup>337</sup> “History,” Historic Boston Incorporated, accessed March 21, 2019, <https://historicboston.org/about/>.

<sup>338</sup> “History,” Boston Preservation Alliance, accessed March 21, 2019, <https://www.bostonpreservation.org/timeline>.

The preservation movement in America took on a whole new meaning in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as it sought to combat Urban Renewal efforts. The desire to remove blight and reinvigorate the economy, as well as provide easy transportation access, was common throughout the country. In an effort to protect the historic and aesthetic fabric of the affected cities, locally controlled preservation commissions and other privately run preservation organizations began to pop up throughout the country. Boston's Urban Renewal initiatives, as has been discussed, certainly damaged the city's historic core. Its preservation movement, at least at the government level, was a bit slow to react, especially when compared to other major cities around the country. Despite this obtuse reaction, it was during this period of Urban Renewal that the city of Boston, through various ways and for varying protective purposes, established six historic districts: Beacon Hill (1955), Back Bay (1966), Bay State Road/West Back Bay (1979), St. Botolph (1981), Bay Village (1983), and the South End (1983).<sup>339</sup>

The Urban Renewal era also resulted in a great deal of work in regards to the surveying of historic properties throughout the city. It also brought about the development of numerous preservation organizations, both publicly and privately operated, such as the aforementioned HBI and BPA. It was at this period, not surprisingly surrounding the bi-centennial, that Boston truly rooted itself in historic preservation.

Redevelopment, either through Urban Renewal or as a result of the BRA's rezoning, was heavily preoccupied with adding to the height restrictions of the city. The Prudential Center, for instance, would not have been built in the Back Bay area without BRA and city efforts to raise the restrictions. Back Bay residents, despite their willingness to allow skyscrapers in commercial zones, were heavily opposed to high-rise opportunities in the heart of their neighborhood, which ultimately led to the designation of the Back Bay Architectural District in 1966.<sup>340</sup> In order to accomplish this feat, Back Bay residents were forced to petition the state legislature, just as Beacon Hill residents and business owners had done in the '50s. As a result,

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<sup>339</sup> George Walter Born, "Home Rule: The Creation of Local Historic Districts in the New Boston, 1953 to 1983," Dissertation, Boston University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2016, p. 2.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

the Massachusetts legislature adopted an amendment to the statewide enabling act in 1960, titled the Historic Districts Act. This law prescribed a process for cities and towns in the Commonwealth to follow, and gave each the ability to designate their own historic districts.<sup>341</sup>

The resolution to the issues that surfaced during the Back Bay Historic District's controversy resulted in a desire to put the Historic Districts Act into action, and develop a local government authority in Boston designed to monitor and preserve its historic resources, including its historic districts. The first step to this process was the addition of architectural historians and preservationists to planning agency staffs; the BRA hired their first architectural historian in 1964.<sup>342</sup> The 1965 General Plan for the City of Boston also sought to include "historic, variegated neighborhoods," expanding on the importance of historic structures to the future design of the city.<sup>343</sup> Government agencies, most notably the BRA, continued to expand the inclusion of preservation professionals in their offices. In February 1969, the BRA announced the establishment of a Historic Preservation and Landmarks Office within the redevelopment authority, as well as the formation of an historic landmarks advisory commission. The BRA Historic Preservation and Landmarks Office was "responsible for making historic studies and recommendations on districts and buildings that should be preserved or restored because of their historic or architectural quality."<sup>344</sup> It was also responsible for developing an initial comprehensive citywide preservation plan, while also recommending any special legislation needed for the establishment of districts and landmarks. The initial staff inside the office included a preservation planner, a research analyst in architectural history, and a research assistant.<sup>345</sup>

With the creation of the preservation staff, the city began to publicly acknowledge preservation and continued use of what Mayor Kevin White noted as "the buildings and charm of

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<sup>341</sup> Born, "Home Rule," p. 172.

<sup>342</sup> Ada Louise Huxtable, "Renewal in Boston: Good and Bad," *New York Times*, April 19, 1964.

<sup>343</sup> *1965/1975 General Plan for the City of Boston and the Regional Core*, Boston Redevelopment Authority, 1965.

<sup>344</sup> Anthony J. Yudis, "B.R.A. Requests Control of Landmarks Office," *The Boston Globe*, Feb. 21, 1969.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*

past eras.”<sup>346</sup> Their first task was a landmarks study that was funded through a Housing and Urban Development grant, under the HUD Historic Preservation Planning Assistance Program, for \$49,775.<sup>347</sup> The BRA Historic Preservation and Landmarks Office effectively welcomed Boston into a new period of preservation, where activists would be able to find counterparts inside the local government, rather than combat the city at the outset, a far cry from the battles that took place in the North End and Chinatown during the construction of the Central Artery only ten years prior.

The Preservation and Landmarks staff was responsible for conducting surveys of historic resources throughout the city, researching and composing architectural and historical study reports, and nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places. They also continued to seek funding through grants, including one to benefit Faneuil Hall along the waterfront, and produced educational pamphlets on proper preservation and restoration techniques.<sup>348</sup>

By 1973, Boston had fallen behind numerous other cities in the country, such as New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, on the issue of preservation.<sup>349</sup> In an attempt to further grow Boston’s preservation powers, a legislative measure designed to create a freestanding landmarks commission, which would have been placed administratively inside the BRA had been put in front of Mayor White and the City Council. *Boston Globe* architectural critic Robert Campbell voiced his support for a city preservation office in his column, arguing that a landmarks commission, one with the legal power to regulate, was essential to preserving Boston’s distinctive historic buildings in the continually changing city.<sup>350</sup> Mayor White supported the measure, stating in his petition to the Boston City Council, it “would provide a continuing, comprehensive preservation program for the City of Boston.”<sup>351</sup> The 1973 measure, however,

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<sup>346</sup> “Commission Starts Landmarks Study,” *The Boston Globe*, May 5, 1969.

<sup>347</sup> “Boston Historic Preservation Program Fact Sheet,” Boston Landmarks Commission, “Legislation – Memos or Correspondence” folder, Box 6 (“Admin Files”), City of Boston Archives.

<sup>348</sup> Born, “Home Rule,” p. 179.

<sup>349</sup> Robert Campbell, “Boston Needs a *Real* Landmark Commission,” *The Boston Globe*, June 3, 1973.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>351</sup> “Minutes of the Boston City Council,” Boston City Council, Sep. 10, 1973, 691.

did not pass due to worries among the business community that the commission would have too much power, and a disagreement between the mayor and City Council over the council's desire to override landmark designation through a veto.<sup>352</sup> It would be two more years before an agreement was reached and the freestanding department would finally find their home in the city's government.

The Boston Landmarks Commission was established under Chapter 772 of the 1975 Massachusetts General Laws. The purposes of the commission are set in the code as follows:

- a. To protect the beauty of the city of Boston and improve the quality of its environment through identification, recognition, conservation, maintenance and enhancement of areas, sites, structures and fixtures which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the political, economic, social, cultural, or architectural history of the city.
- b. To foster appropriate use and wider public knowledge and appreciation of such features, areas, sites, structures, and fixtures.
- c. To resist and restrain environmental influences adverse to such purposes.
- d. To encourage private efforts in support of such purposes.
- e. To promote the public welfare, to strengthen the cultural and educational life of the city and the commonwealth and to make the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live and work.<sup>353</sup>

The BLC continued the work of the BRA preservation staff. In the years leading up to Boston Garden's redevelopment, the BLC not only expanded upon the previously designated historic districts in the city, but also designated five additional historic and architectural districts. The Bay State Road/Back Bay West Architectural Conservation District was designated in 1979, followed by the St. Botolph Architectural Conservation District in 1981, the Bay Village Historic District in 1983, the South End Landmark District in 1983, and the Mission Hill Triangle Architectural Conservation District in 1985. The BLC added two more districts, the Aberdeen

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<sup>352</sup> Ian Menzies, "Boston's Landmark Loophole," *The Boston Globe*, Aug. 13, 1975.

<sup>353</sup> "An Act Establishing the Boston Landmarks Commission," Chapter 772, M.G.L. 1975.

Architectural Conservation District and the Fort Point Channel Landmark District, in the 2000s.<sup>354</sup>

With more than 8,000 properties either located within the historic districts or listed as individual landmarks today, Boston's rich history is proven to play an important role in both the physical and economic make-up of the city.<sup>355</sup> Urban Renewal and various other private and public developments, though giving birth to the preservation movement, obviously resulted in the loss of hundreds, if not thousands, of other historically and architecturally significant properties throughout the city. Even with the numerous private and government-run preservation organizations in Boston and Massachusetts, not every resource can, or even should, be preserved. In order to account for this, the BLC developed a ranking system to easier determine which buildings should be landmarked, and which deserved advocacy in the face of demolition. Although the notion of a ranking system was highly controversial, it was implemented to ensure the important and historical resources of Boston would remain for generations to come. The reason this system worked, according to Judy McDonough, who was involved with the survey work, was due to "professional judgement." Qualified professionals, therefore, decided upon each building's ranking.<sup>356</sup> The rankings were determined on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being of the utmost importance.

In the case of North Station-Boston Garden's demolition, the outside factors discussed in the previous chapter aided in the demolition of the famed arena, just as much as the preservation community's willingness to look elsewhere. With the large-scale Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel submersion project in its planning and construction phases during the Garden redevelopment timeframe, as well as the Boston Redevelopment Authority's large-scale rezoning effort, a new train station/arena was practically inevitable. So what exactly were Boston

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<sup>354</sup> "Historic Districts in Boston," Landmarks Commission, accessed Feb. 19, 2019.  
<https://www.boston.gov/departments/landmarks-commission>.

<sup>355</sup> "About the Boston Landmarks Commission," Landmarks Commission, accessed Feb. 19, 2019.  
<https://www.cityofboston.gov/landmarks/about/>.

<sup>356</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with Author, Dec. 13, 2018.

preservationists focused on during the Garden redevelopment planning stages? As Judy McDonough put it, “Our fight was for Bulfinch Triangle.”<sup>357</sup>

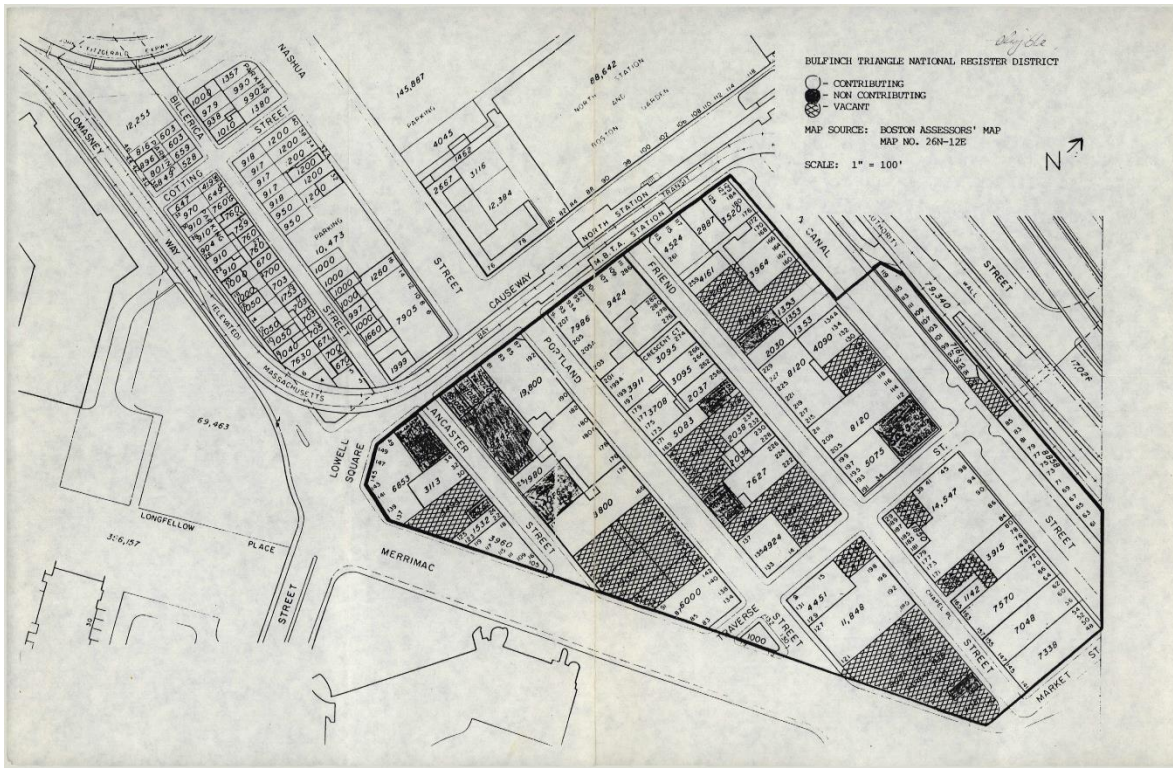
***“Across the Street:” The Bulfinch Triangle Historic District***

The Bulfinch Triangle Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in February 1986. The district includes parts of Canal, Causeway, Friend, Lancaster, Merrimack, Portland and Traverse Streets, as well as, Lowell Square in the northern end of Boston’s downtown abutting both the North End and Government Center. Bulfinch Triangle is a mixed-use neighborhood that encompasses the western half of a triangular street pattern designed by noted Boston architect Charles Bulfinch in 1804 (See Figure 82 below). The district is dominated by late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup>-century commercial buildings, forty-six of which are designated as contributing.<sup>358</sup> Most importantly, however, Bulfinch Triangle lies directly across the street from North Station-Boston Garden.

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<sup>357</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with Author, Dec. 13, 2018.

<sup>358</sup> “Bulfinch Triangle National Historic District,” Registration Form, Reference No. 86000274, National Register of Historic Places, Entered in the National Register, Feb. 27, 1986.



**Figure 81: The Bulfinch Triangle Historic District**

*The Bulfinch Triangle Historic District lies directly across the street from Boston Garden. This map details the line of demarcation between the two zoning areas.*

*Source: Bulfinch Triangle National Historic District, National Register of Historic Place Registration Forms, 1986*

The fight to preserve Bulfinch Triangle related directly to Boston's rezoning efforts and the ongoing Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel project. Particularly in relation to the Big Dig, Bulfinch Triangle became an area of discussion as it pertained to the proposed path of the highway. The primary question being asked at the time was "Can we mesh this area of the city back together?"<sup>359</sup> Designers and planners for the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel Project advocated for the tunnel to run through the area, while preservationists called for the conservation of the historic neighborhood.

Preservation efforts for Bulfinch Triangle began in the mid-1970s as a result of a Housing and Urban Development grant, named New Neighborhoods Downtown, to the BRA. Deborah Gottlin, a preservation planner at the BRA, headed the preservation team, which also included an

<sup>359</sup> David Carlson, Interview with Author, Dec. 17, 2018.



urban designer and several other people from the BRA economic research department. The grant was developed in response to the success of several converted buildings in the waterfront district, and other development projects in the South End.<sup>360</sup> The Faneuil Hall Marketplace development work, including the rehabilitation of Quincy Market, resulted in an increase in development projects in the waterfront area. Samuel Mintz, one of the architects responsible for a hotel adjacent to Faneuil Hall noted after the successful rehabilitation that, “suddenly Boston was hot, and property values in the waterfront area doubled.” The economic success of Faneuil Hall correlated to other areas of the city, resulting in the proposed construction in the Bulfinch Triangle, Boston Garden area.<sup>361</sup>

Preservation efforts in Boston at the bicentennial increased within the BRA preservation department, despite an initial lack of support from BRA leadership. With the help of the bicentennial planning staff, the BRA preservation planners were able to write National Register of Historic Places nominations for several neighborhoods throughout the city, including Town Hill in Charlestown, the Custom House District, and Roxbury Highlands. Initial work on Bulfinch Triangle began at this time. Further work on the area, however, fell by the wayside as various other neighborhoods required the attention of the BRA staff.<sup>362</sup>

By the time Bulfinch Triangle was placed on the National Register in early 1986, the BRA rezoning effort was in full swing. The staff at the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) understood that the BRA, now led by Sean Coyle, were interested in targeting specific areas for re-zoning and redevelopment. This allowed the BLC to persuade Coyle and his staff to shift their attention away from specific neighborhoods that they desired to preserve, Bulfinch Triangle included.<sup>363</sup> What resulted was Article 46 of the Boston Zoning Code, which dictated the preservation requirements within the Bulfinch Triangle Historic District. Included in the code were a specific set of goals. As stated in Article 46, the goals of the code are:

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<sup>360</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with Author, Feb. 11, 2019.

<sup>361</sup> Bernard J. Frieden and Lynne B. Sagalyn, *Downtown, Inc. How American Rebuilds Cities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), p. 282-283.

<sup>362</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with Author, Feb. 11, 2019.

<sup>363</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with Author, Feb. 11, 2019.

1. To preserve the historic and architectural character of the Bulfinch Triangle District;
2. To restore its distinctive and significant street pattern;
3. To promote commercial, studio, residential, retail, and service uses in the Bulfinch Triangle District; and
4. To establish urban design standards which ensure that new development is compatible with existing buildings in design, scale, building materials, and landscaping.<sup>364</sup>

The successful creation of this district, was a significant victory for the growing preservation community in Boston at a time when significant amounts of new construction was going on throughout the city. Unfortunately, the work done to preserve Bulfinch Triangle resulted in the demise of the entire Boston Garden complex, beginning with the Hotel Madison in 1983. The following photographs display the unique architectural qualities that necessitated the preservation of Bulfinch Triangle:

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<sup>364</sup> BRA Zoning Code Article 46: Bulfinch Triangle Historic District.



*Figure 82: General view looking north from the corner of Merrimac and Portland Streets, showing the south and east elevations of 105-119 Merrimac Street.*

*Source: Susan Hollister, Bulfinch Triangle Historic District, March 13, 1985*



**Figure 83: West elevation of the Canal Street Building (61-85 Canal Street).**  
*Source: Susan Hollister, Bulfinch Triangle Historic District, March 13, 1985*



**Figure 84: North and west elevation of Lockhart Building (137-149 Merrimac Street).**  
*Source: Susan Hollister, Bulfinch Triangle Historic District, March 13, 1985*

### ***North Station-Boston Garden Preservation***

The earliest attempts at preservation for Boston Garden lie in the renovation plans of the 1980s. In those plans, particularly the 1985 Boston Garden Center plan from the New Boston Garden Corporation, the original Causeway Street façade would have played a major role in the finished product. That plan would have updated the interior as well as add other new buildings to pair with the 1928 station and the then-under-construction Tip O’Neil Federal Building. The possible loss of the Garden was not raised by others in the city.

In fact, the fate of Boston Garden appears to have been decided just a few years prior during the Boston Landmarks Commission’s citywide survey in the late 1970s and early 1980s. North Station-Boston Garden’s survey work was completed in June 1980. BLC staff determined that at that time the station/arena was only a 3 on the BLC scale, while both the Hotel Madison and North Station Industrial Buildings were graded as 5’s.<sup>365</sup> These rankings, ultimately, influenced preservationists to shift focus away from the Garden redevelopment, and onto Bulfinch Triangle.

In this same survey, the BLC staff also suggested that the Garden was eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. An updated survey was completed in January 1989, as a part of the Big Dig process. Conducted by local historic preservation firm Boston Affiliates, Inc., the survey once again recommended that the arena be placed on the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission, who determines which resources and districts in the state are qualified for National Register status, however, did not concur with either assessment, leaving the door open for Delaware North to continue in their plans to redevelop.<sup>366</sup>

Unfortunately for the Garden, the only mechanism in Boston to enforce preservation is to designate a structure as a landmark.<sup>367</sup> Despite the recommendations to list Boston Garden on

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<sup>365</sup> North Station and Boston Garden, MACRIS Inventory Form No. BOS.1631, Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, June 1980.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> David Carlson, Interview with Author, Dec. 17, 2018.

the National Register during the planning stages, and subsequent development of the “new” Garden, the Boston Landmarks Commission never received a petition to landmark.<sup>368</sup> The Garden’s rank as a 3 on the BLC scale played a part in this. Another important factor to the lack of preservation for the Garden was that the property was located inside a development node, as stipulated under the Boston Zoning Code.<sup>369</sup> The most damning reason, however, as to why the Garden did not receive any large-scale support from the Boston preservation community can be best summed up by Judy McDonough. As she put it, the importance of Boston Garden – North Station was due to the “activities that went on there. Not the vessel.”<sup>370</sup> This concept is most often associated with religious institutions and their belief that the actions inside a church, temple, or mosque are more important than the building itself. According to those in the BLC and MA State Historic Preservation Office, the architectural merit and cultural status of the Garden itself never surpassed or equaled that of the sports and activities that went on inside it. The loss of the Hotel Madison in 1983 did feature a minor preservation attempt remembered best by their slogan “Mad about Madison.” The Garden’s “most important features,” the Parquet floor and banners, had all been replaced at various times so that questions about the architectural integrity of the property only increased, spelling the end of the structure by 1986 in the eyes of the city’s decision makers.<sup>371</sup>

### ***Lessons Learned: The Fenway Story***

The loss of Boston Garden was a three-year long process. It resulted in daily reminders of what was being taken away. To some residents in the city, this was painful to watch. Around the same time the final bricks of the Garden were being hauled off, word began to spread that the Yawkey Trust, owners of Fenway Park, were planning to design a new stadium for Boston’s Major League Baseball franchise, the Red Sox. To a select few who did not wish to relive the

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<sup>368</sup> Michael Cannizzo, Interview with Author, Dec. 17, 2018.

<sup>369</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with Author, Dec. 13, 2018.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> Michael Cannizzo, Interview with Author, Dec. 17, 2018.

loss of yet another nationally recognized sports landmark, the preservation of Fenway Park would serve as the ultimate second chance.



**Figure 85: Ca. 1910, Fenway Park Exterior**

Source: Bain News Service, Publisher. Fenway Park ball grounds exterior. ca. 1910. [Between and Ca. 1915]  
Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014692066/>

The Red Sox quest to attain a new stadium had been discussed as early as 1965 with the South Station Sports Complex, although serious discussions to abandon the revered Fenway Park did not commence until the mid-1990s.<sup>372</sup> As news reports spread that the John Harrington run ball club was determined to find a new home, either in South Boston along Boston Harbor, or directly adjacent to Fenway, a small group of Boston Preservation Alliance (BPA) docents and members began to meet in the apartment of Kim Konrad-Alvarez, a preservationist living in the Fens, to discuss what can be done to ensure the team does not demolish the famed stadium.

<sup>372</sup> Meg Vaillancourt and Frank Phillips, "Sox Making Plans to Stay in Fenway, New Stadium Could Rise Around the Old," *The Boston Globe*, Feb. 9, 1997.

At the time new ballpark plans around Boston were being proposed, the world was preparing for the new millennium. In Boston, a great deal of emphasis had always been put on its Colonial, Revolutionary and 19<sup>th</sup> century heritage. At this time, however, the community was beginning to embrace the future preservation of Boston buildings. Kim Konrad-Alvarez expanded on this view, stating, “People were just starting to say things from that era, the 1910s, 20s, 30s, were just as important as our 17<sup>th</sup> century resources.”<sup>373</sup> She expanded even further, relating this thought to sports venues, adding, “We put as much effort into the venues. They’re as important to our cultural heritage as Old North Church.”<sup>373</sup> This is particularly important to note as there was a great deal of change in regards to professional sports stadiums in the later decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including baseball landmarks Comiskey Park (demolished 1991) in Chicago and Cleveland Stadium (demolished 1996).

Announcement of Fenway’s planned demise came at a time when many “definitely [still] felt the injustice of [the loss of Boston Garden].”<sup>374</sup> This led the BPA members to gather in Konrad-Alvarez’s apartment in the summer of ’97, leading to what would become the non-profit organization Save Fenway Park! The group, which formally incorporated as a 501(c)3 organization in the winter of 1998, began by picketing outside the stadium, particularly during home games, seeking signatures from fans petitioning to maintain use of the park, while also distributing bumper stickers (seen right), which proved to be one of their major publicity tools.<sup>375</sup> Save Fenway’s early activism aided in spreading the word about the potential loss of Massachusetts’ “most popular tourist attraction.”<sup>376</sup> The five-year battle that ensued required much more than picketing, but the members of Save Fenway Park! were ready and willing to do whatever seemed necessary.

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<sup>373</sup> Kim Konrad-Alvarez, Interview with Author, Jan. 4, 2019.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid.

<sup>375</sup> “Updates!” *Save Fenway Park! Newsletter* Vol. 1, Issue 1, January/February 1999.

<sup>376</sup> Neil deMause & Joanna Cagan, *Field of Schemes: How the Great Stadium Swindle Turns Public Money into Private Profit* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), p. 321.





**Figure 86: The Save Fenway Park! bumper stickers were a major component to the early advocacy effort from the non-profit**

*Source: From the Author's Collection*

The battle to save Fenway Park relied very heavily on publicly combatting every move made by the Yawkey Trust ownership group. Drawing on the “mistakes or experience of losing the Garden,” the Save Fenway group detailed many of the negative aspects of the then recently opened FleetCenter, which did not have the same feeling as the old Garden and was not architecturally significant.<sup>377</sup> A big reason for new arena’s architectural simplicity was the fact that the old Garden stood in the way of the main façade for over three years, leading to its original simplistic design. Delaware North would eventually collaborate with Boston Properties, a real estate investment company, to redesign the foreground to the stadium.<sup>378</sup> First and foremost, it was important for the Save Fenway Park! team to detail the historical, architectural, and cultural significance of Fenway. This was accomplished by filling out a nomination form for the National Register of Historic Places. Even though the ownership group would have never acquiesced and agreed to place the ballfield on the National Register, it was believed that “a determination of eligibility will still help our cause in preventing the use of public funds for the demolition of the ballpark, while at the same time building additional support for the renovation and rehabilitation of Fenway Park, rather than its replacement.”<sup>379</sup>

One of the Yawkey Trust’s major arguments for the need to replace the aged stadium was the fact that it did not have enough seats, and that there were no viable alternative options to adding the necessary amount. Armed with the knowledge of this argument, Save Fenway Park! was contacted by award-winning Boston architect and Roger Williams University professor

<sup>377</sup> Kim Konrad-Alvarez, Interview with Author, Jan. 4, 2019.

<sup>378</sup> David Carlson Interview, with Author, Dec. 17, 2018.

<sup>379</sup> “Updates!” *Save Fenway Park! Newsletter*, January/February 1999.

Charles Hagenah. He suggested that his students could develop a plan to show that more seats could indeed be added to the stadium, thus proving it could be rehabilitated. In their plan, Hagenah explained that an upper deck could be added above the grandstand and expanded public areas placed behind the stands. He displayed that a total of 43,700-44,000 seats, 73 luxury suites, and 2,750 club seats could be accommodated by the stadium.<sup>380</sup> “Hagenah’s study” led to the Save Fenway Park! declaration that “the study shows conclusively that the renovation option is indeed feasible.”<sup>381</sup>

Next for the Save Fenway movement was to prove the burden of cost of a renovated stadium would be less than the proposed new stadium. According to Save Fenway Park! the stadium rehab would have cost roughly \$281 million in 1999, as opposed to the projected \$350 million required for any new stadium. The obvious difference in totals does not even include the amount of taxpayer’s money saved by the renovations, nor does it include any budget overruns, and necessary demolition and land acquisition costs required for a new stadium.<sup>382</sup> The necessity to acquire land for the new deal led to the major battle between preservationists and those in favor of a new stadium.

Ideas about the location of a new stadium had swirled around throughout the 1990s. Early favorites to house the team were a stadium in the South End, as well as one along the waterfront. Even more outlandish ideas swirled, such as the possibility of moving the team out of Boston to nearby Worcester in central Massachusetts.<sup>383</sup> The most significant alternative, however, was the plan to acquire nearly 10 acres of land in the Fenway neighborhood, to build a new stadium directly adjacent to the old one. In May 2000, the owners formally proposed a detailed plan for a new stadium. The team would spend \$352 million for the stadium itself, while the state and city would give \$275 million for land acquisition and infrastructure.<sup>384</sup> Many

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<sup>380</sup> “Yes! It Can Be Done!: SFP! Releases Fenway Park Renovation Study,” *Save Fenway Park! Newsletter* Vol. 1, Issue 3, May/June 1999.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>382</sup> “Less Cost – More History! SFP! Releases Detailed Cost Estimate,” *Save Fenway Park! Newsletter* Vol. 1, Issue 4, July/August 1999.

<sup>383</sup> Nick Cafardo, “Worcester May Have a Ball with This,” *The Boston Globe*, Dec. 3, 1995.

<sup>384</sup> deMause, *Field of Schemes*, p. 325.

residents believed that the projected costs of land acquisition would be much higher. The *Boston Phoenix*, a local weekly publication, predicted that the total could be somewhere near \$900 million.<sup>385</sup> Issues with the amount of land necessary for the new stadium, roughly 10 acres worth, led to a large increase in those in favor of preservation. As Kim Konrad-Alvarez put it, “This got the neighborhood involved.”<sup>386</sup>

City officials publicly decried the need for such a large sum of public money, which was especially significant considering the fact that the Big Dig project had reached a whopping sum of over \$14 billion. Even Mayor Thomas Menino, a noted fan of the new Fenway deal, publicly questioned how the taxpayers would get a return on their investment. What ultimately could have led to the downfall of the new ballpark, and a massive public relations issue for the team, actually turned into a bill pushed through the Massachusetts state legislature, allowing for the state to use eminent domain to acquire the lands surrounding the existing ballfield. In a backroom deal conducted before the legislature concluded its annual session in July, various political leaders, including Menino and state senate president Thomas Birmingham, met with financiers and John Harrington in Governor Paul Cellucci’s office at the State House to complete a deal that would call for the Yawkey Trust to pay \$352 million for stadium construction and the state and city to spend \$312 million for infrastructure, land acquisition and the construction of a parking garage. Various surcharges, taxes, and annual fees were announced as part of the deal to help the taxpayers see the return on investment that Mayor Menino called for.<sup>387</sup>

The timing of this deal could not have been worse for Save Fenway Park! and all of the other preservationists and activists involved. Reminiscing about the announcement of the deal, Kim Konrad-Alvarez explained how she and the group felt concerned that this was the end of their fight. She asked herself, “After two and a half years, was this now time to admit defeat?” The timing of the bill’s passing is even more significant considering that Save Fenway had been planning a week long charrette at Simmons College in Boston to see what options were available

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<sup>385</sup> deMause, *Field of Schemes*, p. 325.

<sup>386</sup> Kim Konrad-Alvarez, Interview with Author, Jan. 4, 2019.

<sup>387</sup> deMause, *Field of Schemes*, p. 325-326.

in regards to renovating the park. One of the major takeaways from the charrette was an idea to construct seats atop Fenway's famed Green Monster, a 37-foot-high wall marking the ballfield's left field boundary. Despite concerns that the charrette should be cancelled due to the stadium bill, the successful endeavor proved even further the possibilities that might await the park in the future. Perhaps most importantly, it was realized that play at the stadium could be continuous with phased construction.<sup>388</sup>

One final bombshell was dropped by the Yawkey Trust in October of 2000. The team was officially up for sale. It is believed that the push for the stadium bill to be passed was done for this exact purpose. Any new owner, therefore, would have no obstacles to building a new stadium for the Boston Red Sox.<sup>389</sup> Unlike the Garden, the premature obituaries published in the *Globe*, *Herald*, and various other news outlets, would not lead to any grand scale "funeral" for the historic ballpark. Again dissimilar from the Garden's situation, Delaware North Company was not looking to sell the team; in fact, they remain owners of the "new" garden and the Boston Bruins as of 2019. As venerable journalists and columnists reminisced about their time at the park and memorialized Fenway, just as they had done for the Garden only 5-10 years prior, a new ownership group, headed by John Henry, owner of the MLB's Florida Marlins, awaited to swoop in and save the day. The search for a new owner, which included numerous bidders both locally and nationally based, led to the awarding of the franchise to Henry's group at a bid of \$700 million. One of the first actions the new owners made upon taking control of the team in 2002, was to hire noted architect Janet Marie Smith, who produced a plan to put seats atop the Green Monster.<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>388</sup> Kim Konrad-Alvarez, Interview with Author, Jan. 4, 2019.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> deMause, *Field of Schemes*, p. 332.



**Figure 87: 1939 view of Fenway Park shows Left Field Wall,**  
*The wall would soon be painted Green and renamed, with netting placed atop.*  
 Source: Jones, Leslie. "Ted Williams crosses the plate at Fenway." Photograph. 1939. Digital Commonwealth,  
<https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/nz807x86s> (accessed February 19, 2019)



**Figure 88: July 19, 2014 view of Fenway Park shows Green Monster with 2003 seating addition.**  
 Source: Photo courtesy Darrell Harrington

The initial sense of victory for Save Fenway Park! was vindicated in 2005, when the team owners announced inside the park's .406 Club, which was about to undergo renovations to become the State Street Pavilion, that "the Red Sox will remain at Fenway Park for the long term." The ownership group, officially recognized as the Fenway Sports Group, as well as Janet Marie Smith, were awarded numerous times for their work in preserving and rehabilitating Fenway. Every step of the way, they thanked and mentioned the work of Save Fenway Park! Even with the awards and declarations of maintained usage, Save Fenway never officially closed out the non-profit organization, due to "skepticism" that the preservation attempt was actually successful.<sup>391</sup> Fenway Park was officially placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.



**Figure 89: Panoramic view inside Fenway Park**

*The present day interior of Fenway shows the various changes, such as modern video boards and additional seating, made by the Fenway Sports Group and Janet Marie Smith from 2002-2015.*

*Photo courtesy Alexander Zamarro*

There are many factors that led to the preservation of Fenway, that were not applicable to the Garden's situation. Most important being the fact that Fenway's proposed demolition and the construction of the new Fenway was going to require significant demolition of existing structures throughout the Fenway neighborhood. Contrarily, the FleetCenter was constructed on unused land located directly behind Boston Garden.<sup>392</sup> Another being that Fenway held

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<sup>391</sup> Kim Konrad-Alvarez, Interview with Author, Jan. 4, 2019.

<sup>392</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with Author, Dec. 13, 2018.

significant architectural merit, and as Massachusetts' top tourist attraction the building was admired and sought out by many, despite its inadequacies. In short, it had fans, which at the time of its demolition the Garden lacked.<sup>393</sup> Perhaps the most important thing that differentiated the loss of Boston Garden from the successful preservation of Fenway Park was the fact that the Garden had been lost already, and there was a sense among citizens and preservationists that losing both would seriously damage the cultural fabric of Boston. As Kim Konrad-Alvarez put it, "[I] really think that this was on the heels of regrets on the Garden loss... Fenway was a second chance to try and learn from that."<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>393</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with Author, Dec. 13, 2018.

<sup>394</sup> Kim Konrad-Alvarez, Interview with Author, Jan. 4, 2019.

## CONCLUSION

Advocating for the active preservation of historic recreational resources, preservationist Michael A. Tomlan noted that, “Every day millions of Americans go about working, sleeping, and eating, but what we do during our free time is often the most cherished part of our lives.” He continued, “There are a tremendous amount of historic facilities dedicated to leisure and recreation in the United States. It should come as no surprise that the preservation movement in our country has a growing concern with these properties.”<sup>395</sup> Following closely on the heels of the demolition of Boston Garden, the preservation of Fenway Park can be viewed as a success on multiple levels. First and foremost, Boston retained one of its most prized historical landmarks as well as its highest visited tourist attraction. Secondly, Save Fenway Park! and the new Red Sox ownership group proved the value of preserving and renovating historic sports stadia in both cultural and financial terms. Maintaining and updating sports arenas and stadiums, however, remains uncommon throughout the United States.

As Judy McDonough noted, the cultural impact of Boston Garden was based on the sporting and non-athletic events that occurred inside the arena. Despite its ceremonious opening, “modern” 20<sup>th</sup>-century materials and construction, and constant use by the general public, the Garden received little maintenance throughout its lifespan. The end result was a desire to cleanse by way of redevelopment, as well as reinvigorate the economic vitality of that section of the city. To this day even, many in Boston retain their belief that at the end of its life Boston Garden was nothing more than a “dump.”<sup>396</sup>

By the 1980s, the strong and highly publicized desire to redevelop the Garden had reached a point of no return. Impacted by the changing Boston landscape, complete with the Big Dig highway submersion project, BRA rezoning effort, and the “Massachusetts Miracle”

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<sup>395</sup> Michael A. Tomlan, “Introduction,” in *Preserve and Play: Preserving Historic Recreation and Entertainment Sites*, ed. Deborah Slaton, Chad Randl, and Lauren Van Damme (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 2006), p. xiii.

<sup>396</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with Author, Dec. 13, 2018.



economic boom, the city began to plan for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century. The redevelopment of Boston Garden, therefore, was to serve as an example of Boston's sports culture welcoming the new millennium, echoing that of the rest of the city. Governor Dukakis's awarding of the stadium redevelopment rights to the arena's ownership group, Delaware North Co., in 1988, only proved the inevitability. Only when the money became available, marking the beginning of the end of the early-1990s recession, and the start of development on the FleetCenter in 1992, did Boston Garden's fate come to fruition.

Rather than fight for the preservation and continued use of Boston Garden, a fate which seemed likely only ten years before the FleetCenter's plans were announced, Boston's preservation community conceded the Garden to the wrecking ball, focusing their attention on the neighboring Bulfinch Triangle instead. Even though the preservation of Fenway Park has proven successful on multiple levels, including economically, it is the differences between the Fenway and Garden redevelopment plans that welcomed preservation for the former and spelled the doom of the latter. The "new" Boston Garden's proposed location, on Delaware North owned land directly behind the arena, and the lack of public support for rehabilitating the old stadium were the two most damning differences. Fenway, on the other hand, proposed to take and destroy acres of properties in the Fens neighborhood. The beloved ballpark also featured a significant amount of support from fans on its architectural merit. Though the two historic sporting venues shared a common historical narrative, the differences surrounding their redevelopment opportunities determined their respective futures. Recalling Judy McDonough's lesson, "to try, but don't waste people's time," preservation attempts on Boston Garden would have only further delayed the inevitable.<sup>397</sup> The once grand sports palace had come to the end of its reign.

Despite the supposed inevitability of Boston Garden's redevelopment in the mid-1980s, preservation efforts for the historic arena should have occurred. Boston Garden stood as a

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<sup>397</sup> Judy McDonough, Interview with Author, Dec. 13, 2018.

reminder of the prominence of the Roaring '20s. It was a monument to the grandiose of an American cultural identity that found its roots in industrialization, as seen with the arena's association to North Station and the B&M Railroad. The Garden's historical and cultural legacy, as documented in chapters 1-3, note the arena's importance as one of Boston's most memorable 20<sup>th</sup>-century community centers. The relationship of the building to sports only strengthens its importance, as the prevalence of athletics on American, and in particular Bostonian, culture continues to dominate in the early 21<sup>st</sup>-century. Boston Garden's architectural merit was also questioned throughout the process. Even though, as Michael Cannizzo and Judy McDonough stated, the integrity of the building was questionable due to the loss of the Hotel Madison and the North Station Industrial Building, as well as the Parquet on the interior, the integrity of the Garden's exterior was strongly intact. With few other Art Deco landmarks in Boston, the United Shoe Machinery Corporation and the John W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse are two preserved examples, Boston Garden would have served as yet another reminder of the design style and its use in American society. The structure's importance as a "modern" early-20<sup>th</sup>-century arena was further explained through its materials, which served to further strengthen its importance as an example of early-20<sup>th</sup>-century stadium construction. These beliefs were shared, as seen in the recommendations made by the documentation survey teams that nominated the arena for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In short, Boston Garden deserved preservation.

Questions abound as to why neither government nor private sector preservation organizations fought to keep the Garden from the wrecking ball. With no structural damages, and a lack of air conditioning being the major concern, rehabilitation was a viable, and likely cheaper, option for the ownership group. One reason as to why there was a lack of preservation may stem from the low level of prominence of the arena's architects, Funk & Wilcox. Although the pair have designs listed on the National Register, there is little information about them and their work. If the Garden had been designed by a more prominent or historically relevant architect, there might have been more of an effort to fight for its survival. Perhaps more telling,

was the importance of the “new” Garden serving as a catalyst for economic development in the North End. The successful rehabilitation and economic success of Fenway Park, however, serves as a significant reminder that a rehabilitation of Boston Garden could have also succeeded both in preserving the historic arena and as an economic booster for the neighborhood. As sports culture remains at the forefront of American culture, the importance of preserving the historic stadia and arenas that house the events should become increasingly vital for preservationists. To once again quote Kim Konrad-Alvarez, these venues are “as important to our cultural heritage as Old North Church.”<sup>398</sup>

There were various limitations to this thesis. First and foremost, was the lack of direct involvement from involved employees of the Delaware North Co. Their insight into the redevelopment of Boston Garden would have expanded greatly upon multiple sections of the report, including the specifics of the rehabilitation and redevelopment plans of the 1980s, as well as the ownerships reasons for redevelopment. Another limitation was the lack of photographs and illustrations of North Station. A great deal of documentation was located for Boston Garden, but North Station’s layout and materiality had to be configured through building plans, journal accounts, and news articles. Photographs of the station’s interior would have been very useful in describing the building. Finally, involvement from those who used the arena most, such as the athletes, reporters, and coaches, would have greatly enhanced the historical narrative and cultural impact of the Garden.

The issue of preserving, rehabilitating, and reusing historic sports stadia remains a pertinent topic of conversation in preservation circles. Venues across the country face a similar fate to that of Boston Garden, with few receiving proper attention. For example, the historic Astrodome in Houston only recently found financing to fund rehabilitation.<sup>399</sup> The issue remains in New England to this day. Pawtucket, Rhode Island’s McCoy Stadium, home to the Boston Red Sox AAA affiliate Pawtucket Red Sox, will lose their main tenant at the conclusion

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<sup>398</sup> Kim Konrad-Alvarez, Interview with Author, Jan. 4, 2019.

<sup>399</sup> Allyn West, “How the Astrodome was Saved,” *Houston Chronicle*, April 9, 2018.

of the 2020 Minor League Baseball season. The “Paw Sox,” as they’re locally known, have announced their intended relocation to Worcester, MA, leaving questions about the 1942 stadium’s future. The Paw Sox stated the stadium’s age and lack of modern amenities as reasons for their departure.<sup>400</sup>

The common belief that aging sports stadiums and arenas cannot support today’s fans and athletes is one that is spread across all four of the major professional sports, and has been commonly understood as the only viable option for teams seeking to update. The story of Boston Garden, therefore, is not an uncommon one. The future of professional sports stadia should be a continued concern for preservationists, especially as the threat of redevelopment persists. The importance of sports culture and sports history on the growth of the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries should not be ignored. The grand sports palaces and modern arenas built throughout the 1900s, therefore, deserve an active advocacy. Echoing this belief, Michael Tomlan noted, “To better insure that these properties can be preserved and their designs respected, we must understand how they were formed, evolved, and continue to change.”<sup>401</sup> Going forward the preservation community must determine a response to ensure that these venues remain to tell the full history of American culture.

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<sup>400</sup> Zach Spedden, “No Decisions on McCoy Stadium’s Future,” *Endangered Ballparks*, Dec. 20, 2018, accessed Feb. 10, 2019. <https://ballparkdigest.com/2018/12/20/no-decisions-on-mccoy-stadiums-future/>.

<sup>401</sup> Tomlan, “Introduction,” p. xiii.

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