Soccer Stadium Architecture and Archibald Leitch

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GRAHAM CHRISTENSEN

SENIOR INTEGRATIVE PROJECT: INDEPENDENT STUDY

ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES
CONNECTICUT COLLEGE
2013
Soccer Stadium Architecture and Archibald Leitch

Graham Christensen
# Current Premier League Standings

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Archibald Leitch

- Born April 27, 1865
- Glasgow, Scotland
- Won scholarship to Hutchesons’ Grammar School
- Went on to Anderson’s College studying science
Early Professional Life

• Held a variety of engineering jobs across Glasgow
• Then went to see as a marine engineer for three years until 1890
  – Married that year
• Returned to working engineering jobs around Glasgow
• 1896, opens his own practice
Sentinel Works (1903)

- First reinforced concrete building in Glasgow
- Patternmaking shop and office for an engineering firm
- Category A listed building
Ibrox (1899) and its 1902 Disaster

• Ranger FC and Ibrox Stadium
  – Need for expansion to keep pace with cross town rivals Celtic

• Leitch completed commission for free
  – Capacity of 80,000

• Stadium Hosted England vs. Scotland match in 1902 testing the stadiums capacity with 60,000 fans

• Stands gave out, 25 people died and 190 hurt
  – Leitch was found not to blame, faulty wood had been supplied to him
Improving Safety Measure

• After the disaster Leitch’s work would come to define stadium design
• Patented “Crush Barrier”
  – Prevented Stampede effect
• Improved Terracing
  – Allowed for everyone to see
  – Better crowd control
Craven Cottage (1904)

- Henry Norris, Fulham Club Chairman
  - Ambitious, wanted to grow club into top flight contender
- Only Problem, Craven Cottage’s location
Planning
The Field House

- Unusual, going out of style
- Housed locker rooms, offices and caretakers flat
- Connection to old Craven Cottage
- Grade II Protected Building
Connection with the Neighborhood

- Oldest Stadium in League
- Strong ties with the neighborhood
  - Architecture
    - load bearing brick, string courses, mullioned windows, cartouches and Dutch gables.
  - Social hub
    - Represents the area and its people
- Groups such as Fulham 2000, Fulham Alliance, Back to the Cottage and Fulham United have all voiced support for the Cottage
Hillsborough Stadium Disaster

• Incident during 1989 Liverpool vs. Nottingham Forest game
• 96 deaths and 766 injuries due to stampede
• Police’s lack of control and over selling tickets to blame
• Resulted in Taylor Report which banned standing terraces in stadiums
  – At this point, the Cottage’s Riverside stand had been replaced in 1972, but standing terraces still existed on either end of the field
The Cottage Today and Uncertainty of the Future

• 1998, Stadium given $1,165,575 refurbishment
  • Seats 25,000
    – One of the smallest ground in league
    – Stadium sells out consistently, 98% attendance
    – Team consistently in top half of standings
• 2003, Plans revealed to do further $12,408,800 worth of refurbishment
  – Eliminated the final standing terraces
• 2013, Club announces plans to increase capacity to 30,000 with an addition to the Riverside Stands
His Legacy

• Terraces with concrete footing, sunken gangways and crush barriers formed the backdrop of English soccer through the 80s
• Safety Regulations such as the 1975 and 1996 publication of *The Green Guide to Safety at Sport Grounds* both specified seating specifications similar to the dimensions laid out in Leitch’s 1905 design for Craven Cottage
• England Hosted the 1966 World Cup
  – Of 7 stadiums featured, 6 were Leitch designed