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The Memphis Ballpark District:

A Case Study Investigating the Global and Local Influences in the
Recreation of a Downtown through Urban Architecture and Sport

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Fall 2011

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	1
List of Appendices	5
An Introduction: The Social Struggles of Memphis, Tennessee	6
Section I. Memphis and the Global Urban City	12
Section II. Place Attachment	20
Memory and the Senses	20
The History of Spectatorship in Baseball	25
Section III. The Failure of the Great American Pyramid	29
Section IV. The Creation of an Urban Network	35
AutoZone Park – A Case Study	35
The Completion of the Memphis Ballpark District	45
A Conclusion	50
Illustrations	54
Appendices	65
Bibliography	74

List of Illustrations

Section I.

Figure 1:

Bird's eye view of the city and the river. Memphis, Tennessee. 2005.

Image provided by www.wikipedia.com.

Figure 2:

Plan. Memphis, Tennessee. 2011.

Image acquired through www.googlemaps.com.

Figure 3:

First settlement of Auction Square along Mississippi River. Memphis, Tennessee. 1870.

Looney Ricks Kiss Architects. "Uptown, Downtown, Around Town Memphis: Building Value in a Community," Slideshow Presentation.

Figure 4:

Street view. Beale Street, Memphis, Tennessee. 2011.

Image provided by <http://blogs.babble.com>.

Figure 5:

View from AutoZone Park main entrance. Peabody Hotel, Memphis, Tennessee. 1925. Walter W. Ahlschlager.

Photograph by author.

Figure 6:

View of exterior at night. The Memphis Pyramid, Memphis, Tennessee. 1991. Rosser International.

Photograph by author.

Section II.

Figure 7:

Lithograph. Elysian Fields, New Jersey. 1865. Nathaniel Currier and James Merritt Ives.

Gershman, Michael. *Diamonds: The Evolution of the Ballpark*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993.

Figure 8:

Before transformation from ice skating rink into ball field. Union Grounds, Brooklyn, New York. 1861. William Cammeyer.

Gershman, Michael. *Diamonds: The Evolution of the Ballpark*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993.

Figure 9:

After transformation from ice skating rink into ball field. Union Grounds, Brooklyn, New York. 1861. William Cammeyer.

Gershman, Michael. *Diamonds: The Evolution of the Ballpark*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993.

Section III.

Figure 10:

Under construction. The Memphis Pyramid, Memphis, Tennessee. 1991. Rosser International. Steve Jones, "The Pyramid: Through the Years," Photo Gallery, *The Commercial Appeal*, 1990, <http://www.commercialappeal.com/>.

Figure 11:

Under construction with truss structure displayed. The Memphis Pyramid, Memphis, Tennessee. 1991. Rosser International.

Robert Cohen, "The Pyramid: Through the Years," Photo Gallery, *The Commercial Appeal*, 1990, <http://www.commercialappeal.com/>.

Figure 12:

View of main entrance with Egyptian statue. The Memphis Pyramid, Memphis, Tennessee. 1991. Rosser International.

Photograph by author.

Figure 13:

Bird's eye view with I-40. The Memphis Pyramid, Memphis, Tennessee. 1991. Rosser International.

Thomas Busler, "The Pyramid: Through the Years," Photo Gallery, *The Commercial Appeal*, 1990, <http://www.commercialappeal.com/>.

Figure 14:

Skyline from Arkansas across the Mississippi River. The Memphis Pyramid, Memphis, Tennessee. 1991. Rosser International.

John Conway, <http://www.panoramio.com>.

Section IV.

Figure 15:

Bird's eye view of downtown. AutoZone Park, Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss. Looney Ricks Kiss Architects. "Uptown, Downtown, Around Town Memphis: Building Value in a Community," Slideshow Presentation.

Figure 16:

Architectural plan. AutoZone Park, Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss.

Looney Ricks Kiss Architects. "Uptown, Downtown, Around Town Memphis: Building Value in a Community," Slideshow Presentation.

Figure 17:

View from inside of gates toward the Peabody Hotel. AutoZone Park, Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss.
Photograph by author.

Figure 18:

Arrival to field on ground level. AutoZone Park, Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss.
Photograph by author.

Figure 19:

View of main entry plaza and materials on clubhouse. AutoZone Park, Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss.
Photograph by author.

Figure 20:

Main seating. AutoZone Park, Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss.
Photograph by author.

Figure 21:

View of bluff seating. AutoZone Park, Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss.
Photograph by author.

Figure 22:

View of parking deck. AutoZone Park, Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss.
Photograph by author.

Figure 23:

View from Third Street parking deck. AutoZone Park, Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss.
Photograph by author.

Figure 24:

Street view. Orpheum Theatre, Memphis, Tennessee. 1928. C. W. Rapp and George L. Rapp.
Provided by www.broadwayworld.com.

Figure 25:

View of surrounding urban fabric. AutoZone Park, Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss.
Photograph by author.

Figure 26:

Perspective. Toyota Plaza, Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss.
Looney Ricks Kiss Architects. "Uptown, Downtown, Around Town Memphis: Building Value in a Community," Slideshow Presentation.

Figure 27:

Street view. YMCA Lofts. Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss.

Looney Ricks Kiss Architects. "Uptown, Downtown, Around Town Memphis: Building Value in a Community," Slideshow Presentation.

Figure 28:

Street view. Downtown Ballpark Apartments, Memphis, Tennessee. 2002. Looney Ricks Kiss.

Photograph by author.

Figure 29:

Street view. Downtown Elementary School, Memphis, Tennessee. 2004. Looney Ricks Kiss.

Looney Ricks Kiss Architects. "Uptown, Downtown, Around Town Memphis: Building Value in a Community," Slideshow Presentation.

Figure 30:

View of park at sunset. AutoZone Park, Memphis, Tennessee. 2000. Looney Ricks Kiss.

Photograph by author.

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Analytical Diagrams Highlighting Key Design Decisions of the Memphis Pyramid
Appendix B	Analytical Diagrams Highlighting Key Design Decisions of the Memphis Ballpark District
Appendix C	Analytical Diagrams of AutoZone Park's Union Street Elevation
Appendix D	Diagram of Views into AutoZone Park from Surrounding Context
Appendix E	Use Diagram of the Memphis Ballpark District

An Introduction

The Social Struggles of Memphis, Tennessee

Memphis, Tennessee, is and has been a city of momentous triumphs and debilitating setbacks. Cultural and racial history, geographical location, and significant urban decisions have shaped its history. As Wanda Rushing observes, the city and the people associated with it have the tendency to be “misunderstood and underestimated” not only because Memphis is a Southern town, many of which are culturally rich but globally overlooked, but also because its past is littered with economic and social unrest.¹

Named for its relationship to the Mississippi River and known as the “Metropolis of the American Nile,” Memphis began as four public squares and a promenade that were laid between a grid along the bluffs.² Originally, the city centered around Auction Square near the current location of the Memphis Pyramid. In 1826, the young town had quickly grown into a popular port for flatboat men and their goods because of its relationship to New Orleans. It was during this time that the cotton market took hold in the area, and by the 1830s, Memphis was a major commercial center. Even today, Memphis remains one of the largest and most important transportation hubs in the world because it is home to FedEx Headquarters. During the 1850s, with the addition of Irish and German immigrants escaping famine and political unrest, Memphis became the fastest-growing city in the South.³ It also established a connection with the East Coast with the addition of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. Memphis’s economy grew dramatically with this development because of its constant distribution of the two most demanding commodities in the south: cotton and slaves.

When the Civil War began, both the Union and the Confederacy wanted control of the major transportation center of Memphis; regardless, the city saw very little activity during the

war. A brief battle on the Mississippi River between the Confederate fleet and a Union naval force that resulted in Union control of Memphis was the only confrontation that the residents witnessed.⁴ However, business continued throughout the city with both the North and the South. Soon after the war ended in 1865, Memphis finally began to feel the effects. Recently-freed slaves quickly moved to the city as it was one of the largest in the South. Because many were able to find jobs and adequate incomes, they remained there. As a result, Memphis developed a large African American population.

Social and racial unrest began soon after these changes took place. One of the largest and worst riots in United States history occurred in May 1866 between the black population and Irish whites.⁵ Instances such as these would be common for Memphis in subsequent years.

Any economic struggles that Memphis might have sustained during the war had vanished by 1870. However, while the city was not affected negatively due to the Civil War, it was devastated by the yellow fever outbreak of the 1870s. The epidemic struck the city in 1873, 1878, and 1879 and decreased the population of Memphis by 25 percent due to deaths and those who left permanently.⁶ Because Memphis was now on the brink of bankruptcy, it was put under the control of the state commission. As a result, the locals had little power. With the wealthy upper class departing because of the growing negativity toward the city concerning health and finances, Memphis's future lacked promise.

In the 1880s, the people of Memphis fought to strengthen their city and return it to its antebellum. Dr. D.T. Porter, Memphis's first president of the taxing district, learned of a new sewer system for sanitation. Because the origins of yellow fever were not yet known, many attributed the death of so many people to the unsanitary conditions of the city. Local officials worked to install this sewer system, which is common today in most American cities, and to

clean homes and businesses throughout Memphis. The black community, now 70 percent of the remaining population, was also a major influence in the rebuilding of the city.⁷ They assisted in the local cleanup, established safety patrols, and worked to restore financial stability. Memphis regained its charter in 1891.⁸ It was the dedication of the people of Memphis, and in particular the black population, that revived the city.

During these early years of social instability, a medium of entertainment began to thrive. Music, and in particular the blues, defined the culture of this Southern town. For many, it captured “the mood and melody of the times.”⁹ In the early 1910s, Memphis became the music center for black musicians with the publication of “Memphis Blues” by W.C. Handy. This campaign song encouraged other artists to make their way to Beale Street clubs and music halls to try their own luck with the newest music style. In the years following, Sam Phillips and his top recording artist, Elvis Presley, officially launched the era of the blues in Memphis. This is significant because, to this day, Memphis wants, above all else, to entertain.

Named the birthplace of the Blues, this city has been the source of years of musical entertainment from Graceland and Beale Street to the annual Memphis in May festival on the waterfront. Annual festivals that cater to the history of the southern city such as the Memphis Italian Festival and the Cotton Festival display the spirit of Memphis while giving the public an opportunity to enjoy themselves and be entertained. While music was the predominate means by which entertainment was produced, Memphis also attempted to cater to sports as a new outlet because the addition would offer another means of revenue as well as attract a larger audience to use and populate the city. The construction of venues such as the Mid-South Coliseum (1963), the Liberty Bowl (1965), and the Memphis Pyramid (1992) occurred over the course of the twentieth century.

While the first two projects, the oldest of the three, continue to be used today regardless of their age and lack of modern allure, the Pyramid, completed in 1991, is a clear example of an iconic work of architecture seeking to change and improve the downtown. However, due to issues such as a lack of surrounding development and a disconnect from central downtown that will be further discussed and analyzed in this thesis, the Pyramid currently sits vacant and accomplished little in stabilizing the social and economic concerns of Memphis. How could the failure of one venue contribute to the success of another?

Even with the encouragement of an established identity through entertainment, social and racial turmoil continued over the next century. In April of 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated at the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee. While the country was shattered by the tragedy, the city of Memphis and its public socially felt the impact of that powerful blow for decades to come. Race had always been an unstable topic in the city before the assassination; the devastating act merely added to the issue. Downtown Memphis has housed a predominately black population since the days of the yellow fever epidemic. With the growth of surrounding suburbs, the white population moved westward for both the benefits of perceived safety and more spacious living. Even into the twentieth century, racial unrest remained a common theme in Memphis, and while the struggle had stabilized over the last few decades, still issues often arose because of poverty and social conflict. Because of safety issues and the lack of entertaining events for children, many suburban families found little need to travel downtown. This led to the deterioration and lack of use in Downtown Memphis. While the city was still known for its musical background and southern traditions, it was not growing and improving with the passing of time as most cities do. Memphis was losing its identity on both a local and global scale.

In the late twentieth century, Memphis, Tennessee was on the verge of destruction due to its neglectful past. Race and safety concerns continued to plague the city. The area was failing socially and economically. Memphis and its needs were generally ignored by its public. What needed to be done to recreate this urban center for talent and entertainment? What local influences and global patterns help sustain an urban downtown environment? How could Memphis reestablish its forgotten identity? What would be the ‘difference-maker?’¹⁰

The goal of this thesis is to answer these questions by addressing the essential elements of urban planning and the relationship between sports architecture and place attachment. Specifically, this thesis presents a case study investigating the Memphis Ballpark District. This area, the home of AutoZone Park, a Triple-A baseball stadium, and other related projects, accomplished what many people believed the city needed. It laid the foundation for social stability between different classes and races while also catering to the local culture by contributing to the entertainment nature of Memphis. This research strives to understand why and how AutoZone Park and the Memphis Ballpark District accomplished this through urban planning and the science of place attachment through sports. This investigation will show how the new facility did not create its own identity within an already-culturally sufficient atmosphere; it enhanced and reinforced the identity that Memphis already had. The success of the Memphis Ballpark District and AutoZone Park results from both the local needs of a deteriorating downtown and the global influences of urban planning and place attachment in sports architecture.¹¹

¹ Wanda Rushing, *Memphis and the Paradox of Place: Globalization in the American South*, (North Carolina: UNC Press, 2009), 10.

² Ibid, 34.

³ William Patton, *A Guide to Historic Memphis*, (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010), 12.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, 13.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid, 14.

⁸ Ibid, 15.

⁹ Ibid, 16.

¹⁰ A “difference-maker” in sports is the player on the field that makes an obvious difference in the overall play of the game. Their attitude and skills affect not only their play but also the work of their teammates.

¹¹ Content Footnote: In lieu of Literature Review, the following key sources provided the general history of Memphis for the purposes of this thesis: Covington, Jimmie. “Black Population in Memphis area booms; white exit mounts.” *The Commercial Appeal*, October 29, 2001; Davis, Chris. “Legacy.” *Memphis Flyer*, January 24, 2002; Faircloth, Justin. “Image and Representation: The Downtown Architecture of Memphis, Tennessee.” B.Arch thesis, University of Arkansas, 2005; Patton, William. *A Guide to Historic Memphis*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010; Cunningham, Laura. *Lost Memphis*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010; Rushing, Wanda. *Memphis and the Paradox of Place: Globalization in the American South*. North Carolina: UNC Press, 2009.

Section I

Memphis and the Global Urban City

As can be seen in Memphis and any other urban community, the success of a city relies heavily on key urban elements that have proven their value throughout history. However, they highlight what must be investigated and considered to create cohesiveness and logical sequences rather than establish strict rules and regulations that will lead only to repetitive schemes and little originality among cities. As demonstrated by Kostof, these fundamental concerns of urban planning do not dictate but enhance the design of a city. Established edge conditions, the creation of divisions based on typology, the articulation of the public versus private realms, the logical sequence of the streets and transportation, and the character of public landmarks and iconic architecture determine the dynamic of an urban environment.¹ These urban elements and their roles all operate in the downtown of Memphis, Tennessee.

The creation of a perimeter, or a circumscription, is a critical factor of city-form. Historically, this characteristic has evolved from the thick, enclosing walls used as a barrier into more road signs or soft, unobtrusive edges between cities and their surrounding rural areas or suburbs. The establishment of this “arbitrary line” is essential to the functionality of a city because it creates a social limitation as well as an economic one.² This boundary can be determined by many circumstances. Property and who it belongs to is often reliant upon government, economic stability of the city, and money. In other cases, the edge of a city could be determined not by human intention but rather by the topographical or natural occurrences surrounding it such as major waterways or mountains. This is true of many American cities including Memphis, Tennessee, along the Mississippi River (Fig. 1). In Memphis, specifically, the river is the city’s life source. Its location and its economic strengths were determined by this

pre-existing edge to the west that continues to serve as much more than just a boundary for the city. While the other three edges of Memphis have changed over the last century with the installation of major interstates and the migration of people to the surrounding areas, the Mississippi River has been a constant in the city's history.

Investigating the city edge also leads to the question of sprawl and the phenomenon of suburbs. In cases of a tight, compact urban environment, spill into the vacant surrounding areas will occur.³ Particularly in the United States, it has become human nature to take advantage of the commotion and excitement of a downtown atmosphere while still desiring a more isolated, spacious environment for everyday living. This need for a separate, secure dwelling place contributed to the development of suburbs and urban sprawl. Although the urban edge has blurred significantly over time, there is still an apparent social and economic difference between the downtown and the surrounding spaces. This blurred urban condition occurs in Memphis along the eastern edge of the city. As a driver travels from the western edge of downtown into the established suburbs of Germantown and Collierville, there is an apparent shift in architecture, income, and overall atmosphere that is not defined by a hard edge. While the I-240 loop (Fig. 2) around Midtown and the districts surrounding central downtown does act as a partial edge between the city and its suburbs, it does not experientially affect this gradual progression from one type of style of living to another.

Interior edges are also vital to the composition and functionality of a city. These edges often are not strictly defined nor do they allow for a sense of clarity and logic to exist soundly with a city's chaotic nature. They define districts within the city boundary that relate to use, religion, social order, and culture. Interior edges are a natural consequence of the building of a cathedral or temple or the integration of commercial and residential property. In many cases,

these districts are not planned as the movement and sprawl of people is based on their own intentions. However, the slight establishment of these natural edges creates a harmonious relationship between existing and newly-created areas and allows a city to function productively and smoothly.

Memphis has expanded dramatically since its settlement. The city consists of multiple districts that have formed along the Mississippi River and shifted the visitor's perception of the downtown by establishing these interior edge conditions. The bluffs and riverfront occupy the space between the Mississippi River and downtown Memphis. They establish an essential connection between the two and contribute to the city's efforts to create pedestrian-friendly, social outlets. The riverfront is predominantly made up of parks, such as Martyr's Park, dedicated to those lost to yellow fever in the 1870s, and Tom Lee Park, named for a black man who saved thirty-two white passengers when their boat *M.E. Norman* capsized in May 1925.⁴ Today, Tom Lee Park is used as the grounds for the annual Memphis in May Music Festival. Mud Island, a land mass inadvertently created by a U.S. Navy gunship in 1912 along the coast of the Memphis shore, also houses a large park that has a museum, an amphitheater, and the River Walk.⁵ Even though transportation means have expanded over the last century, Memphis still relies heavily on this river as a vital life source as well as a provider of social avenues.

The Pinch-District (Fig. 3), named for the appearance of Irish immigrants in the 1840s, in North Memphis was the city's first commercial district.⁶ It was the center of the Jewish community in Memphis in the early 1900s and was also home to many other immigrants including Italians and Germans. While this district was the original center of Memphis when it was first established, many of the buildings that were in this area have since been removed. Auction Square, one of the four squares in the original city plan, was once the center of

commerce and a major food market. This district also contains one of the most recognizable icons of Memphis, the Great American Pyramid. Regardless, the Pinch-District has grown into one of the barest areas in Memphis.

Between and along Madison and Union Avenues, two major avenues running through downtown until they meet the Mississippi River, is a district defined by its classical facades and landmarks. Madison Avenue, also known as Banker's Row, represents a majority of the financial district in Memphis because many bank headquarters can be found there. These buildings include Union Planters Bank Building (1924), First Tennessee Bank Building (1964), and the Exchange Building (1910). One of the most revered landmarks of Memphis, the Peabody Hotel, also occupies this district on Union Avenue. It is within this area between Madison and Union that the Memphis Ballpark District also occupies.

Within these districts, the question of the usage and role of public versus private spaces arises. Both types of spaces within the confines of a city and the distinction between the two contribute to the social atmosphere of a city. Public spaces, most notably, often are places of gathering for multiple groups of people or large events. The singular person becomes a part of a greater whole within these gathering spaces. Historically, piazzas, town squares, and public courtyards, which are all used for static activity rather than a means of circulation, offer a place for festivals and annual events to occur. They are where the locals create and continue traditions for generations. These spaces define the atmosphere and the people as well as give the city an identity. Private spaces, while vital to the comfort and lifestyle of the individual person, are more deliberate and planned than public ones but offer little in terms of localism and pride.

Downtown Memphis, although filled with multiple parks and public venues such as Beale Street, does not accommodate the pedestrian. Public parks such as Overton Park and

Forrest Park provide areas of personal entertainment as well as attempt to establish Memphis as a functioning, pedestrian-friendly city. However, Memphis lacks a recognizably commercial center like those found in Denver, Colorado, or Chicago, Illinois, that encourage people to leave the private realm and enter the public one. While it does have a mall along Main Street in central downtown that offers a trolley line and a pedestrian-friendly avenue, Memphis is still a predominately transportation-reliant city like most large cities in the United States. Even into the last twentieth century, this urban problem had negatively affected the city both on an economic and social level.

Between these static conditions within a city are the streets that connect them. A means of circulation contributes to the accessibility of spaces, the ease at which someone moves through an area, and the relationships between those public and private spaces. Although necessary for these obvious reasons, streets are also a political issue.⁷ They establish boundaries among the public and private spaces within the city. While they serve as a major structuring device, streets also put a city on display to visitors and newcomers both visually and economically. They create connections that would otherwise be muddled and lost within the urban fabric. As is true with most American cities, Memphis sits on an orthogonal grid that runs either perpendicular or parallel to the bend of the Mississippi River rather than to the cardinal directions. While the grid lacks regularly in central downtown, it is an organizing tool that utilizes major avenues that connect to the suburbs and smaller, one-way cross streets that link major landmarks.

Between all of these urban elements are the architectural moments that help establish a city's identity. These buildings become the sights that distinguish one city from another. This urban element questions the notable differences between iconic architecture and historic

landmarks. Iconic architecture plays a significant role in the view of a city on a global scale. While a building that is iconic can evolve into a prominent landmark, its design is intended to appeal to the masses or the outsider. These buildings are usually recognized as iconic because of their individuality. Citing the glass pyramid in front of the Louvre in Paris, France as an example, Lee Askew theorizes that buildings “that start out as aliens often become icons.”⁸ Landmarks, on the other hand, often evolve over the course of a city’s history. In most cases, these monuments became landmarks because of local support. Whether architecturally significant or not, they reflect a specific culture or tradition that entitle it to historical importance. In many cases, these landmarks can gain national acclaim just as iconic architecture can become local treasures.

Beale Street (Fig. 4), one of two streets on the National Register of Historic Places, is a cultural landmark that has grown into a globally-recognized icon for Memphis. Named the Home of the Blues, this street represents a diverse community and many different perspectives concerning music and how it should be played. The transition from a commercial daytime atmosphere into an eccentric, entertaining nightlife showcases Memphis and its two distinct characters.

The Peabody Hotel (Fig. 5), revered on both a local and national scale, has encouraged the growth of the musical lifestyle of Memphis and thrived as a symbol of downtown. Although its original location at Main and Monroe was destroyed by a fire in 1923, the Peabody, originally designed by Walter Ahlschlager, has since been rebuilt and remained a heart of downtown Memphis.⁹ This Italian Renaissance-revival structure is often recalled as the beginning of the Mississippi Delta. The hotel showcases a city’s traditions such as the daily walk of the Peabody Ducks. A renovation of the hotel in 1981 by McFarland & Associates gave the city a much

needed encouraging lift into the 1980s. This move invited other architects and the public to investigate the rejuvenation of downtown because the Peabody, once again, became “a destination” rather than just a hotel.¹⁰ This became a precedent that would encourage the ongoing revival of Memphis.

First conceived in the late 1800s but not completed until 1991, the Memphis Pyramid (Fig. 6) is a sports and entertainment venue situated on the northern banks of the Mississippi River.¹¹ It was intended to rival the St. Louis Arch, which is an example of an iconic structure that the public later recognized as a local and national landmark. Designed for the namesake of the city, the Pyramid was created as a symbol of the Southern city and its connection to the river. As Frank Murtaugh observes in his article, the structure, while “a great idea, poorly implemented,” was a much needed addition to the Memphis skyline because of the economic depression of the 1970s as well as the pain that encompassed the city following the Martin Luther King, Jr. assassination.¹² While the Pyramid is iconic architecturally in appearance, the public never embraced the project as a public landmark. The structure currently sits abandoned only 15 years after its completion. The failure of this structure will be investigated further in this thesis as a foil to the success of AutoZone Park.

These fundamental urban elements, studied and analyzed over the centuries by architects and scholars, do not, however, function like a puzzle. No perfect formula for the success of a city exists. While one addition might fit seamlessly within the urban fabric of one city, that does not guarantee its success within another. However, one universal rule is crucial to the prosperity and growth of any city. Cities would not exist without people to populate their sidewalks and public spaces. It is the local influence of a city’s public that creates the culture and traditions that make a one city distinguishable from another. Through the complexity of different perspectives that the

public naturally provide, the individuality of a city is enhanced. In turn, those peoples' memories and allegiances are equally affected by the architectural phenomena of establishing an identity through global iconic structures and local historical landmarks.

¹ Spiro Kostof, *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form Through History*, (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1992).

² Ibid, 11.

³ Ibid, 47.

⁴ Patton, 62-4.

⁵ Ibid, 70.

⁶ Ibid, 153.

⁷ Kostof, 194.

⁸ Chris Herrington, "The Changing Cityscape," *Memphis Flyer*, March 20, 2001; Lee Askew is an architect as the firm Askew Nixon Ferguson Architects Inc. in Memphis, Tennessee.

⁹ Patton, 147.

¹⁰ J. Carson Looney quotation from Herrington.

¹¹ Ibid, 155.

¹² Frank Murtaugh, "Commentary: The Not-So-Great American Pyramid," *Memphis Flyer*, April 18, 2005.

Section II

Place Attachment

Memory and the Senses of a City's Public

Perhaps the most important element within a city is its public. A city is a collection of architectural experiences defined by its diverse population that embraces a sense of allegiance and culture. Regardless of how architecturally luxurious it is, a city that does not reflect the needs and size of its inhabitant will deteriorate over time. A downtown needs people to occupy it for social and economic support. Through care from its public, a city achieves a vibrancy and attractiveness that leads to growth and stability. People gain a sense of attachment to their habitat and invest time and money into its preservation by creating these personal connections and memories through architectural means.

Memory is a personal affair because of its very nature. No one can personally share a memory with another person. Every account of an event is different because everyone has a perspective. People have the free will to tell others about his memories, but no one else can fully understand how they felt at that moment, what exactly they perceived, and how they would view the memory later. As a society, that is how people want it. While there are many things that a person cannot control, memory is one that is purely personal and private. People recognize that their memories are theirs' alone.

A person does not necessarily choose the memories he/she recalls. In most cases, major events or landmarks in one's life are remembered because they are an abnormal occurrence. On the other hand, the mundane, day-to-day intricacies of a person's life merge together to form a

vague collaboration of memories that are often remembered as a single unit rather than many small moments in time.¹ As a society, people remember every detail of a particular day or happening when the drama of that day was so overwhelming or life-changing that it cannot merely be categorized with the other more simple days of their lives. Objects related to that day are also instantly connected to that memory. When one person finds an old math textbook from middle school, math problems or a big test from the past might be the only things on that person's mind. Another would remember when the events of September 11th were broadcast on television in 7th grade math class because he/she was reading that book at the time. When one person smells cigarette smoke while walking down the street, the health effects might be that person's only concern. Someone else will remember a pool party at a smoking-addicted relatives' house on a weekend when a friend passed away. It is perspective, and it is different for everyone.

In most instances, however, memories are attached to place. Seeing a childhood home or school often brings old memories of a person's life to the surface. Instead of noticing the building itself, one sees the life that was created behind it. While these buildings are vital to the prospering life of the city around them, they also play a major role in defining his/her life. It is through these instances of place attachment, which is the nature of a person or people to grow emotionally attached to a place, that society is connected.² The place may not change, but from person to person, every memory created there is slightly different.

This concept of place attachment can be found most noticeably in sports and the stadium. Because of the longevity of these buildings' lifespans, people grow into fans by attending games at a given ballpark or football stadium for their entire lives. They gather emotional memories that

are connected to these specific venues. This sense of nostalgia fuels their love for their sports team and its home stadium.

These memories that lead to place attachment are often spurred by a person's senses.³ The taste of a hot dog, the smell of perfectly-groomed grass in a bustling downtown, and the sight of the team's signature color all contribute to the creation of memories attached to ballparks and the games played there. These sensations establish the memory in a person's mind and trigger a connection between that sight, smell, sound, taste, touch, and the event that occurred. The senses create a moment of place attachment.

Sight, for example, plays a role in both the exterior and interior experience of a sports stadium. A sports stadium is often a large, noticeable addition to a city's skyline. Modern-day venues are complex, massive landmarks that announce the presence of sports in a city. While a stadium's size distinguishes it from other structures along the skyline, most notably it will stand out at night with eye-catching lighting displays and spotlights aimed at the current game. On the interior, the view from every seat is considered. These unimpeded "spectator sight lines" showcase the splendor of the arena as well as the game to which all the seats are centered.⁴ Sight also contributes to the strength of the collective and the ability to see and be a part of a larger whole.

Sound, another strong sensation in sports, offers a sense of fullness to a space. It defines the space that it occupies through its movement and relationships to other sounds within that same area. The sound within a sports stadium is a direct consequence of the action on the turf or field. It fuels the progression of a game and allows the spectator to feel like an active member in the ending result. As is true with the sense of sight, sound is a collective entity within a venue because the crowd reacts together and magnifies excited shouting and disgruntled groaning with

the identical responses of their fellow fans. As Gaffney and Bale observe, there are “very few sensory experiences as powerful as the collective harmony of 50,000 people.”⁵ The formation of a collective is heightened by the effects of sound on the individual.

Place attachment is easily relatable to a sense of history and belonging. The media, a major outlet used to record and broadcast history to those outside the visible realm of the historical event, is a major contributor to the creation of momentous events in sports. A baseball game, or any sporting event, is “a historical experience.”⁶ Every game is recorded in some fashion whether for television purposes or documentation, mementoes that highlight the home team are purchased and taken home to be shared, and public opinion is known before and after the event occurs. While the degree of severity may be short-lived for some, these games are monumental and life-changing for others. As a society, people are intrigued by history and what it means to those who were a part of it. This is true for any major event that has occurred before one’s lifetime. People often strive to find a way to relate to the past. Consequentially, they desire to become part of a future historically-significant event. The stadium atmosphere of crowds caters especially to these historical moments. Fenway Park, for example, is regarded by Red Sox fans as a beacon in Boston. People give the structure a sense of reverence because of the historical events that have and will continue to take place there. The stadium, in many ways, becomes a sacred place for fans in much the same way a church represents its parishioners. There is a “love of place” for this ballpark because of the memories and moments of gathering created within it.⁷

The ultimate effect of these events results from the significance of belonging to a crowd. A crowd can be interpreted in many ways depending on the situation. Being inside a packed stadium with other people creates a more exciting atmosphere and forces the viewer to become

engaged in the event. However, in different circumstances, crowds can be considered a negative experience rather than a positive one. In a more everyday situation, driving on the highway transforms other people into an annoyance even though their proximity to each other is often further apart than it would be in stadium seating. As Tuan demonstrates, it is on the highway rather than in the stadium “that we taste the unpleasantness of spatial constraint”.⁸

The design of the sports stadium considers the sights and sounds of the crowd. In most cases, the architect’s goal is to maximize the fan’s experience within his built environment. A stadium’s acoustics, seating arrangement, and shape intentionally reflect the activities and needs of the individual within a crowd. The creation of place attachment within a space is a strong influence on the design process.

People often have a contradictory nature; while they strive to be individuals in a trend-driven world, they work just as hard to belong within that same world. Collective memories, therefore, also play a major role in the appeal and success of sports franchises and their facilities. The need for a large venue to house a ball game begins with the establishment of spectator sports. Baseball, for example, is not just a game to be played; it is a game to be viewed. It is an outlet of entertainment for a collective with a common interest. It is a struggle observed by people that want one side or the other to succeed simply because they, the viewers, get to take part in something bigger than themselves. People thrive on achievement whether it is accomplished through active or passive means—participating in the game versus viewing it.⁹ Being a spectator by taking part in such events gives people a reason to form comradeship with strangers because they all have one thing in common: allegiance to a sport’s team.

Sports and spectatorship affect people on a global scale when one considers fans within each city throughout the country. Cities that sponsor dominant franchises in any sport reap the

benefits through economic growth and public pride. This is most often reliant upon not only the success of the team but also the loyalty of the fans. The United States, in particular, highlights sports achievements in the same way that they showcase patriotic pride and nationalism. No matter its size, nearly every town or city will welcome visitors and newcomers with billboards and signs boasting of the latest high school championship win or national title.¹⁰ Americans are notorious for their sense of localism, and sports are a contributing factor in that sense of pride.

The History of Spectatorship in Baseball

The game of baseball was among the first in the United States to demonstrate the benefits of spectatorship and place pride. In the late 1700s, the Puritans discouraged sports in early America. However, once the United States prevailed over Great Britain in the War of 1812 and showcased the strength of American morale, sports found a home in people's lives as a means of active entertainment. Baseball originated from an English children's game called "rounders."¹¹ In 1834, the game was adapted into an early version of modern-day baseball. Still, the ballpark was not seen as a necessary addition to the game. At the time, games would take place on open green pastures. As was seen in the Elysian Fields (Fig. 7), the official birthplace of baseball, these sports events offered "standing room only," because American sports highlighted only participation rather than spectatorship.¹²

It took baseball nearly 25 years to officially grow into a spectator sport. In September 1845, the rules of the game that became popularly known as baseball were created by Alexander Cartwright and his fellow teammates of the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club in New York.¹³ Once regulations were established, baseball relied on the social changes of the 1840s and 1850s, such

as an increase in immigration from Europe because of social and religious persecution and the migration of Americans westward, to progress its growth. Games were used as a means to teach English and showcase American solidarity to these new immigrants.¹⁴ Once games and conventions began to take place regularly, entrepreneurs saw a money-making opportunity. These men discovered what needed to take shape to gain revenue. The action of the game was confined to a small area with adequate separation between player and viewer, there was talent amongst the players, and there were people willing to pay to see a game. These elements, which were essential to the establishment of baseball as a spectator sport, arose around 1860.

William H. Cammeyer, a Brooklyn politician who is considered the “father” of the enclosed ballpark, opened the Union ice skating rink (Fig. 8) in 1861. In an effort to encourage people to use the complex year-round rather than just seasonally, he marketed the venue for boating and horseback riding, but this endeavor quickly failed. As baseball’s popularity was growing at the time, Cammeyer decided to convert the ice-skating rink into an enclosed ballpark with seating. After the first free game on May 15, 1862, Cammeyer charged a fee to enter the ballpark, which finally distinguished the merely curious from the actual fans. Cammeyer’s ballpark, Union Grounds (Fig. 9), marks the official beginning of baseball as a spectator sport.¹⁵ Further evolution of the ballpark would occur after the Civil War.

Since then, ballparks have forever defined the cities in which they reside. Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox in Boston, Massachusetts, captured the hearts of not only the fans but also the global audience. This ballpark, first used as a real estate venture, revitalized the surrounding areas and raised their value. It quickly became “a writer’s park” because of its tendency to evoke the phenomenon of place attachment in everyone who visited it.¹⁶ Ebbets Field, home of the Brooklyn Dodgers, is revered as the “best ballpark ever” because when it was

built, it was the only positive outlet the city had.¹⁷ Wrigley Field, the last remaining Federal league ballpark and home of the Chicago Cubs, became the first park to allow fans to keep baseballs that were accidentally hit into the stands.¹⁸ This was just one of many considerations taken to ensure the happiness of the visitor in ways that had never been a common practice. These legendary parks, built throughout the twentieth century, cater not just to the players and the game on the field but also to the fans in the stands and the city surrounding them.

Baseball stadiums, like many other architectural landmarks, help establish an identity within a city by instigating place attachment and pride. For example, the old Yankee Stadium, originally built in 1823 and later demolished in March 2010, was the home of many baseball icons including Babe Ruth.¹⁹ In the months leading up to the stadium's demolition, fans took tours through the park even though baseball season was not in session.²⁰ While their love for Yankee Stadium began because of the team, their pride for it grew because its history, its meaning to New York, and their memories within those stadium walls. This structure, along with many others, is a true example of community loyalty and architectural phenomena because their relevance relies so much on public reaction and history. In the case of the urban fabric, architecture and urban planning are the catalysts that encourage public support and localism to recreate a downtown.

In Memphis, Tennessee, the integration of place attachment can be seen through the landmarks that create its downtown. Locals have formed personal attachments to places such as Beale Street, the Peabody Hotel, and the Orpheum Theatre. This can be most easily seen through the preservation and consistent use of these landmarks. While they are iconic historically on a global level, they have also impacted the memories of those who live in Memphis. However, few examples of place attachment through sport and the stadium existed before the 1990s. Designed

to feed the entertainment industry of Memphis with the addition of sports, two architectural marvels, the Pyramid and AutoZone Park, offered similar intentions with opposing results.

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- ¹ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 193-9.
 - ² J. Bale, *Sports Geography*, (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2003), 14-5.
 - ³ Ibid.
 - ⁴ Chris Gaffney and Bale, John, "Sites of Sport: Space, place, experience," in *Sites of Sport: Space, place, experience*, (London: Routledge, 2004), 27.
 - ⁵ Ibid, 29.
 - ⁶ Ibid, 34.
 - ⁷ Ibid, 35.
 - ⁸ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, 64.
 - ⁹ Gaffney, 29.
 - ¹⁰ Bale, 16-7.
 - ¹¹ Michael Gershman, *Diamonds: The Evolution of the Ballpark*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993) 6-7.
 - ¹² Ibid.
 - ¹³ Ibid.
 - ¹⁴ Ibid, 11.
 - ¹⁵ Ibid, 12.
 - ¹⁶ Gershman, 106.
 - ¹⁷ Ibid., 110.
 - ¹⁸ Ibid., 120.
 - ¹⁹ Jake Mooney, "One Last Look, as Stadium's Days Dwindle to a Few" *The New York Times*, September 12, 2008.
 - ²⁰ Ibid.

Section III

The Failure of the Great American Pyramid

An Investigation of a Precedent

The Memphis Pyramid, while a great idea in theory, did not live up to expectation. For many, these expectations were not even necessarily that high. Its original intention was to be something that Memphis desperately needed at the time—a symbolic media to encourage economic growth and public morale. However, its creation and construction were met with financial woes and public criticism from the very beginning.

Designed by Rosser International, the structure, a literal representation of the name of the city it resides in, was to be a momentous addition to the Memphis skyline. The Pyramid would not only highlight city's namesake and historical roots but also reflects its musical culture. It also was to be home to the Memphis Tigers basketball team and, later, the Memphis Grizzlies. The project was jointly owned by the city of Memphis and Shelby County.¹ During discussions about the project, its location was one of the top concerns. Officials finally decided to place the structure along the bend of the Mississippi River in the first and most deserted district of Memphis. As a result, the structure overlooks the Hernando de Soto Bridge, or the "M" Bridge, and Mud Island. Standing tall at 321 feet or 32 stories and occupying the space of 5 1/2 football fields at its base, the Pyramid is the sixth largest pyramid in the world.² Construction began in 1989 (Fig. 10), and after numerous delays concerning weather and money supply that both added to the negative energy surrounding the project, the arena was completed and opened in November 1991.³

The architecture of the structure itself, although extremely literal, creates a seamless exterior form that is reflected into the Pyramid's interior. The lack of adequate funds determined the incomplete state of these interior spaces. The structure itself consists of an elaborate truss system that defines its shape and sits on a lifted, concrete platform (Fig. 11). Although the Pyramid displays the same façade with identical entry points on all four sides, the intended focal entrance (Fig. 12) faces eastward toward the remainder of the Pinch-District and away from the Mississippi River. As a reflection of one of the few urban planning decisions made during the design process, the main entry also establishes a strong axis with the surrounding neighborhood because of its relationship to the gridded street plan of the district (see Appendix A). This decision foreshadowed the intended redevelopment of the surrounding area that, unfortunately, never occurred.

Other problems plagued the new building. Sidney Schlenker, one of the driving forces financially behind the completion of the project, filed for bankruptcy for his company during construction. The financial stability of the project forever would be questioned. Opening night of the Pyramid was overwhelmed by plumbing problems. While the venue was intended for both sports and musical performances, the acoustics were declared so atrocious that the city eventually sued the contractor for the defective system. The venue, declared by some as "human-unfriendly," has a poor parking situation even though the facility is surrounded by parking lots.⁴

While its basic design was carried out, the execution remains incomplete. The project began as an elaborate epicenter filled with attractions including an observation deck, a Hard Rock Café franchise, a theme park, an international radio station, numerous Hall of Fame representations, and other amenities that were promising but never completed.⁵ The Pyramid could have been a major economic channel as well as a social avenue for the city of Memphis.

However, financial instability turned a promising endeavor into a building that many remark as simply being “better on the outside than on the inside.”⁶ This observation is both architectural and perceptibly true. In comparison to the sleek frame and reflective metal panels that make up the exterior, the interior is rather underwhelming, simple, and only reflects the exterior into the space. Most saw the Pyramid as an iconic building built only for the purpose of being considered “iconic” on a global scale.

One of the biggest and most pressing issues was public reaction before and after the building’s construction. The people of Memphis considered the project an alien in their traditional southern town. While this is often the stepping stone for iconic architecture in an urban atmosphere, this did not occur in the case of the Memphis Pyramid. The construction process went through three years of questionable financial decisions, political turmoil, and production setbacks. Articles in the Commercial Appeal and other Memphis newspapers and magazines that were dated between 1992 and 2009 offer the same adverse opinions even though their dates of publication differ significantly.⁷ The media through the years has highlighted the consistent visual and personal disconnect between the Pyramid and the Memphis people. The Pyramid was a project littered with problems that gave the locals a negative outlook from the beginning. The building had little hope of survival if its own public had few positive opinions about it.

The location of the project was one of the prime reasons for its ultimate failure. While the site that eventually was decided upon did allow the structure to be showcased significantly on the Memphis skyline, it also disconnected the Pyramid from central downtown. Before construction, officials considered four different sites for the facility’s eventual home. One of these locations, a large plot of land at the east end of Beale Street, ironically now houses the FedEx Forum, the

new home of the Memphis Grizzlies and the Memphis Tigers franchises. Unfortunately, the Pyramid's current location was chosen for a cause that was never completed. The Pinch-District, the original central location of the young, budding city in the 1800s, was in the process of being considered for redevelopment when former Major Dick Hackett's term ended.⁸ The revival never took place. Its location established the structure as an iconic architectural piece that is, perhaps, more for show than actual use. The Pyramid, sitting on the edge of this abandoned area, was now just an object in space rather than a part of a greater whole.

The division between the structure and the downtown area is exaggerated by Interstate-40 (Fig. 13), the major interstate connecting Memphis to large cities east and west of the city, which separates the two areas visually and physically. While the Pyramid's location already lacks pedestrian-friendly accessibility, this added boundary physically prevents people from easily and safely walking from downtown to the sports facility. Visually, the interstate, traveled significantly by visitors to the city, divides the Memphis skyline into two unequal parts with the Pyramid on one side and the rest of downtown occupying the other (Fig. 14). The placement of the Pyramid in relation to I-40 stunted the projects possible growth from the beginning. The issue, unfortunately, is nearly impossible to correct.

This physical disconnect results from other factors as well. The Memphis Pyramid sits in a massive "ocean of asphalt" because the surrounding areas within that district were not already or in the process of being developed.⁹ This property became the quickest and most inexpensive means to make money—parking lots. This shows a lack of control of the perimeter.¹⁰ The structure, while key to the visual skyline of Memphis, offers little to the urban planning aspect already established within the city. The interior edges that the Pinch-District once held were not strengthened by the new addition. In fact, the urban edges became more blurred after the

Pyramid's construction because of the uncontrollable sprawl of parking lots and lack of landscaping. The structure forged no relationships to pre-existing landmarks, commercial centers, or restaurants. The Pyramid is a public space of stasis that could not be utilized to its fullest because it offered no logical means of urban circulation from one public space to another. In conclusion, it was an unfortunate result of a lack of planning concerning the property surrounding the Pyramid.

Visually, the only means of appreciating the Pyramid and its symbolic significance to Memphis is from across the Mississippi River or along the Riverfront. In the other areas of downtown where people would socially occupy, the structure is not visible. This separates the visitor's and the local's perception of the Pyramid. While the visitor can appreciate the structure as an object on the skyline and be satisfied with that one-dimensional observation, the local seeks a different level of personal fulfillment through the creation of memories and the establishment of place attachment within venues such as this in their own city. These circumstances damaged not only any economic promise this addition to the city had once offered but also any social interaction that could have fueled the discouraged Memphis public. Any form of social interaction occurred within the Pyramid itself rather than around it. Because of the physical limitations surrounding the Pyramid, personal contact there is short-lived. While place attachment through sports was still present during the years that the Memphis basketball teams were housed there, fan communication ended immediately after the event. People would drive home to the suburbs without taking part in the social realm of downtown Memphis. There was no community.

Behind all of these issues is, perhaps, the most debilitating one. The addition of the Pyramid did not improve the city of Memphis, the specific district in which it was located, or the

public opinion of downtown. Its presence created an added strain to the city economically and socially while offering no cohesiveness architecturally. While many appreciated its intention and exterior beauty, the building did not live up to its potential.¹¹ The structure, while intended to serve as a popular landmark for Memphis, does not embody or enhance the cultural identity of this southern town. It did little to celebrate a city that desperately needed that kind of support.

Just 13 years after its completion, the Memphis Pyramid fell into disuse. Currently, the building sits unoccupied and waiting for future ownership. Even abandoned, the Pyramid still serves the same purpose as an iconic gateway for the visitor rather than a celebrated landmark for the local.

¹ Shelby County has since ceded full control of the Pyramid to the city.

² Zack McMillin, "Once filled to the rafters, Pyramid sits empty as its future is debated," *The Commercial Appeal*, May 10, 2009.

³ Frank Murtaugh, "Commentary: The Not-So-Great American Pyramid," *Memphis Flyer*, April 18, 2005.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Through the media, the Pyramid has been a public controversy since before its completion in 1991. This thesis utilizes various primary sources found in Memphis newspapers and magazines to highlight the public opinion of the Pyramid. It was often used a reference point regardless of if the article focused on the opening or the subsequent closing of the building. The following articles, cited in this section and others throughout this thesis, mentions or highlights the Memphis Pyramid and its progress: Chris Davis, "Legacy," *Memphis Flyer*, January 24, 2002; Chris Herrington, "The Changing Cityscape," *Memphis Flyer*, March 20, 2001; Louis Graham, "Pyramid Dreams: Pyramid Schemes," *The Commercial Appeal*, October 18, 1992; Zack McMillin, "Once filled to the rafters, Pyramid sits empty as its future is debated," *The Commercial Appeal*, May 10, 2009; Frank Murtaugh, "Commentary: The Not-So-Great American Pyramid," *Memphis Flyer*, April 18, 2005.

⁸ While the redevelopment of the Pinch-District was once abandoned, the project has gained new interest in the last few years. This redevelopment includes hopes to find a new use for the Pyramid.

⁹ Chris Davis, "Legacy," *Memphis Flyer*, January 24, 2002.

¹⁰ These observations came from an Interview with Frank Ricks, the architect of AutoZone Park and the Memphis Ballpark District. It was through his firm, Looney Ricks Kiss's, research of the Pyramid that contributed to the success of the ballpark that would be built 10 years later.

¹¹ Interview with Allie Prescott, Former General Manager of AutoZone Park.

Section IV

The Creation of an Urban Network

AutoZone Park – A Case Study

Nearly ten years after the completion of the failing Pyramid, a new project arose that approached the challenge of urban relationships and public support in a far more productive way than its predecessor. AutoZone Park (Fig. 15), a minor league baseball stadium that is home to the Triple-A Memphis Redbirds franchise, was just the stepping stone for the creation of an entire community that would go on to revitalize a deteriorating urban core in downtown Memphis. Through a delicate balance of architectural and urban decisions on both a global and local scale, the Memphis Ballpark District (Fig. 16) demonstrates the role of a sports landmark in an urban landscape.

After the Double-A Memphis Chicks left the city in favor of Jackson, Tennessee, because of location controversy in 1997, the people of Memphis, once again, saw their city lose an economic and social endeavor.¹ The fact that Jackson was one-tenth the size of the large metropolis bothered the public even more and left many with a negative perception of downtown. This was not the first time a sports franchise had left the Memphis area. The Tennessee Oilers, now known as the Tennessee Titans, temporarily called Memphis home in the 90s before permanently moving to Nashville. Both the World Football League and the United States Football League attempted to establish teams in Memphis but inevitably failed.² The Memphis Pyramid, while still operating during this time, was neither nationally nor locally acclaimed. Mud Island, an island attraction along the river, did nothing for the strengthening of

downtown because it was tourist-driven rather than locally-connected. The departure of the Chicks baseball program was just another unfortunate occurrence that plagued a city that could neither entice nor keep a money-making franchise.

Due to this untimely loss, Dean Jernigan, the CEO of Storage USA, and his wife Kristi decided to pay \$8 million to bring a Triple-A ball club to Memphis.³ To own the St. Louis Cardinals affiliate, the Jernigan's established the Memphis Redbirds Foundation, a non-profit organization, in 1998. Over the next few years, the program worked to create a home for the franchise that would not only be a financial success but also promote the growth and prosperity of the entire city of Memphis.

Local response to the prospect of a new stadium varied. According to Allie Prescott, the general manager of AutoZone Park when it opened in 2000, the majority of the Memphis public, although skeptical about the project, supported it "with a measure of hope."⁴ Crime, still as major of an issue in the 1990s as it was during the century preceding it, prevented suburban families from venturing into the downtown area. While this project had support, most people wanted the park to be built in East Memphis away from the troubles of downtown crime and lack of parking because the wealth resided in the suburbs. Many believed that those who actually attended the games would be from this part of town.

Therefore, one of the first and most critical decisions the owners and foundation made concerned the location of the new ballpark. While sites on the western edge of the suburbs were considered early in the planning process, the Jernigans knew that the proper home for the stadium would be in the heart of downtown Memphis.⁵ With the collaboration of both the city and county, the Jernigans, through their own personal funds, and the Redbirds Foundation bought a 20-acre site between Madison and Union Avenues in the central business district. This

prime location, originally housing abandoned buildings and parking lots, would allow for the greatest opportunity for growth as well as encourage the isolated families of the suburbs to, once again, occupy and use downtown to its fullest.⁶

The owners wanted not only the global audience to recognize the park as an iconic work of architecture but also the locals to value it as a landmark of Memphis. To further gain the support and trust of the public, the Jernigan's transferred full ownership of the park to the non-profit Memphis Redbirds foundation. This move showed the locals that this ballpark was created and intended specifically for the city of Memphis as a civic center.⁷ Just the creation of the Foundation itself positively influenced the public because, as Jernigan believed, "When a community feels that it owns a team, it supports that team."⁸

When the time came to decide on an architectural firm for the project, the Jernigans understood the importance of choosing a firm that knew Memphis and the needs of its downtown. They commissioned Looney Ricks Kiss (LRK), a local firm, for the project while also enlisting the help of HOK Sport + Venue + Event, a Kansas City, Missouri-based company, for stadium consultation purposes.⁹ LRK, one of the most respected and recognized architecture firms in the country, has completed many projects on both a commercial and residential scale throughout Memphis including Harbor Town, a riverfront residential community, the FedEx Institute of Technology on the University of Memphis campus, and Memphis/Shelby County Public Library in Midtown. Their portfolio includes a diverse array of projects in urban planning, environmental and interior design, and historic restoration. Frank Ricks, a principal of LRK, valued the decision to establish a collaboration between two firms with two different specialties. As he recalls, LRK's intentions were to create a design that would fit seamlessly into the existing context.¹⁰ Because they are a Memphis-based firm, LRK had both the urban design background

and the personal experience to create a successful park. On the other hand, HOK understood the elaborate needs of a baseball stadium. Their consultation work was vital to the success of AutoZone Park as not just an urban landmark but also a functioning sports venue.

In a rare circumstance, the owners decided that the actual design of the park and everything that it would require financially would dictate the eventual budget. Jernigan believed that while this choice came with many challenges, the result would be “a much better product.”¹¹ AutoZone Park’s price reached nearly \$80.5 million, which was acquired predominately through private funds with assistance from the city and county.¹² While construction on the project began through the spending of the Jernigan’s own money, the bank was slow to approve the endeavor, causing brief setbacks on the project. However, a new banker eventually approved the \$72 million tax-exempt bond issue even though many questioned the financial stability of a nonprofit organization undertaking such an extravagant project.¹³ AutoZone, a Memphis-based auto parts chain, supported the ballpark further by purchasing the naming rights for \$4.9 million.

The property purchased was suitable space for the ballpark as well as other projects that many hoped would someday follow. While these plans concerning the residual land developed later in the design process, the purchasing of this large 20-acre block from the very beginning assured Jernigan and LRK that they would retain control of the surrounding area. The eight acre plot of land not used for AutoZone Park was vital to the eventual success of the Memphis Ballpark District.

The models for the design of the new minor league ballpark were actually major league stadiums in major American cities.¹⁴ The Jernigans and the architects toured 15 major and minor league ballparks during the early stages of the project.¹⁵ By projecting a major league feel into the design of AutoZone Park, the architects allowed the excitement surrounding the ballpark to

escalate. They wanted to show that this was going to mean more to the people of Memphis and the downtown atmosphere than any other sports franchise that had once been there. Everyone involved in the project wanted AutoZone Park to have a global and local impact through its added presence in the urban fabric of downtown Memphis.

During the design process (see Appendix B for analytical study), establishing connections between the new park and existing Memphis landmarks was one of the architects' main objectives. By making this a top priority, LRK laid a strong foundation that gave AutoZone Park the promising beginning that the Memphis Pyramid lacked. Given the proximity of the site to downtown landmarks, this objective easily allowed the future ballpark to become a part of the greater urban fabric surrounding it. Across the intersection of Union Avenue and South Third Street sits the Peabody Hotel, a famous landmark that symbolizes Memphis as well as the South. By establishing that corner of the site as the main entrance to the ballpark and catering the position of the actual ball field in the same direction, the architects created a visual connection between the two structures (Fig. 17). Although their functions differ drastically, the presence of one landmark so close visually and physically influences the public perception of another building that is seeking a similar status. The architects intended the acknowledgment of the past to be noticeable and apparent. The location of the entrance of the park also caters to Beale Street, which begins two blocks to the south of AutoZone Park along South Third Street. While visually one landmark cannot be seen from the other, the urban relationship through the street grid creates another connection to the past.

The presence of three historically significant buildings on the newly-acquired property roughly determined the location of AutoZone Park. In order to accommodate the ballpark, the block of Fourth Street that cut through the middle of the 20-acre site was shifted to enlarge one

portion of the property. As Frank Ricks considered when LRK made this decision, the area already sat unoccupied for years before it was purchased and only slightly supported the University of Tennessee Medical Center, the only presence near that property.¹⁶ Although this move interrupted the street grid, it was not seen as a dramatic change because the advantages of shifting it far outweighed the disadvantages.

With the location and central entry point of the park determined so early in the project, the architects proceeded to establish a further visual connection that showcased how it would cater to the public and the individual. In this case, they investigated the relationship between the field and the fan. Rather than forcing the crowd away from the level of the street by climbing stairs upward toward the stands as many stadiums do, AutoZone Park, in a unique phenomenon, actually allows the fan to enter the main part of the park and the seating area at ground level (Fig. 18). This oddity further establishes the visual connection between AutoZone Park and Memphis's urban atmosphere. The ball field, always sitting depressed in the ground below the visitor, appears more expansive in size and in presence. Constructed in 1992, Camden Yards, the home of the Baltimore Orioles, serves as an example for AutoZone Park because it too depressed its field to better fit the park into the cityscape.¹⁷ This decision quickly establishes a positive visual perception for the fans because people naturally feel more comfortable at ground level.

Traditional ballparks like Camden Yards such as Fenway Park in Boston and Wrigley Field in Chicago inspired the design and materials for the ballpark itself and most specifically that of the stands and exterior facades.¹⁸ At the owners' insistence, red brick and dark green steel, two signature materials for ballpark construction, dominate the structures appearance (Fig. 19). During the design process of Camden Yards, the architects and owners discovered that nostalgia was achieved in relation to studied old ballparks through the use of steel rather than

concrete.¹⁹ Expansive brick walls, including the most prominent occurrence that spans Union Avenue along the south side (see Appendix C for analytical study of this facade), as well as the structural steel standing-seam roof define the park's "classic, neo-traditional style."²⁰ The roof, a massive plane that extends over two sides of the ballpark and shelters the club suites and media booth, alternates between a gabled and an upward slant truss system.²¹ The complex, through its design and precedents, offers a major league allure that the foundation hoped would encourage Memphians to visit.

The park also provides various degrees and types of seating options surrounding the field. Plastic green seats rest in the stands below the more expensive club sections above them (Fig. 20). To account for larger gatherings of people, a plaza filled with picnic tables and umbrellas for shade sits past the outfield to the west. To offer a baseball game as a means of cheap entertainment, a grassy bluff (Fig. 21) within the confines of the park to the north provides informal seating. Enabling the stadium with this many choices encourages anyone of the general public to attend. As can be seen through the careful planning of seat placement, AutoZone Park took the public's needs into consideration early in the design process.

LRK also addressed the demands of parking through the Memphis Ballpark District. A parking deck (Fig. 22) accompanies one of the historic buildings along Third Street. Additional parking was also available through the cooperation of surrounding vacant lots already established within three blocks of the newly-renovated property. Even so, the lack of parking lots surrounding the 12,300-seat park worried city officials. As can be seen with the case of the Pyramid, parking lots create a disconnect between a large monumental building and the surrounding urban fabric. In most situations, function significantly takes precedent over form because of the amount of space parking lots often require. In the case of AutoZone Park, Ricks

explains that the street grid of a downtown is often equipped with ample parking without the need for expansive, space-wasting concrete lots.²²

Because parking lots did not surround the new complex, invaluable views into the ballpark add to the experiential qualities (see Appendix D). The four established edges surrounding AutoZone Park along the street grid offer both enclosed and open visual experiences. The west and south facades significantly separate the ballpark from the exterior streets because there are solid boundaries that do not allow views from one to the other. However, the parking deck that occupies a portion of the west facade allows clear views into the park (Fig. 23). The Toyota Center, also along the west façade, has a captivating view of the park from the upper stories of the building. To the east, the added apartment complexes allow residents to watch the ballgames from their exterior balconies. To the north, the large, grassy bluff, while offering seating for those attending the game, also opens up the ballpark to the street and passersby. This connection to the urban atmosphere of Memphis allows everyone in downtown to enjoy the park regardless of if they are attending the game. This experience differs significantly from others found in the city. In contrast, the Orpheum Theater (Fig. 24), while it continues to thrive, reserves the elegance and beauty of the architecture of this theater for the visitor by showcasing an elaborate interior within a bare exterior. The interaction with passing pedestrians is limited to a large sign celebrating the name of the theater. While the theater is a treasured landmark, its lack of interaction to the exterior limits its contribution to the urban atmosphere of Memphis.

Views from within the park confines toward the urban atmosphere surrounding it also display these early design intentions. Ricks and LRK put downtown Memphis on display for the visiting baseball fan (Fig. 25). The views to the north and west of the park, although lacking

distinct landmarks, make visitors aware that they are in an exciting and growing downtown setting. The stadium creates a complete architectural experience by framing the city's urban surroundings.

Opened to the public on April 1, 2000, AutoZone Park has received nothing but praise on both a global and local scale. Considered the “Taj Mahal of minor league baseball,” the park remains the most expensive minor league ballpark every built.²³ In return, it is also the highest-grossing minor league club in the country. Globally, the park has been recognized in notable architectural magazines such as *Architectural Record*, *Urban Land*, and *Building Design & Construction*. Other publication features include *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Time Magazine*. AutoZone Park has also received awards of excellence from AIA Tennessee, AIA Memphis, ASID Tennessee Chapter, National Commercial Builders Council, Urban Land Institute, Congress for the New Urbanism, *Building Design & Construction*, Memphis Heritage and Memphis Landmarks Commission, and the Memphis City Beautiful Commission.²⁴ Across the country, critics in sports and national media have recognized AutoZone Park as “unquestionably the finest ballpark ever built below the major league level.”²⁵

While the magnitude of the stadium deemed it iconic architecturally in the eyes of the global audience, the locals established the AutoZone Park as a Memphis landmark. The public of Memphis takes great pride in their new addition to the downtown urban landscape. While a few may have been initially reserved about the project, Opening Day was met with nothing but praise and positive feedback. As Allie Prescott recalled, many questioned the decision to build the stadium downtown. However, with the critical issues such as parking and crime considered early in the design process, the opening of AutoZone Park silenced any negativity. As the first official event, the Memphis Redbirds hosted the St. Louis Cardinals for an Exhibition game. Although

the stadium could only hold a capacity of 12,300 at the time, 15,000 people made an appearance for the unveiling.²⁶ The Redbirds Foundation received numerous phone call and e-mails expressing Memphians' gratitude and appreciation for the new park upon its opening. Frank Ricks recalls stories of families and older couples who had lived in the suburbs for many years without venturing downtown. The addition of the AutoZone Park reintroduced these suburban families to the city that, in their eyes, was too unsafe for their children and too lackluster for their own time. With the completion of the park, the locals believed that, for once, "no shortcuts" had been taken in the design and construction of a promising project.²⁷ The public knew they had "the best of the best," which was a rare achievement for a deteriorating city center like Memphis.²⁸

Over the last few decades, Memphis had seen no significant additions to the commercial or cultural outlets in downtown. While the city retained its natural ability to support musical entertainment, people did not recognize Memphis as anything more than a forgettable southern town. The locals knew that while AutoZone Park would not be the whole solution, it symbolized the city's future growth. The addition of the NBA Memphis Grizzlies to the entertainment culture of the city in the following year validated that belief. The Grizzlies organization has stated on the record that the success of the Redbirds and AutoZone Park significantly impacted their decision to settle in Memphis after leaving Vancouver. The FedEx Forum, also designed by Looney Ricks Kiss, become the home of the Memphis Grizzlies and the University of Memphis Tigers basketball teams in 2004 and expanded the sports entertainment culture of downtown. Prescott saw the addition of the two arenas to downtown as "a source of real pride for all Memphians."²⁹

This sense of pride contributed to the development of place attachment among the locals following the completion of AutoZone Park. Although located in central downtown, the stadium caters to every demographic in Memphis. AutoZone Park, one of the first moves toward recreating a positive entertainment atmosphere in downtown, encourages the wealthy families of the suburbs to spend more time in the city. It also serves as a positive place for the impoverished families of downtown by offering inexpensive ticket prices. On opening day in April 2000, multiple people from outside the city shared with the Redbirds Foundation that they had avoided the downtown area for years because of high crime rates and lack of public communal activities. The building of the new stadium downtown not only fueled Memphis's social atmosphere but also economically benefited the commercial districts because more people were spending time and money in the city. From the beginning, AutoZone Park was a treasured landmark because it fueled place pride and attachment in Memphis.

The science of spectatorship and sports also plays a role in the local appreciation for AutoZone Park. Sports often allow the masses to forget their own prejudices. Comradery through sports achievement did not erase the racial issues in Memphis, but the addition of the ballpark created an opportunity for people to be defined by their team rather than by their physical attributes. While just a minor change when you consider the scale of the problems, AutoZone Park was a significant step toward a more stable social structure.

The Completion of the Memphis Ballpark District

AutoZone Park would not have reached the global and local acclaim that it has without the development of the surrounding property. While some of these projects were the result of

lucky coincidence because the architects and owners did not have them originally planned, their existence defined the perimeter of AutoZone Park and established what is now known as the Memphis Ballpark District, a multi-use urban neighborhood (see Appendix E).

The restoration of the three historical buildings already on the site of AutoZone Park brought an element of the past to the project. Two of those buildings sit along Madison Avenue while the other, originally the William R. Moore Dry Goods Building, occupies a portion of South Third Street.³⁰ The Dry Goods Building, built in 1913, had been on the National Register of Historic Buildings since 1982.³¹ In a \$30 million rehabilitation, the building, now known as the Toyota Center (Fig. 26), was fully restored with its two facades facing the street returning to their historic appearance and the two remaining facades facing the ballpark transforming into a more contemporary exterior. The original cast concrete columns remain visible through the structure on the interior to highlight the buildings warehouse appearance. The building now houses the offices of Looney Ricks Kiss, the Memphis Grizzlies Headquarters, and other commercial offices. The renovation recently received the Paul Gruenburg Commercial Rehabilitation Award because of its historic presence and its contemporary functionality and efficiency. A new \$8 million parking deck that occupies the remainder of the South Third Street block and is connected to another historically-preserved building also serves the Toyota Center.³² The third remaining building, a YMCA (Fig. 27) built in 1909, was renovated into loft apartments while maintaining the exercise facilities on the bottom floor. The preservation of these three buildings created sites that catered to contemporary necessities while retaining a testament of Memphis history on the same property as AutoZone Park.

The apartment complexes (Fig. 28) behind the ballpark along Fourth Street establish this district as a place not only to work and be entertained but also to live. Although this project was

not originally planned while AutoZone Park was under construction, the architects knew they had an extra eight acres of land at their disposal. Following the completion of the ballpark, five new apartment complexes entered the design and construction process. Completed in September 2002, these buildings would also be joined by a six-story parking garage. Because the design for AutoZone Park required the moving of Fourth Street, the avenue was now its own separate block that linked two major streets without being the extension of another high-traffic avenue. As a result, the area became predominately pedestrian-oriented. The street also serves as a vital link between the apartment complexes and commercial areas in other parts of downtown Memphis. The addition of the complexes and parking deck prevented AutoZone Park from just being a ballpark in much the same fashion that the park prevented the apartment complexes from just being a place to live. The collaboration of the two established an even bigger living urban network that created multiple experiences rather than just a singular one. To make the apartments a vibrant addition to the newly-established Ballpark District, LRK took careful consideration in their planning by understanding the value of choice for the individual. As Frank Ricks describes, “To gain more people, you need more options.”³³ The apartments appeal to many demographics to encourage their usage and growth. To further define the complexes as part of the newly-established ballpark district, a large portion of the apartments include balconies that allow for clear and uninterrupted views into AutoZone Park. In this case, spectatorship becomes a major aspect of appeal and further connects the two architectural projects.

The addition of an elementary school (Fig. 29) at the corner of Fourth Street and Madison Avenue completes the Memphis Ballpark District. Built in 2003, the Downtown Elementary School, a desperately-needed facility for the area because of the growing population, caters predominately to downtown residents. The project, although not foreseen during the construction

of AutoZone Park, serves as an essential addition to the already-established urban network within the ballpark district. With the completion of AutoZone Park and the Ballpark Apartments, Looney Ricks Kiss, the designers of this new school, saw the addition as an opportunity to further define the growing Ballpark District. The Downtown Elementary School currently supports 700 students and is available for general public use when school is not in session.³⁴ The school provides a place for study and learning to compliment the areas of living and entertainment that surround it.

The completion of the apartment complexes as well as the elementary school established this once-deserted area as a thriving district in the middle of downtown. While AutoZone Park offers an opportunity for place attachment through sports to encourage the Memphis public to attend games and populate downtown, the control of the perimeter with the construction of these additional buildings brings the positive influence of urban planning and architecture to the forefront. Like a thriving city, the Ballpark District (Fig. 30) is a collection of exterior and interior edges, streets, public and private spaces, and usage catering to and supporting a significant landmark.

¹ David Takesuye, "The Memphis Ballpark District: Impetus for Redevelopment," *Urban Land*, April 2003.

² Josh Leventhal, "Top 10 Ballparks: Memphis' park is No. 1, but financial issues remain," *Baseball America*, April 17, 2009.

³ Dean Jernigan is originally from Memphis, Tennessee. His father's Memphis-based company, Storage USA, is the second-largest self-storage operator in the United States.

⁴ Interview with Allie Prescott

⁵ Larry Flynn, "Diamond on the Delta," *Building Design & Construction*, May 2002.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ As of 2009, HOK Sport + Venue + Event has separated from HOK Group. The organization, now independently-owned, acquired the name Populous.

¹⁰ Interview with Frank Ricks.

¹¹ Flynn.

¹² Leventhal.

¹³ Takesuye.

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- 14 Flynn.
15 Ibid.
16 Ricks.
17 Michael Gershman, *Diamonds: The Evolution of the Ballpark*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company,
1993), 227.
18 Ibid.
19 Gershman, 225.
20 Flynn.
21 This decision was made to appease both Dean Jernigan and his wife Kristi who each had differing views on
the design of the roof. While Kristi favored the upward slant design, Dean wanted a view from his office in the
Toyota Center into the ballpark, which would require a gabled roof. By alternating the design, both parties were
satisfied, and the scheme remains one of the most innovative in minor league stadium design.
22 Ricks.
23 Leventhal.
24 Awards and Recognition Information provided by <http://www.lrk.com/>.
25 Prescott
26 Leventhal.
27 Ibid.
28 Prescott.
29 Ibid.
30 William R. Moore, an orphan at an early age, was born in Huntsville, Alabama in 1830. After leaving
school at the age of 12 to work on a farm after his parents' death, he became involved in the sales industry. Before
he was 30-years-old, he established his wholesale dry goods company in Memphis. Today, he is recognized as an
influential civic leader in the city. Information provided by Moore College of Technology, "A Introduction and
Brief History," Accessed October 24, 2011, <http://www.williamrmoore.org/history.htm>.
31 Takesuye.
32 Ibid.
33 Ricks.
34 Takesuye.

Conclusion

The creation of the Memphis Ballpark District as a whole is just the beginning of the city's future growth and prosperity. It showcases the locals' newfound understanding that to fix their issues, they must remain true to their cultural background and utilize global factors as an aid rather than as a whole solution. The Memphis Pyramid, a clear example of the latter situation, caters almost exclusively to a global audience. Its one-dimensional conception forms a disconnect between the structure and the people that truly matter in the further development of the city it was intended to represent. Debates concerning the future of the Pyramid have arisen since its closing. While the project does heavily contribute to the Memphis skyline, the physical boundary of Interstate-40 that alienates the Pyramid from downtown Memphis has, as many believe, doomed the Pyramid and its future. Redevelopment of the Pinch-District, although considered for years, might still not be enough to save the project.

The Pyramid, while emblematic in name, does not symbolize the people or culture of Memphis. Built as a modern-day shrine, the arena, while temporarily utilized, was not a structure that the public could embrace. Its creation followed the example of the St. Louis Arch, an architectural feat at the time of its construction. Memphis, however, needed an example within its own landscape to follow.

AutoZone Park was not just built in Memphis; it was built for Memphis. The park and its surrounding context are not only an example of an extremely well-done and meticulously thought-out architectural phenomenon but also a local wonder that caters almost exclusively to the Memphis public. While appreciated on a global scale, the park connects so flawlessly to the surrounding urban fabric that it is obvious to the visitor that this stadium was meant for Memphis alone. A specific problem, especially when relating to a city, requires a specific solution for a

positive outcome to follow. AutoZone Park clearly exemplifies this philosophy. However, consideration of global influences oftentimes can further improve a project. In the case of AutoZone Park, universal subjects such as urban planning, spectatorship in sports, and place attachment gave the stadium global appeal without sacrificing its local roots. Through these themes with a cultural premise, the park and its entire urban community created a positive example for future projects in Memphis.

The Memphis Ballpark District offers the city a multi-use urban outlet that caters specifically to the current needs of the public. This district provides families with a place to live, work, and play within the same mixed-use neighborhood. With the construction of multiple apartment complexes, the timely addition of an elementary school, and the restoration of three historic buildings, the Ballpark District has grown into a thriving urban network because it utilizes the global urban planning elements that allow an entire city to function. Within a landscape of distinct edge conditions creating a transition between the city of Memphis and the district, various softer edges, separating the areas of different uses, are also prevalent. The site houses public and private spaces that create many different visual and physical experiences. Anchoring the entire project sits AutoZone Park, a public venue that has earned landmark and iconic status through the local support and global acclaim.

AutoZone Park does not follow the conventional pattern for most sports facilities. While it houses a team of players that have the comradery of spectators to support them, visitors to the park do not solely praise the events of the baseball game. Instead, they marvel at the stadium itself. While this is not, in and of itself, a rare feat, AutoZone Park is a young stadium. Built in 2000, it does not have a historical basis for the praises that people seem to lay upon it. The idea of place attachment and nostalgia do not seem to fit in this case because the public does not have

years of memories stored within those stadium walls. Regardless, while Memphians take pride in the Memphis Redbirds, they rest most of their admiration around the stadium that houses them.

AutoZone Park is an example of a structure that creates a sense of place attachment amongst the people from the very beginning. It has gained momentum and made a significant impact on Memphis's urban core both economically and socially because it is a means to entertain, which is all Memphis and its public ever really wanted and needed. It succeeds because of the combination of creating a memorable landmark, capturing this phenomenon of place attachment through local support, and establishing a new medium for entertainment. The fact that AutoZone Park is a stadium was a contributing influence but not the whole solution; sport simply caters heavily to these three needs. There are other means that would have also benefited the city, but for Memphis at that time, it needed an outlet that captured the attention and hearts of the people.

Perhaps most importantly, this thesis demonstrates the importance of remembering and always considering one's audience. While respect on a national level is a worthy goal, creating an impression with the local public and those who will actually occupy that building should be the primary incentive. LRK and the owners understood that for this project to have the positive impact they wanted, AutoZone Park needed to accommodate every class and race of Memphis. By encouraging everyone in Memphis to take part, the new park establishes a small but influential example of social stability for the rest of the city to follow. As a result, the community has developed a sense of loyalty toward not just the building but the meaning behind that building. The Memphis Ballpark District successfully demonstrates how the motivation of the locals to improve and stimulate social and economic growth is the most essential element for any city to function and succeed.

This thesis began as a study of architecture and the social and economic ramifications it has on people who occupy it. While the architecture of AutoZone Park contributes to public perception and the overall experience within the project, it is not the reason the park is one of the most respected and successful in the country. The park began as and continues to be a popular entertainment outlet in a southern entertainment-driven town because of its locals. Throughout its development, this thesis grew into a study of people and their intentions. AutoZone Park serves as an example of how the needs, wants, and choices of the local public influence the architecture of their city.

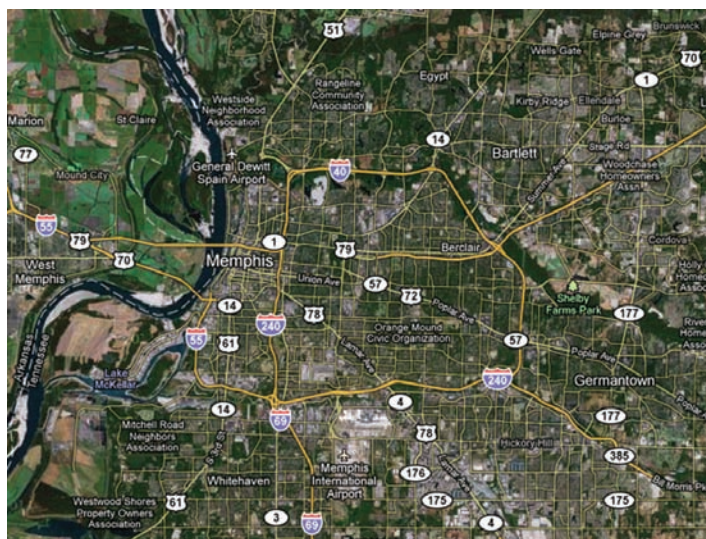




FIGURE 4



FIGURE 5



FIGURE 6



FIGURE 7



FIGURE 8



FIGURE 9



FIGURE 10



FIGURE 11



FIGURE 12



FIGURE 13



FIGURE 14



FIGURE 15

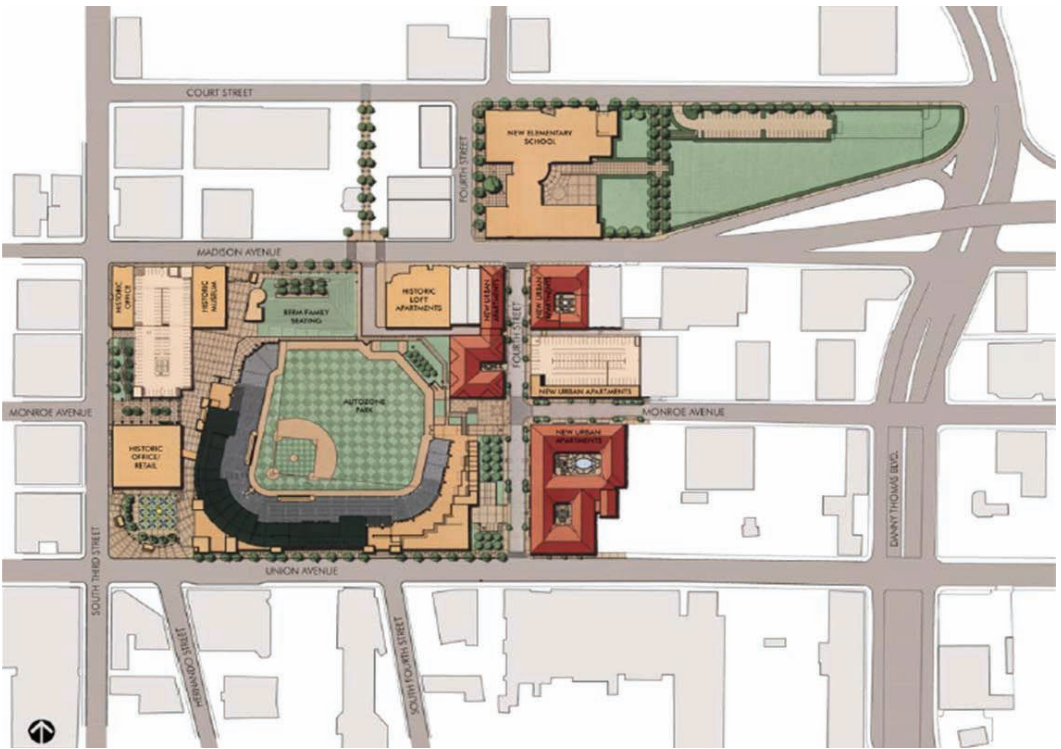


FIGURE 16



FIGURE 17



FIGURE 18



FIGURE 19

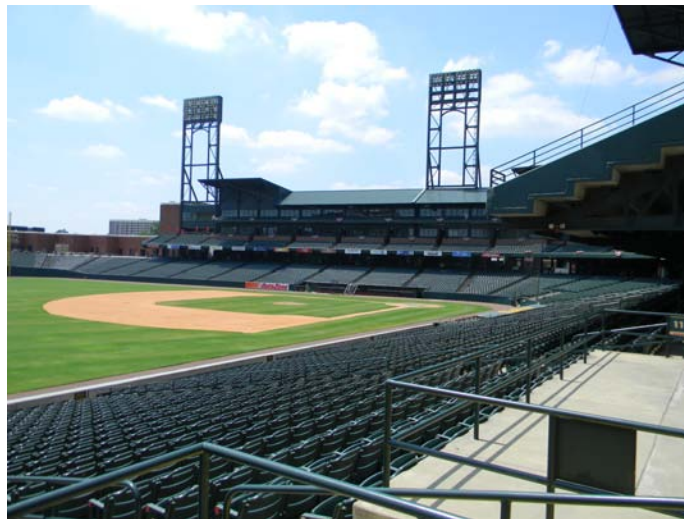


FIGURE 20



FIGURE 21



FIGURE 22



FIGURE 23



FIGURE 24



FIGURE 25



FIGURE 26



FIGURE 27



FIGURE 28



FIGURE 29

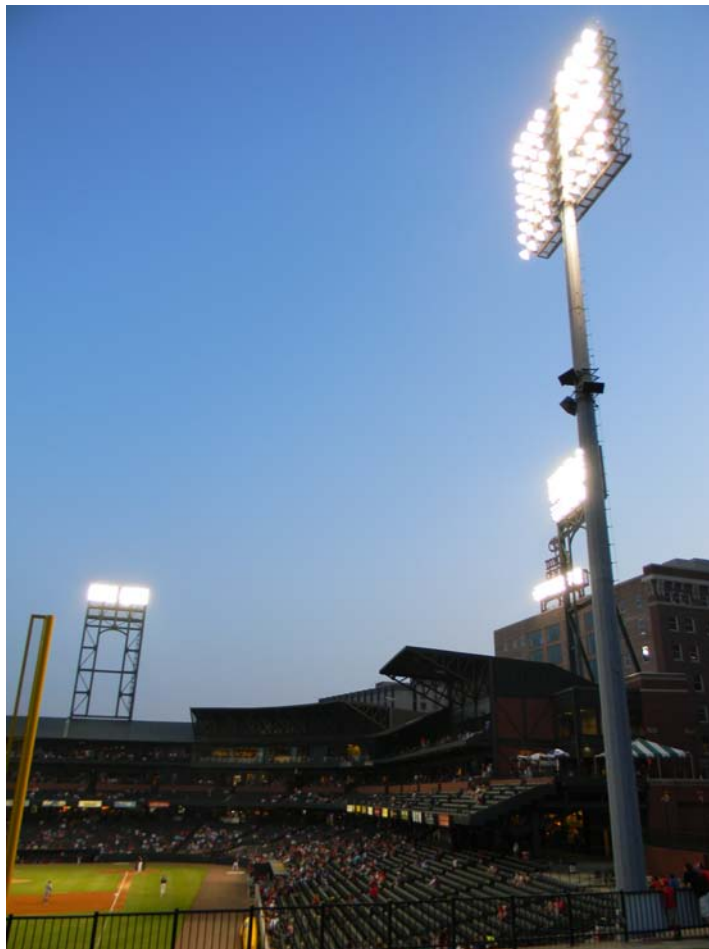
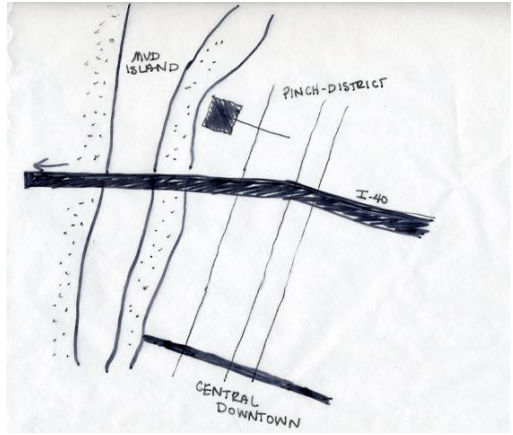
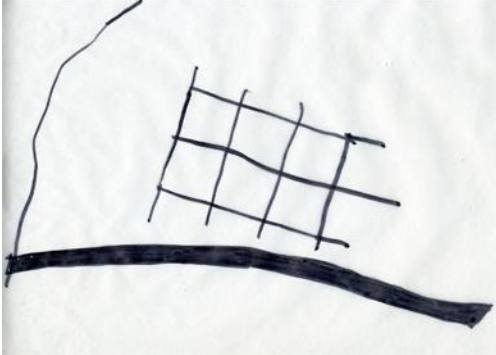
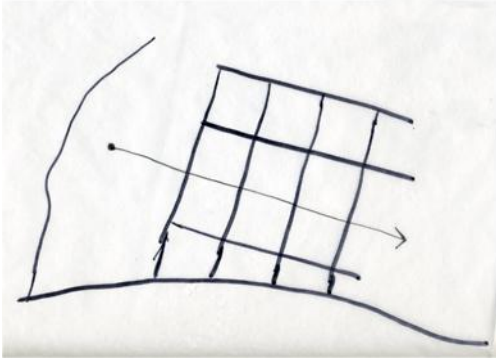
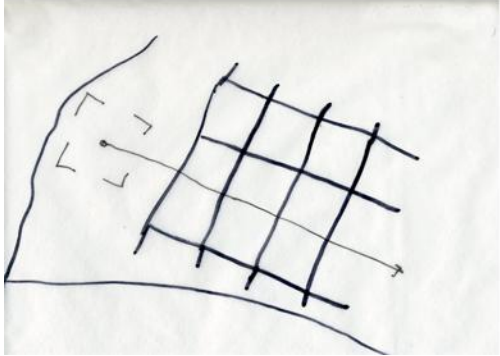
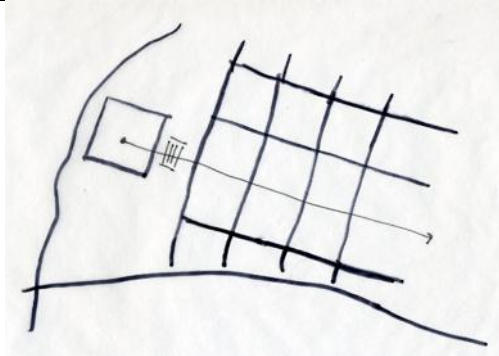
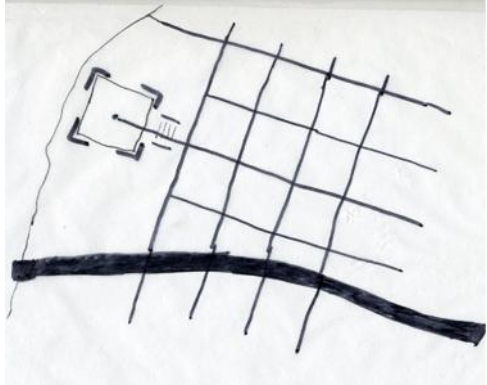


FIGURE 30

Appendix A

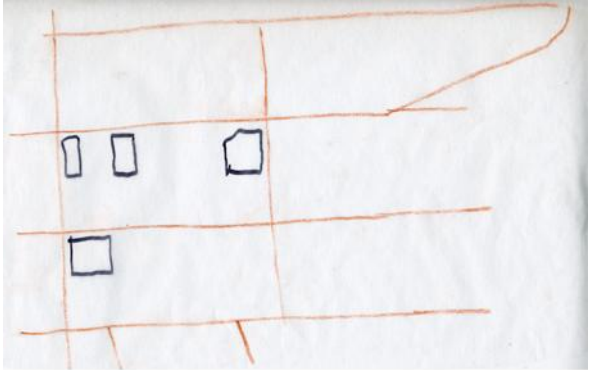
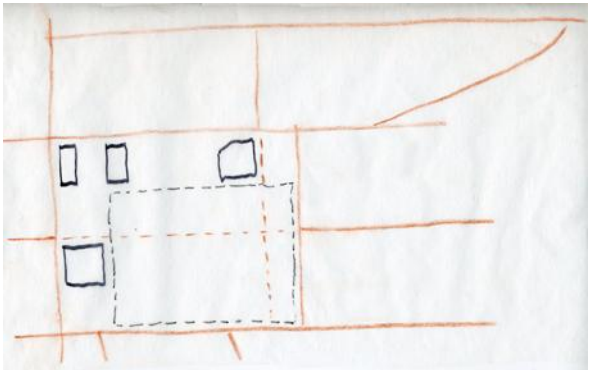
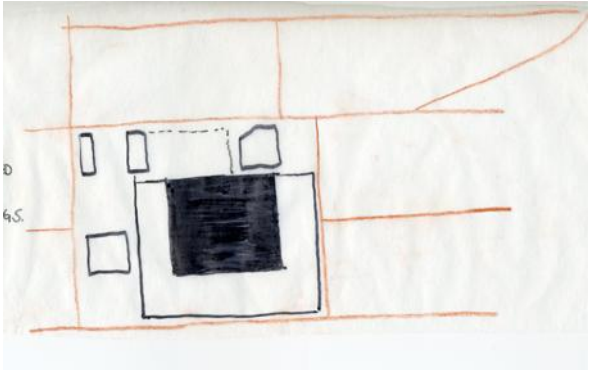
Analytical Diagrams Highlighting Key Design Decisions of the Memphis Pyramid

<p style="text-align: center;">Context</p> <p>Interstate-40 and distance create a definite disconnect between the Pyramid and today's central downtown.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Existing Conditions in Pinch-District</p> <p>The first defined district of Memphis, the Pinch-District, forms a square grid between the edge of the Mississippi River and, in later years, Interstate-40.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Axis Established</p> <p>The central axis of the Pinch-District became the focal point of the future home of the Memphis Pyramid.</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;">Orientation Established</p> <p>The directionality of the future Pyramid was established early in the design process. As this diagram demonstrates, the new structure was intended to form a relationship with the Pinch-District.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Entrance Defined</p> <p>To distinguish it from the other three secondary entrances around the structure, the formal entrance greets the visitor with an Egyptian-inspired statue and a threshold enhanced by a set of stairs.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Final Placement</p> <p>In the end, the Pyramid relates almost exclusively to the Pinch-District, one of the most under-populated areas of Memphis.</p>	

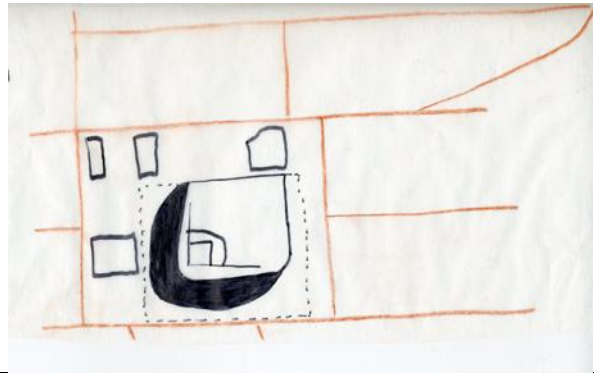
Appendix B

Analytical Diagrams Highlighting Key Design Decisions of the Memphis Ballpark District

<p>Existing Condition</p> <p>The existing site, filled with abandoned buildings and parking lots, only retained three of those buildings for historical purposes.</p>	 <p>A hand-drawn diagram on white paper showing a street grid. Four horizontal orange lines and two vertical orange lines define the site. Three small, hand-drawn rectangles represent existing buildings: two are in the top-left block, and one is in the bottom-left block.</p>
<p>Streets Changed</p> <p>In order to fit the standard ballpark into a downtown grid, a segment of Monroe Avenue was removed, and a block of Fourth Street was shifted.</p>	 <p>A hand-drawn diagram on white paper showing the same street grid as the first diagram. A dashed rectangle is drawn in the center-right area, indicating the area affected by the removal of a segment of Monroe Avenue and the shifting of a block of Fourth Street. The three existing buildings are still shown in their original positions.</p>
<p>Placement of Ballpark</p> <p>The placement of the ballpark was ultimately determined by the locations of existing buildings on the site.</p>	 <p>A hand-drawn diagram on white paper showing the final placement of the ballpark. A large, solid black rectangle represents the ballpark, positioned within the street grid. The three existing buildings are still shown in their original positions. The diagram is labeled 'D' and '4.S.' on the left side.</p>

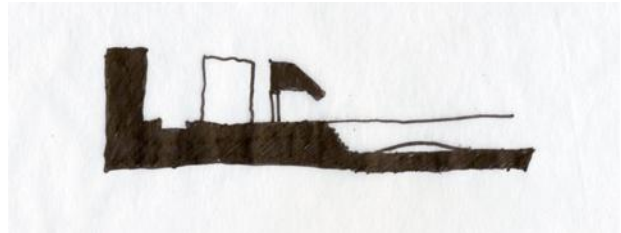
Directionality

The orientation of the field, while predominately related to the existing buildings on the site, is a response to streets and the location of the surrounding landmarks (such as the Peabody Hotel and Beale Street).



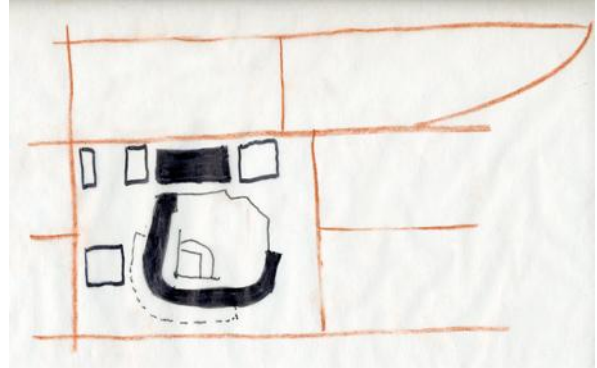
Depression of the Field

To allow the visitor to establish a visual connection between the ball field and the surrounding urban atmosphere, the design directed the visitor to enter into the seating area at ground level.



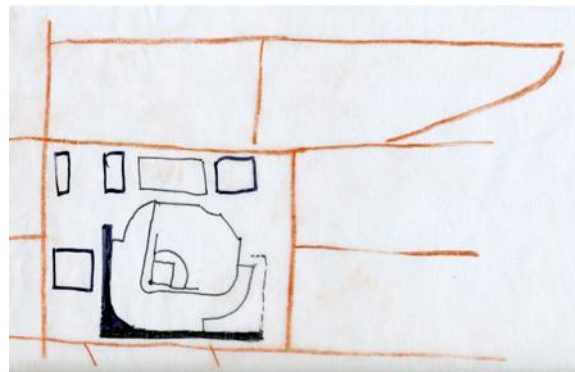
Stadium Seating

Seating included not only the actual seats but also inexpensive open seating on a grassy bluff in the outfield.



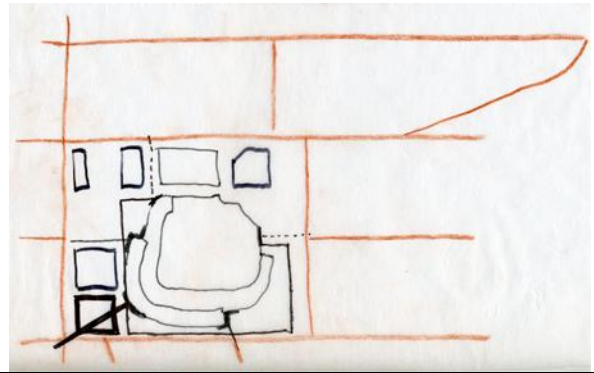
Exterior Edge

Two hard edges establish the boundaries of the actual ballpark. One runs along Union Avenue, one of the most populated connections between the suburbs and downtown, while the other separates the ballpark from the entry plaza and commercial offices.



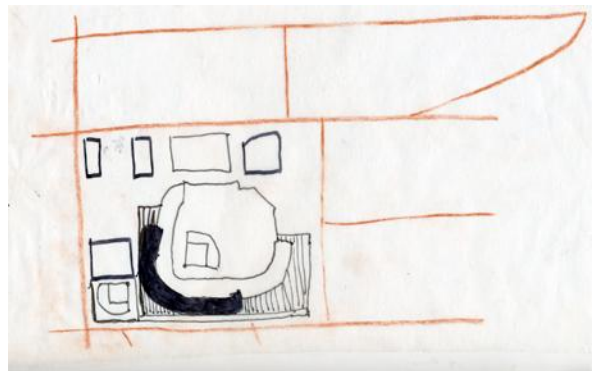
Points of Entry

Although all four blocks surrounding the park have entry points (private and public), the main entry is directed toward a major intersection and the Peabody Hotel with secondary streets relating to minor streets.



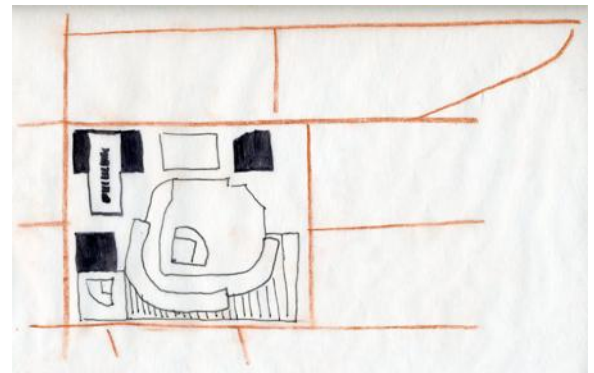
Entry Plaza (Main)

The entry plaza, designated clearly as the main entrance through an elaborate public gathering space and large signage, further ties in the ballpark's relationship to the Peabody Hotel and Beale Street.



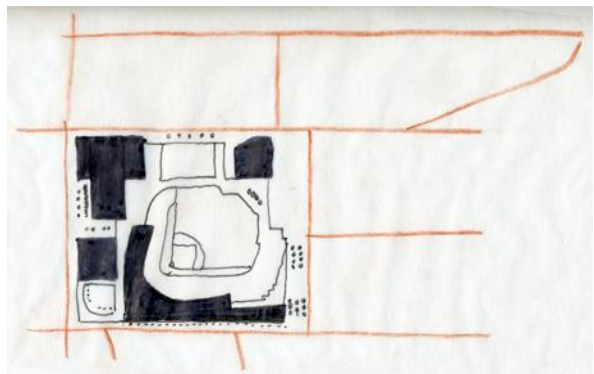
Development of Historic Buildings

These buildings, including the Toyota Center and the YMCA Lofts, were developed into loft apartments, a parking deck, and office space.



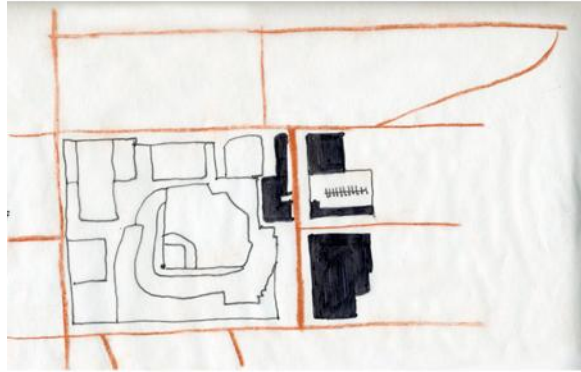
Landscaping/Exterior Spaces

Landscaping created an oasis within a busy downtown.

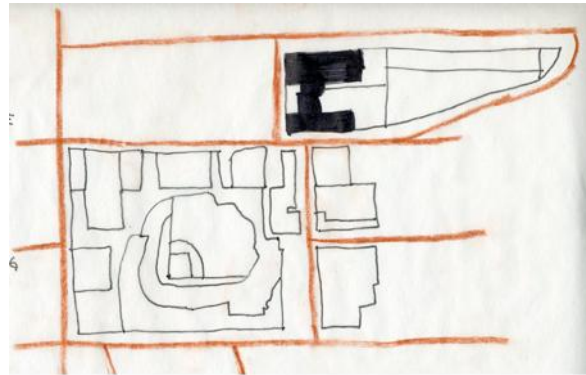


Ballpark Apartments

Apartment complexes that overlook the ballpark create a community and demonstrate the advantages of controlling the perimeter. The YMCA, one of the historic buildings, was also renovated into apartments.

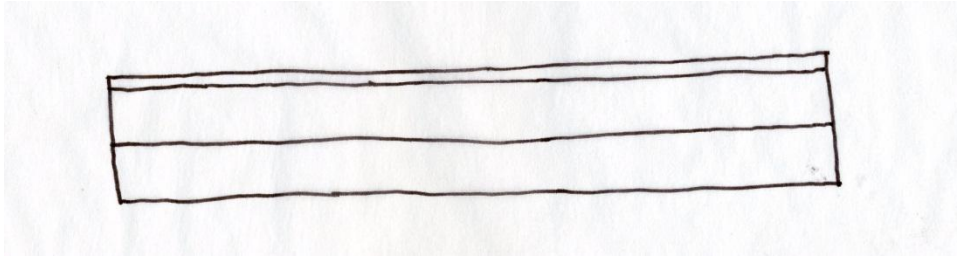
**Downtown Elementary School**

This addition was a fortunate occurrence that further solidified the Memphis Ballpark District as a functioning urban network.

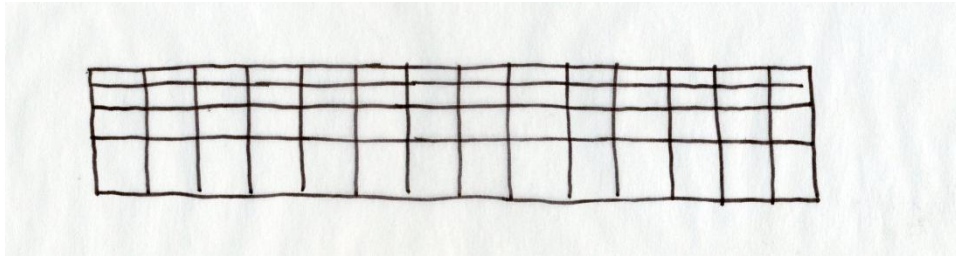


Appendix C

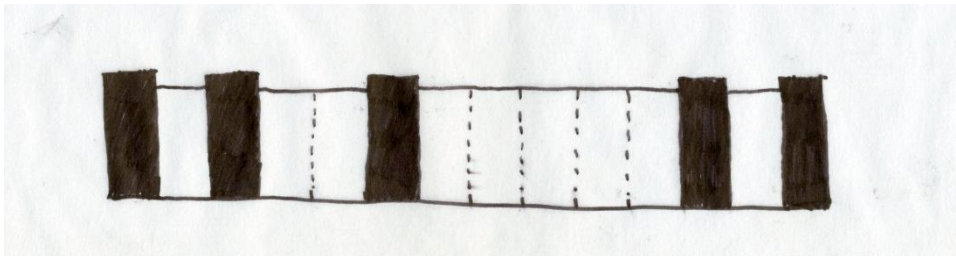
Analytical Diagrams of AutoZone Park's Union Street Elevation



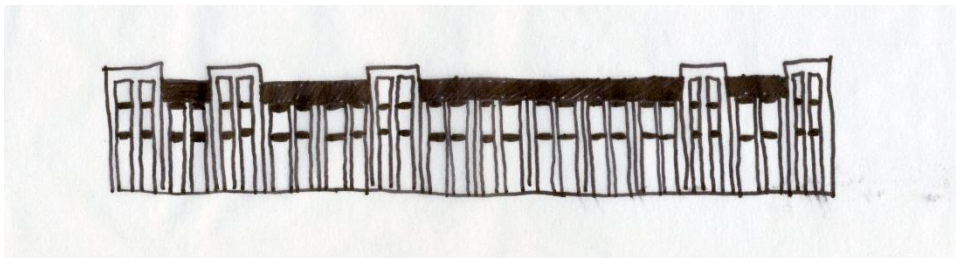
The horizontal lines dominate the plane.



The façade was divided into fourteen, vertical pieces.



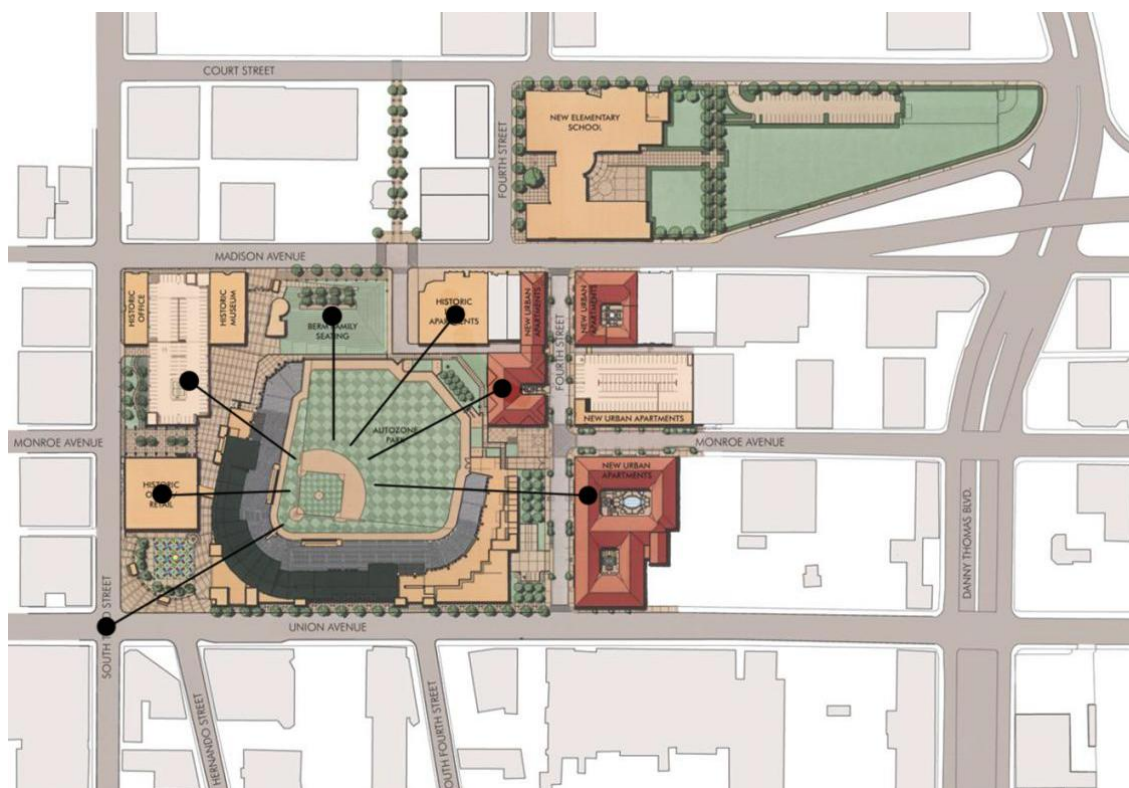
Protrusions away from the façade are a response to surrounding streets and the existing context.



Fenestration further divides the façade evenly.

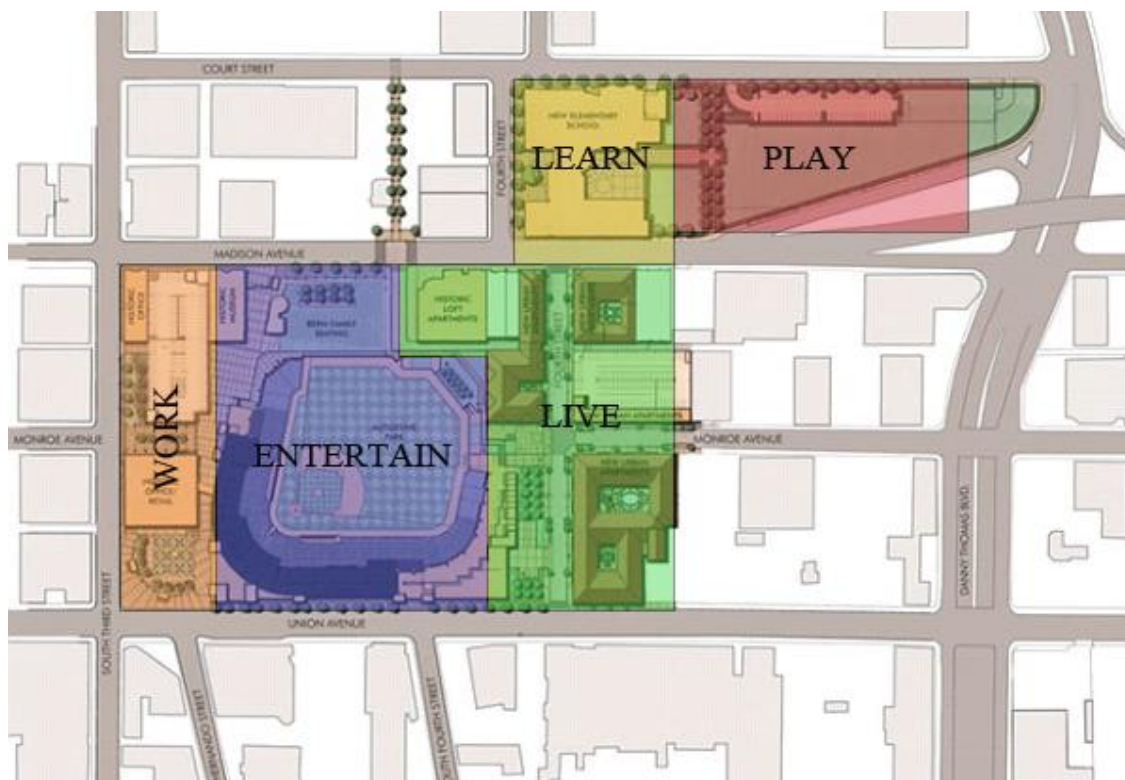
Appendix D

Diagram of Views into AutoZone Park from Surrounding Context



Appendix E

Use Diagram of the Memphis Ballpark District



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