DESIGN TEAM

John Davids, AIA  •  Project Designer
Judy Davids  •  Designer
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Sponsored by the Tiger Stadium Fan Club
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January 1990

• Dedicated to "Baseball John" Miramonti •
Tiger Stadium has as much history and character as anyone could ask for, as well as the closest proximity between the fans and the players of any surviving major league park. Considering its substantial seating capacity, this intimacy is near-miraculous. Destroying a park as irreplaceable as this would be a tragedy for Detroit and baseball.

— John Pastler
Ballpark consultant and architecture critic

Tiger Stadium is a steep-sided, squared-off enclosure, whose boxy dimensions, like those of many ballparks back then, were dictated by the cross streets and avenues that hem it in. Downtown stadiums like this...seem to hold and intensify the sounds and hopes and intimate oneness of their crowds, and when you’re inside, watching your team (in its old brilliant home whites, with the same famous, old-time gothic initial) violently at play, it’s possible to wonder for a moment which decade you are in and which wonderful, hero-strewn lineup is on view down there, in the instant of its passing from action to history.

— Roger Angell
Season Ticket

In Detroit there’s a cozy seat at the railing in the second deck where you can lean forward and hear the swish of the bat when the on-deck hitter swings. When there’s an argument at the plate, you don’t have to ask the players afterward what was said. This is the best spot I’ve found to grasp the central aspect of the sport, the tense business being conducted between the pitcher and the hitter. It was here that I suddenly said to myself, “So that’s ‘changing speeds’”...

— Tom Boswell
Why Time Begins on Opening Day

I love Tiger Stadium. When I taught at Michigan State, in the early fifties, I drove to the ballpark frequently from East Lansing to watch Detroit play. Tiger Stadium is an important part of Michigan history. May it live forever.

— Lawrence Ritter
The Glory of Their Times

It would be a shame to lose that place. I loved playing there...Where would all the ghosts live if it were torn down?

— Darrell Evans
Historic Tiger Stadium can serve the needs of Detroit's ball club and its fans for many years to come through a low-cost renovation and expansion proposal.

The Cochrane Plan was designed by architect John Davids and his associates at the request of the Tiger Stadium Fan Club, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving baseball in Detroit.

The Cochrane Plan meets the desires of Tiger fans to preserve Tiger Stadium and retain its historic character while improving its amenities.

The Cochrane Plan satisfies the expressed needs of the Detroit Tigers for improvements to concessions, rest rooms, clubhouses, office space, and support services.

The Cochrane Plan provides the club with seventy-three luxury suites to accommodate 1,200 patrons. The plan preserves or improves sight lines in every part of the stadium.

The Cochrane Plan expands and improves Tiger Stadium's facilities without altering the existing field dimensions, reducing the seating capacity and variety, or compromising the ballpark's intimacy.

The Cochrane Plan accomplishes all this through a series of additions and expansions:

- Additions on the stadium's Cochrane Avenue and Michigan Avenue sides allow for new concessions and rest rooms and for expansion of clubhouses, offices, commissaries, and storage areas.
- An addition at the corner of Michigan and Trumbull contains a greatly expanded administrative and ticket selling area.
- An infill building on Michigan west of Cochrane houses a Hall of Fame museum and marketing operations and is connected to the Cochrane addition by a pedestrian bridge and a ground-level plaza.
- An optional new level of luxury suites and press facilities replaces the existing third deck.
- This new deck makes likely the removal of forty percent of the supporting columns (posts) from the upper deck.

The Cochrane Plan allows the Tigers to play all home games at Tiger Stadium during the renovation period.

The Cochrane Plan's total cost is $26.07 million, with approximately half of that expense for the luxury suites. By any measure, this represents a small fraction of the cost of a new stadium. This figure includes a fifteen percent contingency and is inflated to assume a fall 1991 construction start.

The Cochrane Plan insures Detroit a first-class sports facility and unmatched tourist attraction well into the twenty-first century.

ENDORSEMENTS OF THE COCHRANE PLAN

The following professionals have reviewed and endorsed the Cochrane Plan:

- Ken Aste, American Institute of Architects (AIA), Vice-President of Design, Contract Interiors
- John J. Castellana, Fellow, American Institute of Architects (FAIA), Past President, Detroit Chapter, American Institute of Architects, 1987
- Richard E. Fry, AIA, Vice-President of Design, TMP Associates, Inc.
- Karl H. Greimel, FAIA, President, Richard E. Fry, AIA Ltd.
- Dan Hoffman, Dean, College of Architecture and Design, Lawrence Technological University
- Bruno Leon, FAIA, Head of Department of Architecture, Cranbrook Academy of Art
- Carl Luckenbach, FAIA, Dean, School of Architecture, University of Detroit
- Principal-in-Charge, Pontiac Silverdome design team
- John Pastier, President, Luckenbach/Ziegelman and Partners Inc
- Architectural critic
- Glen Paulsen, FAIA, Ballpark consultant
- Head of Department of Architecture, Cranbrook Academy of Art, 1965-1971
- Emil Lorch Professor Emeritus of Architecture, University of Michigan
- Carl Roehling, AIA, President, Michigan Society of Architects, 1989
- R. Rocco Romano, AIA, Vice-President and Director of Commerce Division, Smith, Hinckman & Grylls Associates Inc.
- Chief Architect, TMP Associates, Inc.

In addition, the following resolution was passed by the Board of Directors of the Michigan Society of Architects:

The Michigan Society of Architects Board of Directors feels it is important to evaluate the potential of preserving, through renovation, Tiger Stadium as one of the alternatives for maintaining the tradition of professional baseball in Detroit. We hereby endorse a review of the renovation and addition as presented to the MSA Board of Directors by the Tiger Stadium Fan Club.
INTRODUCTION: PARTNERS FOR CHANGE

Since 1896, professional baseball has been played at the corner of Michigan and Trumbull, making it the oldest address in American professional sports. For nearly a century, people from all walks of life have come there to see Detroit’s ball team. The corner has been common ground in the midst of a city and a region undergoing enormous changes.

The park itself has grown and changed with the times. Team owners have paid for several expansions and renovations:

- In 1896, George Arthur Van der Beek paid $10,000 to clear the grounds of the old town ballparks at Michigan and Trumbull and build a wooden grandstand that became known as Bennett Park.
- In 1911-12, Frank Navin and William Yawkey took their profits from American League championships in 1907, 1908, and 1909 and replaced Bennett Park with a concrete-and-steel structure at a cost of $100,000.
- In 1923-24, Navin again plowed some of his profits from a decade of successful teams back into the ballpark, double-decking Navin Field.
- In 1935-38, Walter O. Briggs used the revenue from the Tigers’ first World Series triumph to double the size of the ballpark, completely enclosing and double-decking the stands and creating $3,000-seat Briggs Stadium.

In these and other projects at Michigan and Trumbull, the team paid for improvements and the fans repaid the investment with increased attendance. The changes benefited the owners, the players, the fans, the neighborhood, the city, and the region.

Because of this partnership between the club, the fans, and the community, the Detroit franchise has become one of the most stable and valuable in professional sports. In 1989, the Tigers drew more than 1.5 million fans to see live baseball.

The HOK plan would break with the past, destroy a valuable landmark, and replace it with a park where all seats would be further from the field, to the detriment of the vast majority of fans. For the sake of questionable profits, such a new park could destroy the link between the team, the city, and its fans and sacrifice the long-term stability of the franchise.

We believe it makes more sense to preserve and renovate Tiger Stadium at a far lower cost. The Cochrane Plan, submitted here, would benefit the club, the players, the fans, the city, the region, and all of organized baseball. As in the past, the Tigers and their followers can be partners for positive change, and Detroit can retain its distinctive and valuable baseball landmark.

HOW THE COCHRANE PLAN CAME ABOUT

The Tiger Stadium Fan Club was formed in September 1987 by a group of Detroiters concerned about the future of major league baseball in Michigan. It is a non-profit organization with a membership of over 5,000 people throughout North America.

We formed the Fan Club based on our belief that Tiger Stadium remains a suitable venue for major league baseball in Detroit. That belief has been strengthened in the past few years by mounting evidence that the stadium is structurally sound:

- A study by Tumer Construction completed in November 1987 showed that all necessary repairs and some improvements to the stadium could be made for $6 million, including replacing a section of deck in the right field corner which was not replaced during the 1977-78 renovations.
- Noted structural engineer Lev Zellin conducted a visual examination of the stadium in March 1988 and described it as “landmark construction—a classic.” He found none of “the common signs of structural weakness.”
- A visual inspection the same year by University of Detroit structural engineer Constancio Miranda found no important structural problems.
- No significant evidence of structural problems has been documented since the 1977-78 renovations. The HOK study bypassed this entirely while presenting two renovation plans. In fact, that study assumed the foundations “to be adequate for an increase in design loading of up to fifteen percent.”

With structural soundness receding as an issue, the debate for the past year or so has centered around the relative merits and costs of renovation versus a new stadium.

The HOK study released in March 1989 contained two options for renovation. In each, the field would be lowered and home plate moved toward right field to accommodate 4,200 more box seats behind third base. The right field grandstand, with its famous upper-deck overhang, and the right-centerfield bleachers would be demolished. Under Option A, priced at $57 million, luxury suites would be placed on the facing of the second deck and some posts in the upper deck would be removed; in a second phase, a new roof would be built, and more luxury suites and a new press area would be constructed on the third deck.

Under Option B, to cost $82 million, the upper deck would be rebuilt, eliminating all posts upstairs. To accomplish this, the entire upper deck would be moved back, raising the current distance from its front seats to the edge of the field (from 40 feet to 120 feet). Two levels of luxury suites would be built in a mezzanine area. This option would require the Tigers to find another home field for two years.
These renovation proposals have severe deficiencies:

- They are too costly.
- They would place all existing seats farther away from the playing field. (In the second plan, the front of the upper deck would be 120 feet from the field, fully three times as far as the present stadium’s 40 feet.)
- They would destroy the right-field overhang, one of the stadium’s most distinctive features.
- They would eliminate 3,500 to 8,000 of the existing 10,000-plus bleacher seats.

Upon reviewing the HOK plans, the Tiger Stadium Fan Club concluded that a serious creative effort had not yet been made to explore how the stadium could be renovated to accommodate the needs of the club and the fans.

On April 20, 1989, the Fan Club’s executive committee decided to pursue its own study to determine whether a better renovation plan could be designed.

**CRITERIA FOR THE COCHRANE PLAN**

Two sets of criteria are used in the Cochrane Plan, reflecting the clear wishes of fans and the stated desires of the Tigers.

**Fans’ Criteria**

**1. Preservation.** The expressed wish of fans and taxpayers to preserve Tiger Stadium must be a fundamental priority.

The overwhelming preference of Tiger fans and of the citizens of Michigan is to keep and renovate Tiger Stadium. That sentiment has been reflected in every survey conducted over the last two years. A poll conducted by Market Opinion Research of Detroit and reported in the Detroit Free Press of Feb. 7, 1988, showed sixty-five percent of people in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties wanted to save Tiger Stadium, versus only twenty percent for a new stadium.

These sentiments are important. They should not be dismissed as mere nostalgia nor declared irrelevant to an economic decision.

Fans — the customers of the Tigers — like Tiger Stadium. Any business ignores the wishes of its customers at its own peril.

Michigan citizens — those who would foot the bill in any kind of public financing for a new stadium — want to keep the ballpark. They recognize that paying great sums of money for a new ballpark is an extravagance that Detroit and Michigan cannot afford.

Baseball fans throughout the country have expressed great interest in preserving Tiger Stadium as one of the few remaining classic ballparks. With the demise of Comiskey Park in Chicago, Tiger Stadium will share with Boston’s Fenway Park the distinction of being the oldest park in the major leagues, Fenway and Chicago’s Wrigley Field, the only other parks pre-dating 1920, have the status of national treasures, recognized and worshipped by baseball fans everywhere. Baseball needs the old parks to retain its links with the past.

**2. Historic character. Every effort must be made to preserve the historic character of the ballpark.**

Current outfield dimensions and distinctive features, including the right-field overhang and the flag pole, should be maintained. Changes which restore former historic features should be explored. The game should be played in open air and on natural grass.

Unlike other teams, in baseball the dimensions of the playing field are not standardized. As a result, the design of ballparks in each city gives a distinctive flavor to the play of the game.

That variety has diminished in recent decades because so many of the new parks built have been symmetrical, replacing old parks whose quirky dimensions were dictated by the pre-existing pattern of city streets. Tiger Stadium is one such park. The right-field overhang, unique in all of baseball, came about because of the proximity of Trumbull Avenue.

Retaining the existing dimensions of the park is also important in order to preserve the integrity of records over time.

Historic character also includes the intangibles about Tiger Stadium that are so attractive to fans: the “feel” of an old ballpark, the knowledge that the experience was virtually the same for parents and grandparents, and the powerful realization that Hall of Famers of many eras played within the same confines.

Baseball fans everywhere, but especially in Detroit, overwhelmingly prefer open air and natural grass as part of the special magic of the summer game. The weather is, and should be, a factor in the playing of the nation’s premier outdoor game.

**3. Viewing conditions.** Under any renovation, as many seats as possible should be kept as close as possible to the playing field. Construction of private boxes and other renovations should not damage existing sight lines. Removal of some posts should be explored.

Fans want to sit close to the action, and in Tiger Stadium they sit almost on top of it. Stadium consultant John Pastier has recently studied average distances from the seats to the field in major league stadiums. He has found no stadium whose average distance is as low as Tiger Stadium’s. Pastier’s figures are based on careful and conservative comparisons of major league stadiums; he provides the following evaluation:

- **Distance from home plate to the front of the top deck behind home plate:** Tiger Stadium’s figure of 85 feet is the best in the major leagues, Comiskey Park, by comparison, is 101 feet, while the front of Dodger Stadium’s fifth deck is fully 203 feet from home plate. (Circular stadiums are not included in this and the following comparisons because they have very few rows of seats behind home plate.)
- **Distance from home plate to the last row of the top deck behind home plate:** This seat distance is 161 feet in Tiger Stadium, second only to the smaller Comiskey Park’s 154 feet. In much-acclaimed Royals Stadium, fans behind home plate may find themselves as much as 273 feet from the action.
- **Distance from home to the last row of the lower deck:** Once again, Tiger Stadium comes off best, at 147 feet. Even at compact Wrigley Field, the distance is 199 feet.
4. The Cochrane Plan

• Average viewing distance behind home plate: Tiger Stadium’s figure of 113 feet is unmatched in multi-decked stadiums and even surpasses the single-decked Fenway Park. Modern open air stadiums in Anaheim (156 feet), Baltimore (150 feet), Los Angeles (161 feet), and Kansas City (162 feet) cannot compare.

Pastier adds that given the stadium’s geometry, equivalent calculations done behind first and third bases would be impressive as well. This statistical analysis bears out a conviction long held intuitively by baseball experts who traditionally have praised Tiger Stadium’s intimacy.

Pastier concludes:

No better spectator park exists. By actual measurement, its seating proximity to the field surpasses all other parks, old or new. This is the prime gauge of the ballpark quality. It creates intimacy and involvement that are lacking in newer stadiums, and will surely be missed in any replacement. As design, it is a rare specimen of the Golden Age of ballparks, full of character and complexity, and miraculously combining both monumentality and human scale.

Posts: A Blessing in Disguise

Tiger Stadium is renowned throughout baseball for its intimacy. The posts make that intimacy possible. They allow the upper deck to be built directly over the lower deck. The posts obstruct at least 3,000 seats at Tiger Stadium, but they put all the upper deck seats much closer to the playing field than any similarly sized design would. Most games are not sellouts, and there is no reason why anybody at a typical game needs to sit in an obstructed seat at Tiger Stadium; all other seats can be sold first. Tiger Stadium, with its posts, offers better seating than any other stadium for the vast majority of fans at the vast majority of games.

Dale Swearingen, vice-president of Osborn Construction Company, which built Navin Field, spoke in 1989 of “the fictitious Nirvana of columnless viewing,” then commented further on modern tendencies in stadium design:

“We’ll build a stadium without columns, they say. Well, without columns, you need a cantilever, and the expense of that really intimate angle is too great. And so you get these huge stadiums where the upper decks are miles from the field, and the fans are so far away from the action that you need a huge television screen to keep them interested. (New Yorker, 18 September 1989: 34-35)

That said, any post removal that could be accomplished without changing the proximity of the seats would improve sight lines in the affected areas. In no case should placement of luxury boxes further impair sight lines. Many good seats in the upper rows of the lower deck of Tiger Stadium behind home plate now have vastly diminished sight lines because of the construction of the new broadcast booths and owners’ boxes in the 1977-84 renovations.


Baseball at Michigan and Trumbull has always brought together people of all classes and walks of life. Tiger Stadium has the only double-decked bleachers in the major leagues, affording people of limited income the opportunity to see a game at distances much closer than many of the expensive seats in Toronto’s SkyDome. The great number and variety of seats in the infield and outfield make Tiger Stadium accessible to many types of fans. Vastly increasing the number of season tickets and vastly reducing the number of outfield seats would make it harder for the average Tiger fan to see a home game.

5. Amenities. Improve concessions and rest rooms.

In some areas of the stadium, concourses, concession areas, and rest rooms are cramped. When crowds are large or concessions are understaffed, fans often must wait for one or more innings to get refreshments.

6. Accessibility. Improve handicapped access.

Handicapped seating is limited and unsatisfactory. Those wishing to buy box seats are limited to two tickets each because there is only one row of seats available (excellent ones behind home plate in the lower deck). The only reserved seats available are at the top row of the lower deck behind the Tigers’ dugout; the view there, especially for those wheelchair-bound, is very poor. There is no handicapped access to the upper deck and no drop-off place for handicapped fans.

7. Neighborhood. Corktown residents, agencies and business people must be considered. No changes should damage an existing business.

Corktown is Detroit’s oldest neighborhood. For more than a century, its vitality has been linked to the ballpark at Michigan and Trumbull. Moving the Tigers’ home to a new location, even one nearby, would have severe economic consequences for neighborhood businesses and residents.

In recent years, Corktown has attracted some people back into the city. Neighborhoods like Corktown are one of Detroit’s most precious and vulnerable assets. The extremely varied parking options near the ballpark also afford many neighborhood residents, business people, and non-profit institutions a much needed source of income. At the same time, fans benefit from a choice of inexpensive or free parking within a few blocks of the stadium or nearby parking at higher prices. Ingress and egress from the Michigan-Trumbull area are outstanding compared to most other major league cities.

8. City. Any changes at Tiger Stadium should have a positive impact on Detroit and Michigan’s economy, vitality, and civic spirit. Changes must be considered in light of the many other priorities straining the city’s resources.

Detroit is one of only three cities with classic steel-and-concrete ballparks from the great era of stadium construction in the second decade of this century. Unlike Boston and Chicago, Detroit and the Tigers never have emphasized the ballpark in their marketing. Tiger Stadium adds much more distinction to Detroit than any new ballpark possibly could.

Detroit would suffer if one of its few remaining civic monuments is destroyed. Detroit badly needs to retain some of its treasured history. This increasingly divided region needs common ground.

In light of the dire problems facing Detroit — crime, homelessness, unemployment — and the limited budget and resources of the city, any public expenditure on a baseball stadium must meet a stringent cost-benefit analysis. The city and the state cannot afford vast sums of money to build a new ballpark, especially if the existing park can be renovated for considerably less money.

Tigers’ Criteria

The Tigers’ criteria were taken from those published in the HOX study.

Overall Performance Criteria

1. Baseball season attendance — 3,000,000 fans
2. Baseball season tickets — 24,000 fans
3. Storage for concessions
   a. In the concourse: accommodate three consecutive sellouts
   b. In the stands: a single sellout
4. Provisions for handicapped accommodations including seating for all price categories.
5. Grouping of compatible facilities with access to outside.
6. Adequate ingress/egress and circulation for spectator and stadium operations and emergencies.
7. Adequate storage.
8. Minimize obstructed view seating and provide seats as close to the action as possible.
9. The economics of cost versus revenue should be reflected in the design.
The Cochrane Plan

3. Preserve the quality seating of Tiger Stadium and improve it if possible with column removal.

Solutions

Cochrane Addition

An addition on the Cochrane Avenue side of the stadium is the key to expanding the facilities at Tiger Stadium.

This addition requires closing Cochrane to vehicular traffic. Closing Cochrane will not pose traffic problems. There are no business or residential addresses on the block. Traffic is limited, even on game days, and the existing streets west of the stadium can serve traffic needs and provide access to the network of parking lots between Cochrane and Rosa Parks Blvd.

The expansion of the stadium across Cochrane is consonant with previous stadium expansions which affected residences and businesses on National Avenue and Cherry Street (the former names of Cochrane and Kaline Drive) and required the rerouting of Cherry. Unlike those previous expansions, however, the Cochrane addition encroaches only on one existing parking lot and would require no demolition or disruption to the neighborhood.

On an underground level, the addition accommodates forty-one new secure parking spaces for Tiger players and coaches. Players currently park in the stadium lot near Michigan and Trumbull and must cross the stadium to get to their clubhouse; the new lot gives them direct access via an elevator. Players would enter the parking area by driving south on Cochrane past a secure checkpoint and down a gently inclined ramp.

On the ground level, the Cochrane addition more than doubles the size of the home clubhouse, from 3,192 square feet to 7,150 square feet. It also expands the existing stadium office and storage area. It creates a new dining room and lounge for 400; a kitchen; a Tiger Room for club officials and guests, seating fifty; and an enlarged women’s rest room.

The plan replaces existing press and freight elevators, which are old and slow, with new elevators just to the east. This relocation allows Gate 15 to be doubled in width, relieving the severe pedestrian congestion at this corner and allowing new physically handicapped accessible turnstiles to be installed. An off-street handicapped drop-off point will be situated at the corner of Michigan and Cochrane.

Outdoors, Cochrane remains open from Kaline Drive to Gate 14 for TV vehicle access. A new pedestrian “Hall of Fame Plaza” is created between the stadium and the buildings on Michigan, including room for an outdoor dining area adjacent to the indoor dining room.

On the second and third levels, the design greatly expands the concourses at the top of the lower deck and at the back of the upper deck, between home plate and third base, to accommodate roomy new food courts with twenty-one stations on each level; new women’s rest rooms and lounges on each floor; a 2,700-square-foot commissary at each level; plus first aid rooms, security offices and detention areas, and fan accommodation rooms.

The new commissaries all food preparation and efficient vendor pickup at each level of the stadium. A new bank of six elevators serves the luxury suites on the fourth level. The elevators also provide access to all stadium levels for the physically handicapped and for stadium personnel.

Michigan Addition

A three-level addition along Michigan Avenue occupies the western part of the existing Tigers’ parking lot. The remainder of the lot is still ample for front-office parking and for receiving.

On the ground level, this addition triples the size of the cramped visitors’ clubhouse; expands the existing commissary; creates a new concession stand with six stations; and widens the concourse in front of the new concession.

On the second and third levels, this addition provides new food courts with twenty-one stations at each level and new women’s rest rooms and lounges at each level, similar in design and size to those in the Cochrane addition. A new bank of five elevators allows luxury suite patrons to reach the fourth level and provides access for the physically handicapped and stadium personnel.

The Michigan addition requires a reorientation of the ramp that leads to the upper deck. The new ramp is covered to eliminate the slippery conditions that sometimes prevail on the existing open ramp.

The new food courts and women’s rest rooms alleviate congestion on the upper levels by creating separate areas for fans to line up for these facilities. And because most lower-deck fans will walk up to the top of the lower deck to the new concession areas, congestion in the ground level concourse will be relieved.

THE COCHRANE PLAN

T he Tiger Stadium Fan Club executive committee charged the design team with satisfying, as far as possible, both the fans’ criteria and the Tigers’ criteria. The design team distilled from these a set of architectural objectives. The Cochrane Plan provides solutions to these challenges and addresses the more detailed criteria as well.

Architectural Objectives

1. Continue the tradition of baseball at Michigan and Trumbull.
2. Maintain the integrity of Tiger Stadium while making the stadium competitive with modern ballparks in terms of facilities.
6 • The Cochrane Plan

The new commissary and storage areas opened up by the Cochrane and Michigan additions would free space in other sections of the stadium for other stadium facilities.

Trumbull Addition

A three-level addition at the corner of Michigan and Trumbull enables the club to enlarge and modernize its sales operations by creating 3,300 square feet of space for a new ticket department and ticket office on the first level and to greatly expand its administration offices by a total of 5,090 square feet on each of the second and third levels.

Michigan Avenue Infill

A three-story infill between two existing buildings on Michigan Avenue just west of Cochrane includes a Tiger Hall of Fame museum on the ground floor. The second and third floors house marketing and public relations offices and a luxury suite and season ticket sales department.

The infill building's design harmonizes with the style of the existing buildings on Michigan. The building serves as a point of integration between the neighborhood and the stadium, with the Hall of Fame museum functioning as the Tigers' friendly face to the community.

Prospective customers will enter the Hall of Fame, learn about the rich history of the Tigers and their stadium and then visit the sales departments.

The third level connects to the Cochrane addition by an enclosed pedestrian bridge, so customers can enter the stadium and make their choices of luxury suite or season ticket locations.

Luxury Suite Level

Independent of the other additions, an optional new third deck accommodates seventy-three state-of-the-art luxury suites. The suites extend into the outﬁeld on either side of an expanded press box and scoreboard/orchestra room.

Most of the suites seat fifteen people: ten seats in two tiers at the front of the suite, outdoors; and five seats at a counter inside the suite. The arrangement combines an exclusive, open-air environment that includes the sights, sounds, and smells of baseball with seating within a heated or air-conditioned environment. Two of the suites would be large hospitality suites, each seating twenty-four people in the outdoor tiers and twelve at counter seats inside.

All the suites allow for lounge furniture, a wet bar, closet space, and individual or collective catering. Catering rooms/warming kitchens are located directly across the private concourse from the suites, as are rest rooms, janitors' closets, storage rooms, and shared open lounges.

The open lounges serve as meeting and socializing spaces for suite patrons. They are situated along the outside wall of the third deck and, through large expanses of glass looking outward, afford spectacular views of downtown Detroit, Windsor, the Ambassador Bridge, the Fisher Building, and other Detroit landmarks. The lounges break up the length of the private concourse and transform it from a long, featureless corridor (typical of other suite complexes) into an appealing setting.

Two banks of elevators, situated in the Cochrane and Michigan additions, provide controlled direct access to the luxury suite level. New emergency stairs from the suite level meet applicable fire codes.

All indoor and outdoor seats on the luxury suite level command superb views of the playing field, unlike the luxury boxes at the Palace of Auburn Hills and many other new facilities. The luxury suites are an average of 85 feet from the playing surface, compared to 138 feet for upper level suites at the Palace.

The suite level is an entirely new third deck, replacing the existing structure, now mostly unused. This new deck is moved back twelve feet in most of the stadium to improve sight lines above the infield. The contour of the right-field third deck, scene of dramatic over-the-roof home runs, remains unchanged.

The new level leaves the view from the interior of the stadium almost completely unchanged. From the exterior, the glassed-in lounges, stair enclosures, and elevator towers add vitality to the skyline of the stadium.

All indications strongly suggest that construction of the new third deck and replacement of the existing stadium roof make it feasible to remove forty percent of the existing upper deck columns. The new third deck can be supported by the remaining columns with truss girders spanning between them.

Three engineering factors make this approach possible. First, Tiger Stadium, typical of older buildings, was overengineered. According to Charles Davis of the Detroit Building Authority, a study of the park done during renovation showed there is fifty percent more structural strength than is necessary to support the roof. Second, because the cantilever of the third deck is decreased by twelve feet (which also improves sight lines), the load will be more evenly shared by the columns at the back of the upper deck, and the relative load on the front row of columns will be reduced. Third, the modern materials to be used in the new third deck will be lighter than the existing steel trusses, wood plank decking, and built-up roofing.

The removal of forty percent of the columns in the upper deck eliminates or reduces the obstruction from thousands of prime upper deck seats. In the unlikely event that column removal should not prove feasible after a detailed engineering assessment, no other elements of the Cochrane Plan are jeopardized.

Other Stadium Improvements

To insure handicapped access to every portion of the stadium, eight ramps from the upper deck concourse to the seating area are reconfigured to provide a gentler incline. This is a simple procedure with a modest cost. These ramps will provide access to four new physically handicapped-accessible seating areas in the upper deck: one along each base line, one in right field, and one in the bleachers.

The plan also provides for a new concession area in the lower deck general admission area in right field, new rest rooms in the upper deck bleachers, and new security facilities.

By providing new space in the additions for facilities now located in other parts of the stadium, the plan opens up those spaces for storage or other uses.

COST SUMMARY

January 12, 1990

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**Financing the Cochrane Plan**

The Fan Club opposes public funding of the luxury suite portion of the Cochrane Plan but otherwise takes no position on financing methods or stadium ownership for the plan at this time. Four points must be made in this regard:

- First, the plan’s cost is less than half the total of any option yet presented or under consideration.
- The Tigers clearly wish a change in the status quo, and financing any other such change would be more difficult than funding the Cochrane Plan.
- Second, with the very substantial revenues to be gained from luxury suites, the cost of that portion of the plan (of not the entire plan) can be amortized over a relatively short time.
- Third, should any public funding be authorized for any portion of the Cochrane Plan, such action will be far more fiscally, socially, and politically responsible than public funding for a new stadium. The strained finances of Detroit and Michigan, the pressing human needs in the city, and the clear wishes of Detroiters and Michiganders to preserve the stadium make an unnecessary new stadium at public expense unwise.

Fourth, a number of ownership options, including fan ownership of the stadium, are possible. Apart from actual ownership, various leasing arrangements carry the potential of protecting the interests of the Tigers, their fans, and the City of Detroit. The Fan Club believes it is in the interests of all these groups for the Tigers to remain in Detroit. The Cochrane Plan represents not only the least expensive but the best means of accomplishing that.

**CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE**

The cost estimate assumes a groundbreaking of October 1991. Implementation of the Cochrane Plan will take twenty-two months, with completion envisioned in August 1993.

A significant advantage of the plan is that most construction is possible during the baseball season because most additions are outside the envelope of the existing stadium. The limited demolition work necessary, including removing the necessary portions of the existing outer wall of the stadium, can be done in the off-season.

Major construction work on the new top level can be done in the off-seasons from October 1991 through April 1993. Structural steel on this level can be completed, the structure enclosed, and the press box completed by April 1993. Interior work in the luxury suites, including mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and finishing, can proceed during the 1993 season. Since few weekday afternoon games are scheduled, a normal work schedule will apply and conclude each day before gates open at 5:30 for a night game.

**EVALUATION**

**Evaluation in Terms of Fans’ Criteria**

The Cochrane Plan saves Tiger Stadium, keeping the Tigers playing ball at the one field they have ever called home. In every survey ever taken, the vast majority of fans want to keep the current stadium. This plan accomplishes this and ensures the continued loyalty of the Tigers’ customers.

By adopting the Cochrane Plan, the Tigers could lay new claim to one of the most distinguished ballparks in the major leagues. With Fenway Park and Wrigley Field, Tiger Stadium could be preserved and take its rightful place as a national baseball landmark. Tiger Stadium has distinction, grace, and charm that cannot be purchased with any new stadium. Those enduring qualities can be marketed more successfully than the novelty of any replacement facility.

**Historic Character**

The Cochrane Plan preserves the historic character of Tiger Stadium. The playing field and the surrounding interior of the stadium are left virtually untouched — even the height of the right-field roof, where tape-measure home runs fly over or bounce off into legend.

The Cochrane Plan’s respect for the ballpark is consistent with the many previous expansions and alterations the stadium has undergone since 1912. All those improvements harmonize with the original design of the grandstands, pavilions, and fascia. The Cochrane Plan keeps faith with the ballpark’s history and with the remarkable subsequent adaptability of the park.

**Viewing Conditions**

The Cochrane Plan keeps all seats in the lower and upper decks as close to the playing field as they are now. By the likely removal of some columns in the upper deck, the plan also substantially reduces the number of obstructed seats. The Cochrane Plan offers the most quality seating for the most fans.

**Mix of Seats**

The Cochrane Plan preserves the stadium’s balanced mix of ticket prices even while adding luxury suites. The bleachers remain intact, ensuring that fans of all income groups have access to professional baseball in Detroit. The sights, sounds, and smells of America’s national pastime survive under this plan for all — pensioners and college students, young families and unemployed workers, season ticket holders and school groups. The bleachers and general admission seats at Tiger Stadium historically have provided young people with an introduction to a lifetime of visits to Michigan and Trumbull. If outfield seats are cut back or eliminated in a new stadium, the Tigers risk sacrificing the long-term support of their fans in search of uncertain profits.

**Amenities**

The Cochrane Plan amply provides for all the additional amenities fans want today: new rest rooms with changing tables through the park, including the bleachers; more concession stands with a wider selection of menu items; an in-house dining room; and easier movement along the concourses. No new stadium is needed to accommodate these desires of Tiger patrons, when this plan solves all these problems in a much more cost-effective fashion.

**Accessibility**

The Cochrane Plan provides for more handicapped seating at all levels and much greater accessibility with an off-street drop-off point at Michigan and Cochrane, wider entrances, and more elevators.

**Neighborhood Impact**

The vitality of Corktown would be enhanced by the addition of the Hall of Fame and its outdoor plaza, decorated with a walkway of flags and banners. Disruption would be confined to a small portion of one parking lot. Neighborhood merchants and churches would continue to profit from the ballpark as they always have. And Tiger Stadium would present a fresh and attractive face to the city, with distinctive cupolas atop the new elevator shafts, a new ramp on the Michigan side, use of off-whites and vintage stadium green around the third deck, and huge picture windows along the top of the stadium’s exterior.

It is likely that the rejuvenation of the stadium, especially its exterior, and the introduction of a new
8 • The Cochrane Plan

neighborhood-stadium interface at the corner of Michigan and Cochrane would spark revitalization of the business strip along Michigan and make Corktown an even more desirable address.

City Impact

In recent decades, many cities have justified the expenditure of public money on new stadiums by arguing that such construction has great economic benefits. But a study by economist Robert Baade shows that new stadium construction has no demonstrable net economic benefit to a municipality.

Now that major league cities have new ballparks (many of them depressingly similar in appearance and design), the value of a classic old park has increased. By adopting the Cochrane Plan the city would retain in that simple grass diamond a crown jewel more worthy of showcasing to tourists than any new generic ballpark could ever be. Already baseball fans from around the country make pilgrimages to Tiger Stadium; travel and tour agencies nationwide have developed packages around such visits to baseball shrines. Detroit entrepreneurs can build on that by realizing the vast potential of Tiger Stadium and developing and marketing it as aggressively as the Grand Prix.

Evaluation in Terms of the Tigers’ Criteria

The Cochrane Plan anticipates and answers all the Tigers’ operational needs, from naming the stadium to conducting ball club business. It provides:

• Ample storage for concessions, materials, and equipment
• Handicapped access and seating in all areas and price categories
• Improved circulation for spectators
• Significantly increased rest room facilities
• Twice the concession stations than at present
• A Hall of Fame museum with outside access

The following chart illustrates the dramatic impact of the Cochrane Plan on Tiger Stadium facilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Total</th>
<th>Total Under Cochrane Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concessions</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s lavatories</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s water closets</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s lavatories</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water closets</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinals</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissaries</td>
<td>2,700 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissary storage</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home clubhouse</td>
<td>3,192 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors’ clubhouse</td>
<td>1,300 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press facilities</td>
<td>5,120 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>11,900 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket department</td>
<td>290 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury suites</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating capacity</td>
<td>52,806</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Cochrane Plan does not fully meet the Tigers’ wishes for luxury boxes seating 1,800 patrons, for 24,000 seats that can be sold as season tickets, and for 40,000 seats within the foul poles.

Luxury Suites

The plan does provide for luxury boxes seating 1,200 patrons, about sixty-seven percent of the capacity the Tigers say they want. The Cochrane Plan accommodates as many of the luxury suites as Tiger Stadium can hold without ruining the sight lines of the existing prime seats (which the HOK renovation options do by placing luxury boxes on the facing of the second deck). These suites are superior in design and location to almost any existing luxury suites at other stadiums and arenas. They afford magnificent views of both the playing field and Detroit’s skyline. They offer patrons a choice of open-air or climate-controlled environment. And the boxes can be constructed without damaging the sight lines or character of a stadium which has always brought the Tigers enormous fan support.

It is by no means assured that a new stadium’s 150 suites could be sold at anticipated prices. This uncertainty and the radically higher cost of a new stadium make the profits to be gained from the Cochrane Plan far more predictable.

According to a Crain’s Detroit Business analysis, if the Tigers sold all 150 suites in a new stadium at $45,000 each, the yield would be $6.75 million per year. Even if one accepts Crain’s conservative estimate that a new stadium could be built with $150 million in financing, annual principal and interest payments on an 8% interest, 25-year municipal bond would total approximately $13.9 million, more than double the annual suite revenue. Assuming the same interest rate and repayment schedule, the equivalent annual payment on the $26.1 million Cochrane Plan would be approximately $2.4 million; yet the sale of 73 suites at $45,000 each would generate $3.28 million, more than enough to finance the entire plan and generate a profit. The higher interest rates characteristic of private financing would increase still further the disparity between revenue and expenses in a new stadium.

Under the Cochrane Plan, new profits from increased concessions and newly unobstructed seats can also begin the day construction is completed; the first dollar in net profit from a new stadium would not begin until well into the next century. Moreover, the more realistic number of suites provided by the Cochrane Plan would be far less likely to exceed Detroit area demand for luxury boxes. “It’s possible that 150 new Tiger suites would saturate the market,” observes Crain’s analyst Charles Child.

Seating Distribution

The Tigers’ desires for 40,000 seats within the foul lines and 24,000 season ticket locations are incompatible with the preservation of Tiger Stadium. With post removal, the Cochrane Plan opens up approximately 5,000 upper deck seats for potential sale as season tickets. But there is a clear conflict between several important fan criteria (preservation, historic character, viewing conditions, and mix of seats) and these desires of the Tigers.

Several questions might be raised about the Tigers’ desires: Could the Tigers sell 24,000 season tickets in a year, especially if they are in a new stadium where most of those seats would be much farther removed from the field than box seats at Tiger Stadium? How many season ticket holders who are used to the intimacy of Tiger Stadium would continue to buy season tickets if they offered inferior views of the field? How many non-season ticket holders would pay top dollar for the leftover seats in a stadium configured so that many of those seats would be farther from the action than many current outfield seats at Tiger Stadium?

Would a stadium with 40,000 seats in foul territory and few or no cheap outfield seats be the most profitable avenue for the Tigers to take in the long run? Two consequences of a columnless stadium with most seats crowded in foul ground are inevitable: First, that many of those seats are mediocre because of their distance from the action; and second, that the stadium would contain a much higher percentage of expensive seats than Tiger Stadium. Outside of the periods of abnormal demand found in rare championship seasons, could the Detroit market sustain higher average ticket prices for mediocre seats?
The Tigers are one of the most stable and profitable franchises in professional sports with one of the most loyal followings of any team anywhere. The latest estimate is that the franchise is worth $110 million; the club's value has doubled in the last six years. With new national television contracts (with CBS and ESPN) that provide them $14 million a year, and with millions more in local broadcast rights, the Tigers cannot reasonably plead financial exigency as the rationale for construction of a stadium to guarantee them 24,000 potential season tickets. Crain's Detroit Business estimated the Tiger's profits rose from $3 million in 1985 to $7.5 million in 1987, all before the huge national television windfall awaiting baseball in 1990.

The issue most often cited by the club is future competitiveness. But in this frame of reference, whatever increased revenue a new stadium would bring in excess of the Cochrane Plan (if any) is minor. No stadium of any type anywhere can compete with the level of broadcast revenues possible in the New York or Los Angeles markets, just as no conceivable stadium in Seattle can make a franchise there financially competitive with the Detroit market. Anything approaching financial parity is possible only with a major restructuring of baseball, an issue far beyond both the scope of this study and the control of any individual team. Fortunately, recent experience has shown that such parity is not necessary for the operation of a successful franchise.

On-field competitiveness and consistent profitability are hallmarks of the Tigers' history and clearly sustainable in their future. The free-agent misadventures of George Steinbrenner only demonstrate dramatically the lesson that shrewd baseball men have known since the game's infancy: that the shifting secrets of who can best hit a ball, pitch it, or catch it yield themselves not to a torrent of dollars but only to a dogged combination of scouting, coaching, practice, and luck. Similarly, the fan loyalty on which all profits in the game are ultimately based holds mysteries beyond the abilities of accountants to uncover. To their acute awareness that baseball is a business, they may need to be reminded that it is not like other businesses.

Closer to home, will the Palace of Auburn Hills remain a financial success if families of the future are asked to spend a hundred dollars or more and suffer hour-long delays in the parking lot to view a losing team? And can the income from luxury suites withstand future changes in corporate entertainment fashion or tax law?

The success of new parks in Cincinnati or St. Louis must be balanced against failures in Pittsburgh or Montreal. When fans harbor negative feelings about attending games, a new stadium is not a solution.

Overwhelming public sentiment in support of Tiger Stadium is a factor the Tigers can ignore only at their peril. What is at stake is not only short-term profitability but the entire foundation on which Detroit's reputation as "a great baseball town" rests. The possibly unpleasant shock of a new stadium, combined with the collective trauma that Tiger Stadium's loss would inevitably occasion, places at risk the entire business equilibrium of the franchise.

A very real question is whether the lure of marginally higher season ticket sales and a few thousand more box seats is worth the potential consequences. Even the traditionally lucrative local broadcast rights could decline in value if the next generation of fans is denied the experience of growing up in Tiger Stadium's outfield. Expensive seats, moreover, are advantageous to the team only if they are sold; and the box office fortunes of teams with a smaller (albeit richer) fan base are particularly vulnerable to the inevitable subpar seasons every club encounters on the field.

This "great baseball town" is also an economically strapped blue-collar city. The chemistry of its loyalty to the Tigers may be far more volatile than anyone knows.

MARKETING TIGER STADIUM

If any new stadium's effect on fan loyalty is indeed a roll of the dice at best, then the safety of the Cochrane Plan stands in sharp contrast, not only in its vastly lower cost but in its marketing potential.

The Cubs and Red Sox have had stunning success marketing ballparks that have become national treasures and remain as enduring sources of good will for their teams. Tiger Stadium's charms stand ready to provide the same magic for the Tigers if they choose to market the ballpark's history, character, and intimacy.

There are steps we might respectfully suggest by which the Tigers could capitalize more on the warm memories their stadium evokes:

1. Work with the City of Detroit to better maintain the stadium. Structural engineer Lev Zettlin, while calling the park "an engineering classic" capable of lasting indefinitely, nevertheless noted that its cosmetic and incidental maintenance was below average. Peeling paint has no structural significance but great emotional importance.

2. Publish detailed diagrams of Tiger Stadium, clearly indicating sight lines and obstructions, to relieve fans' anxieties over seat locations. Tiger Stadium's columns make possible the best upper deck seats in baseball; it is unfortunate and unnecessary that fans must view these posts as an unknown quantity, a threat to their enjoyment of the game.

3. Give renewed focus to marketing the bleachers. Recent improvements in security practices can combine with the improved amenities provided under the Cochrane Plan to once again make them an introduction to a lifetime of Tiger baseball.

4. Finally, celebrate and promote this venerable Detroit landmark in advertising and publications. Fans who have never suffered the sterility of baseball in plastic stadiums may need to be reminded of the treasure they enjoy in Tiger Stadium.
ON LUXURY BOXES

The question of luxury boxes has been a difficult one for the Fan Club's study group. We recognize that they generate significant revenues which enhance a team’s profitability and could conceivably increase its competitiveness. But we do not share management’s enthusiasm for the luxury box trend in American stadiums.

The stadiums built in the first half of the century were “democratic”: regardless of the amount paid for the ticket, all fans heard the same sounds, breathed the same air, and enjoyed or endured the same weather. Fans of all incomes stood in the same concession lines, ate the same food, and used the same rest rooms.

The introduction of luxury boxes changes all this. By isolating a limited number of privileged patrons, luxury suites reinforce the idea of a stratified society much more dramatically than conventional field boxes do. Despite the preponderance of season tickets, many fans of moderate income still can splash occasionally and get good box seats. Only those with connections to corporate lessees, however, have the opportunity to watch the game from luxury boxes.

Except for luxury boxes, baseball ticket pricing has always emphasized the game itself, not peripheral amenities. Fans pay primarily for proximity and view of the game, not for creature comforts, proximity to refreshments, and isolation from other fans.

In most ballparks, the luxury patron sacrifices the intensity of the open-air baseball experience, with its rich texture of sight, sound, and smell, for glassed-in, climate-controlled exclusivity. In Fenway Park, outside crowd noise is piped into the new luxury boxes to try to compensate. The luxury box patron also misses the opportunity to gain insight into the game from discussing it with strangers. The luxury box minimizes exposure to the elements and to humanity.

Many fans would prefer to see Tiger Stadium remain without skyboxes. If, however, Tiger management insists on luxury suites, the Davids design is an intelligent one. The suites proposed here combine the comfort and exclusivity desired by corporate patrons with the opportunity to enjoy the action from excellent outdoor seats and to open the entire suite when weather permits. The presence of fans in the third deck would recall an earlier era when the Tigers routinely used it for overflow crowds.

The Tiger Stadium Fan Club is not promoting luxury boxes. But we feel it part of our responsibility to present how best they could be integrated into a plan that preserves what the fans like in Tiger Stadium and what Tiger management says it wants. If luxury suites are considered necessary, the ones John Davids has designed are first-rate in luxury and comfort. They do not interfere with the average fan’s experience of the game, and they respect the structure and tradition of Tiger Stadium.

CONCLUSION

For nearly a century, Detroit’s ball club and its citizens have been partners in progress. That partnership has produced continuity, stability, and a sense of pride. It has produced a bond between the Tigers and their fans, a community sports tradition that can match that of any other city.

The community now faces an important choice: continue that tradition, or break from it and build a new home for the Tigers.

The publication of this plan, we feel, clarifies that choice. The Cochrane Plan refutes the argument that Detroit needs a new stadium because the rest rooms at Tiger Stadium are too small or the concourses too cramped. It refutes the argument that the old ball yard cannot be modernized into a facility that is competitive with those in other cities. And other experts already have refuted the argument that the stadium is in too much disrepair to be saved.

The Cochrane Plan demonstrates that a creative solution is possible that accommodates the desires of the fans and the ball club and keeps baseball in Detroit. And it does more than that: It gives the state of Michigan and the city of Detroit a modern facility that is also a historic landmark, combining the best of the old and the new. The result, properly promoted, would equal Wrigley Field and Fenway Park as a tourist attraction.

We also feel that the preservation and modernization of Tiger Stadium would do more to enhance the long-term stability of the Detroit baseball club than the building of a new stadium. A great part of the value of the club is to be found in the fans' incredible affection for the experience of baseball at Michigan and Trumbull, an affection that translates into loyal patronage even in periods like the present when the product on the field is a poor one. Keeping the stadium, and making it more attractive to fans, is a safer path than building a new stadium somewhere else and loosening the bond between customers and the product.

The Cochrane Plan keeps the golden days of baseball right here and right now for the city of Detroit and for all baseball fans.

The Cochrane Plan will not require mountains of gold, either. The luxury boxes can pay for themselves. The Tigers’ national broadcast revenues from a single year could pay for everything else in the plan. In a city and state suffering from severe economic and social problems, it would be difficult to justify spending hundreds of millions of dollars to build a new stadium when the existing one is a superior investment at one-sixth or less the cost.

And a privately financed stadium might still require major public expenditures for infrastructure improvements, and breach the faith of tens of thousands of Tiger fans in a fundamental way. Not only Detroit’s history but our personal histories live at Michigan and Trumbull.

The fate of Tiger Stadium should be a public decision. The path chosen should make good sense economically, socially, and ethically. We have always maintained that given the creativity and the will, Tiger Stadium can and should be saved. The Cochrane Plan provides the creativity. All that remains is the will.