

Charlotte Coliseum and Ovens Auditorium



2700 E. Independence Boulevard

Charlotte, Mecklenburg

c. 1956

The auditorium and arena complex is composed of two buildings, both designed by Odell and Associates, and connected by a landscaped plaza and a shared parking lot to the rear of the two buildings. Today the buildings are known as Ovens Auditorium and Independence Arena.

In front of the auditorium is a circular drive and rectangular pool with fountains. The exterior of auditorium is concrete with rectangular tile, and aluminum windows and doors. Wood panels with projecting vertical wood slats or battens are on many walls, including

the walls of the box office and cloak room, and the base of the stage. Rectangular blue tile, like that on the exterior, is used in the lobby, mezzanine, and the rear wall of the auditorium. In the auditorium, a balcony is cantilevered out over the lower section. The lobby has a terrazzo floor, large expanses of windows, and an open staircase with wood and metal railings, leading up to the mezzanine floor. The mezzanine level overlooks the lobby and retains what appear to be a few original benches. The concession bar is a recent alteration.

The coliseum is a large circular building next to the auditorium, and at the time of its construction, was the largest dome in the world. The exterior is concrete, steel, and glass. The interior is arranged around the centrally located arena floor, or performance area. Wood and metal flip-down seat ascend up from the floor. The ceiling of the arena is the underside of the dome and has exposed beams and other structural members. Surrounding the actual arena area are corridors with steel, glass and tile walls.

The coliseum and auditorium are exceptional examples of Modernist design by an important local architect. They maintain a high level of integrity.