RESEARCHING BASEBALL IN EVANSVILLE:
HISTORIC EVALUATION AND REHABILITATION RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR BOSSE FIELD IN EVANSVILLE, INDIANA
A CREATIVE PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I have saved the most important person that I am most thankful for the last. My high school sweet heart and future wife Ashley, she has faithfully been by my side, through thick and
thin for the past 10 years. Thank you for giving me the push I needed to pursue my master’s degree, I could not have done any of this without your love and support. I cannot wait to start our lives together and grow old. Anybody can tell someone you love them, but it’s a feat to mean it. I love you Ashley, with all my heart.

This creative project is dedicated to all of you. Thank you all very much. I could not have done this without any your guidance.
INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1880s, the sounds of cracking bats, snapping mitts, and cheering crowds have echoed throughout the summers and into the fall in Evansville, Indiana. Since 1915, Bosse Field has been home to many baseball teams, most recently the Evansville Otters. Designed by prominent Evansville architect Harry E. Boyle, it is the fifth oldest baseball park in the United States and the third oldest still being used on a regular basis by a professional baseball team, exceeded only by Boston’s Fenway Park (1913) and Chicago’s Wrigley Field (1914). Yet, Bosse Field has not received the recognition it deserves because of its location and minor league status.

The game of baseball has changed since 1915, but the love for the game and the history of the ballpark carry on to this day. Bosse Field has been home to many baseball teams and many hall of famers have stepped foot on its historic field. This creative project creates a historic evaluation and rehabilitation recommendations for Bosse Field in Evansville, Indiana, so the century-old ballpark can receive the recognition it deserves to be listed in the National Register and help preserve the field’s history and integrity. This will provide the necessary information for local preservationists they need to nominate the structure to the National Register.
This creative project provides an opportunity to demonstrate my ability to work directly with the owner of a structure and having the ability to document what the clients are looking for and completing a cost estimate for them. This project also shows my ability to conduct in depth historical research, and to gather information about a historic structure that will be needed to nominate the structure to the National Register of Historic Places.
METHODOLOGY

This historic evaluation and rehabilitation recommendations is comprised of several different features. Historical documentation is indeed one of the necessary features, but there is much more to the report. This report contains information about the history of a structure to include the floor plans, photographs, mapping, and information over any contributing individuals, history about the property, and an architectural description. The current state of the structure is also assessed by identifying the conditions of both the overall building and individual architectural components that are in need of repair. A cost estimate is then provided for these repairs or improvements. All of these elements were created for this creative project on Bosse Field.

This work begins by identifying the history of Bosse Field. It is important to research this history of the stadium and the teams it has hosted to understand why the ballpark should be listed in the National Register. The main areas of research are to find out when Bosse Field was built, why it was built, who built it, why it was is significant at the time of construction, why it is significant today, how it has changed over time, who changed it, and why they changed it. I collected this information by contacting and researching the collections at the primary source materials at Vanderburgh County Historical Society and Willard Library in Evansville, Indiana. The written history follows an outline that begins with a statement of significance supported by the development of the architectural and historical context in which the structure was built and subsequently evolved. This report includes an architectural description and bibliographic information.
The next process of this Historic Structures Report is to capture photographs of the historic ballpark. I used a 35mm SLR (single-lens reflex) camera for my photographs to capture the setting, elevations, and significant details of both the interior and exterior of Bosse Field. To acquire the photographs, I made plenty of site visits to Bosse Field.

An assessment of the conditions of the interior and exterior of Bosse Field which will note the existing conditions, materials, and construction methods of the ball park was completed. The conditions of the ball field have been photographed for the report. To complete this section of the report, I made day trips to Bosse Field to obtain the information that is needed. A cost estimate of proposed treatments will be included in the report.

The last process of this Historic Structures Report will be measured architectural drawings of Bosse Field, including floor plans and elevations. I have acquired measured drawings of the ballpark from the 1950s from Willard Library’s archive in Evansville, Indiana; I made copies of the drawings using AutoCAD.
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Historic Evaluation and Rehabilitation Recommendations for Bosse Field in Evansville, Indiana

May 2014

Cory Johnson
History of
Evansville, Indiana
In 1812, the land for Evansville, Indiana, was purchased at the north end of the Ohio River. On March 27, 1812, Hugh McGary Jr. purchased about 441 acres and named it "McGary's Landing". In 1814, to attract more people, McGary renamed his village Evansville in honor of Robert Morgan Evans, a founding member of the settlement. Evansville soon became a thriving commercial town with an extensive river trade. It was incorporated in 1819 and received a city charter in 1847. The building of the Wabash and Erie Canal, which connected the Great Lakes to the Ohio River and ran from Toledo, Ohio to Evansville, greatly accelerated the city’s growth. With the rise in industrialization, the population doubled between 1870 and 1890. Fueled by the growth of factories, urbanization transformed the landscape and substantially contributed to changes in government, society, and intellectual life. During the 1890s, Evansville was the 56th largest urban area in the United States. By the 1920s, the population doubled again. Population was aided by improved health and medical care. During the early 1950s, post-war industrial production rapidly expanded the city. Nevertheless, the Evansville was wealthier than ever before. During the final third of the 20th century, Evansville became the commercial, medical, and service hub of the tri-state region.

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3 Ibid., 5.
4 Ibid., 10.
Mayor
Benjamin Bosse
“When everybody boosts, everybody wins.”

-Major Benjamin Bosse

Mayor Benjamin Bosse was responsible for making this historic ballpark and Garvin Park what they are today. Bosse moved to Evansville at age 15 to work with his brothers in the grocery business. After years at the grocery store, Bosse eventually took over the business. In 1899, he became a partner in Globe-Bosse-World Furniture Company. Through expanding his business interests, he became a millionaire owner or co-owner of numerous companies in different industries around Evansville. His manufacturing knowledge and leadership abilities led to his election as mayor of Evansville in 1913. Bosse is one of the most influential people in Evansville’s history. Bosse always challenged citizens to develop civic pride. He acquired 212 acres for what is now Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden, modernized and motorized the city’s fire and police departments, established the first free dental clinic of its kind in Indiana, established the city’s first laboratory to battle influenza and tuberculosis, and purchasing the land to develop Garvin Park. Bosse served as the mayor of Evansville from 1912 until his death in 1922 at age 47 following an illness during his third term as mayor.

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5Kenneth P. McCutchan, At the bend in the river the story of Evansville (Evansville: Windsor Publications 1982), 57.
7Ibid.
Garvin Park
At the turn of the century, the city of Evansville was considering acquiring Thomas Garvin’s woods and creating a public park; however, it took the dynamic personality of Mayor Benjamin Bosse to implement the plan. In 1915, the city acquired 90 acres of wooded land from Garvin’s heirs for $50,000. The intent was to provide a free outdoor recreation space for Evansville’s working-class Northsiders, but from its inception the park attracted people from all around the city. The completion of Bosse Field and the beautiful landscaping of Garvin Park (figure 4) were both improvements made for the good of the community and in line with Bosse’s strategy to boost Evansville into the Twentieth Century modern era. Today, Garvin Park provides a large lake, swimming pool, playground, tennis courts and basketball courts. Unfortunately, Bosses Field was not listed as a contributing resource in the Garvin Park National Register Nomination. Therefore, the ball park does not currently have Register status. However, as this report will demonstrate, it does have the significance and the physical integrity to be individually listed in the National Register under both Criterion A (Structures that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history) and Criterion C (Structures that embody a distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master). To maintain the field’s potential Register status, it is recommended that all future repairs and maintenance activities (see chapters 8 and 9) meet the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

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Figure 4: The entrance of Garvin Park c. 1920

History
of
Bosse Field
Baseball has been played in Evansville since 1877. During the late 19th century, Louisiana Street Baseball Park was located on Louisiana Street between Baker Avenue and Read Street (figure 6), adjacent to the Evansville Union Stockyards. Although bleachers and a grandstand provided seating, some fans watched from the roof of the hotels near the park. In 1885, the city of Evansville created its own minor league team, the Evansville Reds of the Northwestern League. From 1895-1914, the Evansville Black Birds and later the River Rats played games at Louisiana Street Park. The last professional game at Louisiana Street Park was played on June 16, 1915. One day later, the more spacious and modern Bosse Field was dedicated before a large, enthusiastic crowd of 8,082 people. Evansville declared July 17th, 1915, a holiday and people came from near and far to witness history.

Figure 5: Opening day of Bosse Field. June 17, 1915. This photograph shows the original stand and bleachers that were located at the north and south ends of the grandstand.

13Ibid.
15Ibid.
16Karl Kae Knecht, Opening day. 1915. Evansville, Willard Library Archives
Figure 6: This map shows where Louisiana Street Baseball Park was located, in relations to Bosse Field.

Image taken from https://maps.google.com/
The Evansville-Vanderburg County School Board constructed Bosse Field, as an effort of Mayor Bosse, trying to develop an athletic program in the local schools, making the ballpark the first municipally owned athletic facility in the United States. Designed by prominent Evansville architect Harry E. Boyle, Bosse Field was built during the era of the first concrete and steel stadiums. Before, the first professional baseball venues were large wooden ballparks with seats mounted on wood platforms.

The cost of construction was $65,000.\(^{17}\) When opened, Bosse Field seated 7,180 (it now only seats 5,110), but a total of 8,082 were on hand for Opening Day.\(^{18}\) Ticket prices ranged from twenty-five cents for bleacher seats (located along the north and south sides of grandstand) to fifty cents for the grandstand and seventy-five cents for box seats. The result was a successful on all counts, with the Evansville River Rats defeating the Erie Sailors, 4-0. After two years, the Central League, a Class-B minor league, shut down following the 1917 season, bringing Evansville Evas to the Class-B Three-I League (those Three I's represent Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa).

Figure 7: Bosse Field, during construction. April 1915. The bleacher seats on the far left of the photograph are no longer there. The wood of the roof over the grand stand has been replaced of the years, but the steel roofing structure is still being used today, as well with the walk way at the bottom of the seats in the grandstand. \(^{19}\)

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Like many ballparks of its era, Bosse Field hosted more than just baseball. In 1921, Evansville was awarded a franchise in the APFA (American Professional Football Association), and the Crimson Giants played their home games at Bosse Field. After a hopeful start to the 1921 season, poor attendance and bad scheduling caused the Giants to lose both players and money. In 1922, the APFA was renamed the National Football League. Around the same time, the Evansville Baseball Fans’ Association developed their own football team and gained the sole rights to Bosse Field. However, neither of the teams was successful, so both had to be shut down. Failing to draw any sort of significant attendance at Bosse Field, the Evansville Pros folded after two games. The Crimson Giants played just three games in 1922, all on the road, before becoming the first NFL team to fail.

Figure 8: A photograph of The Crimson Giants c.1920s taken outside of Bosse Field in front of the main façade. Note that the exterior walls have openings in the middle and were recessed, these walls were closed in the 1930 renovation.

23 Because the Crimson Giants only last 2 years, this is all the information that was found.
Figure 9: The Crimson Giants playing in Bosse Field c.1920. This also shows how their playing field was laid out in the ballpark. They played from the first baseball side to left field.  

Evansville baseball gained its first Major League affiliation in 1928, partnering with the Detroit Tigers. The city of Evansville spent $50,000 to improve the ballpark in 1930, changing the main façade from all concrete to the Art Deco Style and brick veneer. The design was completed by Thole and Legeman, an Evansville firm. During the 1931 season, Bosse Field hosted its very first night game, an August 12th affair in which the Evansville Hubs fell to the Decatur Commodores, 7-6. Comparatively, the first night game in the Major Leagues was not until May 24, 1935, at Cincinnati’s Crosley Field (demolished in 1972). In 1938, home plate was moved closer to the grandstand, lengthening the distance to dead center field. Moving home plate back shorten the length from the backstop to home plate. Historically, the home plate was located where the present pitcher's mound is today.

During World War II, various Minor Leagues had to stop play, including the Three-I League, but the Major Leagues drew even closer to Bosse Field. During the war, teams could not waste gas to travel to warmer states for Spring Training, so Major League teams found ballparks closer to home. From 1942 until the end of the war in 1945, Evansville hosted the Detroit Tigers spring training. After the war, minor league baseball resumed. The Evansville Braves finished the 1946 season with a 68-51 record, good for third place in the standings. In the playoffs, the Braves made short work of Davenport, three games to one, then swept Terre Haute in the finals, three games to zero. For the first time since 1915, Bosse Field hosted a league champion.

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27 Ibid.

28 Bix Branson, interview by author, Evansville, IN, April 15, 2013.
Figure 10: The first night game at Bosse Field, August 12, 1931. Note that the bleacher seats are no longer there. 28

Historically, Bosse Field only had an outfield brick wall; in 1950, an “inner wall” was installed so the fans could enjoy seeing more home runs. The inner wall was removed for the 1951-1953 seasons and then reinstalled in 1954. In 1958, the city of Evansville spent approximately $400,000 on renovations to make the ballpark “fit and safe.” Renovations were completed by the same firm that did the rehabilitation in 1930. The biggest renovation consisted of installing all new seating throughout the entire park. The historic wood seats from the 1958 renovation still remain in the grandstand today. A year later, in 1958 Baseball departed from Evansville returning briefly in 1966 with the Southern League’s Evansville White Sox, an affiliate of the Chicago American League. Unfortunately, this team only lasted two years. After a two-year hiatus, baseball returned to Evansville. In 1970, Evansville became an affiliated of the Minnesota Twins, taking the name the Triplets. The Twins partnership only lasted for a year, but the name Evansville Triplets stuck.

August 30, 1984 was the last day that the Evansville Triplets played at Bosse Field. After this season, the team was sold and moved to Nashville, Tennessee. For eight years, no baseball was being played in Bosse. Then, in 1992, the movie A League of Their Own about the AAGPBL (All-American Girls Professional Baseball League) shined the spotlight on the historic ballpark. Bosse Field served as the set for all the Racine Belles home games and the AAGPBL Championship Series between the Belles and the Rockford Peaches. Three years after the movie’s release, baseball returned to Evansville, the Evansville Otters began playing at Bosse Field on June 15, 1995. The Otters still use the field today.

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31 Ibid.
Assessment of Physical Integrity
Bosse Field retains its integrity of location, design, setting and materials. Bosse Field retains its original brick outfield walls and façade from the 1930s, its single-deck grandstand, general configuration of the original playing field and urban setting. The 1915 plans called for the main façade to be ornamentally covered with stucco. It is possible that the general configuration of the entrance was left in 1930, and that it only received a veneer of brick, along with its carved concrete Art Deco ornamentation and a slight change to the parapet silhouette. The only pieces left of the original 1915 field, are the structural steel trusses of the grandstand’s roof and concrete trusses, that can be seen underneath the 1950’s grandstand seating. While it has been altered throughout the years to upgrade the facility and improve the quality of the baseball experience for the fans and players, the current appearance of Bosse Field is remarkably similar to what it was decades ago.

Figure 11: 1930 Renovations of Bosse Field in 2014. All current photographs taken by author.
Architectural Description
Site Plan

Resting in the southeast corner of Garvin Park, Bosse Field is bordered by Maxwell Avenue to the north, North Heidelbach Avenue to the east, East Morgan Avenue to the south, and Don Mattingly Way to the west. The main parking lot is on the north side of the ballpark; another small parking lot in southeast corner of the field. The original C-shaped grandstand that has historic wood seating and is covered by a roof is along the northwest and southwest sides of the field. The original brick outfield wall surrounds the remaining of the playing field on the north, east and southeast sides of the ballpark. There are eight light towers, two in both the left and right fields and four on top of the grandstand.
Figure 13: Site Plan

- Maxwell Ave.
- N. Heidelback Ave.
- E. Morgan Ave.
- Don Mattingly Way

- Parking Lot
- Grandstand
- Playing Field
- Exterior wall
  (Historic Outfield Wall)

- Outfield Wall
Site Photographs

Figure 14: Section of historic exterior outfield wall, in main parking lot. Facing southwest

Figure 15: Main entrance. Facing east

Figure 16: Southwest façade, facing east

Figure 17: Historic outfield wall. Standing in the small parking lot in southeast corner, facing west
Main (west) Façade

A concrete sidewalk leads to the non-historic ticket booth constructed with running bond brick pattern. The ticket booth which was built in c.1970s has two identical window openings with limestone sills and lintels; a green and white striped vinyl awning covers the window openings that lead up the gable roof with a concrete cornice.

The west facade contains the main entrance to the ballpark. The Art Deco style is evident in the stepped pediments, and the decorative concrete cornice. The main façade is three bays wide. The north and south bays are identical; they both extend out further than the center bay. In the northwest and southeast corners of the north and south bays are two window openings with two-over-two single-hung windows with wood frames that are painted green and these are the historic ticket booths. On the second floor there are two window openings with two-over-two single-hung windows with wood frames that are painted green that are above the windows. The north and south bays are flanked by two brick pilasters that travel from the bottom of the façade all the way to the top of the parapet. At the top of the entrance there are carved ornamented concrete panels with a floral design. On top of the north and south bays are two steel flag poles from 1915 that are painted white.

The main entrance is recessed in the middle bay. The door opening has green wrought iron gates and is topped with a decorative concrete crown. The interior walls in the entrance opening have identical 3-dimensional concrete flower vases that are approximately a foot tall. There are carved limestone panels that state Bosse Field, the panels hang above the door opening. The panels are just below a limestone sill for three window openings with two-over-two single-hung windows with green painted wood frames. The main entrance is recessed in a brick archway.
North, East, and South Elevations

The historic outfield wall makes up the north, east, and south elevations that surround the entire outfield of the field. Constructed from brick using a common bond with pilasters approximately six feet apart, some pilasters protruding further than others to help support the exterior wall. The historic outfield walls are topped with historic and non-historic decorative terra-cotta rectangle tiles. The north and south elevations are identical, each having one entry in the northwest and southwest corners with green wrought iron gates that open during game day to let fans in and out. Each opening is flanked by two brick columns on each side of fences. The columns are topped with stepped concrete caps (Figure 19).
Interior

Ingress

The ingress of the stadium is at the west point of the ballpark. The original flooring of the ingress from 1915 is poured concrete; each wall of the interior has a poured concrete base. The ceiling in the ingress is a poured concrete, with three hanging green colored lights. The gift shop is located on the south side of the ingress and one steel double door opening that leads into the home teams locker room and other rooms that are underneath the grandstand. On the east side of the ingress, there is a concrete ramp that leads to the main grandstand and a concession area. The main office for the park’s employees and access to the visiting team’s locker room is located on the north.

Gift shop

The gift shop, historically the coach's office, is accessed through a modern aluminum-framed, single-light door. All four walls historically have been covered with a slightly textured plaster and painted white with maroon and forest green strips. The poured concrete flooring in the gift shop has been covered with modern carpet. The east and west walls have modern wood shelves that display merchandise. Two window openings covered by iron bars on the west wall that allow natural light to the room.
South wing of Interior

Coach’s Office

The room is entered through the door on the east wall. The walls in the coach’s office area are brick. The concrete floor has been covered by grey modern carpet. The concrete ceiling is painted white and has modern lighting fixtures. The ceiling shows the forms of the I-beams used to build the 1915 structure. On the south side of the room are where one toilet and two urinals are located and shower area. The shower walls are covered with a historic tan glazed ceramic tile. On the north wall, there is evidence of a historic opening that has been closed up with brick (no information why opening was closed).

Figure 22: Coach’s Office, Facing northwest

Home Team Locker Room

The room is entered through the door on the east wall. The walls in the locker room are all brick. The poured concrete floor has been covered with grey modern carpet. The concrete ceiling is painted white and has modern lighting fixtures. The locker room ceiling shows the forms of the I-beams used to build the 1915 structure. One toilet and two urinals are located on north side of the locker. There are metal lockers on top historic concrete bench that run from the east, south, and west walls. The shower area is on the south side of the locker room. The shower walls are covered with a historic tan glazed ceramic tile.

Figure 23: The Otter’s locker room, facing northeast
South wing of Interior cont.

**Trainer's Room**

The trainer's room is entered through the door on the west wall. The walls in the trainer's room are all brick, except for the south wall which is concrete block. The poured concrete floor is covered by modern grey carpet. The ceiling is concrete and has modern lighting fixtures. In the middle of the room, is a concrete truss and reminiscent of the historic seating from 1915.

![Figure 24: Trainer's room, Facing south](image)

**Home Team's Lounge Area**

The lounge area is enter through a door on the west wall. The east and north walls in the lounge are built with brick. The west and part of the south walls are built with concrete block. The ceiling is concrete and has modern lighting fixtures. The interior brick wall on the south side of the room is where the boiler is located. The poured concrete floor has been covered with modern grey carpet. The south wall has two door openings. There is one door opening on the east that is a storage area and the door opening on the west leads to a men’s restroom.

![Figure 25: Lounge area, facing southeast](image)
North wing of Interior

Umpires Room

The room is entered through a door on the east wall. The walls in the umpires room are brick that has been painted white. The poured concrete floor has been covered with modern grey carpet. On the south wall is where the lockers are located. The ceiling in the umpires room shows the forms of the I-beams used to build the 1915 structure and has modern lighting fixtures. The north wall is where one toilet and two urinals are located. The restroom’s wall is covered with historic ceramic tiles that have been painted white. There is one door opening on the north wall that leads to a shower area.

Visitor’s Locker Room

The locker room is entered through a door on the east wall. The ceiling is concrete and the form of the 1915 I-beams can be seen. The locker room has modern lighting fixtures. The walls in the locker room are all brick. The bricks on the north wall have been painted green. The poured concrete floor has been covered with grey modern carpet. On the north wall of the locker room, is where one toilet and two urinals are located. There are five green metal lockers on top of the historic concrete bench. The historic concrete bench runs along the east, south, and west walls, with green metal lockers on top of them. The south side of the locker room is where a small hallway that leads to the shower. The showers walls are covered with a historic tan glazed ceramic tile.

Figure 26: Visitor’s locker room, facing north
North wing of Interior  cont.

Small Hallway / Locker Room For Employees

The hallway is entered through a modern metal door with no glazing on the south wall. In front of the door opening on the south wall is a protruding original cast concrete beam from the 1915 structure, this supported the historic seating of Bosse Field. All the walls in the hallway are brick that has been painted white. The ceiling is concrete and has modern lighting fixtures. The floor is poured concrete that has been painted. The north wall has one historic door opening with a swinging wood batten door, with no glazing.

Figure 27: Hallway leading to lounge area, facing north.

Lounge Area

The lounge is entered through a historic wood batten door, with no glazing on the south wall. In front of the door opening on the south wall is a protruding original cast concrete beam from the 1915 structure, this supported the historic seating of Bosse Field. The north, south and west walls in the lounge area are brick that has been painted white. The east wall is concrete block that has been painted white. The poured concrete floor has been covered with modern grey carpet. The ceiling is concrete and has modern lighting fixtures. The north wall has one historic door opening with a swinging batten door, with no glazing.

Figure 28: Lounge area, facing south
Storage Room/ The Dirt Floor Room

The storage room is entered through a door opening on the west wall. All the walls in the storage room are made of brick, except for the east wall which is concrete block. The ceiling is concrete and has modern lighting fixtures. The flooring in the storage area is the only room in the ballpark that has not been covered with concrete or modern carpet, the floor is dirt. Protruding cast concrete beams that supported the historic seating of Bosse Field are above the door opening in the west wall, in the middle of the room and at the end of the east wall. The east wall has one door opening that leads to a smaller storage area.

Figure 29: Storage room, facing northeast.
A concrete ramp leads up to the historic grandstand. The grandstand is covered by a triple fan truss roof system, which is held up by 16 I-beams (Figure 30). The structural roofing system is from the 1915 construction of Bosse Field. Above the entrance ramp is where the historic press box is located. There are four lighting fixtures from the 1930s that are on top of the grandstand. The only modification that has been done to the roof is that it was extended outwards on the west façade for a new drainage system and the façade’s walls were built up in 1930 (Figure 46). Figure 31 shows the different kind of rivets that were used in 1915 and 1930. In the middle of the north and south wings are where men and women restrooms are located and one concession stand. The grandstand has 5,110 seats, 4,562 which are the historic seats from the 1950s and the other 548 are modern plastic seating. All of the historic seating is underneath the grandstand. All of the modern seating are at ground level with the playing field, these are referred to as “box seats.” On the north and south end of the grandstand are two brick walls that are build using common bond. There is poured concrete walk way behind the brick walls that stretches the entire length of the grandstand from the original construction in 1915.
The Grandstand

Figure 30: The historic grandstand from 1915, facing west.

Figure 31: Shows the different rivets from the 1915 construction and the rivets when the roof was extended in 1930.

Figure 32: The original trusses from the 1915 construction of the grandstand.

Figure 33: Facing south in the grandstand, showing the historic and non-historic seating. Also can see the original I-beams used during 1915.
The Press Box

Figure 34: The front of the press box that is above the entrance ramp

The historic press box is on the west side of the ballpark, right above the main gate. It is constructed out of wood and is painted green. There are 12 window openings with one-over-one single hung modern windows, on the east wall of the press box. On the west side of the press box are 7 window openings with two-over-two single hung historic windows. A modern steel door opening on the south enters into the press box and into a small office space. There is a door opening with a modern aluminum door on the north wall that opens into a washroom. There is wooden staircase on the north wall that leads up to the roof of the grandstand. Another door opening on the east wall leads into the press room. In the middle of the room towards the ceiling a historic truss penetrates through the front wall of the press box. The west wall in the press room is brick that has been painted white. At the north end of the press room is one door opening that leads into another small office space. On the south wall is a door opening with a modern aluminum door on the north wall that opens into a washroom. One more door opening with a modern steel door is on the north wall.

Figure 35: Inside the press box, facing north.
Architectural Drawings
*Not to scale
*Not to scale
Figure 38:

*Not to scale

- Steel
- Concrete
- Brick

Grandstand Cross Section
Main Façade of Bosse Field
Cory Johnson
Conditions Assessment
Exterior Conditions
Exterior conditions

Overall

The overall condition of the main entrance is good. The structure exhibits signs of age, but there is no major damage. There is mortar missing and brick spalling, which occurs when the bricks absorb and retain too much water which then can freeze and expand breaking away the brick surface.

Limestone Panel

The carved limestone panels that state “Bosse Field,” above the main entrance are in great condition. There is no major damage to the panels, other than the mortar is missing between the two panels. If not properly tuck-pointed, water will rest behind the panels and cause further damage to the structure’s wall and panels.
Exterior conditions cont.

Concrete Base

Overall condition of the foundation is good. Throughout the entire west façade foundation, there are small stress cracks, caused by the settling of the structure. I believe the base is cracking from settlement because the base is not from the original 1915 construction, it was added during the 1930 renovations. To fix the cracks, an epoxy-injection system, should be injected into the cracks to permanently patch the cracks. By fixing the cracks, moisture will not be able to settle inside the concrete and cause further damage.

Concrete Cap

The concrete cap is in fair condition. Spalling has occurred, due to the concrete absorbing and retaining too much water which then can freeze and expand breaking away the surface of the concrete. Because of spalling exposed the cast iron rebar can be seen. This can be seen all around the north and south sides of the main façade. The strength of concrete should to be tested by a professional and re-formed, so no further damage occurs.
Exterior conditions

Exterior Outfield Wall

The historic outfield wall is in good condition. There is minor mortar missing, mainly at the bottom of the north, east, and south elevations. The mortar has come dislodged due to the elements resting at the base of the wall. Even though mortar is missing it has not weakened the wall. A mortar analysis should be completed, to make sure new mortar’s texture, color and appropriate mixture matches the historic mortar. Once this has been done the areas need to be re-tucked with new mortar.

Figure 43: Missing mortar on the outfield wall, north elevation.

Ceramic Tiles

About 30% of the terra-cotta tiles that are on top of the historic outfield wall are broken. The tiles that are broken are mostly the replacement tiles. This is known because they are not glazed with a salt glaze, compared to the historic tiles that do have a glazing. The non-glazed tiles are coarse, which allows water to enter into the clay, which causes them to break. New tiles need to match the existing terra-cotta tiles in color, form and texture.

Figure 44: Broken terra-cotta tile on outfield wall on the north elevation.
Exterior conditions cont.

Iron Gates

The two iron gates on the west and south sides of the ballpark, show rust and paint is chipping off. Gates need to be stripped properly using a low-pressure grit blasting which is often the most effective way to remove paint. Grit blasting is fast, thorough, and economical, and it allows the iron to be cleaned in place. An alkyd rust-inhibitive primer contain pigments such as iron oxide, zinc oxide, and zinc phosphate needs to be applied. At least two coats of primer should be applied, followed by alkyd paint.32

Drainage Pipes

The appearance of the white PVC pipe with the historic cast iron pipes is not pleasing. The PVC pipes need to be painted the same color green as the historic pipes or replaced to match the cast iron pipes.

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Interior Conditions
Interior Conditions

Umpires Room

- Overall the room is in good condition. Paint is bubbling and pealing off the west wall near restroom area, due to moisture. Moisture begins to form behind the paint or in front and forces its way through the paint and which causes the paint to fail. Walls should be properly stripped of paint, and leave tiles as is.
- Cast concrete beam is separating from historic seating. This may suggest a structural issue. An architectural engineering should be hired to conduct tests to see if structure is sound.

Visitor’s Locker Room

- In the shower in the visitor’s locker room, there is a broken tile on the south wall. No mold was present during site visit. Tile should be replaced with matching tile.

Walls and Ceiling

- Overall the room is in good condition. Paint is bubbling and pealing off the west wall near restroom area, due to moisture. Moisture begins to form behind the paint or in front and forces its way through the paint and which causes the paint to fail. Walls should be properly stripped of paint, and leave tiles as is.
- Cast concrete beam is separating from historic seating. This may suggest a structural issue. An architectural engineering should be hired to conduct tests to see if structure is sound.

Shower Tile

- In the shower in the visitor’s locker room, there is a broken tile on the south wall. No mold was present during site visit. Tile should be replaced with matching tile.
Left Wing Hallway

Overall condition is great. The room could use a fresh coat of paint on walls. Floor should also be repainted or have paint removed.

Coach’s Office

Shower Ceiling

The concrete ceiling is cracking in the coach’s office, likely from settlement issues. This may suggest a structural issue. An architectural engineering should be hired to conduct tests to see if structure is sound.
Sliding Steel Door

The paint on the sliding door that opens to the tunnel for the home team’s dugout is failing. The paint is failing above the handle of the door and on the lower north corner, from being used. The door should be stripped properly using a low-pressure grit blasting which is often the most effective way to remove paint. Grit blasting is fast, thorough, and economical, and it allows the iron to be cleaned in place. An alkyd rust-inhibitive primer contains pigments such as iron oxide, zinc oxide, and zinc phosphate needs to be applied. At least two coats of primer should be applied, followed by alkyd paint. In the lower south corner, where the door meets the door stopper, the steel panel is starting to lift from the shell of the door.

Storage Areas

In the storage areas at the end of each north and south wings, have wall braces inside that are rusting. Does not appear to be severe, only surface rust. During my site visit there was no sign of leakage in storage area. The rust may be due to humidity changes in the ballpark. The braces should be stripped properly using a low-pressure grit blasting which is often the most effective way to remove paint. Grit blasting is fast, thorough, and economical, and it allows the iron to be cleaned in place. An alkyd rust-inhibitive primer contains pigments such as iron oxide, zinc oxide, and zinc phosphate needs to be applied. At least two coats of primer should be applied, followed by alkyd paint.
Boiler Room

The drain in the boiler room was not working properly, which caused flooding in the boiler room. This problem was being resolved during my site visit.

Radiators

The are two radiators in the bathroom and shower areas in the two locker rooms, the coach’s office, and umpire’s room. The radiators are rusting and paint is failing. The paint on radiators needs to be tested for lead and if radiators are indeed painted with lead paint, the lead paint needs to be removed with wet hand scraping. A spray bottle with water and hand scraper is needed for wet hand scraping. Wet hand scraping creates the least amount of dust and fumes. Once the radiators are stripped of paint, the radiators need at least two coats of alkyd rust-inhibitive primer contain and followed by alkyd paint.
Interior Conditions cont.

Trainer’s Room

The overall condition of the trainer’s room is good. On the lower west wall there is sign of efflorescence and mortar missing. Efflorescence is a condition where salt deposits form on the surface of the masonry. These bricks need to be cleaned by applying neutralized acid to bricks. The acid will attack, not only the calcium carbonate and calcium sulfate efflorescence. A mortar analysis should be completed, to make sure new mortar’s texture, color and appropriate mixture matches the historic mortar. Once this has been done the areas need to be re-tucked with new mortar.

North Wing Concession

The overall condition is good. The ceiling of the concessions room is cracking and has rust stains. The cracks are caused by the vibrations of the old air conditioner that is attached to ceiling. Rust needs to be cleaned with a poultice consists of an absorbent material or clay powder, mixed with a solvent to form a paste which is applied to the stain. The poultice is kept moist and left on the stain as long as necessary for it to draw the stain out of the masonry. As it dries, the paste absorbs the staining material so that it is not redeposited on the masonry surface. An architectural engineering should be hired to conduct tests to see if concrete ceiling is sound.

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Figure 55: Efflorescence at the base of the west wall in trainer’s room.

Figure 56: Cracks in plaster ceiling. Facing north

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Grandstand Conditions
Grandstand Seating

There are 4,562 original wood seat left in the ballpark. The seats that are the closest to the ends of the grandstand are in poor condition. Some seats are broken, the wood is rotting and paint is failing; due to the fact they are open to the elements. Seats should be restored, or at least save a representative section of the original seating.

Figure 57, 58, & 59: Broken and deterioration of grandstand seating.
Concrete Joints

All caulk in every row of the grandstand, that has been used to fill in joints, is old and starting to crack and peel off. The problem has been solved underneath the grandstand, but needs to be fixed on the outside of the grandstand as well, to make sure there is no water infiltration. All caulk on the exterior of grandstand should be removed and refilled with new caulk.

Steel Trusses

Overall condition of trusses are good. Surface rust and paint decay is visible on all iron trusses throughout the grandstand. The rust is occurring due the fact the grandstand is open to the elements. Trusses need to be stripped properly using a low-pressure grit blasting which is often the most effective way to remove paint. Grit blasting is fast, thorough, and economical, and it allows the iron to be cleaned in place. An alkyd rust-inhibitive primer contain pigments such as iron oxide, zinc oxide, and zinc phosphate needs to be applied. At least two coats of primer should be applied, followed by alkyd paint.
Grandstand Conditions cont.

Figure 62: Wet wood, caused by a leak in the roof on the south side of the grandstand.

Roof of Grandstand

Overall condition of roof is good. There are some places that show signs of the roof leaking. The rolled roof needs to be inspected for any blisters that are holding water. Once found, blisters need to be popped and covered with roofing cement under the loose roofing material. Once dried cover the entire area with more roofing cement. The roof needs to be examined by a roofing professional.

Figure 63: Water damage in the south room of press box.

Figure 64: Water damage in the north room of press box.

Interior of Press Box

The south and north rooms of the press box, have major water damage in the northwest corners of the west and north walls in both rooms. There must be a leak in the roof of the grandstand. The water is traveling through the masonry of the west façade and is damaging the interior plaster. When the salts from the masonry substrate come in contact with water, they migrate to the surface of the plaster, appearing as dry bubbles or efflorescence. The source of the moisture must be eliminated before replastering the damaged area.\(^{34}\)

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Playing Field Conditions
The field

The overall condition of the playing field is excellent. No signs of damage to the field. When wet water does settle at third and second base, where the players stand. This problem is very common at all ballparks.

Figure 65: Photograph of the entire playing field, from the top of the roof of grandstand, facing east.

Figure 66: Photograph from center field, showing condition of field and the historic grandstand.
The Dugouts

Both dugouts are in fair to poor condition. The concrete roofs and the bricks in each dugout are spalling. Spalling occurs due to the masonry absorbing and retaining too much water which then can freeze and expand breaking away the surface of the concrete. The dugouts need to be rehabilitated. If rehab work is done, the bricks need to be cleaned with an acid-based cleaning product. A mortar analysis should be completed, to make sure new mortar’s texture, color and appropriate mixture matches the historic mortar. Once this has been done the areas need to be re-tucked with new mortar. The roofs need to be treated with a breathable water proof coating, to help stop any further damage. Concrete should be tested by an architectural engineer, to make sure the concrete is structurally sound.
Cost Estimates
of
Proposed Treatment
All work on Bosse Field will be planned and should be completed in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* for the treatment of historic properties. General guidance requires the preservation and maintenance of historic materials and features. This section summarizes identified work items and estimated costs. The cost estimate is based on square foot prices for similar uses published in *R.S. Means' Commercial Renovation Cost Data, 35th Edition*35 and get-a-quote.net. 36


Cost Estimate

**Exterior of Bosse Field**
1) Masonry Cleaning - approximately 20,674 Sf......................... $26,669
2) Brick tuck-pointing and repair- approximately 1,033 Sf..............$78,561
3) Cracks in foundation- approximately 37 Sf............................ $1,412
4) Forming of concrete cap on the main façade- approximately 385Sf. 

.............$5,123
5) Removal of paint & new paint on 2 steel gates and 5 drain pipes....$140
6) Terra cotta tile replacement- approximately 288 Sf........................$3,413

**Subtotal of exterior work**......................$115,318

**Interior of Bosse Field**
1) Paint removal on restroom walls in umpire room-120 Sf.....$134
2) Epoxy filling for crack in ceiling in umpire room 23 Sf.......$138
3) Paint for north wing hallway - 336 Sf..............................$74
4) Shower's ceiling in coach's room- approximately 23Sf.........$138
5) Testing for lead paint on radiators - 8 total...................... $480
6) Paint and removal of paint on radiators - 8 total ...............$155
7) Brick cleaning in trainer's room- 228 Sf..........................$294
8) Brick tuck-pointing in trainer's room - 19 Sf.....................$25

**Subtotal of interior work**.......................$3,121

**The Grandstand**
1) New Grandstand Seating - 4,562 seats ......................$657,840
2) Caulking concrete joints - 144,718 Sf..........................$274,964
3) Stripping paint and painting trusses - 2,792 Sf...........$349
4) Removal of paint and painting of press box -558 Sf...$1,267
5) Demolition of plaster in press box -150 Sf.............$78
6) Repair of plaster walls in press box - 50 Sy.................$1,370
7) Roof demolition and New Roof - 5,260 Sf..............$43,974

**Subtotal of grandstand work**....................$976,842

**The Dugouts**
1) Masonry cleaning for 2 dugouts - approximately 540 Sf.....$697
2) Brick tuck-pointing and repair - 90 Sf............................$986
3) Concrete patching on the dugouts roof - 18 Sf...............$487

**Subtotal of dugout work**.........................$2,170

**Total Estimated Project Cost**..........................$1,097,476
Conclusion
If it was not for Mayor Bosse’s energy which was instrumental in seeing that the completion of Bosse Field. Even today, Bosse Field presents a remarkable baseball experience, directly from the moment you step up to the main entrance. Its history is striking for a baseball fans of all ages. All in all, it feels like watching baseball in a living time capsule. The crowds in Evansville continue to support their local baseball team: On August 18, 2013, Bosse Field welcomed its 2,000,000th fan.37 Sadly, Bosse Field might never receive the recognition of a Fenway or a Wrigley. The quiet, proud history of the ballpark is undiminished, even after all these years. This historic evaluation and rehabilitation recommendations was completed with the intent to show the owners of Bosse Field that the century-old ballpark should receive the recognition it deserves and to be listed in the National Register. By having the ballpark listed it will help preserve the field’s history and integrity and help the ballpark be able to receive the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) to help with the recommended work. HPF is used to pay part of the costs of staff salaries, surveys, comprehensive preservation studies, National Register nominations, educational materials, as well as architectural plans, historic structure reports, and engineering studies necessary to preserve historic properties. The work must meet standards set by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties for restoration.

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Bibliography


Bix Branson, interview by author, Evansville, IN, April 15, 2013.


