SPORT, POWER, AND ARCHITECTURE:
THE VANCOUVER VELODROME

by

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ABSTRACT

My thesis began with an investigation into the history of the stadium and a questioning of how the stadium has been influenced and shaped by different power structures throughout time. From this foundation of research I developed a design for The Vancouver Velodrome.

The site chosen for The Vancouver Velodrome is located on the North slope of Burnaby Mountain in Vancouver and is currently being used as a concrete factory. The site is bordered on the south by the Barnet Highway and to the north by a cliff which leads down to railway lines that run along the shore of the Burrard Inlet. The geographical location of the site from the natural slope separates it from the mountain and marks it as an isolated site. It was my desire then to re-establish a sense of unity within the landscape.

The velodrome was not to be an isolated object, to be held out as separated from the landscape. Rather, it was to act as a connector which joins together the mountain, the site, and the ocean. Unlike the stadium precedents which were often founded upon ideological concerns, the velodrome was founded by the sense of power dictated by its environs, rather than that imposed on it by other structures.

The velodrome design was therefore influenced by the landscape, the more significant elements included a 100 ft. highway retaining wall, a bowl-like depression, and a large retaining wall on the north side of the site which supported the cliff face. The highway retaining wall was used to create an entry procession. The depression contained nicely the large space required and the banked contours then helped to brace the bleachers and embraced the building in general. The northern wall dictated the long axis for the velodrome and the bridge which connected it to the mountain slope, which also served to support the roof structure.

The overall design manifests the notion of a building not 'within' the landscape but rather one which 'is' part of the landscape; on which people traverse and in which people inhabit.
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Aerial Photo of Site Location
[Image provided by the U.B.C. Geography Dept.]

Aerial Photo of Site
[Image provided by the Burnaby Municipal Hall]

Panorama Site Photo—Looking Northwest
Interior Collage: Solo Gymnast

Interior Collage: Rhythmic Gymnasts
Interior Collage: Along the Straightaway

Interior Collage: Around the Curve