

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Roseau Memorial Arena

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 321 2nd Avenue NW

City or town: Roseau State: MN County: Roseau

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☐

Public – Local

☒

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE: sports facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE: sports facility

Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: _____

Foundation: Concrete

Walls: Wood, Steel

Roof: Asphalt shingles, Synthetics

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Roseau Memorial Arena is a historic recreational facility located in the town of Roseau, Minnesota, a city of approximately 2,200 people in north-central Minnesota. (see Figure 1.) The Arena was built in 1949 to serve as a sports center for the city's hockey programs and is still in its original use. In 1955, a substantial addition was made on the east side of the original arena. Commonly known as the warming house, the addition had been anticipated at the time of the original construction but not completed until additional fundraising was completed. It became the primary entrance to the facility. In 1989, the arena's west side was extended to meet competitive ice rink regulations.

The nominated property has one contributing building. (See Photo 001.)

The property is located on the north side of 3 1/2 Street NW between Second and Third Avenues NW. This is one block north of the city's primary east-west thoroughfare (State Hwy. 11). On the north side of Memorial Arena is the North Ice Rink, built in 2002. (See Figure 2 for the property boundary.) There is a baseball field just beyond the North Rink. Roseau's commercial district is one block to the east. The building is set back approximately 24 feet from the street on the east and south sides. This space is paved and used for parking. On the west side, there is also space for parking, with the property line extending up to the baseball field (See Figure 2.) The property has no vegetation, except for a grassy space between the Arena and the North Rink.

Narrative Description

The building has two primary blocks: the entrance/ locker room/ concession block on the east side of the building (generally referred to as the warming house) and the rink/seating block (referred to as the rink block) on the west, parallel to 3½ Street NW. (For a floorplan, see the photo logs in the additional documentation.)

The warming house, built in 1955, is roughly 50' x 100' in plan. The main entrance is through the warming house facing 2nd Street NW. This section of the building, two stories high, is constructed of painted concrete blocks. The knee wall, roughly 3' high, is of rusticated concrete block. Initially built with a flat roof, in the mid-1980s, a student class from the high school constructed a wood-framed, steel-clad, front-gabled roof. It housed much of the air-handling equipment required to move the warm air from the compressors into the arena and warming house. The sheet metal in the gable end has a ventilation opening and signage with large metal letters reading, "Roseau Memorial Arena."

Fenestration on the section consists of four glass block windows on the second floor. The main entrance is through a pair of single-entry, metal doors, reached via a set of concrete steps. A 1965 addition on the north side of the warming house created a new lobby with easier access to the rink.

There is a shallow gabled portico over this entrance. There is a single-entry door on the ground level on the southeast corner of this elevation. On the south elevation of this block, there are two square glass block windows.

The ground or first floor of this block has eight locker rooms. (See Photos 007, 008, 009) The second floor is a generally open space with a concession stand, restrooms, and windows on the west wall for viewing hockey matches. The room is essentially a museum of local hockey, with displays of significant players and coaches, as well as trophies from tournaments. (See Photos 003, 004, 005, 006.)

On the north side of the warming house block, between the 1955 warming house and the current North Rink, a lobby was added in 1965, accessible from the street via a single-entry door. (See Photo 003 and Figures 3, 12.) Two further additions stand between the two buildings: a 2004 addition to house the condenser unit and a 2013 addition to provide access from the North Rink lobby to Memorial Arena. (See Photos 20, 21 and Figure 12.)

The rink block, constructed in 1949, is rectangular in plan, measuring 123' x 216' when built and 256' at present, following an addition on the west side in 1989. (See Photo 011.) Its design consists of a single-story barrel vault open arena utilizing 35' high pine glulam arches and pine purlin decking. The arches are set on concrete buttress foundations set 8' apart, with a 5' high concrete curtain wall between the ground and the base of the arched roof. The end walls used wood framing with hardboard asphalt siding on the exterior, later converted to steel panels in 1989.

The current roof has a rubber membrane across the top of the arch, transitioning to interlocking asphalt shingles on the sides. The underlying material is a 2" x 6" tongue and groove pine wood purlin decking. The original arena roof consisted of rolled asphalt paper adhered with adhesive and

metal edging and finished with a sprayed-on aluminum coating. The change in roofing material took place in the late 1970s or early 1980s. (See Photo 011.)

The west (rear) elevation is steel siding with the rusticated cement block as the knee wall. There are three doors on this wall. On the south is a metal double-door. In the center is a rollup garage door. On the north side is a metal single-entry door. There are two large air vents. (See Photo 010.)

The north and south elevations are essentially the same, with two double-entry doors. (See Photos 11 and 12.) The knee wall, roughly 3' high, is of a brown rusticated concrete block. This was added after a major flood in 2002. (See Photo 006.)

Inside the Arena, the interior consists of exposed wooden glulam arches and purlin decking stained a medium brown. The 5' concrete curtain walls on the interior of the arena are simply smoothed and painted. The rink plan is in a traditional hockey configuration with the skating surface (concrete when there is no ice), dasher boards, plexiglass protective shields, plus space for teams and penalty boxes. Originally, the boards were topped with wire mesh, but are now regulation plexiglass. (See Photos 015, 016, 017.)

In 1952, volunteers installed seating along the north and south sides of the rink and on the west end, accommodating roughly 2,000 spectators. At that time, the main floor was excavated down approximately two feet to provide a better view of the ice surface from the new seating. A perimeter ice wall and dasher boards were installed along with concrete walkways around the new seating areas. The original wooden bleacher seating is still in place today, though rink modifications in 2002 required the removal of the lowest bleacher seating and slightly reduced capacity to accommodate regulation-sized arena dasher boards and ice playing surface. (See Photo 018.)

On the east wall, where the rink block connects to the warming house, there is a band of single-light windows on the second floor. There is also a broadcast booth that extends out from the wall, accessible by a metal ladder from the first floor. (See Photo 017) On the west end, there is a storage and maintenance room for the Zamboni machine. (See Photo 019.)

This final portion of the corridor is owned by the Roseau Youth Hockey Association and is not part of the nominated property. (See Figure 3 for an overview of construction dates.)

Integrity

The Arena has integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. It is in its original location, and the Arena retains its original feeling, especially inside with its high arched wood ceiling and rafters and the 1952 bleachers. The warming house was simple and functional, and its use parallels the use at the time of construction: a place to get warm and watch the match or, on the lower floor, locker rooms for the teams to meet and change. The lobby was added in 1965, within the period of significance.

Several changes occurred after the period of significance. These include the front-gabled roof over the warming house, the addition on the west end of the arena, the brown rusticated concrete blocks on the knee wall, and the condenser unit addition in 2004.

Although adjacent to Memorial Arena, the North Rink is a separate building under different ownership. When it was built in 2002, the two buildings had no connection. (See Figure 10.) In 2013,

an addition was made to the east side of the North Rink, and the space between the two buildings was filled. (See Figures 3 and 12.) At present, one single-entry door provides access between the two buildings, although the corridor is not heavily used. (See Photo 021.)

Despite some alterations, the building retains its character as an example of this type of hockey arena. Character-defining features of the property are the overall massing of the building, the hockey rink itself with the soaring wood arches, the bleacher seating, and the interior of the warming house with its arrangement of public services (concession, viewing, restrooms) on the top floor and the locker rooms on the first floor.

7. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/ RECREATION

Period of Significance

1949-1974

Significant Dates

1949, 1955

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Roseau Memorial Arena, continuously operated as a hockey arena since its construction and opening in 1949, meets National Register Criterion A, locally significant for its association with the city's recreational life. It has been the most important structure in Roseau's identity as a "hockey town." It was the only indoor rink in town between 1949 and 1965 when a practice facility was built just north of the Arena. The Arena remained the sole place for competition. Its construction involved a high level of participation in the form of donated labor, money, and materials. A defining feature of hockey in northern Minnesota is its close-knit community nature. Small towns and villages formed teams, and competitions between neighboring towns created a sense of shared cultural identity. As

writer John Rosengren said of Roseau: “The hockey arena, not the church or the town square or the shopping mall, is the heart of the community, the center of its social and spiritual life.”¹

The period of significance is from its construction in 1949 through 1974, the standard fifty-year demarcation for listing in the National Register. Roseau’s second indoor rink, built in 1965, was removed from the site in 2002 and replaced with the North Rink. In addition, the city gained an additional indoor rink in 2000 when the high school built a facility.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Hockey in Canada: The Birthplace of the Game

Canada is recognized as the birthplace of modern ice hockey, although it likely had its origin in stick-and-ball games played in Great Britain and North America. Early evidence of ice hockey in Canada has been traced back to British officers, stationed in North America, who brought a version from their homeland. In 1825, Sir John Franklin mentioned hockey being played on ice during his attempt to find the Northwest Passage. Additionally, there are claims that Windsor, Nova Scotia, was the birthplace of ice hockey, based on references to playing “hurley on the long pond on the ice” in a novel, *The Attaché, or Sam Slick in England*, by Thomas Chandler Haliburton in 1844. These historical references indicate the early presence of ice hockey in Canada.²

The game gradually evolved, and by the 1870s, recognizable elements of modern hockey began to emerge. According to the International Ice Hockey Federation, the first organized indoor game of ice hockey was played in Montreal in 1875, marking a pivotal moment in the sport's history. Reporting on the game, the *Montreal Gazette* noted, “Hockey is played usually with a ball, but last night, in order that no accident should happen, a flat block of wood was used, so that it should slide along the ice without rising, and thus going among the spectators to their discomfort.”³

As it grew in popularity, hockey became ingrained in Canadian culture. The chilly winters offered many opportunities for outdoor recreation, and frozen rivers and ponds served as makeshift arenas for friendly games. The creation of leagues and the standardization of regulations allowed the sport to flourish and cemented hockey's status as a favorite activity in the country. There were nearly 100 organized hockey clubs in Montreal alone by the time the first hockey game was ever played in the United States in 1893. That same year, Governor General Lord Stanley of Preston donated a shallow silver bowl as a gift to present to the top-ranked Canadian club. The Montreal Hockey Club, which had won the amateur championship, was the first Stanley Cup winner.⁴

¹ John Rosengren, “The Goal,” *SBNation*, February 12, 2013.
<https://www.sbnation.com/longform/2013/2/12/3976156/warroad-roseau-high-school-hockey-rivalry>.

² Jean-Patrice Martel, “Origins of Hockey,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, February 6, 2020,
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/origins-of-ice-hockey>; Thomas Chandler Haliburton, *The Attaché; or Sam Slick in England* (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, 1844), 305.

³ Michael McKinley, *Hockey: A People's History* (Toronto, Ontario: McClelland & Stewart, 2006), 7.

⁴ Andrew C. Holman, *Canada's Game: Hockey and Identity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 3-9; Michael McKinley, *Hockey: A People's History*, 17-18.

Hockey in Minnesota

Minnesota saw a rapid growth of hockey as teams from Winnipeg, Manitoba, moved south to play exhibition matches. In 1895, the St. Paul Winter Carnival featured matches at Aurora Arena, located near the intersection of Dale and University Avenues.⁵ That same year, Dr. H. A. Parkyn, who had played hockey in Toronto, formed the first University of Minnesota hockey team. He coached the skaters in one of its first important matches against a highly touted Winnipeg team. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, on February 19, 1895, described the international meeting:

The first international hockey game between Winnipeg and the University of Minnesota was played yesterday and won by the visitors 11-3. The day was perfect, and 300 spectators occupied the grandstand, the coeds of the University being well represented....Hockey promises to become as popular a sport at the University as football, baseball, and rowing.⁶

By the first decade of the twentieth century, hockey was “booming” in Minnesota, built primarily around club sports. Formed in 1895, the St. Paul Athletic Club, the state’s first organized team, scheduled matches throughout the region, leading towns like Crookston, Minneapolis, St. Cloud, and Duluth to form their own teams.⁷

Matches were generally played on outdoor ice, with St. Paul as a hotbed of activity. A Virginia Avenue rink and Como Lake were especially popular. Minneapolis kept pace, organizing a league with five teams in 1904 competing on a frozen Lake Harriet. Attempts were made to move hockey indoors. The Star Rink, an indoor roller-skating facility in St. Paul, added ice in 1901. A second indoor ice rink opened in north Minneapolis in 1904. Both facilities remained operating for only a few years. Finally, in 1906, a huge coliseum was built on the state fair grounds. At first used for horse shows, the Hippodrome was flooded in the winter and the first hockey contest took place there in January 1909, featuring an all-star team from the Twin Cities against the visitors from Fort William, Ontario.⁸

Small towns in northern Minnesota played a significant role in these early years of hockey. Local teams organized across the state's northern tier, and intercity rivalries developed. Hallock is believed to have constructed the first indoor ice hockey arena in Minnesota in 1895. The *Kittson County Enterprise* reported, “Material is on the ground for Hallock’s new skating rink, and it is going to be a bute too. It will have a clear body of ice, 58 x 150 feet, with a space about ten feet wide, which will be taken up for a waiting room and the remainder in a platform and seats for spectators. The doors will be thrown open for business in less than two weeks.” Eveleth, another northern Minnesota town, erected an indoor rink in 1902, although it remained open for only a few years.⁹

⁵ *St. Paul Daily Globe*, December 22, 1895.

⁶ *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, February 19, 1895.

⁷ Roger A. Godin, *Before the Stars: Early Major League Hockey and the St. Paul Athletic Club Team* (St. Paul, Minn.: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005).

⁸ *St. Paul Globe*, December 26, 1896; January 15, 1899, January 1, 1905; *Minneapolis Journal*, January 14, 1904; *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 3, 1909.

⁹ *Kittson County Enterprise*, November 22, 1895. Towns with teams included Chisholm, Virginia, and Hibbing. *Duluth Herald*, September 29, 1910.

Roseau

Roseau was a relatively young town when hockey made its first appearance. Incorporated in 1895, the town gained a foothold after being named as seat of the newly organized Roseau County in February 1896. Located in a transitional ecosystem between the forests and the prairie, the local economy was built on agriculture, with mixed-use farms raising livestock, delivering dairy products, and harvesting grain. The region developed a special niche as farmers grew clover and, later, sod and grass seed. As early as 1907, the *Roseau Times* reported, “Most every farmer has his clover field or will have before another year goes by.” Harnessing the river, flour and saw mills opened, and a small commercial district developed.¹⁰

In 1906, Archie Alley, a young man from Hallock, Minnesota, visited Roseau to investigate business prospects. According to several sources, he decided to settle there and introduced hockey to the town. Seeing several boys playing on the river, he stepped on the ice and taught them hockey.¹¹ It caught on quickly, and by January 1908, local men had built an outdoor rink with dasher boards. (See Figure 4.) When a match ensued on the Warroad rink, it began a legendary rivalry that continues to this day.¹² Roseau lost. One week later, the teams faced off in Roseau. The local newspaper described that encounter:

There were several mix-ups and some talk, but no broken heads. The game resulted in a tie and was unsatisfactory to both sides. It was a hot game, and some of the boys got warm under the collar, but that will wear off as both teams are composed of good fellows and true sports.¹³

After the Great Northern Railroad opened between Roseau and Warroad in December 1908, the intercity contests became so popular that a special train ran between the two towns on game day. The *Times* reported, “The Roseau bunch play good hockey, and the Warroad boys are not slow and play the game for all in their power. That is what makes it exciting between the two clubs.” The day concluded with a masquerade ball, and the Roseau boys returned home on the morning freight train.¹⁴

By 1916, Roseau had joined a handful of teams in northwest Minnesota that met on a regular basis, including matches against players from Thief River Falls, Hallock, Grand Forks, Crookston, and Winnipeg. One of the older local players organized a junior hockey team by 1910. A non-

¹⁰ Hazel H. Wahlberg, *The North Land: A History of Roseau County* (Roseau, Minn.: Roseau County Historical Society, 1975), 67-71; *Roseau Times*, November 22, 1907; *Roseau County Times*, July 26, 1895.

¹¹ *County of Roseau Centennial, 1895-1995* (Roseau, Minn.: Roseau County Historical Society, 1994), 257. The Alley story comes from a longtime resident, Hubert Dieter.

¹² Numerous writers have labeled the Roseau-Warroad high school battles as “the biggest in the state of hockey.” These teams have met 186 times, however, there have also been hundreds other matches over the years between teams representing the two towns, including multiple levels of youth hockey. For example, see <https://lptv.org/warroad-vs-roseau-the-state-of-hockeys-biggest-rivalry-forged-on-similarities-not-differences/>.

¹³ *Roseau County Times*, January 10, 17, 1908.

¹⁴ *Roseau County Times*, February 4, 1910; *Warren Sheaf*, March 8, 1916. The *Sheaf* story stated, “The Roseau boys have played hockey for years.”

sanctioned high school hockey team began in 1916, but then World War I and the great influenza pandemic intervened and slowed the growth of hockey.¹⁵

Roseau's First Indoor Arena, 1925-1943

When veterans of the Great War returned to Roseau, they organized the Kaleb E. Lindquist American Legion Post #24. In turn, the post turned to hockey as a way to contribute to the community. They began by helping to fund a high school program in which students were divided into four teams that played competitively. The winning team received a silver cup provided by the Legion. The veterans also installed lights at the local outdoor rink.

In early 1925, the Legion pushed for the construction of an indoor arena as a memorial, joined by their women's auxiliary. The committee presented the following reasons:

That it would encourage participation in healthy winter sports on the part of children and in this way be a moral safeguard. . . . It would be a credit to the cooperative spirit of the community; it will be a place where the old as well as the young would find enjoyment in a clean beneficial way.¹⁶

Using plans drawn by J. P. Grothe, and relying on broad community volunteer support, the arena was finished in September 1925. (See Figure 5.) Measuring 160 x 70 feet, it rested on a concrete foundation. It opened with a two-day Legion Carnival. In December, after temperatures allowed for ice to form, the Memorial Rink hosted an open house with free skating and an exhibition between two local teams.¹⁷

Over the next decade, Minnesota hockey competition pitted local clubs against neighboring communities, travel teams from North Dakota, or intracity league battles. Semi-pro teams proliferated, and St. Paul, Eveleth, Virginia, Duluth, and Hibbing formed the semi-pro Central Hockey League in 1932. The University of Minnesota established itself as a premier program in the United States after hockey became an official varsity sport in 1920. By 1940, there were twenty-six high school hockey teams in Minnesota, including Roseau's, which was formally organized in 1936. In northern Minnesota, other towns such as Warroad, Thief River Falls, Hallock, Williams, Baudette, Crosby, Crookston, and Detroit Lakes built enclosed rinks.¹⁸

As the popularity of high school hockey grew, talk of a state tournament grew. In October 1941, the State High School League gave permission to Roseau to host the first official state tournament. By February 1942, however, the United States had entered World War II, and tire and gas rations prohibited extended travel. In the end, the seven-team tournament field included Roseau, Warroad,

¹⁵ *Roseau Times-Region*, February 9, 1993; *Roseau County Times*, February 4, 1910.

¹⁶ *Roseau Times-Region*, February 27, 1925.

¹⁷ *Roseau Times-Region*, November 13, December 11, 18, 1925.

¹⁸ Ross Bernstein, *More Frozen Memories: Celebrating a Century of Minnesota Hockey* (Nodin Press, Minneapolis, Minn.: 2007), 188-189. Will Sherry, "A History of Hockey in Minnesota," *The Minnesota Republic*, January 25, 2023, <https://mnrepublic.com/8740/sports/a-history-of-hockey-in-minnesota/>. Eveleth's Recreation Building (1919) is the only early northern Minnesota hockey arena listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It was soon supplanted by the Hippodrome (1922). Charles Skrief, "Eveleth Recreation Building," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1979. The Virginia Recreation Building (1923) was listed in the National Register in 1982 but has since been demolished.

Eveleth, Baudette, Williams, Hallock, and Thief River Falls, with all matches played at Memorial Rink. The Thief River Falls Hornets took the championship trophy home. The next state tournament would be held in St. Paul after the end of the war.¹⁹

Disaster struck in July 1943 when a violent windstorm blew down Memorial Arena. The high school built an outdoor rink and warming house next to the school, and their coach, Oscar Almquist, held the program together in the absence of an indoor arena.²⁰

Memorial Arena

The end of World War II ushered in a new era for Roseau. Soldiers and sailors returned from military service. The local population grew by twenty-five percent over the decade. The economy got a boost in 1946 when three local men started a new company named Polaris, building light farm equipment. That same year, the Roseau team advanced to the state hockey tournament. “Many Roseau people are finding they have urgent business in the Twin Cities this week,” observed the local newspaper, “and are likely to have to leave, or have left, to look after their interests.” The Rams won the tournament with an electrifying 6-0 win over Rochester.²¹

It was time for a new arena. In 1947, the Roseau Arena Building Committee, later reorganized as the Community Memorial Arena Association, initiated a fundraising drive for the construction of a new indoor facility, led by its president, Norman Flagstaff Sr. For a town of 2,200 residents, it would not be a small undertaking.²² It was not until 1949 that construction planning began in earnest. After the committee visited rinks in Minnesota and Manitoba, they settled on a plan with prebuilt rafters of western pine, shipped to the site and mounted on concrete buttresses with steel plates. The half-rafters were also joined by a metal plate at the peak. The warming room, however, would have to wait until additional funds could be raised. Instead, an empty country schoolhouse was moved to the site to serve that purpose.²³

The arena was a community-wide project, both in terms of gathering donations and volunteer work on construction. “It is expected,” stated the local newspaper, “that many of the townsfolk and the countryfolk whose children will use the rink will pitch in on the work. . . . The arena committee emphasizes that without the cooperation of the community folks for labor, etc., the rink would be impossible to complete.” J. P. Grothe, who had supervised the construction of the 1925 arena, was hired to manage the work again, even though he had moved to Los Angeles, California, in the intervening years.²⁴

Volunteer crews began work in earnest in the fall of 1949 with the installation of the concrete buttresses, sunk ten feet into the ground, and rising five feet above, with reinforcing steel rods. The roofing required the most labor-intensive hours. “At any time,” stated the local newspaper, “every

¹⁹ *Roseau Times-Region*, February 26, March 5, 1942; *Eveleth Clarion*, February 26, 1942.

²⁰ *Roseau Times-Region*, December 9, 1943, January 12, November 30, 1944.

²¹ *Roseau Times-Region*, February 20, 27, March 13, 1947. The earliest known footage of the state hockey tournament comes from 1946. It can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/ys7n8BVb1DM?si=2yWXgKgyGDRbftZZ>

²² *Roseau Times-Region*, November 10, 24, 1949.

²³ *Roseau Times-Region*, February 24, May 5, 1949. The Association had been organized in 1947.

²⁴ *Roseau Times-Region*, December 13, 1945; August 25, 1949. It should be noted that only three indoor hockey arenas were operating in the Twin City Metropolitan area at this time.

man who can pound a nail is urged to come out for what time he can spare . . . and bring his hammer. Just say, 'I'm ready.'"²⁵

The grand opening of Memorial Arena took place on December 31, 1949, with a hockey game between the Roseau Cloverleafs (a semi-professional team playing in the Northwest Hockey League) and a Winnipeg team, followed by a figure skating exhibition. The Rev. T. C. Hanson spoke at the ceremony, saying, "This can rightly be called a living memorial. It is not some standing monument or statute upon which you can gaze but means nothing more." Looking out at the hundreds of contributors and volunteers, he concluded that it was "an arena of the people, by the people, and for the people."²⁶

When the new Memorial Arena opened (See Figures 6, 7, 8.), it was one of only two built in Minnesota during the 1940s and one of thirteen indoor hockey rinks operating in Minnesota. That same month, archrival Warroad opened its new indoor arena.²⁷

"A Hockey Town"

Almost at once, the Memorial Arena became a cornerstone of the community. "This is a hockey town," said Norm Flagstad Sr., who had pushed for the Arena's construction. The key to understanding the impact of the sport on Roseau is to look at its programs. Newspaper editor W. S. Adams estimated that twenty percent of the population of 2,300 were involved in hockey in some way. Another writer noted of Roseau, "It starts in a little town in northern Minnesota, where his parents would awaken before six on frigid winter mornings, make hot chocolate for their kids, and drive them to hockey practice." From a young age, a child was almost expected to play hockey, and no one was turned away. Youth hockey offered programs for different age groups. Equipment was easy to come by as one generation passed their skates, sticks, and uniforms to the next generation. There was also time allotted for free skating. In addition, a girls' junior hockey tournament was held during the annual Winter Sports Carnival.²⁸

It was more than just a hockey rink. The Arena played host to a Winter Sports Carnival for many years, featuring speed skating, figure skating, and an event called "stunt skating." Since the ice was natural and subject to the seasons, in 1950, volunteers installed a removable wood floor for use during the summer months. For several years, local car dealers held an automobile show in September to show the latest models.²⁹

As a community volunteer effort with limited funds, it was always understood that the arena would be a work-in-progress. Supported by a profitable concession stand, the Arena Association finished the next phase of construction, adding permanent wooden bleacher seating in 1952. This work required the excavation of the ice rink floor by about twenty inches. A concrete walkway was

²⁵ *Roseau Times-Region*, August 25, 1949.

²⁶ *Roseau Times-Region*, December 22, 29, 1949.

²⁷ "Minnesota Ice Arenas," *Vintage Minnesota Hockey*,

<https://history.vintagemnhockey.com/page/show/788261-minnesota-ice-arenas>

²⁸ *Roseau Times-Region*, March 31, 1955, December 29, 1955, May 3, 1989.

²⁹ *Roseau Times-Region*, July 22, 1950, March 20, 27, 1952, March 31, 1955, March 8, 1956, January 14, 1965, September 18, 1969; Anne Wallestad Erickson, editor, *History of the Roseau County Schools, Junior Winter Sports Meets, 1950-1970* (Private printing, 1970).

added around the outside of the boards. The new seating was installed along the north and south sides of the rink and on the west end, accommodating roughly 2,000 spectators. It was a source of community pride, as a newspaper writer stated: “Anyone who sees the Roseau arena and doesn’t agree that it is one of the finest in the country can find quick argument among the hundreds of men who worked there, women who served coffee and lunch, and onlookers who came to gloat over the good seats they’ll have come hockey season.”³⁰

The final piece of needed work was a warming house. A community appeal observed:

There has been a very definite, crying need for an adequate warming house for the Roseau Arena for a long, long time. . . . This past winter, a total of well over 50,000 people used the arena. No other building in Roseau county can even approach that figure. . . . Yet, this vital portion of community life does not even have the most primitive of toilet facilities. It does not have the barest of showers nor even the most skimpy locker space.³¹

In 1955, the warming house was built on the east front. It was a simple concrete block building, using plans drawn by local resident Art Salpacka. It added locker rooms, restrooms, and a concession stand. (See Figure 9.) As with the previous projects, it was a community affair, supported by local donations and volunteer labor.³²

The high school team, which played its matches at Memorial Arena, soared, winning the state title in 1958, 1959, and 1961. Only a huge upset to Warroad in the regional tournament kept them from a title in 1960. Under the guidance of head coach Oscar Almquist, Roseau appeared in the state tournament fourteen times, and in addition to the state championships, they were runner-up on four occasions, and third-place finishers once. Almquist is enshrined in the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame.

The 1960s brought tremendous change to hockey in Minnesota with the growth of youth hockey programs to serve the baby-boom generation. At the beginning of the decade, there were only seventeen indoor arenas in the state with five of these in northwest Minnesota. Of these, eight had artificial ice. By 1970 there were sixty indoor arenas in the state with nearly three-quarters of the rinks using artificial ice. The dramatic expansion continued through the 1970s and 1980s.

TABLE: Indoor Hockey Rinks in Minnesota³³

YEAR	SM	TC	CWC	NE	NW	TOTAL
1940	2	4	1	6	6	19
1950	1	3	1	3	5	13
1960	2	5	1	4	5	17
1970	4	25	3	15	13	60
1982	17	60	10	22	21	130
1998	26	106	26	27	30	215

KEY: SM Southern Minnesota

³⁰ *Roseau Times-Region*, August 28, 1952, November 13, 1952. These bleachers remain in use.

³¹ *Roseau Times-Region*, March 24, 1955.

³² *Roseau Times-Region*, September 1, October 27, 1955.

³³ <https://history.vintagemnhockey.com/page/show/813675-history-of-indoor-ice-rinks-in-minnesota->

TC Twin Cities
CWC Central/ Western Minnesota
NE Northeastern Minnesota
NW Northwestern Minnesota

In Roseau, ice time was hard to schedule, with a backlog of public skating, open hockey, figure skating, and high school games and practice. There were club teams for young men, sponsored by local businesses, Saturday morning leagues for youth down to third grade, sports clinics, and, in the 1950s, the semipro Cloverleaf team. In 1964, the city built a 65' x 165' enclosed ice rink on the north side of Memorial Arena. This was a simple structure with a metal frame and galvanized roof. Like Memorial Arena, it relied on natural ice, and its small rink made it inadequate for many competitions. In 1965, the city built a lobby addition between the Arena and the North Rink.³⁴

The reliance on natural ice could play havoc with early season schedules. Finally, in 1969, the city moved forward with a plan to install artificial ice in Memorial Arena. A new concrete rink floor was laid with refrigeration pipes, and ice compressors were installed in the warming house basement. This allowed the extension of the hockey season into the late fall and early spring. However, this new arena floor was not insulated against the development of perma-frost under the ice surface, so the facility was not able to run year-round. At the same time, the concession stand and viewing area were renovated with wood paneling over the concrete blocks.³⁵

From 1969 to 1991 was the "Golden Era" of Minnesota hockey, according to historians David La Vaque and L. R. Nelson. The state tournament moved from the St. Paul Auditorium to the Met Center in Bloomington, which offered twice the seating capacity. By 1979, back in St. Paul at the Civic Center, the tournament drew more than 100,000 visitors. With the expansion of the National Hockey League and the rival World Hockey League, the demand for players filtered down to local level as high school and college students were drafted to stock the expanded rosters.

For Roseau, there were no state high school championships in the 1970s and 1980s, however, the three Broten boys, Neal, Paul and Aaron, brought glory to the town. Neal Broten, who grew up playing on the Arena's ice, took Roseau High School to three state tournaments, scored the game-winning goal for the NCAA championship at the University of Minnesota and took home the Olympic Gold Medal in 1980. In a 2009 contest sponsored by the Minnesota Wild, Broten was named the greatest Minnesota-born hockey player of all time.³⁶

In a typical year during these decades, typically 240 to 300 Roseau youth played hockey on fifteen different teams ranging from mites to high school varsity. In 1989, the city approved significant renovations to the Arena. The work included extending the west end to provide room for a

³⁴ *Roseau Times-Region*, November 5, 1955, September 9, 1965, March 29, 1989.

³⁵ *Roseau Times-Region*, April 24, September 11, 1969, January 1, 1970.

³⁶ John Millea, "Game Night at Roseau's Hockey Cathedral," *Minnesota State High School League*, July 12, 2022, <https://www.mshsl.org/about/news/johns-journal/best-johns-journal-2021-22-no-4-game-night-roseaus-hockey-cathedral>; Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, October 16, 1996; Tom Weber, "Wild hockey fans pick greatest high school team, player," *MPR News*, April 10, 2009, https://archive.ph/20130415192412/http://minnesota.priprod.publicradio.org/display/web/2009/04/10/greatest_hshockey/#selection-1219.1-1219.105.

Zamboni machine and to extend the ice to regulation size (85' x 200'). The facility gained heat for the first time using a heat reclamation system from the condenser unit. A wood-framed, pitched steel roof was constructed by the school construction class on the top of the existing warming house to conceal and house much of the air-handling equipment required to move the warm air from the compressors into the arena and warming house. The following year, 1990, the high school team won a state championship for the first time in twenty-two years.³⁷

In 1992, the Minnesota State High School League, following considerable debate, moved to split the state tournament into two classes, based on school enrollment. Schools with 500 or more students were assigned to Class AA. Even though Roseau averaged just over than 300 pupils, the high school refused to step down to Class A – becoming the Class AA school with the smallest enrollment. The winning traditions continued, with state championships in 1999 and 2007.

Another change came in the 1990s after the MSHSL voted to become the country's first state high school association to sanction women's ice hockey as a varsity sport. Roseau already had girls' teams at the youth levels. One young woman, Maghan Grahn, played goalie for the Roseau Boy's hockey team through the mid-1990s and went on to play for the University of Minnesota- Duluth and University of New Hampshire women's hockey teams. However, the only regulation rink was Memorial Arena, so the Bantam (ages 13-15) and High School women's teams lost out on ice time for competitions. In 2000, the high school opened the Rams' Sports Center with a regulation indoor rink.

As youth hockey enrollment grew, the Citizens Arena Improvement Association and the Roseau Youth Hockey Association raised funds to construct a new indoor rink. The RYHA removed the existing 1964 North Rink, selling it to an organization from Badger, Minnesota, and then constructed a new regulation artificial ice arena north of the old Arena. Built in 2002, the North Rink is a metal frame, insulated, steel-walled facility. The only shared function was a new condenser for making ice, which was moved from a room on the lower floor to a 2004 addition off the lobby of the warming house. In 2013, the RYHA built an addition on the east side of the North Rink. This became the primary entrance for that facility. At the same time, a connecting corridor to Memorial Arena was added to the south. (See Figure 3.)³⁸

Conclusion

Roseau Memorial Arena, continuously operated as a hockey arena since its construction and opening in 1949, meets National Register Criterion A, locally significant for its association with the city's recreational life. The period of significance is from 1949 through 1974. Now one of three enclosed rinks in town, the Arena is still used for hockey programs and competition. In January 2024, it was site of the 185th match with arch rival Warroad High School. (See Figure 11.)

³⁷ *Roseau Times-Region*, March 29, 1989; *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, March 11, 1990. Roseau's Peewee team (ages 11-13) won three state championships and the Bantam team (ages 13-15) earned nine state championships. A Saturday Morning League run by the Jaycees included around 280 youth.

³⁸ *Roseau Times-Region*, September 9, 24, October 22, 1964, September 30, 1965; May 12, 2001.

Sports have a major influence on the cultural identity of small towns. This is due to a variety of factors, such as how closely knit these communities are, how important some sports have historically been to the community, and how closely sports are linked to local customs and values.³⁹

Hockey is central to Roseau's cultural identity, and hockey journalist John Millea has called the Arena "one of Minnesota's hockey cathedrals." If the Arena is a shrine, the worshipped heroes are the players on the ice. It is a town where "the four-year-old kid who swishes his hockey stick on the kitchen floor still wants to be a player like Neal Broten." Broten himself described that community bond:

Growing up, my heroes weren't the NHL guys, they were the Roseau High School hockey players. I feel real lucky to have grown up in such a wonderful hockey town, where the tradition runs deep into the community. I mean hockey is what that town is all about for basically eight months out of the year. It's pretty amazing and to be part of that is something special. In small towns like that, you start playing with the same group of guys when you first get skates, all the way through peewees, and finally through high school. So when it's over, it's like saying goodbye to family.

The sport provided continuity among the generations and formed the core of the community. "If you're talking about anything on Main Street in Roseau in the summer, it's probably when the hockey season will start," says Rube Bjorkman, who led the Rams to their first state title in 1946 and won two Olympic silver medals. "It's the intangible thing that keeps the community together."⁴⁰

For those reasons, Memorial Arena is significant to Roseau's history and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. As Bob Lund, a Roseau player, coach, and lifelong fan, said of the Arena, "It just might last forever."

8. Major Bibliographical References

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³⁹ Richard Harrison, "Between a Puck and a Showplace," in *Canada's Game: Hockey and Identity*, ed. Andrew C. Holman (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 155; Stacy L. Lorenz, "Constructing a Cultural History of Canadian Hockey," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, (2015) 32:17, 2107-2113.

⁴⁰ John Rosengren, "The Goal," *SBNation*, February 12, 2013, <https://www.sbnation.com/longform/2013/2/12/3976156/warroad-roseau-high-school-hockey-rivalry>

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Newspapers

Roseau Times

Roseau Times Region

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register

___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): RO-ROC-00016

9. Geographical Data

Acres of Property 2.69 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude:	Longitude:
2. Latitude:	Longitude:
3. Latitude:	Longitude:
4. Latitude:	Longitude:

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15	Easting: 297194	Northing: 5414355
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property in the city of Roseau, Roseau County, Minnesota, incorporates all of Roseau County Parcel 543020600, described as follows:

Subdivision 4 less the North 204' of the West 317.83' of the East 359.83' of Auditors Plat #5; Riverside Subdivision. The Roseau Memorial Arena is bounded by 3½ Street NW on the South, the RYHA North Rink on the North, 2nd Avenue NW on the East and 3rd Avenue NW on the West.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The above boundary encompasses the entirety of the Memorial Arena and associated parking for the arena. Although the North Rink is associated with the Arena because of similar functions, it was built more than fifty years later and is under different ownership. Only a single-entry door provides access between the two buildings. The only shared utility is the ice compressor.

10. Form Prepared By

name/title: Daniel J. Hoisington
organization: Hoisington Preservation Consultants
street & number: P. O. Box 13585
city or town: Roseville state: MN zip code: 55113
e-mail: djh@hoisingtonpreservation.com
telephone: 651-415-1034
date: March 1, 2024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer,

photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Roseau Memorial Arena

City or Vicinity: Roseau

County: Roseau

State: Minnesota

Photographer: Daniel J. Hoisington

Date Photographed: July 11, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

001: East elevation of Arena (on right), view to NW

002: Arena, view to W

003: Lobby, view to W

004: Warming house interior, second floor, view to SW

005: Warming house interior, second floor, view to NE

006: Warming house interior, second floor, view to S

007: Warming house interior, first floor hall, view to E

008: Warming house interior, first floor, locker rooms

009: Warming house interior, first floor, locker rooms

010: West elevation of Arena, view to NNE

011: Arena, view to E

012: North Rink (left) and north elevation of Arena (right), view to E

013: Cornerstone and foundation, view to NW

014: Interior showing concrete buttress and wall, view to S

015: Interior showing rink and warming room/ concessions, view to E

016: Interior showing rink and west entrance/ addition, view to SW

017: Interior showing rink and warming room/ concessions, view to E

018: Bleacher seating on south wall, view to E

019: West entrance and Zamboni room, view to W

020: Hallway with door to North Rink, view to N

021: Condenser room, view to W

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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Figure 1: Roseau Memorial Arena. *Source: Google Earth*



UTM: 15 297194 5414355

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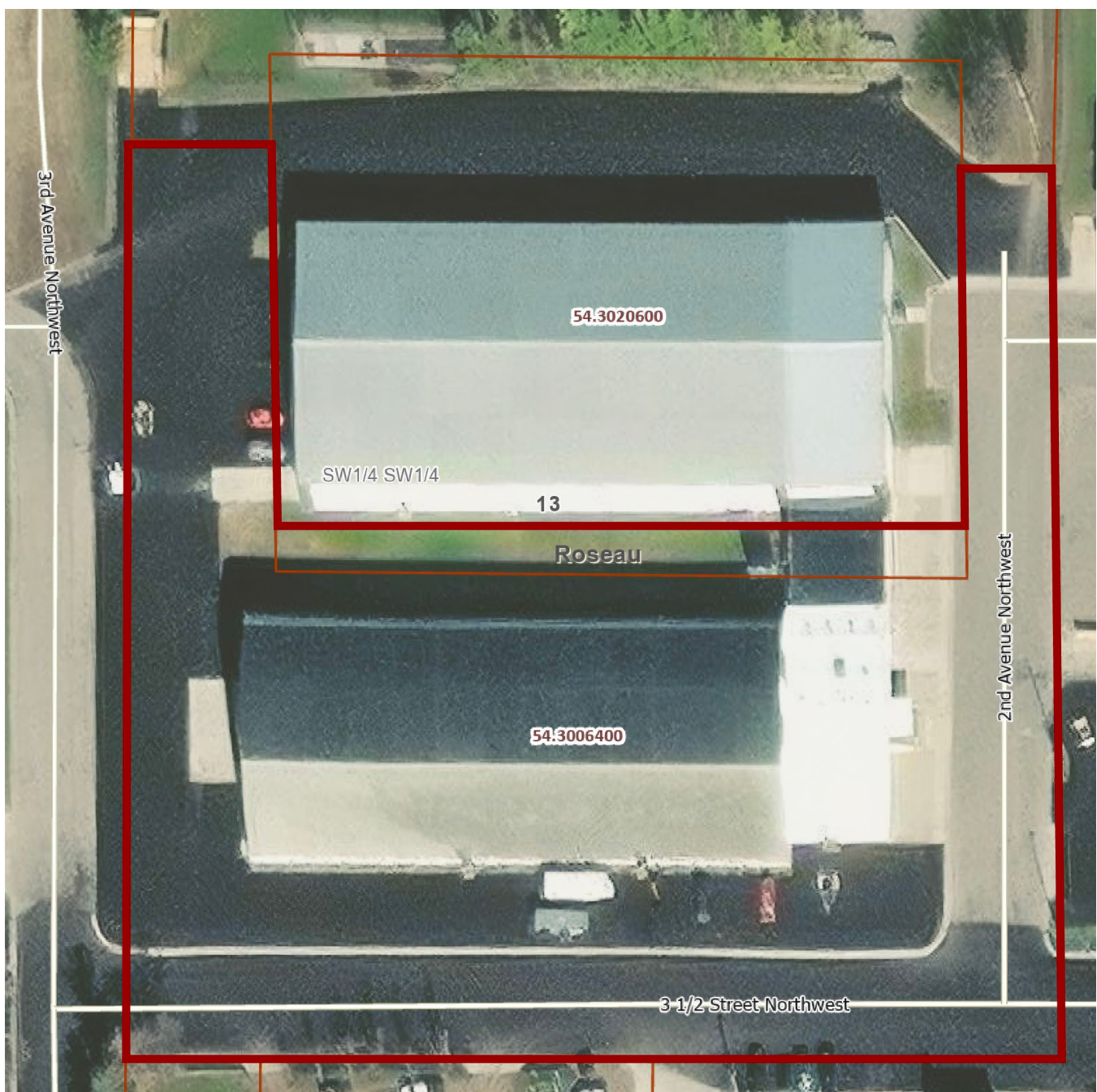
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Figure 2: Property Boundary. Source: *Roseau County*

Lot 54.3006400 is owned by the City of Roseau. City property extends to include the southernmost portion of #54.3020600 – the open space between Memorial and North Rinks. It includes the 2004 condenser unit addition but not the 2013 connecting corridor. See Figure 3.

All other portions of Lot 54.3020600 are owned by the Roseau Youth Hockey Association, Inc.



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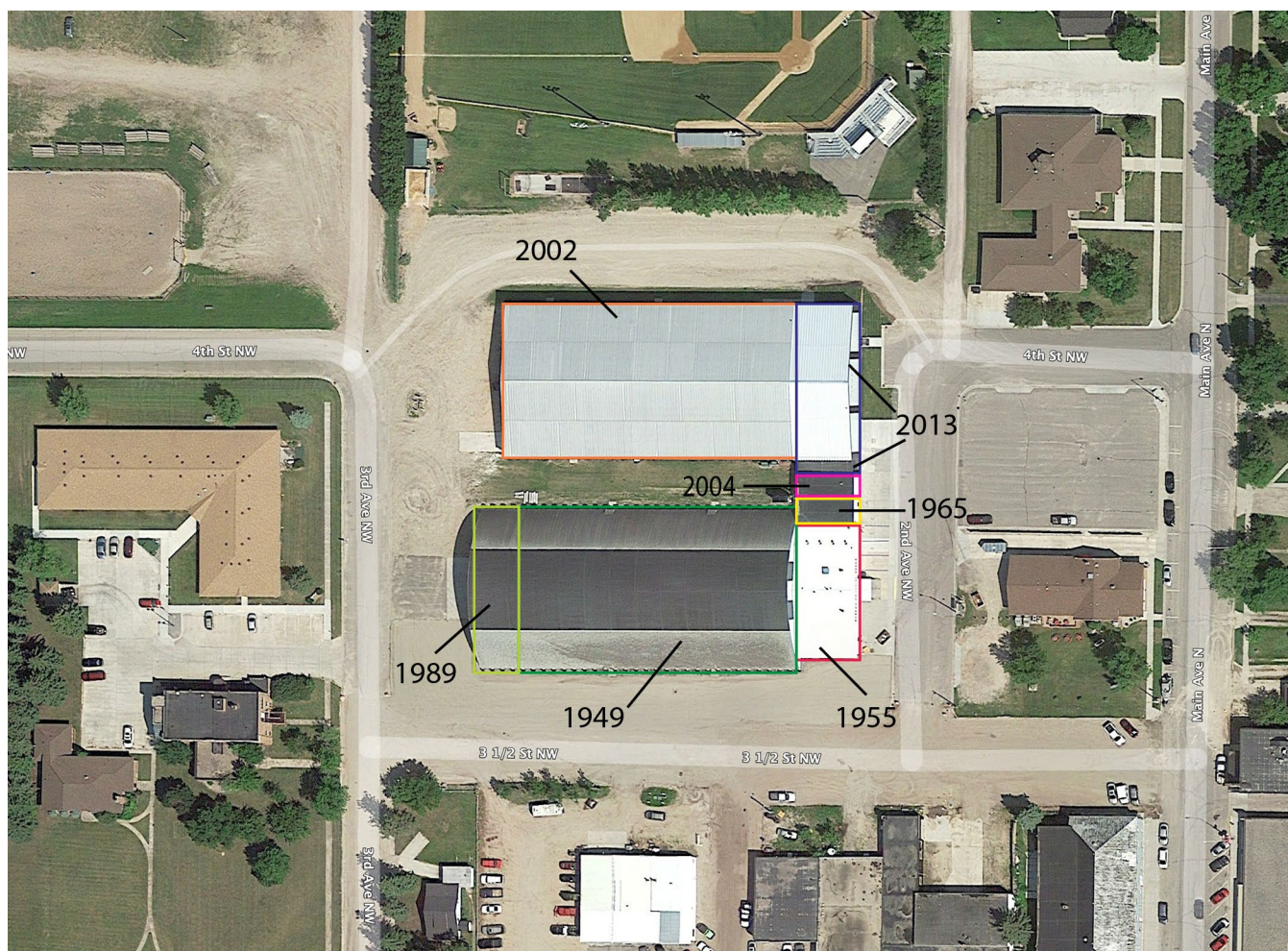
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Figure 3: Construction Dates



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Figure 4: Outdoor Hockey Rink, Roseau, 1908.

Source: *Roseau County Historical Society*

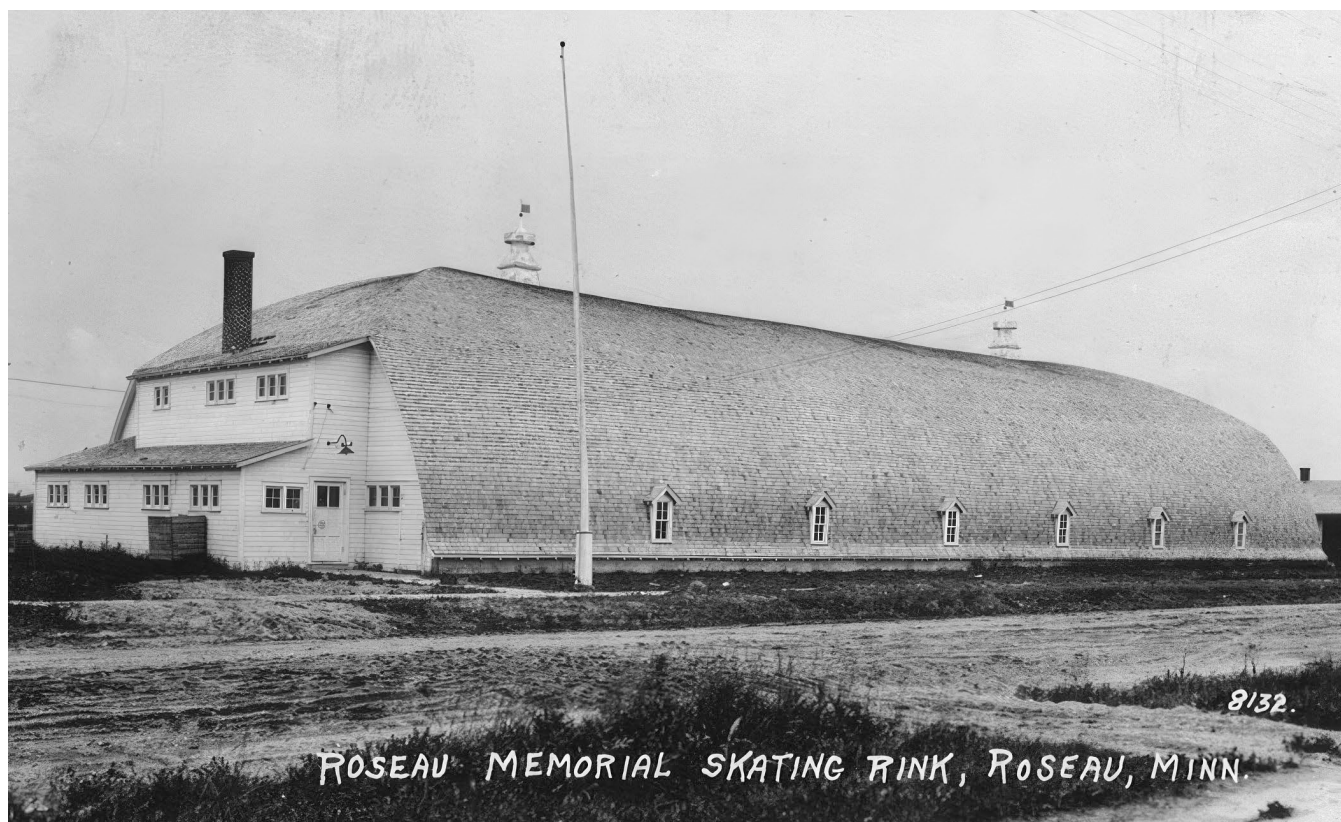
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Figure 5: First Indoor Arena, built in 1925.

Source: *Roseau County Historical Society*

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Figure 6: Roseau Memorial Arena. View to the northeast around 1955.

Source: Roseau County Historical Society



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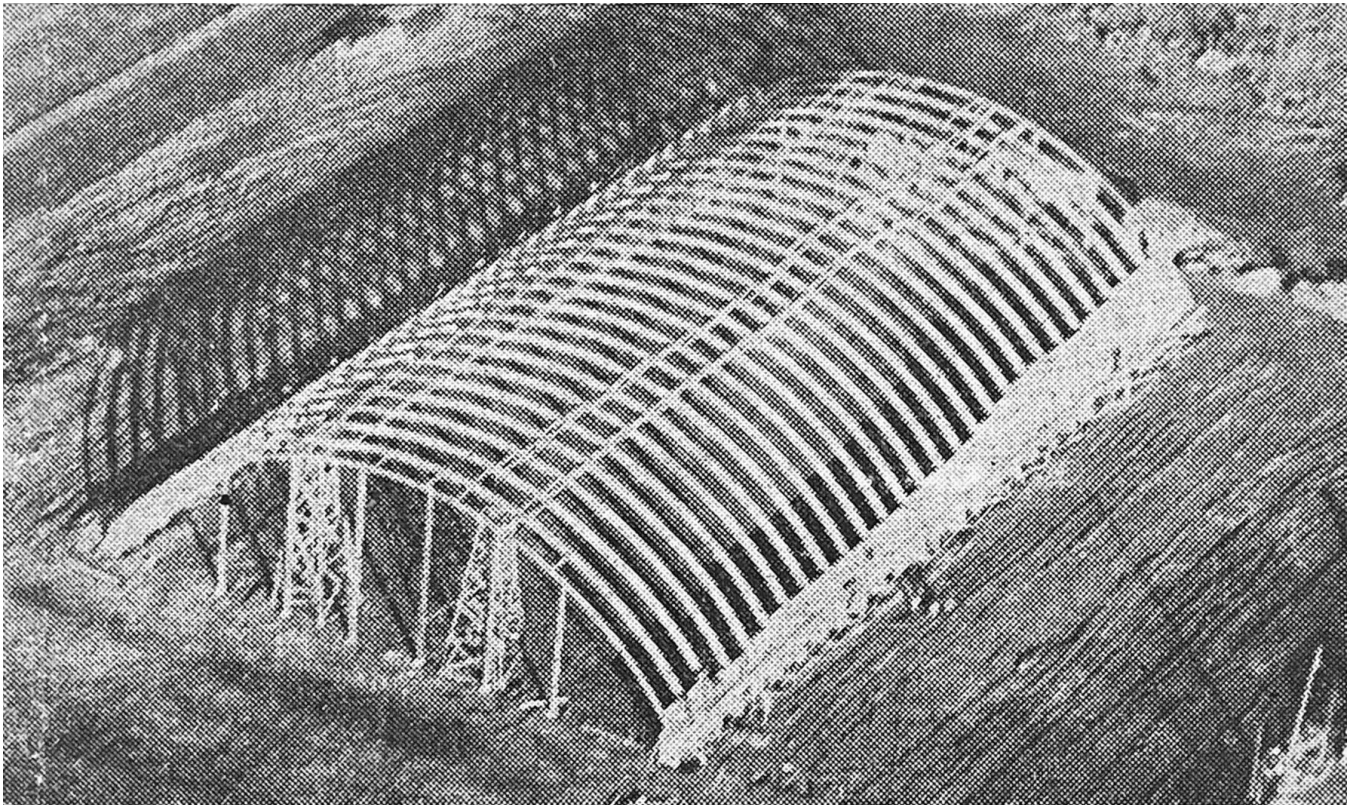
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Figure 7: Roseau Memorial Arena during construction.

Source: *Roseau Times-Region*, November 10, 1949.



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Figure 8: Roseau Memorial Arena. View to the northwest around 1955 following the addition of the concrete block warming house. *Source: Roseau County Historical Society*



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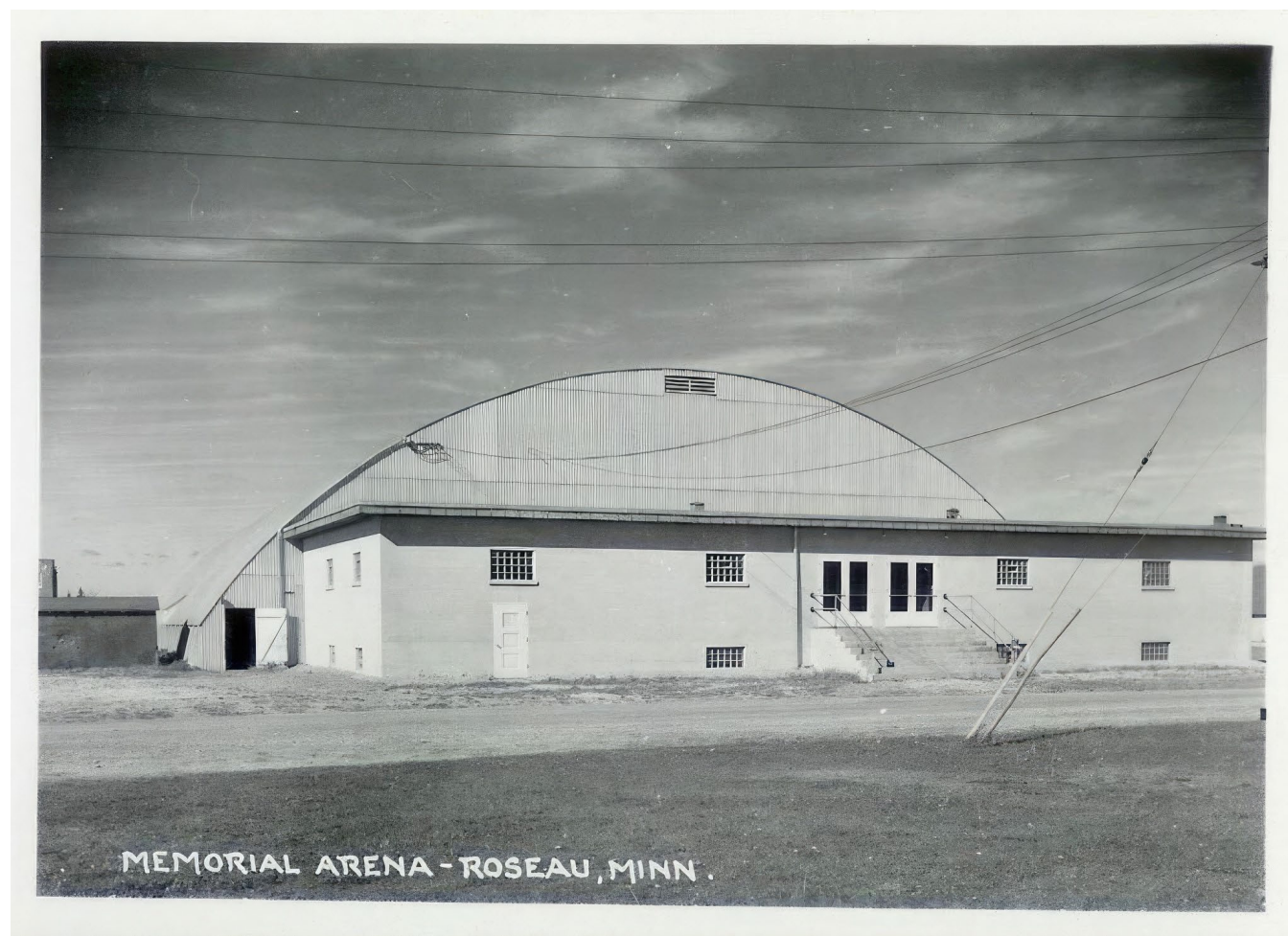
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Figure 9: Roseau Memorial Arena. View to the northwest around 1955 following the addition of the concrete block warming house.

Source: Roseau County Historical Society



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Figure 10: Roseau Memorial Arena 2003.

Source: Minnesota Vintage Hockey

The North Rink (right) was built in 2002 without connecting to Memorial Arena (left). In 2004, an addition to the Arena provided space for a condenser unit. It was not until 2013 that a connection was made between the two buildings.



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Figure 11: Roseau Memorial Arena, January 9, 2024. This was the 185th meeting between the two high school teams.

Source: Roseau High School



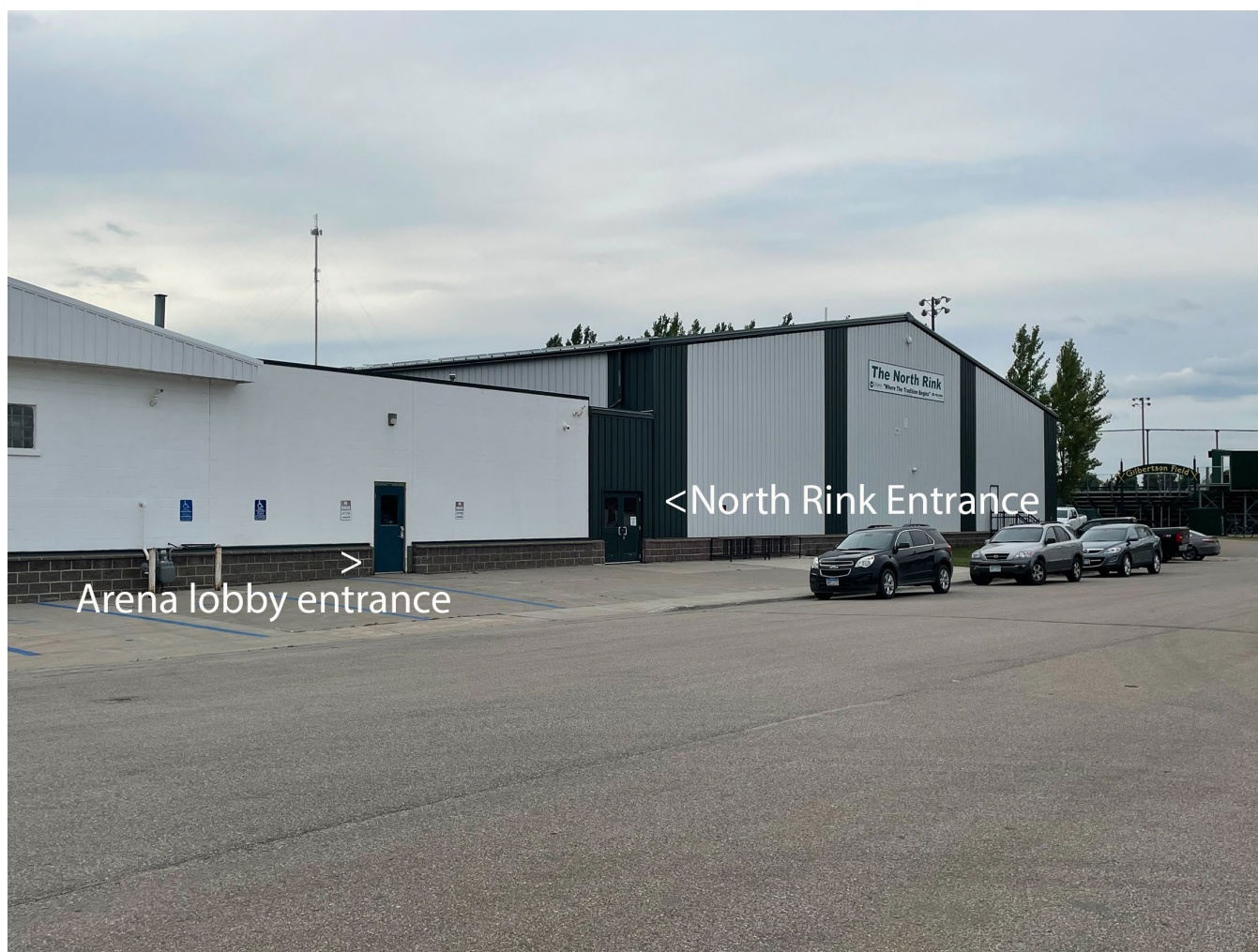
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Figure 12: Roseau Memorial Arena and North Rink, east elevation. The North Rink entrance was built in 2013 and an addition to the 2002 North Rink.



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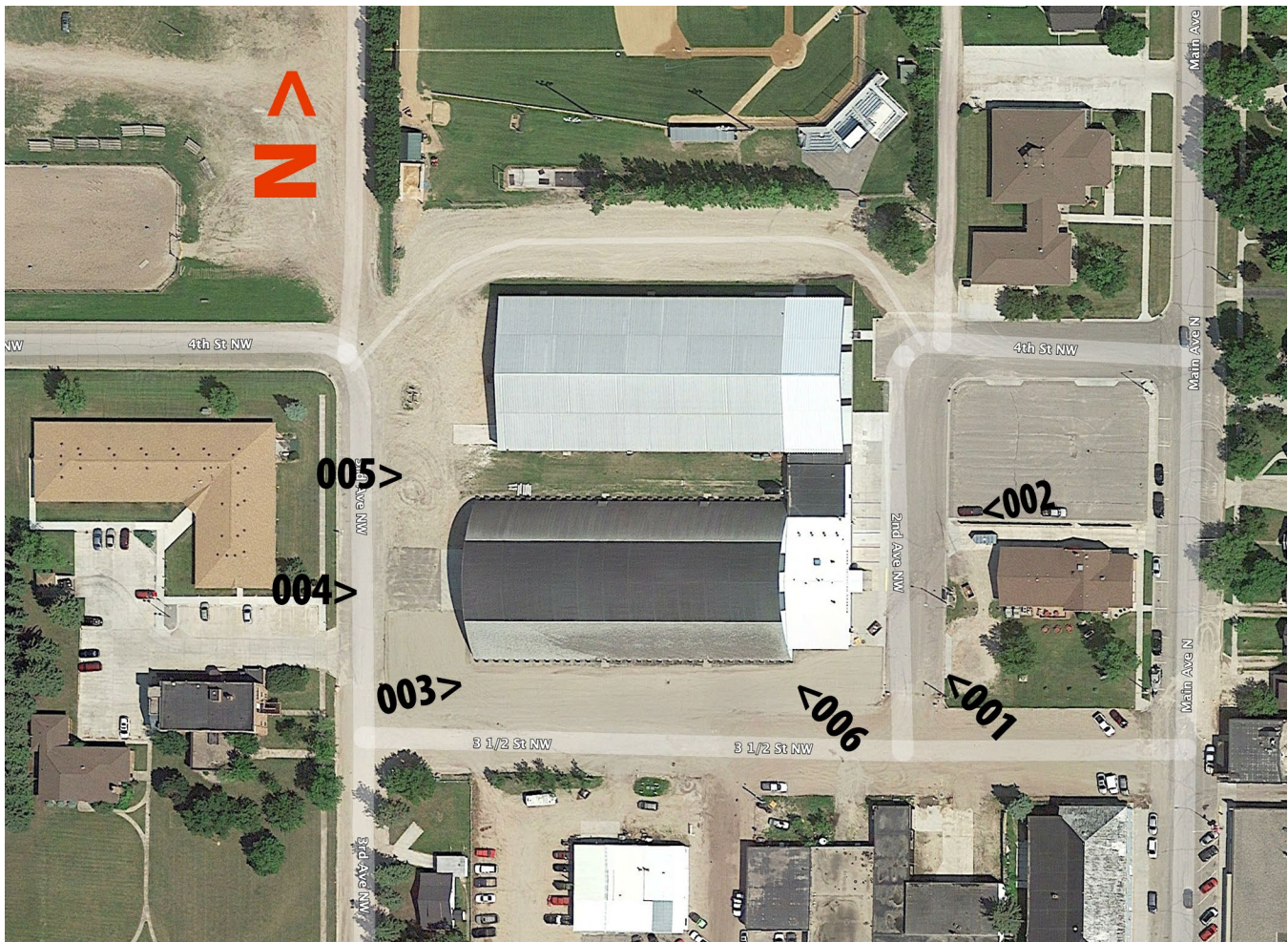
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PHOTO KEY: EXTERIOR



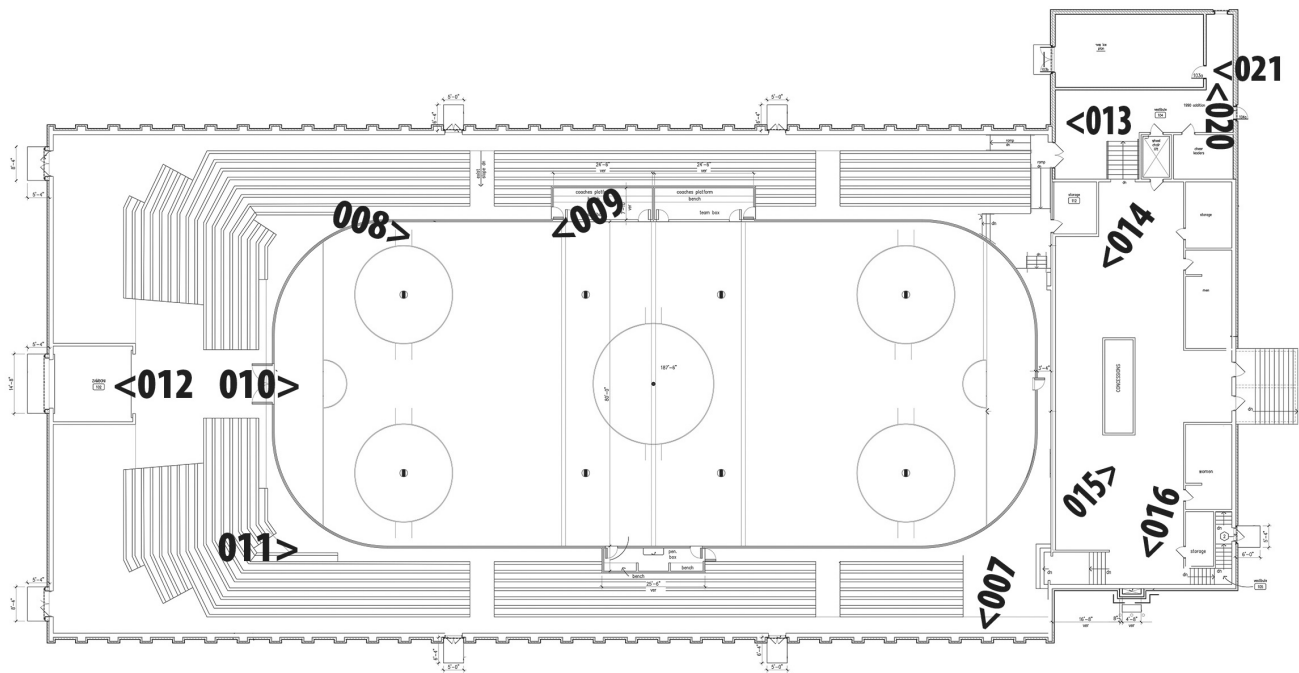
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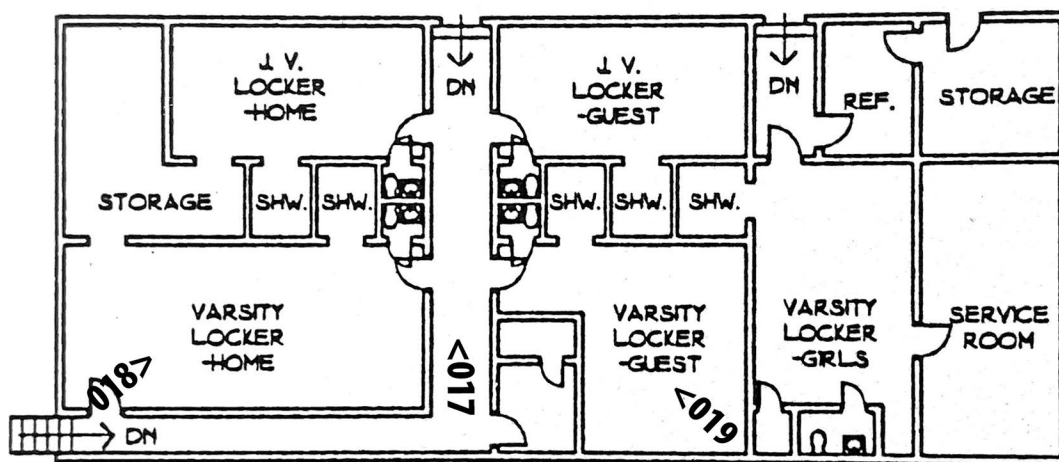
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PHOTO KEY: INTERIOR



① first floor plan
3/8" = 1'-0"



② LOCKER ROOMS
1/16" = 1'-0"