

**OLD YANKEE STADIUM GATE 2 MEMORIAL
ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE, CONSTRUCTION,
STABILITY, COST, & ORIGINALITY**

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INTRODUCTION

On May 5, 1922, foundation work for Yankee Stadium began on a five-sided plot of land located in the Highbridge section of the Bronx. It was acquired the previous year from the estate of William Waldorf Astor by the owners of the New York Yankees, Jacob Ruppert and Tillinghast L'Hommedieu Huston. Completed in only 284 days at a cost of \$2.5 million, Yankee Stadium was a grand venue and state of the art for its time. It was the first baseball facility with three separate seating levels and, when opened on April 18, 1923, was by far the largest stadium built to date.

The Yankees, having been tenants of the New York Giants at the nearby Polo Grounds since 1913, were notified by the Giants that they were to vacate the premises by the end of the 1922 baseball season. It is generally agreed that the primary reason for this eviction was the sudden increase in attendance at Yankee games after their purchase of Babe Ruth in 1920 to the extent that the Yankees outdrew the Giants in their own ballpark.

The Yankees won the first of their 26 World Series championships during that inaugural season of 1923, and with all the baseball and non-baseball related history that took place inside of its walls over 85 years, Yankee Stadium became world renowned as the Roman Coliseum of its day.

With the move of the Yankees to the new ballpark across the street in 2009, the historic Yankee Stadium is slated for demolition and will be replaced by Heritage Field, a new park to contain three baseball fields for neighborhood use.

In the meantime, a great opportunity exists for preserving a small but historically significant portion of the original Yankee Stadium exterior wall and at the same time creating a wonderful gate for the new Heritage Field. This opportunity is perfectly represented by Gate 2.

LOCATION & SIZE

Old Yankee Stadium Gate 2, the left field entrance into the Stadium is situated near the southwest corner of River Avenue and East 161st Street. It is located closest to East 161st Street and oriented roughly parallel to this street. River Avenue, along with the elevated Lexington Av. Express/No. 4 subway line, is approximately 250 feet to the east. It is also directly across East 161st Street from the new Yankee Stadium and faces Gate 6 on its right field side. As Gate 2 is located closer to the new Stadium than any other portion of the old park, it will serve very well as a symbolic bridge linking these two great baseball venues. Moreover, the Gate will be a dramatic entrance into the new Heritage Field, providing inspiration for neighborhood children on their way to baseball games for generations to come.

The restored Gate will be a three sided structure with its front side facing north. Connected to this front side on both ends are to be two sidewalls extending to the same height as the Gate's front. The approximate dimensions of the restored Gate 2 as proposed are 68 feet wide, 79 feet high (measured to the 1970s era cornice), and 16-17 feet deep.



CONFIGURATION & ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL

Gate 2 is considered to be the most picturesque section remaining from the original Yankee Stadium dating to the 1920s. On the street level, there are five door openings or bays through which fans entered the Stadium. Three of these are clustered together in the slightly recessed center gate section and the other two are at each end. This portion of Gate 2 was part of the original 1923 Yankee Stadium construction. For the first five seasons, the three level grandstand extended just beyond first and third bases. In the Gate 2 area, only the field level stands originally existed; these were constructed of steel and concrete and were retained throughout the life of the Stadium.



With the expansion of the Stadium grandstand into left field during the 1928 season, the mezzanine and upper levels were built over the existing field level stands. Using the same design as Gate 4 behind home plate, the height of Gate 2 was significantly increased to enclose the corridors and ramps that provided access to these two additional levels of seating. The Gate, as we know it, took shape at this time.



The three attractive arched windows providing light and ventilation for the interior concourses were built as part of this 1928 expansion. The center of this portion of the Gate where these three windows are located is also slightly recessed continuing the configuration of the lowest level of the exterior built in 1923. At about one-third the height of each of these windows were placed small concrete balconies. Nine terracotta “end pylon” pieces with a baseball related motif (baseballs and the Yankees’ interlocking NY logo) were fixed to the balcony fronts (three on each) and two more shields were located above and between the three arched windows. All of this gave Gate 2 symmetry and an imposing and grand appearance.



On both sides of the three arched windows are two rows of very narrow but tall rectangular shaped windows within the non-recessed Gate 2 end sections. Five smaller windows are situated directly above the arched and rectangular windows. These were filled in during the Stadium renovation in the 1970s although their shapes are still visible.

Across the topmost portion of the 1928 Gate 2 extension was a flat concrete section bridging the two vertical Gate end sections and the center recessed portion which contain the arched windows and balconies. The distinctive Yankee medallions were located at each end of this section. Two of these large medallions were affixed to each of the three major Yankee Stadium entrances (Gates 2, 4 and 6). Completing the ornamentation at the top of Gate 2 were the four feet high copper-alloy “YANKEE STADIUM” letters placed in between the famous medallions. The

medallions and Yankee Stadium letters were removed during the renovation in the 1970s but the medallions have since been replicated at the new Stadium Gate 4.

This upper concrete section was cut off during the Stadium renovation and replaced with a similar but taller concrete facade that enclosed the concourse and ramps for the reconfigured upper deck. The replacement concrete section was designed to match the lower Gate 2 structure. One difference with the original is that its lowest section is recessed in the center and follows the contour of the lower Gate. There are three vents for the interior concourse in this center area. A concrete cornice runs horizontally above these vents and across the entire Gate. There is also another flat concrete section above this cornice to complete the current Gate configuration.



GATE 2 CONSTRUCTION

The Gate 2 structure, along that of the original Yankee Stadium exterior walls, consists of a poured reinforced concrete façade supported by structural steel I-beams. This method of construction is durable as the different structural properties of reinforced concrete and steel compliment each other thus resulting in a very stable building. This was a very common building construction technique during the first half of the twentieth century. It is also rated as fire resistive construction. The upper Gate concrete section dating from the 1970s is also constructed of reinforced concrete.



As depicted in the photos above, Gate 2 is connected to a network of structural steel members. These currently support the interior corridors and ramps but provide additional stability for the Gate. Additionally, there is a basement level below Gate 2. Original Stadium plans show the basement depth to be at 10.5 feet below street level.

The original concrete walls utilized Edison Portland Cement, an ingredient of concrete that increases its hardness. This cement was developed by Thomas A. Edison during the early twentieth century at his New Jersey based laboratory and concrete plant. As the Yankee Stadium walls are one of the best extant examples of a large building utilizing Edison Portland Cement, the historical significance of this structure is thus magnified further arguing for the preservation of Gate 2.

FEASIBILITY & STABILITY

Discussions with a long-standing and reputable steel erection firm in New York have confirmed that the preservation of Gate 2 is extremely feasible. The Gate structure is very stable now and would remain so during construction and afterward.

There are options on how the preservation job would proceed once the demolition of the rest of Yankee Stadium begins. For example, the demolition company could demolish the structures adjacent to Gate 2 and install temporary supports to make the Gate free standing, or they could temporarily leave a section of the Stadium from the Gate to the first set of support columns and demolish the structure around it before permanently bracing the Gate to be a stand alone monument. It is important to note that the separation of the Gate from the rest of the Stadium, and installation of any required supports, can occur during the demolition process so as not to extend the overall demolition timeline.

In terms of the necessary Gate 2 restoration needed, our proposal is that the current gate structure be retained up to and including the cornice. This height would be approximately equal to that of the original Gate. The 1970s era concrete section above the cornice would be removed.

With regard to the sidewalls for the completed Gate, the east wall (closest to River Av.) was part of the 1923 and 1928 construction and still exists. The west sidewall would need to be built so as to form the third side of the Gate 2 structure.



COST OF GATE 2 PRESERVATION

A New York based steel erection firm has estimated that the rough Gate 2 preservation cost would be less than \$1 million. The cost estimate for the concrete necessary to fill in the west sidewall is less than \$100,000. Other expenses would include engineering, steel reinforcement, foundation/footings, crane permits, etc. These costs will be a very small fraction of the current Yankee Stadium demolition budget of \$80 million and the \$50.8 million projected budget for Heritage Field itself. Also, the Gate as a freestanding structure would require minimal on-going maintenance.

Viable opportunities exist for defraying much, if not all of the Gate 2 preservation cost. Discussions with several contractors indicate their willingness to volunteer services for this effort. Similar to the current Polo Grounds Brush Staircase Project, fundraising through pledges can produce additional financial options. The sale of commemorative paving bricks also has the potential to recoup much of this expense. Recent commemorative brick projects at stadiums and other historic sites throughout the US, which are very popular with the public, have resulted in profits of up to \$5 million.

ORIGINALITY OF GATE 2

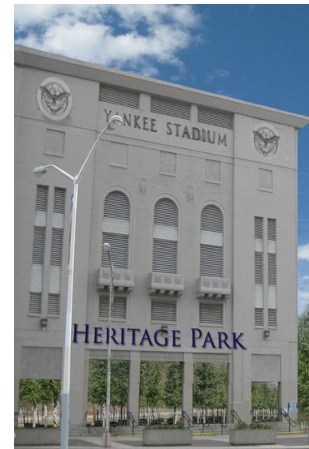
The exciting reality is that more than 80% of the original 1920s Gate structure remains. Of the old Yankee Stadium's three main entrances, Gate 2 was the only one not significantly altered during the renovation, and Gate 2 is the most architecturally significant element remaining from the pre-renovated structure. The three photos/renderings below clearly illustrate this originality.



Gate 2: 1928-1973



Gate 2: 1976-Current



Gate 2: Proposed

The bottom section of the Gate was built in 1923 when the Stadium opened. The upper portion (arches & balconies) was added in 1928 with the leftfield grandstand extension. Because the upper deck was reconfigured during the Yankee Stadium renovation in 1973-76, the uppermost section seen in the old photo on the left (contains the two medallions and the Yankee Stadium lettering) was replaced with the concrete strip with the three vent openings and the cornice above as shown in the center post renovation photo. The proposed Gate 2 restoration (depicted at right)

would involve only the removal of the horizontal concrete strip located above the cornice (refer to center photo) and reinstalling the two medallions and the Yankee Stadium lettering.

The two sidewalls would provide stability for Gate 2 as shown in the rendering below. The sidewall on the right was built as part of the 1928 grandstand extension. This wall still exists. So new construction would consist of just the one sidewall depicted on the left in this rendering.



In summary, preservation of Gate 2 preserves significant elements from all phases of the Stadium's existence: original construction, expansion and renovation. It creates a symbolic bridge from old to new and creates a historically relevant entrance to Heritage Field. Moreover, it does this at a very low cost with no adverse impact on the demolition or park construction process and does not impede on the new park facilities.

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