

Arts and Recreation

Arts and Recreation facilities surveyed as part of the Ohio Modern project were built from 1940 to 1969 in Dayton, Kettering, and Vandalia. Fifteen buildings related to this theme were surveyed, including sports-related buildings such as basketball arenas, ice skating rinks, bowling alleys, a boys' club, and a recreation center. Also included were entertainment-related buildings such as movie theaters, a concert arena, a natural history museum, a band shell and a tourist camp. Stylistically, most are categorized as Modern Movement, but there are also some examples of Googie, Art Moderne, Art Deco, and International Styles. Architects who designed arts and recreation facilities in the Dayton area in this time period include Emory J. Ohler, Richard Neutra, Pretzinger & Pretzinger, and John Sullivan, Jr.

The former **Airline Theater** (MOT-05465-13) was built in 1947 next to the Airline Shopping Center. For many years, it was the only movie theater in Vandalia. Converted into a Masonic Temple in 1961, it is a two-story building with International Style design elements.



Airline Theater
246 N. Dixie Dr., Vandalia

The two story **Coliseum** at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds (MOT-05199-60) was built in 1922 and remodeled with a Modern treatment, including turquoise panels in the openings, in 1953, when several of the fairgrounds' historic buildings were rehabilitated as part of the fairgrounds 100th anniversary.



Coliseum
Montgomery County Fairgrounds, Dayton

The former **Bomberger Recreation Center** (MOT-05161-57) was designed by John Sullivan, Jr., and built in 1955 in Bomberger Park. It is a two-story building with a taller gymnasium, featuring International and Modern Movement design elements including a projecting two-story glass entry. The recreation center replaced early 20th-century facilities at the park and was part of the city's overall 1950s park improvements plan.



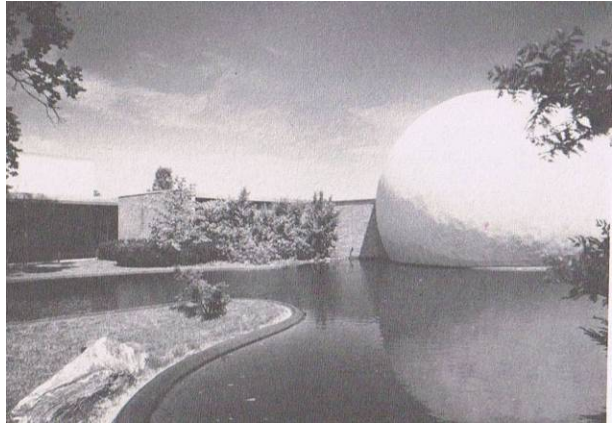
Bomberger Recreation Center
1306 E. Fifth St., Dayton

The **University of Dayton Arena** (MOT-05157-64) was built in 1969 and is the home of the University of Dayton Flyers basketball team. Construction of the arena was the direct result of "mounting ticket pressures as the UD student body grew from 2,000 undergraduates in 1950 to more than 7,500 in 1968." (Albers) Designed by a local firm, Pretzinger & Pretzinger, it is a four-story building with a distinctive Modernist convex roof. UD athletic director Tom Frericks approached Pretzinger & Pretzinger after the initial plans for a round arena were beyond the project budget. The firm created a different and more favorable design, resulting in the arena having 60% of its seats between the baskets. It was completed for a cost of approximately \$3.5 million. The UD arena has hosted the NCAA tournament numerous times.



University of Dayton Arena
1801 S. Edwin C. Moses Blvd., Dayton

The **Dayton Natural History Museum** (MOT-05169-47) was established in 1893 and for many decades was part of the public library system. In the 1950s, the museum was threatened with closure, but local children fought the closure with a fundraising campaign. Prominent Modernist architect Richard Neutra was chosen to design the new museum, that was completed in April, 1958. In 1959, the Junior League donated funds for the planetarium, also designed by Neutra and completed in 1960. In 1963, the museum director noted, "It used to be commonplace to find a Daytonian who didn't know about the museum. Now that is a rarity." (Sanders 85)



Dayton Natural History Museum, ca. 1968
2600 Deweese Pkwy., Dayton
(Historic Image 21)