Recreational Facility

Dual sheets of Olympic size ice surfaces, plus 4 to 12 curling sheets would be the most profitable ice skating facility scenario. Combining other recreational sports and physical activities with one or more sheets of ice provides a stronger economic model than a just an ice rink with no other amenities.

Any ice facility that is primarily a training facility for curling, hockey, speed, and/or figure skating has a lot of dead time during the day while most customers are at school or otherwise occupied by jobs or household responsibilities.

Such a facility must have a strong public skating and group class program to generate a stream of home grown new customers that eventually join resident clubs and leagues headquartered at the rink.
The floor plan of the Collinwood recreation center offers a look inside the facility, to be inserted inside an old Big Lots store starting in 2010.

In addition to green design, the project is part of a national trend toward "big box reuse," documented in book with the same title published by Oberlin College Visiting Professor Julia Christensen. Christensen shows how communities across the country are turning abandoned big box stories into justice centers, go-cart raceways, daycare centers, charter schools, libraries and churches.

The trend has gone largely unnoticed by architecture critics, perhaps because examples in the book featured big boxes redecorated with kitschy, faux-classical facades.

Volpe's design is more high-concept. He's cleaning and reusing a folded metal canopy that will make the upper portion of the building's main facade resemble a giant, stretched out accordion.

In addition to this bit of 60's-era styling, Volpe will modify the original flat roofs with a sloped roof over the natatorium and a gable roof with a skylight monitor over the gym. Metal panels on the facades will be finished in colors including a goldenrod yellow, a soft, earthy gray and a weathered blue intended to evoke nearby Lake Erie.

The project will be financed by the city through general obligation bonds, which makes it a self-help effort at producing jobs in a recession. Construction, which will take about 14 months, should begin in the first half of 2010, said Ken Silliman, the mayor's chief of staff.

Cleveland could do with more projects like this. Recycling an empty store as a recreation center could help at least one corner of the city hang on to existing residents and attract new ones. It shows how smart design can aid a larger recycling project - that of Cleveland as a whole.

The facility also includes the Marche, a 160-seat restaurant overlooking Nippert along with a juice bar and a more informal 400-seat Center Court dining facility featuring made-to-order specialty pizzas, deli sandwiches, fresh breads, salads and more.

Floor plans and budgets vary, but the typical center is generally comprised of three areas, each programmatically and environmentally unique: fitness, ice rinks, curling sheets, lap pool, offices, and multipurpose rooms and meeting space, etc..

These spaces usually radiate from the building's core, where the lockers and food service are found. The architectural intention is a natural flow from one space to another with an openness that defies demarcation. In fact, it is quite common to have a running track winding through the complex, underscoring the oneness of the assembly
The renovated and expanded Billingsly Student Center at Missouri Southern now serves multiple masters. It is the new home of the Beimdiek Recreation Center, the Willcoxon Health Center, the campus bookstore, textbook rental services, Lion’s Den Food Service and student life offices.

A 50-meter, Olympic-sized lap pool with eight lanes or a natatorium is a logical feature for a recreation center. If indoors, it should be a structurally separate building to reduce environmental damage, from the pool chemicals and moisture, to other parts of the center. The building would house locker rooms, and related activities, such as a diving tank or facilities for water polo.