

New Riverside Stand at Fulham FC

PROJECT TEAM

Architect: **Populous**

Structural Engineer: **WSP**

Steelwork Contractor: **Severfield**

Client: **Fulham FC**



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Fulham are a football club with a rich history and strong sense of community - they have played at their riverside ground, Craven Cottage, since 1896. These two characteristics informed the client's brief to create a 21st century facility for fans that would operate 365 days a year and serve the club into the future. The Thames Riverwalk was to be opened up and this was to be done within a very constrained footprint, whilst the club remained playing at their home throughout.

The architecture of the new Riverside Stand seeks to distance itself from the traditional structurally driven approach normally found in football stand design. The structure of the roof is hidden within a clad soffit, affording the opportunity to place plant within the roof structural depth and freeing up usable floor space in the building below.

The design of the new Riverside Stand has been influenced by the architecture of boathouses that are a feature of this section of the river, and the steel frame has been celebrated throughout with the exposed Riverwalk columns and balcony visible along the full length.

The Riverside Stand itself also has no direct road access. The river therefore represented the projects' biggest opportunity and risk for the construction. A significant portion of the steel frame, all precast concrete elements and a large quantity of the cladding was transported by the river, reducing congestion and the impact of road traffic on the neighbourhood.

Steel roof trusses spanning 35m were assembled together in pairs at Tilbury docks and fitted with roof finishes to both surfaces as well as MEP (mechanical, electrical and plumbing). This offsite construction was then lifted onto barges, sailed up the river, before being craned into position. This pre-assembly significantly reduced work at height.

The steel frame solution allowed the incorporation of some key features to improve space planning and maximise the useable floorplate. Three transfer trusses, up to 22m-long, were included to provide column-free spaces. Vertical Vierendeel trusses provide the support to the cantilever roof to minimise impact on the use of the floorplate. Adaptability was proven during the design development phases as different uses, such as apartments, spa and hotel, have all been introduced to the design.

Close collaboration within the project team and the attention to detail of the exposed steel elements were key to delivering this innovative, iconic stadium building, worthy of the location and befitting of this historic sports ground.

Judges' comment

Most notably the sizeable Fulham Riverside Stand was constructed without interrupting football operations. Prefabricated and partially assembled on Tilbury docks, the substantial components were then transported along the Thames to site for installation. This innovative approach ensured seamless progress and minimised disruptions, showcasing exemplary planning and execution.