

BRENTFORD FOOTBALL CLUB

FORMAL RESPONSE

INTRODUCTION

AFL Architects, on behalf of Brentford Football Club are delighted to confirm receipt of the summary of responses from the supporter survey, and can confirm that the comments, opinions and ideas outlined therein are being fully considered, at this concept design stage.

Consultations will continue through later stages of design to address appropriate issues and ensure the design remains responsive to supporters' interests.

This document responds directly to the comments prompted by the questionnaire issued to supporters in April by the Lionel Road Stadium Consultation Group.

Responses are preceded by a reminder of the questions originally posed.

1. *What are the positive respects of Griffen Park and the Matchday experience that you would like to see retained at the new ground?*

- a. The comment regarding the spectators' proximity to the pitch is widely shared. Current design standards (stipulated by FIFA and UEFA) call for minimum distances between the goal line and spectators (7.5m) and the touch line and the first row of seats (6m).

Compliance with these requirements ensures the new ground will be suitable for the staging of a wide variety of matches.

- b) 40% of respondents mentioned this proximity issue and the Design Team are currently looking at ways of maximising the number of spectators sitting as close as possible to the pitch (for example, a two tier design will pull more seats towards the touchlines and increase the sense of enclosure around the pitch.
- c) Currently football stadia in the UK are designed as all seated venues. Opinion is divided regarding the safety issues, but the introduction of standing spectator areas would at this time, preclude access to possible grant assistance towards the capital cost of the project, from sources such as the Football Foundation. In addition, UEFA and FIFA will not sanction competitive games at venues that are not fully seated in the UK.
- d) The new Stadium will provide a variety of pre and post match catering offers. The current ground offers the renowned facility of 'A pub at each corner'. Whilst this may not be replicated, facilities will be distributed around the ground and the Design Team are currently exploring the idea that these facilities can reflect, in some way, the 'Four Pub' theme. The aim is to offer these facilities 7 days a week where possible.

2. When you think of Brentford moving to a new Stadium, what are the facilities you think might ideally be part of the new Stadium?

- a) The new stadium design aims to provide a much wider and better quality catering offer. A full range of pre and post match dining, bar, and meeting facilities are being considered. These facilities will include the provision of 'sit down' dining for the ordinary fan, and will be positioned at appropriate areas of the Stadium. This mix of offers is essential if the Club is to maximise revenue from catering, and the fans are able to choose the matchday experience that suits them.
- b) The new stadium will be compliant with current 'DDA' requirements and the criteria within the 'Accessible Stadia Design Guide'. Disabled fans will be offered a variety of locations, all of which will be carefully located and will not impede the view to the pitch of and other supporters, and will not allow the disabled supporters' view to be blocked by other fans standing.
- c) W.C. provision will also be in accordance with current 'Stadia Design Guide' requirements. Design ratios will be as follows:-

80-25% male to female provision based on F.S.A.D.C. Design Guide which determines the level of provision. Female provision has a 5% factor to allow for growing female attendances.

- d) Transportation lines to the new Stadium are being carefully examined. The proximity of the site to local bus and rail services is an advantage, but it is recognised that some parking provision will need to be allowed for onsite.

Currently options for undercroft parking are being considered, but must be reconciled with service and access requirements. In recognition of the fact that this is a key issue, the Design Team is currently liaising with transportation consultants to ensure the project responds to current strategies.

- e) The choice of an appropriate supporters' access system (eg Oyster card type turnstile operation) is part of the overall accessibility strategy currently being considered by specialist consultants. The system chosen will be geared to providing as specialised a system as is possible, but must be flexible to ensure a variety of events can be held at the Stadium, if required.
- f) The Design Team have recognised that the new Stadium will present a number of changes in respect of the hospitality offer. It is encouraging to see that fans understand the need for this change, and equally positive that there is a passion to regain the Club's distinctive identity.

In view of the significant site constraints, it may not be possible to re-create a single tier Royal Oak stand, but the Team are currently looking at the configuration of a home end, incorporating pre and post match facilities with the idea of maximising the number of seats in close proximity to the pitch.

- g) Full consideration is being given to the use of the Stadium for events other than football matches. As the design evolves, these options will become clearer, particularly in view of the possible constraints generated by the site.

- h) The Design Team incorporates an 'Acoustic Expert' in order that all issues relating to crowd noise and its contribution to a matchday atmosphere are properly considered. This is a vital area of design, if the best atmosphere is to be created for the fans and players alike.
- k) Improved legroom and spectator comfort when seated will be addressed as the new Stadium terrace details are established (with a minimum step depth of 750mm) and seat widths are determined (proposed min 480mm). These dimensions measured from front of terrace to front of terrace above and seat centre to seat centre adjacent, represent a significant improvement on the current provision at Griffin Park.

The intention is that all seated fans will have a clear uninterrupted view of the pitch.

- l) The provision of a large scoreboard is under consideration. Suitable locations are being identified during this design development stage of the project.
- m) Whilst the Design Team are aware of some fans desire to smoke at the game, the new Stadium will, for reasons of safety and compliance with current legislation, be a non-smoking venue.
- n) Careful consideration is being given to the appropriate location for a 'Family provision and crèche facilities'. BFC recognised the benefit of this provision and its contribution to maintaining the 'special' feel of the Club.
- o) As part of the wider agenda, the Design Team are looking at the possibility of providing other community facilities such as swimming pools, a sports hall, and a café. A number of other facilities may be considered to develop the Stadium as a true community hub (hotel, retail units, Club Museum, etc), promoting the active use of the building all week round.
- p) The Design team are keenly aware of the desire to retain the distinctiveness of the Club and to maintain the 'Brentford Feel'.

Current proposals are very distinctive and do not follow the standardisation agenda other clubs have. The aim is to provide a distinctive Brentford facility, designed to facilitate the future development of the Club within the community.

3. What else would you like as part of the new stadium?

- a) The current design places the players' tunnel on the centre line of the pitch.
- b) The ongoing design process will remain focussed on the need to develop a community and spectator friendly facilities with as wide a variety of uses as possible.

There is currently no proposal to incorporate a running track around the pitch, as the site cannot support this, and there is no requirement for the facility.

- c) The new Stadium, by virtue of the multiple uses envisaged and the community profile of the club will remain distinctively 'Brentford'. This distinctiveness will be reflected in the design of the Stadium and its support facilities.
- d) Full consideration is being given to all green issues regarding the design, construction and operation of the new Stadium, whilst retaining a clear view of the long-term affordability of such strategies.

4 If you have been to any New Stadium recently, which ones do you particularly admire?

- a) Clearly fans are aware of the new generation of UK stadia. However, the intention is for the Design Team to apply their expertise in this field to create a Stadium unique and responsive to the identity and needs of B.F.C.

The Design Team have benchmarked the proposals against recently completed stadia of all types to ensure we incorporate the best (most appropriate) features where possible.

5. If you have been to any stadiums recently, which ones do you particularly dislike.

- a) The key negative reaction from fans to the new stadiums they have seen is the perceived lack of character and atmosphere at some new grounds. The particularities of the site and Club requirements suggest this will not be an issue at the new Brentford Stadium.

6. Thinking specifically of the catering that might be provided at Lionel Road, are there any things in particular you would like to see at the new Stadium?

- a) The Design Team are aware of the need to offer a varied catering offer, as previously stated, and will seek to provide facilities that maximise choice, minimise queues and create a wider corporate offer. One idea being considered is to create Club concourse type food halls where varied concessions service a common area during pre and post match.
- b) There is limited scope to develop 'old style' pub environments but at this time no options have been discounted.
- c) Devices such as separating food and drink outlets on concourses have been tried at other venues and the effectiveness of this strategy is being assessed.
- d) It is hoped that the design process will lead to an environment that responds clearly to the current dissatisfaction of the fans with this aspect of the matchday experience and will offer options such as healthy food, "more choice, greater range and more variety".

7. Thinking specifically of the seating (or even standing) areas within the New Stadium, are there any things in particular you would like to see?

- a) The provision of more comfortable seating has been identified as a key design deliverable. The New Stadium will reflect current (better) standards as previously stated.
- b) The issue of standing fans remains contentious but the Design Team are briefed to comply with current design guidance as listed above.
- c) The Design Team are currently looking at providing a family area and continue to develop a terrace plan which maximises the number of fans close to the pitch.

8. Thinking specifically of the overall appearance of the Stadium, are there any points you would like to make?

- a) The appearance of the Stadium will undoubtedly be distinctive. The current proposal creates an enclosed pitch to maximise a cauldron like atmosphere and focus attention (and noise) onto the playing surface.

From the outside, the Stadium will reflect its unique location as well as the identity of the Club and will provide a facility with a true community focus.

9. Are there issues you would like to raise that don't fit under any of the previous questions?

10. Do you have any other comments about the proposed new Stadium at Lionel Road?

- a) Responses to the above questions (9 & 10) broadly reflected response to the previous questions, however, the Design Team appreciate the level of understanding shown by supporters that this is a key opportunity to develop a home for the future and the Team should seek the best possible facility that can be realistically delivered.
- b) The new Stadium will indeed, fuse the aims of achieving good customer service, maintaining the Brentford Community values and respecting the history of the Club.