

> ATHENS 1896 VENUES



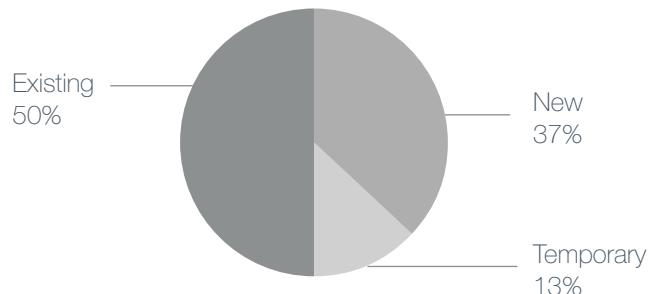
OVERVIEW

Seven competition venues were used for the Olympic Games Athens 1896, five of which remain in use today. Three of the competition venues were existing, three were new and one was temporary. Along with the temporary venue, one of the new venues has been demolished. The three existing venues all remain in use.

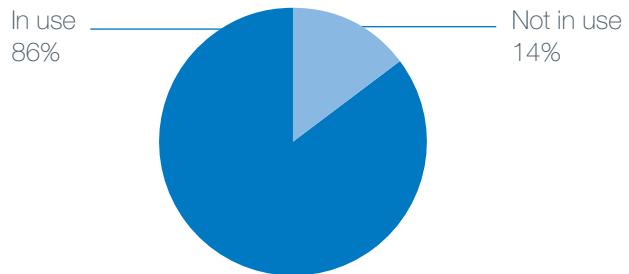
Most of the venues continue to host elite sporting events, with two of them staging competitions at the Olympic Games Athens 2004 and a third used as the main communications centre for that event. Some are also open to visitors and host events such as conferences and concerts.

An eighth venue was set up to host the Athens 1896 rowing competition, but this was cancelled due to stormy conditions. The venue is still in use. An existing venue, the Panathenaic Stadium, served as the Olympic Stadium, staging the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and several of the competitions. There was no official Olympic Village.

VENUE CLASSIFICATION



CURRENT USE (PERMANENT VENUES)





ATHENS 1896 VENUES AT A GLANCE

Venue name at Games time	Venue classification at Games time	Use at Games time	Current status
Panathenaic Stadium	Existing	Athletics, artistic gymnastics, weightlifting	In use
Phaleron Bay	Existing	Rowing	In use
Bay of Zea	Existing	Swimming	In use
Zappeion	Existing	Fencing	In use
Athens Lawn Tennis Club	New build	Tennis	In use
Velodrome	New build	Cycling (track), tennis	In use (rebuilt)
Kallithea stand	New build	Shooting	Not in use (demolished)
Athens-Marathon-Athens	Temporary	Cycling (road), marathon	Dismantled (temporary)

> THE VENUES UP CLOSE

VENUES IN USE

PANATHENAIC STADIUM

Originally built in 329 BC, the stadium had fallen into disrepair in the 19th century before being restored for the 1896 Games. However, the work had not been completed by the time the Games began, and temporary wooden stands were installed.

The stadium has since hosted a number of sporting and cultural events, including the first Balkan Games in 1929, the opening ceremony of the 1997 IAAF World Championships, and the archery competitions and the finish of the men's and women's marathons at the Olympic Games Athens 2004.

Every two years, the stadium is also the venue for the official handover of the Olympic flame to the organisers of the next Olympic Summer or Winter Games. In April 2010, it opened to the public and became a visitor attraction, offering educational programmes for schools and tours. It is also a concert venue.

ATHENS LAWN TENNIS CLUB

Founded in 1895 and the oldest tennis club in Greece, the Athens Lawn Tennis Club hosts local and international competitions, including Greece's home Davis Cup matches. Open to members and visitors, it is also used for coaching and practice.

BAY OF ZEA

The bay has been a harbour since the early fifth century BC. Some temporary facilities were erected for the Games, including a pier for spectators and shelters for boats. It is now a yacht marina with berthing capacity for 670 craft.

ZAPPEION

Opened in 1888 for the purposes of exhibiting Greek art and antiquities. The Athens 1896 fencing competition took place in the building's circular atrium, around which spectator seating was installed. The venue has fulfilled a number of functions since then. A radio station and then a hospital during the Second World War, it was the home of the Organising Committee for the Olympic Games Athens 2004 from 1998 to 1999, and served as the main communications centre during the Games. Situated close to the Panathenaic Stadium, it is now a conference and exhibition centre and a member of the Historic Conference Centres of Europe association.

VELODROME

The 7,000-capacity velodrome at Neo Phaliron hosted the finish of the cycling road race and some of the tennis matches. Cycle races had been held before in the area, and the venue, which was refurbished to include other sporting facilities in 1899, would continue to stage them in the years immediately after the Games. The popularity of cycling began to decline in Greece, however, and the track was abandoned. In 1925, the velodrome was converted into a football ground and the track removed. Eleven years later, the venue was renamed Karaiskakis Stadium. The home ground of the football club Olympiacos, it hosted several other sports as well. In 2003, it made way for a new Karaiskakis Stadium, which staged several football matches at the Olympic Games Athens 2004.

VENUES NOT IN USE

KALLITHEA STAND

White marble was used to build the shooting stadium in the classical Greek style. The gallery featured long rows of columns and was capable of accommodating 30 shooters at a time. In 1922, the site was expropriated by the state to house refugees from the Greco-Turkish War, and the shooting range was relocated across the city of Athens to Kaisariani.

TEMPORARY VENUES

ATHENS-MARATHON-ATHENS

The men's individual road race at Athens 1896 covered the same route as the marathon race, with riders racing from Athens to Marathon and back again. For the marathon race, competitors ran from Marathon to the Greek capital on a course that was only 24.8 miles long (modern-day marathons are run over a distance of 26.219 miles or 42.195 kilometres). The first Olympic marathon of the modern era, the race was held to commemorate the famous run that the messenger Pheidippides made in delivering news of the victory over the Persians in 490 BC. The Athens 1896 road race and marathon both finished at the Panathenaic Stadium, which is also the finish point for the Athens Classic Marathon, first held in 1972.

> DID YOU KNOW?

The Panathenaic Stadium is so called because it was intended for use by all Athenians (the prefix - pan means "all, every, whole, all-inclusive"). It is also known as "Kallimarmaro", Greek for "beautiful marble".

In the Roman era, the stadium was a gladiator arena where wild animals were staged.

Along with the velodrome and the Kallithea stand, the stadium was one of three Athens 1896 venues to provide temporary shelter for refugees from the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922.

The Athens 1896 marathon was won by Greek runner Spyridon Louis, who gave his name to the Olympic Stadium used at Athens 2004 and the Olympic Athletic Centre of Athens, where the Olympic Stadium is situated.