

> LONDON 1948 VENUES

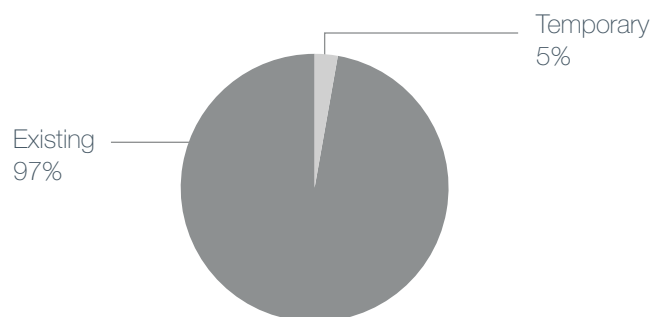


OVERVIEW

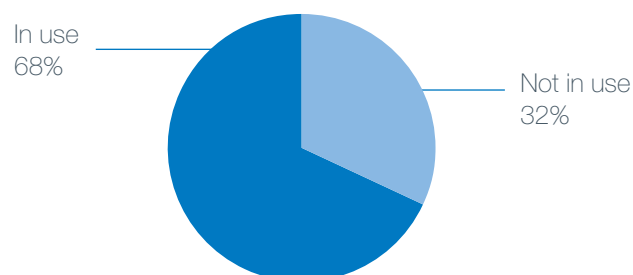
Twenty-nine competition venues were used for the Olympic Games London 1948, 19 of which remain in use to cater for high-performance and grassroots/community sport. Aside from one temporary venue, all the other competition venues were existing. No Olympic Village was built either, out of a desire to keep costs low in a country still recovering from WWII. Of the nine venues no longer in use, five are football stadiums. The temporary venue was dismantled after the Games.

Empire Stadium, now Wembley Stadium, hosted the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and the athletics competitions. Two of the venues had been used at the 1908 Olympic Games (Henley Royal Regatta Course and Bisley Rifle Range), while three were used at London 2012: Empire Stadium (Wembley), Empire Pool (Wembley Arena) and Empress Hall (Earl's Court).

VENUE CLASSIFICATION



CURRENT USE (PERMANENT VENUES)





LONDON 1948 VENUES AT A GLANCE

Venue name at Games time	Venue classification at Games time	Use at Games time	Current status
Empire Stadium (Wembley)	Existing	Athletics, Opening and Closing Ceremonies	In use (rebuilt)
Lyons Sports Ground, Sudbury Hill	Existing	Field hockey	In use
Polytechnic Stadium	Existing	Field hockey	In use
Herne Hill Track/Velodrome	Existing	Cycling (track)	In use
Champion Hill	Existing	Football	In use
Craven Cottage	Existing	Football	In use
Selhurst Park	Existing	Football	In use
Finchley Pool	Existing	Water polo	In use (rebuilt)
White Hart Lane	Existing	Football	In use (rebuilt)
Empire Pool	Existing	Swimming, diving, water polo, boxing	In use (repurposed)

LONDON 1948 VENUES AT A GLANCE (CONTINUED)

Venue name at Games time	Venue classification at Games time	Use at Games time	Current status
Griffin Park	Existing	Football	Not in use
Guinness Sports Ground, Park Royal	Existing	Field hockey	Not in use (demolished)
Empress Hall (Earl's Court)	Existing	Boxing, wrestling, weightlifting, gymnastics	Not in use (demolished)
Arsenal Stadium (Highbury Stadium)	Existing	Football	Not in use (demolished)
Green Pond Road	Existing	Football	Not in use (demolished)
Harringay Arena	Existing	Basketball	Not in use (demolished)
Lynn Road	Existing	Football	Not in use (demolished)
Palace of Engineering (Wembley Empire Exhibition Site)	Existing	Fencing	Not in use (demolished)
Venues outside London			
Central Gymnasium or Command Central Gymnasium	Existing	Modern pentathlon (fencing)	In use
Aldershot Command Central Stadium	Existing	Eventing, dressage	In use (rebuilt)
Tweseldown Racecourse	Existing	Eventing, modern pentathlon (equestrian)	In use
Aldershot Pool/ Aldershot Lido	Existing	Modern pentathlon (swimming)	In use
Bisley (Bisley National Rifle Association Ranges)	Existing	Shooting, modern pentathlon (shooting)	In use
Fratton Park	Existing	Football	In use
Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst	Existing	Modern pentathlon (running)	In use

LONDON 1948 VENUES AT A GLANCE (CONTINUED)

Venue name at Games time	Venue classification at Games time	Use at Games time	Current status
Torbay	Existing	Sailing	In use
Henley-on-Thames (site of the Royal Regatta Course)	Existing	Rowing, canoe	In use
Goldstone Ground	Existing	Football	Not in use (demolished)
Windsor Great Park	Temporary	Cycling (road)	Dismantled (temporary)

> THE VENUES UP CLOSE

VENUES IN USE

EMPIRE STADIUM (WEMBLEY)

Built for the British Empire Exhibition of 1924/25, the stadium hosted its first FA Cup final in 1923 and remains the venue for this showpiece match and for the League Cup final today. It is also the home of England's national football team and staged the 1966 World Cup final, the finals of the 1996 and 2020 UEFA European Championships, and the finals of the London 2012 women's and men's Olympic football tournaments.

The stadium has on occasion provided London football clubs Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur with a temporary home, and it has been used for several other sports over the years, including rugby league, rugby union, American football, speedway, boxing and baseball. It is also a celebrated concert venue and was the setting for the 1985 Live Aid charity concert. It also hosts corporate events and offers guided tours for visitors.

One of the two physical remnants of the 1948 Olympic Games is Olympic Way, since renamed Wembley Way. A half-mile approach to the stadium leading from the nearest London Underground station, it was built for the Games and channels spectators in their thousands to the stadium's gates. The other is the Olympic Roll of Honour, two large plaques commemorating the gold medallists at the 1948 Olympic Games and set in the walls on either side of the Royal Tunnel. The plaques were removed and kept safe when the stadium was demolished in 2003 and returned to Wembley in time for the 2012 Olympic Games, as part of an exhibition at the new stadium.

LYONS SPORTS GROUND, SUDBURY HILL

Created in memory of the soldiers who died in WWI, it opened in 1919. The site was sold in 2000 and, though the original pitches remain, the pavilions have been replaced by an indoor tennis and fitness centre.

POLYTECHNIC STADIUM

It is now used by the University of Westminster's sports teams. The stadium grandstand was built in 1936 and is now a listed building. The stadium was originally home to the Polytechnic Harriers Athletics Club and other local clubs and schools, and it was a venue for training at the 1948 Olympic Games and for competitions such as the Amateur Athletic Association Championships.

HERNE HILL VELODROME

The velodrome continues to be used as a community cycling venue, 130 years on from its construction. Available for corporate events and private functions, it is used regularly by local clubs and 15 local schools and is also open to disability groups.

The oldest remaining venue from the Olympic Games London 1948, it is one of the most famous velodromes in the UK and is widely regarded as the spiritual home of British cycling. It enjoyed its heyday in the 1920s and 30s, when events such as the Good Friday Meeting attracted crowds of up to 12,000. Though in regular use after the 1948 Olympic Games, it was threatened with closure in 2010 due to the poor state of the facilities. The velodrome was extensively refurbished between 2011 and 2017, when the 450m banked asphalt track received a completely new surface, floodlights were installed, and a new pavilion was built to accommodate new changing rooms, offices, a café and bike storage facilities. It was London's only velodrome until the construction of Lee Valley VeloPark for the 2012 Olympic Games.

EMPIRE POOL

Empire Pool was part of the Wembley Park complex, the main hub at the 1948 Olympic Games. Used at the 1934 Empire Games, (as the Commonwealth Games were formerly known), it hosted its last swimming events at London 1948. It has since become a prominent music and sporting venue, welcoming boxing, ice skating and basketball, among other sports, and providing the setting for the Horse of the Year show until 2002. Awarded listed status in 1976, it was renamed Wembley Arena two years later. The venue staged the badminton and rhythmic gymnastics competitions at the 2012 Olympic Games.

TWESELDOWN RACECOURSE

A horse racing venue since 1866, it staged National Hunt meetings until 1932. An equestrian venue at the 1948 Olympic Games, it continues to host national eventing horse trials and is also used for training and riding clinics.

HENLEY ROYAL REGATTA COURSE

Held in the Oxfordshire town of Henley-on-Thames, the regatta first took place in 1839 and has been staged every year since, with the exception of the two world wars and 2020, when it was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has made use of four courses to date. The Olympic rowing competitions in 1948 were held on the fourth of these: the Straight Course. The venue hosted four men's rowing events at the 1908 Olympic Games, on a different course.

LONDON 1948'S FOOTBALL GROUNDS

Ten football grounds were used at the 1948 Olympic Games. Five remain in use: Selhurst Park (the home of Crystal Palace), Craven Cottage (Fulham), Fratton Park (Portsmouth), White Hart Lane (Tottenham Hotspur, rebuilt and renamed in 2019) and Champion Hill (non-league team Dulwich Hamlet, though the original stadium was knocked down and a new, smaller stadium was built on the same site in 1992).

The remaining five are no longer in existence. Most of these not-in-use stadiums have made way for residential developments. At Highbury, for example, the listed East and West stands remain as flats, with their original facades having been refurbished. The site of the Goldstone Ground is now occupied by the Goldstone Retail Park.

VENUES NOT IN USE

GUINNESS SPORTS GROUND, PARK ROYAL

The ground lay next to a brewery that was demolished in 2006 to make way for the headquarters of drinks company Diageo.

EMPRESS HALL (EARL'S COURT)

This venue was later renamed Earls Court Exhibition Centre. Built in 1895 and redeveloped in 1936, it became a major exhibition, events and concert venue and staged the volleyball competitions at the 2012 Olympic Games. The venue was demolished in 2014 to make way for a residential development that has yet to be built.

HARRINGAY ARENA

Built as an ice hockey stadium, it was also used for skating, boxing and other sports. It became a warehouse after WWII but was demolished in 1978. The site is currently occupied by a retail park.

PALACE OF ENGINEERING (WEMBLEY EMPIRE EXHIBITION SITE)

The venue was opened in 1924 as part of the British Empire Exhibition and demolished in the 1970s.

> DID YOU KNOW?

Empire Stadium's iconic 38-metre-high towers were made listed buildings in 1976.

Some 250,000 tons of earth were excavated to create the bowl in which Empire Stadium was built, with 25,000 tons of concrete and 600 tons of steel rods used for the stands.

When it opened, the Palace of Engineering was the world's largest reinforced concrete structure.