

= St Andrew 's ( stadium ) =

St Andrew 's is an association football stadium in the Bordesley district of Birmingham , England . It has been the home ground of Birmingham City Football Club for more than a century .

Constructed and opened in 1906 to replace the Muntz Street ground , which had become too small to meet the club 's needs , the original St Andrew 's could hold an estimated 75 @, @ 000 spectators , housed in one grandstand and a large uncovered terrace . The attendance record , variously recorded as 66 @, @ 844 or 67 @, @ 341 , was set at a 1939 FA Cup tie against Everton . During the Second World War , St Andrew 's suffered bomb damage and the grandstand , housing a temporary fire station , burned down in an accidental fire . In the 1950s , the club replaced the stand and installed floodlights , and later erected a second small stand and roofed over the open terraces , but there were few further changes .

The ground became dilapidated : a boy was killed when a wall collapsed during rioting in the 1980s . When new owners took the club out of administration in 1993 , they began a six @-@ year redevelopment programme during which the ground was converted to an all @-@ seater stadium to comply with the Taylor Report into safety at sports grounds , and all areas apart from the Main Stand were completely rebuilt . The seating capacity of the modern stadium is just over 30 @, @ 000 . It has function rooms suitable for business or social events and a club store selling Birmingham City merchandise . A 2004 proposal that the club should sell the ground and move into a multi @-@ purpose City of Birmingham Stadium remains speculative . In 2013 , the ground was listed as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011 .

St Andrew 's has been the venue for England international football matches at all levels below the senior national team , and for semifinal matches in the FA Cup and finals of lesser competitions . It has played host to events in other sports , including rugby union and professional boxing , and more recently has staged music concerts .

= = History = =

= = = Former grounds = = =

Small Heath Alliance ? the original name of Birmingham City Football Club ? played their first home games on waste ground off Arthur Street , in the Bordesley Green district of Birmingham , very near the site where St Andrew 's would be built . In 1876 , they made a temporary move to a fenced @-@ off field in Ladypool Road , Sparkbrook , with an estimated capacity of 3 @, @ 000 spectators ; because the field was enclosed , admission could be charged . Interest in the team grew , and a year later they moved again , this time to a rented field in Small Heath , situated on the eastern edge of Birmingham 's built @-@ up area , just north of the main road to Coventry . This ground , which became known as Muntz Street , had four sides of open terracing , a small covered wooden stand , and a changing @-@ room for the players . When first opened it could hold approximately 10 @, @ 000 spectators . Over the years the height of the terracing was raised , which increased the capacity to around 30 @, @ 000 , but this became insufficient to cope with the demand . The attendance at a match in 1905 against local rivals Aston Villa was officially recorded as 28 @, @ 000 spectators , but several thousand more climbed walls or forced turnstiles to gain entry . The landlords refused to sell the freehold of the ground , nor would they permit major extensions to be made . As the board of directors estimated that staying at Muntz Street was costing the club £ 2 @, @ 000 a year ( £ 194 @, @ 000 at today 's prices ) , they began the search for an alternative site .

= = = Construction = = =

Director Harry Morris identified a site for a new ground in Bordesley , some three @-@ quarters of a mile ( 1 km ) from Muntz Street towards the city centre . Covering an area of 7 @. @ 5 acres ( 3 ha ) , bounded by Cattell Road , Coventry Road , Tilton Road , Garrison Lane and the railway , and

near St Andrew 's church , the site was where a brickworks had once operated . Though Morris described the land itself as " a wilderness of stagnant water and muddy slopes " , the Sporting Mail considered it " very favourably situated for obtaining easy communication with the city and many of the suburbs , and will be served by an excellent service of electric cars [ trams ] , while the provision of a railway station close at hand is also considered as within the bounds of possibility . "

The club took the land on a 21 @-@ year lease , and entrusted the role of surveyor and engineer to a local carpenter , Harry Pumfrey , who despite a lack of qualifications produced plans " which would have done credit to the most expensive professional architect " . Club director Thomas Turley , a builder , acted as clerk of works , and it is estimated the club saved more than £ 2 @,@ 000 in professional fees by keeping the work in @-@ house . Tradition has it that gypsies , evicted from the site before work could begin , laid a 100 @-@ year curse on the club ; although gypsies are known to have camped nearby , there is no contemporary evidence for their eviction by the club , and construction began in February 1906 .

Artesian springs , which kept the land flooded , had to be drained and blocked off with tons of rubble before soil could be laid on top . To create height for the terracing on the Coventry Road side of the ground , the club offered the site as a tip , local people paying a total of £ 800 ( £ 77 @,@ 600 today ) for dumping an estimated 100 @,@ 000 loads of rubbish . This embankment was known from the beginning as the Spion Kop , stood 110 terraces high at its highest point , and had a reported capacity of 48 @,@ 000 spectators , each paying 6d ( £ 2 @.@ 43 today ) . The Grandstand , on the Garrison Lane side of the ground , was 123 yards ( 112 m ) in length . It held 6 @,@ 000 seats divided among six sections , priced from 1s to 2s ( £ 4 @.@ 90 to £ 9 @.@ 70 today ) , and all accesses were lit by electricity . In front of the stand was space for 5 @,@ 000 to stand under cover . Beneath the stand were refreshment rooms , changing rooms , a training area with plunge bath , a billiard room donated by brewery magnate Sir John Holder , and the club 's boardroom and offices , which hitherto had been maintained in premises in Birmingham city centre . Behind the goal at the railway end of the ground was space for a further 4 @,@ 000 standing spectators , and access to the ground was gained via turnstiles on three sides of the ground . Total capacity was estimated at 75 @,@ 000 , and construction cost at £ 10 @,@ 000 ( £ 970 @,@ 000 today ) . The playing surface , at 115 by 75 yards ( 105 m x 69 m ) , was one of the largest in the country , had a four @-@ yard ( 3 @.@ 7 m ) grassed border , and was surrounded by a cinder running track .

= = = Early years = = =

St Andrew 's was officially opened by Sir John Holder on 26 December 1906 , when Birmingham played Middlesbrough in a First Division fixture . There had been heavy snowfall overnight , and dozens of volunteers , including members of the club 's board , worked all morning to clear the pitch . The game finally kicked off an hour late , finishing goalless in front of 32 @,@ 000 spectators . The Birmingham Daily Post editorial next day suggested that " the fact that so many spectators attended under such adverse conditions augurs well for the step that the directors have taken " , and that the directors were " to be congratulated in having provided their supporters with a ground second to none in the country " .

The Football Association chose St Andrew 's to host the 1907 FA Cup semifinal between The Wednesday and Woolwich Arsenal ; Wednesday won 3 ? 1 , and went on to win the tournament . This was the first FA Cup tie to be played at the ground , as Birmingham had lost their opening match away from home . Three more semifinals took place at St Andrew 's before the Second World War , in 1911 , 1924 and 1934 . The club bought the freehold of the ground in 1921 for a price believed to be less than £ 7 @,@ 000 ( £ 679 @,@ 000 today ) . In the 1930s , roofs were erected over the Kop and Railway End terraces , and in February 1939 , the ground attendance record , variously recorded as 66 @,@ 844 or 67 @,@ 341 , was set at the fifth @-@ round FA Cup tie against Everton .

= = = Wartime = = =

During the First World War , the club supported the war effort by allowing the ground to be used as a rifle range for military training . On the outbreak of the Second World War , all outdoor sport was banned by the Government until safety implications could be assessed . When football resumed a few weeks later , Birmingham 's Chief Constable ordered the ground 's closure because of its proximity to probable air @-@ raid targets such as the BSA munitions factories . The matter was first raised in Parliament in November 1939 , but the Home Secretary felt unable to intervene . By March 1940 , when St Andrew 's had for some time been the only football ground in England still closed , the Chief Constable bowed to public pressure , and a crowd of 13 @,@ 241 witnessed Birmingham 's first home game in more than six months .

In 1941 , St Andrew 's suffered 20 direct hits from Luftwaffe bombing , which destroyed the roof of the Kop , badly damaged the Railway End , and forced the team to play elsewhere . It was therefore a surprising choice of venue for a wartime international match between England and Wales ; on safety grounds , spectators were required to purchase tickets in advance , and numbers were limited to 25 @,@ 000 . Three months later , the Main Stand , which was being used as a temporary National Fire Service station , burned down , destroying the club 's records and equipment ? " not so much as a lead pencil was saved from the wreckage " ? when a fireman mistook a bucket of petrol for water when intending to damp down a brazier . The team returned to the ground in 1943 .

= = = Improvements = = =

The replacement Main Stand , built in the early 1950s , used a propped cantilever roof design , which meant fewer pillars to block spectators ' view of the pitch . Floodlights were installed , and officially switched on for a friendly match against Borussia Dortmund in October 1956 . By the early 1960s , a stand had been built at the Railway End to the same design as the Main Stand , a new roof erected over the Kop , and the Tilton Road end covered for the first time . A scoreboard and clock were installed at the City end of the ground in memory of Birmingham and England player Jeff Hall , who died of polio during the 1958 ? 59 season . In the 1970s , the Asda chain proposed to share the cost of a new stand as part of a supermarket development on land behind the Kop made vacant by slum clearance ; in the face of opposition from commercial rivals , the proposal fell through .

= = = Modernisation = = =

The last home game of the 1984 ? 85 promotion season , against Leeds United , was marred by rioting , culminating in the death of a boy when a wall collapsed on him ; this was on the same day as the Bradford City stadium fire , and the events at St Andrew 's were included in the remit of Mr Justice Popplewell 's inquiry into safety at sports grounds . In response to this and the later Taylor Report , the capacity of St Andrew 's was cut to 26 @,@ 000 , but it was accepted that the stadium had to be brought up to modern standards . Club chairman David Gold recalled his first visit in March 1993 :

It was a shock . I had a picture in my mind of what I was expecting , but it was in such a state of disrepair that it was hard to comprehend ... Only two @-@ thirds of the bulbs on the floodlights were working and the Football League had threatened action if we didn 't do something to improve the lights . It was raining . It was a dour game . It was dark . It was dull . There were people standing in the rain looking extremely uncomfortable and unhappy . This First Division club was penniless and near to extinction . There were corrugated @-@ iron fences round the ground and it looked as though it hadn 't seen a lick of paint since Birmingham reached the FA Cup Final in 1956 .

Though relegation to the Third Division meant the club was no longer bound by the Taylor Report 's 1994 deadline for conversion to all @-@ seater , new owner David Sullivan continued the £ 4 @.@ 5 million development as planned . After the last home game of the 1993 ? 94 season , the Kop and Tilton Road terraces were demolished , helped by fans who took home a significant proportion as souvenirs , the land was cleared ? the rubbish tip beneath the Kop which had earned the club £ 800

in 1906 ( £ 43 @, @ 300 at 1994 prices ) cost £ 250 @, @ 000 to decontaminate ? and by the start of the new season , 7 @, @ 000 seats in the Tilton Road Stand were ready for use . On completion of the Kop Stand , the stadium was formally re @-@ opened in November 1994 by Baroness Trumpington , representing the Department of National Heritage , who unveiled a commemorative plaque and presented a cheque for £ 2 @. @ 5 million on behalf of the Football Trust ; the ceremony was followed by a friendly match against Aston Villa , attended by a crowd of 20 @, @ 000 . Planning permission for an all @-@ seater Railway Stand was granted in March 1995 , but work was delayed by a dispute over land owned by Railtrack and the stand opened only in 1999 .

= = Structure and facilities = =

The stadium has four stands . The Main Stand ( renamed the Garrison Lane Stand from 2010 to 2012 ) , a free @-@ standing structure on the north side of the playing area , was completed in 1954 and has seating for fewer than 5 @, @ 000 spectators . The upper tier contains the media area and an area of corporate seats as well as standard seating . The lower tier , known as the Paddocks , consists of a few rows of seats placed on the uncovered terraced area in front of the stand ; the view from this area can be obstructed by the central tunnel and the dugouts . A row of executive boxes was added at the back of the Paddocks in the 1970s . The family area is divided between the eastern end of the Main Stand and the Paddock beneath . The club planned £ 1 @. @ 3 million worth of restructuring and refurbishment work on the stand , which contained hospitality areas and offices , during the 2009 closed season , and seating was replaced in 2010 . The broadcasting gantry is situated in the roof of this stand .

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Jeff Hall 's death , the club commissioned a memorial clock to replace the original which did not survive the 1990s renovations . Placed centrally above the Main Stand , it was unveiled in September 2008 by Hall 's teammates Alex Govan and Gil Merrick . However , adverse reaction to the clock 's size and position provoked the club into ordering a larger replacement to be incorporated in a proposed big screen .

The Railway Stand , on the west side of the stadium nearest to Birmingham city centre , is also free @-@ standing . It was opened in 1999 and holds some 8 @, @ 000 spectators in two tiers ; the upper tier , a small area known as the Olympic Gallery , overhangs the lower , at the back of which is a row of executive boxes . From the 2009 ? 10 season , the Railway Stand was renamed the Gil Merrick Stand , in honour of the club 's appearance record @-@ holder and former manager . Visiting supporters are housed in the lower Railway Stand , segregated from home fans by plastic netting over the seats .

The Kop Stand and the Tilton Road Stand , opened in 1994 , form a continuous L @-@ shaped single @-@ tier stand , with seating capacity for nearly 17 @, @ 000 spectators , round the remaining half of the pitch . A walkway separates back and front sections . The Kop seating includes the directors ' box and a row of executive boxes , within the stand are a number of function rooms and hospitality areas , and there are electronic perimeter advertising boards in front . The stadium has floodlight pylons only on the north side ; the south side is lit by a row of lights along the front of the Kop roof . The Tilton Road Stand has 9 @, @ 000 seats , and is the only one without hospitality boxes .

The various function rooms and corporate boxes are available for hire for business or social events , and the stadium is licensed as a venue for civil weddings . There are wheelchair areas in all parts of the stadium , and commentary headsets for visually impaired spectators are available .

The pitch measures 100 by 66 metres ( 109 yd × 72 yd ) . It was relaid three times in 2007 . The first attempt , made because the surface had deteriorated to a dangerous condition , was unsuccessful because of freak rainfall which resulted in the postponement of the next match ? the first time such an event had happened in senior English football . The work had to be repeated , and then done for a third time in the closed season . The postponement of an FA Cup @-@ tie in January 2009 highlighted the lack of under @-@ soil heating , which was installed in June .

= = Future = =

In 2004 a proposal was put forward to build a " sports village " comprising a new 55 @, @ 000 stadium for the club , to be known as the City of Birmingham Stadium , other sports and leisure facilities , and a super casino . The project would be jointly financed by Birmingham City Council , Birmingham City F.C. ( via the proceeds of the sale of St Andrew 's ) and the casino group Las Vegas Sands . The feasibility of the plan depended on the government issuing a licence for a super casino as permitted under the Gambling Act 2005 , and Birmingham being chosen as the venue , but this did not happen . The club have planning permission to redevelop the Main Stand , and a derelict building behind the stand has been demolished , but club and council have continued to seek alternative sources of funding for the City of Birmingham Stadium project .

In 2013 , the Birmingham City Supporters ' Trust 's application for listing St Andrew 's as an Asset of Community Value ( ACV ) under the Localism Act 2011 was approved by Birmingham City Council . The legislation defines an ACV as a building or other land whose main use " furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community " and where it is realistic to believe it could do so in the future . It requires any proposed sale to be notified to the Council , and provides for a six @-@ month moratorium on that sale to allow the Trust and other community groups to submit their own bid .

= = Other uses = =

Teams representing England have played international matches at St Andrew 's , though not at senior level . In 1957 , England B defeated Scotland B under floodlights in front of nearly 40 @, @ 000 spectators . England 's junior sides have played there on several occasions , at under @-@ 23 , under @-@ 21 ? the 4 ? 0 defeat to Spain in 2001 was the England under @-@ 21 team 's worst home defeat ? and youth levels . Before competitive football resumed after the First World War , a Scottish Football League XI beat their English counterparts , including Birmingham players Frank Womack and Billy Morgan , 3 ? 1 at St Andrew 's .

As of 2009 , four FA Cup semifinals have taken place at St Andrew 's , and the ground has hosted semifinal replays on five occasions , most recently in 1961 . It was the venue for the 1987 play @-@ off final replay , in which Charlton Athletic beat Leeds United to remain in the Football League First Division , and for the final of the FA Vase in 2004 and 2006 .

The ground has also been used for other sports . Small Heath Harriers athletic club , whose headquarters had been at the Muntz Street ground , trained at St Andrew 's until the 1920s . The 1960 South African touring rugby union team beat a Midland Counties XV by 16 points to 5 on a muddy St Andrew 's pitch in front of a 17 @, @ 000 crowd . In 1949 , Dick Turpin beat Albert Finch on points to retain his British and Empire middleweight boxing title ; Turpin 's brothers Jack and future world champion Randolph fought on the undercard . In 1965 , Henry Cooper defeated Johnny Prescott at St Andrew 's to retain his British and Empire heavyweight title ; the fight took place two days after originally scheduled , having been rained off at the last minute , which prompted debate as to the feasibility of outdoor boxing promotions in light of the uncertain British weather .

St Andrew 's was the location for the rally scene in Peter Watkins ' 1967 film Privilege . It has hosted a number of music concerts : performers and events include UB40 , supported by The Pogues , in 1989 , Duran Duran in 2005 , and the 2002 Party in the Park , featuring Westlife and Sugababes among others .

= = Records = =

The record attendance at St Andrew 's was set at the fifth @-@ round FA Cup tie against Everton on 11 February 1939 ; the actual figure is variously reported as 66 @, @ 844 or 67 @, @ 341 . The highest attendance recorded for a league match is 60 @, @ 250 , against Aston Villa in the First Division on 23 November 1935 . The highest average attendance over a league season , 38 @, @ 821 , was set during the 1948 ? 49 First Division season , and the lowest , 6 @, @ 289 , was recorded in the Second Division in 1988 ? 89 . Since the stadium was converted to all @-@ seater ,

the record attendance is 29 @, @ 588 , set against Arsenal in the Premier League on 22 November 2003 .

St Andrew 's was the venue for the first use of a penalty shootout to determine the winner of an FA Cup match . For five seasons , between 1970 and 1974 , the losing FA Cup semifinalists were obliged to play off for third and fourth place ; Birmingham City finished third in the 1971 ? 72 FA Cup by beating Stoke City 4 ? 3 on penalties following a goalless 90 minutes .

= = Transport = =

The nearest railway station to the stadium is Bordesley , on the Birmingham to Stratford Line between Moor Street and Small Heath stations , which has regular services only on match days . The stadium is a 20 @-@ minute walk from New Street station , which is served by direct trains from most parts of the country , and slightly less far from Moor Street , which is served by Chiltern Railways trains from London Marylebone . Digbeth Coach Station , served by National Express coaches , is a 15 @-@ minute walk away , and buses run from the city centre past the ground . There is very limited parking at the stadium itself , but a secure outdoor car park is available at Birmingham Wheels Park , less than 15 minutes walk away , and parking is permitted in the streets surrounding the ground .