

= Crabble Athletic Ground =

The Crabble Athletic Ground , also known as The Crabble or simply Crabble. is a football stadium located in the northern Dover suburb of River , Kent , England . It was the home of the various incarnations of Dover F.C. from 1931 until the club folded in 1983 . Since then it has been the home of Dover Athletic F.C. , and it was also the temporary home of Margate F.C. between 2002 and 2004 , when the club 's Hartsdown Park stadium was being redeveloped . The stadium has two seated stands and two covered terraces and holds a total of 5 @, @ 745 fans (including 1 @, @ 010 seats and 3 @, @ 642 covered terracing) , although in the past , crowds larger than that figure could be accommodated . It also has a clubhouse , which the club completely redeveloped in 2008 .

= = History = =

In 1896 , a syndicate of local businessmen began a project to create a sports complex at the site known as Crabble Meadows on the outskirts of Dover . The word Crabble , which is also found in the name of a local corn mill , derives from the Old English crabba hol , meaning a hole in which crabs are found . The project was an extremely costly one but was completed in 1897 , and football was first played on the Crabble site in the same year . In 1902 , the original owners of the site , beset by financial problems , contemplated selling the land for redevelopment but eventually sold the site to the town council for £ 5 @, @ 500 . The pitch was shared by the town 's cricket and football teams , with the cricketers being given priority , which meant that the football team was forced to begin and end its season either with a long run of consecutive away matches or by playing matches at other , less satisfactory , venues in the town . To resolve the issue , the council opted to lay out a new football pitch further up the hillside , behind the lower pitch 's pavilion . The first match played on the " upper pitch " took place in September 1931 , with a small stand being constructed the following year . The football club then used the upper pitch whenever the lower pitch was unavailable due to cricket commitments .

Dover F.C. applied for permission to build a grandstand on the southern side of the " upper pitch " in 1947 , but the application was rejected . Three years later , the club was permitted to extend the existing small stand on the opposite side and in 1951 , Dover F.C. moved to the upper pitch on a permanent basis , initially paying the council rent of £ 300 a year . The final match on the lower pitch took place on 26 March 1951 , and the first on the upper pitch was held eleven days later , when Fulham were Dover 's opponents in a friendly . Due to a shortage of bolts , the grandstand had not actually been completed at this time . Covered terracing at the Town End , where fans had previously stood on the hillside , was added soon afterwards . Floodlights were added in 1961 and inaugurated with a match against a Chelsea XI .

Dover F.C folded in 1983 , but the newly formed Dover Athletic took over the ground and continued to make improvements . When the team won the Southern League championship in 1990 , however , promotion to the Football Conference was refused on the grounds that the stadium did not meet the standard required by the higher division . Subsequently , new turnstiles were installed and two new terraces were built behind the goals . The seating in the main stand was replaced and a second grandstand was added on the opposite side of the pitch . These improvements meant that the club was able to gain promotion after its second Southern League title in 1993 . In the 2002 ? 03 and 2003 ? 04 seasons , Margate F.C. played home fixtures at the stadium while redevelopment work took place at their own Hartsdown Park ground . What was originally intended to be a short @-@ term arrangement ended up lasting for two years as the redevelopment work stalled .

Between 2003 and 2004 , the ground was known as the Hoverspeed Stadium under the terms of a sponsorship deal . In 2007 , the club announced that under another such arrangement , the stadium would be known as the SeaFrance Crabble Stadium , however a year later it was announced that the deal would not be renewed due to the ferry operator 's financial constraints . On 1 July 2008 , the club announced local car dealership Perry 's as the club 's new main sponsor , with the stadium being rebranded as the Perry 's Crabble Stadium . In 2008 the club launched a project to replace the existing clubhouse with a new £ 200 @, @ 000 building featuring a larger bar , better audio @-@

visual facilities and a high quality kitchen . The club hopes the new building will become a popular venue for social and business functions .

= = Other uses = =

The lower pitch at Crabble was used by Kent County Cricket Club as one of its home venues for first @-@ class cricket matches from 1907 to 1976 , a total of 106 first @-@ class matches being played there .

= = Structure and facilities = =

The stadium is known for its unusual location , being set into the side of a hill . It has two seated stands and two covered terraces . The Main Stand , which has been in place since 1951 , occupies the length of one side of the pitch and has a roof supported by numerous columns , which obscure the view for some fans . Identical covered terraces for standing spectators are behind both goals , which also suffer from an obstructed view . The small Family Stand occupies a portion of the side opposite the Main Stand . The remainder of this side of the ground is taken up by the clubhouse , toilets and other club facilities . Unlike most football stadiums , the club directors ' lounge is set atop one of the stands . In December 2009 the Football Association gave the stadium 's facilities an A grade , meaning that it meets the minimum standard for entry to the Football League .

The stadium is approximately 1 @. @ 5 miles (2 km) from Kearsney railway station , which lies on Southeastern 's Chatham Main Line from London Victoria to Dover Priory . Dover Priory itself is further away , but connecting bus services are available . Parking is available around the perimeter of the adjacent rugby club .

= = Records = =

The highest attendance ever recorded at the ground was recorded when " just under 7 @, @ 000 " fans were in attendance for a match between Dover F.C. and Folkestone on 13 October 1951 . Current club Dover Athletic 's record home attendance is the crowd of 5 @, @ 645 for the match against Crystal Palace in the FA Cup on 4 January 2015 .