

= Arsenal Training Centre =

The Arsenal Training Centre , often referred to as its geographical location London Colney in Hertfordshire , is the training ground of Arsenal Football Club . It houses ten full @-@ size pitches , an indoor facility and a medical and rehabilitation centre .

Constructed after manager Arsène Wenger campaigned for Arsenal to replace its existing University College London groundshare site , it opened in October 1999 at a cost of £ 10 million . The training centre was financed by the transfer of Nicolas Anelka to Real Madrid .

As well as accommodating Arsenal 's first team and youth teams , the centre from 2003 to 2012 acted as the training base for the England national football team before home internationals and friendlies . It has attracted criticism from local residents over environmental and catchment issues .

= = History and development = =

When Arsène Wenger joined Arsenal in October 1996 , he attempted to organise an extra training session at the club 's University College London Union (UCLU) Shenley Sports grounds , for the benefit of getting to know his players . Wenger was told that the ground ? owned by UCL , was reserved for its students , which left him not knowing ? whether to laugh or cry ? . A few weeks after , a fire partially burnt down the training centre , costing £ 50 @,@ 000 in damages . Arsenal temporarily rehoused their training base to Sopwell House Hotel in St Albans . Wenger , dismayed by the arrangement , campaigned for a purpose @-@ built , Arsenal @-@ owned ground that housed the latest training equipment . This was one of the " important decisions " he wanted to make for the club ? " Without an assurance of that freedom and control I would not have stayed . "

By February 1998 , Hertsmere Borough Council granted consent for Arsenal to build a training centre on the greenfield land , adjacent to a local school in the Bell Lane area , London Colney . It is situated adjacent to the former facilities at Shenley Sports grounds , which Watford Football Club use for training purposes . They concluded it was ? ? essential to support the training facility ? , that it would replace an existing building used by the club and that Arsenal ? s community work ? constituted exceptional circumstances ? . The plans were referred to the Environment Secretary John Prescott , who ratified it , in spite of the area 's position on the green belt . Planning permission was obtained in September 1998 .

Richard Marshall and Dearle & Henderson designed the training ground and its facilities . Wenger was " heavily involved " in the process ? ? even down to the kitchens ? and shared ideas from his time as Nagoya Grampus manager , where the club itself was building its own training centre . As part of a fact @-@ finding mission , club representatives visited other training facilities from around Europe , such as Bayern Munich and Auxerre . Arsenal 's physiotherapist Gary Lewin and fitness coach Tony Colbert were involved in their respective areas . The project , transforming a 140 @-@ foot site , was completed in 45 weeks at a cost of £ 10 million . Arsenal financed this through the transfer of Nicolas Anelka to Real Madrid for £ 22 @.@ 5 million in August 1999 .

The Arsenal Training Centre was opened by Sports Minister Kate Hoey on 11 October 1999 . Chairman Peter Hill @-@ Wood described it as ? simply superb ? , while Wenger felt it acted as a " big attraction " for players to come to Arsenal . Unlike before , the training centre was open to the first team squad and youth teams for training simultaneously , which in Wenger ? s words gave Arsenal a ? stronger feeling of togetherness ? . The club have since expanded its training centre to include a press briefing building , as well as an indoor pitch facility . During development work in August 2006 , an artillery shell was found near the site which led to the surrounding area being evacuated .

= = Facilities = =

The training centre covers an area of 143 acres (0 @.@ 58 km2) . In all , there are ten full @-@ size pitches at the site . Inside the complex there are training and rehabilitation areas , physiotherapy and massage rooms and remedial and hydrotherapy pools . There are also squash /

basketball courts , sauna , steam and weight rooms , a restaurant for staff and players , conference rooms , offices , classrooms and a TV studio to interview players and staff for Arsenal TV .

All ten pitches have undersoil drainage and an automated sprinkler system . In addition , two have undersoil heating . Each pitch is built to match the playing surface specifications of the Emirates Stadium . Three of the pitches are reserved for the Arsenal youth team , three for the reserves and three for the first team . The tenth pitch is where first team friendlies and Under 18 league fixtures take place .

A medical and rehabilitation centre was completed in October 2011 , tailored to meet the needs of the Arsenal players . The centre houses apparatus such as an anti gravity treadmill and a range of screening equipment . Players returning from injury are able to focus on their rehabilitation " in a separate , specialised space " , with medical staff on hand . Extra training pitches are also set to be laid . In February 2015 Arsenal ordered 1 @ 400 m2 of artificial grass from the Swiss company called Tisca Tiara for the training pitch .

In March 2015 , Arsenal announced plans for a major redevelopment of its training centre . The plans include expanding and upgrading the main building , constructing a player performance centre , and refurbishing the visitors , educational and media centre . Specific gym improvements include new 40m running tracks and dedicated space for Yoga and Pilates . New offices and meeting rooms will be built for the scouting team , academy staff , and data analysis personnel . Upgraded training medical and training facilities include a spa , a cryochamber , and ice baths . To accommodate the changes , a two storey extension will be built , the equipment shed will be moved , and 280 trees will be planted (to replace the 140 that will be removed during the redevelopment process) . The project was supported by the Sport England with planning approval given by the Hertsmere borough council planning committee . Project completion is scheduled for the beginning of the 2017 / 18 season .

= = Criticism = =

The ground has attracted criticism from local residents . A parish council meeting in October 2001 revealed that Arsenal players had not been involved with local initiatives , despite claims during its planning phase that the ground would allow the club to develop links with the local community . Shenley Primary School reportedly failed to receive any visits from players despite repeated requests . The club responded by pointing to initiatives by its Ladies team to organise competitions at local grounds . Plans to develop new buildings and road links to the site were challenged by residents four years later ; they believed it would lead to increased traffic and noise pollution in the area .

In March 2006 , The Daily Telegraph noted Arsenal 's failure to develop young English players following a UEFA Champions League tie against Juventus , in which they did not use a single English player . According to desk research , youth team opportunities was a main reason the club obtained planning permission for the centre . Arsenal cited in a statement : " The Bell Lane site is within the Arsenal ' catchment area ' and the club already has a very active youth policy in the area . In particular , the club currently works closely with 12 local clubs which would be maintained and enhanced if the Bell Lane proposal were to go ahead . "

= = Other uses = =

The England national football team frequently trained at the ground when preparing for games in London ; the agreement with Arsenal began in March 2003 . They have since 2012 relocated their training base to St George 's Park National Football Centre . Arsenal 's training ground was used by the national team in November 2013 , for the friendlies against Chile and Germany after St George 's Park reported a stomach bug .

For the UEFA Champions League finals that took place at Wembley Stadium in 2011 and 2013 , Barcelona and Borussia Dortmund respectively used the centre 's facilities to train . American Football side St. Louis Rams trained at London Colney in preparation for the 2012 NFL International

Series in London . Arsenal had previously " priced " themselves out of hosting the New York Giants or the Miami Dolphins .

In November 2009 , the ground held a tournament between teams of colleagues from eight local organisations , which raised £ 1 @ , @ 500 for charity .