

WEMBLEY PARK



Project Summary

Wembley Park is a large-scale, mixed-use regeneration project surrounding the iconic Wembley Stadium in Northwest London and is one of Europe's largest and most exciting urban transformation sites. Quintain, developer of Wembley Park, owned by Lone Star funds, has been transforming the area since 2002 and reshaping the neighbourhood into a vibrant 365-day destination now known as Wembley Park. A central focus of the masterplan is Quintain's commitment to placemaking through social value and community living.

Project information

DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

Quintain site purchase 2002

Masterplan approved

2016 – Current masterplan

2004 – First masterplan

Construction started 2004

Project completion 2027

BUILDING AREAS

National Stadium

170,000 square feet (90,000 capacity)
(not Quintain owned)

Residential 8,500 new homes –
approx. 10,258,400 square feet

Office Approx. 750,000 square feet

Retail and leisure 500,000 square feet

Parking spaces 3,400

LAND USE FEATURES

Site size 85 acres

Open space 42 acres including 7-acre park

INVESTMENT

So far £2.5 billion capex invested to date

Per month at peak of construction £45 million



Wembley Park in 2002, Quintain.



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The Vision

Quintain makes it a goal to “invest in both their buildings and the surrounding community.” During their 29-year history, they have “transformed assets into places where people want to live, companies want to grow, and neighbourhoods can come alive.” This is Quintain’s overarching mission for Wembley Park.

Quintain’s community engagement and placemaking strategy aims to foster a vibrant and happy community by bringing together existing residents, workers, students, and local groups through their robust, balanced, and accessible events and programmes. Community and inclusivity underpin everything Quintain strives for at Wembley Park. They believe that everyone that works, lives, or studies at or visits Wembley Park should feel like they belong and notice the impact they are making. This is achieved in two ways, firstly through corporate social responsibility schemes focused on corporate initiatives for employees such as a volunteering programme and secondly through a hugely popular community centre focused on positive community impact for residents and users of the project, providing stability and helping the development feel community owned.

Wembley Park is a £3 billion project and is on track to be delivered by 2027. This new 34 hectare neighbourhood will renew the long-neglected space around Wembley Stadium, regenerating it physically as well as reconnecting with the surrounding communities. This ambition is being realised through 957,000 square metre of mixed-use development, including over 46,000 square metre of retail and leisure space, 17 hectare of a culturally curated open space and other existing assets that strengthen Quintain’s initiative. Quintain has turned Wembley Park into a 365-day destination for residents and visitors while also being the largest single site of Build-to-Rent in the UK, with 6,044 homes managed by Quintain Living.

“The legacy we are creating is a new piece of [London] city,” says Jason Margrave, Executive Director of Development at Quintain. “I think in the last 18 months, we have seen a shift in people’s perceptions of Wembley Park which is evidenced by the amount of people who visit us annually. We have turned something that people were very downbeat about into an amazing place that people flock to visit.”

The Site and History

Wembley Park is well known on a global scale due to it being the home of London’s famous concert and events venue, The SSE Arena, Wembley, as well as the iconic National Stadium. The area has hosted various historic events over the past century – from the 1948 Summer Olympics to the Live Aid concert in 1985. It was demolished in 2002, rebuilt and re-opened in May 2007 on the same site.

“Interestingly, if you go anywhere in the world and talk about Wembley, people know about it,” says Julian Tollast, Head of Master planning and Design at Quintain. “It has the sort of global presence that is pretty rare in any other site. You have this physical structure that can shift 90,000 people in an hour, but [Wembley Park] wasn’t being tapped into the rest of the year.” Wembley Park houses the largest stadium in the UK, attracting 2 million visitors pre-covid and hosting 40 of the biggest events per year in sport, music, and entertainment.

The ambition, for Quintain, was to balance a strong events focus with a vibrant community, a beautiful place to live, visit and work, with more urban opportunities being introduced throughout the masterplan. Quintain was attracted to the Wembley Park location, not only due to its iconic history, but also because of its central connectivity within London.

“I think the fact you have an existing stadium and arena mean that this site already has good transport links. It has the Jubilee line and the Metropolitan line – in transport terms it has great connectivity to central London,” says Margrave. “And it has scale. For me as a developer, these are some fundamentals of why Wembley works and why it was an attractive proposition.”

Background

Quintain identified the opportunity for major residential mixed use urban regeneration around the proposed redevelopment of Wembley Stadium in the late 1990s. Quintain had similar experience with major masterplans alongside event venues such as the Greenwich Peninsula Masterplan. It acquired the lands around the stadium which were used for event day parking along with the Wembley Arena, Conference and Exhibition Centre. The original overall plan was a multi-storey car park and coach park. Through a constant improvement process, five masterplans were created until Quintain arrived at the current plan. These 42 acres formed the core of the Stage One Masterplan. The total land ownership has grown to 34 hectares since.

Quintain effectively bought the company, Wembley London Limited, which owned all the assets around the National Stadium. In parallel, the Football Association wanted to make sure that the new Wembley was not just “the same old same old.” Andy Donald, (who at that time was Strategic Director of Regeneration and Growth in the London Borough of Brent), wanted to work together with Quintain to place-make the “new” National Stadium as a 18/7 (18 hour-city, 7 days a week) place to live, work and play and not just an area impacted by the major stadium events. Wembley Park used to be disrupted by the big events at the stadium with the inconvenience of traffic and neglected surroundings.

“It wasn’t very pleasant outside and now it is. It is a tremendous change,” says Julian Tollast, Head of Masterplanning and Design at Quintain, but it hasn’t taken away the fact it’s a great place to see football and music concerts and everything else. “We have not taken away from what made it famous. We have just constantly added to it.”



Wembley Park masterplan, Quintain.

Planning and design

The developer's main challenge has been changing the perception of the place from an events destination to a 365-day neighbourhood, alive with activity. Within such a challenge, however, lies great development opportunity.

"The stadium was like a massive UFO for the wider local community. It has landed, this object. We are always conscious that we have got to integrate with our local community and what we create can't be viewed as something that's conceived from afar as a citadel," says Margrave. "In order for it to have lasting value, it has to integrate. And part of that is the outreach work that Ash Patel [Community Engagement Manager and Wembley Park local] does in order to understand what the community wants."

In masterplanning and planning permission terms, Wembley Park went through a series of five masterplans. It started with the initial core areas around

the stadium and gradually expanded further overtime. It was a tremendous endorsement to the masterplan that the local authority London Borough of Brent wanted their headquarters and Civic Centre included. It was important to make sure that the masterplan was not just a remarkable thing on paper; but something made into a reality.

In line with the masterplan, 8,500 homes will be created accommodating 20,000 new residents. Wembley Park is the largest Build-to-Rent (BTR) development in the UK. Quintain has already delivered over 4,700 homes at Wembley Park (across a range of tenures) and Wembley Park's flagship BTR development, the first development specifically designed for families, is now open. Canada Gardens, completed in summer 2020, comprises a total 743 homes, 303 of which as Discount Market Rent, situated around over an acre of podium garden containing a club house, allotments, BBQs, a sand pit, and a pirate ship.



Pirate ship, Quintain. (Credit: Chris Winter)

“We have balanced up the overall vision and mix of uses at a macro scale and then at a micro scale, we have really focused on the spaces between the buildings and the human scale interaction and the character and use of those spaces; that for me is why I think we have achieved something fairly unique and best in class,” says Margrave.

The places and spaces within the public realm have been designed at a variety of scales that not only always suits their everyday use but also is capable of being managed or upscaled for major event days where attendance flows are high in order to maintain a minimal impact on residents. Places that are primarily for residential use are sometimes separated vertically from the public realm and sit at podium garden or rooftop level. Where they exist at ground level suitable enclosure or management is instigated to control the

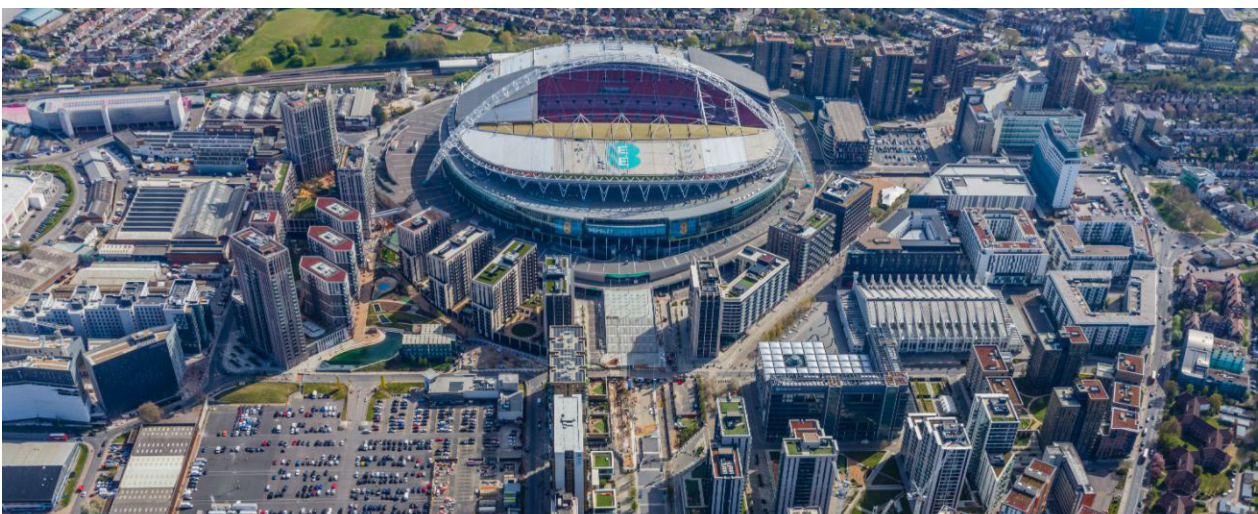
access of large crowds. The microclimate has been considered in all cases and tree planting, shrub planting or shelters are delivered along with other measures to mitigate any unacceptably adverse impacts of wind, rain or sunshine.

A recent key development on site was the Olympic Steps project: the new entrance to the National Stadium. The former pedway that was built over surface car parking in the 1970s was replaced with a new set of steps, liberating a significant amount of public realm back to the community, uniting the east and west of the estate, and increasing accessibility to the Stadium with the introduction of four new lifts. The Olympic Steps are a fitting development for an increasingly residential estate, that is no longer used purely for event days.

Construction

At peak times of the project there have been over 1,500 construction workers on site, of which 40% are local Brent residents. Quintain has built over 4700 homes in Wembley Park, with more under construction and outline consent for a total of 8,500 in the area.

Quintain is committed to impacting positively on the local community, therefore a dedicated Construction Skills Programme, giving local people job and apprenticeship opportunities has been created.



Aerial view of progress 2021, Quintain.



Summer on Screen, Arena Square, Quintain. (Credit: Chris Winter)

Additionally, as the pace of construction increases, it is important for Quintain to keep the local community informed. A regular Construction Newsletter is sent to those who work and live around Wembley Park to keep them up to date with the key construction work going on.

Community engagement

Quintain is developing Wembley Park inclusive of corporate social responsibility, and its community engagement strategy aims to foster a vibrant and happy community at Wembley Park by bringing together existing and new residents, workers, students, and local groups through a robust, balanced, and accessible programme. The strategy aims to evolve as the site develops and the number of residents increases.

Community engagement is a key part of any masterplan design, evolution, and implementation. The challenge at Wembley Park in the early years was identifying the community. The residential communities surrounding the site have been consulted throughout and the visiting communities of the event days have been consulted through their respective organisations.

There are three communities at Wembley – the event community (those who come to see sport or music), an already existing residential community around the area, and the future community.

“Quintain feels that community engagement is key to creating long term value.”

“I think for me, it is the longevity of what you create. If you deliver something and you create something that the community really respects and has a sense of ownership and they use it, then it brings a degree of vibrancy and longevity to the place,” says Margrave. “I like to think that we are doing it right because I see local people using the spaces at Wembley Park all the time. Which means that we are doing exactly what we set out to achieve.”

The emerging communities are now key stakeholders in the continued evolution of the masterplan, and Quintain continues to engage with them as part of a regular dialogue of liaison as well as consultation specific to individual planning applications.



Mayor of London's International Busking Day, 2019, Quintain. (Credit: Chris Winter)

It engages with the existing and future communities to best shape the future of Wembley Park to make it sustainable in every aspect – socially, environmentally, and economically. Quintain engage with the London Borough of Brent at multiple levels to cover all stakeholders. The Elected Members, The Leadership Team and Officers in multiple departments. The longstanding relationship with key individuals in many of these groups has been key to the smooth and successful process of establishing shared goals, discussing emerging proposals, achieving permissions, delivery on site and the many relationships in operation of the Place and the Properties at Wembley Park. There are many different communities, and Quintain are mindful to relate to everyone whether they Live, Work or Play at Wembley Park.

Within Quintain Living developments, there are a huge range of different designs and spaces, ensuring that there is 'something for everyone'. Apartments include studios up to four-bedroom homes with multiple bathrooms, designed for sharers. The most recent Quintain Living development, The Robinson, is designed with students in mind and has playful amenity spaces like a rooftop space with caravan working-from-home pods and a slide! Canada Gardens, one of Quintain Living's flagship development, was designed for families and includes a play-shed and pirate ship for children to enjoy amongst the 1.5 acres of landscaped podium gardens and allotments. Quintain Living puts great emphasis on building a long-term community of residents and its events programme supports that organic growth of the community.

Placemaking

At the forefront of this masterplan is Quintain's commitment to placemaking. The global, cultural placemaking agency Futurecity, was appointed to devise a new culture and placemaking strategy for the scheme surrounding Wembley Stadium. The 2016 strategy helped put cultural placemaking at the heart of Quintain's plans for Wembley Park, drawing together commercial, development, marketing and design teams under a unified vision and governance structure. This led to key initiatives including the first Music and Events-focused Boxpark, artist studios created in partnership with Second Floor Studios, and a dedicated programme of activation and public art. The Yellow, a permanent creative community facility, has been particularly successful. It typically draws 719 monthly visits with an annual attendance in 2019 of 9,100 providing 364 hours of free space for local organisers and 28 regular weekly creative classes. This is one of the sites key stakeholder engagement outlets. The community were involved not only in designing it but also in running the events held there ensuring it meets the local vision of a successful space for engagement.

Optimal land use before beginning official development is of upmost importance in Quintain's commitment to placemaking, Tollast highlights that "there are these "meanwhile" sites, rather than just hoard them off as empty bits of wasteland, we always make some positive developmental use of them to the extent that we can".

On the back of the 2016 Culture and Placemaking Strategy, Futurecity was asked to develop a further Public Art Strategy in 2017 to help shape the vision into an integrated framework for public art commissioning.

The strategy laid out a structure for the briefing, commissioning, and review of permanent and temporary installations and crucially includes of a range of stakeholders and community voices in decision making to engender a genuine sense of ownership towards commissioned artworks, and Wembley Park as a place.



The Spanish Steps, Quintain. (Credit: Chris Winter)



The Yellow Community Centre, Quintain. (Credit: Chris Winter)



Troubadour Theatre, Quintain. (Credit: Chris Winter)



Wembley Park, 2027 vision, Quintain. (Credit: Chris Winter)

Tollast demonstrates Quintain's success of placemaking at a variety of different scales as "District to Doorknob" – placemaking that suits both the individual as well as the event day crowds. The physical measures are a mixture of the permanent and long term as well as 'meanwhile' interventions implemented over 16 years of the development.

By 2018, Wembley Park's ambitions to be a hub for creativity and culture was delivering tangible results including a new theatre in partnership with Troubadour Theatre, Quintain embedded outdoor performance infrastructure throughout Olympic Way and the wider site, and a regular year-round programme of publicly accessible events. In 2019, Wembley Park delivered 500 hours of free events that were attended by 400,000+ people. It also commissioned £150,000+ per year directly to artists for permanent and temporary installations. This enhanced cultural offer helped support the London Borough of Brent's winning bid to be London Borough of Culture 2020.

Margrave says "Fundamentally we must be doing something right in terms of creating a place as football numbers have increased year-on-year. And if you look at those football metrics and attract new people to come and live and work at Wembley, then I think placemaking has achieved what we set out to. For me, that is sort of the metric that I would use for success."

Observations Lessons learned

Flexibility is key

Margrave recognised that the beginning southern portion of the upcoming 7-acre public park was curated as a formal and structured space which takes away its flexibility in use. He agrees that "less is more" and in hindsight, he says "we should have not over themed the space and left it flexible to see how that space evolves and how the community use it." That way the space would naturally evolve through time to adapt to changing market and economic circumstances and consumer needs.

Stakeholder Engagement

Tollast now celebrates Wembley Park's success by engaging stakeholders beyond the stadium: "At the start of the project, it was concerning knowing how to explain to people that their life won't be ruined by football fans and concertgoers? I do not think I have had to answer that question for over five years now. People just get it. They get the buzz of the place. We have this amazing community and atmosphere that goes into overdrive at Wembley Park, 365 days a year. People love it."

Websites

<https://www.quintain.co.uk/wembley-park/masterplan>

Project address: Wembley Park, Wembley, Brent, HA9

Owner: Quintain Ltd

Architect and Masterplanner: Masterplan architect from 2014 onwards is Flanagan Lawrence, London, UK

Previous masterplanners

2002-2005 Phase 1 Richard Rogers Partnership (now RSH&P)

2008-2010 MAKE, for the North West Lands masterplan

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