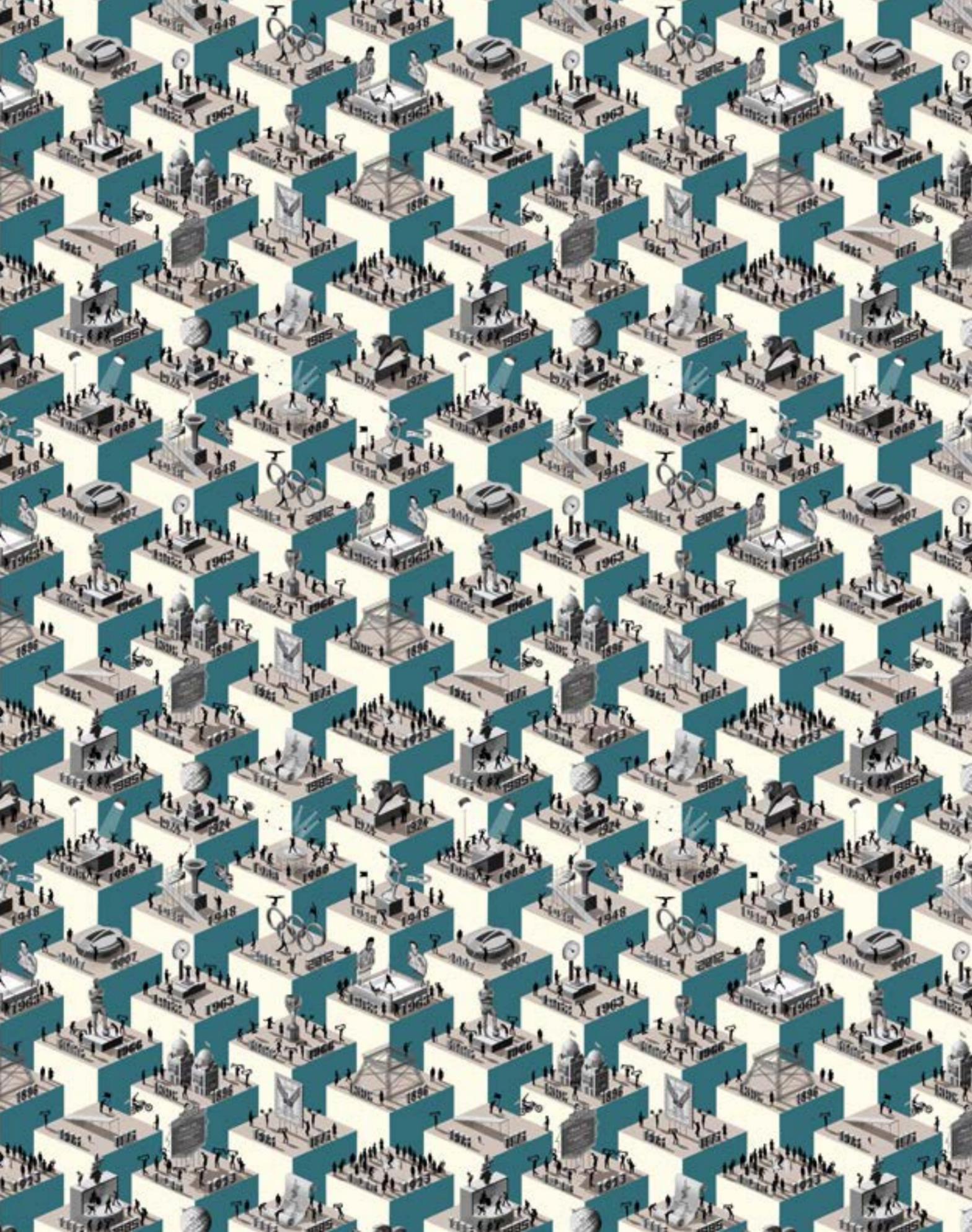




PASS IT ON ...

Voices from Wembley Park





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Wembley Park is being developed by Quintain Limited.

Quintain is the developer behind the transformation of Wembley Park, which it acquired in 2002. The 85 acre site surrounding Wembley Stadium currently comprises The SSE Arena, Wembley, London Designer Outlet, the Hilton London Wembley, Premier Inn, Boxpark Wembley, Troubadour Wembley Park Theatre and over 2,000 homes.

Once completed, Wembley Park will become the single largest site of Build to Rent homes in the UK. Quintain wholly-owns Tipi, the lifestyle-focused rental operator which offers an all-inclusive rental package.

Innovations in the Green Infrastructure already delivered are ensuring that Wembley Park is emerging as a truly smart part of London. Quintain manages and maintains all of the publicly accessible land, offering 40 acres of high quality public realm for all residents and over 11 million annual visitors to Wembley Park.

quintain.co.uk/wembley-park

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Wembley Park is undergoing a major transformation. Every year there is something new. 2019 sees the opening of the new public realm and tree-lined avenue on Olympic Way. This major promenade is known by fans worldwide as ‘Wembley Way’. This seems a fitting time to hear some of the voices of Wembley Park.

This book represents the views of only a few of the many that make Wembley Park the place it is today. A special mention should be made of those we were unable to include in this first edition.

There are thousands of people working tirelessly behind the scenes at Wembley Park. They continue to make this a celebrated place in the country’s capital, and although it would not be possible to list them all, our appreciation of their contribution is wholehearted.

There will be many more voices in the future and we hope for another collection to celebrate in 2020.



PASS IT ON ... was born as an interview project. Everyone approached had a story to tell about Wembley Park now or from its recent past. At the conclusion, each interviewee was asked to name an individual who, for them, best captures the spirit of the place. The diverse answers add a human dimension that is very telling. This dynamic corner of North West London means a very great deal to those who know and love it.

Successful partnerships.



Olivier Brahin
Chairman of Quintain

It is a rare privilege to own and develop a project like Wembley Park. It requires vision and conviction to create a unique place for living at the heart of an iconic destination such as The National Stadium. We owe this privilege to our shareholder and all our partners who have made this possible and we remain grateful for their continuous support and co-operation.

We believe that it is important to remember that Wembley Park is also a successful partnership between the public and private sectors. This emphatically demonstrates that when both are working together, great achievements can be made overcoming the most complicated challenges.

I would especially like to thank:

- Lone Star Real Estate Fund IV and its unwavering commitment, since the acquisition of Quintain in 2015, in allocating the necessary capital and resources to Wembley Park;
- The London Borough of Brent for its permanent and daily support as well as its enriching vision of the future Wembley Park; and
- Wembley National Stadium and The FA for their sincere co-operation in finding solutions to complex issues, allowing the co-existence of huge sporting events alongside continuing construction and the growing communities.

A project like Wembley Park is only made possible because of the people involved. Quintain has assembled an incredible team of highly talented professionals and advisers from all sectors of real estate including construction, engineering, design, place-making, marketing and letting. Our team relentlessly pours its intelligence, heart and soul into this very special project.

Our ambition and long-term goal is for Wembley Park to offer its residents a safe, entertaining, perfectly interconnected, sustainable and healthy urban environment. Within this, all will be able to experience and enjoy the best possible living conditions whilst fully integrated into the vibrant metropolis of London.

An incremental piece of city.



Ricky Burdett, CBE
London School of Economics

London is an organic, incremental city. The 18th century Great Estates were conceived as urban set-pieces that aligned with the ownership of aristocratic landlords. Yet, over time, they connected up into the variegated but distinctive array of Georgian and Victorian streets and squares that form part of central London's DNA today. Wembley is setting a 21st century standard of urban living for London that builds on this unique tradition.

Wembley Park has a different yet equally distinctive history. Despite its current focus as a major site of densification and growth, the wider area displays many of the characteristics of a typical London railway suburb. Traces of the past survive beneath its urban structure.

Like much of London, Wembley is experiencing intense change. And it's happening very quickly. The number of homes, shops, offices, food outlets and leisure facilities has mushroomed in the last decades, taking advantage of available land and excellent transport connections. New investment has been made in the public realm, most notably on Olympic Way and in front of the Civic Centre, and major improvements will be made to the underpasses and White Horse Square towards Wembley Central. Quintain is at the centre of a larger neighbourhood that is attracting new businesses, tenants, residents, shoppers, students, visitors, fans and tourists. It is becoming a 'piece of city'.

People are moving in to recently completed apartments and offices; local residents are enjoying new facilities like Boxpark and the soon-to-be-completed Troubadour Wembley Park Theatre (where War Horse will be performed). London Designer Outlet is a popular attraction during the day, and the Stadium and Arena enliven the area in the evening and weekends. Despite the scale and pace of construction, a Wembley neighbourhood identity is beginning to emerge, with its own culture and DNA, much of it shaped by its young and diverse population of metropolitan renters.

London's population will continue to grow with millennials attracted to its global economy and culture. Family demographics are constantly changing and a whole new group of 'later living' residents are being drawn to the diverse culture of urban areas. A new generation of residents has already embraced living in rental accommodation, reaping the benefits of the shared economy, new technologies and collective living. Wellness, life-work balance, sustainability and the environment are priorities for many young people making choices about where they want to live and work. Reduced car dependency, shared bike and car schemes, as well as new and evolving forms of household delivery are generating new lifestyles which make places like Wembley Park more attractive and desirable.

Quintain has reaffirmed its commitment to creating a long-term, desirable urban environment with efficient and well-designed buildings and a high-quality public realm. The challenge is to move Wembley Park forward, building on what has been achieved to make it one of the best new pieces of London.



A new face of North West London.



Sir David Higgins
Adviser to the Board of Quintain

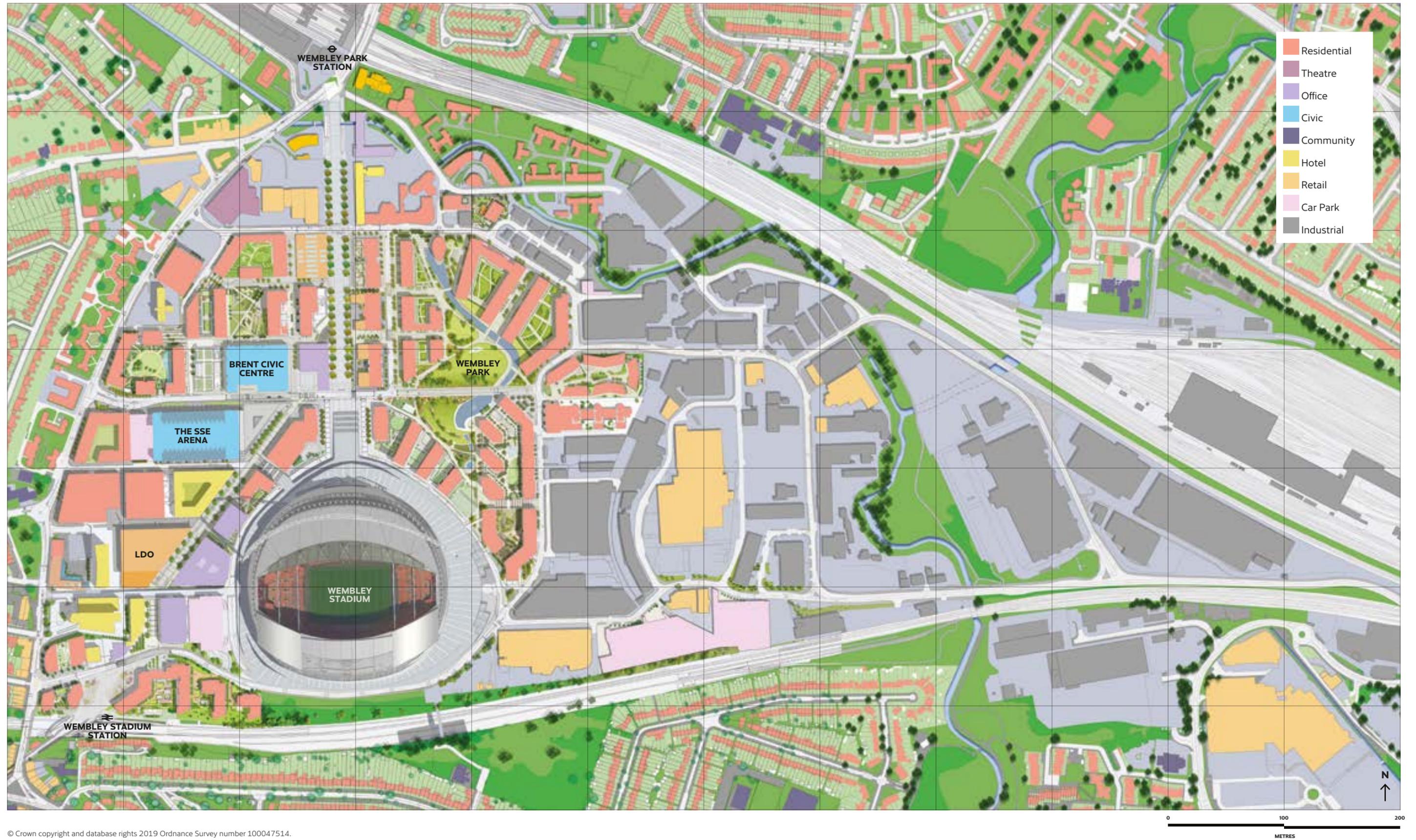
People often believe that building houses is the same as creating communities. Governments set new housing targets but creating a place where people want to live, work, relax and form friendships is much more complex.

The London Olympics 2012 acted as a catalyst to concentrate public investment to clean up a contaminated industrial zone in Stratford and forced public investment into developing leisure facilities, parkland and upgrading utilities. This stimulated the development of thousands of homes and jobs, and transformed this area into the new heart of East London.

A transformation as dramatic is now under way at Wembley Park, funded by Quintain and other private sector investors in partnership with Brent Council. Wembley has long held a special place in sporting and entertainment history in the UK, originally as the Empire Stadium and from hosting the 1948 Olympics and the famous World Cup of 1966 to Live Aid in 1985. For a number of years the newly rebuilt Wembley Stadium sat in splendid isolation, surrounded by car parks. Now Wembley is well on its way to being a thriving London community of over 20,000 people. The crucial foundation of sustainable growth lies in the three separate railway stations that provide access to job markets.

In the four years I have been involved with Quintain at Wembley Park, I have witnessed this transformation and the community already has homes, shops, a theatre, leisure facilities, offices and a growing expanse of parkland. The real point of difference of Wembley Park is the investment in the high quality public realm in advance of full occupation. Quintain is also one of the pioneers of private institutional ownership of rental properties on a substantial scale. This new investment model allows accommodation options for people to rent high quality, well-managed homes with the flexibility of relocating within the same community.

Wembley Park is changing the face of North West London.





First Pass

Everyone who has ever been to Wembley Park takes away a memory. Whether it's of an event, a concert or a sports fixture, there is always something about the visit that sticks in the mind. It might be a footballer's kick; the referee's final whistle; a rock star's virtuosity; the moment a huge crowd went wild; whatever the spectacle, the vision is always epic.

In the last few eventful years, on a very different scale, there has been an increasing number of ways to take away a whole host of other memories from Wembley, every bit as positive. These are the many thousands of very human exchanges that take place outside both the Stadium and the Arena.

From either perspective, the place is evidently and obviously special, not just in the imagination, but as a very real location where amazing things happen. Wembley is one of the best-known addresses in the world. Anyone, wherever he or she is on the planet, seems to have a view.

This book knits some more local views together, going deep into what is a remarkable area, to capture the real story of Wembley Park.

Over 200 years, this corner of North West London has evolved dramatically. Originally the creation of a far-seeing, garden-loving pioneer, the park provided a refuge of peace and tranquillity for the newly urban population. Boxed in by all the pressures industrialisation and metropolitan development could throw at them, the people flocked to see a welcome and green oasis.

Later, as the site of one of the most influential exhibitions ever staged, it became the blue print for of how cities – and, indeed, cultures – would develop in the 20th century.

Fast forwarding to the optimism and spirit of the 1960s, the Stadium became universally celebrated as the pinnacle of English achievement in the football world, before going on to anchor vast gatherings around music, politics, religion and a wide range of sports.

Dramatic developments in the 21st century have changed the neighbourhood more profoundly than the previous century did in its entirety. The 85 acres are blossoming into a living, breathing settlement, brilliantly planned, well appointed and with a breadth and depth of commerce, entertainment, education, arts and social cohesion. Still a work in progress, it is nevertheless a perfect time to listen to a diverse group of people who knew the place before, appreciate what it is now and hint at what it will become.

As they talk through the transformations of Wembley in general – and Wembley Park specifically – it's impossible not to pick up on a collective optimism and dynamism. Nothing stands still here. The development never stops. A powerful 'can-do' spirit prevails. It's infectious, in the best possible way. So much so that, once experienced, you can't help but do what we all do on hearing exciting news.

Pass it on.

LEFT
Bobby Moore held
aloft by his world beating
teammates in 1966.



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LEFT
The new Wembley Park
– captivating in the short,
long and Colour Run.

Chapter One

LEAVING A LEGACY

As chief executive of Quintain, I'm responsible for the delivery, financing and planning of our principal asset, which is Wembley Park. I'm also accountable for the future health of the company. Since 2014, my focus has narrowed from the whole of the UK and Ireland to a 12 minute journey up and down the Metropolitan Line, from Great Portland Street to Wembley.

One day Wembley Park will be completed. It's our duty to ensure that the legacy we leave is one to be proud of, and that stands up to scrutiny from everyone who lives and works here: the football and music fans who visit, Brent Council and a long list of other interested stakeholders. They will all ultimately judge us. We have a real obligation to a very broad constituency.

Currently, 90% of both Quintain's time and people are dedicated to Wembley Park. The 10% spent on other projects will grow over time: Quintain has an appetite and a capacity to apply the lessons learned here and elsewhere to new ventures and new projects. But to be clear, I expect that Quintain will manage Wembley Park indefinitely in one form or another. Once the physical building has been completed, I expect us to have a long term, open-ended responsibility for the Wembley Park estate.

My professional involvement with Quintain dates from the end of 2014, when we started looking at its purchase from the Lone Star side. Before that, I was an occasional visitor to Wembley, going to the odd match and concert. My first ever visit was to a Rugby League match, aged 17 or 18. I remember where we sat in the old stadium, watching England lose to Australia.



Angus Dodd
Chief Executive
of Quintain

RIGHT
International Busking Day,
Wembley Park.

From the outset, it was pretty obvious that Wembley Park was the most important and valuable asset in Quintain's portfolio. But as a publicly quoted company, with shareholders who instinctively shied away from too much risk being concentrated in one asset, Quintain was obliged to own a broader portfolio. It was clear that the company would be better in private ownership, selling everything except Wembley and reallocating both cash and human resources to this one remarkable site. It wasn't exactly a hidden jewel – with 85 acres around the National Stadium and 12 minutes by tube from the West End, there's nothing hidden about it at all – but it was being held back by a lack of funding and focus.

The financial resources, afforded by Lone Star, now put us in a privileged position. We have ownership, coupled with shareholder backing for a concept that is not without risk. Lone Star's support and conviction have been remarkable. This support has also allowed us to raise the debt which any project of this scale requires.

Since 2014, my focus has narrowed from the whole of the UK and Ireland to a 12 minute journey up and down the Metropolitan Line, from Great Portland Street to Wembley. That said, my remit has expanded tenfold, with greater variety than in any previous role I've had.

I see constant change everywhere at Wembley, on a daily basis. It could be a hoarding that comes down to reveal a completed building, or a little more paving finished on Olympic Way, or a new tenant. It's a bit like returning home to discover that your wife or partner has painted the window frames. You'd notice. I see that incremental change, quite literally day by day.

Boxpark has brought a whole new dimension to the estate since it opened in December 2018. It provides a reason to visit Wembley beyond shopping, work or events. I think we'll see more of that as we expand the retail and leisure offers.



It's our duty to ensure that the legacy we leave is one to be proud of, and that stands up to scrutiny from everyone who lives and works here: the football and music fans who visit, Brent Council and a long list of other interested stakeholders.



Wembley Park, 2019.

Of course we remain very focused on delivering residential and work spaces – they are where the main value of Wembley and Quintain sits. But no one is going to rent, buy or work here unless it's an interesting attractive place to live. Those who've been at Quintain longer would say that London Designer Outlet Centre opening, in 2013, marked a similar sea change with the likes of Marks & Spencer, Nike and The North Face opening on site. Along with Boxpark, we also have various independent businesses arriving soon, including a market, a brewery and a bakery. Independent one-offs add a village feel. Without old historic buildings, we have to allow our own character to emerge, particularly with ground floor uses. That character should emerge naturally and organically. There is a balance to be struck, especially in today's retail environment; often the most interesting tenant is least able to afford market rents.

I'm proud of what we've done to Olympic Way – or 'Wembley Way', as the fans call it – with the architects, Dixon Jones, and their redesign with the trees, lamp posts and paving. It's a historic, iconic London road. Just looking on Google, you see the countless pictures taken of it, with thousands of people, horses and the stadium in the background, and you're reminded that Wembley is famous globally. The redesign is elegant, sympathetic and doesn't shout too loudly. And it's almost finished.

We're delivering on time and to budget. Not many developers can say that. But currently we're not even halfway through the build period and delivery process. There will be a moment in time, in the late 2020s, when we'll know whether the project has been truly successful. The physical delivery will be complete in 2027, provided we don't acquire any more land. I hope history will relate that a group of people (management, shareholders and Brent Council) committed to a real vision for success and built an authentic London neighbourhood that hadn't previously existed.

The relationship with the Council is very even-handed. Brent is our planning authority. We don't receive any particular favours but we do have good, open dialogue and they are super supportive of what we're doing. Part of this stems from the location of their building – architecturally, one of the best town halls in the country – right in the middle of our site. That important proximity helps. I think we work well together. Political differences (if there are any) never come up as an issue, we see eye to eye on almost everything we do together.

My favourite moments in Wembley Park are those spent just walking around. I take the long way round to the Tube. I enjoy seeing the place busy with workers, residents and visitors. I conduct endless headcount surveys in my head. It is a constantly fascinating place. Brent is ethnically extremely diverse with pockets of both wealth and relative impoverishment – one of our key aims is that the benefits of our investment in Wembley Park are more widely dispersed than just the limits of our ownership.

I do have a great sense of responsibility towards the place. Leaving would be like moving out of a much-loved house. I'd want to pass it on to somebody who feels the same way. I suspect my predecessors, in particular Adrian Wyatt (who bought the site for Quintain in 2002) and Max James, felt the same. This is their project as well. Our own team here work incredibly hard to plan, design, build and lease the buildings. The project is bigger than any one of us but every day I see individual employees doing more than I'm entitled to expect from them. So I'd pass it on to that collective of individuals, Quintain, confident that they would continue to deliver the piece of London entrusted to us.

I'm proud of what we've done to Olympic Way – or Wembley Way, as the fans call it – with the architects, Dixon Jones, and their redesign with the trees, lamp posts and paving. It's a historic, iconic London road.

RIGHT
Boxpark ...
Wembley Park's latest exciting venue with global street food, bars, stand up comedy, music and dance.



Chapter Two

CREATIVE RENEWAL

I'm a luxury upcycler. I take second hand, vintage or end-of-line cloth and transform it into brand new pieces. I also make bespoke fashion for men, women and children. It started with my mum's clothes. I thought, I'm going to take the saris and the lehengas around the house to pieces and put them back together again.



Shilpa Bilimoria
Luxury Upcycler

It's a little like archaeological restoration. We do it with buildings all the time, why not do it with clothes?

I have been in this studio (on Empire Way) for nearly a year. I moved to Wembley in 2005. First, in Kingsbury, and then to Wembley Triangle in 2010. We first settled in the UK in Orpington, from West Coast Vancouver. It was a real culture shock. When dad moved here, and I came back to Wembley from university, everything about the place made me feel I could breathe again. I could see the colours and hear the sounds I recognised as an Indo-Canadian girl. It felt homelike.

My very first experience of Wembley was wintertime. I was 13 and we had an eight-hour stopover between Canada and India. We visited family here before going up to Neasden Temple. I remember seeing people buying Indian veg. I was so tired, it was – literally – like a dream.

I love Wembley Park. I wanted to inspire a creative scene here and have it flourish. In 2013 when London Designer Outlet opened, it coincided with me having my first studio outside my house in Wembley Park. That was the tipping point for me. I could shut the front door and go to work. I thought, I don't want to go over to

RIGHT
A new home for
new creativity.





LEFT
Boxpark, Wembley ...
20 street food vendors,
three bars and great
entertainment.

Shoreditch for Brick Lane or the markets there. I want a market to be here. And now, this place has changed so dramatically. I call it a manifestation of what I wanted as a creative hub. Thinking of Boxpark, we have one here now.

The markets are coming up on our doorstep. The 30 new creative studios are managed beautifully. It's all changing for the better with the coming forward of new creativity. It will take a bit more, I think, but it's getting there. For instance, the borders between Wembley and Wembley Park are being crossed by locals – slowly, but increasingly.

There's something powerful about the independent businesses here. They have real character and individuality. They make the place more real. Second Floor Studios and Arts manage this space and are a breath of fresh air. They can shine the torch – or fly the flag – for us. It's almost like Amanda Rose (photographer) and I speak for the artistic start-ups and it's a role I relish. For the future, I hope that independent, creative companies, whether they're fashion, food or 'maker' enterprises, continue to pop up and create this energy.

I'm very aware of the history here and have looked back at the British Empire Exhibition. There are aspects of that which are not entirely comfortable in 2019, but I also think that if I'm sitting on ground where, back at the Exhibition, an Indian artisan was working, maybe I can represent that spirit in a brand new way. I want to bring in the ethics of fashion, workers' rights and everything we need, in a really new, beautiful manner. Maybe as a homage to them. My story in Wembley Park could then, truly, be one of luxurious upcycling. The stories of the past can be unpicked and reworked, in a modern way, for the modern era. In my work, I go back now all the way to where I came from and I see ancestry. There was Canada House here and I'm Canadian. My mum was born in East Africa and they had a Kenya House here too.

My favourite thing to do in Wembley Park is just to be here. Honestly. We can go into Boxpark for a meeting, to the LDO to pick up stuff, or simply be somewhere. Anywhere here is a huge change from being next to a tyre fitting place! The villagey feeling is arriving. People have been supportive – Ash at The Yellow, for instance. And if you ask, the people at Quintain will go out of their way to make things work.

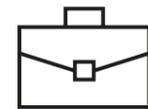
The idea of leaving Wembley Park and never coming back is such a strange thought. The first thing I'd think is where could I go where I would feel this at home? Nowhere is the answer, except maybe Vancouver. In all of Wembley, at any time of night, I feel fine, wherever. I've never ever felt vulnerable or weak. Not once.

The person who epitomises Wembley for me, in every single sense, is my other half, David Cherry. Properly put, he's my fiancé, he has lived in Wembley for nearly 30 years after coming over with his family from St Lucia aged thirteen. When he walks down the road (he walks everywhere), there's not one place where he doesn't recognise somebody. He is so charismatic. He will talk to anybody. That's why I'd choose him.

Nothing fazes him.



There's something powerful about the independent businesses here. They have real character and individuality. They make the place more real.



8,000
new jobs will be created
between now and
completion of the project

Chapter Three

ENDURING MEMORIES

My first experience and enduring memory here was, aged 17, seeing David Bowie in 1983 at the Arena. It made a massive impression upon me. Later, I was working at Coca-Cola when it became the sponsor of the Stadium, the Arena and also the England football team. The year after, during Euro 96, I was in and around Wembley every day and developed a deep attachment for the place.



James Saunders
Chief Operating Officer
of Quintain

Sadly that part of London, which was so synonymous with world firsts, good times and celebrations, suffered from a chronic lack of investment. When visiting for a game or a concert, you had to tune out all the bad stuff. In truth, it was a wasteland, poorly served, with no infrastructure. At the time I was invited to join Quintain, operating its businesses and assets on the Wembley Park estate, there was only one Indian restaurant and vast, open areas of nothing. And yet I remained very aware of the potency of the place and the Wembley brand.

Today, I can confidently say Wembley has come full circle with a new Stadium, revitalised Arena, live sport, music and culture nearly every day. As a live event junkie, I enjoy the atmosphere as much as the artists. I'm not that discriminating. Bowie, Disney, Bros, Cliff Richard: I've enjoyed some very different acts along the way! There's a big part of what I do during the day that stops being work and becomes all about the regeneration of an amazing place. For me, it's personal. The place is special. It's a privilege to work here.

The colour and complexion at Wembley Park change all the time. A huge amount has happened over the last ten years. In a place that only used to come

LEFT
The SSE Arena Wembley.
It's easier to ask who
HASN'T played here ...

alive on event days, now we have every colour of the rainbow, with Stadium days, Arena nights, shopping days, school parties, students, cultural events, small gatherings, large gatherings ... It's a place of constant change and the colours of the trees, parks and buildings never appear the same from one day to the next. We used to talk about tumbleweed rolling down Olympic Way and you could, almost literally, see it. Now we have commuters who leave their Wembley Park homes for other parts of London or who arrive for work at a growing number of businesses located here.

Life here changed on October 23rd, 2013. That's when London Designer Outlet opened. It was, in many ways, the first place you could visit in Wembley without a ticket. It is the best of the British high street captured in one area – a reason to visit Wembley without aiming for a specific event. Before it opened, the broader retail community in London said an outlet wouldn't work, especially being so close to the West End, Brent Cross and Westfield shopping centres. But the LDO

I want there to be a genuine community that connects Wembley Park to the wider Wembley. Despite the concentration of rental homes here, it's not going to be a place for transient renters; it's a place for long-term residents.



has proved them wrong and we're at full occupancy, still growing sales and footfall. There is now an everyday pulse, with a real heartbeat to the Park. It's meant that, including the events, we have gone from 3 million to over 11 million visitors a year in the time I've been here.

I think the 'overhang' of the old Wembley experience is one of our challenges. It still persists in so many people's minds. People think they know everything that's going on here because Wembley is so often in the back pages of the newspaper. There is an element of press editor fatigue when it comes to Wembley. As a result, everything that is new here probably doesn't get its fair share of press coverage. Obviously, seeing is believing and we know that the best way to change old perceptions is to bring more and more people to the site. I do, honestly, observe that 'OMG moment' when someone arrives at the Tube station, walks out and looks down 'Wembley Way'. It's heartening.

I want there to be a genuine community that connects Wembley Park to the wider Wembley. Despite the concentration of rental homes here, it's not going to be a place for transient renters; it's a place for long-term residents. We take our role in helping catalyse the community very seriously and are proud of what we have

LEFT
Home to the UK's most colourful fun run.

BELOW
Mr Doodle, an artist to put Wembley on the map ... and the walls.

achieved by introducing new facilities like The Yellow and Second Floor Studios and Arts, for example.

We are already changing the word of mouth about Wembley Park, taking it away from purely event related occasions. We're building a place with a new economic engine, full of culture, character and community and people are beginning to say how proud they are to live here. We are creating a Wembley for a new generation. The Twin Towers of the old stadium and Live Aid mean very little to most millennials. To them, Wembley means One Direction, Take That, Coldplay, Gareth Southgate and Raheem Sterling.

If I think of individuals who really embody the spirit here, Harvey Goldsmith is probably the most successful and prolific promoter this country has ever had. He staged Live Aid in the Stadium and Bruce Springsteen in the Arena. He's Wembley through and through. I'd go so far to say that Harvey is Wembley.



365

An everyday destination with sports, music, events, shopping, cinema, markets, restaurants and hotels

He was incredibly helpful when Quintain purchased the site and has been hugely supportive of our plans and journey.

Today, I'd also have to say Mo Butt, the leader of Brent Council, is a true 'Wemblian'. He's a telecoms engineer turned public servant, an exceptional, engaged individual who has vision and really gets it. For carrying the story forward, Mo is definitely one of those people I'm so glad is there to pass it on.



Chapter Four

A STRONG HEART



Rey Smart

Fitness coach and run leader

My first few years were in nearby St Raphael and I came back in 1996, studying at the College of North West London. Part of my growing up was coming to Wembley market. I loved it. The sights, the sounds and getting bargains like knock-off replica tops! I did a tour of the old stadium with the two towers with my school.

Wembley has changed so much over the years. Back then, I wouldn't ever venture up here. It was a wasteland. I was working for a housing association, around 2006, involved in building the first social housing blocks. I thought, here, in Wembley? Really? That was way before London Designer Outlet or anything else. From being very desolate, unforgiving and unwelcoming, it's now turned into a bustling mini city. You see the arch, the lights, it's breathtaking.

Before 2012, I was just running to my job, commuter running. A colleague, who had done a lot of charity runs, asked, "Why don't you do an event?" It grew from there. I think my first one was a BUPA 10k through central London for Great Ormond Street. Honestly, I was never going to beat Mo Farah so I thought, that's OK, and decided to qualify as a run leader. It was my way to help people get fit and give them some kind of social connection.

Wembley Park keeps on evolving. Some people find change unsettling but here it's comforting and exciting. So that's what I look forward to as well as the familiar London Designer Outlet and the people I know. Everyone contributes to that community feel and makes it a bit like a village. That's what I've come to like.

LEFT
The Stadium is used for running around and there are the steps that can really help.



Everyone contributes to that community feel, and makes it a bit like a village. That's what I've come to like. There's an energy. Brent will become the London Borough of Culture in 2020.

There's an energy. Brent will become the London Borough of Culture in 2020. In such a short time, the people here have really come together. You don't find that in established areas.

The run groups started in January 2014 when I approached the manager of Asics store in the LDO and asked to lead their sessions. We run on Wednesdays. It's free and I encourage those who come along to talk to each other. There's a really diverse range of backgrounds, different nationalities and different ages. People can walk and be coached a little if they like – or train for a marathon. It's a mixed bag. The great thing is that we now run a circuit outside the Stadium, which means no one ever looks fast and no one ever looks slow!

The architecture in Wembley Park helps our running. The ramps can be used for hill repeats. The Stadium is used for running around and there are the steps that can really help.

We're up to 17 runners on some Wednesdays, which is good, but can go down to five in the winter. I'm there all year round, whatever. There's nothing commercial about it but I do feel the community deserves these kind of initiatives. With Tipi, we've had some new people moving in and, by coming to the group, they're getting to know a few neighbours. I get some runners from Alperton and some from Wembley High Road. It's really good to see them come from further afield.

The new Yellow is the third iteration of the Community Centre. It's moved around the estate to allow other development. A fantastic hub and state-of-the-art facility, different groups operate classes there, yoga, tai chi, cookery, dancing, playgroups: a real plethora of activities.

There was some cynicism in the early days. People said it was a tick box exercise to help Quintain get planning permission. But as time's gone on, people have seen the commitment to having something here. A community requires more than just buildings and The Yellow has become its heart. Many other companies would have taken their foot off the pedal once the planning application was approved and they'd delivered their commitments. But no, Quintain has continued to drive it forward. I strongly believe that, coming from a real estate and social housing background, Quintain understands placemaking and this place is being made. London's newest village, I guess.

I hope Wembley Park continues to grow. I'd be disappointed if people packed into these modern-build apartments and just disappeared. The development has brought investment and higher incomes, but people aren't just spending their money here, they're socialising. I've travelled around the world and I've seen the separation that happens in cities, I love London because the world is in London. The world is definitely in Brent and it hangs together. I walk around here and I feel this is home.

The person who I would want to pass the spirit of Wembley Park on to is Bina Jorgensen, a resident of Forum House. She has been training with me for a bit longer than two years and she has lost 20 kilos. This time last year she hadn't won any medals. Last week she completed her fourth 10k, running an Adidas city run. She's got faster every time and it's just inspiring. A brilliant ambassador for Wembley Park because she embraces everything that is good here. Bina, pass it on.



RIGHT
Wembley Stadium.
A capacity of 90,000 ...
or just one.

Chapter Five

A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

One can't talk about Wembley Park without talking about the Stadium. The FA has a critical part to play given this is, effectively, the home of the game. Whatever people's view of the Stadium, it was – and is – the catalyst for regeneration in this area. I'm responsible for the day-to-day operation of Wembley Stadium. I work for both the Stadium and the Football Association as one and the same thing.



Jon Sellins
Football Association,
Chief Operations Officer,
Wembley Stadium and St George's
Park National Football Centre

Growing up in South West England, we looked at Wembley as a magical place. In 1985, when I was 22, a college friend played in the Rugby League Challenge Cup Final. A bunch of us organised a trip to come up and watch, with a minibus and lots of beer. I remember walking up 'Wembley Way' towards the Pedway, looking at the Arena, the old conference centre and, obviously, the Stadium. Having just finished a degree in leisure and recreational management, I can remember thinking how amazing it would be to work here. A year later, the opportunity arose and, thanks more to enthusiasm than skill or experience, I found myself working in this incredible place.

Like the perennial bad penny, I've left and come back numerous times. I'm now in my fourth spell. I joined as an assistant event manager at the Conference Centre in 1986. Over ten years, I worked up to a senior operational role in the Conference Centre, the exhibition hall, the Arena and then the Stadium. It was an astonishing training ground. I packed 20 years of experience into ten, simply by virtue of the scope, scale and mix of events we staged. Even the Conference Centre held impressive events like the Benson & Hedges snooker.



RIGHT
Wembley Stadium, the stage for many a final, whatever the sport. 1985 Rugby League Challenge Cup Final, Wigan vs Hull – Wigan won 28-24.



The England Winners stamp, designed by David Gentleman, was created by a new printing of the lowest value of the three British 1966 World Cup stamps. The stamp was not immediately available in Scotland or Northern Ireland for 'diplomatic' reasons.

After a year away, I was invited back to help with delivering the European Championship in 1996. Those were some of the most magical experiences of old Wembley. England almost won, like we always do. Afterwards, I became involved with the FA, developing the design brief for the new Stadium. The building was designed to accommodate, broadly speaking, three sports, namely football, rugby league and athletics, due in part to the conditional funding from the then National Lottery. The athletics track could be overlaid on top of the pitch in the same way as at Hampden Park for the Commonwealth Games.

After working with the London Olympics in 2012 – when I was back here again as one of 31 venues I was managing – I was approached by the FA to help advise other stadiums around the world. That was my third post, acting as a stadium management consultant. I left to run muddy obstacle races for a year, on Tough Mudder, before taking up with Tottenham to help plan the operation of their new stadium. Once there I was sidetracked because, as White Hart Lane was being semi-demolished, Spurs were playing their Champions League matches at – where else but – Wembley. So back I came, to become a customer of both the Stadium and Wembley Park. My decision to come back and work for the FA was a bit heartbreaking but it shows the pull Wembley has over me. It felt like coming home. The Tottenham fixtures have helped from an emotional point of view as Spurs is my team. But precious few stadiums have such a rich mix of football, rugby, NFL, concerts and boxing.

Wembley as a stadium is, I think, pretty good, personally. It's a hell of a lot better than the Olympic Stadium or, shall we say, Stade de France, which is a compromise. Without it, there would be no transport links, and without the transport links, there would just be this great big lump of North West London. The building itself is a totally modern, state-of-the-art, world-leading icon. Stadiums aren't too complicated. You want to get in quickly, buy something to eat or drink, go to the loo and have a decent view. The new Stadium addresses all those directly, a fantastically appropriate environment, I think, for the world class events we host.

The other huge improvement is the hinterland of Wembley Park. Ten years ago, Wembley Stadium was an oasis in a horrendous desert of industrial space. A town has been created. It's as simple as that, with residential accommodation, offices and, for our visitors, the entertainment and leisure facilities.

The residents, visitors and ourselves are all living in Europe's biggest building site at present. That brings real challenges. We're going through some pain, as are the residents, to get the long-term gain. For example, there are plans to knock the (fairly ugly) Pedway down and replace it with monumental stairs. The Pedway may be ugly but it has worked safely for 50 years, an effective way of bringing people in and out. The replacement staircase will have to be safe, requiring careful management to ensure no one slips, trips or falls, particularly when there are 80,000 people involved. Long term, I do believe it will look much more impressive, undoubtedly, and aesthetically more pleasing.

As the Football Association, we don't always agree with the Council, nor with Quintain. I'm sure they'd say the same of us. But I think we have a very good working relationship now. We work as a tripartite group to address the challenges of managing the Wembley Park estate and to make event days better for everyone. We talk to the residents too with a residents' committee that meets every so often a useful interface between the parties. Being fair, for the last two years we've pretty much doubled the number of events and that's not been easy for the residents. My hope for the future is to get the job finished.

While the Stadium is my favourite feature of Wembley Park, the area around it is now undoubtedly better. You used to come to an event, your event, arriving late because there was nothing to do. You would leave as soon as you could to go off into town or wherever. Now Wembley Park is becoming a true destination venue. People come and stay the night. There are numerous hotels, restaurants, bars and coffee shops. Quite rightly, a stadium of this stature has become a place where you

can spend a couple of days to take in a show at the Arena, watch a football match and perhaps a concert. I'm astonished by the number of tourists who now choose to stay at Wembley for their trip, rather than in central London.

I still love watching football. I've had two years of watching my football team play here. I still get a tingle when I see that arch. It's a magical place as far as I'm concerned. I encourage my staff team to get out of the Stadium and walk around. I love walking down the road from Wembley Park station with the Stadium as a backdrop. There can't be too many more impressive arrivals.

I would miss the full house, magical event days most. FA Cup Final Day is probably the pinnacle, but the semi-finals are incredible with more genuine fans inside the Stadium. The noise, just before kick-off, is amazing. Without the pomp and ceremony of the Final, there are just two teams, equally matched, fighting it out in front of the faithful. Incredible. I would sorely miss those massive sporting occasions (and we haven't even touched on concerts which used to be my forte).

I had thought to mention Sid Franks as the embodiment of Wembley. A retired local resident, Sid was a Wembley Stadium Community Officer, appointed by the entrepreneur, Sir Brian Wolfson, in the 1980s. Previously a fierce critic, he became a poacher-turned-gamekeeper and the inspiration for better traffic control, litter picking and street stewarding on event days.

However, my pass-it-on choice is much more contemporary. When we start to move 75,000 people out of the Stadium after a concert, most of them go up to Wembley Park Tube station. They need controlling, as we can't just let them all walk onto the platforms which would be dangerous. So we hold and pulse them safely into the station, which can take an hour or more. Among the stewards who look after the public, there's this brilliant guy called Shaky (his real name is Shaied Afsar). A staff supervisor, he's introduced post-concert karaoke at the Tube station. He uses his phone to play music to the crowd while they're waiting. The sing songs that result, at the end of a concert, are just great, great experiences. Shaky gets them all singing and it's just magical, a genius piece of positive crowd control. It's a brilliant way for an event to end and the crowds go home with this amazing memory of Wembley and Wembley Park. Which, of course, they can pass on.

BELOW
Wembley Stadium ...
a world class venue
for major events,
inside, or out.



I still get a tingle when I see that arch. It's a magical place as far as I'm concerned. I encourage my team to get out of the Stadium and walk around.



LONDON DESIGNER OUTLET

WEMBLEY PARK



Chapter Six

CENTRE OF GRAVITY



Sue Shepherd
Centre Manager of
London Designer Outlet
at Wembley Park

I'm the Centre Manager of London Designer Outlet at Wembley Park. We also look after the retail properties on the wider estate, some of which aren't built yet! I used to come to the old Wembley because I'm both a big football and music fan. But I didn't have hugely positive impressions of Wembley Park. It was somewhere to go and then leave, as quickly as you could.

I started in February 2014. The last five years have just been a blur. We have about 80 separate businesses – shops, restaurants, cafés and bars. When the Centre opened, we were about 65% let. We're at 98% now. The last three years have really been about bringing in newer, better brands, more appealing to our customers.

At first, people had a preconception of what 'designer' meant. We had to manage their expectations. The bonus was having Guess, Superdry and Replay alongside Gap, Villeroy & Boch, Marks & Spencer and Next all here in the opening year. We have to cater both to mission shoppers (who travel long distances to find a bargain) and to the local community. As London's first-ever urban outlet, our catchment area is vast.

I have two standout memories. I'm old enough to have watched the 1966 World Cup with my mum and dad. I remember watching our black and white TV, waving Union Jacks on lolly sticks. The emotion around seeing the amazing Stadium really caught my imagination. I have this indelible impression of Nobby Stiles running round the pitch afterwards, holding the World Cup, with no front teeth.

LEFT
The best value shopping
in London.



Car-free roads ...
Wembley Park's
busy boulevards.



20+
restaurants bars
and cafés

My second, big, standout memory was 1985, July 4th, and the first time I saw Bruce Springsteen live. That fired a 35-year passion for his music and the E Street band. Since then I've seen him 27 times live. But at that concert at Wembley, I remember watching him on stage as the sun went down with everybody holding their lighters up, getting lost in the music. So my love of Wembley was there long before I was asked to run London Designer Outlet. I'd never even heard of it!

I consider myself very lucky to be part of Wembley Park. We have this big, shiny shopping centre next to the Stadium and The SSE Arena. Given what's happening in the world, we have to be ultra aware of security and, if I lie awake at night, that's what I'm thinking about. But the joy is in working both with and for successful businesses. We have had such strong growth for so long. London Designer Outlet is my baby and I like to think we sit at the heart of things, a centre of gravity for the place.

I only wish we had a roof! I always think this a glorious place in the summer. There are loads of places where you can sit and have a glass of wine and watch the world go by or have a cappuccino and that's lovely. But it can be a challenge when it's bucketing down, freezing cold and you're in an outdoor centre.

We do have the first new cinema to be built in Wembley for over 30 years. There are restaurants far and wide, a theatre coming later this year, and great entertainment. To that, add shops, a play area, Boxpark and when you layer all the activities on top – open air cinema in the summer, say, or a Christmas market in December – it's like North West London meets the South Bank. 'Exciting' is an understatement.

Most community events are free of charge. Over half the estate is gardens and outdoor spaces, quietly managed and maintained by Quintain. When we host the

ABOVE
Restaurants, coffee shops, bars, World class dining, dunking and dawdling.

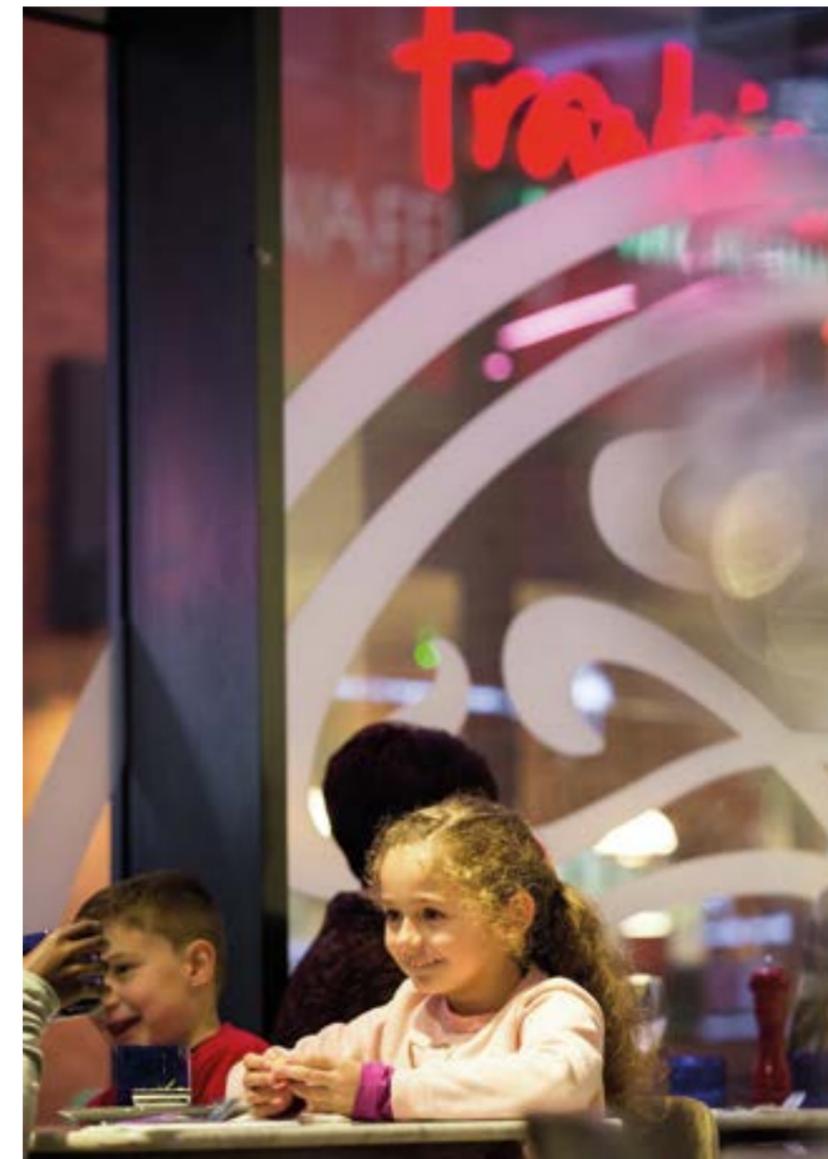
RIGHT
Happy families, a taste for all appetites.

Euros here in 2020, it will be amazing for people to see how much the area has changed.

I love watching live music at the Stadium the most. That's my passion, I've booked tickets this year for Fleetwood Mac and the Eagles. Honestly, though, on a Friday night, I just like to get together with my team and go and sit in one of the bars and wrap up the week. I have eight people in my team and we're managing 256,000 square feet in the LDO alone.

I'd say James Saunders embodies the true spirit of the place. If you cut him across the middle like a stick of rock, he'd have Wembley Park right the way through. I love his passion for everything that happens here. Julian Tollast is another who I hope will always be here and who will see the project through to its ultimate conclusion, whatever that looks like!

The manager of Guess, Kirbey Mills, has been here virtually since day one. She's great. She's running the most successful Guess outlet unit in Europe. They regularly win prizes. It's people like her that I meet along the way who make it worth coming to work at six o'clock on a December morning. She is exactly the right person to pass it on.



I consider myself very lucky to be part of Wembley Park. We have this big, shiny shopping centre next to the Stadium and The SSE Arena.



50
stores



Global events,
global superstars.



The light side
of illumination.

Chapter Seven

A LIFESTYLE CHOICE

I'm the Commercial Director of Tipi and I've been here for over ten years. Being Commercial Director means getting involved in all aspects of the business, from marketing to leasing to operations to all the finance aspects. Tipi is Quintain's rental business, named after the Native American tent dwelling, the very definition of flexible living.



Rajesh Shah
Commercial Director of
Tipi at Wembley Park

Tipi was set up to address the rental sector and put the customer first. Everything we do is focused on the customer's experience from a rental perspective. There are so many pain points that renters face living in London. Tipi acknowledges all the complications and simplifies them, making everything really straightforward. Shock horror, we've found that if you provide a good, attentive service, your occupancy sits at 98.5%! More than that, both landlords and tenants will come with gifts because they like dealing with you!

Our team is 45 people and growing. We'll be hiring 40 more this year. With 3,500 houses by the beginning of 2021, we should be over 100. I see our role as helping customers to see renting not just as a transaction for physical space – or 'unit' – but as a lifestyle choice that benefits them. When they describe it as 'home', and not just a flat (or apartment), we're winning!

In 2009, we started the first commercial development which was the Hilton, as well as a student block called W05. Visiting the project then left me fully aware of how dead Wembley felt. From the station to the Stadium, it was surprising how few people you'd pass. I had been before for event days when it was buzzing but

RIGHT
Know your neighbours:
a Tipi Supperclub night.





Regeneration
for a new generation.

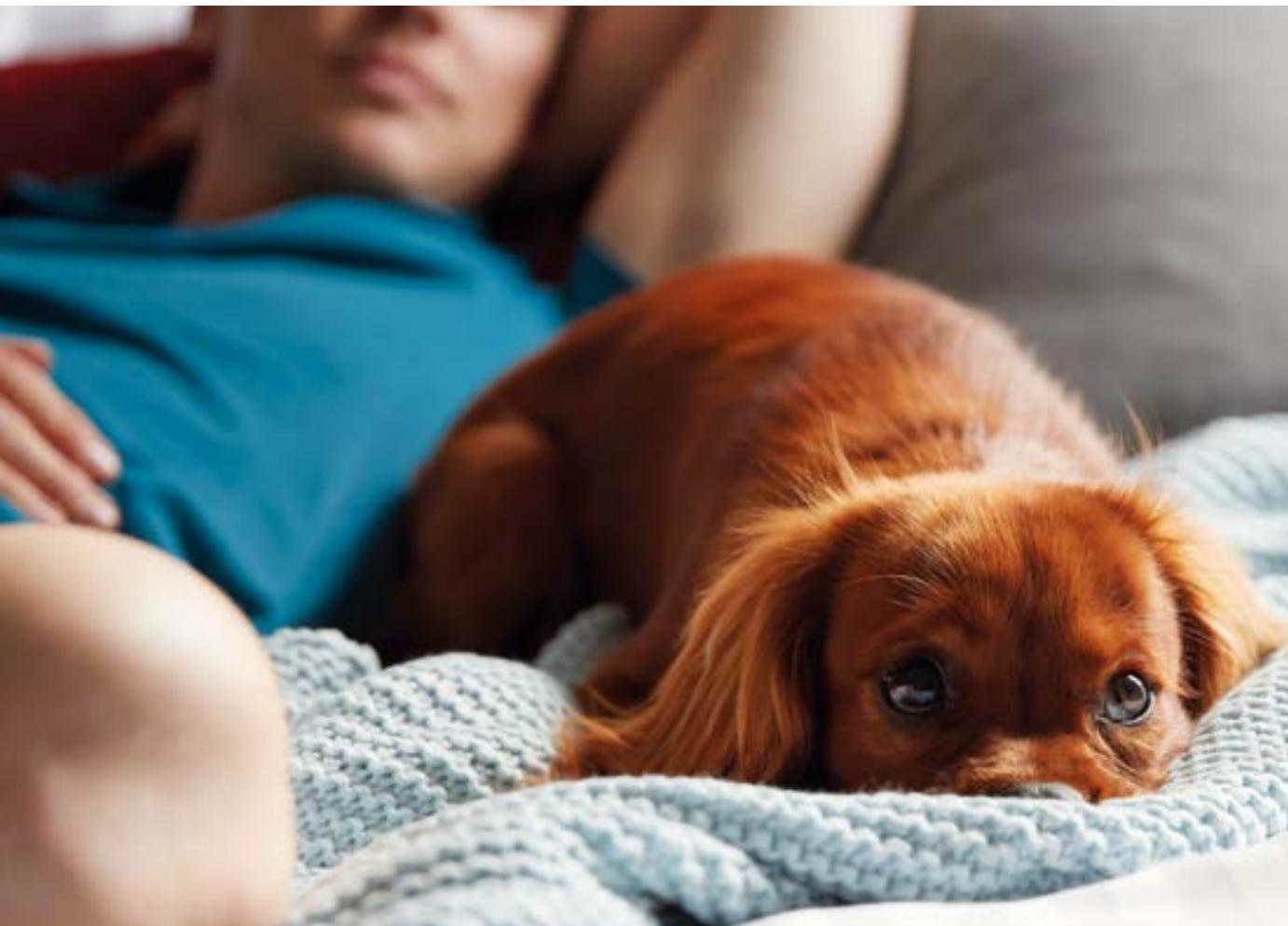
everyday Wembley was just dire. Nowhere to buy coffee. Nothing worth doing. Until two or three years ago, my speech was always 'This is what Wembley will become' but, this year, it has become 'Look at what it is now'. The exciting future has become an amazing present.

In those early days, the only way I could excite investors was by painting a picture. 'Imagine the Hilton when it's fully built, the renters, the retail to come,' I'd say. But it was a real struggle. Now, it's a really positive surprise living and working here. You come out of the Tube and see the familiar Stadium arch but, as you start walking, there are all these 'ah-ha' moments. The coffee shop right at the station, say, and then Boxpark (wow, what is that?). Getting to the heart of Wembley Park, you see the retail units, shopping, the people and Brent Civic Centre. All full of life. Just today, a colleague who lives in one of our buildings was saying he and his wife hardly ever cook. With London Designer Outlet restaurants and now Boxpark, they are spoilt for choice. Staying at home has become the hard work option!

The trigger for change was London Designer Outlet in 2013. The next turning point was Emerald Gardens in 2016 and the first two residential Tipi buildings. Real acceleration followed in 2017 to 2018. In other, large London developments, you find very uniform architecture. Here, it's different, with extraordinary variation inside and out. It's funny, but we think the buildings we are putting up are like Marmite. On a viewing, if a customer says that they "hate that building", we should never be offended. Instead, we can say, "Let me take you to another three buildings, all totally different, and I'm convinced that you'll love one of them". We've got so much choice coming through.



7,000
new homes
to rent or buy



For me, the best feature of Wembley Park is Emerald Gardens, the residential development that opened in 2016. It's seven buildings clustered round a one acre private garden.



Having been a part of Wembley Park for so long – over ten years – and involved with the team and living through the change, what I'd miss would be seeing what it could all become. And the people ... I know it's a cliché but the Tipi team is so passionate, particularly the younger ones. The team members who live here in the park are the most passionate of all!

Who would capture the spirit of Wembley Park most for me? My first thought is Julian Tollast who, for me, is the absolute embodiment of the Wembley spirit. He fights so hard about where every single tree should go or where a lamp post might be. His attention to – and capacity for – detail is extraordinary.

The other would have to be Jennie Fojtik. Jennie's a very passionate individual and when she sets her mind to something, she will put her heart and soul into it. She's massively passionate about training people, she brings an incredible knowledge of the residential rental market and was instrumental in setting up Tipi.

LEFT
Time off in Tipi ...
a welcome pause
and welcome paws.

RIGHT
An abundance of
green space and gardens.



Chapter Eight

A SOFTER WORLD



Jennie Fojtik
Head of Leasing, Quintain

I have lived in Wembley Park, in Forum House, for a good few years. It was Quintain's very first residential block. I literally lived and breathed my job. My background is estate agency. I came to Quintain in 2008 and started working with Rajesh about four years ago, setting up Tipi. My role now is helping to open new buildings, procure furniture and develop new business opportunities.

Before Wembley, I'd worked in West London in property. I'd seen the Stadium arch go up but never visited. The view in my Ealing estate agency was that lettings around this area were a bit, you know, 'ick!'

Honestly, working in Wembley Park is a bit of a mish-mash. It's very cool because it's always changing. I joke that when I first started here, there was a builders' café and that was it. Now, it's busy and vibrant.

The joy of being here is influencing those changes. For example, the design of Emerald Gardens came about because of feedback that Wembley then was too concrete and cold. With an acre of green space in the centre, light shines between the buildings onto the gardens, softening the environment. I'm proud of that. When Emerald Gardens was built, the area was crying out for more property to live in with all the flats already full, but the gardens added something fresh. It really changed things, in my view.

There have been other, little tipping points too. In 2012, the student accommodation building opened along with both the gym and Tesco on the ground floor of Quadrant Court. The gym had membership for 3,000 – 4,000 so it brought

LEFT
Wembley Park.
A 12 minute hop from
the centre of London.

RIGHT
Outdoor living ...
even event free days
can be eventful.

BELOW
Tipi living ...
a walk in the park.



Open spaces
A new seven-acre
public park and a
new London square



**The student
accommodation has
brought a lot of young
people. That's a real
positive too.**

people to our end of town. Each time, the conviction that regeneration was actually happening grew. In 2012, the Brent Civic Centre and, in 2013, London Designer Outlet confirmed that. The Civic Centre brought 2,000 employees walking to and from the station each day.

As Wembley Park is on a hill, the views are exceptional. In summertime, the sunsets across all of the buildings are spectacular. And looking out, you can see from Harrow-on-the-Hill to the City with the Tube trains weaving through North West London. Up by the Stadium at night, it's silent, almost like you're looking down on the busy-ness. It's so peaceful. And yet, there you are next to a world-famous football stadium that holds 90,000 and only 12 minutes into central London on the fast train. This is an amazing, modern mini city. I should know. I've lived here.

The younger generation that has been brought up in North West London wanted a more diverse way of living and so chose other areas to go and live. Interestingly, when they then started to return, it was because you could get new flats in Wembley Park and a different way of living. It's now becoming truly diverse in the way that London is diverse. We're seeing pet owners – of dogs especially – and people of all ages and stages come to live here. The mix is broadening. I think that's good because it's becoming more open. The amount of student accommodation has brought a lot of young people. That's a real positive too.

I would love to see more pedestrianisation and even more greenery. I hope both happen. Already, though, the attitude of my friends and family has changed. It used to be, "You what?", when I said I lived here. It's definitely a proper place now. If I was told I had to leave, I'd miss the people especially. Work colleagues, people associated with where I've worked and lived, and seeing faces I know. These are the people who make my life work.

When thinking of somebody who I would pass the Wembley cloak on to, Ash Patel jumps to mind. He personifies the positive spirit here. On a human and community level, he's just in touch with everything. He has such a receptive radar that goes far beyond Quintain and Tipi. He really is a man of the people, good to have around because he'll simply engage without trying.





Chapter Nine

MELLOW YELLOW



Ash Patel
Community Engagement
Manager

What started as a volunteering role has become a full-time occupation. I love what we do here and watching it change all the time. I've been the Community Engagement Manager of Wembley Park for three years. With Halah, we're a team of two and run everything. We're based at 'The Yellow' for about 60% of the time and run outreach projects for the other 40%.

We have 25 different weekly programmes and I'm becoming more of a facilitator, giving people the ownership to run an event, whether it's for pensioners or for little kids. The Yellow is our brand new community centre, with an event space, kitchens, a workshop and offices too.

I've been in and around Wembley for around 40 years. I was born here. My first memories were around the Stadium and some of the concerts. Live Aid, The Rolling Stones. The very first concert I remember was Queen. The last song was 'We Are The Champions' and the whole place was just bouncing.

Growing up, we'd get on our cycles and zoom around the Arena and the Conference Centre. It was a maze. I remember how Brent was both big, but small at the same time. You could reach a certain destination within ten minutes without trying. There was a lot of car park space, empty most of the time. There were matches, of course, England games, FA Cup fixtures and concerts. And the Wembley Market. My dad would probably go every week. Looking back, people talk so fondly of the market but the Wembley of today is really special.

LEFT
The Yellow.
A centre for everyone
in the community.

You don't have to go to central London any more. The food choices now are extraordinary. Growing up, I'd travel all over London to go to an open mic or a talk. Today, I can find those right here on our doorstep.

I see community engagement as breaking down boundaries. All our events are based around the four themes of Arts, Culture, Health & Well-being and Education. Each is there to promote better understanding. Success for me is when people say they feel like they belong in Wembley Park because of what we do. We also work with charities addressing people living in isolation or groups to do with mental health. We work heavily with the Council, supporting Brent as the 2020 London Borough of Culture, for example. In 2018, we had over 10,000 people visit The Yellow.

As I said, our role is simply about bringing people together, not about making money. I don't know of any other community centre with such good facilities. I'm very proud of it. Local people are proud of it too.

For some reason, people seem to collide more, in positive ways, in Wembley Park. Brent has always been a diverse borough. People find a way of talking to their neighbours. We're accustomed to different cultures coming in and I think we understand more about what's happening in England and the UK. This area is welcoming to everyone and everyone should feel they're a part of what's going on. To me that's so important. It brings a soul to Wembley Park.

FAR RIGHT

Local stand up, poetry slams and singers, all hosted at The Yellow.

RIGHT

Peace and calm amid the noise and haste.



Honestly, the people are the future. I've noticed kids coming in from different schools, different backgrounds and making friends with wider groups. There's a respect that grows for each other and the neighbourhood. I've even seen them picking up litter. Really! The respect crosses all the usual divisions.

For me, what I love most is watching the connection happen. For instance, just today, we had an English class where people were learning, but watching the friendships being made when strangers come together is amazing. Not surprisingly, the thing I'd miss the most would be the camaraderie and the smiles. We're in London and it's rare that people talk to strangers. It brings some sunshine to your day.

The person who best represents Wembley Park to me is Natalia Kharine. She's lived here, moved away and then come back. Her passion and enthusiasm are infectious. As soon as I met her, I wanted her to be part of The Yellow family. It's entirely down to her that ten kids from the most extraordinary backgrounds put on a show last week. It was just amazing.



630

places in a new three-form entry primary school



Chapter Ten

A JEWEL IN THE CROWN

We manage The SSE Arena on behalf of AEG and for Quintain. I've been here – this time – just over ten years. I first started in August 1990. It was a big jump from running a 2,000 capacity venue and leisure centre in Newport, South Wales!



John Drury
General Manager of
The SSE Arena

After a job programming both the Stadium and the Arena, I became Sales and Marketing Manager for the Arena in 1995. I moved away to work in other venues, but was back again in 2008. Very happily.

The SSE Arena is the jewel in the crown. Certainly, it's globally known, a world-famous venue as relevant as ever. We have so many first-time headliners. It's always good to see somebody breaking through to an audience of 12,500. Last year we had George Ezra, who hadn't headlined a venue of this scale. A huge deal for him. I'm reminded every time how important it is for artists to play here. You sit with George Ezra or, like last year, Five Seconds of Summer from Australia, All Time Low from the States or Babymetal from Japan, and wonder how relevant can this venue be to them from thousands of miles away? And they all say, "It's Wembley. The Beatles played here, the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin ... " The SSE Arena is a milestone place on the way up to so many acts. We call ourselves iconic, and I think we're justified.

We held 157 events in 2018. Just over 900,000 people came through. We have a million in sight for 2019. I'm proud of that. I usually say to any act that

The SSE Arena is a milestone place on the way up for so many acts. We call ourselves iconic, but I think we're justified.



RIGHT
The Beatles' final UK concert, May 1st, 1966. The *New Musical Express* Annual Poll Winner's Concert at the Wembley Empire Pool was to be their last ever scheduled appearance in Britain.

I usually say to any act that we get in to play here, before they go on stage, to please say "Hello Wembley" and I am delighted to see that, 99% of the time they do.

we get in to play here, before they go on stage, to please say "Hello Wembley" and I am delighted to see that 99% of the time they do. You get the odd person who says "Hello London", but it's rare. They don't shout out "Hello Greenwich" at the O2!

The diversity of acts is extraordinary. Hillsong is a great example, a three day women's conference held every spring. They put in about 9,000 delegates. They love it at Wembley. More than anything now, they love it that there are the places to eat and sleep. And there's more entertainment here.

I remember driving into the area for the first ever time and thinking 'wow'. It was in the 80's and a big adventure for me coming from a 500 seat theatre in Chesterfield. There was the Stadium, the Arena and nothing else, just a big old car park. Even then, as a music fan, I knew this was a very special venue.

Back then, you could see the remnants of the Empire Exhibition, the ruins of the Palace of Arts, but they're all gone now. This is the last building that dates from that time. Wembley Park's development has made an enormous difference. Concert-goers and performers just expect more. It's been important that it's not just the venue that has changed, even though we completely, literally, turned the building around when Quintain refurbished it in 2006. (The entrance is now at the other end). We talked a lot about the Hilton when it was launched in 2012, a four star hotel in the area where there had been none at all! We now have the Novotel, a new Premier Inn, Boxpark and the LDO. Perception went from Wembley being all about Indian restaurants down the road to having 30 different places to eat on your doorstep.

We talk about it being the biggest Build to Rent operation in the UK. By 2027, I think there's going to be 20,000 people living and working here. There's a school, there's something for everybody which there never has been before. It's a sizeable chunk of North West London that was largely ignored and forgotten until Quintain came along. And to be able to turn it into its own little community, so close to the centre of London, with two world class venues is very, very special.

RIGHT

Hollywood Vampires playing at The SSE Arena, Wembley.

BELOW

The empty pool is still underneath the floor of the Arena today.



In 25 years' time, looking back I think people will remember how a new community was developed in such a well-positioned area. We're seeing the transformation every single day. We can see the vision and we can see where it's going and it's been well documented and well explained by Quintain. It really helps us understand where it's going and it helps us sell our business, sell the venue, sell The SSE Arena, Wembley to the wider music industry.

My favourite thing to do is, and will always be, to see a show at the Arena. So, for example, we did three shows last year with Arcade Fire. They were fantastic. The promoter was really happy, so was the agent. We gave the band awards and they were really pleased. It's something to do with the building. With The Cure a couple of years ago, their tour was built around our dates because they wanted to finish with three days here. Sometimes we might be the only UK date – just recently the Smashing Pumpkins, for example – and it helps makes us that little bit special. Elton John calls it his 'favourite venue' and Michael McIntyre, a local boy, finishes his tours here.

I have only once been at the microphone in front of the audience. I didn't really want to do it. We had Arijit Singh who had sold out with 11,000 people on the night. It was the biggest Bollywood show we've ever had. We said to the promoters that he'd done so well, please could we give him an award. I thought, it's just going to be the announcement and the announcer will say, this is John Drury. He's coming in to give an award to Arijit, there'll be a handshake, a photo and that'll be it. Before I went on, they said, "Right ok what are you going to say?" And I thought, 'Ohhh... really?' But I went on and started with, "Hello Wembley." I got a cheer for that, said a few more things and it all worked really nicely.

There are certain artists who, from the time that we see them here, really capture the Wembley 'thing'. Elbow were like that, Frank Turner is like that, and there are a lot of acts we love. But the individual who always comes to mind because I know him so well is James Saunders who has Wembley in his bones. When his job changed and he was moved further up, I thought, OK, we're not going to see you as much now. But he said, "Oh yes you will, because being connected to everyone is what I really enjoy." He's remarkable and very approachable.

I'd pass it on to him.

The SSE Arena was originally The Empire Pool and Sports Arena, built for the 1934 British Empire Games.



**Councillor
Muhammed Butt**
Leader of Brent Council

LEFT
Dramatic views of
Wembley Stadium from
the new Civic Centre.

Chapter Eleven

BUILDING BRIDGES

I was first elected as Councillor in 2006 for Tokyngton ward, which covers Wembley Park. I became involved with the development and regeneration plans around 2007, working with Anne Clements. In 2010, I became the deputy leader of the Council and, in 2012, the leader. My job is to provide strategic oversight and guide the political sphere of the organisation.

It's also important to engage with partners and stakeholders. Working together, we'll get the best outcomes for the 325,000 people who live and work in Brent. We're predicting a further 20,000 residents in the next five to ten years.

I worked for British Telecom until 2012, but being leader of Brent Council is full on and full-time. My family have been in Brent since 1962 and I was born here in 1966. Childhood memories go all the way back to stores like C&A, Rumbelows and Bejam, shopping with my mum and dad. Over my lifetime, successive communities have come in. The Ugandans, in the 1970s, were followed by the Somali community, escaping persecution. The Eastern Europeans arrived around 2000. My immediate neighbourhood was very much part of the Windrush generation where, besides Caribbean arrivals, communities were coming in from India and Pakistan. I couldn't really understand it all as a kid. Now you can appreciate it was about finding a path home. It is in Brent that all these communities connect. That is our strength. People remain here. Those who choose to stick around really do stay here forever. The Wembley Park regeneration is definitely one of the reasons why.

I remember the old buildings which have been knocked down, the National

Stadium and the Conference Centre. People would drive into the area for an event and leave. If you'd pointed out that this was actually the London Borough of Brent, they'd have said, "Where's that?" Today, Wembley Park has become a destination. People want to visit. They will come into the area to have a coffee, or to have a meal. They love London Designer Outlet. It's creating an opportunity for people to come to visit the shops. They get a sense of the positive melting pot of communities all working and living together. The National Stadium is part and parcel of our community, delivering great benefit with 35 days of events every year. But there are still 330 days when the stadium isn't used. With every new opening and initiative, we're seeing that people are being drawn in for other reasons. With Quintain and Wembley Park, we have to create hubs, activities and projects where people feel they are valued. That way, people are encouraged to put more back into the area.

When the Civic Centre opened here on October 6th, 2013, it was a powerful signal. By transferring ourselves from 15 or 16 different buildings to this one place, it showed that the regeneration of Brent would continue with the Civic Centre at the heart of positive change. It brought 2,000 working people to the area every day. Simultaneously, we brought in flexible working and a digital transformation of the council as well. We went paper-light. Our customer services became more accessible. For example, the library is open seven days a week. Working with Quintain to get this building here gave us that opportunity, helping us to be more resident focused.

When The Masterplan for Wembley Park was first unveiled, many struggled to see the big picture. Aside from the Stadium, the Arena and the Conference Centre, they couldn't understand how all these homes, the commercial space and the retail units would fit. There was real hesitancy. The residents now truly appreciate the plan. I recently took a resident with me over the White Horse Bridge, across to the

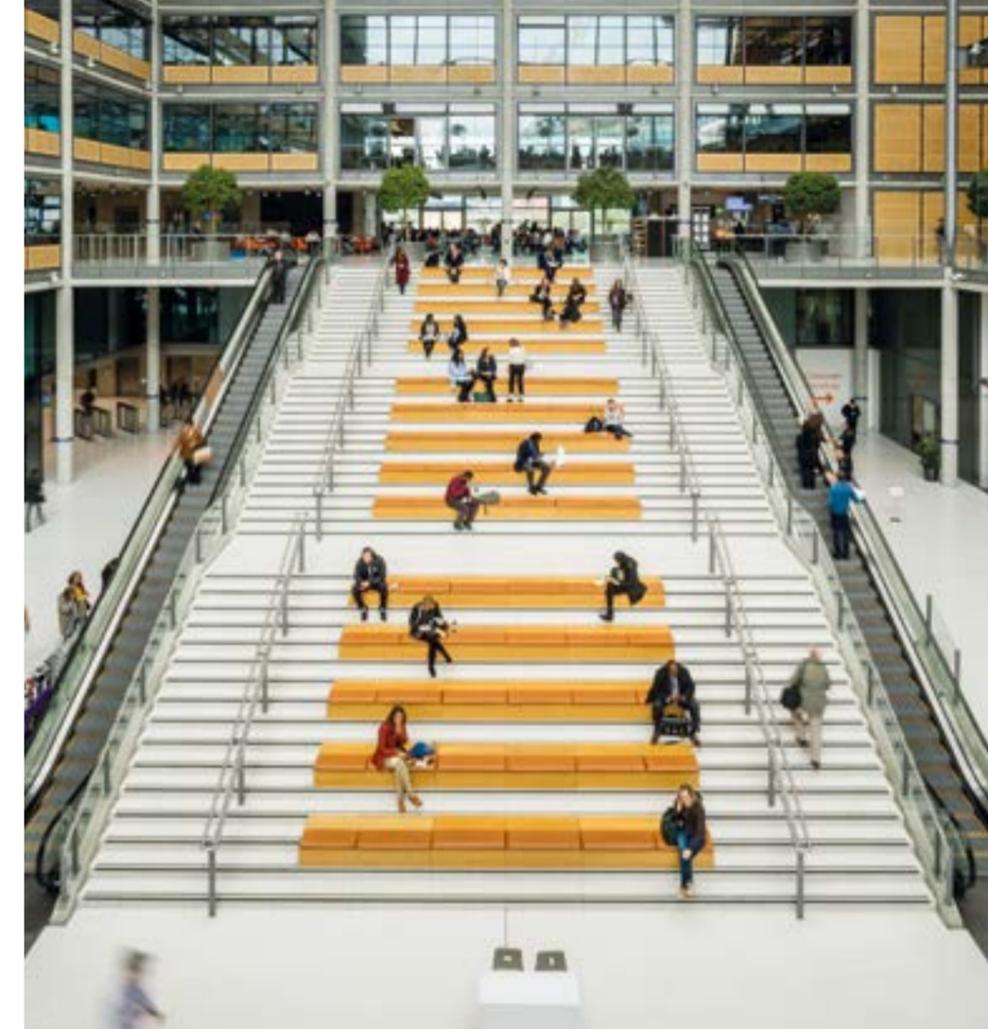
FAR RIGHT
Brent Civic Centre.
An era-defining town hall
for the 21st Century.

RIGHT
National treasure. One local
boy made very, very good.

BELOW
An iconic, landmark
building at the centre of
Wembley Park events.



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Premier Inn and the top of London Designer Outlet. He'd never walked that way. He was stunned. It's moments like that, when people can see the real benefits and possibilities, that they appreciate the ambition here. Rich and poor, we're all walking down the same streets, with the same shops, sharing the same space where everyone connects.

When my children – who are growing up now – come with me to Wembley Park, they can see the positive results. My greatest wish is that everything combined will have a favourable impact on people's lives, raise their hopes and also their aspirations. Wembley's regeneration is not just about the improvement of an area, it's about the improvement of lives. If you go back to the Romans, the Egyptians or to the Incas, every society has left a constructive mark. I hope that what we're doing in Brent is part and parcel of an improvement in wider society. With what we have on offer, Boxbark, London Designer Outlet and the Troubadour Theatre with War Horse on the horizon, I'm now able to come on any day and have a good experience. A destination and a place for every day has been created.

The person I would pass it on to is the boxer, Henry Cooper. A few weeks ago, I was privileged to attend the unveiling of the blue plaque for him, with the Cooper family and friends. He used to have a food shop in Wembley and he went from working in a humble grocer's to being a global icon. In his lifetime, he made such a contribution, not just to Wembley and Brent, but also to our society and the whole of the UK. Blessed with great qualities, he should be recognised for his legacy. We shall not forget him in our celebrations for the London Borough of Culture next year.



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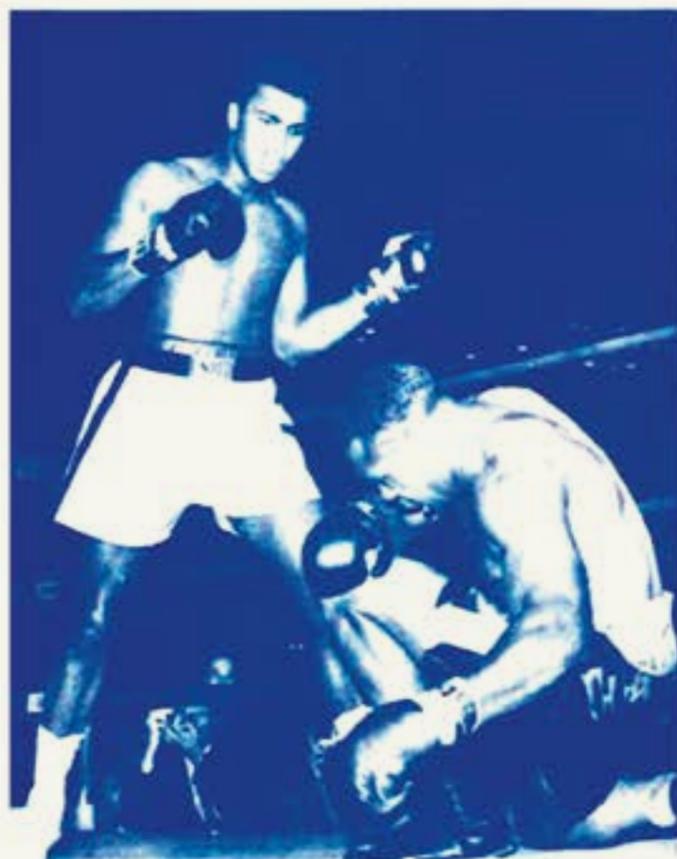
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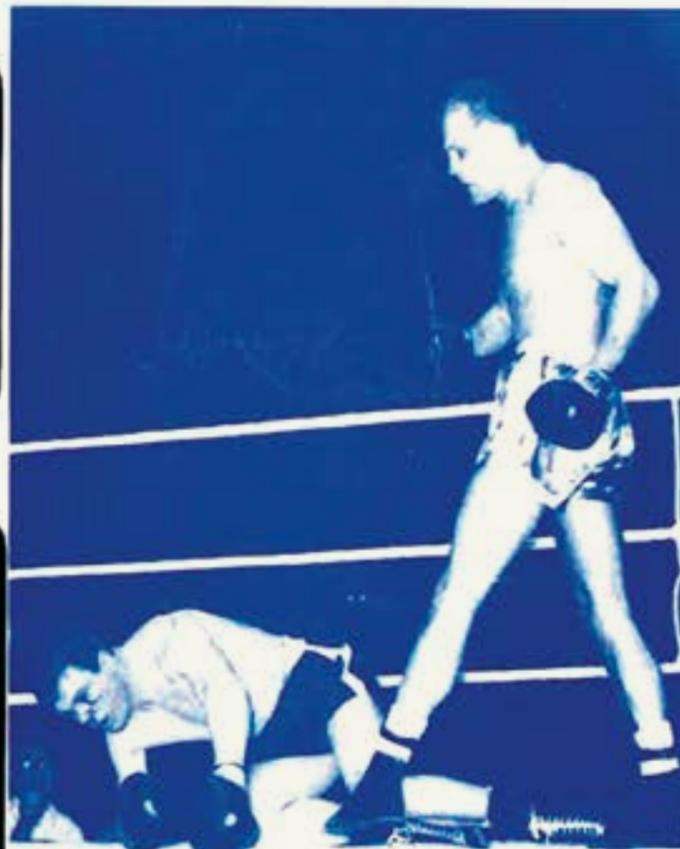
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Chapter Twelve

UNDER PRESSURE

Wembley was always a boyhood dream. The first FA Cup Final I remember was Leeds/Chelsea in 1970. Little did I know I'd be running the place some years later. I was first turned down for Operations Manager for Wembley plc in 1987. They called me back for a role in the new merchandising department as it moved in-house.

When both the merchandising manager and the assistant left, I grabbed the opportunity with both hands. My baptism of fire, in 1988, was being locked outside the Stadium on the merchandise stand when trouble flared at an England/Holland game. I was physically and verbally abused because of my Wembley shirt. I quickly took it off for my own safety.

They were exciting times. I was working in the Arena, the Stadium and the Conference Centre, managing both catering and car parking contracts. Around 1994, we had to restructure the business. I became the commercial director in 1991, three months before my 30th birthday. Much of what we're used to now was so new then. Corporate hospitality, merchandising and rock concerts in stadiums were all developing off the back of Live Aid. At the same time, some aspects were very basic. Until the mid 90s, perimeter boards were hand painted. We had a couple of guys from Oldham who would drive down to paint them on matchday mornings. We did have an incredibly creative and imaginative chairman in Sir Brian Wolfson. He recognised the need for change. He and the Board gave us the resources to develop the place. We had a permanent, dedicated staff of (appropriately) 66,



Paul Sergeant
Former Commercial Director
of Wembley Stadium

RIGHT
Up to 90,000 people
enter the Stadium for
each event.



Live Aid, July 13th 1985,
the largest rock concert
in history.

LIVE AID





When Pele visited, he asked for a football, which he took down to each end and scored, something Gordon Banks had stopped him doing in the past. You could tell it was a very special moment for him.

ABOVE
The incomparable Pele ... whose memorable shot was saved by Gordon Banks. Football's greatest ambassador at the then global home of the game.

RIGHT
Euro 96 ... Football was (nearly) coming home.

from groundsmen to security and commercial people. I became stadium director and was running everything. It was a massive honour and, to this day, the best job I ever had – or will ever have.

The old Stadium was built in the early 20s as a temporary structure for the Empire Exhibition. We spent about £70 million in a very short space of time on its upkeep. After the tragedy of Hillsborough, the *Green Guide* was revised which gave venue owners of any sport, not just Wembley, the kick up the backside that was needed. Health and safety became a priority. Building design, management structures and operational procedures all changed too. Running a venue is like looking after a small town. With 80,000 or 90,000 people coming, you've a serious responsibility to look after them, something that keeps you awake at night.

Every event was a first. Whether you've done the Cup Final countless times before, the circumstances were always different. There was always a huge amount of planning, preparation and co-operation needed with competing clubs and associations from overseas, concert promoters, police, fire, ambulance and Brent Council. For us in the Stadium, 60 – 70% of people arrived in the last hour before the start. At the close, 100% of those attending all wanted to leave at the same time. Good co-ordination with London Underground, the British Transport Police and Metropolitan Police was essential.

A few weeks before Euro 96, I received a phone call from The Ritz. "I have Mr Pele on the phone for you", said the concierge. The legendary footballer was asking to visit before the tournament, during which he would be commentating for Brazilian TV. Next day, he arrived in a private limo, wearing a cream suit. As we walked around, he asked for a football. (We'd normally keep them hidden from Chairmen and CEOs, because they'd all run on to the pitch like schoolboys.) Pele walked out on to the beautiful green surface, perfectly mown, with the goals up. He took the ball down to each end and the delight on his face when he kicked it in was something to behold. Up to that point, most memorably because of Gordon Banks, he'd never scored there. You could tell it was a very special moment for him.

Sir Stanley Matthews was another legend who used to come to Wembley regularly. I spoke at Stan's funeral and his 80th birthday. He was always very proud of his days here. At home, he had three lawns around his house. He called one paddock 'Vale Park'. And another, 'Victoria Ground'. The third, which was pristine, he called 'Wembley'. In the build up to Euro 96, Stan came and visited. Simply Red's Mick Hucknall was also on site, doing the video for the tournament theme song. When he got wind that the legend was in the stadium, Mick came and joined us. It was amazing to see what the footballer meant to a global rock star.

In my position, the Euro 96 tournament was really tough. I was there for up to 110 hours a week, sleeping under my desk. You may remember the opening ceremony featured two lancers on horseback. In rehearsal, one of the guys was

knocked off right in front of the Royal Box. I gave them both an absolute rollicking and strict instructions about no contact. But then the same thing happened again on the actual day. One rider broke his leg in a couple of places and was trapped under his horse. Thankfully the animal got up, because we had nothing there that could shift a horse if it too had broken a leg. A testing start.

In the Euros, we first played Scotland, then Holland. England/Scotland is always ramped up with all the off-field stuff, let alone what happens on the pitch. The morning of that match, a bomb went off in Deansgate, Manchester. Immediately, we were an obvious target. Via the *Belfast Telegraph*, we received a coded warning. During the game, there couldn't have been a safer place in Britain. It really tested all our processes and procedures. We worked closely with the Metropolitan Police, who were incredible. Then, days later, at the England/Holland match, we had a power failure midway into the second half. In the footage, you see only four of the eight light pylons are working. That was the catalyst that led, subsequently, to all venues having backup generators. At the time, with England 3-0 up, we nearly had to call off the game. With 80,000 people enjoying the football, we were having kittens behind the scenes.

I fell out with Ken Bates (then Chairman of Wembley National Stadium Ltd) and left Wembley in January 2000. I'm more than impressed with what's been realised since. I do believe the old Twin Towers could have been incorporated as part of the new Wembley. Even now, as you go around the world, people shake their heads as to why they were knocked down. Their demolition took weeks. It blows a bit of a hole in the argument that (apart from the plaster roofs) they were crumbling. With today's technology, I wish the new Wembley had incorporated them. But look, it's still an incredible, unbelievably prestigious Stadium.

The person I would pass on to is Sir Brian Wolfson. He helped rescue Wembley Stadium in the 80s when it was a crumbling heap. He had the vision and the foresight to turn it around. He raised the necessary capital. To me, Sir Brian was the architect of the future Wembley, someone that the staff could always relate to. He would talk with them, listen carefully and involve them at all times: an inspiration to the entire Wembley staff and to Wembley's reputation globally.



In my position, the Euro 96 tournament was really tough. I was there for up to 110 hours a week, sleeping under my desk.

The arch over the new stadium has become a defining image of London.

Chapter Thirteen

WINNING THE PITCH



Robert Gordon Clark
Chairman of London
Communications Agency

In 1988, I went to the Liverpool/Wimbledon Cup Final. (Wimbledon won 1-0.) I was staggered by how run-down Wembley Stadium was. From the toilets, the experience, the area around that site and the burger vans in the car park, the place was an echo of just how much London was on its uppers then.

I joined London First, in 1993, after being recruited as head of communications. My job was to help campaign on issues of importance to businesses in London. They included the likes of Crossrail, the Jubilee Line extension and Heathrow Terminal 5. Two years later, the newly introduced National Lottery and the Sports Council announced there would be a national competition to decide where a new National Football Stadium should be built. Various cities around the country piled in with bids and five were shortlisted: Bradford, Sheffield, Birmingham, Manchester and London.

At that point, Wembley PLC approached London First for help. A campaign was launched to keep the National Stadium in London at Wembley. I was seconded there and joined by Will Tuckley, now the Chief Executive of Tower Hamlets. Bradford and Sheffield were knocked out and it became a three horse race. We engaged Peter Mead, the Chairman of ad agency Abbott Mead Vickers and owner of Millwall at the time. His mantra was that in the two words, 'London' and 'Wembley', there were brand values going back, in one case, 2,000 years and in the other, 70. Names that were (and are) worth billions globally. Our pitch to the Sports Council was completely driven by that.

LEFT
The iconic arch distinguishes Wembley Stadium (and Wembley Park) on the 21st century London skyline.



BELOW
The doves released to open the 1948 Olympics in Wembley Stadium were actually pigeons.



I wrote to all the other borough leaders in London, with the obvious exception of Brent. Five came back suggesting that the stadium be built in their boroughs!! Without a mayor, London had no coherence. Toby Harris, the leader of Haringey Council and chair of the Association of London Government, then stepped forward and was immensely helpful to the bid. And, in the end, we were successful and beat the other cities.

On the design for the new Stadium, I had to defend the loss of the Twin Towers. On a Radio 5 live phone-in, various callers were asking why they had to go. I replied that the towers were almost completely worn out and that, when the stadium was built in the 1920s, they had actually been retrofitted. They were, in fact, facades. One suggestion was to pull them away from the stadium and move them down Wembley Way to form an arch. We actually commissioned architect drawings to show that they would have looked completely out of scale, like toy-town structures. In the end, they were demolished.

The final game in the old stadium was the 1-0 loss to Germany in 2001, befitting for a stadium that had had its day and was ready to be knocked down. That last match it rained, we lost, Kevin Keegan was the manager and it was just a really damp squib. In a strange way, it was bizarrely appropriate.

In 2001 I had just set up London Communications Agency. Our involvement with Wembley progressed with Quintain buying a lot of the assets around the stadium and around 45 acres of the park. (The full purchase of 85 acres came later.) The project was code-named 'Project Tolkien' after those Twin Towers. The investment into Wembley and the regeneration by Quintain was a powerful lever in helping build London's case for the Olympics. Combined with the co-ordinated Tessa Jowell led bid, it added up to a potent and, ultimately, winning argument.

If you watch the 1948 opening film of the Olympics in Wembley Stadium, when they released the doves on the running track – which were actually pigeons – the boy scout's knee in the right hand corner belongs to my father-in-law, Sir Michael Day, one-time chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality. He was one of the scouts who opened the pigeon coops to let them loose. A legal friend tells me there was only one lawyer employed for the whole of the 1948 games and, apart from men's athletics, no sponsorship at all. All the participants had to pay for – and bring – everything else. They really were the post-war austerity Games.

Apparently the chargé d'affaires for the official opening forgot to bring the Union Jack flag into the Stadium to raise up the flagpole. A flunky was sent out to fetch it from 'an Austin in the car park'. When he went out, he was confronted by endless Austins and blind panic. Somehow, a flag made it up the pole from somewhere.

The arch over the new Stadium has become a defining image of London. Back in 1990, your typical tourist probably took away the Tower of London, Beefeaters and red London buses as their takeaway snapshots. London now resonates with cultural diversity, architecture – ancient and modern – and leading edge creativity. Wembley Park is, honestly, the best expression of that. The new Stadium is one of the most famous in the world. The park is in outer London but effectively inner London in its convenience. It is an outstanding place.

My choice of whom I would pass it on to is Paul Daisley, who was the leader of Brent Council and a local MP. He died, tragically young, of cancer in 2003. He led the Council through the bidding and the deal. I didn't know him well but, working with him and the Council, I found him incredibly supportive and a real, unsung hero in the whole process. When I look back, he did a lot to make sure his borough was supporting the bid. He was a very special bloke and it's great to see a garden at Wembley in his honour.

The new stadium is one of the most famous in the world. The park is in outer London but effectively inner London in its convenience. It is an outstanding place.

LEFT
From National Stadium and the FA Cup in 1935 ...

BELOW
...to world class Stadium, internationally renowned and recognised in the 21st century.





Lord Toby Harris
Labour Peer

LEFT
Famous friendly faces from another era. The Twin Towers were the face of Wembley Stadium for three-quarters of a century.

Chapter Fourteen

HOME OF FOOTBALL

I'm a member of the House of Lords and chair the Labour Peers' Group. I'm also a member of the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy. In addition, I have various public and advisory roles. Like so many others, I watched events at Wembley on television as a child. My first ever actual visit was as part of an education process, not so much for redevelopment, but as a possible venue for an Olympic stadium.

It was always an exciting place but the high points were confined to the pitch. The rest of it, in some ways, you had to endure.

In the 1990s, I was Borough Council leader of Haringey. In 1992, I also became chair of what's now London Councils, the Association of London Government. As such, I was essentially the spokesperson for all the London boroughs. It's a bit more complicated than that but, in effect, I was the senior elected politician in London, representing Londoners. The engagement with Wembley came about as the bidding process for the new National Football Stadium began. A consortium was formed of which local government was going to play a key part. We were presenting to the Sports Council for England, which was the National Lottery distributing body at the time. The hope was for London to continue as home to the National Stadium.

The old Stadium was fading and past its best. Iconic, of course, with the Twin Towers and being the home of football. The tender was opened up to the country. Rather than having Wembley Stadium Ltd bidding, which might not sound terribly satisfactory, it was agreed to form a consortium. We were working closely at that time with London First. The agenda was about building a prospectus for London



Olympic Way
was transformed by
major refurbishment

as a city. The 'interesting' task was to bridge all 33 London boroughs and also reach a common consensus with the business community. It was agreed that a vehicle would be set up that was called the English National Stadium Trust and that I should lead the bid.

There was serious opposition from four other cities. Blackpool and Sheffield were knocked out pretty quickly and it became a three horse race between Manchester, Birmingham and ourselves. Passionate arguments were made about the symbolism of Wembley and its place as the home of English football. Ultimately, we were successful. The sports grant was £120m. It turned out that was only sufficient to buy out Wembley Stadium Ltd and the site. Ultimately, several hundred million extra was needed to build and complete the Stadium. There was also an issue about whether National Lottery money could be given to a private company.

One result was that I, as an individual, became the actual owner of Wembley Stadium for 15 minutes. As part of the legal structuring, the stadium was transferred to me personally and then I transferred it to the trust. A very complicated business. I stayed out of the room while the lawyers made it happen!

Originally, we were to be the development vehicle. We employed people to start putting together plans. There was a whole sub argument about whether to include an athletics track or not. In the end, the Norman Foster design was built so that, in theory, dual use was possible. There were challenges about creating the Wembley roar and the closeness of the crowd to the football. It added to the design complications at quite a late stage. By then, the Football Association had woken up to the fact that this was potentially the biggest asset football would ever have and so they ought to assert themselves. The FA became the owner. It was an enormous relief no longer to have personal responsibility for any delays or mismanagement. Chris Smith, the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the chair of the Football Association did a deal in Chris' sitting room one Sunday morning, (without either having their officials in the room), which essentially dispensed with the requirement that the athletics track actually worked or functioned.

Prior to demolition, there wasn't much of a venue attraction. You were there for the football and some really rather nasty hamburger outlets. That was it. There was nothing else to do there. Ingress and egress were extremely challenging. 60,000 people would arrive simultaneously, just before the game. Why arrive two hours early to trudge through a wasteland with only a really greasy hamburger off a stall to tempt you? Equally, at the end of a match, everybody wanted to get out because there was no reason to stay.

So the three main routes were really congested. Part of the original Masterplan was to look at a much broader development of the area. Maybe, we debated, we could partner with a developer. That's where, I think, Quintain came in to create far more of a destination in Wembley Park. Amongst us, our original, idealised version of the future was of this area thriving. I think Wembley Park still has a way to go but it is much closer to that original drawing than I could ever have dared hope.

The person I'd pass on to as pivotal to the development is Bob Stubbs. We engaged him to be the development director. He, perhaps more than anybody, understood the importance of the wider view. When Ken Bates left, Bob was also pushed out. He really pulled together the elements to enable wider reinvigoration to appear possible. So much so that it frightened the Football Association who insisted they were 'not in the business' of regeneration. Bob really did an exceptional job.

RIGHT
Olympic Way ...
what better way to
approach a national icon.

BELOW
The World Cup
Championship hat from
1966, a sculpture detail
on the Bobby Moore
statue beneath the
Wembley Stadium arch.



Chapter Fifteen

HOME AND FAMILY

We visited Wembley once to see the X Factor final being recorded in The SSE Arena. I never thought I would be living here. It felt so far away and then I checked the time and it was less than half an hour from the city centre! Marketing for Motaword is my living during the day and, in the evenings, I am a software engineer, developing voice apps. I really think vocal interaction is the future.

On March 4th, 2019, we celebrated three years living in Wembley Park. Tipi was our first real home. We were the first ever Tipi renters (of the Quintain Buy to Rent properties) to move here. We were supposed to move in two weeks later but our previous contract, a studio flat in Bethnal Green, finished and we were facing hotel bills. Quintain let us move in. There was nobody else in the whole building. Emily wasn't born yet, so it was just me and my husband. We call our moving-in date our 'Tipiversary'.

We were very, very careful about choosing where to live. My husband saw the Tipi newspaper ad, so we came to check it out. Quintain had built London Designer Outlet and we saw the plans for the park, Elvin Gardens. Ultimately, we wanted a nice apartment, somewhere safe, first for me as a pregnant woman and, later, for our daughter. Then, also, somewhere where you could go shopping, enjoy the weekends, and still feel you were in London. Besides that, there was this amazing feeling of being next to the biggest stadium in the UK, a reminder that we would be living in one of the most beautiful cities in the world.



Dr Aygul Zagidullina
Marketer, software engineer and Tipi resident

RIGHT
Plenty of drama ... even on event free days.



RIGHT

Wembley Park welcomes adventurous appetites, whether at London Designer Outlet, Boxpark or the various open air markets throughout the year.

FACING PAGE

London Designer Outlet ... where best value shopping meets the best known brands.



Our hope was to have a very big choice. And that's just one reason why we settled upon Wembley Park, with all London Designer Outlet restaurants.

When you're pregnant, you want all these things like strawberries and cake and to have all kinds of food choices close by. My parents are in Russia, I've lived all my adult life in Germany and my husband is from Turkey. Our daughter is British. Our hope was to have a very big choice. And that's just one reason why we settled upon Wembley Park, with all London Designer Outlet restaurants. We have changed our apartment four times now. As they build new houses, it keeps getting better. We've moved to Landsby, the very latest house, which opened in December 2018. I used to dream of the perfect place for us to live – a brand new, high spec apartment, with everything from floor-to-ceiling windows to a concierge service. And here we are! It's become a reality.

More widely, Quintain is taking care of all the area, not just the buildings to sell or rent. They have built playgrounds for children. There is always this sense that something is coming soon, the new nursery or new schools. I only wish it could happen quicker!

Christmas is amazing in Wembley Park. Instead of going to Oxford Street or Bond Street to see the lights, this last year I could experience Christmas with my daughter, right here, on my doorstep. There were fantastic installations and incredible lights. In London, you really want to live in a place where things like that are happening.

I love the Stadium. I don't understand why anyone wouldn't. My cousin visited last month and was so impressed to feel that energy and the happiness. He'd never seen crowds that big enjoying something so much. People walk back from an event, singing songs, celebrating, really loud. I love sharing that with my daughter, the activity and the energy of fans passionate about football, music or whatever they've been to see. It makes it an exciting place to live. This is a neighbourhood, with a really rich history that was left, almost abandoned, for a few years but now it's in good hands again.

Honestly, our little community is like a growing family. Our neighbours join with us at all the events. Just last week, we were celebrating Saint Patrick's Day and they were teaching us how to dance. I would really miss them, moving to the kind of place

where you turn your face away in the lift. Here, everybody recognises each other. There's a warm kind of village feeling. If we have guests coming over and my daughter is sleeping, we can use the kitchen downstairs to cook for up to 40 people.

We're a quadrilingual family and I love learning about other cultures. In a diverse community like this one, my daughter is growing up totally accustomed to people of different nationalities. It's not artificial engineering but real life. I'm a great believer that anything can be solved through communication and the more we communicate with people, the better.

It's probably very silly but something I really like, since my daughter is growing up here, is watching her running and dancing in the fountains that rise, suddenly, from water jets in the ground in front of The SSE Arena. Just watching her playing there with other children is so absorbing. You stop thinking about the pressures of tomorrow, just about how this place is her home and how happy she is and we are. It's like the butterfly effect – from that small observation, all sorts of positivity can grow.

It may not surprise you that the person to whom I would pass it on is my daughter, Emily Olivia. I left my family in Russia for many reasons, very much my decision. I moved to Germany and then, later, we came here. I guess I was searching for a kind of paradise and we have found it. I was wondering, why am I so happy? Is it this amazing apartment, is it the amazing stadium? The beautiful fountain, the LDO? After all this self analysis, I realised that the happiness is actually inside our home and the family. It's not the outside world. Emily was born here, a child of Wembley Park and a Tipi baby. When we are walking around, I always say, "Emily, this is your home. These are all your first things – the apartment where you lived, your first park, your first slide, the first café I ever took you to." She is everything to me that captures the positive spirit of the place.

Christmas is amazing in Wembley Park. Instead of going to Oxford Street or Bond Street to see the lights, this last year I could experience Christmas with my daughter, right here, on my doorstep. There were fantastic installations and incredible lights.





Chapter Sixteen

VISION TO REALITY



Brett Harbutt
Head of Planning
for Quintain

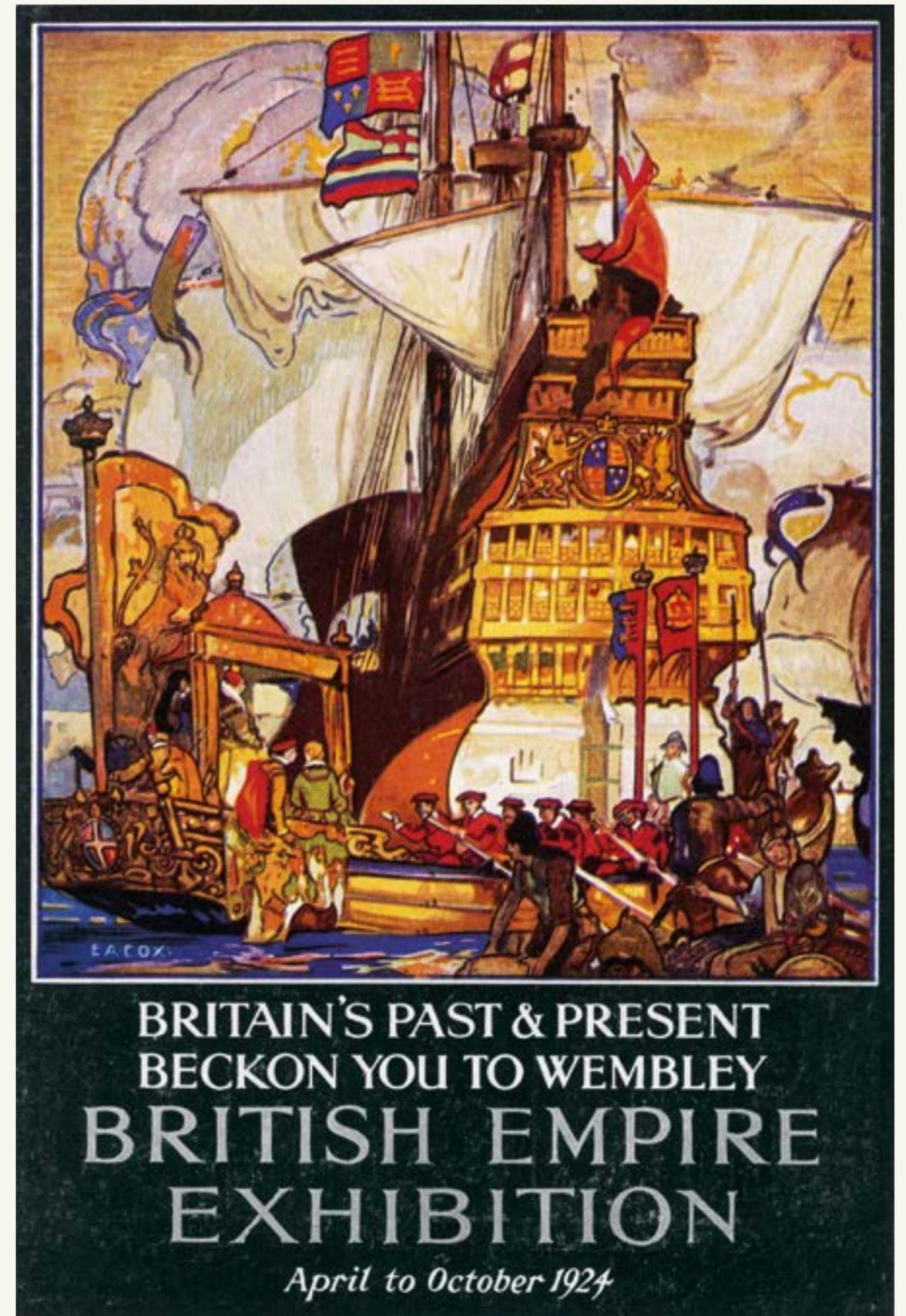
As Head of Planning, I work alongside architects, environmental, planning and highway consultants and liaise with Brent Council, the Greater London Authority and the Transport for London. I was a senior planning manager with Quintain at Greenwich from 2007 to 2011. The then Director of Development asked me back in 2017.

We'll start the negotiation – planning, effectively – at one end with a pitch to the Council. We aim for a set of designs where everybody is happy to take the plan forward to planning permission. The exciting part is talking about big buildings and new public spaces but there's also the basics of colours of bricks, say, or footpath widths. With my team, I'll take forward the architect's vision to the Brent planners.

My first ever memory of Wembley was from 1990, seeing Guns N' Roses, when I was 16. With some mates, we took the Chiltern Line up to Wembley Stadium. The day was all about the band but I vaguely recall lots of car parks and industrial buildings. To this day, my favourite thing is seeing a really good concert at Wembley Arena. Over the last thirty years, I've been over a 100 times for some of the best nights of my life.

My first day 'in the office' was in January 2017. It was dark and wet (as it often is). There was not much happening on the eastern side of the site, except for car parks and a few cranes. The development since has been phenomenal, the last 24 months a real whirlwind of change.

LEFT
A dynamic regeneration project that is changing the face of Wembley Park every day.





I'm proudest of the public realm that knits everything together. We've always emphasised that it's not just about buildings sitting in isolation but the provision of very high quality, generous areas of public space too.

ABOVE
Alto apartments ... the variety of buildings has created a diverse cityscape.

RIGHT
The fountains in Arena Square ... enjoyed by all those that visit.

The tipping point happened with the two major planning applications commissioned at the end of 2016, with approvals for up to 5,000 more residential homes, offices and retail space. They coincided with the Lone Star acquisition and a step change in the rate of construction. Almost 3,000 of those homes are now nearly finished. From building two, maybe three, hundred homes each year, we've accelerated to delivering 1,000 each year for the next five years.

The decisions were accomplished thanks to a highly collaborative working relationship with Brent Council. The planners and the politicians have lived and breathed the borough longer than we have. It's about combining their aspirations with our capability. Having been here 20 years, we trust their views and I like to think they trust us.

I'm proudest of the public realm that knits everything together. We've always emphasised that it's not just about buildings sitting in isolation but the provision of very high quality, generous areas of public space too. The connections that people pass through and along, such as Wembley Park Boulevard (by LDO), or Olympic Way, plus the green spaces in Emerald Gardens, give Wembley Park a real sense of place. The buildings are set in a framework of public spaces. When completed, I believe these will be among the best and the most generous in London.

You can't really talk about Wembley without mentioning the Stadium and its history with football. (I was disappointed to see Liverpool lose the Trophy in the season it reopened!). But bringing my parents, wife and daughter here, they've been amazed at the diversity of uses, and of people and just how busy it is even on an event free day. Wembley Park is now a bustling, busy, 365-days place.

So many developments you see nowadays grind to a halt for funding reasons or never really deliver on their original promise. Phase One of the Wembley Park Masterplan is well under way and over half way to completion. Phase Two will deliver another 2,000 homes on what is currently The Yellow Car Park.

You don't see the scale anywhere else that you see at Wembley Park. At one point, we had 24 tower cranes on site, probably 5,000 – 6,000 construction workers and the overall delivery speed was comparable to that in the Olympic Park back in 2009. Obviously, Wembley is my job but over the last couple of years I've really started to understand the place and the vibrancy that is generated. Really, I'd miss the buzzing energy and excitement you get here, be it when England is playing with thousands of people milling around or just on a normal Monday morning. There's always something to go out and have a look at.

I'm the great, great grandson of William Harbutt. An art teacher from Bath, he invented Plasticine in 1897, using petroleum jelly to make a new modelling medium that never dried out. In 1924, Harbutt's Plasticine was invited to exhibit in the Palace of Industries at the Empire Exhibition here at Wembley Park. 90 years later, having established the connection thanks to my dad, who is the family archivist, there is now a Harbutt Road to commemorate him. It's a lovely gesture and indicative of how Quintain would like the area to keep in touch with echoes from the past. Humphry Repton Lane, for example, is a tribute to the landscape gardener who fashioned Wembley Park in the first place when it was part of a grand estate. I'm honoured to be named alongside those important people in history!

It's obviously for that reason that I would pass the baton back to William. I hope he'd be proud of the full circle effect. All the pride, industry and energy he experienced in Wembley Park is definitely flowing back into the place a century later, with a definite Harbutt link.

BELOW
William Harbutt's 1897 invention was exhibited at the Empire Exhibition. Great, great grandson Brett heads up Planning for Wembley Park, shaping history in a different way.



The connections that people pass through and along, such as Wembley Park Boulevard, or Olympic Way, plus amenities like Emerald Gardens, give Wembley Park a real sense of place.



Chapter Seventeen

SIGNS OF THE TIME



Michael Cotton
Wembley sign
manufacturer

I've just retired from running Eastcote Signs, my own company which I've had since 1999. It's a bit odd after 49 years of working at Wembley. I was born in Kingsbury in 1953 and the family moved to Wembley in 1955. I passed the Eleven-plus and went to Preston Manor Grammar School. My passions were art and cars.

Leaving school at 16, I had an apprenticeship with a rally team in Lancaster Gate for a famous rally driver, John Sprinzel. I stuck at that for a year and then a company in Wembley called Phelps Publicity were looking for an apprentice, poster and ticket writer. I had no idea what that meant but I applied. In the old days, shop window posters and most billboards were done by hand. In the posh, West End shops, there were these beautifully, hand-rendered tickets on the fur coats and so on. My first job was painting tickets for places like The Scotch House, Burberry and Aquascutum. After five years, I started on the sign side.

The footings at one end of the White Horse Bridge in Wembley, by Wembley Triangle, are in the cowsheds that were our studio. The shop is still there at Number One, Neeld Parade. There were underground toilets on Wembley Triangle and, on match days, they'd be heaving with drunken fans from every country.

I started at Phelps in 1970 and Lin – who was to become Mrs Cotton – started in mid 1973. I eventually became the co-owner in the mid 80s. That lasted until 1997, when we sold the company. I thought, well, I've got all the contacts. Rather than be just a manager, I borrowed a little bit of money and took the plunge – and here we are, 20 years later. The business always revolved around Wembley.

LEFT
The White Horse Bridge is a dramatic replacement of an old Wembley landmark (not to mention a quick way to the overland station).

At one point, a third of our turnover at Phelps was for hand-painted posters for the Stadium, Wembley Pool, as it was, and the Conference Centre. There were no written contracts. Once a month, all the posters would be updated. The Stadium had dog racing too with people in there twice a week. That meant a demand for lots of advertising. There were billboards all around the complex, with one above the Arena advertising whatever was on that week. All were completed by hand, in oil, on paper, before the bill poster would stick them up. Wembley work kept us busy for three days a week. We still do bits for the management company that runs the Arena now, AEG.

When I lived in South Kenton, I was within earshot of the Stadium. On Cup Final day, you'd hear if someone scored, even though it was a good three miles away. Those were my first memories. My brother, who was two years older, would cycle to the Stadium with his friends and buy a Cup Final programme. He's still got them all, bless him. For us, living there, it was a very, very nice place. It was the first suburb outside London and it didn't have a London postcode but was Wembley, Middlesex. When you crossed the North Circular into Wembley from Stonebridge, you'd arrived, as it were. People who lived in Willesden, Harlesden and Stonebridge aspired to live there. The High Road had Marks & Spencer, Woolworths, British Home Stores and three cinemas. It was a great place to be brought up as a kid.

The big change has been the huge influx of people from all over the world. I was stunned how busy it was when we were working down there about a month ago. I actually learned to drive up and down Olympic Way because it used to be a bit of rubbishy old runway where the lorries used to park, and was dead except for match days. Before I was 17, I said to my dad, "We'll go up there and you can show me how to change gear." Now it's absolutely alive with people.

The shops are a massive improvement. The High Road is too disjointed and they could never have developed it like they have London Designer Outlet. You used to be able to walk out of the Stadium and see for half a mile before the next building. I know I'm heavily influenced by nostalgia but I loved the old Stadium although it was falling down. Inside the towers was a mish mash of scaffolding holding them up. You could actually poke your finger through the concrete like eggshell. I've been to a couple of events at the new Stadium and it's as you'd expect a new stadium to be. It's still the centre of the universe. For a football fan, it doesn't get any bigger than that, in the world, not just in London. If you said Wembley Stadium to anybody, anywhere in the world, they'd know it straightaway.

The poster we did for Paul McCartney was the biggest poster ever at Wembley. And the one we did for the Live Aid stage was seen by more people than any piece of work we ever did. In the lead up to Live Aid, the company dealing with advertising space inside the Stadium sold the roof of the mixing tent to TDK. They came to us on the Thursday, bearing in mind the concert was on the Saturday. They wanted a 6 by 5 metre banner and for us to sign write TDK four times on it. We phoned our supplier and he said it could be done. The boys finished sign writing late on the Friday. That tea time, we took it to the Stadium and marched it in through the back door, like a long, pvc, magic carpet. We finished fitting it about 1.30am in the morning. The mixing tent was 15 feet in the air and the Stadium was completely black. The only light was from the engineer putting in the mixing stuff beneath us. The roadies were long gone. It struck us then, how the hell do we get out? We're in the middle of Wembley Stadium, with loose guard dogs wandering around everywhere. No one had a mobile phone in 1985. In the end, the engineer put the P.A. system on and summoned the security chaps over the speakers at top volume. They had to come in, round all the dogs up and escort us out.

So yes, we had a free rein in the old place. We'd drive the van up to the back, open the great big gate ourselves, drive in, close it and we could go wherever we wanted. No-one questioned us. They'd see us on the CCTV, recognise us, and in we went. Same in the Arena. I could go to any pop concert I chose. They had commissionaires there in the old days, mostly retired servicemen and dressed like sailors. I knew them all by their first names because we were there so much.

The poster we did for Paul McCartney was the biggest poster ever at Wembley. And the one we did for the Live Aid stage was seen by more people than any piece of work we ever did.



I'd walk up to the entrance gate with my wife once the concert had started, and say, "Alright, Jack," or whoever it was, and he'd say, "Yeah, Michael, go on in." Nine times out of ten, the Arena manager would put us in the VIP bit.

I was lucky enough to go to the NME Awards in 1965 when The Rolling Stones headlined, which was a bit of a thrill. The Beatles were supposed to be there but they were in America. It happens that my daughter's related to one of the Stones now so we get to see them if we want to. We saw them last year, so there was a gap. 1965 and 2018: bookends, you could say.

We've seen our daughter present a good few times at the Arena. That's massive for me. To be in that iconic place, Wembley Arena, that has been in my blood for fifty years, and see your daughter presenting is a tingly hair moment. We were at the Children In Need concert just before Christmas. I'd miss the Arena more than anything. It's just one of those places that gets under your skin. Of course, I used to ice skate there as a kid. It was a public ice rink on a Sunday. The Wembley Lions ice hockey team would always play on a Saturday and the ice was left down. You'd turn up, hire some skates and off you'd go. Under the floor is still the site of the full sized swimming pool. My old man swam there in the opening ceremony in 1934 when he was 14. So again, it's got a little link to me as a result.

Thinking about who I'd pass it on to, I'd first say Henry Cooper. There's also the fact that I met my wife in Wembley. That's a big, big marker for me. She lived in the road where Phelps Publicity was and we were married in January 1977. I think, though, I'd choose a chap called Len Went, who was the press officer for the Stadium. He was a very influential man and very old school, like a raconteur in the entertainment world. Every Friday lunchtime, the local businessmen would converge on the Conservative Club, known as the Red House. The two bosses at Phelps were always in there, as was Len. That's how we got most of our work. It was all done via word of mouth, a pat on the back and see-you-tomorrow-old-chap sort of thing. It was all very relaxed, in his head, nothing written down, but the responsibility was left to him. Len was Wembley personified.

I actually learned to drive up and down Olympic Way because it used to be a bit of rubbishy old runway where the lorries used to park, and was dead except for match days.

ABOVE
Michael Cotton (and Eastcote Signs) hand-painted poster for Paul McCartney at The SSE Arena remains the largest ever created in the UK.

Chapter Eighteen

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT



Laura Ashby
Skills Manager of
Wembley Park

I'm the Skills Manager for Wembley Park. My area is corporate social responsibility, local employment and apprenticeships. That includes our employee volunteering programme, match funding and being a local community fund manager. I think that, by taking on someone like me, it demonstrates that Quintain really is committed to investing more into the neighbourhood. It's not just a tick box gesture.

Outside work, my most important role is being a mother. I've also been a community artist for over 12 years. I'm currently working on a series of paintings which are being displayed in work places and local community centres aimed at raising mental health awareness.

I remember the very first time I came here was to go to a UB40 concert at the Arena. I imagine it was around 2010 or earlier. I was so focused on going to the concert that Wembley Park made no lasting impression on me at all. It was so nondescript, really. I suppose I could summarise it as a weird sort of vagueness. I just remember being inside.

I've worked in Wembley Park since May 2015, setting up London Designer Outlet's Retail and Hospitality Skills Academy. I moved here in January 2016. It's been professionally rewarding to help employees climb up the career ladder, increasing their awareness, skills and both pay and progression opportunities on the way. That role led me into the world of construction, setting up the equivalent in the form of the contractor community framework. Personally, having my son here has enriched my experience and created lasting, fond memories of the place.

LEFT
Quintain supports a contractor community engagement programme that connects with Brent Council, colleges and especially local schools.

... there's the amazing team at Wembley Library in the Civic Centre. Every Saturday, we take our son to the rhyme and storytime session run there ...

He's very well known around Wembley Park and we can't go anywhere without bumping into friendly faces.

Working and living on-site means never a dull moment! Surrounded by rapid growth and development, I don't necessarily notice the changes day by day. But then, you suddenly find yourself at a topping out ceremony, celebrating a new landmark with the teams responsible. Whether it's an event day, with all the crowds, or an 'ordinary' day, there's always something going on. As a big music fan, my favourite thing to do is seeing a gig at The SSE Arena or at Wembley Stadium. It's amazing to be home less than five minutes afterwards. And having Boxpark has been a really welcome addition. Just the other day I was coming back from central London and the place was swarming.

If you said I could never come back, it's the people, the friends and the wonderful construction teams I'd miss most. Talented, passionate, they're the best feature of Wembley Park. As an example, there's the amazing team at Wembley Library in Brent Civic Centre. Every Saturday, we take our son to the rhyme and storytime session there, run by the wonderful Jo Gordon. Jo also runs Daniel's Den, held at The Yellow on Fridays, where my husband and I have been going since our boy was only a few months old.

My hope is that Wembley Park is created as a lasting legacy for Brent residents to access long term employment and opportunities. My wish is for future generations to live healthy, interesting and eventful lives here. I like to think that people might look back at this time and see how many opportunities were created. And how much the developers and contractors have tried to put back into the local community.

For my pass, I would hand on to someone I've recently employed as full-time project coordinator. He's called Nabil Al-Kinani. Nabil was just a young volunteer. He lives a five minute walk from Wembley Park station and is training to be an amateur boxer. He approached me about an event in nearby Chalkhill. Something about him really caught my attention. The team at Quintain, guided by James Saunders, want to push community support, so they helped to fund the role. Nabil was, hands down, the best candidate. He so obviously wants to give back to the place where he's been brought up. His attitude is exactly the one defines investing in the people that make a place.

RIGHT
Nativity at The Yellow.
Every year, stars are born.

BELOW
For the team, the work
never ends.



Chapter Nineteen

DISTRICT TO DOORKNOB

I joined Quintain in 2005 after working as a consultant to them on the Greenwich Peninsula project from 1999. Prior to that, I was at Farrell's (Terry Farrell and Partners) for 17 years. My title is Head of Masterplanning and Design for Quintain, covering both Wembley Park and Tipi. I'm effectively the guardian of The Masterplan, with respect to the public realm and the overall sense of place.

I often say my responsibilities run from district to doorknob.

In the 80s and 90s, I came to Wembley to see Michael Jackson, Madonna and Simply Red (who played the old Wembley Stadium sideways). A particularly happy memory was during the 1996 European Championships. Some friends in Rickmansworth invited us to a barbecue the day that England played Scotland. My wife and I took the Met Line with our son, who was 18 months old, in a pushchair. We were surrounded by all the football fans – men in kilts and so on – and I thought, 'Oops, this could be tricky'. Actually, there was a great party atmosphere, with the fans calling him 'the wee bairn' and so on. Nothing intimidating and really good fun.

More recently, in 2006, when we re-opened The SSE Arena, it was still a building site on the Thursday. On Friday, there was a community event. And on Sunday, Depeche Mode and 10,000 people turned up to have great night out. It always amazes me how I can walk into Wembley Park on a Monday morning and you wouldn't know that this tornado had passed through the day before. Our operations team is superb at making it all spick and span. As part of my day job, I work with our development and project managers as well as the planning,



Julian Tollast
Head of Masterplanning
and Design at Quintain

RIGHT
The distinctive fins of the Red Car Park, a suitably fashionable companion to London Designer Outlet.

operational and Tipi teams to establish the briefs. These are delivered by a broad range of architects, landscape architects and other designers. It's important to set clear principles and then employ the right, talented people to deliver more than you thought possible! In 2019, we've three major residential buildings finishing for Tipi. We've just completed Landsby and Tipi has moved to its new hub. In June, we'll have Alameda and, in September, Ferrum. By the end of the year, the first three buildings on Canada Gardens will have opened to residents. That's a phenomenal amount of new homes.

In 2013, associated with the opening of London Designer Outlet was the multistorey Red Car Park. Designed by aLL Design and Leslie Jones, it has coloured fins on the exterior. Early in the design process, we'd been trying to visualise how they would look, using computer projections. I decided to make a simple model. I took some foam board home one weekend and cut out shapes of paper to make the fins. I was starting to spray paint them in my backyard when my daughter said, "Can I give you a hand, dad?" She helped me out and I still have that model, in a cupboard, as a treasured memory. At the official opening the following Easter, my daughter came out of LDO and she said, "Look dad, there's my car park." Those moments make it all worthwhile. She's now a second year architecture student at Newcastle University.

Working here, no two days are the same. The community of both residents and working people is constantly evolving. It's also growing

During the design process, my daughter and I made a model of the Red Car Park. I still have that model, as a treasured memory.

RIGHT

The SSE Arena ... a milestone venue for so many acts, with 157 events a year and counting.

BELOW RIGHT

Market Square's cherry trees are sited in huge flower pots – and transportable if needed.



... in 2006, when we re-opened The SSE Arena, it was still a building site on the Thursday. On Friday, there was a community event. And on Sunday, Depeche Mode and 10,000 people turned up to have great night out.

as place a to visit without a ticket. The greatest changes have been in the public realm. In 2005, as people came out of Wembley Park Tube station on an everyday basis, nobody walked down Olympic Way – or Wembley Way, as the fans know it. They would always walk around the outside. Now it's one of the promenades of London. That 365 day buzz is a huge improvement. On event days, Wembley used to be a last minute, dash-in, dash-out place. You'd have a pre-match pint at Baker Street and come up for the game. The local businesses received no benefit. Now, the community benefits all year long. We're trying to create a genuinely permeable, mixed use zone where people stay for longer, around the big days too.

Some of the best features are what I call the 'meantime uses', where people pause. They include Market Square, where the cherry trees are in pots under the ground, and the playpark outside London Designer Outlet, which is always busy. The rain shelter that we put up is almost more important to protect the kids from the sun. I believe the temporary uses of the car parks outside event days could be really positive. In particular, 'meantime use' of the coach parks could give Wembley Park an additional, unique character.

There have always been cranes here since I started. That's impressive, considering the financial crisis from 2008 to 2012. Back then, we'd just finished Forum House, our first residential building. We carried on to complete Quadrant Court, the Hilton, the student residential property and, in 2013, LDO. We didn't stop. The deal with the Civic Centre meant they completed their building. The occasional criticism of the privately operated public space around it is all a bit frustrating. In London, many celebrated public spaces have been delivered – and managed – at private expense. Some people still see this as privatisation of the public realm. Yet there wouldn't be those places and spaces available were it not for the private sector. I'm proud of what we've done here.

When Lone Star bought Quintain in 2015, we shifted from the private-for-sale model to the residential Build to Rent model. We also trebled the pace of delivery. Anyone who last saw Wembley Park six months ago is amazed. For me, it's full of memories and quite a few dreams. People take immense pride in the place locally, nationally and internationally. I believe history will look back and say that, in these years, Wembley Park was transformed into an everyday part of London that could easily go into overdrive to accommodate the major events for which it's world-famous.

We have some interesting statistics that show that the youth of North West London feel an added sense of safety and security when they're here.

With the students (there are 3,500 here), we hope some will choose to become lifelong residents. For 'later living' the idea of making the choice to move into an environment that's step free, with a lift service and that's comfortable is very appealing. When I say later living, I'd start at the age of about 55 – and I'm 55 now!

Some of our original Tipi residents have had their first baby and are moving up through the property scale. There are students who moved into the first accommodation we built in 2012 who came and worked for Quintain. Wayne and Gerardine Hemingway started Red Or Dead just east of the Stadium. We are now working with their family and, particularly, their children on some graphic design work on that part of the site. This is the generational pass-it-on effect.

My favourite thing to do is the Wembley Walkabouts – or 'Tollast Tours', as colleagues call them. At least once a month, there is a 90 minute walking tour, perhaps with new people in the office, or with guests. I love doing those. We also do a residents' quiz night every other month. A couple of quizzes ago, one question was about matching pictures of trees planted on Olympic Way to their Latin names. Someone managed seven out of ten. I was blown away. I also love just generally watching the world go by. Walking around, seeing how people are interacting with things and asking how they got engaged with the place is always fascinating. If you told me I had to leave, I'd really miss the common purpose of all those involved in creating a truly great place to live, work and play.

The wonderful Market Square, where the cherry trees are in pots under the ground, is cared for by David Hughes, whose official title is something like 'Head Landscape Technician' but I call him 'David the gardener'.



As to who I would pass it on to, if I think of the work I do, I would pick David Hughes on our operations team. David's official title is something like 'Head Landscape Technician' but I call him 'David the gardener'. Perhaps not as extreme as giving a child up for adoption, but I know that all the hard work that has gone into creating the landscape of Wembley Park would be wonderfully well cared for. I had thought about choosing from the residents, the emerging civic leaders, community champions, the fans or even the performers. But I'll pick one name, and that's David.



Community Facilities

GP surgery, community spaces, sports facilities and a new public play park

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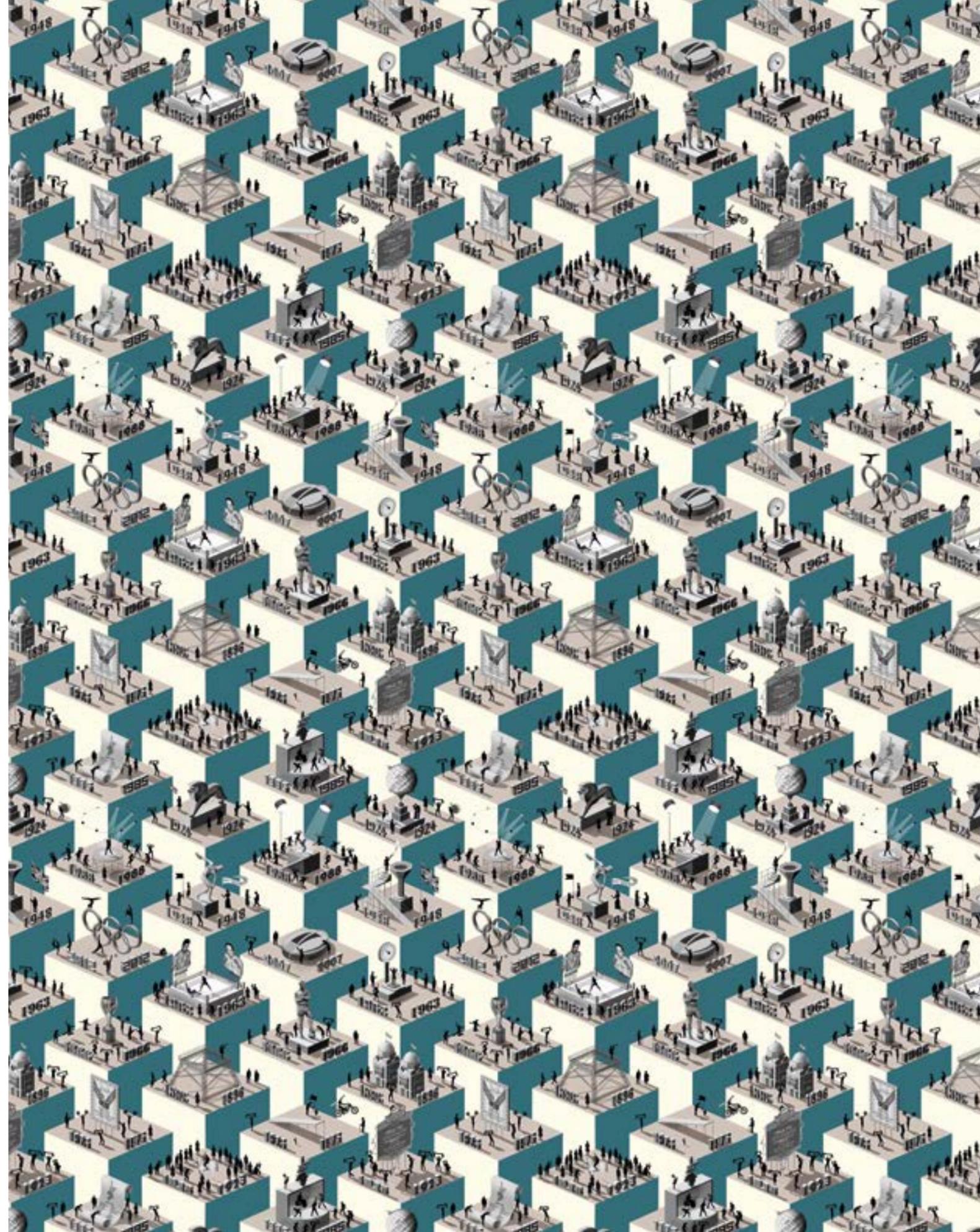
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