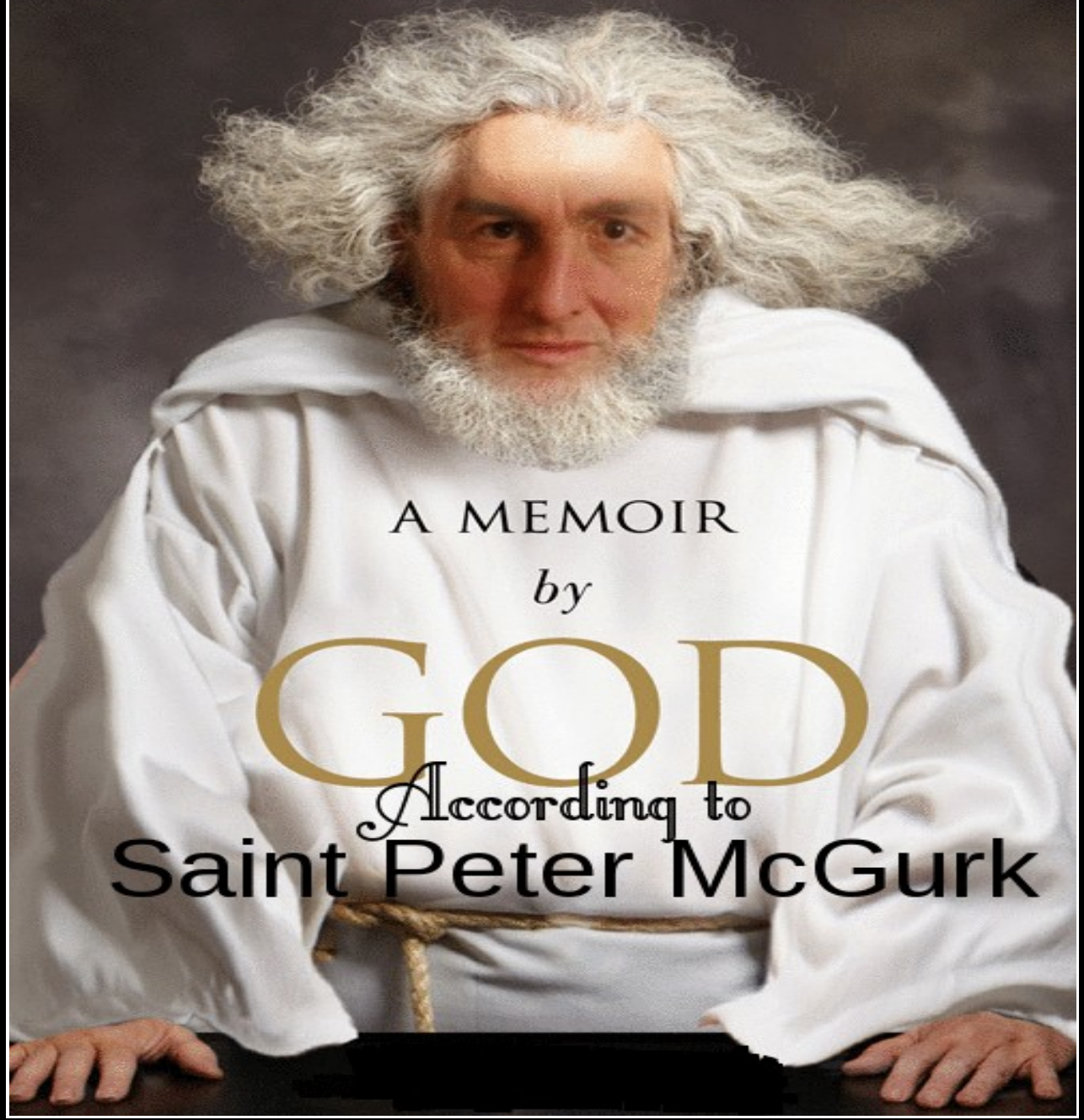


THE LAST TESTAMENT



Peter McGurk, a lifelong Liverpool fan and architect from Huyton.

Saint Peter publishes his own blog where he's put his ideas forward for redeveloping Anfield. Peter's claim to sainthood came when John W Henry tweeted the link <http://petermcgurk.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Anfield> to Peter's blog. Hmmm...



John W. Henry @John_W_Henry

26 Jun

it's Liverpool: Anfield petermcgurk.blogspot.com/search/label/A...

Expand

MAY 11 2012

Anfield Redevelopment Part 1 - FSG's already legacy

THANK FSG THAT'S OVER

All of our ideas of the new stadium are based on two unsuccessful administrations. Not a good plan And we have to accept that the stadium is important but it is not even the be all and end all of the club's finances. There are other priorities.

Yes, the gap in match-day revenue is obvious but the way to address that gap properly is not.

Having spent some time in getting to know what's what and taking full stock of what there is, FSG are clearly setting out a path to get the club back to winning ways.

It is of course FSG's place to run the club, to take the lead. It's the manager's job to manage, the players' job to play and the supporters' job to support. In telling us what to expect from them, they told us what they expect from us. That's good and strong leadership.

One thing for sure, they won't be spraying cash. They will look to take full advantage of every penny of every pound spent. Good.

FSG have made it possible to invest in the team from revenue and not from debt by buying the club for £300m and have invested a wee bit more.

All but all of our money, what we now pay to get in, what we now pay for TV, Warrior's money, SC's money, is reinvested in the club. It goes to build the club. Goes to build the team. Not to pay debt. That's more than a good thing. That's already a legacy.

We need to listen to that and not to get carried away with unrealistic and in the long run, damaging expectation. They are here for the long term.

FSG have been feeling their way in unknown territory. They said when they came that the global market is the priority. That global way forward is not straightforward. It is asking a lot for them to have learned the ins and outs of a ruthless game, restructured the club's finances and admin and re-worked the way in which the club sells itself round the world - and to have re-hashed all that in the space of barely a year and a half.

And all that while of getting to know the game and the club locally and internationally, there have been some pretty heavyweight comings and goings outside of their control and difficult PR situations to deal with. Not to mention unpicking the errors and omissions of two previous

administrations with regard to a stadium.

Players of the right quality on the pitch are also and obviously a priority. Growing them is going to take a while, so we'd better buy them for now. We need to get the money to get the players. FSG are not 'all about money'. They are all about winning and getting the money to get the players and the club to win.

Of the three main sources of money available to get or grow the players we need (Broadcast, Commercial and Matchday), commercial income requires the least in terms of cash input. Second to that, Broadcast (thankfully TV companies build their own infrastructure). Matchday Revenue is the toughest nut to crack. It needs the highest cash input and comes with the highest risk of failure and the lowest potential return.

When all's said and done and with the best possible wind (actually an absolute financial miracle), a new stadium can look at bringing in a net additional income of £15m. To put it in perspective, the shirt deal is more. Quite a lot more.

However and in reality, a *new* stadium will bring in 'very little' *additional* money for the team beyond what we already make. Realistically and to all intents and purposes and without naming rights, it's about nil...

So let's be clear. A new stadium as we know it does not work for LFC.

FSG know that we can build as many seats if not more than our competitors at Anfield but we cannot fill 76,000. They know we don't have 2000 homes to sell as at the Emirates or the City of London corporate market on the doorstep or a cheap-as-chips-for-an-even-lower-return-than-you-thought design to build.

In fact a new stadium promises little or no return in the medium term - for the next critical 15 years in which a stadium must make a difference (if it is to make one at all). FSG know that without a truly huge sponsorship, it is as dead as dust.

This is not a diminution of ambition. This is not to excuse ourselves from the 'European Elite'. This is not an admission of defeat or an opening of the door to mid-table mediocrity. This is the situation we have to master. The challenge we have to meet to do as well as *and better* than our biggest competitors.

We do have Anfield. An important part of our history and our brand but more importantly, a football ground that is up to snuff with regulations, that has an operating license and crucially, already generates £40-£42m a year and costs us zip to build.

Inescapably, we can get to the capacity we want at Anfield for half the cost at most of a new stadium. A new stadium cannot ever compete unless it makes up the other half of the cost in naming rights. An extraordinarily tall order. No - just impossible.

The challenge then is to address Anfield's failings and then to extend it to the sensible 'sweet-spot' of 60k-65k with sufficient premium-earning seats to produce 'roughly the same income' as a new stadium at half the cost.

The reward, is that it will extract the full value of every penny in every pound. Just what we need to do. Just what FSG aim to do. A redeveloped Anfield fits the bill.

Posted 11th May 2012 by Saint Peter McGurk

MAY 12 2012

Anfield Redevelopment Part 2 - Show me the money

THE WRONG QUESTION?

There are easier ways to make money than a stadium that's for sure.

Whether it was to make more money or attract new owners or increase the value of the club or, plain boastful vanity or joining a 'European elite', the question was never how to build a new stadium. That was the wrong question.

The right question was not how to build a new stadium but how to increase 'matchday revenue' and so improve potential re-investment in the club, particularly in the team. And if that means a bigger capacity, how to make it pay. A crucially different if subtle distinction.

FSG have cleared that question up and they've told us where they are coming from on it.

We're going to live within the club's means. Spend from revenue. What the club can afford. Value is nice but not the be all and end all. They will not be dropping hundreds of millions of their money on the table. Certainly not to inflate the apparent value of the club. So far so good.

SO, SHOW ME THE MONEY

Last year, each seat at the club earned £900 on average or about £40m for the whole stadium. It was slightly down on £940 in the previous year. The 'revenue per seat' at Old Trafford was also down but at £1425, already 60% more than us. At the Emirates, down (anyone worried yet?) to £1540 and at Stamford Bridge, down but still going on for double at £1615.

To catch any one of them we would need to both reverse the downward trend and pay their prices and match their respective capacity and attendances. Simple and obvious maths. Extraordinarily difficult to achieve.

We don't have as much a corporate market as Manchester but even *if* we were to match our closest geographical and economical rival (sorry, Everton), we would still be £23m behind Old Trafford. To match United's revenue per seat, we would not only have to match prices (which are already 'similar' on a like-for-like basis) but also to gamble on success and a higher number of games. For the dangers of relying on success, see Leeds United.



new or redeveloped, still more than £30m behind

However, you can say that a full new stadium or redevelopment with the same ratio of corporates in premium seats and private boxes as any one of Chelsea, Arsenal and United might increase the average spend by just about a third.

A one-third increase in revenue per seat to £1200 would yield a total of £72m from a 60000 seat stadium. £36m behind United and the best we could achieve at today's prices with a full league programme, a half decent run in the domestic cups and since the £900/£940 revenue per seat is based on European years - reasonable attendances at a decent number of games in at least the Europa Cup. Not quite the saviour we thought it was.

Not only that but as the club has said, a new stadium makes very little additional money in the medium term. In other words the £32m of additional revenue may very well be swallowed up by the additional costs. Putting cash in won't help (see 'return on investment'). Oh dear.

As JWH says, this isn't London or the South-East. We don't have the city on the doorstep and 16m people or whatever it is within easy reach. As he also said, it isn't even Manchester as far as numbers of people who can afford it goes.

A new stadium needs money without interest payable to a bank or a return to an investor (even if the investors are the owners) - it needs the so-called 'free money' of naming rights to do anything at all financially.

The latest UK benchmark on naming rights is the £3.4m at the Emirates or perhaps the more recent say, £10m at the Etihad (actually who knows? the whole deal comes with a £1bn commercial development wrapped up in their somewhere).

On the face of it the difference between a new stadium and a redevelopment is the difference between no surplus and about £15m surplus. To make up that difference, £15m naming rights would certainly be a record-breaker in the UK and in this economic climate of uncertainty, a miracle.

Meanwhile, a redevelopment would be earning money (for the team and even increasing the value of the club) almost from day one - without the unlikely prospect of actually getting naming rights and without the risk of losing them. Because sponsors change their minds. Renewal can be a tricky time. The feasibility can go out of the window at the stroke of a PR calamity.

So there's really just two things that could realistically happen with naming rights. They could provide a 'meagre' additional income (£5m?) or they could plug the gap left by the empty seats in a new stadium pending the day it's all paid for... too late.

Much too late for a sport that needs year on year investment in the team to get anywhere and in any event much too late to meet any of the promised riches from a new stadium.

All that pain, sweat, aggravation and risk for precisely or very nearly nothing.

In a horrible and dangerous balance for now and for the foreseeable future. After twenty years of waiting to improve money for the team from the gate, another 15 years for good measure. A financial 'mistake' - if we fill it. A disaster, if we don't.

And not just against Man United and Chelsea. Every game.

If we don't fill a new stadium on a wet Monday night against Stoke, the money goes backwards. We would be starting to pay more out than the extra we're getting in. With the finances so finely balanced, it doesn't matter if there are queues around the block for six games a season, or ten, or fifteen. **It must be every game.**

You have to wonder what the chances are of us getting 60,000 against Stoke (or WBA, or Wigan or...) even on a nice sunny Saturday at 3pm. And most people hope for some cheaper tickets from a new stadium, with deals for kids and specials for families. To 'safeguard future generations of support' and 'get in the locals', the heart of the support.

But if you have to hit targets - the right number and price of premium seats, boxes and steak and chips, the right number of standard seats and pies - each and every game. Just to cover costs.

Without even producing a surplus for reinvestment in the team. What chance is there for a boys' pen? ***

Worse for a new stadium. Since Anfield is bought and paid for, bulldozing the ground loses the club the current income of £40m - £42m a year. Even at the highly conservative five years left for Anfield, there's £200m to £210m plus - gone, at the swing of the wrecker's ball.

Worse still, we would all have to pay again to rebuild the first 45,000 seats in the new stadium.

This really is the crux of the comparison between new and redevelopment. As JWH and Ian Ayre have said, we don't get 60,000 additional seats for 'our' hundreds of millions - we get 15,000.

So people say 'build it bigger!', 'stack it high' and 'sell it cheap!'. 'If it's not worth building 15,000 - build more!'. Problem is, the higher you stack it, the more expensive it is to build, and exponentially so. The more expensive it is to build, the higher the prices and the fewer who can afford it. If you look at the rake of a new stadium another way, it's almost a perfect graph of a law of diminishing returns.

And we can't forget that the local public transport infrastructure would be maxed at just over 60,000 (for a new stadium or a redevelopment). Beyond that the costs of upgrade are more than likely disproportionately expensive.

Posted 12th May 2012 by **Saint Peter McGurk**

MAY 13 2012

Anfield Redevelopment Part 3 - Fans, Club and Community

It is not the club's responsibility to regenerate Anfield/Breckfield. It is no private business concern. It is the responsibility of Council to look after the area and the residents. Council is hamstrung by budget and circumstances. The club does more than its bit already but working together can make it happen to their mutual benefit.

LI00581105.

Cllr Richard Kemp, the council's housing executive member, said: "The club owns around 200 houses that were bought around the ground.

Liverpool Echo - 12 April 2001

NOTE TO SAINT PETER

Maybe if people understood that it has been the policy of the club to buy up homes and leave them empty for more than a decade, they will understand the anger of the property owners and residents left in these derelict streets..... It is indeed LFC's responsibility!

Other stadia in other places, in other countries do get a lot of help. There's government aid, local authority infrastructure, football association assistance, world cups, Olympic games, commonwealth games, vibrant (even over-heated) local economies...

Or less directly, supporting developments - apartments, hotels, shopping malls... there's not much of that going to kick in at Anfield. We'll have to get on without it.

While football clubs grew out of communities, football grounds can back themselves back into them and into the cities in which they sit. **There is clearly mutual benefit in developing a once or twice a fortnight sports event into 365-day business.** Not only for the club and the local community but also for the city and the development of football tourism.

The area has become unloved and unwanted. Direct involvement in the re-building or refurbishing of houses may be too much for any club but a thriving stadium with a 'village centre' and commercial hub can bring people back. Where there was thought to be no room for even a stadium, there has been a second and even a third look - looking at what's there and building on it. The end of that line is the Sports City or an Etihad-type campus or a Football Quarter but there's a great deal for the community short of that...

The city's planned development of local infrastructure is ambitious. The development of the Bootle Branch line (and other re-openings) is a city issue - of considerable benefit to the inner wards and

developments in the city centre. Nevertheless Anfield (and Goodison) would benefit.

The club has a great deal of experience in the management of commercial sponsorship and brand values at its disposal. Surely we will see in-stadium sponsorships, stand naming rights, associated suppliers, advertising hoardings, 'jumbotrons'... Fenway is a model for balancing commercial dynamism with sporting heritage to great effect (in many ways it is the *raison d'être* of redevelopment).

Similarly the development of hospitality within the stadium will not follow the accepted wisdom. Not reams and reams of private boxes, Liverpool is not that kind of place. It's not that kind of club. Not especially that kind of fan.

But more especially, there are more profitable ways to go. Some premium seats at Anfield already top private box seats - at considerably less cost to the club to build. Nevertheless and no doubt, we can expect hospitality suites, sports bars, sky bars, tweet cafés...

There is only so much a fan can spend on any given match-day but there's any number who would spend more of it in the stadium or in a part of it given decent facilities. There's more who would come for the day as a family. There's more that would travel further for a longer stay. An 'Albert Village' plugged right into the stadium would capture pre-and post-match trade, drawing it into the stadium earlier and leaving it later...

FIVE or SIX 'ALBERTS'



CABE (the architectural advisor to councils) were scathing of the approach to the new stadium - no sense of 'occasion' they said. A lost

architectural opportunity. OK. But worse, a lost revenue opportunity.

Yawkey Way at Fenway Park is great enough, if not very big. The Anfield Plaza might have had a similar character but there is no commitment to build it. It's hard to know what the Anfield Plaza was to be. It's a package for sale of fairly indeterminate content.

There is however Walton Breck Road, the 'high street' on which the Kop stands and already slated by LCC for renewal as part of the Anfield/Breckfield Regeneration. It's already a part of the community and in a way, a part of the ground.

You could see the humble Walton Breck Road as the Yawkey Way of the area - packed with (football-related) shops and eateries. A milling space, a meeting place, a food, ale and plaza place. A tree-lined 'Walk of Fame' on Anfield Road. Greater than life sized statues of the Anfield Greats. Five European Cups on European-sized plinths (with of course a spare for the next one, or two or...). A real venue for the occasion. Another Wembley Way if you like (but better - a LOT better).

Then there's the pubs... You could say there's a lot of money that runs through the clubs fingers and into the pockets of the area's pub landlords. In my view, that's how it should be. The local pub is part and parcel of the experience. But the club can glean a lot more from visiting fans and away fans outside the ground as well as in it. To state the extreme, what if the club owned the freehold of The Albert for example? Nice 'little' earner. What if there were five Alberts? or six?

TOUCHING WHERE THEY MEET



Anfield/Breckfield is run down.

The properties behind the Main Stand are with few exceptions derelict and tinned up. Council have just said they want to flatten houses in Lothair Road and grass them over. The houses behind the Albert have gone - as have those behind the Anfield Road end.

The residents have waited a long time for action on housing. There is already a process and programme of clearance and rebuilding of 1800 homes in the area. What's that? Seventy streets? Big job. Involving the negotiation of market-related prices, the offer of alternative new accommodation and compensation for removals - for owners and for tenants. Long programme. In fact, "*The redevelopment of Anfield / Breckfield started in 2005 and is expected to be a 15 year process*" - LCC website (and that was before the money was stopped). So beyond 2020 then.

The club is being supportive but housing wasn't part of the new stadium scheme. And the area in question for a redevelopment wasn't even in council's first six or seven phases of clearance and renewal.



As we know the lease on Stanley Park has not (yet) been taken up. But if it were, there is the Vernon Sangster Sports Centre to re-build. The club already has an Academy in Kirkby and training facilities at Melwood but kids soccer schools are a growing market (sic) and could go some way to returning the whole park to the community.

Talking about the park strays into the bigger picture of a Football Quarter. It may be too soon to talk about university Sport Science faculties but the attraction of up to a 100,000 capacity fan zone, halfway between Anfield and Goodison, at relatively modest cost is hard to ignore. The development of Walton Breck Road as a 'Yawkey Way' of football-related businesses, bars, eateries - as well as a metro store, would both make more of a day of it and revivify a flagging High Street.

An hotel might not get the 7/365 it needs and there are plenty in the city centre that do but a serviced 'aparthotel' either in the stadium or facing it would be the seven-day-a-week business that a hotel alone would find it hard to be.

The Echo Arena & BT Convention Centre on the waterfront caters for the middle to large conference and events market. It's a great success. However, it cannot handle a huge stadium concert or a scouse wedding (who can...?). If they can be a seat at table or a place at a bar under the stand for every seat in it (and there can), that's a first rate hospitality offer for during the week.

In the context of a six or seven day commercial hub, small to medium sized business space around the ground (and in it) starts to make real sense.

The club and council must look out for themselves but coming together where they touch would be a strong start for a Football Quarter.

FOOTBALL QUARTER



The city is getting a lot of things right in bringing people here. There's even people coming down from places like Edinburgh to see what it is that the city is getting right.

One of the right things is an 'integrated offer' ie., presenting a clear picture of what's on offer, playing to strengths and not confusing different areas - the Waterfront, the Cavern Quarter, the Ropewalks, the Cathedrals, the Georgian Quarter... the Football Quarter.

LFC and EFC together across Stanley Park is and always be about football for the visitor. That's its strength. That's its offer. It is not about the surrounding communities (with regard to Tourism). However, the communities would benefit hugely in terms of education, economic activity, business start-up prospects and job creation.

The park has been restored. The Vernon Sangster will be re-built. The school has been rebuilt. The Isla Gladstone Conservatory has been restored. These things change the perception of the place and doing that is half the start.

Stations on the railway would benefit the local community as much as the visitor. I think there used to be six stations on that line between Edge Hill and Kirkdale. The 'Canada Dock Branch Line'. Those stations have been costed at £5m - £10m each in living memory *and* the line doesn't have the expensive safety systems and signalling for passenger traffic any more. Too timid to cost, it was described as 'self-funding'.

Of course there's ponderous goods on the line potentially 24/7 and there's also a problem with connection at both ends. Into the city centre and into South Liverpool - but you might be ok from Huyton - or Manchester... there used to be a rail 'flyover' at that end but someone carelessly built a technology park in the way.

It's a massive expense. It's a city expense. But opening up the line to the city centre could link the out of town visitor almost straight to the ground. A timely rail service would be better for the city and the visitor than a long slog home with no pint straight after the match. If it were me I'd run it via Lime Street and the underground.

There's a market for a whole day experience (academy visit, sports training Museum Tour, Heritage Trail, 100 players and days that shook the Kop, Club Shop, Sports Bar, the 'Kop Way') of which the match itself is 'just' a (most important) part.

If you play your cards right, it would knock over into a weekend stay in a hotel in town and you'd get to see all the other stuff - The Beatles, Albert Dock, Liverpool One...

All these things can be - but the question is, does the club have to get involved or should the club stick to its knitting? The financial feasibility of any of these things cannot hang on a weekly/fortnightly event. Football is the core but the city is the bigger beneficiary.

And although football is the core and a main contributor to the financial success of a Football Quarter, neither club will, nor indeed can, be a prime financial participant. In a tightening situation for football itself, they can only do their bit for the benefit of the city by looking after their own business and maintaining their own international appeal for their own benefit.

The strength of a Football Quarter is in the sum of its parts. It would indeed "create a great draw and showcase for the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of anticipated football visitors to the

city. A tourist destination worthy of international status and recognition; providing increased employment and visitor spend towards the city's target of 14,000 jobs and £2bn a year by 2020".

The Football Quarter is an extremely diverse mix of uses and participants. It would be way beyond the ken of FSG to lead on its own. But as part of a bigger group...

There are other examples. But the Melbourne Sports and Entertainment Precinct for example is or was driven at least at local authority if not government level. And that's at least an entirely sports opportunity (although it has taken since 1956 to get where it is now).

Coming down a bit, the £1bn Etihad Campus/Eastlands Regeneration is a commercial enterprise first and a football opportunity second. Even so, it is driven if not by a foreign government then at least by one of its main families.

Real Madrid's Fantasy Island is only a little bit less ambitious and it might just stretch UEFA's definition of 'location' beyond credulity if it is to be accepted under FFP.

The criteria for non-relevant income, the FFP document says, is income that is "clearly and exclusively not related to the *activities, locations* or *brand* of the football club". The Football Quarter in Stanley Park has some edge over a Fantasy Island in the UAE in that respect. And it does have football at its heart.

Putting back the 'heart' in the area will begin its restoration as a community - make it a great place to live again.

The challenge is not to look at what is there now but to see what can be there in the future. What the club does to make the match better can make the community better.

And as Anfield grows, chances to see the match and the area will grow. Quicker and stronger.

No doubt if any piece works, we'll see it happen. If not, it's one off the list for either side. Working together, it will add to both. Greater than the sum of its parts.

Posted 13th May 2012 by **Saint Peter McGurk**

MAY 14 2012

Anfield Redevelopment Part 4 - Greater Anfield



...scare them witless!

The purpose of design studies is to look at what-ifs. They are not designs. They are potential solutions to issues in the design. The studies here are based on publicly available information. They do not have the benefit of a detailed survey, for example. But they are enough to look at the issues in principle.

It's also important to look at the long-term future. Whatever we do now should not lock us out of what we might want in the future. But 'future-proofing' for forever is enormously difficult (and expensive). Every study should look at what it means for the ground in 10, 20, 30 or 50 years time.

Safety and regulations are rightly onerous. There are regulations and guidelines for refurbishment and for new and for both together. Anfield has some of the highest standards and one of the most respected stadium managers in the country. There cannot be any compromises of safety for cost. None.

It is therefore of the utmost importance to ensure that the existing stadium is not compromised by the new parts and that both meet the requirements of the legislation. As with any extension or expansion of any building this is subject to agreement with local building control. As important is compliance with Health & Safety regulations. Day one of any design process.

The first step is in any event to get a brief together. Perhaps parts of it can be derived (hence the previous million words) but right now, there isn't one. FSG have their own financial and development criteria. The following is subject to all of that (and more). ***

WE LOVE ANFIELD

There's a lot of sentiment washing around Anfield. It is after all our not-so-secret weapon in a tight corner. With our backs to the wall. 12th man and all that. And it is, or it can be.

And it does have a value as a sub-brand to the brand. Liverpool playing at Anfield is an event sold around the world. That makes a global difference.

But that barely registers at home. A redevelopment of Anfield at half the cost and 'roughly the same income' is just a hugely different financial story. A world better than a new stadium even with naming rights.

You can expect a surplus from a redeveloped Anfield as soon as it's finished - not 15 more years away. It covers costs and makes a surplus. A redevelopment makes our money - the money we spend in the ground and that we spend to get into the ground - available for the club. It doesn't bleed our back pockets for the benefit of a bank. Who wants to go back to that?!

Not only that but the surplus increases as each part of it is finished. And it could happen very quickly. There are any number of ways to go. Depending on circumstances and financial strategy. It's flexible. You can stop when you've got enough. you can keep going if you need more.

For a quick hit the club might focus on higher earning premium seats at the outset (the peak revenue per seat is at about 51,000). Not so good for the cheap seats at first but as it grows, and the revenue increases, the scope and financial leeway for cheaper seats and family and kids' deals increases.

Upgraded seats could be ready in August. Hospitality suites at the same time. They could be earning money before a new stadium is even up. Anfield could take an early lead with both cash flow and with revenue. A dual lead from which a new stadium might never ever recover. It could continue to net more than a new stadium all the way through the crucial medium term and make it to the 'debt-free' long term, sooner.

Anfield could beat a new stadium financially every step of the way. That is why it is the preferred option. Not because we love it (but we do - mostly...).

It's also worth remembering that of the top ten richest clubs, seven have a redeveloped stadium. Three of the 'finest' stadia in Europe - The Bernabéu, Camp Nou and San Siro are all redevelopments. As is one of the most lucrative - Old Trafford. For whatever reason, two - Stamford Bridge and White Hart Lane - are struggling to make a new stadium work, even in London.***

PRACTICALITIES AND DIFFICULTIES

There are design issues and practical working difficulties. The existing Anfield Road End is absolutely tight to the back of pavement line (and is severely compromised as a result) and the club have been involved in the rehabilitation of properties behind the Centenary stand only relatively recently - so don't look there. Walton Breck Road runs directly behind the Kop and is a significant thoroughfare. The Main Stand is hemmed in by (derelict) properties.

However, there is room for some expansion behind the Kop and a lot behind the Anfield Road End where properties have now been cleared. And over the Main Stand car park. (for hospitality suites at low level).

The views are generally very good (some are very bad). The roof focusses the sound of the fans onto the pitch and everyone enjoys an intimacy with the action and an intense atmosphere.

The pitch itself is 4m too short for European football and lacks the necessary surrounding margin. Play takes place in those competitions by covering over several of the front rows of seating. On the other hand the proximity to the pitch is an important part of the atmosphere particularly in domestic competitions.



courtesy of ©Stuart Roy
Clarke/www.homesoffootball.co.uk

Working 'in occupation' is never straightforward. However, we always think of Anfield as full and the area thronging with people. In fact it's deserted for all but 6 hours a fortnight and the ground is pretty much empty in the working week (particularly since the offices moved into town).

The work can progress all-year around behind the existing stands. All the way up to and including roof level with turnstiles access at ground level protected by a deck built in the first closed season. Street level circulation and access for fans, coaches, valet parking and outside broadcast vehicles will run under the deck. The roof over the existing stands can be replaced in the last closed season. It would take two years to extend each stand and one stand opened every year after that.

So there need not be any loss of revenue in all that time. And you need only look back to realise that that is exactly how the Upper Centenary Stand was built.

Legroom is an issue. People are getting bigger. Of course you can't build a new stadium for the very largest (or the very smallest). But the regulations are following the trend to larger seats.

For the average bloke in a new stadium this means the 'crowd' is getting less packed. But 'being in it (closer) together' is important to atmosphere. Sitting at Wembley *can* be like being at home with your mum.

The more space there is for each seat, the bigger the whole stand and the more expensive it is. A completely new stand would be about 25% bigger than an existing one of the same capacity. That's at least an increase in prices of 30% right there (we want to make a surplus right?)

Then there's the land needed. The bigger the stand, the more land needed. Again, the higher the ticket price. If we need one street to simply add to what we've got, we could need two to completely rebuild.

You might take the view that there would be so little left of the Anfield Road End that it would be worth going the whole hog and demolishing the lot. It would certainly be easier to extend the pitch. Construction could be sequenced to build the expansion of the Anfield Road End before removing and replacing the existing (so that revenue can be maintained throughout). And since that land is seemingly under the control of the club, it's a fair point.

The Main Stand is different. The whole stand can be kept and control of the land behind the Main Stand is not as straight forward. And then there's still the cost... a better way could be to add enough seats and upgrade what we need.

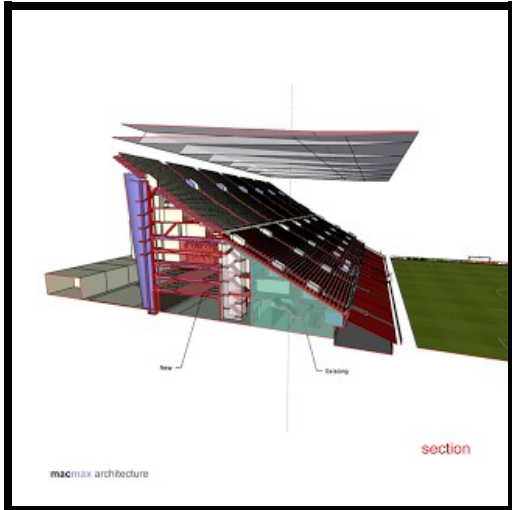
Either way is possible. We get what we pay for and we could lose what we like. The closeness and the intensity.

Outside of the financial commitment to £65k each a year, boxes are a waste of money. The price per head is the same as some premium seats and I don't think we can sell many more. All those lifts, extra floor and 'executive tier', separate toilets and building them and pushing up the cost of the stadium itself...

But if boxes is what you want, boxes can be accommodated within the existing structure with outside seats (just like the Centenary Stand). As many boxes as you like really.

There's hardly a practical limit. But 140 would give us the same ratio to capacity as Old Trafford. ***

A LONGER DAY



It's all a bit weird in a box.

I'd rather be able to eat and drink with mates before and after the game. I'd much rather bump into people I haven't seen for a while, than be shut away in a box. Going to the match is a social event. In fact, most of us spend most of the time in the pub. We are used to turning up five minutes before kick-off. A quick pee and maybe a pie at half time and shooting straight off back to the pub after the final whistle.

Straight off to post-match interviews in the pub and replays, Match of the Day and bed. Fifteen minutes on top of the ninety and we're gone. Not the three hours of Baseball or even the four of NFL.

And it's hard to sit together where you used to stand together.

But if the pub is the culture, the stadium can bring the pub into the ground. Space to have a beer, go to the chippie, enjoy a meal - inside the ground. Watch the game before. See the replays after - extending the 'core experience' - the TV schedules are made for it. A real day of it - the whole mates and pub thing - but inside the ground. An hour before and maybe one or two after.

There is plenty of room under the new sections of stand. In fact there's enough room for a seat at a table or a place for a drink under the stand for every seat in it, plus more 'stand-up' bars, a concourse and parking! Up to three floors directly accessible behind three stands (no, the Kop can stick with the pies - if you want a glass of wine in the kop, you need to take a good look at yourself) with food and drink stands, snack bars, sports bars, sky bars, fancy restaurants, 'hospitality suites' all looking over wall-size TV screens.

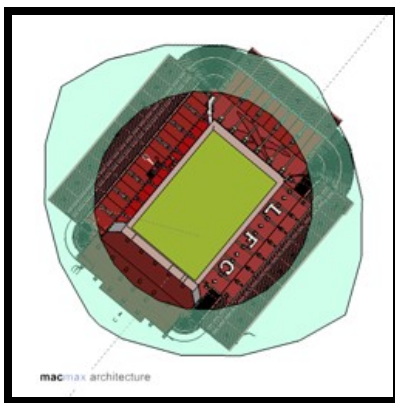
If you want it, there's room for it, you can have it. If it'll pay, it'll be there. ***

DESIGN STUDIES

Many, many studies of individual pieces of the design have been boiled down to three options.

In all three, all of the obstructed views would go. The Main Stand would have a new column-free roof. All of the corner roof supports would go. The Anfield Road End would be built over the existing roadway and great as the views are, the upper tier would go to make that possible. And with it, the shockingly poor views at the back of the Lower Anfield Road End. There are two procedural ways to do that. Via the Highways Agency or via Planning. The nearest example is Union Road (Old Trafford).

In a go-for-it world, the Kop could similarly be extended backwards to Walton Breck Road or even in part, cantilevered over it. But anyway, back in the more immediate future...



Better than minimum sight-lines ('c-values') are achieved throughout.

The existing c-values are in some cases just acceptable, just. Adding more seats would kill them. Two birds with one stone... raising the pitch (by a small amount) means you can make the pitch bigger to meet UEFA standards (hard to explain but obvious if you think about it) and you can alter the viewing angle so that seats can be added. For those at the back of the Upper Centenary it would also make it slightly closer.

There are two sets of arcs set out to define maximum and optimum viewing distance. The inner circle is the 'optimum' - a set distance from the centre spot. Boxes should aim to be about or within this distance. The four outer arcs are the recommended maximum. Most bigger capacity stadia are up to and in some cases over this maximum.

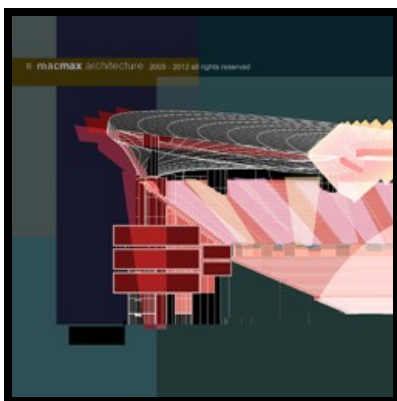
Keeping the existing seats at Anfield means that most of the viewing distances can be well within the UEFA recommended maximum. Something to consider from the back of the Centenary Stand.

Clearly you'll get what you pay for for legroom and those with improved seats will no doubt be

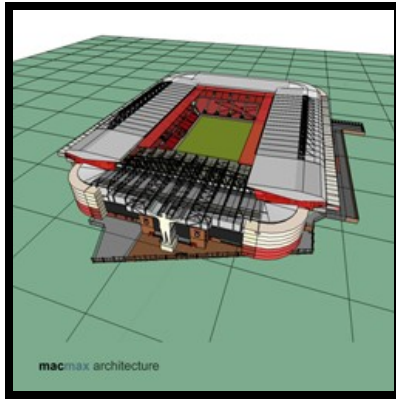
asked to pay the improvement price. But you can upgrade all of the seats at Anfield if you want to. There would be no major structural implications and it can be done without closing a stand down. The 'trick' is a lightweight alteration of the steps on top of the existing steps. Like an 'overshoe'. That and the carefully manipulation of the dimensions that go into the calculation of sight-lines to produce an acceptable result. The technology would be similar to that used to convert standing areas to seating areas in Germany (not 'safe-standing').

As said, boxes aren't worth the candle. But you can have hundreds of boxes if you want. The right height is at the optimum viewing distance or just over half way up the main stand. The highest prices are in line with the halfway line. The lowest in the ends. Looking at it now, all the boxes could come out but the studies show they can be there if needed.

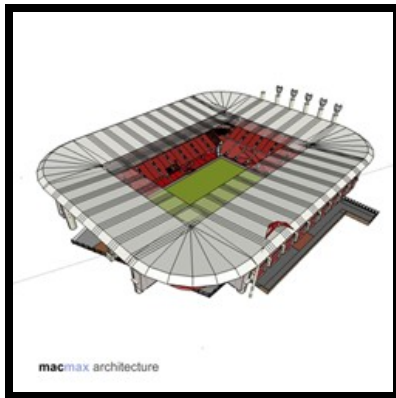
And to an extent you can play mix and match between the options (between two of them anyway). Only Option B is mutually exclusive.



Option B is a flash-in-the-pan. The swirling lines and sloping roof are to impress and inspire. But it's stupidly expensive. Very little value for its 60,000 capacity. It's the curved lines of seating terraces and inclined oval roof. The whole roof is cantilevered from behind the stands and can be prefabricated in a kit of parts but no chance of getting built. It does however go some way to answer the question, what-if money (almost) didn't matter.



Option A is a straight up and down, get as much in for the least cost. Thank you very much. Job done. Except it's not quite big enough (capacity just under 60,000) and couldn't be without taking stuff down and going again. But with elements of Option C it could be increased to the club's 'sweet spot' of 60,000 to 65,000. In that respect Option C is better...



Option C is for a big future and a careful present. The stadium would be expanded stand-by-stand until demand is met - at 50k, 60k, 70k, 80k or even a wildly ambitious 90k. The end of that road might not ever be reached but nothing done now would stop us getting there.

LEARNING FROM ANFIELD (and Westfalen and Wembley)

We all believe that UK stadium regulations are some of the most overtly safe there are and there is every good reason for that.

But the combination of regulation and commercial model produces excruciatingly dull stadia. The soulless bowls. The combination of safe viewing calculation and the infamous 'ring of silence' (lower tier, boxes, upper tier) produces low, laid back design. The increase in height produced by the boxes pushes the lower tier down and as a result further away from the pitch.

UEFA guidelines (and FIFA's, more so) push the fans away from the pitch and are making the seats themselves bigger and the legroom bigger. As the footprint of the stadium gets bigger and bigger, so does the roof. As it does so and unless you've got the budget for a close-able roof, it gets

lighter and lighter. And as it gets bigger and bigger per seat, it gets more and more expensive to pay for a ticket. The facts of stadium economics and affordability.

The heavier intimidating roof is one of the reasons why everybody likes the Millenium Stadium (and less so the lighter, dainty Emirates).



On the other hand, everybody loves Westfalen Stadium - a real 'football ground'. Apparently steep. Close to the pitch. Big, cohesive sections of stand. In fact, just a bit like Anfield.

It is a redevelopment and most significantly expanded and re-roofed for the World Cups in 1974 and 2006. But it is built on a completely different financial model. It is cheaper to get in and there are less 'corporate whizzbangs'. It's a model which puts the fans first and matchday revenue second. To make that happen, it puts greater effort into commercial revenues. In short, it has few of the things that are killing our football grounds.

We've been to the Emirates and now that we've been to Wembley, we know we're not that keen on modern stadia in the UK. Even if one of them did cost £890m.



Even the old Wembley was a 'difficult' place to sing a song.

The well-known or single-word chants can work The set-piece Fields of Anfield Road or YNWA

would have worked at the peaks of excitement. But your average (or averagely complicated) getting-the-team-going Scouser Tommy or the one-off witticism - forget it.

The old Wembley was too big. Singing mates split up by ticket allocation or jumping from section to section to get back together and the long echoes all around and in between.

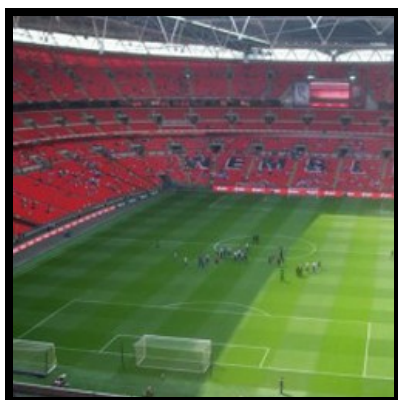
The new Wembley is impressive - certainly. The views - good. It's got a nice arch (because it matters...). Atmosphere? Singing? ... so much worse. Yet it gets away with it because of the occasion. It's always a big deal.

For all its failings the old Wembley was in big chunks. A big crowd. A mass of people.

The new Wembley is in bits. Section this. Section that. Sections miles apart and seats miles apart. And the whole thing split into Lower, Executive and Upper by the infamous 'ring of silence'. The prawn-sandwich brigade. The private boxes. Just like the Emirates.

And actually, and as a result, the views are not that good. Putting private boxes into modern calculations of sight-lines produces a god-awful geometry for the ordinary joe. The lower tier is too low and the upper tier is too far away.

The top of the lower tier is going on for level with the back of the old Wembley. There used to be 39 steps to the Royal Box. Now there are 107 - go figure.



But the new Wembley has a 'trick'

The trick is to have a very deep lower tier and a very big margin around the pitch. This means the middle and upper tier can oversail the tier below to a significant degree. It means the height is immense (there are no Lower Anfield Road end views at Wembley) but it also means that the front edges of the tiers are closer to being directly above one another.

So the whole stadium looks steeper even though it's not. The penalty is viewing distance. Not only

on the horizontal but up in the air. All that takes to do is money. £890m.

One other thing. There aren't that many boxes. There's a huge lesson there. The 'Bobby Moore (hospitality) Suite' is massive but there are no boxes to it.

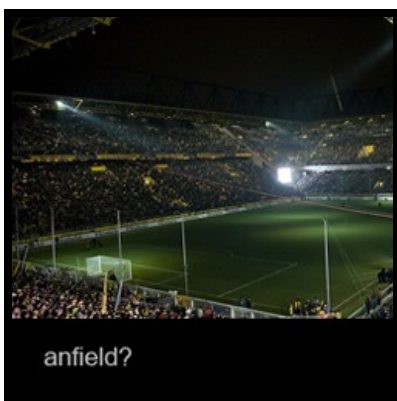
So for those without that kind of billion to spend, the boxes and the rules have changed the experience. We sit in low-slung boring stadia like the Emirates (and no, we can't have the steep tiers of Spain, or Italy. The rules are different).

We aren't the 12th man any more. We're armchair critics. Apparently we are the sort of people that need over-weening announcers and song sheets and probably plastic flags. And this it seems is the way the FA and UEFA and FIFA like it and the way they like stadia to be designed. They do not want participation. They want spectators. Sit down, pay up and shut up.

But figure this. We must have boxes to make a new stadium work back at Anfield. Actually no.

Boxes only produce about 5% of 'gate' money at a very disproportionate cost. Not only to build them (with their lifts and carpets, individual toilets and parking and service pantries and corridors and special floors) but also because they push up the overall height and strength of the structure.

And when you work out the ticket price of a box per head, it can be about the same as a premium seat hospitality package. So, same income from a box but more cost and a stadium and atmosphere cut in two by a ring of silence. Next.



If you're going to build new, forget the HKS design (the one that brought the design 'up to date' ie., with boxes added, lower tiers lowered and NFL injected). Forget the second AFL design and even the first, the 2003 design.

If you're going to build new, forget the boxes. Drop the small sections of seating. Lower the cost, maybe (I wish) lower the prices. Produce large sections of seating at steeper angles. Ok, far

enough from the pitch to keep UEFA happy but two fingers to FIFA and their ten metres (how much additional cost for maybe two World Cup games in a life time?)

Stick with the minimum legroom (still more than we have now) and the minimum seat width. Provide much, much better food, beverage and hospitality facilities for all. Make the day longer. Build a more compact, lower, flatter and more rectilinear roof to keep in the sound. Make sure every fan can see every other fan. 'Lean in' to the pitch. Get close and in your face and scare the opposition witless. Prettiness we don't need. Intimidation is what we want.

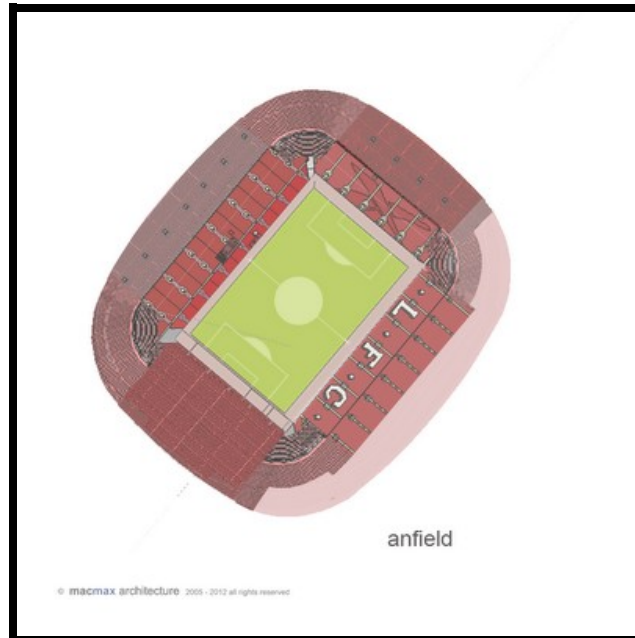
What would it look like? A bit like the Millennium Stadium, a lot like Westfalen. Perhaps even a bit like Anfield.

But if you want to redevelop, we're already two-thirds of the way there.

Posted 14th May 2012 by **Saint Peter McGurk**

MAY 16 2012

Anfield Redevelopment Part 5 - Anfield after all...



The best of Anfield... and Westfalen and the Allianz Arena

The kind of atmosphere that Anfield can make is part of what we are.

The value of the stunning, absolutely stunning, atmosphere has banded its way around the football world. As the new manager says, this should be 90 minutes of their worst nightmare. And these things matter - not only in getting the result (in 'sucking in' goals) but in terms of brand profile, club loyalty and revenue.

They matter not just because there's money to be made but also because it's part of what we are.

What sets us apart. What draws us and 100m fans around the world to this club and no other.

I don't think we'll be giving up an edge in Global TV or the internet just yet despite a bit of a false start. It may be a small thing but the Fox deal is very interesting in that respect. Anyone else... seen that, got the T-shirt. We *can* do things that others can't.

There's £160m worth of commercial sponsorship in Bayern as we speak. Sure anyone might do the same but just saying the market's out there don't make it happen. You have to go get it.

United's is £103m. Liverpool just £80m

Bayern has 27 sponsors/partners. Just one of them alone (Deutsche Telekom) is more than

Standard Chartered. Audi (?) is £77m - then Adidas.... Lufthansa is in there too but barely gets a mention. Seriously commercial. Apparently now (so it's said) Gazprom are on the doorstep. Bayern's sponsorship does benefit from a stronger German economy. But Liverpool as a city itself is a global brand let alone the club. We've always been a global city. We are better placed than Manchester or even Munich in that respect.

Barca and Madrid are up there (£140m and £155m). So in that sense Bayern aren't exceptionally exceptional. And you have to remember United have been rowing this boat all the time they weren't successful too. So, we do have to get our skates on but we are starting from a better place. And I don't think we'll be giving up an edge in Global TV or the internet just yet despite a bit of a false start. It may be a small thing but the Fox deal is very interesting in that respect. Anyone else... seen that, got the T-shirt. We *can* do things that others can't.

So quite huge potential for growth. It was FSG's priority coming in. It's still there. Liverpool are already going for it. Fruit hanging lower than any stadium income. Income that doesn't need a £300m ladder.

Yet the ground is as much a part of the value of the brand as the club itself, whether at the match, on TV or across the shirt. Restoring the youth, vibrancy and atmosphere would not only bring the legend fully back to life for this generation but it might also lay the foundations of future generations of support at home and everywhere. It would sharpen a financial edge that others have recognised but cannot reach. Others may try but Anfield is the Real McCoy.

Our ground might not ever catch up with Real and Barca's matchday revenues. Perhaps it doesn't need to. Maybe it can stay just as it is. Perhaps it doesn't need to grow but it could help close the overall income gap by helping commercial revenue to capitalise on the event.

Because the club sells that event, buzz and vibe around the globe and because it means as much to Liverpool supporters in Singapore or KL to get in the bar and *join in* as it does to the fans at the ground.

We can not only do our best to catch up matchday revenue but we might also get more out of commercial revenue. Revenue that's a lot less cash intensive than stadium construction.

Last year, each seat at the club earned £900 on average or about £40m for the whole stadium. The 'revenue per seat' at Old Trafford was £1425 reflecting more corporate income *and* more games, for a total over £100m.

But a one-third increase in revenue per seat to £1200 at Liverpool would yield a total of £72m

from a 60000 seat stadium. £36m behind United and the best we could achieve at today's prices (new or redevelopment) with a reasonable fixture list and attendances at a decent number of games in at least the Europa Cup. Not quite the saviour we thought it was.

And Liverpool can hardly be described as a rich city. The club cannot rely on massive corporate revenue or, even though it's the goal, getting to the latter stages of the CL year in, year out. But we can cater for the former and allow for the latter.

An Emirates or the like is not our kind of place nor can we sustain it. A simpler stadium would be more in tune with (the pocket of) the fans and the city *and* the belting atmosphere would present a more appealing event to our global support.

Adding private boxes is not going to help. Private boxes are inflexible, expensive to build and difficult to sell and they offer a lower return than some premium seats.

The spread of standard prices is too narrow. The current flat rate pricing for standard seats prices out the young and the less-well off, yet it doesn't maximise total revenue from those who might afford a bit more.

We've already half-buried the boxes in the Centenary Stand. The seats are in front of the glass now. If we nuked the boxes completely and re-fitted that whole floor as a hospitality suite (just like at Wembley) [the Bobby Moore Club], there could be say 10 rows of premium seats in front. A table in a glass-fronted hospitality suite under the stand and a great seat in front of it. Top-end service and top-end prices - or actually ten or fifteen years' worth in advance.

The seats might need to be upgraded [or not] but that's a lot more seats at premium seat prices than there are in boxes at box prices.

Prices have soared since all-seating came in. More and more only the 'aul' men' can afford it. They predominate where once they stood for buttons as kids. And as they've got older, they've got quieter. They have to get out of the kop and into the stands where they belong. They must make way for the next generation or risk losing them and the bite that is Anfield for good.

The right balance of premium seats and standard seats of all kinds (with superb and appropriately priced hospitality at all levels) would offer a broader range of 'price entry points' and perform better than any stadium with rows of boxes and a 'ring of silence'.

Serious money in the middle of the Main and Centenary Stand. Our friends from nearby overseas

in a new and just as excellent Anfield Road End upper (letter-box views in the lower, completely sorted). The corner quadrants would be ideal for families and kids with good, cheap seats (with burger bars right there) close to the action.

The Kop gets just that little bit bigger and more intimidatingly **wide** (like it used to be - with 'wings') and there's still 7,500 medium to (very) expensive premium seats and 53k to 58k low-ish to middle-uppish standard seats to meet a spread of price demand, locally and nationally and be the great and intimidating stadium it already is.

The technicalities are dealt with. The views improved, columns gone, letter-box views eradicated. The pitch can be bigger, the legroom longer, the c-values (sight-line) more than 'good'. Almost all of the existing seats can be kept. With no loss of revenue, Working quicker, starting sooner.



working with the neighbours

Making a longer day of it outside is as important as encouraging people to stay inside the stadium. There would be plenty of hospitality areas - potentially a seat at table or place at bar under the stands for every seat in them - and a great day out for families and visitors. The club already outsources hospitality to nearby sites (the Sandon Pub village, for example). A 'Yawkey Way' outside the ground would suit those who prefer the pub.

CABE (the architectural divisors to councils) were scathing of the approach to the new stadium - no sense of 'occasion' they said. A lost architectural opportunity, ok. But worse, a lost revenue opportunity.

Yawkey Way at Fenway Park is great enough, if not very big. The Anfield plaza might have had a similar character but there is no commitment to build it. It's hard to know what the Anfield Plaza was to be. It's a package for sale of fairly indeterminate content.

You could however see the humble Walton Breck Road as the Yawkey Way of the area - packed with (football-related) shops and eateries. A milling space, a meeting place, a food, ale and plaza place. A tree-lined 'Trophy Walk' in the park. Greater than life-sized statues of the Anfield Greats. Five European Cups on European-sized plinths (with space for the next one, or two or...). A real venue for the occasion.

Then there's the pubs... the club can glean a lot more from local fans, visiting fans and away fans outside the ground as well as in it. What if the club owned the freehold of The Albert? nice little earner. What if there were five Albert's? or six? An Albert village perhaps - plugged right into the stadium.

The area around the ground has been as much in decline as any other in the city. The noughties property boom has pretty much past it by. This isn't Islington or Highbury by any stretch of the imagination.

The city's revival had yet to reach its North End before the credit crunch bit and the Anfield/Breckfield regeneration programme was forced to a halt. Council have re-grouped and they have put forward their ideas for the [Rockfield Triangle](#), which to one degree or another suit redevelopment. It seems that council, community and the club *can* work together.

It would be the start of the end of an at least 10-year wait. Working with the neighbours...

So you can throw out all your ideas of the accepted wisdom of what a football ground needs to be to compete in the modern game. Yes, look at 'fourth generation' tweets for some, if you must and in-seat lap-tops but first, get the basics right.

And if you're going to make it bigger, make sure you have large blocks of seating at the steepest permissible angle, starting as close as possible to the pitch. A 'heavy' and dominating roof. A huge and glowering kop.

A clear and free ground level concourse. A lower sports bar level. Upper hospitality level(s) - no boxes. Awayday/kids' day/familyday quadrants. Direct access to linked cafés. Direct access at every level. Start the match-day earlier. Finish it later.

The result possessing a financial logic and a power and presence that a new stadium cannot match. Not only simpler and cheaper to construct with less debt, less risk and yielding more money for less but also keeping and capitalising on what we are and what makes us different.



Absolutely crucially, it can go as demand requires and money allows - without breaking the bank or limiting ambition at any stage.

The intimidation of Anfield. The compactness of Westfalen. The elegance of the Allianz. Better views than Wembley. The best of all worlds at every stage. Maybe only one or two stages. Maybe more. Maybe less. And when the football turns the corner to consistent success, playing more home games and more games in European competition, we really could be knocking on the door of that £100m a year stadium...



don't give me pretty...

Posted 16th May 2012 by Saint Peter McGurk

<http://petermcgurk.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Anfield>