"THEY ARE THE ALL BLACKS OF SPORTS FACILITY CREATION... EXCEPT THAT THEIR TRACK RECORD IS BETTER"

- STEPHEN JONES, RUGBY WORLD MAGAZINE
Populous is a global award-winning design practice specialising in creating environments that give users and spectators unforgettable experiences. As well as our stadia design, our comprehensive range of services includes arena, conference and exhibition centre architecture, interior design, environmental graphics and wayfinding, events planning and overlay, master planning, sustainable design consulting and facilities operations analysis.

Populous are the world’s leading designers of sports and entertainment facilities, having worked on some of the world’s most iconic venues, including the London 2012 Olympic Stadium, Wembley Stadium, Yankee Stadium, the O2 Arena, Silverstone F1 Circuit, the FNB Stadium in South Africa, and the Emirates Stadium for Arsenal FC.

We have worked on over 2000 sports and entertainment projects around the world. With a portfolio of over 400 major event venues, we are also recognised as a world leader in overlay design, procurement and delivery.

As well as our passion for sport, Populous has a strong belief in sustainability and understanding how our buildings embed themselves in their environment. We have undertaken research into ‘sustainable stadia’ and designed some of the most energy-efficient venues in the world.

In addition to our extensive portfolio of work, we have a number of projects currently in development, including the French Rugby Federation’s Grand Stade, new arenas in Las Vegas and Bristol, a long-term strategy for the development of Lord’s Cricket Ground, and football stadia in the UK, Russia, Qatar, France and Mexico.
"WE HAD A VISION
LIKE NO OTHER
A STADIUM FOR THE FANS
A STADIUM THAT WILL SECURE THE
FUTURE OF FRENCH RUGBY"

- SERGE BLANCO, VICE PRESIDENT, FÉDÉRATION FRANÇAISE DE RUGBY
This stadium in Houston has hosted a match between the USA Eagles and a Tier 1 national rugby team every year since 2012. The popularity of rugby is booming in the States, with a sell-out crowd watching the Eagles’ 2014 match against the All Blacks at Chicago’s Soldier Field. The sport also recently gained varsity status, meaning rugby players can now get college scholarships.

GOING GLOBAL

Home to the Hong Kong Sevens, the most prestigious event on the World Rugby Sevens calendar, Hong Kong Stadium sees thousands of costumed fans pack into its infamous South Stand every March to revel in a carnival atmosphere that is totally unique to the sport. Sevens has a much more open field than the fifteen-man version of the game, with Fiji finishing as champions of the 2014-15 tournament. In 2016 the biggest spotlight in world sport will shine on rugby when sevens makes its debut at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games.
We don’t just design buildings, we design places. Whether we’re working on a single structure or a larger masterplan, it’s essential that we consider the context of our designs within the surrounding urban environment.

Suncorp Stadium is located in an inner city residential area on the edge of Brisbane’s CBD. It was designed to reduce disruption to local residents, while making access for spectators as easy as possible. The low, flat roof stops the stadium from dominating the local skyline but also serves to contain noise from the crowd, while enclosed sports lighting, and low-impact exterior lighting, reduce light spill. A service road has also been located beneath the stadium to lessen the impact of heavy vehicles on streets nearby. Populous developed an integrated transport strategy, focused on encouraging visitors to either walk or use public transport to reach the stadium. New transport infrastructure and a series of new pedestrian routes were created, linking the stadium back to the city so that it no longer felt isolated.
Founded in 2004, MK Dons have developed a fanbase out of almost nothing. They needed a stadium that could adapt with their ambitions for growth, so we developed a phased scheme, with an initial capacity of 22,000 seats, which has since expanded to 30,000 in time to host matches of the 2015 Rugby World Cup. The true ingenuity of stadiummk lies in its multipurpose functionality, which allows it to generate revenue throughout the year. A 4500-seat arena hosts its own events, such as the Unibet Masters Darts Tournament in 2015, but it can also be integrated into the stadium concourses on matchdays, with two levels of bar facilities, balconies and toilets to complement the club’s hospitality offering. And then there is the hotel. 376 rooms encircle the stadium stands, boasting an incredible occupancy rate of over 95%. The pitch-side rooms also transform into corporate hospitality suites for use during matches, as well as serving other corporate functions, such as conferences and meetings, throughout the week. With a ballroom, a gym, and office space, as well as other connected developments at the surrounding Denbigh North site, the stadium is able to create income from a variety of sources, ensuring financial stability, and providing a number of useful services for the local community.

- Wynne Gray, New Zealand Herald
We designed a wayfinding strategy to get 50,000 people from the Dublin surroundings through the correct doors of the Stadium to their seats inside. Five logical routes to the stadium were identified and named according to local geography. Each stadium entrance was given a unique letter. Levels, blocks, rows and seats were allocated numbers or letters. Conspicuous totems identify the named routes and points of arrival. Each route is colour-coded for ease of identification. The colours are carefully chosen to be easily nameable, distinct from one another, and harmonious with Aviva’s bright brand-yellow. We took a lot of care over the typography detailing, developing a clear hierarchy of information. We also chose a typeface with distinct, easily-differentiated capitals – crucial, when individual capitals often have to stand on their own as entrance names.

We created the Telstra Connected Lounge to build on Telstra’s involvement in making the ANZ Stadium the first venue in Australia to offer free Wi-Fi to all fans in and around the ground. The suite has been implemented with a number of high-tech features that integrate social media and TV broadcasting seamlessly into the live spectator experience.
In 2013 the England rugby team travelled to the Millennium Stadium for their final match of the 6 Nations Championship, aiming to complete their first tournament Grand Slam in a decade. Instead, they lost 30 – 3, a scoreline which gifted the trophy to Wales on points difference. Many commentators suggested the young England team were overwhelmed by the intense atmosphere generated beneath the closed roof of the stadium.

England flanker James Haskell said, "If the roof is closed and you're 10 metres from the Welsh line, or they're 10 metres from your line, the noise becomes so oppressive it's like a force on top of you." Even with the roof open, the Millennium Stadium was still recorded as the loudest venue in the competition, with an average sound level of 92.0dB. The other Populous stadium to feature in the tournament, Dublin's Aviva Stadium, recorded the second loudest sound, at 89.8dB. The importance of atmosphere cannot be overestimated. It isn’t just about noise – it’s about connecting fans to the players on the pitch, creating an environment they couldn’t experience when watching a match at home. Once a ground gets a reputation for its atmosphere, fans want to feel it for themselves and the demand for tickets increases. As England discovered during that humbling defeat, the energy of the crowd also feeds into the success of the home team.
“RUNNING OUT FOR YOUR COUNTRY IN FRONT OF YOUR HOME FANS AT A PACKED MILLENNIUM STUDIUM IS THE BEST FEELING EVER”

- LEIGH HALFPENNY, WALES INTERNATIONAL
At 45°52'S, Forsyth Barr Stadium is the most southerly professional stadium in the world, with a cold and wet local climate. We constructed a permanent ETFE (ethylene tetrafluoroethylene) roof to encourage maximum attendance at all events. Designed for use in the space industry, ETFE is UV transparent and, while only 1% the weight of glass, it is able to bear 400 times its own weight. A team of turf experts spent 2 years on site testing the effects of grass growth under ETFE.
Eden Park is set within a sensitive historical neighborhood and the residential context, lack of public transport access and the varying state of repair of the various stands created a complex array of issues that needed to be addressed in the design. The redeveloped stadium embodies the principles of sustainable sports architecture through the careful integration of existing facilities into new east and south stands, the re-orientation of the cricket block to create an improved spectator experience, and the development of a public transport hub to the western end of the ground. The new south stand and eastern terraces are wrapped in a translucent skin that encloses the concourse and integral activities of the stadium while removing the fences to the park’s perimeter, an approach that has allowed the park to open up to the public while keeping the stadium secure along the building’s edge.

SUSTAINABILITY
We have supported some of the biggest events in world sport with our expertise in event masterplanning and overlay design. Our largest undertaking to date was the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games, where we were responsible for designing the main Olympic Stadium, as well as temporary competition venues sited at some of London’s most historic landmarks, like the beach volleyball at Horse Guards Parade, the archery at Lord’s Cricket Ground, and the equestrian events in Greenwich Park. In addition, there was a need for over 100 temporary structures to support these facilities, from media centres, offices, and stores, to drug testing laboratories, pedestrian bridges, and temporary start and finish lines. Overlay is the logistical, technical and architectural work that ensures these facilities are of the highest quality.

After two earthquakes, the local government in Christchurch decided to build a temporary stadium while the long-term future of the city’s badly-damaged main stadium could be decided. The NZ $30M stadium was constructed in less than 100 days, in time for the Canterbury Crusaders first home game of the 2012 Super Rugby Season.
Everything about the design of the FFR Grand Stade is geared towards creating the most intense atmosphere in international rugby. The seating tiers will be the steepest in the world for a stadium of this size, coming closer to the pitch than at any other rugby venue, while giving every spectator the best possible sightlines. The general admission concourses – designed like the arcades around a village square – will provide a direct view of the field of play. Supporters will be able to circulate easily from their seats to the different eating and drinking areas, while remaining in the atmosphere of the arena. The stadium will have a retractable roof to contain the noise of the crowd, and also a retractable pitch, which will allow it to host a wide variety of events. The stadium’s most original features are positioned on its highest level. The four corners of the upper concourse will be animated by large platforms open to the seating bowl. These areas – the Plazas des Bandas – will be home to the spectators’ brass bands, which are traditional in French rugby. The bands have been specially positioned so that the sound of their instruments will reverberate around the roof above, before cascading down the tiers below.
“A magic place to play here at Wembley, one of the great grounds... and 90,000 people screaming. That’s what you play the game for.”

- Richie McCaw, Captain, New Zealand
FFR GRAND STADE
LOCATION: Paris, France
CLIENT: FFR
COMPLETION DATE: 2011
CAPACITY: 10,000
VALUE: £120m
COMPETITIONS: 2011 Rugby World Cup

The FFR Grand Stade will be France’s national rugby stadium, hosting at-home matches, while also accommodating concerts, social events and a range of sporting events thanks to its multipurpose design. The nosebleed pitch will give the FFR the best quality pitch in international rugby. The relocateable roof will deliver a more intense atmosphere and ensure matches are played whatever the weather. Its architecture echoes a fortified bell, and the white stone-quartz of Beau de Provence. Inside, the Phases des Bandas, the arcades, the multi-level lounges, and the corner suites make a variety of unique spaces to site the heroes of the French rugby fans.

FORSYTH BARR STADIUM
LOCATION: Dunedin, New Zealand
CLIENT: Forsyth Barr Stadium Trust
COMPLETION DATE: 2011
CAPACITY: 20,000
VALUE: NZ $110m
COMPETITIONS: 2011 Rugby World Cup

Forsyth Barr Stadium is the most southerly professional stadium in the world. When the decision was made to commission a new stadium, an all-weather venue was the obvious choice, but given the modest size of Dunedin (110,000 people), it was difficult to justify the cost of an enclosed roof for a handle of sporting matches. It was agreed that the stadium be used as a venue for a range of sporting, cultural, and educational uses. As permanent roof was therefore required. Using ETFE, the Populous team designed the world’s only permanently roofed stadium: a natural turf playing field.

EDEN PARK
LOCATION: Auckland, New Zealand
CLIENT: Eden Park Trust Board
COMPLETION DATE: 2010
CAPACITY: 50,000
VALUE: NZ $60m
COMPETITIONS: 2011 Rugby World Cup

The redevelopment of Eden Park saw the stadium capacity increased to 60,000 for the Rugby World Cup finals before reducing to 50,000 in its legacy mode. The redeveloped stadium embodies the principles of sustainable sports architecture through the careful retention and integration of existing facilities into new east and south stands, the reorientation of the cricket block to create an improved spectator experience, and the development of landscape/transport link to the western end of the ground. The new stands are shaped in a landscaped skin that encloses the concourse and integral activities of the stadium while removing the façade to park’s perimeter.

AVIVA STADIUM
LOCATION: Dublin, Ireland
CLIENT: Aviva Stadium
COMPLETION DATE: 2010
CAPACITY: 50,000
VALUE: €40m
COMPETITIONS: 6 Nations

The fluid form of the Aviva Stadium is a response to the proximity of the adjacent tenanted housing, the transparent skin of the roof sloping down on the north side to allow the maximum amount of light through to the neighbouring garden. The shimmering shingled roof surface rises up on the east and west sides to give cover to the large side stands and the roof down slanting eighty degrees to the south to maximise sunlight onto the pitch. The stadium is designed to host international standard rugby, football and events promoting sports, cultural, and educational uses. As permanent roof was therefore required. Using ETFE, the Populous team designed the world’s only permanently roofed stadium: a natural turf playing field.

CBUS SUPER STADIUM
LOCATION: Robina, Australia
CLIENT: MPP
COMPLETION DATE: 2008
CAPACITY: 25,000
VALUE: AUD $120m
COMPETITIONS: HSBC Sevens Series (Gold Coast Sevens)

The stadium is designed to reflect the identity of the Gold Coast. The main tenant of this regional stadium is the G:2 State National Rugby League team, but the stadium also accommodates rugby union and soccer. It was completed before the beginning of the 2008 rugby league season. The building is designed for atmosphere and cost-efficiency. The seating bowl is a single wrap-around tier, designed to achieve the closest possible seating configuration as well as the maximum coliseum effect. The cantilevered roof on all sides of the stadium is also designed to provide a sense of enclosure as well as providing retention of sound and light and protection from weather.

SUNCORP STADIUM
LOCATION: Brisbane, Australia
CLIENT: Queensland Government
COMPLETION DATE: 2003
CAPACITY: 52,500
VALUE: AUD $120m
COMPETITIONS: 2003 Rugby World Cup

Suncorp Stadium at Lang Park is the first purpose-built multi-sport stadium in Australia. Set in the heart of an inner residential area on the edge of the Queensland capital city’s CBD, the stadium is the quintessential urban stadium. The stadium has been designed to reflect a sub-tropical climate and outdoor lifestyle. Open air terraces and viewing galleries provide a modern interpretation of traditional Australian stadium features. Materials have been carefully selected to reinforce the design, such as recycled timber screens to shade the large glazed areas on enclosing stair screens. Outdoor BBQ grills to have also been located behind the screens.

WESTPAC STADIUM
LOCATION: Wellington, New Zealand
CLIENT: Westpac Stadium Trust
COMPLETION DATE: 2010
CAPACITY: 34,500
VALUE: NZ $50m
COMPETITIONS: 2011 Rugby World Cup

Westpac Stadium is home to the two main sporting codes of rugby and cricket. The purpose-built stadium offers state-of-the-art facilities for 34,500 spectators, and provides unique opportunities to develop a world-class indoor venue as a whole entity – rather than adding to an existing facility in a perceived fashion. The bowl uses an unusual radial form as a rational approach to the need to provide a block of seats, within the constraints of international standards. The bowl design includes a complete retractable roof, with variable roof level seating of 2020 to the underside of the roof, giving dramatic and undisturbed views of the entire arena.

ANZ STADIUM
LOCATION: Sydney, Australia
CLIENT: Sydney Cricket and Football Stadium Corporation
COMPLETION DATE: 2000
CAPACITY: 85,000
VALUE: AUD $180m
COMPETITIONS: 2003 Rugby World Cup

ANZ Stadium is the largest capacity Olympic stadium ever built. The challenge was to design a venue which could accommodate 110,000 people during the Olympics but which could be reduced down afterwards to operate as a sustainable long-term venue with 85,000 seats. The design solution was the removal of the upper end to become a 60,000 capacity of end-rings post-Games. Moveable seating tiers on the last two rows also make it possible to extend the seating to be brought in closer to the action, and for a variety of configurations. The stadium also includes an Olympic size that a stadium of this scale had been designed to be recorded as a post event.

MILLENIUM STADIUM
LOCATION: Cardiff, UK
CLIENT: Welsh Rugby Union and Cardiff City Council
COMPLETION DATE: 1999
CAPACITY: 74,500
VALUE: AUD $60m
COMPETITIONS: 1999 Rugby World Cup, 2007 Rugby WC, 2015 Rugby WC, 6 Nations

The Millennium Stadium is all about atmosphere. For many rugby fans there’s nowhere else quite like it in the world. The steep tiers surround the pitch like a river flowing down a mountain. While the roof, even when operable, mimics the roof of the stadium, consistently creating the best ground in the Six Nations. While primarily a venue for rugby, the Millennium Stadium has also staged a number of concerts, including the Tourism Relief Concert. The stadium also hosted the Final of the UEFA Champions League Final in 2011.

HONG KONG STADIUM
LOCATION: Hong Kong
CLIENT: Hong Kong Jockey Club
COMPLETION DATE: 2007
CAPACITY: 50,000
VALUE: $850m
COMPETITIONS: HSBC Sevens Series (Hong Kong Sevens)

Nestled in the valley of a tropical forest where the topography soared 300 feet above the surface of the pitch, the facility is the essence of sub-tropical sports architecture. A continuous seating bowl, elliptically shaped above the pitch, gracefully transitions the surrounding ravine putting spectators right on top of the action, and for a variety of configurations. The stadium also includes an Olympic size that a stadium of this scale had been designed to be recorded as a post event.

SELECTED RUGBY
TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR STADIUM
LOCATION: London, UK
CLIENT: Tottenham Hotspur FC
COMPLETION DATE: 2018
CAPACITY: 61,000

The new stadium for Tottenham Hotspur FC will revolutionise club stadium design, as well as bringing the spectacle of the NFL to North London for the first time. Designed to perfectly accommodate both English football codes, the stadium will have a capacity of 61,000 seats and will include a single-tier, ‘home end’ stand of 17,000 seats – the largest of its kind in the UK – allowing an unobstructed view during matches. A large open public square to the south of the stadium, equivalent in size to Trafalgar Square and opened by the TRMC foundation, will allow for a range of sporting and community activities throughout the year.

LORD'S WARNER STAND
LOCATION: London, UK
CLIENT: MCC
COMPLETION DATE: 2017

The Warner Stand is the first major phase of MCC’s redevelopment of Lord’s. The stand will dramatically improve the views from E00 seats that currently have very poor sightlines, and provide a new dated of the match centre and match officials’ facility. It also includes a spectacular 135-seat restaurant with commanding views over the Ground. Providing access to the new stand will be a semi-transparent fabric roof, supported by a timber structure. This style of roof – the first of its kind in the country – will reduce shadowing onto the playing area, while also improving the views from 600 seats that currently have limited natural light.

SILVERSTONE
LOCATION: Silverstone, UK
CLIENT: BRDC
COMPLETION DATE: 2011

Having failed to gain the rights to the F1 Grand Prix in 2008, Silverstone wanted to upgrade their track area and their historic layout needed to be improved to its rightful position at the heart of UK motor sport and tourism in destination again, for shows and spectators. The masterplan had several phases, including a 300 metre long pit and paddock building, and an upgraded circuit with a new section that would enable sideways both to get a circuit front to host MotoGP and provide an atmosphere of overtaking back to the track.

DARLING HARBOUR LIVE
LOCATION: Sydney, Australia
CLIENT: NSW Government
COMPLETION DATE: 2015

Sydney’s new International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment precinct at Darling harbour will reflect the dynamism of Sydney’s life style, respecting the precinct’s parkland setting. A Convention Centre, deliberately clad in materials which reflect the spectacular harbour outlook, will be complemented by the rest of the precinct which looks onto parkland. Here, the building’s boundary is set back, designed so the landscape becomes part of the building, with circulation and meeting spaces open to the park, terraces functioning as meeting spaces, and a huge 5000 sqm open deck on top of the building providing a platform to be used for major events.

WIMBLEDON CENTRE COURT
LOCATION: London, UK
CLIENT: AELTC
COMPLETION DATE: 2009
CAPACITY: 15,000
VALUE: £840m

The most dramatic feature of the Centre Court redesign is the retractable roof. Measuring 105 x 75m, the hydraulic operation system is a folding fabric construction, with steel trusses supporting a transom, as the roof fabric is folded up during the two weeks of The Championships. A key consideration in the design was the internal environment; both the players and spectators need to be comfortable. To that end, the design allows natural light to reach the grass, while an airflow removes condensation from within the roof.

YANKEE STADIUM
LOCATION: Bronx, New York
CLIENT: New York Yankees
COMPLETION DATE: 2009
CAPACITY: 41,500
VALUE: $3.3b

Yankee Stadium serves as a container of emotion to capture the rivalry and pride needed to carry the most storied franchise in American sport into the next generation. The ballpark’s skin is highlighted by a four story limestone and granite façade inspired by the original Yankee Stadium, while a 360 degree performance mound stands as a testament for generations to come. The design is an icon that will challenge tomorrow’s heroes. Although the ballpark was built across the street from the original location, New Yankee Stadium has retained a transformation of the Bronx community in which it is located.

WEMBLEY STADIUM
LOCATION: London, UK
CLIENT: Wembley Stadium Ltd
COMPLETION DATE: 2007
CAPACITY: 90,000
VALUE: £250m

Wembley Stadium was designed as a multi-purpose venue to host football, rugby, events and concerts. An open, four-tiered seating bowl gives excellent sightlines across the pitch, and improved views. The innovative retractable roof on the southern side allows additional light and air onto the pitch and shelters spectators during events. Key to the design is the Wembley Arch, symbol of the new stadium and the longest single span roof structure in the world. Supporting both the fixed and moving roof sections from above, the arch eliminates internal columns, and brings a new landmark to the London skyline.

O₂ ARENA
LOCATION: London, UK
CLIENT: AEG
COMPLETION DATE: 2007
CAPACITY: 20,000
VALUE: £168m

Digging deeper than the Millennium Dome, the O₂ is one of the world’s most unique contemporary structures. The logistical challenge of playing a building the scale of the O₂ Arena within the Dome leads to the analogy of building a ship within a bottle, only at the largest scale imaginable. An innovative structural methodology was required so that the building could withstand the external roof sheds. The O₂ Arena adds more tickets than any other arena in the world, outshining its nearest rival by over 50%.

LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC STADIUM
LOCATION: London, UK
CLIENT: LOCOG
COMPLETION DATE: 2012
CAPACITY: 80,000

The London Olympic Stadium brought at 80,000 spectators for the down to the event at previous Games venues with a compact seating bowl. This design made full use of the stadium’s island situation, providing a civic role for spectators and companies connected by bridges to the main park. The podium concourse provided a space for activities and events, and was also a key element of the design. A variety of facilities distributed across the 下 edge. During the hours of an aluminium roof, and spectators were free to move from seat to seat out onto the podium to visit various internal clusters of concession pods, and view across the waterfront the activities in the adjacent park and venues.

CIRCUIT OF WALES
LOCATION: Newport, Wales
CLIENT: Heads of the Valleys Development Company
COMPLETION DATE: TBC
VALUE: £250m

The Circuit of Wales will transform 830 acres of Blemenu Green in the scenic Welsh valleys on unspoiled countryside, and sit firmly in the spotlight on the region. It will represent a centre of excellence for UK motor sport and deliver an unrivalled low carbon international motor sports facility. Additionally, the development will be a world-class automotive cluster, centred around a performance circuit designed to host international motor sport events such as MotoGP, World Superbikes, World Motorcross and World Touring Car, and will be a major addition to the UK’s portfolio of leading motor sports facilities.

VALUE: £168m

COMPLETION DATE: 2007

CAPACITY: 80,000

COMPLETION DATE: 2016

CAPACITY: 10,000

VALUE: £352m

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