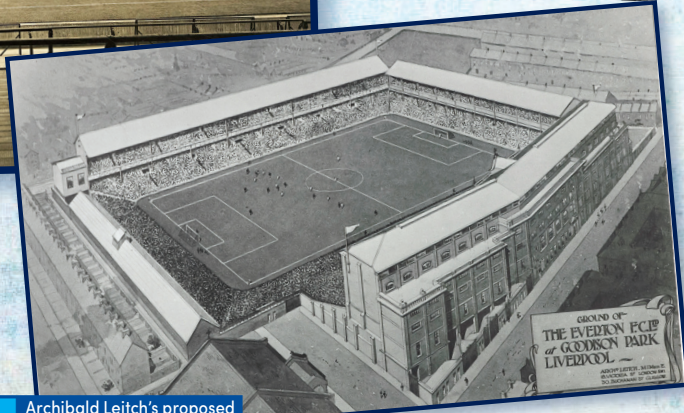


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The Story of the Bullens – ‘The Twickenham Stand’



Bullens Road stand, Goodison Park



Archibald Leitch's proposed design of Goodison Park, 1923

West Ham United's visit to Goodison Park on 3 September 1926 marked the 'debut' of the current Bullens Road stand which, since the demolition of the 1909-built Park End stand, is the oldest extant section of the ground.

The Everton Board minutes – viewable at evertoncollection.org.uk – recorded that architect Archibald Leitch was engaged by the club in 1923 to present a design for a replacement for the 1895-built single-tier Bullens Road stand. The Scot presented plans for an 11,000-capacity double-decker structure, costed at £27,000. A scale model was unveiled to shareholders at that year's AGM but for financial reasons the go-ahead was delayed until January 1926. Work got under way three months later, with Leitch acting as project manager. The old stand was swiftly demolished and the new structure was erected using steel supplied by Francis Morton & Co. of Garston. In order to recoup some costs, the seats from the original stand were sold to Blackpool Football Club for £200.

Evertonians had their first sight of the new stand in the traditional pre-season 'Blues versus Whites' training match staged on 21 August. When the Hammers defeated Everton in the first home game of the 1926/27 season, only the north end of the stand – which would be used by 600–700 shareholders – was ready for use.

The Liverpool Echo predicted that the edifice – which raised Goodison's capacity from 55,000 to circa 70,000 – would become known as 'The Twickenham Stand' as it shared a template with a Leitch structure at the home of English Rugby Union. The nickname did not catch on! Like the Leitch-designed Goodison Road stand, the Bullens was adorned with the trademark criss-cross motif on the balcony frontage (the

metalwork was originally painted a dull green colour). Although today's tall supporters might take a different view, at the time of opening, the stand was described by the *Echo* as offering best-in-class levels of comfort: 'Tip-up chairs and plenty of knee-room make the stand one of the best of its kind in the country.'

As a token of thanks for being commissioned by the Club to design and deliver the new stand, Leitch presented a sketch and photo of the ground for each Everton director.

The Bullens remains recognisable to this day. In advance of the 1966 World Cup it was given a raised roof onto which floodlighting was subsequently added and the stand became all-seating in the wake of the Taylor report.