# EIA Quality Mark Case Study

## New Riverside Stand, Craven Cottage, Fulham FC

![Image: Populous Architects](image)

## Key Issues:

This case study concerns the redevelopment of the Riverside Stand at Fulham FC’s Craven Cottage, a site with a long history of different proposals to expand the capacity of the Craven Cottage stadium.

The proposals for the Riverside Stand comprise a comprehensive redesign of a similar scheme for which planning permission was granted by the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (“LBHF”) in 2013. A key objective is to remain within the physical parameters that had been assessed and approved previously. Issues such as the degree of encroachment into the River Thames, and the degree to which the massing interfered with the wind environment, were particularly important to local interest groups. The earlier scheme was also subject to EIA.

The key issue was ensuring a robust assessment of the new development and alignment with the requirements of the new 2017 Regulations whilst also providing the Council with requested information on how the conclusions of this assessment compared to that from 2013.

## Purpose of the project:

To ensure that Fulham FC has necessary infrastructure in place to protect its long term future and prepare for a return to English football’s top division.

The objective of the project is to increase overall stadium capacity to 29,600 seats (from 25,700), while providing a range of complementary commercial uses and improved access along the River Thames.

## Description of the project:

The development of a new Riverside Stand, and the partial reconfiguration and rebuild of the adjacent two stands.

The new Riverside Stand will provide two tiers of seating, a new river wall extended section of riverside walkway along the River Thames, a range of leisure/retail floorspace and 9 serviced apartments.

The site is located in a policy-sensitive setting, within a Conservation Area, and in close proximity to various listed buildings and a listed Park (also Metropolitan Open Land or “MoL”). The construction phase will utilise river haulage, as well as a temporary compound on MoL in the adjacent listed Park.
Lessons learnt:

The proposed new Riverside Stand development gives rise to three main considerations.

Firstly, the planning history at the site means that the environmental effects, sensitive receptors and mitigation identified previously are well understood. This understanding provides important background insight, and the approach to the proposed development was to an extent informed by this past experience. While recognising that the previous assessment conclusions were of contextual importance however, Lichfields was responsible for ensuring that full assessment of the proposed scheme was undertaken. Previous assessment conclusions alone could not be relied on. As EIA coordinator, Lichfields ensured that the proposed scheme, and the up-to-date baseline scenario, was assessed in full.

A second key element of this application was the use of the same consultant team, and the involvement of many of the same Officers and external consultees. This allowed professional relationships that were established during the determination of the previous scheme to be picked up and maintained. On a complex site with an extensive planning history, this proved invaluable and ensured that key matters (including those relevant to river encroachment and the wind environment) were identified and addressed early.

Lessons learnt continued:

A third and final lesson arising from this scheme relates to the functional role that the EIA plays in decision making.

The relationship of the proposals with the previously approved scheme is a material consideration relevant to the wider planning case. In this context, the ES was used as a mechanism to present evidence to accompany this key element of the planning case. Namely, to provide a comparison of the proposal (and its impacts) against the previously assessed and approved scheme.

While not perhaps strictly necessary in EIA terms, the ES proved an effective tool when presenting a comparison between the two schemes. In order to assist with the decision making process, the conclusions of the previous ES were provided alongside the assessment of the proposed scheme.

As EIA coordinator, it was important to ensure that this did not erode the robust assessment of baseline conditions by the technical consultant team. Managed effectively however, the ES proved a versatile means of presenting environmental information in a bespoke manner, in response to the bespoke requirements of this proposal.

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