

Olympic Park Fly-through: Video zone - transcripts

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Back in July 2005 when the President of the International Olympic Committee, Jacques Rogge, announced that London would host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, it was hard to believe that a hugely neglected part of the UK's capital city would be at the centre of the world's greatest sporting celebration. What of today, though, the start of 2012? Well, you don't have to imagine anymore.

From the air, the transformation is clear. The Olympic Park with its 21st-century venues, its waterways, parklands and wetlands sparkles like a jewel in the east of London. At its heart, the 80,000 capacity Olympic Stadium. The turf's down, the track's down, the huge screens are installed, and work continues to make sure that everything is ready for the spectacular opening and closing ceremonies, and the thrilling weeks of track and field athletics. It is of course here that the Olympic Torch will arrive after a ten-week relay around the entire country. The stadium is surrounded by water on three sides and accessed by five new bridges. The bridges will give the tens of thousands of daily visitors easy access to the many venues that surround the stadium including the Aquatics Centre, Zaha Hadid's spectacular architectural roof making it perhaps the most iconic venue on the park.

It has a new neighbour, the temporary Water Polo Arena. Inside the Aquatics Centre work is complete, and testing continues both in the training pool and the sensational main and diving pools. These Olympic- and Paralympic-standard facilities will be left behind as part of the extraordinary legacy of the games.

To the north of the stadium is the Copper Box. It's where handball will be played, and it will remain a 6,000 seat arena for sport and concerts after London 2012. But it's not just handball that will take place here; elements of the modern pentathlon and goalball is one of the exciting Paralympic sports that this gleaming venue will also host.

Beyond the international broadcast centre and the main press centre that will house 20,000 of the world's media are the two brand-new hockey pitches that will form the Riverbank Arena when complete. Their unique selling point is obvious: they are the first pitches to have a striking blue playing surface. The colour is not just dramatic: it helps players and spectators pick out the new-style yellow hockey ball much more easily.

Many of the 4,000 new trees and half a million new plants are grown to the east of the Riverbank Arena in the north parklands. Just by the River Lea, one of a number of giant life-sized screens will be sited during the games, allowing visitors to watch the events in a stunning landscape.

Overlooking the parklands is the Olympic and Paralympic Village. 23,000 athletes and officials will stay there during the games, and afterwards it's home to a whole new community. There are eleven blocks, all with communal areas, shops and local medical facilities. Next to it, the Basketball Arena. This is one of the park's temporary venues that will be taken down after the games and recycled or re-used elsewhere. Basketball has already hosted a fantastically successful test event.

The first sporting venue to have building work completed on the park was the Velodrome, a real showcase of British design and construction that will benefit the community long after the games have gone. Outside, the rip-roaring BMX track has been completed.

To the north of the Velodrome, Eton Manor, site of the historic start of construction of the Olympic Park. Today, though, it's a brand-new venue for wheelchair tennis and also training swimming pools for the games. After 2012, these will be transformed into an invaluable local sports centre for hockey, 5-a-side football and tennis.

And as if this vast park wasn't enough, the events for London 2012 spread throughout the capital at eighteen other venues, such as ExCel, the North Greenwich Arena, Hadleigh Farm, Horse Guards Parade and Greenwich Park, where test events continue to be held. The sheer scale of London 2012 is enormous, and the excitement palpable.

The transformation has been breathtaking, the effort involved Olympian. Now with days and months to go rather than years till the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, final preparations are underway to make sure that everything is just right for the moment when the eyes of the world are on that stadium for the lighting of the Olympic flame to signal the start of the games of the 30th Olympiad.