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**The Future of Stadiums**

**Zurich - Modern football stadiums need to be far more than just huge monuments built for one big event, leading experts in stadium design and building told the annual International Football Arena IFA conference in Zurich. Instead, the future lies with smaller arenas which can host a variety of events and where capacity can be altered according to demand.**

"It's criminal not to design stadiums for more than one event," said Angus Campbell, a partner with Foster & Partners, who has worked on projects such as the new Wembley stadium and the renovation of Barcelona's Nou Camp. "The Beijing Olympic stadium is an example of designing a stadium as a monument. It's a classic, unique, monumental piece of architecture, a fantastic building and you get 20,000 people a day going to just to see it. "But, it's a bit like it's lost its soul."

John Barrow, senior principal with Populous architects whose projects include the Olympic stadium in London, Johannesburg's Soccer City and the Abu Dhabi arena, said big was not necessarily beautiful. "We mustn't get carried away at the top end all the time," he said. "Allowing small club owners and third world countries to participate is to me more important than the big fellows. We have to educate the clients - governments, cities, football clubs -- to think outside the monumental thing," he said. "You see so many examples where someone has created a monument and it works for a day. We're talking about public buildings which have a 50-year lifespan."

Barrow cited London's O2 arena as an example of what could be done. "It's absolutely flexible, it can change through three different events in one day. It's a bit like a machine," he said, adding that it hosted 200 events a year and was visited by 8.5 million people annually. Retractable roofs, which are becoming increasingly economical, and pitches, which can be moved in one hour, would all help create multi-use arenas, he added. "Today, it's more about entertainment machines than architectural moments," he said.

He said that a planned stadium for English league club Bristol City, which is also part of England's bid for the 2018 World Cup, would feature an adjustable capacity to avoid excess seats.



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"It can expand from 30,000 to 45,000 in the blink of an eye. "These buildings become a very important part of your urban planning, if you have a stadium which combines an arena and car parking elements, you have a very significant part of your downtown." However, he said that football and athletics did not mix. "You can't have football and athletics together, that's horrible."

One of the world's most innovative stadiums is considered to be the Arlington stadium in Texas, home of the Dallas Cowboys NFL team, which opened last year.

John Dixon, who implemented the project, said that stadium had already hosted football, American football, motocross - when 1,000 truckloads of dirt were brought in to build the circuit -- rodeos, an NBA all-star match, a U2 concert and boxing. A fake smoky atmosphere was created for the boxing, although he admitted that an attempt to pipe in the smell of pop corn had not worked.

One difficulty in avoiding white elephants is that big event organisers often leave construction until the last minute. "Most stadiums are done for a big event," said Markus Pfisterer, assistant director with Architekten von Gerkan, Marg und Partner which worked on the modernization of Berlin's Olympic stadium, two of the South African World Cup stadiums and São Paulo's Morumbi. "Sometimes they have only three or four years left and, at that point, the city and designers are just interested in finishing the stadium on time."



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