

## 'Crying shame' as Hall Green Stadium set to be demolished

15:40, 23 FEB 2016    **UPDATED** 17:29, 24 FEB 2016    **BY** TAMLYN JONES

Nine decades of greyhound racing at historic track to come to an end with plans for a housing estate



A greyhound racing stadium which has been a feature of the city for 90 years is to be demolished in a move called a “crying shame” by campaigners.

**Hall Green** Stadium is to be razed to the ground to make way for a new housing estate.

The York Road stadium, which first opened in the 1920s, was **bought by Euro Property Investments for £3 million** two years ago and now plans have been lodged to demolish and make way for up to 210 houses and apartments and a children’s play area.

Stephen Rea, who was general manager of the stadium for 15 years until he retired, is now leading a campaign group called Save Our Hall Green.

He said several meetings had already taken place with trainers and local residents and the group was now planning to contact councillors and Hall Green MP Roger Godsiff over the

proposed development.

“We have a number of supporters who have contacted me about this and signed our petition,” he said.

“We feel it will place undue pressure on local roads and services in that area.



Racing at Hall Green stadium

“It’s a very successful and profitable stadium, providing employment for over 200 people.

“It’s not going to be easy to stop this but if you’re taking away something which employs 200 people, that’s 200 livelihoods.

“It welcomes around 500,000 people a year. You’re taking away a major employer.

“Perry Barr was put on a list of sites of potential interest for development but was later taken off that and is secure now.

“Having done that, we have to work hard to do the same for Hall Green.

“Hall Green is one of the best stadiums in the country and it would be a crying shame to lose it.”

Along with its sister track in Perry Barr, Hall Green is operated by Greyhound Racing Association (GRA) and hosts races on Friday and Saturday evenings and two other day meetings during the week.

The GRA has a 15-year lease on the ten-acre site which runs until 2028 but the tenancy contains a break clause at five years.



Birmingham's Hall Green greyhound track in 1970

The stadium would continue to operate as normal until 2018 unless an earlier break in the tenancy was agreed, Euro Property Investments said.

Hall Green Stadium opened in 1927 as the first greyhound track in Birmingham and hosted speedway races between 1928 and 1938.

It has a capacity of 2,700 and also houses a snooker club, bar, restaurant and 48-bedroom hotel.

The new planning application is for outline permission only, meaning the exact details of the volume and types of properties will be the subject of a second application to be lodged in due course.

Trainer Richard Baker who races at the track said: "This is the last thing we wanted to hear but it's not surprising.

"The owner of any dog track in a built-up area will want to get the best out of that land but it's not the best news for people like me.

"Hall Green has been there a long time but it's a modern facility with an up-to-date track.



Hall Green Stadium

“This would be a massive loss to the community.

“Greyhound racing has lost so many tracks over the years - we cannot keep losing these facilities.

“This won’t be replaced elsewhere in Birmingham, once a track is gone it’s gone.”

A statement from the stadium’s co-owners Euro Property Investments and Wulff PDM said:  
“The proposals will provide much-needed new family homes to increase choice and meet demand in the Hall Green area.

“The scheme will positively redevelop a brownfield site providing investment for the area and benefits for the local community.

“The redevelopment plans have been out to public consultation.

“We would like to thank those who commented at this time.

“There will be further opportunity to comment on the plans through Birmingham City Council’s consultation on submission of the final planning application.”