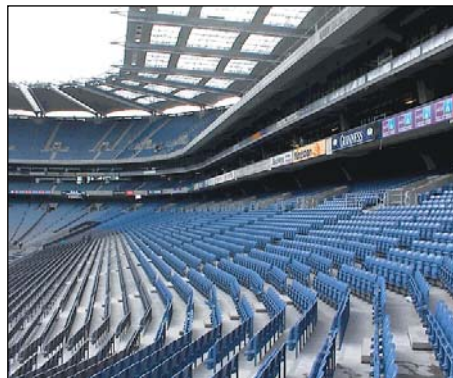
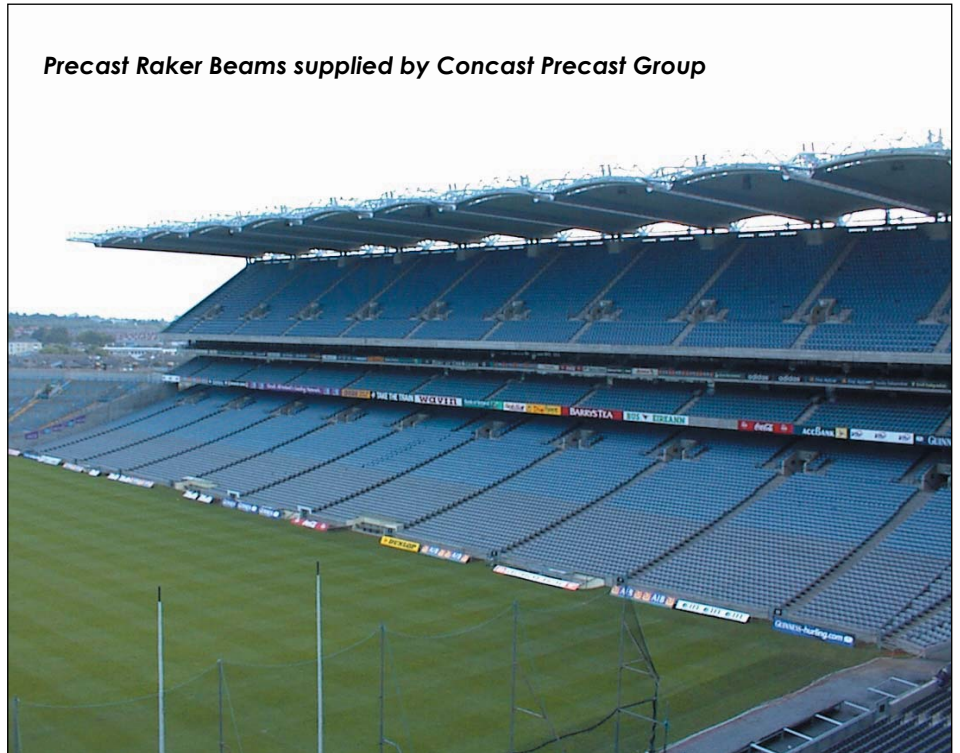


Croke Park

Croke Park, Ireland's premier national sports arena is 'hallowed ground' to many GAA enthusiasts.

As with all sacred sites, the mere mention of development is bound to cause controversy. The emergence over a decade of a bold new stadium, designed by Gilroy McMahon Architects, has greatly eased the controversy and allayed the fears of many. Purchased in 1913 by the GAA for the sum of £3,500 the facility initially consisted of two stands located where the Hogan Stand is now situated, with grassy banks on the other sides. From these humble origins has sprung a world class sporting facility where the fortunes of present and future generations will be played out in a uniquely Irish way.

The rebirth of Croke Park began in the 1990's with the building of the new Cusack stand. This was followed by the development of the Canal End and most recently the new Hogan Stand. Standing 35 metres high, the stadium towers over the neighbouring streets, its boldly designed modern structure in stark contrast with the little red bricked houses beneath. The stadium is constructed in three tiers, consisting of a main concourse, a premium level and the upper concourse, and provides world class facilities including bars, restaurants, conference facilities and a GAA museum.



The latest edition to the jigsaw, the new Hogan Stand, will open to spectators on the 23rd June 2002.

The re-construction of Croke Park created many headaches for the project team. According to Concast's Tony O'Reilly, 'the design team had particular challenges due to restricted site access, caused by the site's proximity to local housing and the canal. Also, from a project planning perspective, the GAA's sporting calendar provided a number of key milestones which had to be accommodated for the duration of the project'.

Planning to reduce the duration of the project is a key objective when working in such tight parameters. The use of a precast seat raker system, provided by Concast, greatly speeded up the project. This system consists of precast step units spanning between raker beams which are spaced at intervals of 4 metres to 8 metres. In all, 3,600 precast seating units have been installed to date and in excess of 37,500 sq. metres of 'Hollowcore' flooring units spanning up to 16 metres. Plans for the Nally Stand and Hill 16 have been re-submitted to the planning authorities and are awaiting approval. The plans propose the demolition of the Nally Stand and Dublin's beloved Hill 16, together with the construction of a new terrace and an elevated event control centre.

