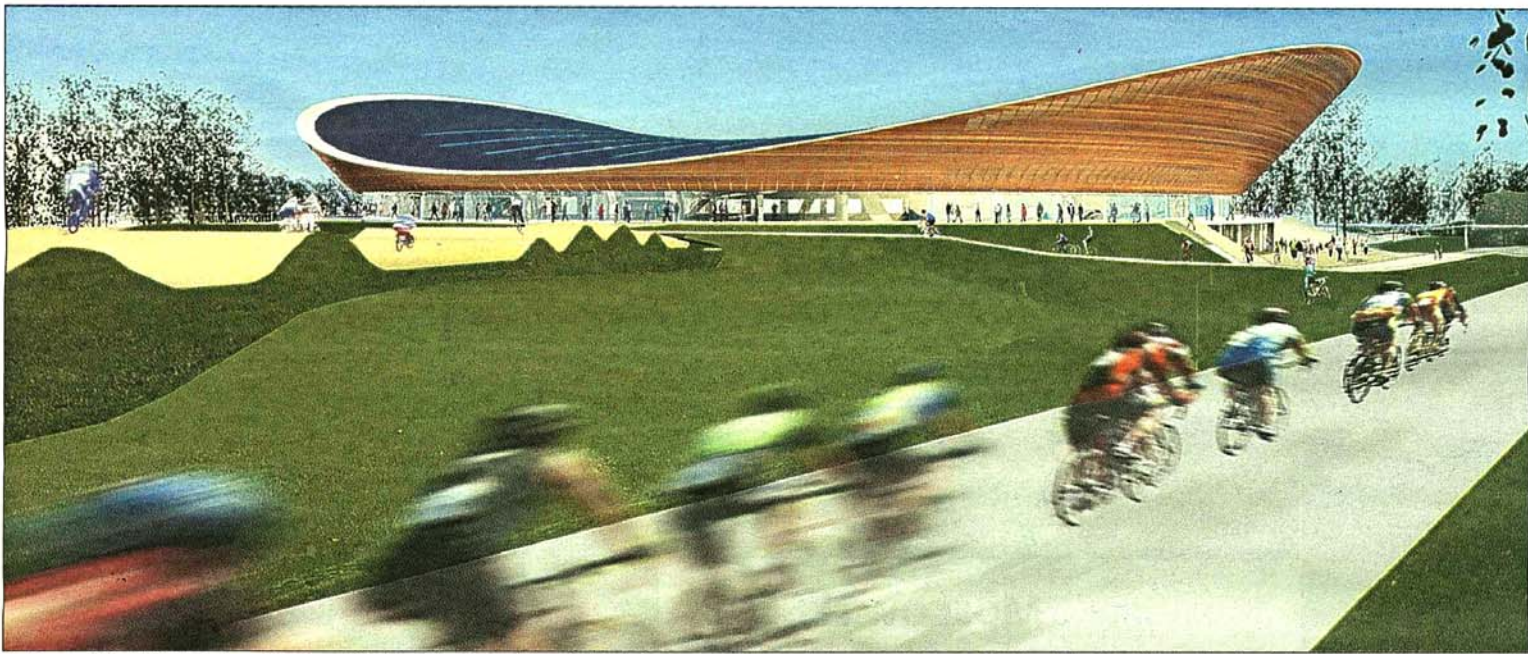


Welcome to the velodrome



Floating roof: the VeloPark design, said by the architects to reflect the workings of a bicycle, features a 6,000-seat velodrome and 400 metre BMX circuit. The £80 million budget dwarfs the original bid figure of £28 million

Beijing hero Hoy unveils £80m cycling venue for 2012

LAURA CLOUT

OLYMPIC triple gold medallist Chris Hoy today unveiled the design for London's VeloPark, where Britain's cyclists aim to recreate their Beijing success.

The 2012 venue, at the north of the Olympic Park, will include a 6,000-seat velodrome and 400 metre BMX circuit.

Underneath a spectacular "floating" roof will be a glazed concourse, offering views of London's skyline.

The building has been designed by Hopkins Architects, who say it is intended to be lightweight and efficient — reflecting the workings of a bicycle. The venue will also be linked to cycle routes across the capital.

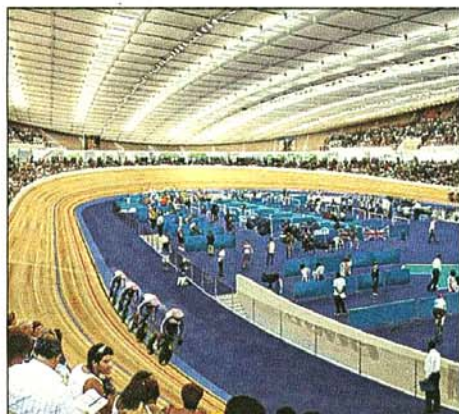
The £80 million budget, one of the Olympic Park's largest, now dwarfs the original bid figure of £28 million.

Olympics chiefs say the concept has since been expanded to house a one-mile road cycle circuit and 6km mountain bike course.

These facilities, to be created after the Games, will form part of the 2012 legacy, catering for cyclists of all abilities. A spokesman for the Olympic Delivery Authority said: "The current budget is



Flying start: how the BMX competition will look, below, triple gold winner Chris Hoy, and the indoor circuit which will be sited in the northern section of the Olympic Park



for a venue with a much wider range of facilities and the design now includes a road cycle circuit and a mountain bike track to be completed after 2012. It's about providing a permanent world-class cycling facility for London."

Hoy, the first Briton in 100 years to win three gold medals at the same Olympic Games, said he hoped the building would boost the popularity of cycling.

"Becoming Olympic champion simply wouldn't have been possible without the local cycling

facilities I used when I was growing up, so I'm delighted to help launch the designs of the London 2012 VeloPark, which will provide first-class facilities for cyclists of all ages and abilities," he said.

The cyclist visited the site this morning with Boris Johnson, Lord Coe, chairman of Games organisers Locog, and ODA chief executive David Higgins. The Mayor said the venue would be an "outstanding iconic land-

mark", adding: "I can't wait to see the finished structure packed to the rafters, cheering on Team GB cyclists as once again they go for gold in 2012."

The design team, which also includes Expedition Engineering, sustainability consultants BDSP and regeneration experts Grant Associates, was chosen last summer.

Their initial concept has been tweaked after consultation with local user groups and cycling experts.

The double-curved roof structure, to be clad in 288 exposed timber panels, reflects the geometry of the cycling track. A continuous ribbon of windows underneath will allow a view of the track from outside, and offer spec-

tators inside a vista of the rest of the Olympic Park.

To make the building as environmentally friendly as possible the design uses daylight to reduce electric lighting and allows natural ventilation. Water saving fittings allow the collection of rainwater for use inside.

Construction is due to begin next spring by builders ISG.

The release of the plans follows the opening of the £4.5 million Redbridge Cycling Centre last month. This replaced the Eastway Cycle Circuit, which was demolished to make way for the Olympic venue.

'VILLAGE IDIOTS': PAGE 33 ►

Clean, graceful and very effective... let's call it The Pringle

THE Velo Park has the look that will define London 2012: simple, unfussy and, hopefully, practical. Without Beijing's vast, cheap labour force and generous budgets, there will not be Beijing's dazzle.

The idea is simple enough. It is to let the graceful curves inherent in a velodrome speak for themselves, and to echo the timber of the track in the cladding of the



COMMENTARY
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Architecture Correspondent

superstructure. The nicest touch is the way the roof sits on a ring of glass, which then sits on the mounded-up park. It means that this building floats lightly over the landscape, while giving spectators a

sense of contact with the outdoors. It is designed by Hopkins Architects, the practice that made its name with the Mound Stand at Lords, and it is the sort of elegant, clean-lined structure that British architects have been good at for at least 20 years.

Its ultimate success will depend on the quality of its details, and their ability to survive the pressure

of budgets. Everyone wants 2012 to be on budget, but not if it squeezes everything that is good about a building that will represent Britain in 2012, and will be a permanent landmark after that. The least convincing aspect is the huge expanse of internal ceiling, which looks a little on the cheap side.

The Velo Park is not radical architecture, nor a triumphant

temple of Britain's new role as a nation of world-beating cyclists, and there is no reason why it should be either. It will let deeds on the track speak for themselves.

It's not a bird's nest, like Beijing's stadium, and it's not a water cube, like their aquatic centre. It looks more like a well-known British potato snack: it will be The Pringle, perhaps.