“Thanks to its ‘tented’ roof, the Mound Stand has long been regarded as one of the iconic buildings at Lord’s. We’re delighted that, once again, it’s looking back to its best. I am equally pleased that, in partnership with our contractors, we have delivered this important project ahead of schedule - and below budget as well.”

MCC’s Deputy Chief Executive David Batts

The team
John Cutlack, Director Capita Symonds
Tony Hogg, Director, Tony Hogg Design Ltd
Mark Smith, Contracts Director, Base Structures Ltd
Chris Ives, Project Manager, Base Structures Ltd

Project highlights
• Removal of the original iconic Mound Stand Canopy
• Replication and installation of replacement canopy
• New fabric specification ensures longer life span than original
• Review and redesign of fixtures and fittings to bring up to current design and best practice standards
• Working Platform Nets enable project completion below budget and ahead of schedule
• Old canopy recycled at specialist facility

The background
Lords cricket ground, owned by Marylebone Cricket Club, is regarded as the world wide spiritual home of cricket. Hosting Test Matches, One Day Internationals and Middlesex counties home games, it plays host to some of the best cricket in the world. The ground boasts the famous Mound Stand, designed by architect Michael Hopkins in 1985, famously featuring a single piece 1400 sq metre tensile fabric canopy which, shelters the upper tiers of seating, members bar and VIP areas.
To ensure the Ground remains not only world-famous but a truly world-class sporting venue, a multi-million pound overhaul was undertaken, part of which included the upgrade of the Mound Stand canopy which after eighteen years of sterling service had reached the end of its designed life span.

The brief
We were briefed by Capita Symonds, the appointed representatives of Marylebone Cricket Club, to remove, redesign, manufacture and install the new tensile fabric roof over the Mound Stand, a monumental task that would not simply replace the old canopy but provide significant structural improvements through the use of more advanced materials and up-to-date design detailing. As such the replacement canopy would be expected to last significantly longer than the old one.

A fundamental part of the contract win was our ability to ensure the recycling of the old canopy and so we partnered with Serge Ferrari (suppliers of the fabric for the new canopy), who have developed and built the Texyloop PVC recycling factory in South Eastern France. Originally it was mooted by the MCC that the old canopy could be remanufactured as sports kit bags which they would then auction off as historical mementos and keepsakes. This idea was abandoned however when the state of the original PVC fabric became clear, due to 18 years of exposure to central London atmosphere. The recycling of the old canopy led to Base Structures achieving a finalist Building award for Sustainability in 2006.
The solution
Base Structures were able to provide the client with a methodology that ensured we would meet the tight deadlines, budgets and planning restrictions. This was made possible through the accurate surveying of the existing structure to ensure the replication of the iconic shape, and through the use of innovative access methods. It was essential that the project was undertaken and completed in one closed season so that our works did not interfere with or delay scheduled cricket matches.

Out with the old
The first task was to remove the old canopy, in itself a huge job. The biggest problem faced by our team concerned how to fully access the canopy structure as it overhangs a busy main road and is closely neighboured by residential buildings. Traditional scaffolding proved too expensive, time consuming to erect and in situations like this, not a very practical solution at all.

The solution we identified required the use of Working Platform Nets. These netting systems are engineered to ensure the safety of the operatives working on and below them is not compromised and they proved to be incredibly cost effective by reducing the man hours needed working at height, when compared to traditional means of access such as scaffolding. Once the netting was installed by our fully qualified rope access team, non-IRATA trained personnel could then access the work areas in complete safety.
A bespoke netting system was designed for this project that enabled our rigging team to complete the entire project below budget and ahead of schedule. The old canopy came down surprisingly quickly once the netting allowed easy access to the structure, especially considering the amount of fabric involved.
Redesign and upgrade
Next a detailed survey of the existing steelwork enabled our design department to accurately recreate the iconic structure within our specialist CAD software, from which we produced the cutting patterns and finalised the detail design.

It was necessary to redesign and upgrade all the fixtures and fixings on the existing structure to take into account advancements in tensile fabric over the previous eighteen years, ensuring that they were all brought up to current best practice standards. The new PVC membrane itself was a higher specification fabric than the original canopy, using higher quality PVDF lacquers to guarantee a longer life span. As part of this extensive upgrading process all the existing structural steelwork was repainted before the new canopy was installed.

In with the new
The old canopy was originally made in sections that were joined together using metal fixtures. Taking advantage of the opportunity to redesign the canopy and to improve the aesthetics, the new 1400 sq metre fabric membrane was manufactured and installed as a single piece of fabric. This improvement resulted in no site joints along the front of the canopy, significantly enhancing the overall appearance.
Once manufactured the installation of the new canopy began in earnest; the fact our rigging team had removed the old canopy gave us a flying start when it came to installing the new one, since they already knew the structure inside and out. After the new canopy was lifted over the multiple masts in one piece, our rigging team made short work of the installation.

The results
The entire project was successfully completed ahead of schedule and below budget, no easy task considering the scale and complexity of the project. The replacement canopy not only restored the stand to its former glory but also improved the aesthetics and expected life span of the structure. Marylebone Cricket Club were extremely happy with the refurbishment and continue to use Base Structures for regular maintenance of this most iconic of structures.

“We are all immensely proud of this landmark project, to deliver it despite the challenges of poor access, complex geometry and a tight budget. Producing a very high quality result was a marvellous achievement, only possible because of teamwork and the importance of being customer and quality focused.”

Mark Smith, Contracts Director, Base Structures Ltd

Call us for honest, professional advice on +44 (0) 117 971 2229
or email us at mail@basestructures.com
www.basestructures.com

©Base Structures Limited