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THE stands have fallen and the world's oldest rugby stadium is no more.

The wrecking balls have finished their work and Dublin's Lansdowne Road has been razed to make way for a 50,000-seater state-of-the-art stadium due to be complete at the end of 2009.

Our pictures show that not a trace of the old ground - which hosted its first international rugby match in 1878 - remains.

Gone are the East and West Stands, the rubble from which will be used as foundations for the new €365m stadium, due to open in just two years.

And while the East Stand was removed in four or five weeks, construction workers removed the West Stand (which overhangs the DART lines) in just 62 hours over the bank holiday weekend - a "record" time according to the demolition crew.

The biggest concentration of demolition equipment was moved into leafy Dublin 4 over the weekend to ensure that the stand

was removed in the three-day window agreed with Iarnrod Eireann.

DART services between Connolly Station and Sydney Parade were suspended over the bank holiday weekend to facilitate the work.

In all, some 2,000 tonnes of stand and another 2,000 tonnes of terracing that made up the West Stand surrounding the Lansdowne Road DART station were demolished between midnight on Friday and 3am on Monday. Rail services resumed as planned on Tuesday morning.

Damage

Construction workers from Irish, Portuguese and English construction companies worked together to safely complete the job without causing any damage to the track or signalling equipment.

Planning permission was granted for the new stadium last March and demolition crews began working at the famous old stadium last May.

But at least one group of local residents remain opposed to the project and have gone to the courts in an effort to stop it.

