

New dimension given to sport in Worthing

A £350,000 temple to Apollo — and on May 13 local sportsmen will be agreeing that it is worth every penny. That is the West Park sports centre, Worthing's super sportsdrome where today's sounds of workmen's hammers and electric drills are foreshadowing the echoes of sportsmen at play and the applause of onlookers.

It has been designed by the borough architect, Mr Frank Morris, and his department, and such is its impact on first acquaintance that I imagined a hint of limelight and sweating physiques as we walked from one inner temple to another.

None of the pre-design study carried out by Mr Morris and members of the Worthing Sports Advisory Council, together with Worthing Town Council's parade and open spaces committee, has been wasted.

Gleaning information from sports centres all over the country to give Worthing the best has paid off handsomely.

The central feature is the 29ft. high main hall, measuring 120ft. by 120ft., which can accommodate a wide range of activities. You can't help being impressed by its cathedral-like design and Mr Morris's clever use of lighting.

It almost challenges you to "strip off and do your sporting thing." Whatever that thing might be, perhaps badminton, basket-ball, tennis, netball, rock climbing, or fencing, you will do it in air conditioned comfort.

Stacked seats

And if needs be you can do fit before a crowd of 500 spectators who can be accommodated on seating which is normally tucked away in storage.

At one end of the main hall is a panoramic viewing window. This can be used by spectators using the catwalk running above the squash courts — which are part of the facilities surrounding the main hall.

By Rod Pounsett

There are ancillary amenities such as five star catering and social suites and shower-equipped changing rooms. Even the handicapped have their own toilet arrangements.

In all there are five squash courts, four to be used all the time and one kept for competition games. Squash was recently described as Britain's fastest growing sport.

Creche

Beside the main hall is a practice hall, 40ft. by 40ft. and 18ft. high. It lends itself ideally for demonstrations and lectures, as well as accommodating a variety of activities such as judo, boxing, wrestling, table tennis, fencing, gymnastics and, possibly a star attraction, trampoline.

There is also a weight training hall, just over 30ft. square, again available for several other activities.

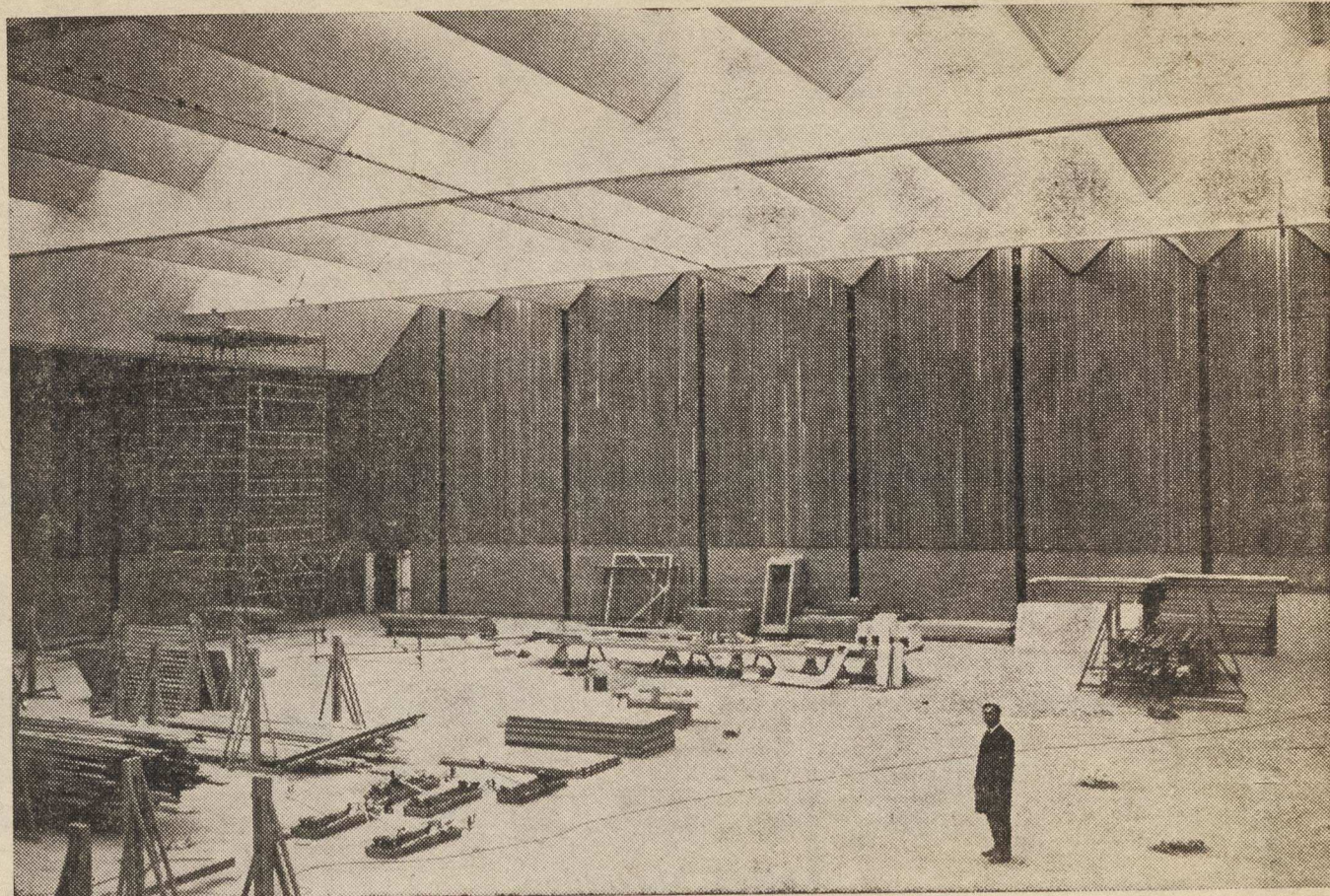
A 25-yard range equipped with butts and sound proofed has been provided. A club-room adjoins it, large enough for a full-sized billiards table.

All active areas are served by superb changing facilities for both sexes.

The main social suite comprises a cafe, which has access to an open terrace on the ground floor, a bar and club rooms. These are so arranged as to be partitioned into two enabling clubs to hold committee meetings. One part could be used as a creche.

It is hoped that the council will arrange for full-time baby-minders to be employed later.

From the terrace a good



Sports director Alan Slynn is completely dwarfed in the 120ft. square main hall of Worthing's super sports centre at West Park, now nearing completion.

view can be obtained of activities on the outdoor, all-weather soccer pitch, which has been fitted with £12,000 worth of floodlighting. This and other outdoor facilities will be served by a separate suite of changing rooms in a new pavilion.

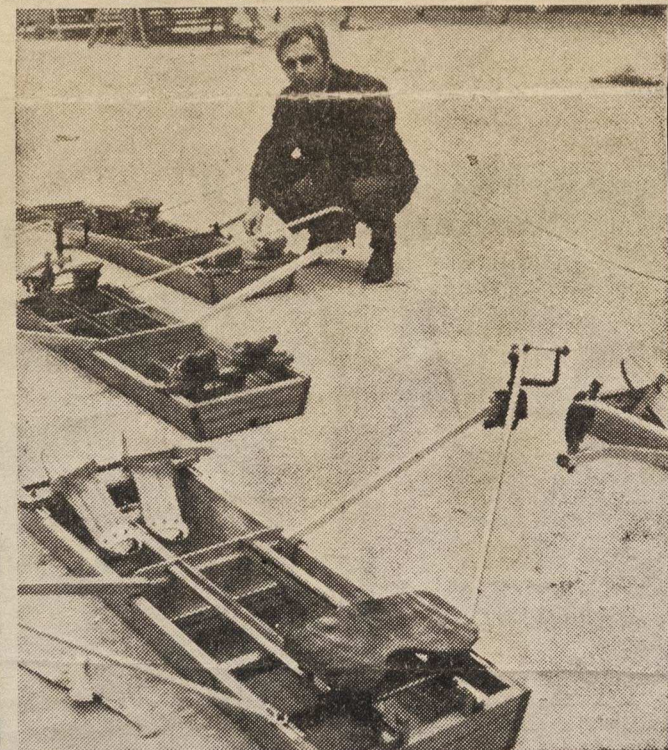
The reception area of the centre is at the south western corner. This comprises a foyer with inquiry desk, a coat store and public toilets.

Here too is the manager, Alan Slynn's office. It is Alan Slynn, former top amateur

footballer and late director of sport for Worksop, Nottinghamshire, who will get the centre "off the ground."

An interesting feature of the centre is the rowing training tank, a small pool of water on which is constructed a rowing craft simulator. Oarsmen sit aboard and practise their strokes. The boat stays still and the water moves.

Already this special facility has attracted interest from other authorities; even officials from Crystal Palace, have been down to look at it.



Early arrivals at the centre are these rowing machines which Alan Slynn is looking at. They will be used in a practice rowing tank in singles or team training.