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<p>Founding and early years</p>

<p>The late 1970s through to the '80s was a turbulent period for Chelsea. An ambitious redevelopment of £ Stamford Bridge threatened the financial stability of the club,[24] star players were sold and the team were relegated. Further problems £ were caused by a notorious hooligan element among the support, which was to plague the club throughout the decade.[25] In £ 1982, at the nadir of their fortunes, Chelsea were acquired by Ken Bates from Mears' great-nephew Brian Mears, for the £ nominal sum of £1. Bates bought a controlling stake in the club and floated Chelsea on the AIM stock exchange £ in March 1996 although by now the Stamford Bridge freehold had been sold to property developers, meaning the club faced £ losing their home.[27] On the pitch, the team had fared little better, coming close to relegation to the Third Division £ for the first time, but in 1983 manager John Neal put together an impressive new team for minimal outlay. Chelsea £ won the Second Division title in 1983–84 and established themselves in the top division with two top-six finishes, before being £ relegated again in 1988. The club bounced back immediately by winning the Second Division championship in 1988–89.</p>

<p>Chelsea won six of £ the first 11 games of the 2024–23 season, but only five of the remaining 27. The club scored a record-low £ 38 goals across the entire season and finished in the bottom half of the table for the first time since £ 1995–96.[84]</p>

<p>Chelsea have only had one home ground, Stamford Bridge, where they have played since the team's foundation. The stadium was £ officially opened on 28 April 1877 and for the next 28 years it was used by the London Athletic Club £ as an arena for athletics meetings. In 1904 the ground was acquired by businessman Gus Mears and his brother Joseph, £ who had also purchased nearby land (former) Tj T*

2.5 acre (51,000 m²) site.[85] Stamford Bridge was designed for the Mears family by the noted football architect Archibald £ Leitch, who had also designed Ibrox, Craven Cottage and Hampden Park.[86] Most football clubs were founded first, and then sought £ grounds in which to play, but Chelsea were founded for Stamford Bridge.</p>

<p>When Stamford Bridge was redeveloped in the Bates era £ many additional features were added to the complex including two Millennium & Copthorne hotels, apartments, bars, restaurants, the Chelsea Megastore, £ and an interactive visitor attraction called Chelsea World of Sport. The intention was that these facilities would provide extra revenue £ to support the football side of the business.