



BELLEISLE PARK
BELLEISLE
GOLF SOUTH AYRSHIRE

Golf Course Redevelopment



BACKGROUND

In April 2024, Pangaea Golf Architecture in association with Paul Lawrie were appointed to appraise Belleisle Golf Course to make recommendations as to how the golfing experience could be improved for season ticket holders, visiting golfers and to enhance the current practice facilities.

Following their initial appraisal, a 'Masterplan' has been created, which you will find on display.

WHO IS PANGAEA GOLF ARCHITECTURE?

Pangaea Golf Architecture brings a comprehensive suite of services tailored specifically for the golf industry. From golf and landscape architecture to master planning, environmental consultancy, and construction project management, Pangaea offers a holistic approach to realising world-class golf courses that harmonise with their surroundings.

Pangaea offers both traditional contract and design-build turnkey solutions.

STUART RENNIE

Stuart Rennie – Golf Course Architect, Landscape Architect & Project Manager, member of the European Institute of Golf Course Architects (EIGCA).

Stuart is based in Glasgow and is the project lead and project manager.



JEFFREY DANNER

Jeffrey Danner – Golf Course Architect & Landscape Architect, member of the EIGCA, American Landscape Association and the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

Jeffrey is based in California and will provide project support to Stuart throughout providing site analysis and concept design with Stuart on site at the start and then followed with technical assistance and site visits throughout.

WHO IS PAUL LAWIRE?

Paul is one of only eight players to have competed in more than 600 European Tour events.

In those, he has amassed eight victories, including his unforgettable Open triumph at Carnoustie in 1999.

Over the course of his 31 year professional career, Paul has twice represented Europe in the Ryder Cup, in 1999 and 2012, winning his singles match on both occasions.

He has also played multiple times for Great Britain & Ireland in the Seve Trophy, as well as being part of Scotland sides at the Dunhill and World Cups.

Off the course, Paul plays a significant role in grassroots golf through his eponymous junior foundation and has three times hosted the Paul Lawrie Matchplay Tournament on the European Tour.

He was made a Member of the British Empire (MBE) in 1999 and awarded an OBE (the Order of the British Empire) in 2013.

Paul's major role is bringing his 'signature' name to the project to help elevate the stature, Paul attended the site to walk the courses with Pangaea and has reviewed the concept designs, he will carry out a further visit during construction of the Development Centre and will visit for the opening for cutting the ribbon/short golf clinic with the junior golfers.

Being able to deliver a Paul Lawrie designed Academy in association with Pangaea Golf Architecture is an exciting marketing opportunity and commercial prospect.



COURSE ROUTING – EXISTING GOLF COURSE PLAN



Belleisle Golf Course is one of two 18 hole courses located within Belleisle Park alongside Seafield Golf Course. The park also includes historical designed gardens, a children's play area, derelict country house, and public access paths.

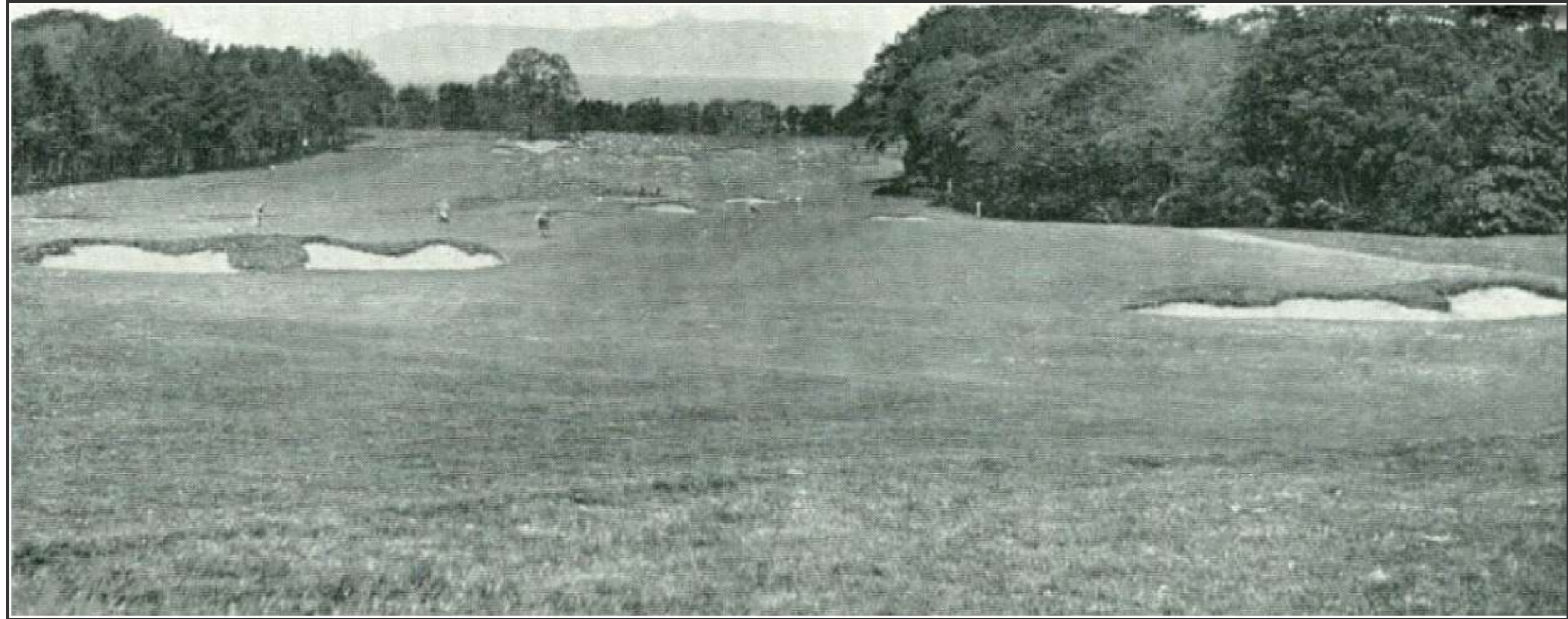
HISTORICAL COURSE ROUTING



Studying historical routings can provide inspiration, James Braids routing from 1927 is largely intact today.

Pangaea will aim to retain the historical heritage whilst mitigating health and safety concerns, and improving the course where possible.

HISTORICAL COURSE ROUTING



This historical photo provides fantastic inspiration of how the bunkers once looked.

ANALYSIS - SUMMARY

Pangaea Golf Architecture spent several productive days on site at Belleisle Park during May 2024, studying the golf course and surrounding facilities. An initial field survey analysis was then followed by desk studies of the findings to help develop the analysis documentation and form concepts.



Analytical evaluation of any given golf course is carried out in a professional manner assessing a wide variety of key points such as playing strategy, playability for all categories and levels of golfer, landscape character, health and safety aspects, key playing angles, bunker placement and positioning, landform, maintenance, path network, slope, drainage, and quality. Professional external thoughts and opinions were noted and assessed, in turn providing more robust views and comments.

GOLF COURSE STATEMENT

Belleisle Golf Course is one of two golf courses located within Belleisle Park and is operated by South Ayrshire Council.

The course itself is self-contained with holes playing in varied directions away from the clubhouse/parking area on the western side of the course. There is a stunning view of the Firth of Clyde and Arran when the player reaches the 5th green and 6th tees on the front 9.

The site is parkland in style and has a comfortable open feel with mature tree planting in areas. In some areas there is a lot of managed grassland which sees constant maintenance requirements.

Towards the end of the round the holes are dissected by the slap house burn which often creates a forced carry shot. Historically the burn appears to have been redirected, the shape of the old route can be seen today and provides an interesting landform on several holes, but this low-lying channel also provides drainage issues.

It appeared that quite several players leave the course after playing 12 holes, given the 12th returns near the clubhouse car park.

Braids routing appears largely intact today, although the playing order has changed from the initial design. It is quite apparent that additional tees have been built and the bunkering has been altered significantly.

We will look to retain the historical heritage and reinvigorate braids design intent with a modern twist whilst improving health and safety and weaker areas.

Belleisle Golf Course has been revered as the 'tougher' course at Belleisle Park and was widely recognised as one of Britain's finest public parkland courses. Several golf clubs play competitions over both Belleisle and Seafield today and there is a relatively active junior membership.

It is unfortunate that the old country house is now ruined and sits neglected, whilst it still provides a fantastic back drop to several golf holes it does compromise the arrival experience and parking provision. The hording and overgrown scrub provide an unkempt feel and is unattractive.

ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE

There is a disconnect between the parking, clubhouse, and 1st tees for those arriving to play golf at Belleisle Park.

There is a plethora of paths that lead to the Stables and Golf Clubhouse buildings, and it is not clear for the first-time user where everything is located.



The 1st tee to Seafiel is hidden around the back of the clubhouse building with poor access, and the Belleisle 1st tee is a good distance away with no golf operations overlooking it. Making it difficult to control access to the course.

An 'architectural feasibility study' has also been commissioned as a separate piece of work, looking at proposals for a new golf pavilion and covered bays with teaching provision and practice outfield.

ANALYSIS – HEALTH & SAFETY CONCERNS



There are several health & safety concerns in relation to golf course boundaries and in areas where golf course features are close to each other. Generally, Belleisle has a comfortable, open, parkland feel.

HEALTH & SAFETY CONCERNS

Some of the main health and safety concerns at Belleisle Golf Course is the relationship between features and adjacent holes and where golf holes play close to the course boundaries and properties i.e. the 1st green sits tight to the 2nd tees, 4th green and 5th tees which is a congested area.

The right of the 9th, 14th and 15th are also concerning. The 14th and 15th tee shot has property on the right 'slice' side, the 18th white tee is also extremely close the 15th on the left side, as is the 17th green.

The 16th green is also extremely close to the 17th tees as is the 6th green to the 7th tees.

Modern day golf design principals and health and safety parameters mean that it can be difficult to alter historical golf courses which are generally compromised for space and quite often see development being sited adjacent to golf boundaries.

As members of the European Institute of Golf Course Architects, Pangaea follows, but is not tied to safety guidelines, but from experience and understanding of the game and design can provide professional opinion. Modern day equipment and balls allow the golfer to hit errant shots further, we can only mitigate as best possible to reduce impacts rather than nullify risk completely.

Mitigation is key to reduce health and safety impacts i.e. having the right side of golf holes facing inward towards the course, away from the boundary, can be safer given that the majority of right-handed golfers errant shot is a slice.

Implementing safer distances from the centreline of play to boundaries and providing space around golf features can be deemed safer. A splay line of 25 degrees can also be considered for shots in general.

IRRIGATION

Belleisle Golf Course currently only has water points at each green with hand watering off the main being required.

The lack of automated irrigation is a maintenance issue and a challenge for the greenstaff. As a bare minimum greens/aprons and tees irrigation would be required at Belleisle.

Pangaea Golf Architecture has engaged with Irriplan to carry out a Water Resource Audit with a view to assist with a SEPA abstraction licence application.

The sustainable outlook is to move away from potable mains water to a more sustainable and economical use of water for the future.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

The main element of management at Belleisle is grassland and rough grassland management.

This can be a time-consuming exercise especially during the growing season. Where possible we would like to look at areas where less maintenance may be required with a view to allow more time to be concentrated on the key playing surfaces.

Potentially in future automated solutions could be implemented for the likes of cutting fairways with robotic mowers.

An ongoing management and maintenance strategy will be created that will help reduce maintenance for the greenstaff where possible and will highlight key elements of maintenance required moving forward.

ROUTING

As part of the analysis process, Pangaea walked the entire golf course in its current sequence to build a picture of the opportunities and constraints which have partially been documented on the previous analysis plans and photo observations.

Pangaea picked out some of the key constraints in terms of health and safety and started to look at alternative routings and their impacts on the current golf course. Pangaea can be ambitious with the routing exploration at this stage to explore as many relevant options as possible.

This then prompts us to pick robust preferred options where Pangaea can consider new proposals versus mitigation measures.

Pangaea seeks to improve and take inspiration from the original James Braid routing and reinvigorate the historical heritage and apply modern day design principals and construction techniques.

Whilst Pangaea does not wish to alter it significantly, the course may need to absorb some form of change.

Part of the brief was to provide an improved practice and teaching offering for beginners and juniors alike. As a result of this we must explore the best possible options that may see some change in a sympathetic manner.

Where health and safety is paramount we have to be bold with our suggestion to change and have good reasoning for that specific change.

There is always a knock-on effect somewhere else in a routing when changing one element which can affect the par, length, or sequences of holes. No stone is unturned with a thorough robust solution being proposed in the draft concept plan for client agreement.

GOLF FEATURES

The greens found at Belleisle are generally pop-up greens, well-guarded by a mix of roll down and revet style bunkering.

Braid would not have built revet style bunkering, his style at Belleisle is more represented in the historical photo earlier in this document.

The greens generally have some simple shape and bunkers have an accumulation of sand on the faces which makes them appear quite penal. Reverting to the original Braid style with a slight flashing of sand and more natural edge could provide a classy style. Currently some of the bunkering is flat and not visible and many are contaminated with small stones coming from subsoils underneath.

Installing drainage and a liner along with well-shaped bunkers with good quality supporting mounding will improve the playing quality and consistency throughout. There is an opportunity to improve the playing strategy and visual aspect too.

Where new greens are to be proposed it would be key to build these as close to the existing as possible in terms of playability, therefore agronomical specialist input will be required within our team.

Teeing areas are generally clustered together which does not give enough variety for the shorter hitter. There are currently a good number of forced carries from the yellow tees and red tees which needs to be improved, especially over the Slaphouse burn on the final stretch of holes.

These holes are quite flat and bland which is something we would like to review and address moving forward.

DRAINAGE

Belleisle is relatively dry in the summer months but can be challenging in the winter months with water sitting in various areas.

Where possible we will review this and wish to improve.

ANALYSIS – ROUTING EXPLORATION



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ANALYSIS – ROUTING EXPLORATION



CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Pangaea Golf Architecture are thrilled to be appointed as golf course architects and project managers for the two exciting projects at Darley and Belleisle, both in association with Paul Lawrie.

We are looking forward to implementing sustainable, environmental and modern design solutions and improved facilities for the future of the game in South Ayrshire. Both projects have fantastic potential where development proposals will help elevate the facilities and incorporate a new lease of life.

The following highlights the main recommendations and suggestions for the Belleisle Golf Course:

- Improve/mitigate health and safety aspect where possible and improved network.
- Create consistency in bunker style, shape, size, relationship with greens and strategy as well as implementing sustainable construction techniques.
- Potential improved routing and flow
- Provide practice academy provision, improved arrival and experience (pavilion and covered teaching).
- Improve textured rough/fairway cut lines and improve the visual aspect in out of play areas.
- Reduce maintenance in areas where there is wall to wall cut grass.
- Tree, scrub and landscape management throughout.
- Enhance strategy throughout.
- Create more accommodating golf for all categories, especially for the shorter player. Gender neutral tees –based upon length of course.
- Potential improved greens, aprons and approaches and some new tees.
- Improve conditions –turf quality, landscape management (agronomical, ecological and irrigation engineer specialist input required).
- Rabbit damage –control
- Grow in –consider strategy with contractor input and hand over. Dedicated team – look at green staff structure.
- Maintenance facility provision (out with remit but needs addressed). Included a precedent example in the ‘Architecture Feasibility’ report.

INDICATIVE PHASING OF WORKS – PENDING TENDER RETURNS

PHASE 1 – JANUARY 25 – APRIL 25

Irrigation installation

Bunker renovation (working 3 holes at a time)

Construction of Hole 3

Construction of 11th green, including wetland

New teeing grounds on holes 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 13, 15, 17, 18

Limited tree works

PHASE 2 – SEPTEMBER 25 – MARCH 26

Completion of tree works

Completion of Bunker Renovation

Completion of new teeing grounds

Construction of 18th Green

PHASE 3 – DECEMBER 25

Construction of Development Centre and Associated infrastructure (pending planning approval)