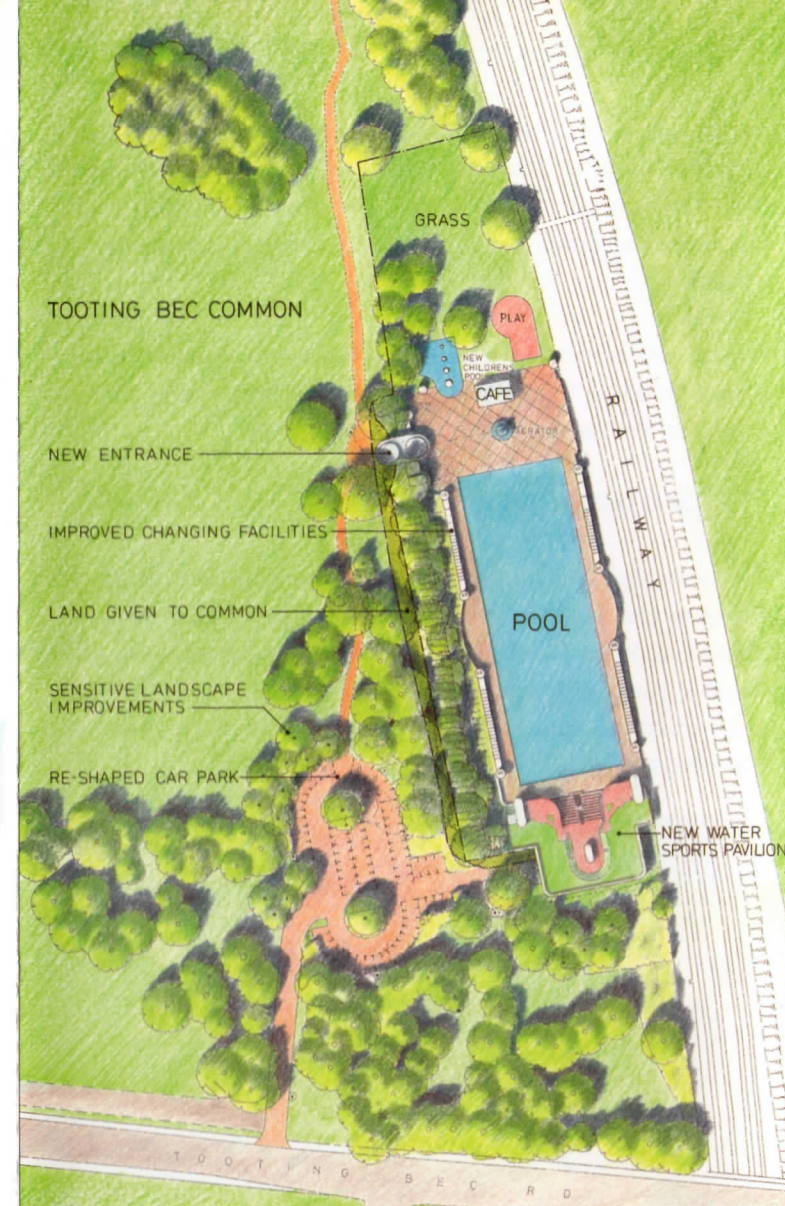


tooting

bec

lido



open
since
1906

site plan

showing

new

proposals



Brochure Produced by (S.L.S.C) South London Swimming Club
Tooting Bec Lido, Tooting Bec Road, London SW16 1RU

With Special Thanks to:
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Wise + Kormelink design © 1996
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what

future...

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tooting bec lido

Tooting Bec Lido has been a haven for local people for most of this century, ever since its grand opening ceremony on July 28 1906.

Nestling among the trees at the Streatham end of Tooting Bec Common. 'The Bec', as it is known locally, is one of the biggest open air swimming pools in Europe. At 300 feet long and 100 feet wide, it contains a million gallons of water - unheated, yet 'The Bec' stays open all year round.

In the summer, thousands come to cool off from the sizzling City heat. They can swim or sunbathe at the water's edge, as if at the seaside. For children, there is a play area away from the pool. There is also the famous Lido café, serving snacks throughout the day.



In the winter, the South London Swimming Club runs the pool on behalf of Wandsworth Council. Many hardy Club members carry on swimming through the winter months - a few even breaking the ice when the temperature falls below zero. On Christmas Day, swimming races are keenly contested with the winners traditionally receiving their prizes from the Mayor of Wandsworth.

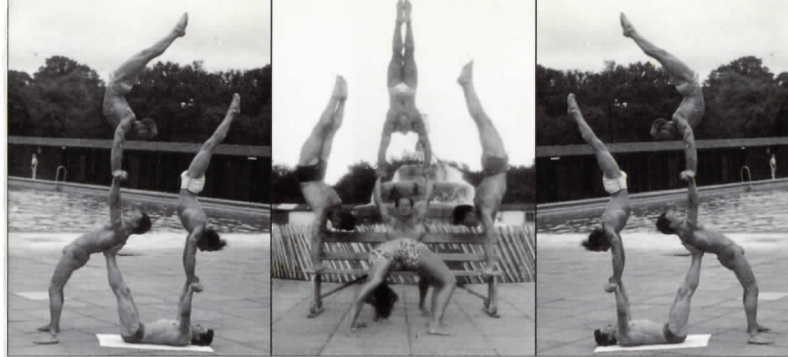
in the beginning

The Lido, or 'bathing lake' as it was first known, was built in just three months in the spring of 1906. 250 local unemployed men were engaged at 7 old pence an hour for a 43 hour week.

The 'bathing lake' was a joint venture between the London County Council, and Wandsworth Metropolitan Borough Council. The county council gave the site on Tooting Bec Common and agreed to maintain the pool, while the borough council provided an architect and the workforce. The total cost was less than £8000.



Photo by courtesy of Wandsworth Libraries



glory days

In the 'Thirties', open air pools became known as Lidos. The word comes from the Latin, *litus*, meaning shore - as in the famous beach resort in Venice. Dozens of lidos were built throughout the country, creating a seaside atmosphere in many inner city areas.

The idea of health and fitness was 'in' - as it is again today - and thousands of people made the most of being able to exercise in the open air, enjoying a sense of physical and spiritual well-being.

At Tooting Bec, some major alterations were carried out to keep up with the trend. Better pumping equipment was installed and an aerator, or fountain, was added. A new café behind the fountain gave the Lido a more up-to-date look.



Wandsworth Council has maintained the pool, but over the years it has suffered from movement and cracking caused by tree root growth. This has reached the point where the problem can be dealt with only by a major intervention. The pool itself can be repaired, but it would be too expensive to refurbish many of the surrounding buildings.



in search of a future

Over the years, the South London Swimming Club has succeeded in keeping the Lido active out of season. It is now determined to secure the long-term future of the pool and has commissioned a local firm of architects to draw up plans for repairs and new facilities.

The aim is to widen the Lido's off-peak use and to enhance the original 'beach in the city' concept. We believe the proposals - by Michael Phillips Associates - will do just that.

the proposals

Michael Phillips Associates have been commissioned to design a scheme to give the Lido a new lease of life as the millennium approaches. It is a proposal that takes on board the history and colourful 'seaside' charm of the Lido, but which also incorporates modern facilities that will cater better for children, families and disabled people.



water sports activities

Central to the scheme is a water sports pavilion, sited where the entrance now stands. This would provide a meeting-place and storage facilities for swimmers, weight-lifters, canoeists and sub-aqua divers. An external flight of steps would double as spectator seating, and a roof garden with snack bar would provide additional sunbathing areas.

a new entrance

The present entrance to the Lido is so understated it seems almost secretive. It appears to turn its back on the Common and the local people.

A new entrance would be located at the opposite end of the pool. Designed to sit discreetly among the existing trees, it signals that a pool lies beyond, inviting passers-by to come in and give it a try.

Also, with the entrance at the shallow end of the pool, no-one

will need to make the hazardous walk from the deep end past swimmers and sunbathers. This would make entering the Lido safer, especially for children and disabled people. Instead, the public would walk straight on to a large open terrace - and still have that first breathtaking view down the length of the pool.

family facilities

A new heated children's paddling pool would be sited alongside the entrance, near the existing café and children's play area.

The changing rooms would be rebuilt - retaining their brightly coloured doors - and there would be new showers and toilets.

improved car parking and landscape

The car park would be redesigned and the Lido more fully integrated into its surroundings.

There may be minor boundary adjustments to ensure that no land is lost from the Common.

the future

The long history of Tooting Bec Lido proves that it is a special place with a special character. It has lasted for ninety years, but is now showing signs of decline and needs to be brought up-to-date.

The pool itself is the largest in London. With sensitive treatment, the Lido can be assured of a long future. We hope you agree with us that the opportunity to do this should be grasped now.

