

Saltdean Lido

Project Evaluation Report

December 2024



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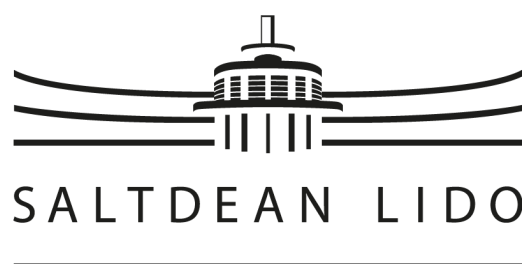
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Introduction



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1. Introduction and project summary

1.1. Saltdean Lido – project context

Opened in 1938, Saltdean Lido is the only Grade II*-listed coastal lido in England, named by English Heritage as one of ‘Seven Wonders of the English Seaside’. The Modernist design by RWH Jones reflects the social aspirations of the interwar period for creating beautiful spaces by the sea for all to enjoy, regardless of class or background.

The Lido is reminiscent of an ‘ocean liner gliding over the sea’, with a distinctive curved-wing pavilion providing a backdrop to the 43-metre-long crescent-shaped pool, designed to accommodate 500 swimmers. It is one of the only pools in the country listed as built from concrete. The Lido was first listed in 1987 and was upgraded to Grade II * in 2011.

The Lido fell out of popular use around the turn of the century and began to decline. The leaseholder and operator of the Lido complex approached Brighton and Hove City Council (‘the council’), who owned the site, with proposals to demolish the pool and develop the site for housing. While the council say they would not have accepted these proposals, the future of the site was uncertain and unresolved.

Thanks to a skilled and dedicated group of local residents, who campaigned against the demolition, the lease was taken back from the operator and put out to tender.

Members of the campaign group formed the Saltdean Lido CIC (‘SLCIC’), set up with the core objective to provide a sustainable future for Saltdean Lido. In 2013, they bid for and won the tender to take on the lease for the site from the council. A partial lease was granted for the pool in 2017, and the full site lease was negotiated and signed in 2020 after a period of planning and fundraising.

The first substantial phase of works to realise SLCIC’s vision was the restoration of the swimming pool and surrounding terrace, which was completed in 2017, when the pool reopened to the public. The restoration was highly praised, and the reopened pool proved popular with local residents and incoming visitors.

However, the SLCIC recognised that the pavilion building was key to the long term financial sustainability of the Lido. At this time, the building was in a state of disrepair and disuse, with major water ingress. Most of the building was shut, apart from the library and community centre.

An application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund’s Heritage Enterprise programme was successful in 2018, with matched funding secured by 2021 from Historic England, Brighton and Hove City Council and from fundraising by the local community, and several other grants. This enabled the National Lottery Heritage Fund (the Heritage Fund) to grant SLCIC ‘Permission to Start’ status and the restoration of the pavilion building to begin.

Saltdean Lido reopened in spring 2024 and has already welcomed over 100k visits.

1.2. National Lottery Heritage Fund: Heritage Enterprise Programme

The National Lottery Heritage Fund's Heritage Enterprise programme was specifically created to promote economic growth by investing in heritage, through rescuing neglected historic buildings and sites and returning them to a viable productive use. The programme builds upon research that shows that historic buildings can attract businesses that are more productive and can generate more wealth than is average across the whole economy.

While the Heritage Enterprise programme has at its heart similar objectives to the Heritage Fund's wider programmes – engaging people and communities with heritage in impactful and long-lasting ways – the focus of the programme is on how commercial enterprises can sustain heritage:

We want the projects we fund through the Heritage Enterprise process to clearly demonstrate why investing in heritage is good for business and good for the economy as a whole.¹

Indicators include the sustainability of the new enterprise itself; impact on the local economy and surrounding businesses; enhanced profile of the local area; and skills development.

1.3. What the project has delivered

In 2018, at the time that the Heritage Fund grant was awarded, the pavilion building was almost derelict, with large areas inaccessible and unusable. The concrete fabric of the building was deteriorating rapidly, as more and more of the steel reinforcement was attacked by the sea salt air. Investment in the building has led to a wholesale restoration of the original fabric, as well as reconfiguration of later additions to provide new spaces suitable for a range of uses.

- The 1930s pavilion building has undergone a transformative restoration, with almost every element being replaced and restored to make it stable and fit for purpose, while staying true to the original Modernist design.
- The later extensions were retained and underwent significant repairs, and were remodelled to provide spaces for income generation. As these were less architecturally significant, the designs were able to be more flexible, with walls and columns removed to create more space and new entrances.
- Restored spaces within the pavilion include the ballroom, with flexible partitioning, now also used as a restaurant and for weddings and entertainment,
- New facilities include a new reception area with seating and heritage displays; a gym in the restored East Wing; two kitchens and rooms for hire in the West Wing, including the now redundant old plant room; a new hall; and new toilets and baby changing facilities.
- Services, including heating and lighting, have been upgraded throughout. These are now more environmentally sustainable and do not rely on fossil fuel.
- Access improvement includes dedicated disabled toilets, and a new lift from the reception area to the upper level, and a platform lift into the old plant room.

¹ National Lottery Heritage Fund, Heritage Enterprise Grant Programme Guidance, 2019, Page 3

1.4. Project timeline

2018	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Heritage Fund award for restoration of the pavilion building	Lease signed with B&HCC Design Team procured	Designs rescoped to support business plan Planning permission granted Enabling works commence	Main restoration contract begins	Main restoration contract completed late 2023, enabling fit out work to commence.	Phased reopening during spring 2024

1.5. Summary of achievements

Saving heritage through commercial enterprise

The restoration of Saltdean Lido demonstrates the advantages of repurposing heritage assets as commercial venues, with a community interest. Income generated from commercial activities is contributing to the building's long-term preservation. In turn, the heritage brand is being leveraged to boost tourism, enhance community identity, and drive economic growth. The Lido's commercial activities align with and support community interests.

Building a more resilient organisation

SLCIC are delivering a mixed model business plan with room to test and learn, and adapt operations to maximise income. The gym has been a surprise success, and wedding venue hire is particularly profitable. SLCIC are thinking about ways to reduce high cost areas, such as energy bills. As the project has progressed, the Lido's governance structure has naturally evolved and will need to continue to adapt to support its long-term operation as a commercial venture.

Providing a community asset for Saltdean

Community has been at the heart of Saltdean Lido's success, from the early campaigning days through to its current role as a community hub for Saltdean and beyond. The restored Lido has created social capital by creating opportunities for volunteering, skills development, social connection, and civic pride, and promoting mental and physical wellbeing.

Restoring and interpreting the historic building

The restoration of Saltdean Lido has brought an iconic building back to life, and visitors and professionals are impressed at the quality of the restoration. The restoration sensitively retains historic features while providing fit for purpose spaces and facilities, and environmentally sustainable solutions. The Lido was removed from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register in November 2024.

1.6. Key success factors and lessons learnt

Section 7 provides a detailed analysis of how the project was delivered, and lessons learnt that other organisations and project can learn from. Key success factors and lessons learnt include the following:

- SLCIC has worked closely with the local community throughout the lifetime of the project, involving people in different ways and listening to local community needs. This has secured a strong commitment from local people, who have contributed to fundraising campaigns and volunteered their time, and who now want to support the Lido as visitors, customers, volunteers and advocates.
- The project benefited from a client team who took ownership and leadership of the project, while bringing in additional expertise from local professionals. This collaborative approach brought rigour and attention to detail to the project, alongside specialist expertise.
- The client team were on site throughout, with Design Team members visiting regularly. This meant that they could quickly resolve issues or spot poor quality work, which reduced the risk of programme delays, abortive work and extensions of time.
- The client team had the motivation and confidence to challenge the professional team and the building contractor, which led to a significantly higher quality restoration, and tightly controlled costs.
- The experience and expertise of sub-contractors is key when delivering a restoration contract, particularly where specialist heritage skillsets are needed. This needs to be tested during the procurement process.
- The project had a strong business model, and the architectural design scheme responded effectively to the business needs, while celebrating the building's heritage. This has provided strong foundations for the ongoing sustainability of the Lido.

1.7. Recommendations and next steps

After a busy opening period, SLCIC are now in a position to build audiences, increase revenue and strengthen organisational resilience. Recommendations to achieve this in the short term include:

- Building a sinking fund for ongoing maintenance.
- Fundraising for green initiatives that can reduce energy bills.
- Capturing audience data and building an understanding of audiences and their behaviour.
- Marketing beyond the Saltdean community, and ring-fencing time and budget for marketing.
- Reviewing the governance structure, making it fit for purpose for the next stage of Saltdean Lido's life.

2. About the evaluation

2.1. Evaluation approach

This evaluation report has been authored by Anna Cullum Associates, an independent evaluator employed by SLCIC as a grant condition of their Heritage Fund award.

Key evaluation methods include surveys to visitors, local residents and volunteers; and interviews with SLCIC members, Saltdean Lido staff, Design Team members and funders. A full list, and more information about the evaluators, is appended to this report.

SLCIC have welcomed the opportunity to listen to and include a wide range of views, even where they differ from their own.

Quotes used in the report are representative of many other similar quotes within the survey results, or represent the individual views of professionals and experts.

2.2. Evaluation scope

This evaluation explores the extent to which Saltdean Lido has met its original objectives, and the objectives of the Heritage Enterprise programme.

Section 2: Project Summary summarises what has been delivered as a result of Heritage Fund investment; what difference the project has made, and recommendations for the future.

Four sections explore the difference that the project has made to heritage, people and communities, and the organisation:

Section 3: Saving heritage through commercial enterprise: the opportunities and benefits that use of the heritage site brings to local businesses, tourism and the economy.

Section 4: Building a sustainable organisation: how investment has led to a financially sustainable operation, safeguarding the heritage asset for the future.

Section 5: Providing a community asset for Saltdean: how the restoration of the building and new facilities are providing a community asset for Saltdean and its residents, and creating social capital.

Section 6: Restoring and interpreting the historic building: how the capital works have safeguarded the building; professional and public response to the restoration.

Section 7: Project Review discusses project success factors and lessons learnt that can be applied to other projects.

How the project has met its objectives



Saving heritage through commercial enterprise

Building a more resilient organisation

Providing a community asset for Saltdean

Restoring and interpreting the historic building

3. Saving heritage through commercial enterprise

3.1. Why investing in heritage is good for business and good for the economy

The restoration of Saltdean Lido has provided a new multi-use venue capable of delivering a range of income streams for reinvestment into the Lido itself, and providing opportunities for local businesses and operators.

The heritage of the Lido has been a significant factor in the successful delivery of the project, and in the continuing commercial operations.

3.1.1. A strong heritage brand supports commercial enterprise

Saltdean Lido is unusual in that it has been restored to its original purpose and use, rather than becoming a heritage attraction or museum. The heritage brand has been an important part of its business model.

The team has sought to capture the spirit of the 1938 building and the glamour and exuberance of the Art Deco period. The Lido was originally designed to replicate an exclusive ocean liner, with funnel and sun decks, and a glamorous restaurant. This was available to people from all walks of life, including those benefitting from the 1938 paid holiday act.

This heritage is embedded in the building design, interpretation and fit out. The marketing and communications strategy and public programme draw strongly upon heritage narrative – events such as Tea Dances and retro music align with the overall story of the Lido.

The heritage of the building appears to be drawing people in for weddings and private hire.

‘It’s such a beautiful, iconic building and easily accessible from Brighton for guests. The ballroom is stunning, and the restaurant is very good.’ (Venue Hire Guest)

‘A glamorous historic landmark.’ (Venue Hire Guest)

Staff report that tourists are drawn by the Art Deco period, with some even coming dressed in period costume.

3.1.2. Saving heritage contributes to the local economy

The Lido is making the following contributions to the local and wider economy

- Jobs – SLCIC has employed 12 people directly, while operators within the Lido employ approximately 70 members of staff.
- A project valued at approximately £8m, which was awarded to a local professional services companies, contractor and subcontractors.
- Contracts with approximately 25 local suppliers through the ongoing operation of the Lido. The most significant contracts are with the catering operator (who sources food locally) and pool operators, who are based in nearby Newhaven. Other ongoing contracts placed with local suppliers includes compliance, gardening, security and maintenance. The total spend on local contracts, excluding that of the pool operator*, is in excess of £1m per year.

- Spend with other local supplies on a regular basis, including florists, photographers and balloon suppliers (for weddings and parties).
- A significantly reduced liability to the council, who no longer need to undertake emergency maintenance on a deteriorating building.
- A significant VAT contribution to the wider economy (in the region of £100k-£150k per year), now charging more VAT than it is expending
- PAYE and National Insurance contributions in the region of £75k per year.

* While the pool was operating before the main building restoration project, its ongoing operation would have been at risk without the wider business plan that the project has provided. On its own, it is unlikely that the outdoor heated pool will ever reach a financial break-even.

(Estimates provided by SLCIC, based on 6 months spent to end September 2024)

3.1.3. Saltdean Lido is supporting local businesses and enterprise

The café, restaurant and catering operations are externally operated by a local chef who was motivated to invest in Saltdean Lido due to personal connections in the area. The café employs 25 staff, the majority coming from Saltdean or Brighton. Supplies are locally sourced.

Local instructors are using rooms for yoga and exercise classes and visiting instructors sometimes man the gym (which is operated by SLCIC) in exchange for time in the gym for their clients.

SLCIC is investing in local creative industries, such as a local design company and merchandiser who are helping create a new range of merchandise.

A weekly craft market allows local artists and crafters to sell goods.

3.1.4. An iconic heritage asset enhances the tourist offer

In its heyday, Saltdean was a popular holiday destination, with the draw of the beach, the Lido and the local Butlins. However, by the 1990s, repair costs outweighed income generated, the Lido started to fall into disrepair, and it was no longer a destination for tourists. The restored Lido is again an iconic landmark that can be seen from the road that runs from Brighton to Newhaven.

B&HCC tourism strategy responds to a need to draw tourists away from overcrowded 'honeypots' such as Brighton Pier and Devil's Dyke and to promote other tourist destinations. Saltdean will be a 'creative destination' in the council's forthcoming Economic Plan, which looks at how tourists can be drawn to destinations outside Brighton. Saltdean is easy to get to from Brighton, with good bus services and a cycle route with council 'beryl bike' connections. Saltdean has access to the beach and the Sussex Downs, and the Lido provides an important heritage USP.

The East Sussex, Brighton & Hove and West Sussex Local Visitor Economy Partnership recognises the significance of heritage tourism for the local area, seeing Saltdean Lido as an attractive proposition for both domestic and international tourism. They see it as a significant event space for leisure and business visitors, offering different reasons to visit all year round. They also note the increasing popularity of wellness tourism, with Saltdean Lido being

‘an ideal destination for health-conscious visitors, offering not only swimming, but general outdoor relaxation (and a great view)’ (Lynn Trapano, LVEP),

The Lido has recently partnered with Visit Brighton for the first time, who will be marketing the site and promoting it as a venue for corporate hire. The council is already using the Lido for corporate leadership away days.

‘Saltdean Lido is a gem in Brighton’s tourism offering, seamlessly blending history, culture, and fun. For visitors, Saltdean Lido is a perfect activity for families, couples, groups or solo travellers. It adds to our portfolio of unique experiences, encouraging visitors to turn a day visit into an overnight visit, or an overnight visit into a multi-day stay, adding to the economic impact of the visitor economy. Its seasonal events add to Brighton’s vibrant cultural calendar, attracting both locals and tourists. Saltdean Lido is more than just a swimming destination; it’s a community hub that celebrates Brighton’s eclectic, welcoming spirit. It’s a must-visit spot that complements Brighton’s iconic attractions, offering something truly unique for everyone.’ (Julia Gallagher, Head of Sales, Marketing & Partnership, VisitBrighton)

It will be important for the Lido’s business model that it is marketed beyond local residents.

Local residents appreciate the Lido as a flagship building that puts Saltdean ‘on the map’ and brings in visitors.

‘It’s regenerating Saltdean with a really beautiful focal point.’

‘It’s an iconic landmark with visitors from elsewhere commenting on it.’

‘Without the Lido and with the loss of Butlins Saltdean would fall off the edge of the map.’ (Volunteer)

‘It has a very high profile in Sussex, particularly along the coast. You see it on the back of buses, and it’s used as a local landmark - and it is core to the economy in Saltdean.’

They see this as important for boosting the local economy.

‘It’s a beautiful, iconic building that puts the town of Saltdean on the map and attracts revenue from visitors and tourists.’

‘It provides job opportunities and valuable places for local residents that doesn’t involve going into central Brighton.’

3.1.5. Heritage buildings breed pride and guardianship

It is clear from surveys and staff interviews that people feel very invested in the Lido and want to contribute to its future.

The heritage of the building is a significant factor in fostering guardianship. People are aware not only of the architectural heritage of the site, but also its communal heritage, and the campaign to save it. People see how much time and care has gone into the restoration, and that it has been achieved through community action. Nostalgia is also a big motivator – many visitors have memories of Saltdean Lido that are pivotal to their lives, such as spending time with family or meeting their partner.

A common refrain from people associated with the building is that

'It gets under your skin!'

Visitors want to support the commercial activities, and volunteers want to contribute their time. Paid staff say that they feel privileged to work at Saltdean Lido, and they want to match and honour the work that 15 years of volunteering has achieved. Visitors and local residents respect the building, and to date, there has been no vandalism or littering.

3.2. Conclusions

The restoration of Saltdean Lido demonstrates the advantages of repurposing heritage assets as commercial venues, with a community interest. Income generated from commercial activities is contributing to the building's long-term preservation. In turn, the heritage brand is being leveraged to boost tourism, enhance community identity, and drive economic growth. The Lido's commercial activities align with and support community interests.

Heritage Fund outcomes achieved:

Heritage will be in better condition

Heritage will be better managed

The local area will be a better place to live, work and visit

4. Building a more resilient organisation

4.1. How SLCIC is protecting investment for the future

To protect the heritage asset well into the future, it is essential that SLCIC builds financial and operational resilience, with a strong and sustainable business model. The rescoping of the project in 2021 was driven by a careful analysis of how the site could be a profitable concern once project funding was expended. Income is generated from the pool, café and catering, gym, venue hire, workspace hire and a public programme of events.

4.2. Approaches to delivering the business plan – a time of experimentation

The business plan includes a mix of in house and externally operated models. This balance gives SLCIC a reasonable degree of control over what happens in the building and how, while minimising business risk. It gives them the opportunity to experiment, and possibly to gradually increase their own level of control at an appropriate pace.

SLCIC are still experimenting with a range of revenue models. The gym is operated directly by SLCIC, while the pool and café work on a revenue gain model, with a proportion of the income coming back into SLCIC. Venue hire is operated by SLCIC, with the café operator providing catering services. For events, such as cinema nights and comedy nights, SLCIC either takes a pitch fee and income from catering, or takes a cut of ticket income.

The building has been designed to be very flexible, with multi-functional rooms – this has been an important consideration delivering the business plan, so that less successful ventures can be replaced with new income streams. It has also meant that activities which don't work in one space can move elsewhere, (for example, yoga was originally planned to be in the plant room, but this space is considered too noisy, so it has been moved to the lounge). There are five very different spaces to hire – from the large ballroom to smaller therapy rooms.

While the Lido is maximising its USP as a heritage venue, offering tea dances and retro music nights, it is also testing a range of different events, such as comedy, cinema, cabaret and live music. These are attracting different kinds of audiences, from different locations, and are giving people reasons to come back to the venue.

The team are also offering corporate Christmas parties, and have four booked in December 2024. These have been harder to sell, but should be very profitable.

Despite the variety of offers and models that SLCIC are currently testing, they are taking a cautious approach, introducing one or two new initiatives at a time instead of overwhelming themselves with too many changes at once.

4.3. The business model: findings to date

At the time of writing, the Lido has been open for nine months, and the management accounts have been prepared for the first three quarters. Findings so far are that:

- The gym has been a particular success story, with over 500 members and bringing in a steady revenue stream. This is run by SLCIC, and income is achieved with very little effort, producing the highest income per square foot. However, income is seasonal, as people who join in the new year cancel membership later down the line, or opt to use

the pool instead of the gym as weather improves. SLCIC will be reviewing the membership offer, perhaps offering a joint membership with the pool, or increase prices.

- The café operation has been outsourced to an external supplier on a revenue gain model, with percentage of revenue coming back to SLCIC. This means that the café operator and SLCIC have a shared interest in maximising income. There is a strong collaborative relationship between SLCIC and the café operator, and they are considering pooling resources to bolster marketing for the site.

The catering operation includes a café on the ground floor, a restaurant on the first floor, and catering for weddings and functions. An airstream café by the pool is popular in the summer, and the catering team are exploring a pop-up café at the back of the building for dog walkers (dogs are not allowed in the building).

Events catering is currently more profitable than the café and restaurant operation. The team are promoting the café and restaurant as high end, destination eateries, and income is gradually increasing.

- The pool operation is also outsourced on a revenue gain model. The pool was originally rented on a fixed rent, but the operator had no incentive to invest. Now, the operator is paid to manage the pool, sell tickets, and hire lifeguards. SLCIC pays for utilities. The swimming pool itself does not generate sufficient income to cover its costs, particularly with the high cost of hiring qualified lifeguards and covering energy bills. Despite a growing rise in winter swimming, demand for the pool is still very weather dependent. SLCIC hope to be able to agree an arrangement to enable more flexibility to open the pool for longer hours at short notice during periods of good weather. Moonlit swims have been popular, although the revenue generated is relatively small.
- Venue hire and room booking are managed inhouse. Weddings can generate significant income with further income from catering. The Lido is well placed to offer weddings, with a licence to hold ceremonies, its own furniture, and with good access and car parking. This is an area which will be able to grow, as weddings tend to be planned at least a year in advance, and it is hard to sell weddings when a building is closed for construction. SLCIC are looking to partner with the local hotel in Rottingdean to provide an accommodation offer.
- Conference hire is also a potential growth area, which has not yet been fully maximised. There are few places locally that can seat 150 people for a meal. Partner organisations are already booking the spaces, for example, the Sussex Heritage Trust are hosting their award ceremony in 2025, and the Sussex Community Foundation have booked their annual conference at the Lido. These community partners have a discounted or pro bono rent but will pay for food. SLCIC could now explore the conference market on a more profitable venue hire basis.
- Exercise classes including yoga, pilates and Thai chi bring in a small amount of revenue, but also provide an important community offer for local people. The team have found that exercise class teachers are reluctant to teach during school summer holidays but see this as an opportunity to provide other activities, such as a summer club for teenagers. SLCIC would like to employ some instructors directly for other classes to broaden the scope and also receive a higher percentage of the ticket income. A spa,

including sauna, cold plunge tubs and hot tub are planned on a revenue share agreement.

- The autumn programme of live music and comedy have been financially successful to date, with many selling out. Themes that resonate with over 45s, such as disco, soul and Motown nights, are particularly successful. The comedy programme is bringing people from nearby Seaford, Newhaven and Peacehaven, and provides an alternative venue to the comedy circuit in Brighton. A recent 'racy' cabaret night sold out, but had mixed reviews – the team learnt that their audiences are relatively conservative.
- A plan to rent out shared workspaces has been less successful, despite the fact that workspace hire in Brighton is full to capacity. This may be because companies are booking out Brighton workspaces, rather than individuals.
- SLCIC are starting to create merchandise for retail sale and make a small sum of profit. However, while they have control over their own brand, and have the license for some RIBA images, the iconic image of the pool is already in use by others. SLCIC will need to find a USP, and are sourcing local artists to create unique images.
- Heritage Tours have been popular, with around 200 delivered, each with approximately 10 people. This has generated income in the first year, although is likely to wane as people who were curious about the building will have already visited.
- Utilities are currently the largest overhead before staff cost, and the team are looking at strategies for reducing energy consumption. These include fundraising for a pool cover so that the water doesn't lose heat, bringing in air source heat pumps, and using a BSM system to switch areas off at night. There may be opportunities to receive funding to support green energy solutions.

4.4. Next steps, priorities and recommendations

The approach that SLCIC is taking is delivering optimistic results. While SLCIC do not expect to make a profit in the first year or two of operation (they have reserves to cover a loss), they have almost broken even in the first three quarters, which includes a soft opening in the first quarter.

The forecast for 2025, which is a simple extrapolation of 2024's figures, shows a significant deficit. However, SLCIC are planning to close this deficit through:

- Increasing wedding income and conference hire, which will be easier in Year 2 as potential hirers are able to see the building.
- Increased membership income from the gym and pool. SLCIC are also learning from other venues, for example Storrington Lido who provide a physio service for people referred by their GP, many of whom then go onto become gym members.
- The introduction of car parking charges for people not visiting the Lido. The car park is very convenient for people wanting to visit the beach or access the South Downs.
- Reduced energy bills due to pool cover and variable speed pumps which can control filtration levels when the pool is in low/no use.

The team are considering further fundraising initiatives, including sponsorship and naming rights.

They note that the payroll and marketing budgets will need to increase. The recent government budget has made the coming year more challenging.

Priorities for the coming year include

- Building a sinking fund, as a contingency budget has been drawn upon for repairs on work done prior to this restoration project. However, the work done during the restoration project should not need further repair for at least five years.
- Fundraising for green initiatives which could reduce energy bills.
- Marketing wider than the hyper-local community; targeting people in Brighton who haven't yet seen the venue; and building partnerships with promoters who can bring in audiences from outside Saltdean. The operations team have already had conversations with Brighton and Hove Buses who might partner with them to promote the venue. It will be important to ringfence a marketing budget for the team to work to.
- Understanding audiences better. The team have data from gym memberships, pool data, events data, and wifi logins, but nothing for drop-ins and café visitors. It will be beneficial for the team to fill these gaps, and to regularly review customers and behaviour patterns. SLCIC could consider investing in a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system which would support data analysis.

4.5. Building organisational resilience

In the past ten years, the team at Saltdean Lido have grown from a small and passionate campaigning group to a community interest company running a continually expanding business.

It is now employing a General Manager, an Events Manager, a Front of House Manager, as well as three cleaners and four supervisors.

'During my 10+ years involvement the project has gone from a micro business trying to raise money, to a micro business running a multi-£m construction project with a mix of professionals and volunteers, to an operating business with > £1m projected 2024 revenue with a mix of employees and volunteers. It is an incredible journey & story.' (Volunteer & former Finance Director)

SLCIC is gradually stepping back from the day to day operation of the building, and handing control to the operational team. We recommend that this extends to budgetary control, agreeing KPIs with them for all areas. For example, it would be helpful for staff to have a marketing budget to work to, and a budget for community engagement.

The governance structure for SLCIC will also be reviewed, and it could continue as a CIC or move to a Trust, or both. This will need specialist advice. Roles and responsibilities will need to be clearly set out and agreed.

The team will also be looking for at the model for financial control, as the current Finance Director is leaving.

A dedicated cohort of volunteers are supporting the day to day running of the organisation, and volunteer contributions continue to play a critical role in the Lido's operations.

4.6. Strengthened partnership working

SLCIC have built strong partnerships with their funders, Brighton and Hove Council, Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. New partnerships are also in development with Visit Brighton, Brighton and Hove buses, and the local hotel in Rottingdean.

SLCIC have also formed relationships with other cultural and leisure venues in the region, including The De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill, Arundel Lido and Chanctonbury Leisure Centre. These relationships are supporting peer learning through shared experience.

4.7. Conclusions

SLCIC are delivering a mixed model business plan with room to test and learn, and adapt operations to maximise income. The gym has been a surprise success, and wedding venue hire is particularly profitable. SLCIC are thinking about ways to reduce high cost areas, such as energy bills and staffing costs. As the project has progressed, the Lido's governance structure has naturally evolved and will need to continue to adapt to support its long-term operation as a commercial venture.

Heritage Fund outcomes achieved:

Heritage will be better managed

People will have developed skills

People will have volunteered time

The organisation will be more resilient

5. Providing a community asset for Saltdean

5.1. What the project has delivered

While Saltdean is a relatively large suburb, with 14,000 residents, there was no cultural or community hub prior to the restoration of the Lido, and social spaces were limited to a handful of pubs and cafés.

The project has provided a community asset where people can come to improve their health and wellbeing, to socialise and to learn. As well as the swimming pool itself, the complex has a gym, library, and café/restaurant, all of which are well used. Having a multi-purpose venue is unusual in the suburbs.

There is a full events programme including dances, craft fairs and live music. The annual 'Dogtember' is a highlight of the Saltdean Lido calendar, with hundreds of people bringing their dogs to the pool.

Families enjoyed a 'Sea Magic' event in summer 2024, where the Lido transformed into a magical underwater world, with street theatre performances and a children's parade and a daytime end of season family-friendly barbeque in September 2024. New activities for autumn 2024 include comedy nights, club nights, cabaret, cinema nights and balls. Heritage tours of the building take place five or six times a month. These are generating good income for the Lido.

More than 20 volunteers are engaging with the project, keeping the Lido in good working condition by cleaning windows, cutting the grass and keeping the bushes tidy. Volunteers enjoy the space as somewhere to socialise.

The B&HCC free swimming for children programme has been extended to Saltdean Lido for children who attend school in Saltdean. This responds to the fact that Brighton and Hove is under quota for swimming pools, and that it is particularly important for children living by the sea to learn how to swim.

There is now a member of staff focusing on community relationships and partnership.

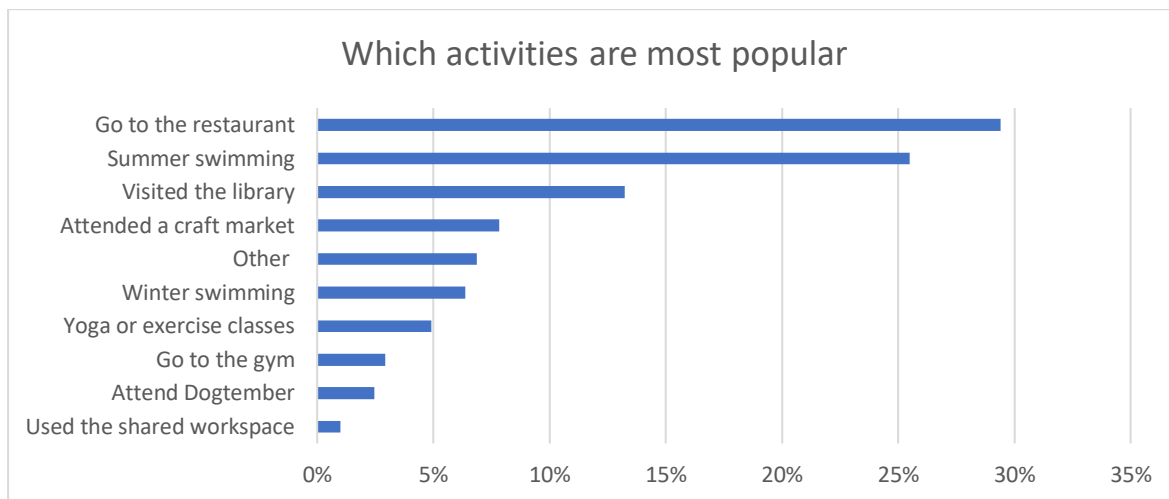
5.2. A community hub for local residents

We distributed a visitor survey via a newsletter and social media, attracting 91 responses. The majority of respondents were local residents (just over three quarters).

A third of visitors had not visited the Lido before it reopened, indicating that the restoration has made it a more appealing place to visit for local residents.

Local people are making good use of the Lido and the different activities it has to offer. Over a third surveyed come to the Lido once a week or more, with 22% coming two to three times per week. The vast majority come with friends and family.

We asked visitors which of the following activities they do at Saltdean Lido (most ticked more than one).



88% of visitors gave their visit 4 or 5 stars, with 67% giving it five stars.

We asked visitors what they thought of the changes they'd seen, and why they felt Saltdean Lido was important for the local community. The words 'community' and 'hub' came up frequently.

Visitors valued having a community asset on their doorstep where they can take part in different activities, and that people of all ages can enjoy. They like having a place to go that isn't the beach.

'It's become very apparent to me that the Lido is so much more than a building and a swimming pool. It's the pride of the community, a real hub for locals or all ages. Everything has been 'done' so well with everyone in mind. Every community needs a place as its core and the Lido is fast becoming that.'

'It is of huge importance that such an architecturally significant building has been saved and restored. The Lido is a hub for the community there's something there for everyone, be it a swim in the pool, going to the gym or a class, a coffee in the cafe, a meal or visit to the Library.'

They see Saltdean Lido as a place where people can come together:

'In an age where communities and even faith groups tend to disperse and become less relevant, the Lido is a place where everyone can feel comfortable.'

'It's good for adults and children, local and visiting. It gives the community something to do as a family or as a singleton.'

'A meeting space, a civic amenity to be proud of, and a confirmation of the enduring value of investment in community spaces and good design.'

The Lido is enhancing civic pride, and instilling a sense of belonging:

'The Lido has given Saltdean a focal point for the community and something to be really proud of. It has succeeded in bringing local people together by providing first class facilities. '

'Preserving assets of the past for generations to enjoy - otherwise areas lose their soul.'

'Sense of belonging and identity for the local community.'

The Lido is supporting health and wellbeing. The high proportion of visitors coming to swim, use the gym, and attend yoga and exercise classes supports the council's health and wellbeing strategy.

'A hub that encourages exercise and positive wellbeing through community - library, exercise classes etc.'

As noted earlier in the report, they appreciate the Lido as a place that puts Saltdean 'on the map,' brings in visitors and boosting the local economy.

While the survey didn't test perception of the B&HCC, a council representative felt that the project has brought Saltdean to the attention of members – this has been important as Saltdean residents have felt underserved by the council in the past.

5.3. Access

A handful of people commented on the accessibility of the building. One said that swimming was very important to them as they are less mobile. Another was pleased that their 88 year old friend in a wheelchair was able to join them at the Lido. The team would like to offer more for elderly people, for example, an exercise classes with a social aspect.

5.4. Supporting young people

The Lido is supporting young people in a number of different ways, promoting physical wellbeing, skills development and community action:

- A junior membership for children between 12-18 has around 70 members. Some come with parents, others come with friends after school. Members are offered 'Girls get active' classes, which promote health and positive body image, and are attended by around 6 young people per week, and the team are working on an offer for boys.
- A voucher initiative in partnership with Brighton and Hove Council allows local children to swim for free. This has been taken up by over 4,000 children, with nearly a quarter attending the local primary school. The contribution from the council is worth over £15k. Two people who completed the visitor survey said that it would be easier to use these if they didn't have to pre-book.
- The Saltdean Lido Community Champion Award Trophy, hosted in partnership with Saltdean Primary School, is awarded once a term to a child nominated by their peers and parents, and displayed in the Lido. This award promotes community action and volunteering.
- The Lido has hosted work experience placement for Brighton College students

The team are looking to extend their community work to after school clubs, and a club for siblings of young people at Chestnut Children's Hospice.

5.5. Building community cohesion through volunteering

Saltdean Lido has benefited from the capacity, skills and expertise of many volunteers. SLCIC is made up of volunteers, who have contributed thousands of hours to running the project. During the project, peripheral tasks such as external furniture builds, tidying up, re-painting/repairing the existing changing block and others were carried out by volunteers. One

volunteer even sponsored the repainting of the changing block to match the new lido building. Volunteers ran many events to boost fund-raising.

Volunteers are now supporting day to day operations of the Lido, including reception duties, setting up for events, garden maintenance and weeding, fundraising, bar work and assisting with the dog swims. Volunteers tend to prefer supporting at the reception and events, and less interested in supporting the management of the building.

22 volunteers completed a survey in 2024 about their experience. They appreciate the variety and different roles to suit different people. They say they are gaining a sense of community, with people valuing the opportunity to meet new people, be sociable and make friends; and to meet people they wouldn't have otherwise.

'I love being involved with Saltdean Lido. It's been a real source of joy watching the building come to life again. Everything I've experienced has been amazing, from swimming, coffee in the cafe, a meal in the restaurant, dancing in the ballroom or sitting in the foyer looking through the art deco books. The staff and other volunteers are friendly and helpful and it's a wonderful place to be.'

'Comradeship, social interaction, pride in a local community enterprise.'

'We have met new friends and enjoyed the social activities, and it feels so good to give something back!'

People have gained an appreciation of the work that goes into running a capital project and heritage building and a greater understanding of the history of Saltdean Lido. They are proud of their contribution to the Lido and value the opportunity to give something back to the local community.

'Volunteering makes you feel part of something important and can be lots of fun, hard work, but satisfying. The Lido is such a visible part of Saltdean and has such a rich history it is really interesting to be part of. And it makes for great friendships.'

'A huge sense of pride in what we have now achieved, plus friends for life'

'I became involved with this project as a Saltdean resident volunteer hoping to provide a skillset to a community project that my family, my children and grandchildren and friends could enjoy for many years to come. I am proud of the outcome which only became possible by the input of many like-minded volunteers and a highly skilled professional design team. '

Volunteers are gaining skills that they can use while at the Lido, and in other walks of life. These included front of house skills, team working skills and communication skills. Volunteers say that they have gained confidence through their experience.

Around a quarter of volunteers say that there is nothing needed to improve their volunteering experience. Others say that communications could be improved, and that there could be greater clarity on what tasks volunteers need to do when. However, they note that

'A few challenges and teething troubles were to be expected. The team here are amazing, caring and very supportive.'

5.6. Conclusions

Community has been at the heart of Saltdean Lido's success, from the early campaigning days through to its current role as a community hub for Saltdean and beyond. The restored Lido has created social capital by creating opportunities for volunteering, skills development, social connection, and civic pride, and promoting mental and physical wellbeing.

Heritage Fund outcomes achieved:

A wider range of people will have engaged with heritage

People will have changed their attitudes or behaviour

The local area will be a better place to live, work and visit

People will have an enjoyable time

6. Restoring and interpreting the historic building

6.1. What the project delivered: architectural restoration

Saltdean Lido is architecturally significant, as a unique coastal lido, a modernist icon, and one of the only listed pools to be built from concrete. It is hailed by English Heritage as one of the 'Seven Wonders of the English Seaside,' and is Grade II* listed.

The 1930s pavilion building has undergone a transformative restoration, with almost every element being replaced and restored to make it fit for purpose, while staying true to the original Modernist design. Both curved wings have been brought back into profitable and functional use.

The later extension was retained and remodelled to provide spaces for income generation. As these were less architecturally significant, the designs were able to be more flexible, with walls and columns removed to create more space and new entrances. Partition walls from the 60s and 70s have been removed to create a fresh and adaptable space.

The Lido was removed from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register in November 2024.

6.2. Restoration of key heritage features

Key heritage features include:

- The restored ballroom on the first floor, now used as a restaurant with flexible partitioning, which reconnects to the rotunda with views of the pool beyond
- The new ground floor café, within the enclosed rotunda, with views over the pool and grounds
- The new free-standing spiral staircase, connecting the ground and first floor rotunda, replicating the original staircase removed in the 1960s
- Replacement of failing Esavian timber doors to the rotunda with a new, near replica set, made in durable heat-treated Accoya timber, and replacement Crittall windows.
- Restoration of the curved terraces of the south facing sun decks, which appeared to be beyond repair, but were restored using innovative carbon-fibre reinforcement strips.
- The restoration and remodelling of the old plant room to provide a new hireable space with an accessible lift.
- A replica neon sign was installed in 2023, recreating the original iconic sign, which was taken down and lost during the war.

'I think the sympathetic level of design input by the architectural and structural teams has been outstanding and I would say that the "look" of the building externally probably improves on original art nouveau design. It has a sharper, brighter feel about it, in particular the colour choice for windows, balustrades and signage.' (Volunteer M&E consultant)

6.3. Interpreting Saltdean Lido

The Art Deco theme underpins the décor of the building, including signage, menus and marketing materials. Display cases show swimming costumes from the 1930s; and the building is dressed with Art Deco artefacts and furniture.

Signage explores heritage themes such as Saltdean as a holiday destination and the golden era of the Lido; memories of the Lido are displayed through wall graphics, and available to listen to on a historic handset; images of the building prior to the restoration adorn the walls.

6.4. Balancing the restoration with contemporary needs

The design scheme has carefully balanced the conservation needs of a Grade II listed building with the needs of a 21st century multi-use venue. Key design solutions include

- Improved internal wayfinding and circulation, by removing cross walls at ground floor level, thereby connecting the whole building north to south and re-establishing effective east - west circulation.
- Wheelchair access throughout the building, including a platform lift between the ground and first floor, and a second lift providing access to the lower historic plant room.
- A future proofed building, with asbestos removed, and a repaired and upgraded drainage system.
- A safe and comfortable environment to work in – for example, the Crittall windows in the library used to leak, meaning that books became damp.
- Modern services, eradicating the use of fossil fuels by designing heating, cooling and ventilation systems that use electricity only, and use of energy efficient heat pumps. See Appendix B for a full list of sustainability measures.

6.5. Professional and expert response to the restoration

The restoration project has already won several awards including

- Sussex Heritage Trust Awards, 2024, Winner - Public and Community Award
- Constructing Excellence, Regional Winner - Regeneration and Retrofit
- Constructing Excellence SECBE Awards 2024, Winner - People's Choice
- RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence, South East – Chair's Award

Judges praise the quality of restoration, innovative solutions and the input from the community to save the building.

'The Lido represents the culmination of a dream to save an iconic building and a community resource from disappearing forever. This is a unique building regarded as one of the best serving examples of lido design in the UK – one of the Seven Wonders of the English Seaside. The building was in such a devastating condition the restoration required extensive collaboration, innovation and expertise from the construction team.' (Sussex Heritage Trust Awards)

6.6. Visitor response to the restoration

Visitors and local residents completing a survey commented on the quality of the restoration, noting the standard of work and attention to detail.

‘Really important that this landmark was saved, going forward important that quality if the restoration is maintained and that the building is well used.’

‘Superb. The thought they has gone into it and the standard of delivery are very impressive.’

‘I am delighted (and a little surprised!) with the quality of the interior and exterior finishes. Details such as skirting boards, lighting and doors (especially the Esavian doors on the rotunda). Also, the landscaping outside the main entrance -planting, blockwork and main steps.’

They appreciate that the Art Deco spirit has been retained, and that this has been embedded into the fit out and interpretation.

‘Each step of the way has never over promised, now getting so close to perfection. Worthy of a visit even if not there to swim or sunbathe, just for a coffee or browse the heritage.’

‘The rebuild has been sympathetic to the original spec and the result looks fantastic.’

‘Tasteful gardens, welcoming and generous foyer with art deco books and glimpses of lido past. Great to make links with the history.’

‘lovely to look around and see history and facts around.’

The only negative sentiment from a handful of respondents was that the temporary barriers separating the pool from the café were out of keeping with the overall look and quality of the buildings – these have since been replaced with permanent barriers which match the pool surround.

6.7. Conclusions

The restoration of Saltdean Lido has brought an iconic building back to life, and visitors and professionals are impressed at the quality of the restoration. The restoration sensitively retains historic features while providing fit for purpose spaces and facilities, and environmentally sustainable solutions.

Heritage Fund outcomes achieved:

Heritage will be in better condition

Heritage will be better interpreted and explained

People will have learnt about heritage

Heritage will be better identified and recorded.

Environmental impacts will be reduced

Project Review



Delivering the project

Success factors and lessons learnt

7. Delivering the project - review

This section reviews how the project was delivered, drawing out success factors and lessons learnt that can inform future projects.

7.1. Key success factors lessons learned

- SLCIC has worked closely with the local community throughout the lifetime of the project, involving people in different ways and listening to local community needs. This has secured a strong commitment from local people, who have contributed to fundraising campaigns and volunteered their time, and who now want to support the Lido as visitors, customers, volunteers and advocates.
- The project benefited from a client team who took ownership and leadership of the project, while bringing in additional expertise from local professionals. This collaborative approach brought rigour and attention to detail to the project, alongside specialist expertise.
- The client team were on site throughout, with Design Team members visiting regularly. This meant that they could quickly resolve issues or spot poor quality work, which reduced the risk of programme delays, abortive work and extensions of time.
- The client team had the motivation and confidence to challenge the professional team and the building contractor, which led to a significantly higher quality restoration, and tightly controlled costs.
- The experience and expertise of sub-contractors is key when delivering a restoration contract, particularly where specialist heritage skillsets are needed. This needs to be tested during the procurement process.
- The project had a strong business model, and the architectural design scheme responded effectively to the business needs, while celebrating the building's heritage. This has provided strong foundations for the ongoing sustainability of the Lido.

7.2. Governance Structure

SLCIC grew from a campaigning group to a committee responsible for delivering a significant capital programme, dealing with procurement, contract management, and operational planning.

It was important to recognise that a different set of skills was needed during the different phases of the project. The staff in place at the start, during the campaign phase, had the strategic business knowledge and understanding to succeed and get the project off the ground. They understood marketing and social media in particular and delivered a strong strategic plan. As the project developed into construction and then operation, the knowledge, experience and skills the project required from its project team changed. SLCIC brought in new members with relevant skills such as finance, accounting and marketing.

It is important for Boards to have self-awareness, to think through how Board roles and responsibilities might need to flex, and to be prepared to let new skills in as projects move through different phases.

The early appointment of an external professional project manager for the pool restoration was a logical step, but proved unsuccessful. The project manager charged a high fee, but made costly mistakes to the detriment of the project and the SLCIC at the time did not have enough experience to hold the PM accountable.

For the restoration of the main building, and , with the new chair and some new board members in place, the SLCIC made the decision to terminate the contract with the project manager and undertake this position in house. This reduced the professional services fees significantly, and gave the client team more control – albeit, taking on a considerable workload. This also gave the client the opportunity to rescope the project significantly.

The resultant project team had a good balance of SLCIC members who were passionate about the project, and paid consultants who brought additional skills and capacity. This balance was seen by stakeholders as important – too much reliance on consultants would have led to higher fees and less control; however, it was important to have some additional expertise and perspective.

While there were a team of experienced professionals, the chair of SLCIC took a strong leadership role, having gained the trust of the Board. All of the people we interviewed felt that this was a positive step, and that it would have been impossible to drive the project through ‘by committee.’ They acknowledged that this was also a risk on the project – to have one person holding so much knowledge and taking so many of the decisions could have led to a ‘single point of failure,’ or burn out. It may have been helpful to have a project sponsor or similar from the council to provide additional support, perspective and capacity

7.3. Negotiating the lease

The original tenant, who had been in place since 1997, was primarily financially motivated, and wanted to work their asset as hard as possible. The council turned down two planning applications to make changes to the site and were given authority to force surrender of lease. However, bringing this about was challenging, as while there were breaches to the lease in terms of repair obligations, they were not serious enough to easily enforce the surrender. There was pressure on councillors to ‘do something’, but the council would not have had the money to rectify the breaches.

The campaigning group exerted significant influence in lobbying for the surrender of the lease, and won the competitive process to take over the lease.

The relationship with the council has been positive, with the council contributing £3m to the project, as well as support and advice. However, SLCIC had to provide a new sub-station, which they weren’t anticipating.

7.4. Rescoping the project

SLCIC’s decision to pause and rescope the project in 2021 was an important success factor for the project. The Heritage Fund granted a ‘Partial Permission to Start’ to recruit the professional team to assist with the redesign. The plans at the time of the conditional award included the demolition of the 1960/70’s extensions, to return the building to its original foot print. This would have resulted in the loss of 400 sqm of floor space. Taking the time to think through the business case for the restoration, and rescope the original plans has meant that

they now have more 'retail' space and can flex and adapt to ensure the future sustainability of the Lido. Changing the plans required new listed building consent and reapplying for planning permission from the council which added time and cost to the project.

7.5. Design process

Design coordination was undertaken during the pandemic, and this made it more challenging for the architect to coordinate the different design disciplines. The architect would have preferred to take more time assessing M&E proposals alongside structural and design proposals and reviewing how this would affect the cost plan.

2D design work was not sufficient to give a clear understanding of space and perspective, and the project would have benefit from more 3D renderings, models and/or flythroughs. Working in BIM would have been ideal, although not necessarily appropriate or fully practical for a restoration project. 3D models need to be coordinated across all design disciplines. However, providing the client with access to the design model through a 3D viewer was key in the evolution of the detail designs of the internal layout.

More detailed and coordinated design work may have reduced the number of variations requested by the contractor.

The Catering Partner was involved early on and he engaged his own team of designers for both kitchens. Some compromises were required as was relocating of space. Constraints afforded by the listed building layout and also having curved walls provided some challenges, but an acceptable solution was achieved, while retaining flexibility of space usage.

7.6. Precontract preparation

SLCIC had ensured that the building was accredited with Grade II* Listed status, to safeguard it against disposal or demolition. While this has been an important step in recognising the Lido's heritage value, the downsides were a more expensive restoration, limits on energy efficient renovations and a higher carbon cost. For example, the team were unable to add solar panels on the roof.

It helped to undertake an enabling works package prior to appointing a main contractor, including an asbestos removal contract (with a local specialist company). This meant less risk and more cost certainty.

While as much survey work was done as possible, intrusive investigations were limited until the restoration contract was authorised, because of the building's listed status. Issues in heritage buildings can often only be fully revealed during opening up works during construction.

Despite budgeting for a 'worst case' position, the existing concrete structure proved a lot weaker in parts than the team had imagined, resulting in more time needed to restore it, and resultant delays to the programme. The hydroblasting process required the areas to be screened off for safety reasons, so inspection of the concrete by the structural engineer was only possible after hydroblasting by the contractor of an area was completed or paused. The concrete repair had to be remeasured after the building had been opened, as it wasn't possible to see prior to the works.

While it is impossible to fully anticipate what might be found at this stage of a heritage project, it is important for teams to be prepared for the unexpected, and ready to find solutions.

7.7. Contractor procurement

Because SLCIC was an independent body, they were able to procure in a more agile manner than, for example, a local authority, and were also able to spend more time on site alongside the contractor. In fact, a client office was installed on site next to the contractors site office with the client and or the client representative on site most days.

The main building contract was structured as a main contractor with specialist subcontractors. The advantages of this was that there was one overall fixed price, and one contractor for the client team to manage.

In reality, while the client team were paying the main contractor to manage sub-contractors, the specialist subcontractor responsible for the concrete work took a lead, and the client team had no direct jurisdiction over them. The main contractor employed sub-contractors that they hadn't worked with before, which meant that they had less control over when they could get them on site.

SLCIC looked for experience of working with listed buildings when procuring and were assured by the main contractor that they had the necessary experience, backed up by references. However, it was clear that many of the chosen sub-contractors did not have the same experience, and this affected their approaches to protecting the heritage during the demolition and restorations phases, and the quality of work (see 7.8 below).

Appointing small local companies outside of the main contract for items such as the landscaping took longer and saved money, but it also meant that the local companies were more committed to the project and wanted to be associated with its success. The Design Team were also local and had an existing working relationship with the council.

In retrospect, it may have been more cost-effective, to split the contract into a restoration contract and fit out contract, giving the client more control, and perhaps leading to a more competitively priced tender.

However, retaining the same main contractor as site manager throughout the project helped with continuity and worked to counteract the impact of changes in contractor management.

7.8. Quality and cost control during the construction process

Having SLCIC members on the ground during the construction process was seen as critical to the project's success. They were able to devote more time to working alongside contractors and dealing with issues than would have been possible if it had been a council led project, where project managers have a portfolio of projects to oversee. They were also able to use their intricate knowledge of the building to avoid costly mistakes. For example, the team prevented the contractor from hydro-blasting a critical structural wall, which may have fallen down if they had continued.

All members of the Design Team were local – this meant that they could make visits at short notice to resolve issues as they arose and avoid costly delays.

In some areas sub-contractor expertise was also below expectation, which led to some abortive work. The contractor also struggled with sequencing, which prevented weathering of the building before the wetter months of the year kicked in. This in turn prevented many sequential aspects of work proceeding as well as some internal water damage that needed making good before works progressed.

Quality control was undertaken by SLCIC Chair, who took a robust approach to managing and challenging the contractor, sometimes asking work to be redone two or three times when below quality. The Chair also required that work was carried out to the requisite quality, not simply carried out to meet the specification. Extensions of time were robustly challenged. While this caused friction between the client and contractor, project team members agree that this was an effective approach. A key factor was that The Chair (volunteer) was a retired senior businessman with the time and experience to undertake this role.

An alternative to the client team controlling quality could have been the appointment of a paid Clerk of Works. While including an additional member of the team to provide this role is costly, and may have assisted, the Chair felt that the client team would be more demanding in assessing quality of finish and so on.

It may also have been helpful to ensure that Design Team fees included an adequate level at RIBA 5, so that the architect visited site more often for regular Design Team meetings during the contract period. He was engaged with resolving design queries and issues through and RFI process but more regular face to face meetings on site arguably may have reduced the numbers of RFI's and emails.

The team did include a Contract Administrator, who also played a critical role in the management of the contractor. However, it is important to acknowledge that a Contract Administrator is there to administer the contract and issue instructions, and should not be part of the decision making process, as this could compromise the designs and specifications provided by the Design Team. However, the CA did provide valuable support to the client team in design discussions with his extensive experience as a FRICS.

Other cost savings included:

- Registering for VAT which meant a significant saving in construction costs, without which the project could not have gone ahead. However, this now means that they need to charge VAT as an ongoing business.
- Direct client purchasing of elements of fit out, such as signage, ballroom art-deco bar, security, landscaping and fencing.

7.9. Developing the business model

As explored in Section 4, SLCIC developed architectural plans and business plan in tandem, retaining flexibility so that one could respond to the other, and this worked well.

Ideally, there would have been more staff in place during the opening period. This was impacted by the project being late, with cost overruns and the resultant phased opening of the building.

7.10. Stakeholder relationships - funders

The relationships with the National Lottery Heritage Fund were good, and it was helpful to have regular joint meetings with the three principal funders (the Heritage Fund, Historic England and B&HCC).

Monthly meetings on Teams with the Heritage Fund were appreciated, which reduced the need for lengthy quarterly reports.

The team appreciated the trust that the Heritage Fund put in them in executing the project. The RoSS consultant was always supportive and helpful on the Teams meetings, but rarely visited the site. It may have been that more proactive advice could have forthcoming with more detailed on-site experience from the Heritage Fund team, but on this project it was not seen as an issue.

They also felt supported by the council, particularly in the context of tough economic times, and in turn, the council felt confident in the expertise provided by SLCIC.

7.11. Stakeholder relationships - community engagement

The team harnessed local support very early on in the project, through stakeholder meetings, surveys, community events and taster activities. This gave a good indication of what people wanted and provided the team with a mandate to represent the community when evidencing a demand for the work they wanted to carry out. The team were able to clearly demonstrate community commitment and ran a successful crowdfunding campaign. Because the community had been engaged from the start, the team had the support there for when they needed it. When the project hit hurdles, the team could call on the support of the community for advocacy, support and even financial backing.

7.12. Stakeholder relationships - volunteers

The project benefited from a large pool of multi-skilled, willing, local volunteers, in addition to the volunteer led CIC. However, now that the operation is becoming larger and more complex, having a team of paid staff is essential. There will be a balance to be maintained between using paid professionals to meet income and operational targets, while harnessing and fostering the skills and passion of the broader volunteer team, many of whom have been involved throughout the project and some who were fundamental to it being saved. Community activism has led to the successful restoration of the Lido, and should continue to be at its heart.

Appendices



Evaluation

Sustainability Measures

Photographic Record

8. Appendix A: Evaluation

8.1. About the evaluators

This evaluation was produced by Anna Cullum (Anna Cullum Associates). Anna is an experienced evaluator, specialising in Heritage Fund and Arts Council England Projects. Her evaluations of over 40 projects, including heritage landscapes and gardens, museums and galleries, performance venues, libraries and archives, and heritage sites, gives clients a deep understanding of what makes projects succeed.

8.2. Evaluation evidence sources

Visitor survey: distributed via social media summer 2024. Sample size: 91

Visitor postcard: collected on the premises summer 2024. Sample size: 28

Volunteer survey: distributed to all volunteers summer 2024. Sample size: 24

Consultees below provided written or verbal feedback.

Name	Position	Role on the project
Derek Leaver	SLCIC Chair	Project Director (Volunteer)
Trefor Oldfield-Hodge	FRICS	Client Representative and Contract Administrator
Phil Naylor	Partner at RHP	Lead Architect
Ian Waddingham	MD at QED Structures	Lead Structural Engineer
Stephen Cheesman	Cheesman Consulting	Quantity Surveyor
Graham Andrews	M&E consultant	M&E Consultant (Volunteer)
Paul Douglas -Smith	General Manager	The first CIC employee and employed a year before the building was complete
Richard Lloyd-Owen	Finance Director	Volunteer CIC director
Phil Haslam	SLCIC	Ex-Finance Director and continues to volunteer
Deryck Chester	SLCIC Director	Heritage interpretation.
Mike and Sarah		Long Term volunteer coordinators
Jane Pinnock	B&HCC Surveyor	Early advocate of the project
Louise Piem	B&HCC Culture Business Manager	CIC day to day contact
Lucy Perry	National Lottery Heritage Fund	Heritage Fund Investment Manager
Julia Gallagher	Head of Sales, Marketing & Partnership, VisitBrighton	Local tourism expert
Lynn Trappano	Local Visitor Economy Partnership between B&HCC, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council.	Local tourism expert

9. Appendix B: Sustainability Measures and Green Credentials

Building Services notes supplied by SLCIC

1. **Planning Constraints** – Saltdean Lido is Grade II* listed and as such planning conditions did not permit the installation solar PV panels to the flat roof areas of the building. Whilst acceptance of these conditions was adhered to during the restoration works design allowance has been incorporated within the building to retrofit Solar PV panels to the 60's and 70's roof areas and will form the basis of a new planning application and appeal, if necessary, in 2025.
2. **Removal of fossil fuel use within the building** – Prior to the restoration work, the building was heated by means of a gas fired boiler serving a low temperature hot water heating system with stored hot water for kitchen and welfare use. SLCIC briefed the design team that the use of fossil fuel, namely gas, should be eradicated from the building. As such all heating, kitchen services and hot water production is electrical.
3. **Air source heat pumps** - The principal rooms which include the Historic Plant Room, Café, Rotunda Restaurant, Ballroom, Lounge and Library are all heated utilising air source heat pumps with internal fan coil units. Air source heat pump systems are electrically powered offering a seasonal efficiency of around 4:1 - that is for every 1kW of power input the unit will deliver 4kW of heating or cooling.
4. **Electric Space Heating – Zoned** – Elsewhere circulation spaces and smaller lettable rooms are heated electrically utilising intelligent panel heaters that are programmed utilising smart app remote controls.
5. **MVHR Ventilation to Historic Plant Room** – The air quality within the building is maintained utilising natural ventilation by means of openable windows/doors and trickle vents fitted to all new window casements. The Historic Plant room at ground floor level, by exception, has no means of natural ventilation therefore a multi vent heat recovery (MVHR) mechanical ventilation unit is provided.
6. **LED Lighting & Bluetooth Control** – LED lighting is provided throughout the building with one exception, the “Saltdean Lido” cold cathode neon sign. The lighting control system runs on an independent mesh network with Bluetooth controls.
7. **Sensor Taps for Handwashing/Low energy Hand Driers** – Hot water is produced with low volume local electric water heaters and delivered at each basin utilising sensor taps to minimise water consumption. Fixed hand dryers are low energy high efficiency units.
8. **Pool Cover** – To help reduce our energy costs associated with heating and filtering the pool water we shall be fitting a pool cover toward the end of October. We have received £20K grant funding toward the purchase of the pool cover from Rampion OTshore who manage the wind farm out in the channel. We hope to achieve a 20-25% saving across our gas and water utility costs during the coming year.
9. **Future green energy and energy saving projects** - We are currently seeking grant funding to upgrade our pool pumping systems with variable drive pump systems for the main and nursery pools. We hope achieve funding and undertake this upgrade during the latter part of 2025.

10. Appendix C: Photographic Record



The Main Entrance, before and after restoration



Colourised original photos

Original photographs of Saltdean Lido soon after it opened in 1938, which have been colourised, and were a point of reference for what the SLCIC wanted to achieve.

Courtesy of RIBA





Saltdean Lido in 1938



Saltdean Lido in 2024

External Dilapidation



1938



2020



2024



Internal dilapidation



Restoring the Concrete Structure



The entire structure was hydro-blasted to remove crumbling concrete and expose the areas of steel reinforcement that could be protected, or else needed to be replaced.





Restoring Heritage Features

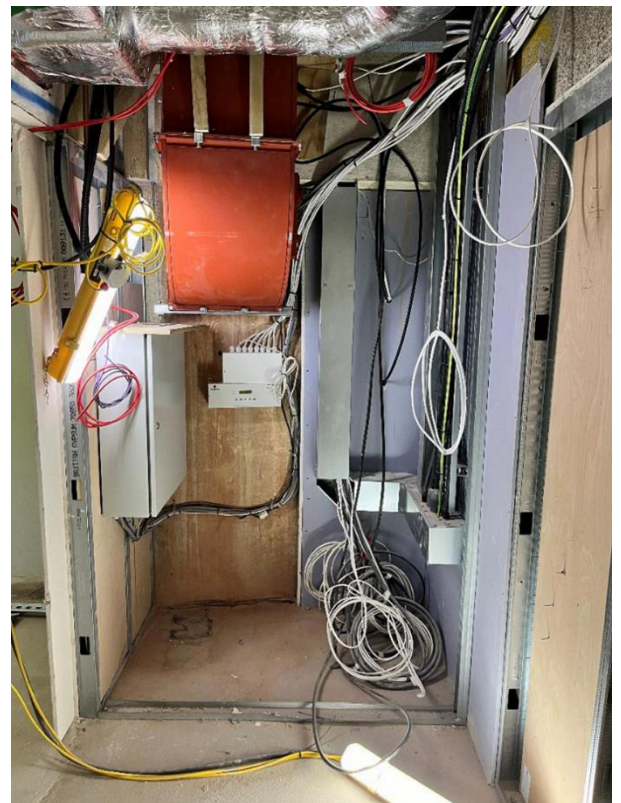


The one undamaged original Crittall window was left in situ, restored and is on display.

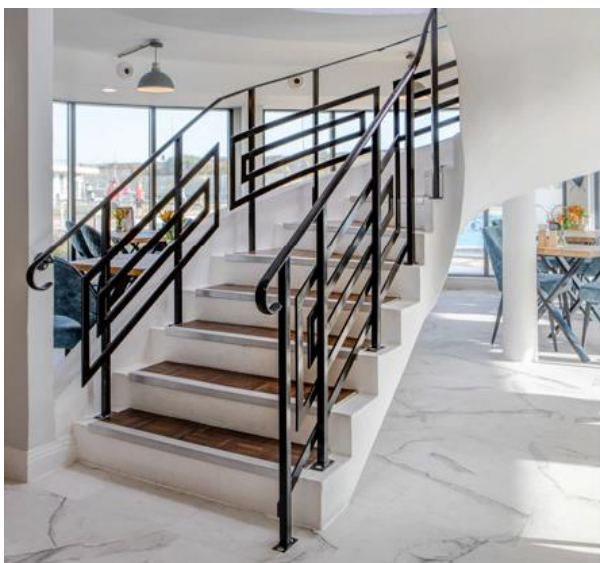
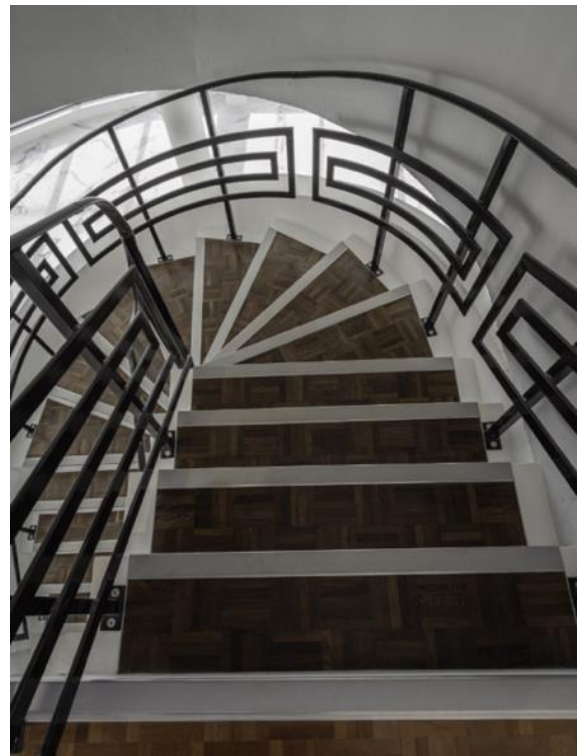
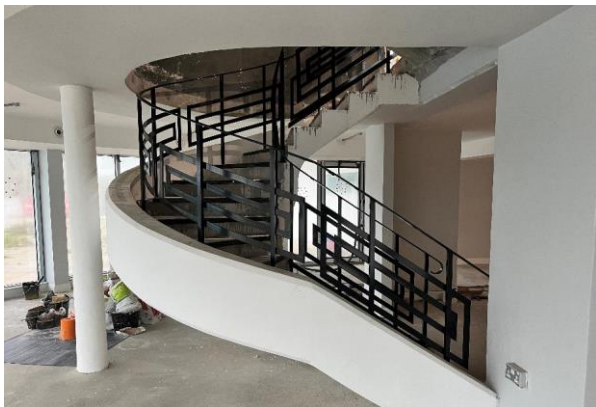
Where possible, cast iron balustrades were sandblasted, restored and re-used on the buildings iconic balcony.

The first floor to roof staircase was largely untouched. Handrails and iron balustrades were restored, and the designs used as the basis of all new ironwork required in the building on new staircases.

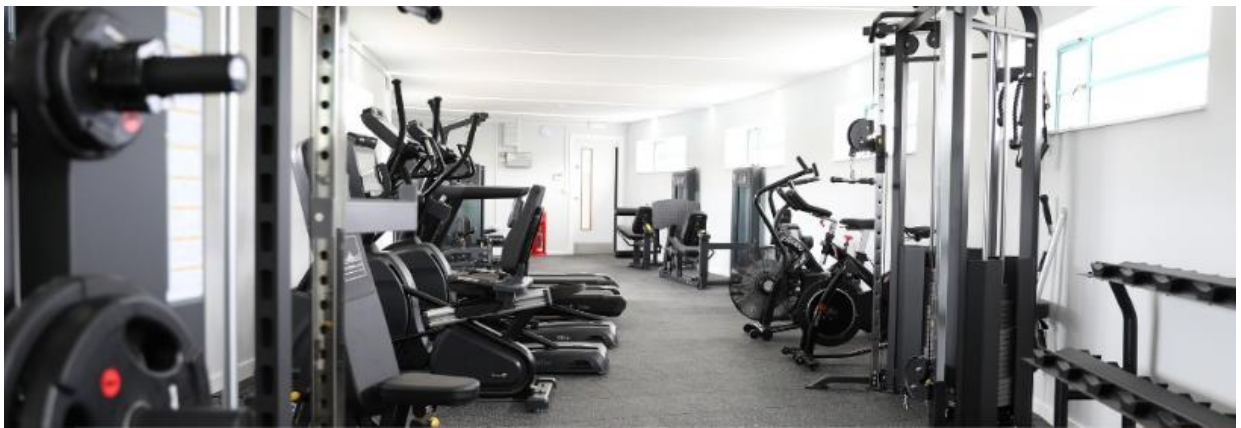
Space challenges - introducing air handling ducts for ventilation, heating and kitchen extraction into a building with no ceiling voids



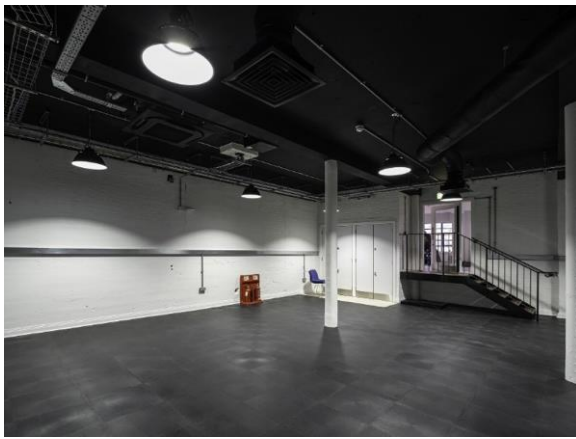
Reinstating the ground to first floor Spiral Staircase, removed in the 1960's



The East Wing



The Plant Room



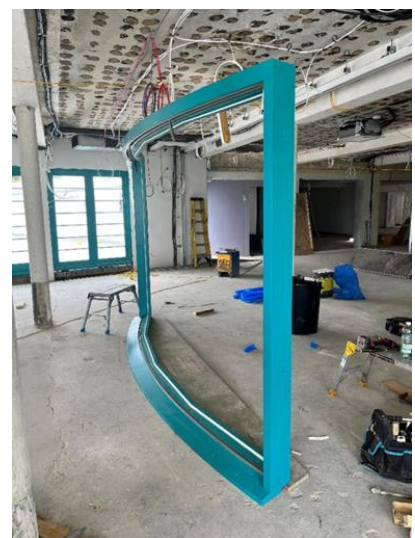
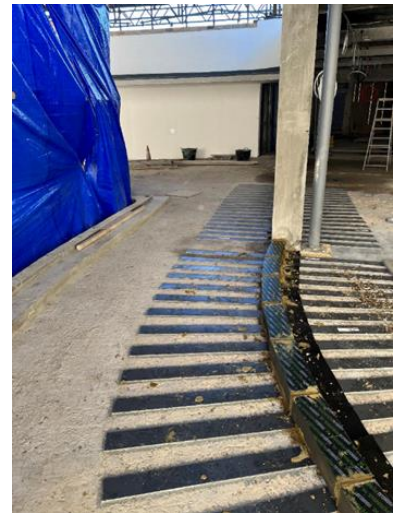
The Ball Room



Carbon Fibre strips were installed to strengthen the cantilevered balconies.

The curved Esavian folding doors of the rotunda, have been replaced with custom made replica wooden doors made in durable heat treated Accoya timber.

Elsewhere, the original steel frame Crittall windows have been replaced with their modern-day double-glazed replicas





Two linked production kitchens service the ground floor café and first floor restaurant/event space.





The Deco café

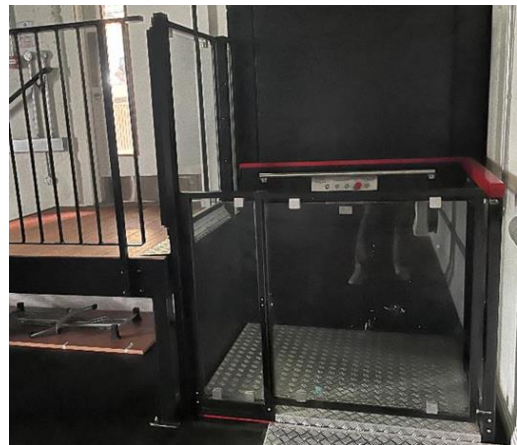




Infrastructure

CCTV, fibre internet access, fire safety curtain and alarms.

Platform lifts to make the whole building accessible to all.



Restoring the chimney which was removed in the 1960's



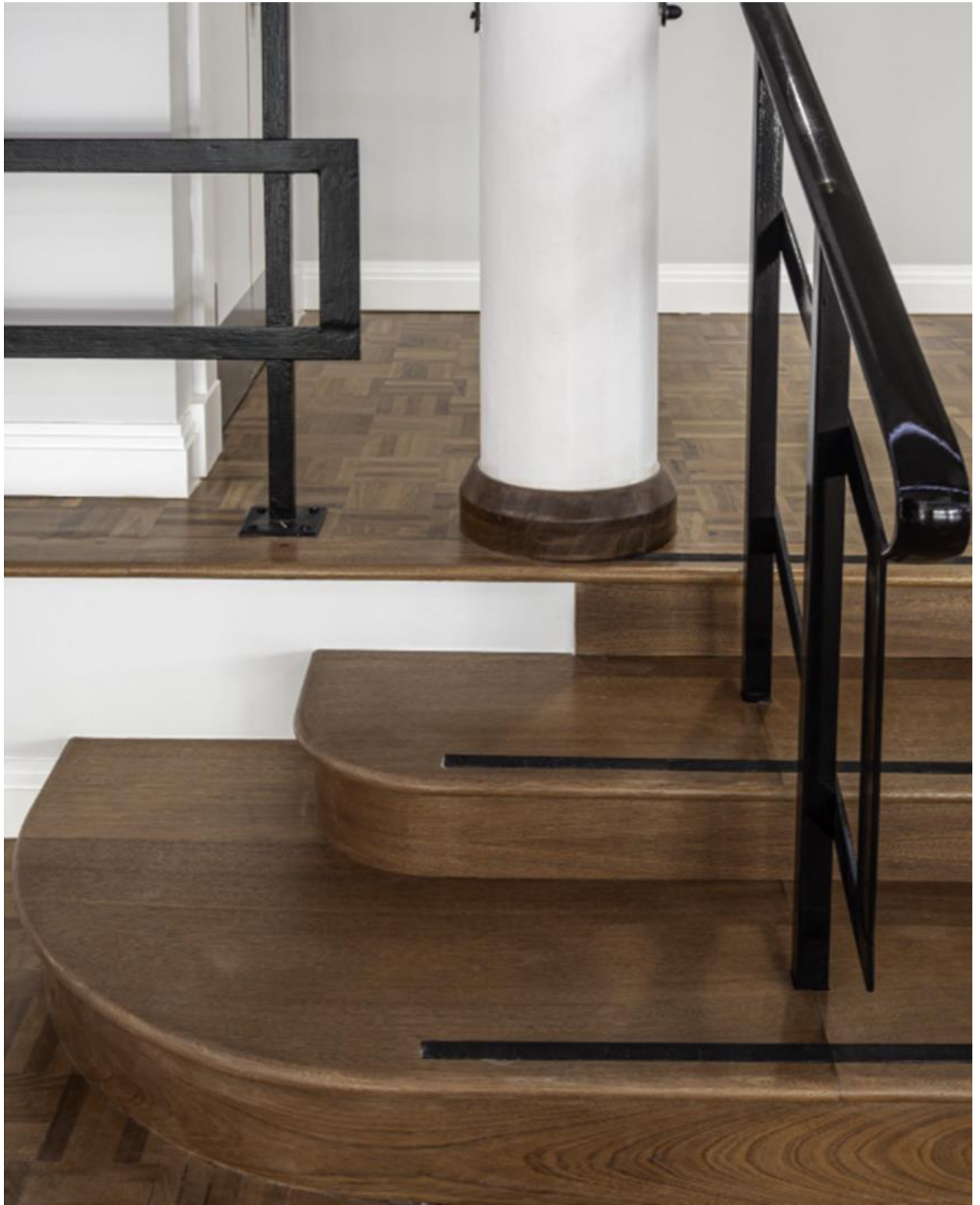
Heritage



Features have been retained and a subtle Art Deco theme introduced to project a 'discerning' establishment to attract visitors, wedding parties and corporate hire







Heritage Interpretation



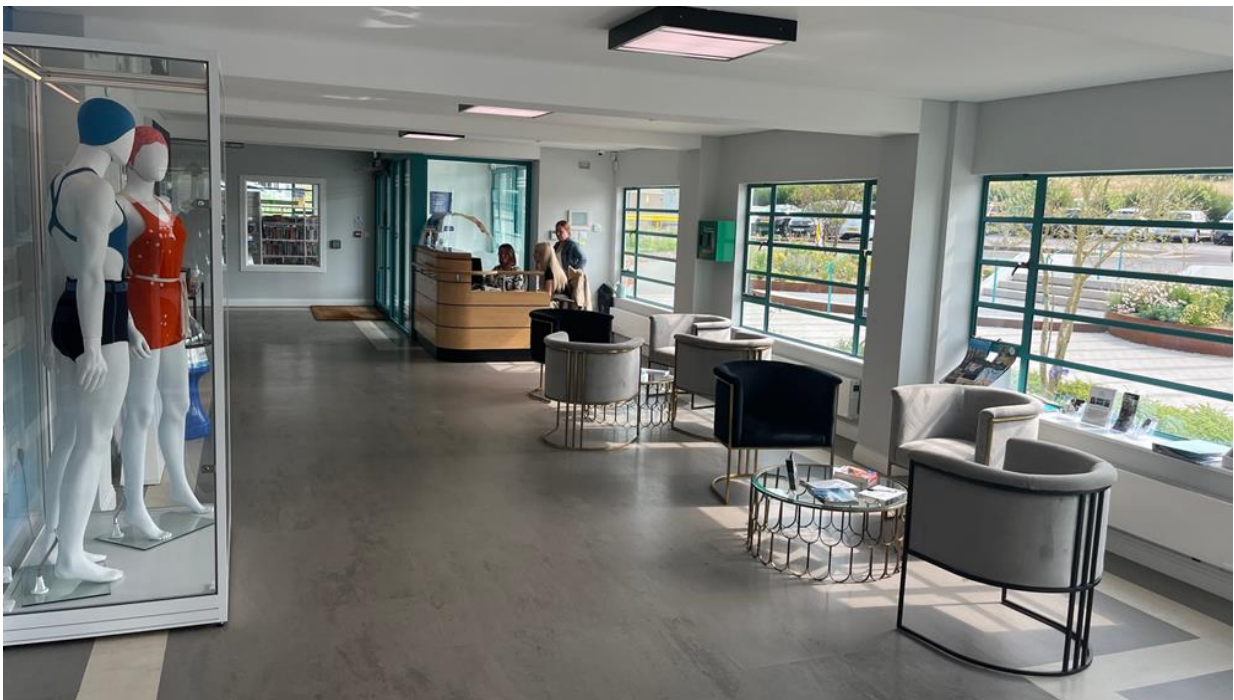
SALTDEAN MEMORIES

REMEMBERING THE LIDO THROUGH THE YEARS

“ It was a lovely white building and clean looking, and just settled there, so nicely in Saltdean, right bang there in the middle for everyone to use.

“ I thought it was extremely glamorous. It was like a movie set, there was quite a lot of glass, and everything shone.

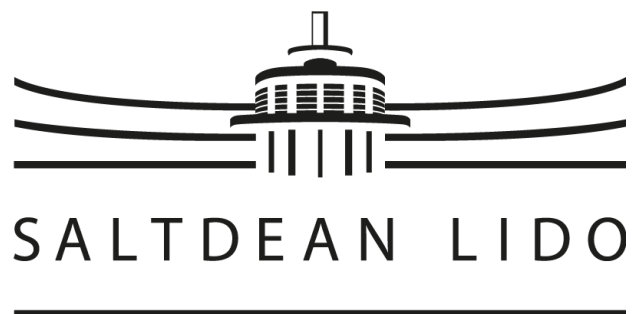
“ It's just a lovely slice of British history from an age which was slower and calmer, and perhaps more family orientated.





The new public library





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