



▲ Completed in 2002 at a cost of £500,000 to Wandsworth Borough Council, the new entrance to **Tooting Bec Lido** – on the west side of the pool, facing Tooting Bec Common – was designed by William Martin & Partners.

The design is intended to evoke the curvaceous Art Deco style of the 1930s and thereby call to mind the heyday of lidos, even though

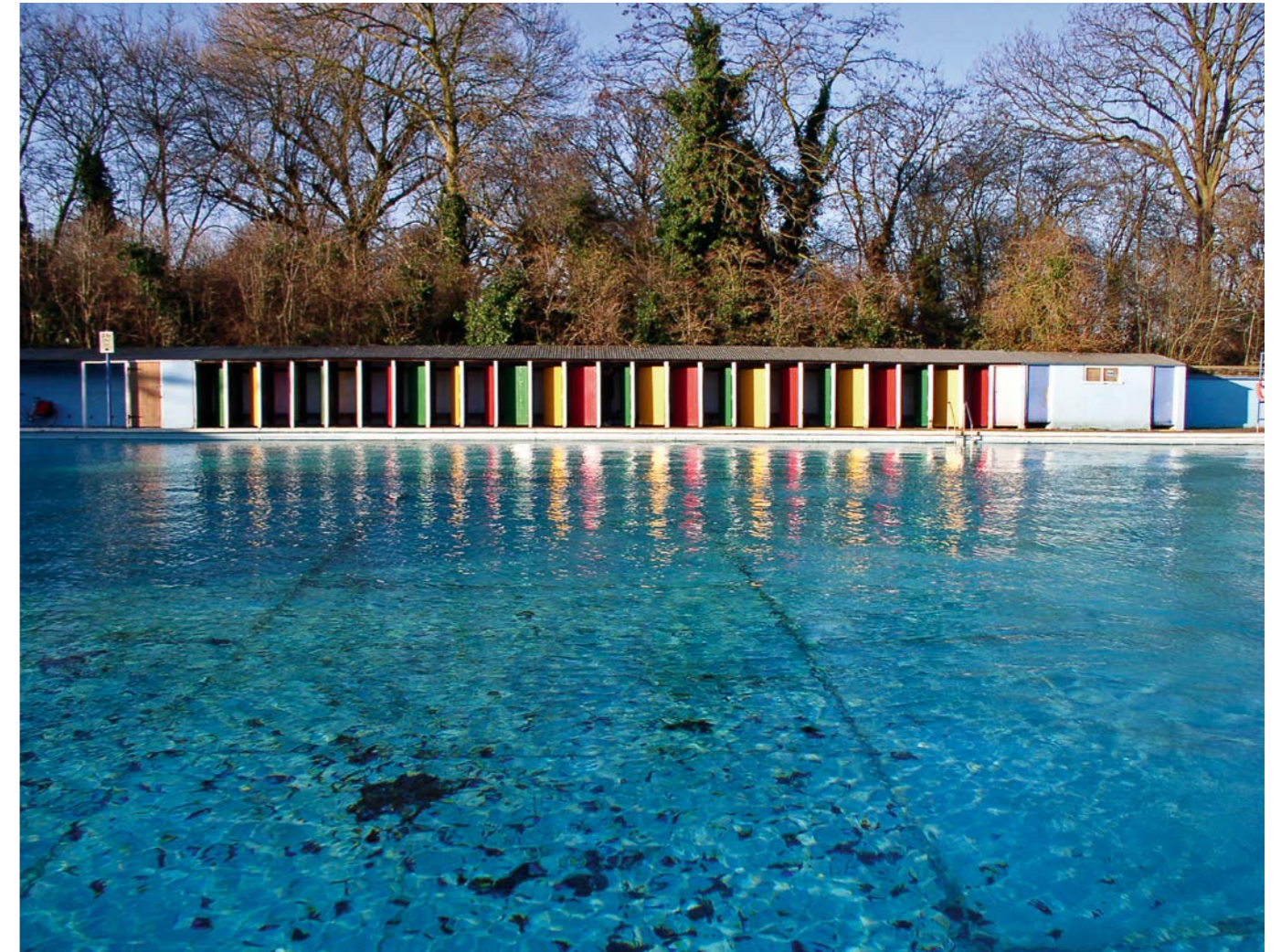
this particular pool pre-dates that era by some thirty years.

Cement render, galvanised steel, glazed blocks and steel doors have all been used to make the building as vandal-proof as possible.

The re-siting of the entrance from the southern, or deep end of the pool, to be nearer the shallow end, was partly done to conform with Health and Safety guidelines.

However this change in emphasis aroused strong feelings and resulted in the holding of a public enquiry.

Many swimmers lamented the loss of that breathtaking, first view down the full length of the pool as one entered, while conservation groups objected to the new entrance's jarring effect on views across the Common.



▲ Apart from its new entrance, **Tooting Bec Lido** is almost instantly recognisable to swimmers thanks to two distinguishing features.

First is the sheer scale of the tank. Measuring 100 feet (30.7 metres) from west to east, the width is greater than the length of most indoor pools. Those without the stamina or heart to tackle Tooting Bec's prodigious 300 foot

length are therefore still swimming a respectable distance.

Second are the distinctive multi-coloured doors of the changing cubicles, so evocative of the seaside and virtually a trademark for Tooting Bec.

The first cubicles at the pool consisted of a simple corrugated-iron roofed shelter, fronted by canvas curtains.

Doors were added only in the 1930s when mixed bathing became the norm. Initially painted green, they acquired their current cheerful colour scheme in 1981.

The trees behind the boxes were planted on the surrounding embankment so that, as required by the LCC, the lake would not 'detract from the natural beauty of the Common' which lay beyond.