

MEMORIES OF MORECAMBE'S
MAKING A
SPLASH!
SUPER SWIMMING STADIUM

During the 1930s swimming lidos were very popular with the public and Morecambe was determined to have the biggest and the best. The iconic Super Swimming Stadium was built in 1936 and was described at the time as the biggest outdoor pool in Europe. It was officially opened on 27 July 1936 as a venue for family fun in the sun, serious swimming competitions and entertainment shows.

Even without a roof the Super Swimming Stadium was always a popular place for holiday makers to spend time. At the peak of its popularity 127,000 people are said to have visited over 2 days.

During the day people could sunbathe on the artificial beach, play on the slides and relax on the sun terrace.

Other attractions included:

- Midnight bathing – which attracted 10,000 brave swimmers in the first week!
- Daredevil diving by RAF diving champion Perry Blake from 21 metres (70 feet) above the pool – double the height of the official diving platform.

- Water ballet shows by the Aqua-Lovelies synchronised swimming team.
- Male acrobatics fun & games by the Aqua-Loonies who entertained audiences by stunt diving.
- On Wednesday 25 July 1948 the first heat of the 'Bathing Beauty Queen' competition was held. The show proved very popular with the holiday makers with 5,000 people coming on the first day to watch 14 girls compete. The rules to enter were simple: competitors had to be British, female and seventeen or older.

Eight years later what began as a show for holiday makers became Miss Great Britain and it was hosted annually by Morecambe from 1956–1989.

In 1975 the decision was made to close the Super Swimming Stadium. In a bid to save it from demolition a proposal was put forward to build a roof over it and carry out extensive repair and renovation. Unfortunately, the costs were too high and it was demolished in 1976.



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The Super Swimming Stadium architects, **Kenneth MB Cross and Cecil Sutton**, designed a very modern building that complemented the nearby **Midland Hotel**. It was built on the site of **T.W. Ward Ltd**, which had been a ship breaking yard.

The structure was primarily built using reinforced concrete which allowed wide, spacious areas within the building with natural light flooding in through the large windows.

Although the Super Swimming Stadium was an overall success there was one structural defect that could never be repaired. A leak in the sea wall which enclosed the pool caused seawater to flow in and out with the tide. It is said to have been a construction fault, but the leak was never found and all repair attempts failed.

Super Swimming Stadium Construction Facts

- It cost £130,000 to build, making it the most expensive lido in the country at the time;
- 500,000 old fashioned bricks were used;
- 15,000 cubic yards of concrete;
- 450 tonnes of steel reinforcement;
- 2,000 square yards of high quality granolithic concrete flooring;
- 5.5 miles of pipes;
- 12 miles of electrical wiring;
- 400 lights;

Site where the Super Swimming Stadium was eventually built



eden project

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The Eden Project has unveiled its vision for Eden Project North, a major new attraction in Morecambe, Lancashire.

The Cornwall-based environmental charity presented new images and details to its northern partners, the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, Lancaster University, Lancashire County Council and Lancaster City Council.

Eden and its partners successfully completed a feasibility study in September and are now seeking funding to make the project a reality.

Central to the vision is a series of pavilions inspired by mussels, which could house a variety of environments.

The plan is for a destination that combines indoor and outdoor experiences, connecting people with the internationally-significant natural environment of

Morecambe Bay while also enhancing well-being.

Its vision of a seaside resort for the twenty-first century includes re-imagined lidos, gardens, performance spaces, immersive experiences and observatories.

Eden is working with Grimshaw, the architecture firm who designed its world-famous Rainforest and Mediterranean Biomes, to create this unique structure for Morecambe with a focus on the marine environment.

A prime site on the Morecambe seafront is the proposed location for Eden Project North. The area was formerly occupied by the Morecambe's Super Swimming Stadium, Bubbles swimming pool and Dome theatre.

Eden Project North will be designed to help the regeneration of the area socially, economically and environmentally.

The vision for the future is that **Eden Project North** will be constructed on the now empty site creating an exciting new visitor experience for the twenty-first Morecambe.



An artist's impression of Eden Project North, a proposed new attraction for the town of Morecambe in Lancashire.

credit: Grimshaw Architects