

HAGGERSTON BATHS TIMELINE, MID-19TH CENTURY TO 2026

Mid-19th century: Haggerston transforms from fields and farms to a densely-populated, working-class suburb of London

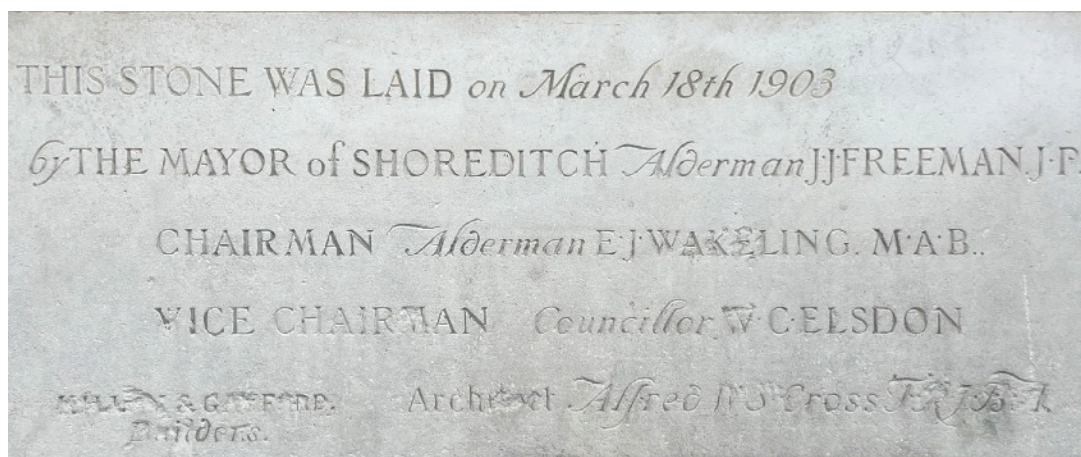
1866, 1870: Cholera outbreak in Haggerston, followed by a smallpox epidemic

1887: Two bath/wash-houses considered as answer to improve public sanitation by Vestry of the Parish of St Leonard's Shoreditch (i.e the local council of the time)

1899: Shoreditch's first public bath house opens in Pitfield Street, Hoxton

1902: Alfred W. S. Cross begins work on designing Haggerston Baths for Metropolitan Borough of Shoreditch

1903: Foundation stone for Haggerston Baths is laid on 18 March



1904: Haggerston Baths completed and opened with great ceremony on 25 June

1921: Renewal of licences for music, dancing and film screenings during the winter (when pool could not be used) opposed by London United Temperance Council because 'the sale of intoxicating drinks is not necessary or desirable in a place of public entertainment'

1930s: First licence for boxing granted in 1930; two new exits created in Whiston Road frontage for use in case of emergencies during boxing matches

1941: Baths closed following 'general blast damage' sustained from bombing during the Blitz

1946-54: Work done to reopen Baths and extend the ground floor laundry to the north-west, on the sites of bomb-damaged terraced houses

Early to mid-1960s: Substantial alterations to pool area, most slipper baths removed to make way for other uses; new main entrance (now at south end of Swimmers Lane) created and basement plant rooms abandoned



1985–88: Baths closed for refurbishment: pool reduced from 30.5 to 25 metres in length to enable formation of new teaching pool, new boiler fitted, old changing rooms and poolside seating removed, new changing rooms constructed and balcony added

1988: Baths nationally listed at Grade II on 9 December

1999: Elizabeth Robinson describes Baths as being in 'dire need of sympathetic refurbishment' in her book *Twentieth-century buildings in Hackney*

2000: Notice of Baths' temporary closure for health and safety reasons posted and doors padlocked, reportedly with just 3 hours' notice, on 11 February; Save the Pool Action Group established almost immediately, works with local architects to develop plans for transforming the Baths into a Healthy Living Centre; Council says it has revised its budget plans to make money available for repairs to Baths, to reopen by June 2000; remedial costs initially said to be £35k, or £280k–300k to address longer-standing issues — later revealed the money was secretly reallocated to go towards the much delayed, massively over budget Clissold Leisure Centre project; Council issues Section 114 notice in October, predicting £15.5m budget deficit; urgent budget cuts approved on 6 November

2001: Baths being squatted and rapidly deteriorating; alternative plans for its future being worked up by Shoreditch Our Way (previously Shoreditch New Deal Trust) and Haggerston Pool Users, involving development of part of the site to generate funds for pool refurbishment

2002: Estimated cost of works to reopen the Baths as a swimming pool now £2m; Hackney Co-operative Developments secures funding for a Haggerston Pool Development Worker to explore possibilities for reopening the Baths as a swimming pool

2004: Haggerston Pool Community Trust holds first Laburnum Street Party, including a candlelit vigil, to mark 100th anniversary of opening of the Baths

2006: Detailed feasibility study for transformation of Baths into a Health and Wellbeing Centre issued by Council

2009: Feasibility study endorsed by Council cabinet in March; Department for Children, Schools and Families then announces £5m grant towards the £20m estimated total cost of the Health and Wellbeing Centre project

2010: Austerity programme instigated by Conservative—Liberal Democrat coalition government begins in earnest; Council's central government grant funding starts to be cut

2011: Hackney Council unable to raise full amount needed to pay for restoration of Baths and Health and Wellbeing Centre project stopped altogether following a review; central government grant repaid in full, other than tiny portion kept back to pay for urgent repairs; Council's new plan is to mothball building to preserve it until a long-term solution can be found

2013: Baths named in the Victorian Society's Top Ten Endangered Buildings in England & Wales list

2014: Petition for Asset of Community Value status rejected by Council as Baths had not be in public use for more than the maximum limit of 5 years



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Haggerston Baths, Hackney, London

Neglected public baths in search of new role Grade II-listed, 1904, A.W. Cross This magnificent former bathhouse, on Whiston Road in Hackney, has been closed and boarded up since 2000,...

2015

18 May: Council launches Expressions of Interest (EOIs) exercise, managed by BNP Paribas; 29 EOIs received, some more fully-formed than others, of which only 5 include some form of swimming pool (whereas 16 include offices, and 14 include residences)

8 October: 'What is the Future of Haggerston Baths?' public meeting, organised by Save Haggerston Pool, held at Centre 151; 160 people plus representatives from Council in attendance; audience members and invited statements from local organisations repeatedly express strong desire to see a swimming pool provided again, paid for by the Council, whereas Council representatives stress the financial and practical impediments to this

2016

September: The Acorn pub at corner of Whiston Road and Queensbridge Road closes despite a local campaign



5 December: After lengthy negotiations, Council announces shortlist of three regeneration schemes for the Baths, by Castleforge Partners, London and Regional Properties, and Seaforth Land — none of which incorporate a swimming pool in their designs

2017

January/February: Seaforth Land exits the selection process

13 March: Council-run public consultation on final two proposals launched — can respond via Council website, paper survey form, or at in-person events

March and April: Drop-in events (28 March and 27 April) and panel discussion (12 April), all organised by the Council, at Centre 151; 6464 survey forms posted to Haggerston residents

357 comments were recorded for this question from the 72 attendees at the events. The purpose of this interactive board was to understand the types of uses residents wanted to see within the Baths.

USE	YES	MAYBE	NO
Events	11	7	2
Conference / talks space	14	8	0
Theatre / performance space	21	5	0
Bar / social space	21	1	12
Workshops / 'makerspace'	25	3	1
Gallery space	26	2	0
Cinema / entertainment	21	3	1
Café	26	0	1
Flexible community space	15	1	0
Restaurant	16	4	3
Studio fitness	22	1	2
Services / amenities	14	2	5
Gym	18	4	1
Independent retail	7	6	11
Breakout workspace	12	0	6

April: London Fields Lido closes for repairs

5 May: Consultation closes, with a total of 312 responses received; more support for Castleforge Partners proposal (54%) than London and Regional Properties one (33%)

27 November: Council cabinet agrees that Castleforge Partners is the winning bidder to redevelop Haggerston Baths

2018

January: London Fields Lido reopens

2019

Late March: consultation exhibition on redevelopment proposals, organised by Kanda consultancy on behalf of Haggerston Baths Limited (i.e. Castleforge Partners), held Kingsland Hub on Kingsland Road on two non-consecutive days (over 9500 invitations had been posted to addresses in surrounding area); 72 people attended, 35 feedback forms completed

23 May: Drop-in event for residents and near-neighbours of the Baths organised by Kanda and held at Centre 151 between 5.30pm and 7.30pm (invite hand-delivered to 200 addresses, none on the south side of Whiston Road); 8 people attended, 3 usable feedback forms completed

Late November: second consultation exhibition, again organised by Kanda and held at Kingsland Hub on Kingsland Road on two non-consecutive days (once more, over 9500 invitations had been posted to addresses in surrounding area); 44 people attended, 27 feedback forms completed

2020

February: Applications for Full Planning and Listed Building Consent for the Baths redevelopment submitted to the Council (for determination by June 2021)

23 March: UK enters first COVID-19 pandemic lockdown

October: IT security breach at the Council causes the planning application documents to be lost

5 November — 2 December: Second national lockdown in England

2021

6 January — March/April/May: Third national lockdown in England

June: The old Britannia Leisure Centre closes; replacement centre opens on 30 June, featuring 25m main pool, separate training pool, leisure pool and introduction to water pool

12 October: Planning applications for the Baths redevelopment validated by Council

2022

11 January: Haggerston Baths Limited submits updated development appraisals note that concludes 'the current scheme is unviable' but adds the developer 'is prepared to take an optimistic view on future rental growth, at their risk, in order to for the application scheme to be considered deliverable'

2 February: Haggerston Baths Limited scheme approved by Council's planning sub-committee; subsequent inability to reach agreement around the contractual basis for the project prevent final planning permissions from being issued

2023

February: Haggerston Park Kiosk opens

2024

July: Randal Cremer Primary School closes

2025

March: Hackney Society informed by Cllr Guy Nicholson, Deputy Mayor & Cabinet Member for Delivery, Inclusive Economy & Regeneration at the Council, that there is scant prospect of the approved scheme for the Baths being built as Castleforge cannot make the numbers add up for it to be financially viable

7 August: Article titled 'Haggerston Baths is sinking into ruin — and locals fear it won't be saved' published by Peter Carlyon in *The Londoner* online newspaper, reporting Castleforge Partners had cited various issues affecting the construction sector and the Baths building as reasons for lack of progress; article also suggests the developer may be having difficulty in raising sufficient capital to fund the redevelopment works; Carlyon calculates from a Freedom of Information Request that Council spent an average of nearly £212k annually on keeping the Baths in its mothballed state in the period August 2019–March 2025 — more than double the same reported annual cost in 2015



30 September: Full Planning application for Baths redevelopment expires

2026

23 February – 23 May: London Fields Users Group spearheads online petition to reopen the paddling pool behind London Fields Lido, closed for five years

1 April: Listed Building Consent application for Baths redevelopment expires

14 June: The Hackney Society stages a public event, 'Rethinking the future of Haggerston Baths', at Centre 151 as part of London Festival of Architecture. 100 people attend.

22 July: Hackney Council's Strategic Property Services confirm that Haggerston Baths 'is a priority site, and timescales will follow discussions with members' but could provide no formal update, status report or revised plans for the building.

Recommended online reading

National Heritage List for England 1988 full listing description <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1235838?section=official-list-entry>

Hackney Independent 2006 blog post 'The Shameful Story of Haggerston Pool' <https://www.hackneyindependent.org/2006/07/the-shameful-story-of-haggerston-swimming-pool/>

Iain Sinclair's essay 'Swimming on the 52nd Floor', *London Review of Books*, September 2015 <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v37/n18/iain-sinclair/diary>

***Hackney Gazette* March 2017 article with reminiscences from the caretaker's daughter** <https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/22939248.haggerston-baths-caretakers-daughter-shares-fascinating-memories-pools-history/>

***Hackney Citizen* report of November 2017 on choice of Castleforge Partners' proposal by Hackney Council** <https://hackneycitizen.co.uk/2017/11/28/haggerston-baths-revamp-approved-cabinet-mayor-sad-swimming-pool/>

Squire & Partners architects overview of scheme approved in February 2022 <https://squireandpartners.com/architecture/reuse/haggerston-baths/>

Tim Walder, 'Haggerston Baths' in *Hackney History* volume 22 for 2023 <https://hackneyhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Hackney-History-0022.pdf>

Peter Carlyon's August 2025 article for *The Londoner* (subscription required) <https://www.the-londoner.co.uk/haggerston-baths-is-sinking-into-ruin-and-locals-fear-it-wont-be-saved/>