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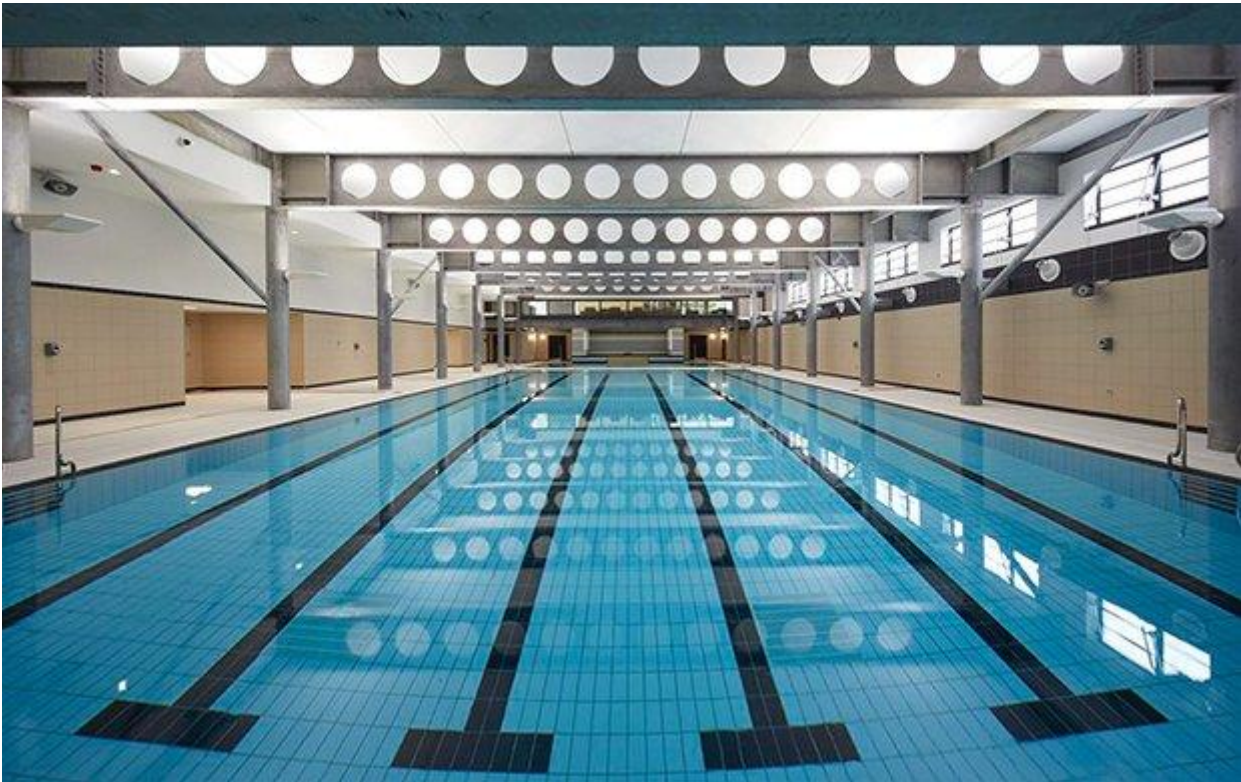
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Project of the Week: Poplar Baths, East London



After almost three decades the Grade II-listed art deco Poplar Baths has re-opened in London's east End. Patrick Quinlan, project manager at Guildmore, talks to *CM*.

Describe the project

The building is a Grade II-listed building that originally opened in 1934 and housed Poplar Baths. It had been closed for three decades and left derelict and people simply believed it would be closed forever. The whole project took about two years, from July 2014 to September 2016.

The project was part of a wider public private partnership that also included 100 new socially let apartments and a new youth centre, the leisure centre now houses a 25m swimming pool and learner pool, restored plunge pool, a Sports England standard sports hall, large studio and gym with a women's only area. Guildmore have also constructed a new state-of-the-art rooftop multi-use games area.

Vital statistics?

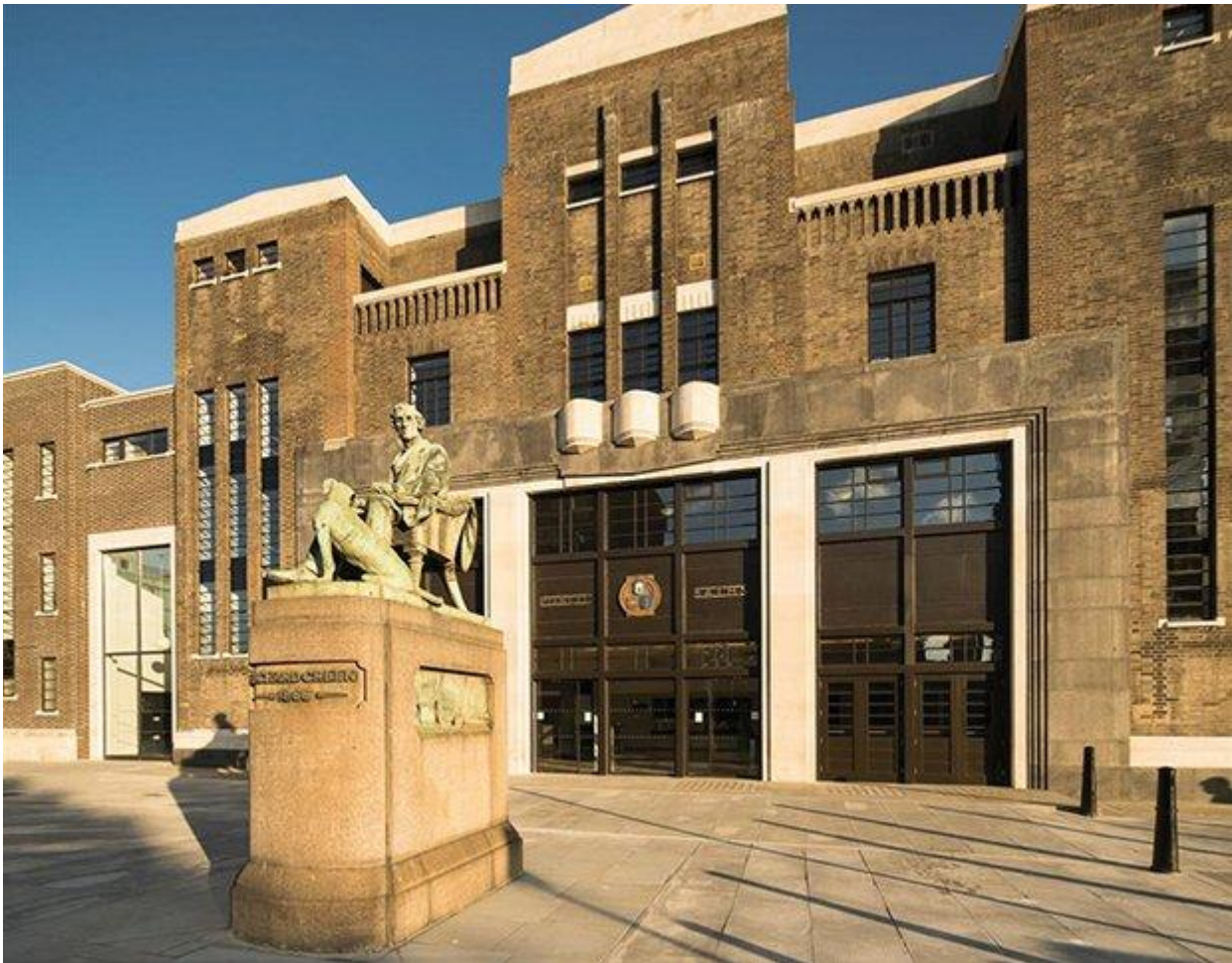
The leisure centre was restored under a design, build, finance and maintain contract by Guildmore for the Borough of Tower Hamlets and the contract sum was £36m. Consultants included Pringle Richards Sharratt Architects and PEP Civil & Structures as structural designers.

What did the works entail?

The project involved the selective demolition of the existing building to improve project viability and facilitate the building of new areas.

Remedial work was carried out on concealed defective structures including cathodic protection to structural steel frame and removal of chlorine-contaminated concrete.

On the conservation side, ceramic tiling and terrazzo finishes were repaired internally, while brickwork and dressed stone were refurbished externally. More than 170 Crittall windows were also replaced.



Brickwork and dressed stone was restored externally

What was the biggest challenge?

The intricate details of restoration. We had issues such as corrosion on parts of the building so that took a lot of work and the managing of a lot of different trades, people and aspects.

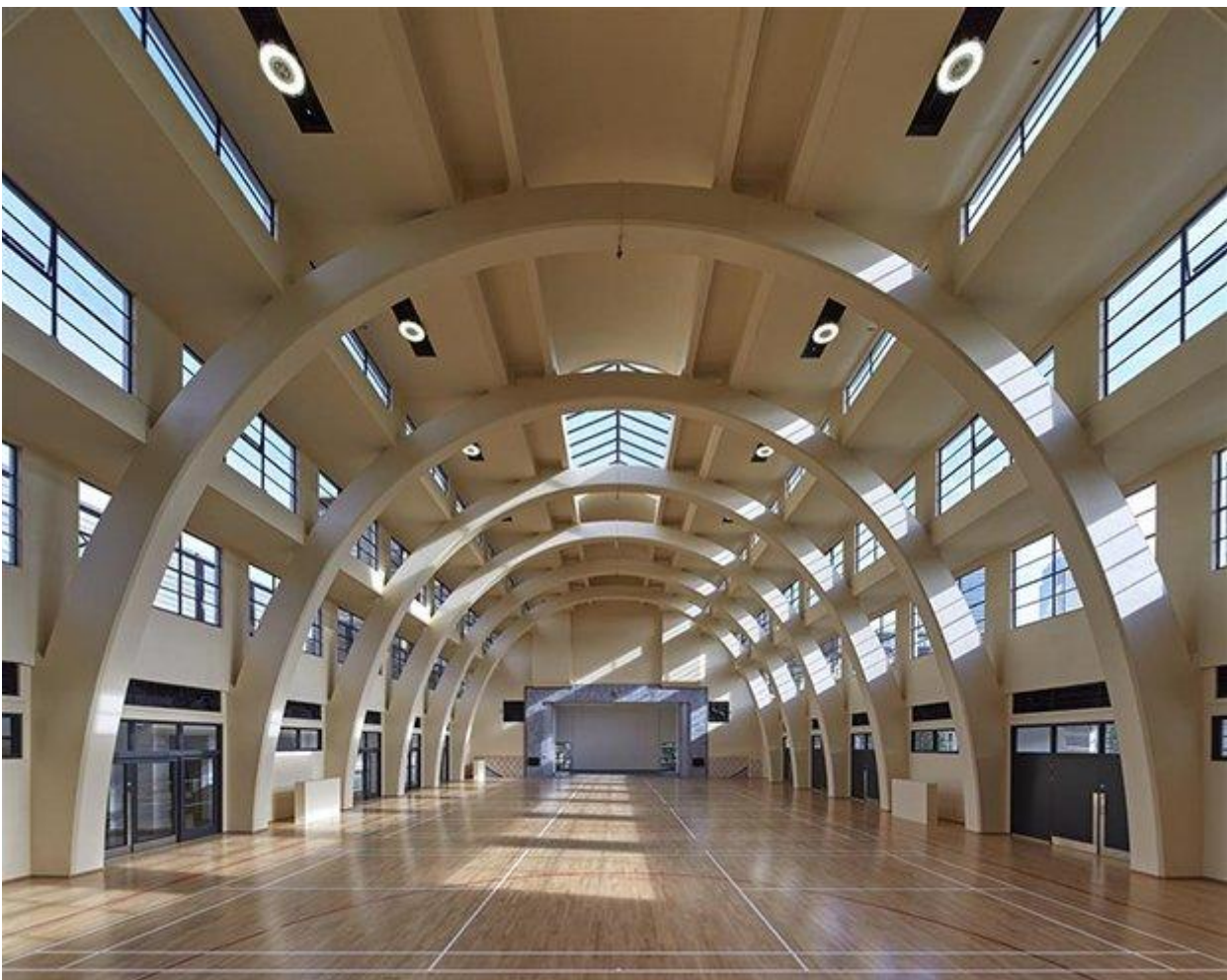
The building had been derelict since 1994 and the fabric had deteriorated, as well as having suffered break-ins. There was also the piling and basement excavation alongside live DLR tracks.

What will you take to other projects?

The big lessons for me were the conservation work and the engagement with the local community. The building has such historic meaning to people that communication and engagement was necessary all the way along.

Champagne moment?

The day of the opening when the community came back into the building. There were various people there who had swam there as children who were now bringing their kids and grandkids. There was also a lady who had been a lifeguard there in her younger years. Hearing people reminiscing and seeing their joy at it being brought back to life.



More than 170 Crittall windows were replaced...



... and ceramic tiling and terrazo finishes inside were repaired

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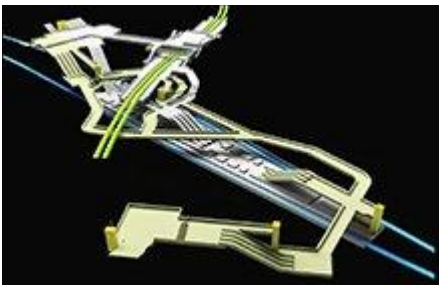
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