

GOAL 12 URBAN DESIGN

Goal 12 Urban Design: “Enhance Portland as a livable city, attractive in its setting and dynamic in its urban character by preserving its history and building a substantial legacy of quality private developments and public improvements for future generations”.

The Design Concept melds modern but historically-sensitive design of the new reflecting pools with preservation of the remaining historic resources on the site, and rehabilitation and reconstruction of some of the components that contribute strongly to the character of the site.

Notably, the four most visually-prominent historic resources that are emblematic of Ransome’s engineering and classical Romanesque design (the dams and their gate houses) will be rehabilitated. Pedestrian access to open water features and classic viewpoints will be restored. New features will respect the existing ones by incorporating materials, alignments, textures, and design details found in the original resources. The proposed overall design will link the past and present, providing Portlanders with many reasons to appreciate the Historic District and our shared history evident in this unique and beautiful site. Thus, the Design Concept, when fully implemented, will provide a substantial legacy of quality public improvements for future generations.



Figure 16. Visual simulation of the Lower Reflecting Pool, the grassy swale, Pump Station 1 and Dam 3 at dusk



Figure 17. Photo of Reservoir 3 from the top of the Grand Stairway

RESERVOIR 3 FROM THE GRAND STAIRWAY: EXISTING

Irregularly shaped Reservoir 3 basin components were constructed in sympathy with the topography. The basin is gravity-fed from Bull Run via Mt. Tabor's reservoirs and was constructed using Ransome's "twisted iron" reinforcing. Reservoir 3 is currently functional. Much of its west side has already been rebuilt several times due to the historic landslide. Liners have been in place since the 1970s. The parapet wall no longer has its original finish.

The Grand Stairway was one of two major entry points to the walking paths around the Reservoirs. It was originally a 7-foot wide, straight run. The stair was covered in vegetation until the mid-2000s. The stair was altered both at the top and along the length, with concrete repair, landings, and new railings in 2008-09.



Figure 18. Visual simulation of the Upper Reflecting Pool from the top of the Grand Stairway

UPPER REFLECTING POOL FROM THE GRAND STAIRWAY: PROPOSED

A new buried drinking water reservoir will preserve the historic drinking water storage function at the site. The existing basin and its parapet and walkway must be removed to construct the buried reservoir. A new reflecting pool/water feature will retain the historic relationship between water, Dam 3, and Gate House 3. The footprint of the new reflecting pool will closely follow the footprint of the existing basin, and the new edge will include new perimeter walkways with a seat-wall/retaining wall on the outer edge. At the Reservoir 3 reflecting pool, the historic fence will be rehabilitated and adapted (shortened, with some flourishes removed) and reinstalled around the water.

The 1970s-era light poles will be removed. The historic lamppost ironwork will be refurbished and re-installed at walking paths. New visually unobtrusive lighting will be installed in the seat-wall and along walking paths to meet the desired lighting levels.



Figure 19. Photo of Reservoir 3 and Gate House 3

RESERVOIR 3 WITH GATE HOUSE 3: EXISTING

Gate House 3 is oval in shape and was designed to hold various system piping and equipment. It is Romanesque in style and constructed using Ransome's patented hand-tooled finish technique. Round glass lights (also patented by Ransome) were cast into the floors. Gate House 3 has continuous horizontal hairline cracks, though window sashes are in good condition. The exterior has a visible coating of biological growth. Metal doors are modern. Structurally, the building is unreinforced.

The Weir building was added in 1946 in a style not matching the Richardsonian Romanesque architecture of the other structures. It was built to screen the water and function as a weir.



Figure 20. Visual simulation of the Upper Reflecting Pool cascading steps near Gate House 3

UPPER REFLECTING POOL AT GATE HOUSE 3: PROPOSED

Gate House 3 will house system piping, instrumentation, reflecting pool and circulation equipment. The building will be structurally upgraded and the roof replaced. The exterior will be cleaned. Unneeded non-historic exterior equipment will be removed, and holes patched. The solid metal doors will be replaced with more visually appropriate doors. The original window sashes and frames were recently (2009) repaired and rehabilitated, but will be repainted. The Gate House 3 entry stairs will be rebuilt with a lower riser height and longer tread run but with a similar curve and design.

Construction of the new buried reservoir requires the installation of shoring during excavation to protect Gate House 3 from damage during construction. The Weir building is poured construction and cannot be moved. Its removal will provide the necessary space to build shoring around Gate House 3. A pedestrian plaza with improved planting and seating will take its place allowing visitors to admire the Upper Reflecting Pool cascades and long views across the site.



Figure 21. Photo of Reservoir 4 taken from Dam 3

RESERVOIR 4 VIEW FROM DAM 3: EXISTING

Reservoir 4 is typically empty and is no longer needed to serve the industrial corridor in NW Portland. Reservoir 4 will be decommissioned as a drinking water storage facility. Much of the basin’s west side and parapet edge has been rebuilt multiple times due to the landslide. As a whole, parapet walls are cracked, and at the southwest corner, large areas are broken.

Gate House 4 is round in footprint with similar features to Gate House 3. Both gate houses can enable water to bypass the reservoirs to go directly to consumers. Cracking runs around the building similarly to Gate House 3. Metal coping was added in 1988-89. The water table base is heavily damaged.

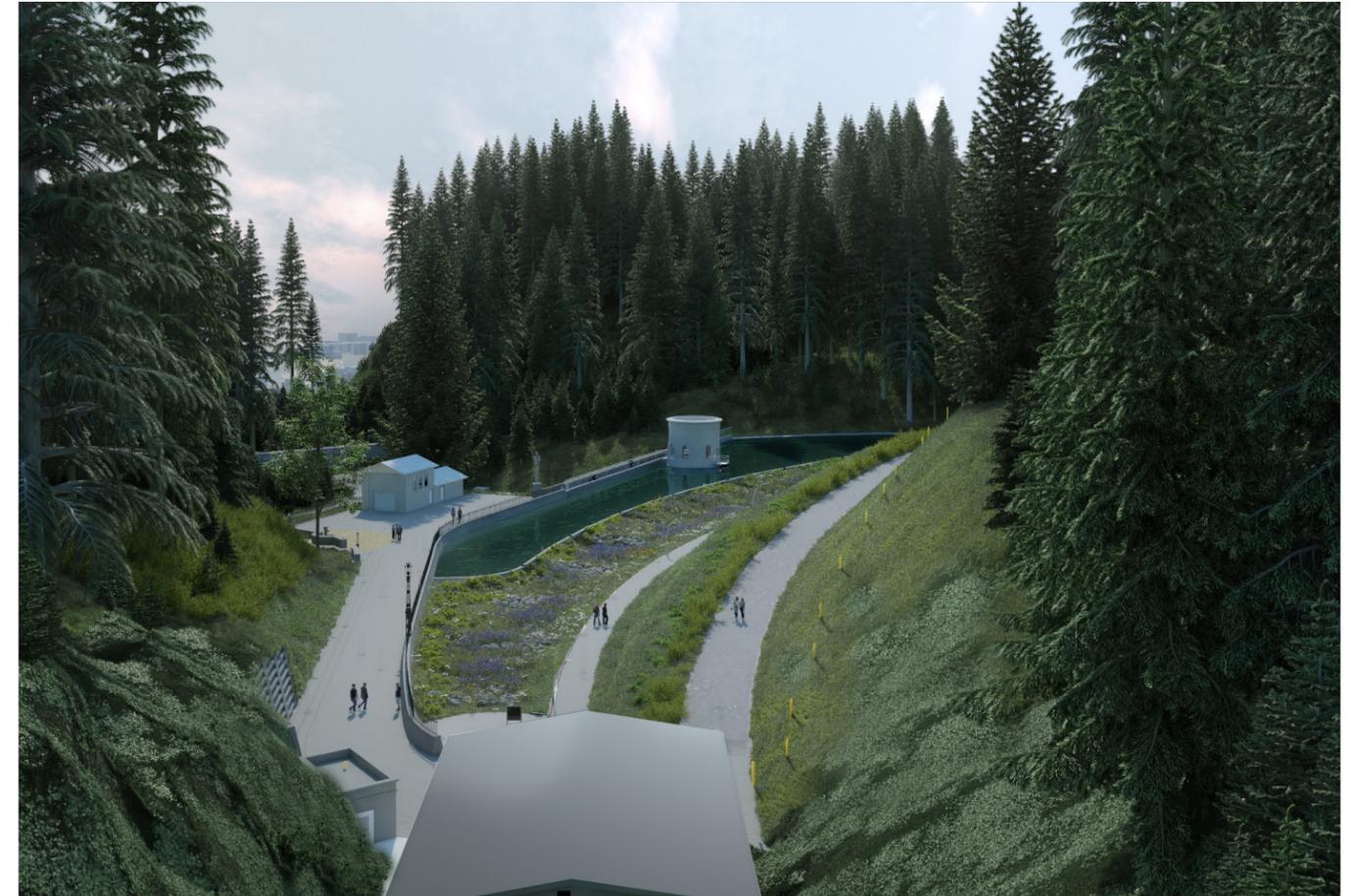


Figure 22. Visual simulation of the Lower Reflecting Pool and Lowland Habitat from Dam 3

LOWER REFLECTING POOL VIEW FROM DAM 3: PROPOSED

The historic water level along the dam and gate house will be restored. The vegetated lowland habitat and functional stormwater swales of Reservoir 4 are visible immediately next to the reflecting pool, with re-graded hillsides planted with native species extending further up to the right side of the image.

The historic wrought iron fence will be retained and fully rehabilitated along Dam 4. Additionally, the historic fence will be re-used at the rehabilitated east and south edges of Reservoir 4 parapet wall, but not along the west edge where there is a new configuration.

The roadway and low wall west of Reservoir 4 will be removed to construct the landslide-mitigating earth fill at the lower reservoir area. A new roadway will be constructed in keeping with the character of the site. The basalt from the demolished walls will be removed, protected, and may be re-used on the site. Additional mitigation for SHPO agreement proposed.



Figure 23. Photo of Reservoir 4 taken from Olmsted City Vista viewpoint on Sherwood Blvd.

RESERVOIR 4 VIEW FROM ABOVE AT SHERWOOD BLVD.: EXISTING

Dam 4 and Gate House 4 are still as visible as when John Olmsted stood in this spot in 1903, proclaiming this view a City vista to be celebrated. Tall trees, a tall chain link fence and a tall hedge now encroach on the view, limiting one's view towards the city center, but the Vista Bridge is still prominent. The water in Reservoir 4 is missing, and the eastern edge of the empty concrete basin dominates the view.



Figure 24. Visual simulation of the Lower Reflecting Pool from Olmsted City Vista viewpoint

LOWER REFLECTING POOL VIEW FROM SHERWOOD BLVD.: PROPOSED

The water at its original elevation encircles Gate House 4 and extends along the dam. A large area of water will be visible to the right of the gate house. In the foreground, the hillside is mounded up, providing the weight needed to mitigate the historic landslide.

Gate House 4 will house reflecting pool treatment and circulation equipment, and continue to be an access point for the existing tunnel drain and site drains. Extraneous (unnecessary) exterior equipment will be removed, and holes patched. The exterior will be cleaned, concrete holes patched and spalls repaired. The original window sashes and frames were recently (2009) repaired and rehabilitated, but will be repainted. The metal doors will be replaced with more visually appropriate doors. The roof will be replaced.

CONCLUSION

The PWB seeks support from the Portland City Council and the HLC for the demolition of three contributing resources in a Historic District: Reservoir 3, Reservoir 4, and the Weir building.

PWB is convinced that the alternative to demolishing these resources is unacceptable. The alternative is to maintain aging infrastructure that will:

- Continue to be damaged by an active landslide,
- Put the public at risk of losing vital water supplies and downstream flooding as a result of a major seismic event,
- Continue to age and deteriorate, and
- Violate state and federal rules which require that these reservoirs be covered.

In the final analysis, the number of supported goals and policies is one measure of balancing applicable Comprehensive Plan goals and policies. However, this is more than a counting exercise. Goals 11 Public Facilities and 11E Water Service relate directly to the provision of essential public facilities – which is the principle role of local government. Policy 8.13 requires that Portland protect its citizens from foreseeable natural disasters. **On balance, the provision of key public facilities and services is a public necessity and should be given great weight in the review process.**

The roles of neighborhood associations, the general public and design professionals are extremely important in building public support for the Design Concept, where reflecting pools will fulfill the open water views that the reservoirs have performed for the last 120 years. Thus, the design to replace the aging reservoirs provides open and accessible water features, maximizes the value of remaining historic resources, respects the environment, conserves energy and is exceptionally well-designed.

Because Portland has adopted strong protections for our shared resources and an open process for decision-making, the Design Concept is consistent with the character of the surrounding area and developed from an effective and inclusive public outreach process.

Taken together, the proposed site improvements – including

the restoration of public access and connectivity, preservation and rehabilitation of historic features, and the inclusion of interpretive features – are necessary to satisfy the demolition approval criteria and gain land use approval. These improvements are also necessary to obtain historic resource conditional use and environmental land use approvals, which must be completed before any development permits can be issued.

The demolition of Reservoir 3, Reservoir 4, and the Weir building will allow for the site to continue use as a water storage and distribution facility which also welcomes and delights its visitors. The site will retain its overall historic character and the four areas of significance under which it was nominated.

The coming Type III proposal will detail the ways this site will be invigorated, protected, refurbished, and restored.



Figure 25. Design Concept plan illustrative rendering