

The Town of Brookline

Preservation Commission

Brookline Reservoir Historic Neighborhood Brochure



2006

The Brookline Reservoir was the original terminus of the Cochituate Aqueduct, the first major water supply system



for the City of Boston. Constructed in 1846-1848, the gravity conduit system carried water from Lake Cochituate over fourteen miles through six suburban towns to the receiving reservoir, where it was then piped to a second reservoir on Beacon Hill. The Brookline Reservoir was formed out of a natural basin extended by a twenty-six foot embankment and lined with a sloped granite wall. It ranges from fourteen to twenty-four feet deep. The resident engineer was T.S. Williams.

At the west end of the

reservoir, by Lee Street is a small granite gate house to regulate the flow of water. The large granite pump house standing at the east end discharged water through pipes to Boston. These structures were designed by a Boston based architect, Charles E. Parker. The gate house facade facing the intersections of Boylston and Warren streets reflects the influence of Italian Renaissance architecture, then just coming back into fashion with the construction of the new Boston Athnaeum. The reservoir immediately became a favorite site for citizens to enjoy its park-like setting. The distance around the track is 0.937 miles.

The demands on the system caused by the rapid growth of population on the region led to the establishment of the larger Chetsnut Hill Reservoir twenty years later. In 1902, the City of Boston decided to sell the Brookline Reservoir and its surrounding land. Prompted by the threat of

development, the neighbors, including Amy Lowell, John C. Olmsted, Walter Canning, Edward Atkinson, and George Lee contributed more than \$50,000 towards the purchase price of \$150,000. The citizen contribution was accepted at the December 30th, 1902 Town Meeting. Although there were plans in the 1920's to build a beach and a bathhouse near Lee and Dudley streets, as well as a warf near the Gatehouse, they were not realized. The Reservoir Park is on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. A jogging/walking track circles the reservoir. The gatehouse is architecturally significant and has been used as a meeting place.



Brookline Reservoir Gatehouse



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**Designed by Andrew A.
Ghobrial**