



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN PRESENTS 2017 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO
THE FISHER HILL RESERVOIR PARK GATEHOUSE IN BROOKLINE**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Fisher Hill Reservoir Park Gatehouse in Brookline to receive a 2017 Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic Preservation Award.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is proud to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of this year’s awardees,” Secretary Galvin said. “The projects the Commission is recognizing this year are particularly diverse and represent the many creative ways that significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. The rehabilitation of the Fisher Hill Reservoir Park Gatehouse showcases Brookline’s pride in making its past available for all to enjoy.”

The Fisher Hill Reservoir dates back to 1884, when the rapid influx of population into the metropolitan Boston area led to the need for a high-service distribution and receiving reservoir. The State Legislature appropriated funds that year, and the Fisher Hill Gatehouse and Reservoir were the first components built, in 1887. The Fisher Hill Reservoir Gatehouse used two 36-inch-diameter pipes to connect to the reservoir to the other high-service distribution and receiving reservoir in the area at Chestnut Hill. During the late 19th century, as water-supply infrastructure became increasingly essential to the growth of cities, the Fisher Hill Reservoir was a crucial element to improving the quality of life in metropolitan Boston. However, as the technology for water-supply infrastructure and management evolved during the 20th century, the need for the reservoir diminished. By the 1950s the Fisher Hill Reservoir was decommissioned, drained, and essentially abandoned.

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The Richardsonian Romanesque-style Gatehouse is a monumental structure featuring a granite substructure, stone main floor, brick second story, and slate hipped roof. Since the appropriation of funds was under the direction of the Boston City Engineer, the Gatehouse was designed by Boston City Architect Arthur Vinal, who also designed the similarly styled and proportioned Chestnut Hill High Service Pumping Station. Typical of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, the Gatehouse features oversized brownstone quoining and brownstone voussoirs at the window and door arches. Other detailing includes raised-relief terra-cotta panels on the façade, a purely decorative feature.

The Fisher Hill Gatehouse and Reservoir sat abandoned for more than 50 years until the Town of Brookline purchased the property with the intention of adaptively reusing it by filling the reservoir basin and creating a community park and soccer field. The property's transformation also included the rehabilitation of the historic Gatehouse. Upon assessment, it became clear that years of neglect meant that the structure was in need of major repairs.

Funded by public seed money and a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund, the Gatehouse underwent a full exterior rehabilitation. The work involved three major components: the replacement of the roof, extensive masonry repairs, and window and door replacements. The original roof was severely deteriorated and missing significant components, which resulted in water infiltration. A new slate roof was installed, with copper finial cap, hip flashing, gutters, and leaders that match the original. The Gatehouse also underwent extensive masonry cleaning, repair, and repointing, all necessary after years of neglect, water infiltration, and vandalism. The most extensive repair involved the careful stone-by-stone dismantling and rebuilding of the north masonry wall.

The final step in the Gatehouse's rehabilitation involved its windows. When the Gatehouse was decommissioned in the 1950s, all of the original windows were removed, along with its door, and the voids were filled in with either masonry or wood panels. After extensive study of historic photographs and drawings, appropriate wood window and front entry door replacements were installed, completing the rehabilitation project.

While similar reservoirs in surrounding towns have been drained and filled when they were taken out of service, the Fisher Hill Gatehouse and Reservoir remains as a remarkable surviving component of the Boston area's historic water-supply system. The rehabilitated Gatehouse and repurposed reservoir park make a significant contribution to the town's civic landscape.

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This is the 39th year of MHC's Preservation Awards program. Projects are considered annually for awards in the categories of Rehabilitation and Restoration, Adaptive Reuse, Education and Outreach, Archaeology, Stewardship, and Landscape Preservation. Individuals are considered in the categories of Individual Lifetime Achievement and Local Preservationist. Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Secretary Galvin will present the awards at an afternoon ceremony on November 2, 2017, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The Fisher Hill Reservoir Park Gatehouse in Brookline is one of 11 projects being honored.

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