

Metropolitan Water Board: Chestnut Hill  
Low Service Pumping Station  
Beacon Street  
Boston (Brighton)  
Suffolk County  
Massachusetts

HAER No. MA-23

HAER  
MASS,  
13-BOST,  
81-

PHOTOGRAPH  
HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

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Location: Beacon Street  
Boston (Brighton), Suffolk County, Massachusetts

UTM: 19.322520.4688760  
Quad: Newton

Date of Construction: 1900

Builder/Designer: Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge

Original Use: Pumping Station

Present Use: Pumping Station

Current Owner: Metropolitan Water District

Significance: Encouraged by the good results being obtained by the Metropolitan Sewerage System, the Massachusetts legislature of 1893 authorized the State Board of Health to make investigations for a metropolitan water supply. The Metropolitan Water Act of 1895 was a landmark piece of legislation. Like the Metropolitan Park Commission Act of 1893, after which it was largely modeled, it recognized the mutual and interconnected needs of the separate towns and cities of the metropolitan region. Careful planning and rationalization of water supply, pumping, and distribution facilities was the only way in which the increasing demands of all the communities could be met. In addition to providing for a new high-service system, the Board of Health found that the existing 47-year-old Cochituate system was insufficient to supply many of Boston's new high-rise buildings. In addition, the slower conduit flow encouraged the growth of algae. Accordingly, the Board recommended that pressure be increased by pumping the water from Chestnut Hill another 29 feet higher to a new distributing reservoir at Spot Pond. The new low-service pumping station, built 500 feet northeast of the 1877 high-service station, was designed by

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Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge, and was completed in 1900. The exterior classical facade is of Indiana limestone with a base of pink Milford granite. Inside were three vertical triple-expansion steam pumping engines built by the Holly Manufacturing Company of Lockport, New York. In 1901, the first full year of its operation, the low-service station pumped about 71 percent of the total amount of water supplied by the Metropolitan Works.

References:

Metropolitan Water Board, Fifth Annual Report, January 1, 1900; Boston: Wright & Potter, 1900, Sixth Annual Report, January 1, 1901; Boston: Wright & Potter, 1901

Transmitted by:

Jean P. Yearby, 1984, from data compiled by Peter Stott