

LOS ANGELES AQUEDUCT CENTENNIAL GARDEN PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Los Angeles Aqueduct Centennial Garden is a renovation of a public park in Los Feliz dedicated in 1940 to William Mulholland, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (LADWP) engineer responsible for the design of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. The renovation was commissioned in 2013 by the LADWP to celebrate the 100th year since the completion of the Aqueduct in 1913.

The existing park includes a grand, Art Deco style fountain and boulder memorial to William Mulholland. In anticipation of the Centennial celebration, the LADWP reconstructed a section of the Aqueduct's dramatic, 8' diameter, riveted steel pipe to erect in the park. An engineering marvel, the Aqueduct collects and moves water 340 miles in open channels and siphon pipes from Lee Vining Creek in the Eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains to the San Fernando Valley, using the force of gravity alone. The City of Los Angeles still depends on this water source for a large segment of its population.

The landscape architect was asked to design a small water conservation demonstration garden to go along with the pipe. Inspired by the LADWP's passion to educate and highlight the engineering inherent in the Aqueduct's construction, the landscape architect proposed a much larger intervention – a complete renovation of the historic park to include a graphic recreation of the Aqueduct's path, larger and more meaningful water conservation gardens, pedestrian pathways and a picnic area to serve area residents.

A coordinated client-consultant team was formed with the landscape architectural concepts realized by LADWP's own project engineers, steel shop fabricators, site concrete and landscape construction crews.

The design includes a representation of the Aqueduct as an inverted section of its trapezoidal form, poured in concrete and hand seeded with blue glass. Corten steel planks, set into the decomposed granite path, mark the miles covered by the Aqueduct from source to terminus. Names of towns along the route were welded onto DWP blank utility access covers and installed along the path. The full scale section of pipe is erected at the park entry along with a compass medallion set in concrete with William Mulholland's cryptic address, "There it is. Take it!" from the 1913 Grand Opening of the Aqueduct.

The wide expanse of tired lawn was removed and gardens of native and low water use plant materials added on all sides, bringing color, texture and seasonal change to this urban park. Native Oaks, Redbud and Sycamores provide shade and habitat value. A smaller, Hybrid Bermuda lawn play space and decomposed granite picnic area were also provided.

The district's City Council Member fully supported the design renovation, which brought new attention to the historic Mulholland Memorial, as well as an upgraded park to the area. The Ground Breaking and Grand Opening ceremonies were well attended with community leaders, DWP workers and even a descendent of William Mulholland himself.