

Photo courtesy of St. Augustine Historical Society, c. 1915



Historic Water Works Open House

Self-Guided Tour

HISTORIC TIMELINE

1896-1898: Constructed as part of City's first water utility as the pumping station

1928: Converted to community center when West King Street water treatment plant was constructed in 1927

1928-2005: St. Augustine Art Association, Little Theatre, Camp Fire Girls and Garden Club occupied building

2005: Building closed due to structural concerns

2009: Architectural status report completed and scaffolding installed to support the roof

2013-2014: Designated a Local Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places

2015-2021: City preservation efforts removed non-historic additions/alterations to restore original finishes and features

2022: St. Johns Cultural Council becomes tenant and breathes new life into the building

2023: Florida Historical Marker to be erected in May during Historic Preservation Month

The St. Johns Cultural Council now occupies the space and has added additional necessary build-outs with careful monitoring by City staff to ensure that the building remains preserved. The space is now used as a venue to facilitate concerts, theatrical performances, exhibitions, educational programming, community meetings, and more.

TOUR / VENUE LOCATION

The Waterworks | 184 San Marco Avenue
904.808.7330
www.StJohnsCulture.com

TOUR HOST

City of St. Augustine Historic Preservation Division
904.209.4326 | harb@CityStAug.com
www.CityStAug.com/PreservationResources

BUILDING SPACES

Auditorium space: a new floor of sealed coquina concrete has a similar appearance to terrazzo. Trusses above are new and roof decking was repaired to match what was historically present. The green color was specified in the original 1896 engineering specifications as "green seal zinc."

Windows are original to the 1928 renovation and have been restored. The surrounding walls that have residual paint would require extensive care to remove the remaining old finish and avoid damaging the brick so they are left in their current condition following a significant amount of cleaning and superficial paint removal.

Walls to your left facing San Marco Avenue and behind you at the main entrance have been completely reconstructed due to masonry failure. This allowed the scaffolding to be removed from the auditorium space.

Stage: A height variation within the building always existed, likely to aid in gravity flow of water from boilers to pumping engines but later would literally be used as a stage. Hex tiles were covered with flooring and rediscovered and restored throughout the stage and back rooms.

Engineer's Office: The bay shaped room, once the engineer's office, was later turned into bathrooms accessed from the outside like a comfort station in historic park settings. Modern facilities could not be accommodated in this space and the terrazzo floor has been refurbished and patched where modern fire suppression equipment was installed. The plaster walls and beadboard ceiling are original and have been repaired and restored.

Kitchen and Office: The two back rooms were once open but became divided after the 1928 change in use. Walls are the original exposed brick with multiple layers of paint and stucco, and the plaster walls are original that were repaired. The hex flooring is original as identified in the 1896 engineering specifications. A cut-out was made in the corner of both rooms to allow a structural system to be placed in support of the last remaining original truss in the attic space.

New Addition: The 1970's addition had to be demolished as it was structurally unsound, and a new facility was constructed to provide bathrooms and handicap accessibility.

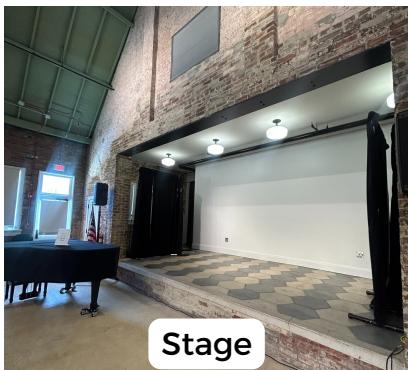
The **music platform** on the exterior of the building was once a fully enclosed semi-circular brick holding tank. In 1928 it was reduced to just a platform called the 'music platform' and, at some point, was demolished. This feature has been reconstructed and during construction the original brick foundations were discovered.

The **aerating basin** that is currently filled-in brought in water with a natural aquifer, later became a wading pool and eventually was filled in. It may be possible to restore the fountain in a future project.

In 1928, Water Works Park became **Davenport Park**, after the City received a bequest from the estate of Naomi Davenport to create a park in memory of Naomi Davenport's father, a part-time resident in St. Augustine. The City converted the building into a community center. The building became known as the Davenport Park Clubhouse, Davenport Playhouse, and later the Garden Center. The knee-wall and columns at the entrance were transported to this property when the ballfield at the park known as Francis Field was decommissioned.



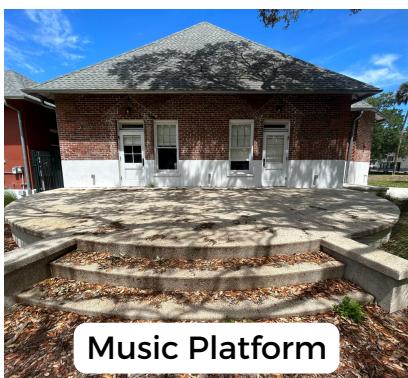
Auditorium Space



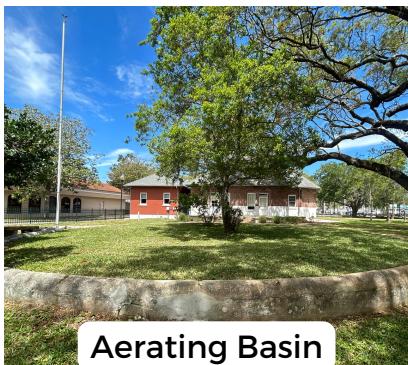
Stage



New Addition



Music Platform



Aerating Basin