

THE BATHHOUSE

One of the primary goals of this plan is to rehabilitate the Bathhouse and in doing so, to return the ticket sales to their original location, the central rotunda. From the beginning it was obvious that all spaces were in use (and some were cramped at that), and that a plan that involved moving the ticket-taking operation (and by implication, abandoning the current location) would be impossible if functions could not shift, and in some instances move out of the building.

It was also observed that the building is operated by two entities, Aquatics to operate the Pool and Nature Center staff to operate the Sheffield Center. Both work in the Parks Department, but they have different missions and they serve different, though overlapping populations. Currently, each operation is well defined within the building. If a new concept emerged that muddled areas of responsibility, it would likely fail if the details were left unresolved. While these matters were discussed with staff during this process, and encouraging possibilities were identified, the complexity and long-range implications of significant changes will require further study by staff beyond the reach of this plan. The recommendations made here assume that solutions to the logistical and operational issues can be resolved, and that a commitment to the budgeting requirements can be reached.

The Bathhouse in 1947

The existing Bathhouse was built in 1947 to replace an earlier wooden structure at the same location. Its design is credited to Dan Driscoll, who designed Deep Eddy a decade earlier, and like Deep Eddy, its plan is organized around a central transaction area flanked by two open-air dressing areas. It is a one-story masonry building with design influences of the Streamline Moderne style, which explains its abstract “ocean liner” appearance. It is listed in the Barton Springs National Register Archaeological and Historical District of 1985, where its condition was described as follows, “While a corner of the women’s dressing area is now used as ticket office and basket room, the structure has not otherwise been modified; even the original landscaping remains substantially intact.” It was designated a City of Austin Landmark in 1990.

Originally, tickets were purchased at the central glass rotunda, much the way movie tickets are bought today, with patrons walking up to ticket windows paying the clerks sitting inside. Depending on the size of the crowd, as many as five clerks would be deployed while the waiting patrons were shaded by the deep canopy that still exists today.



Grand opening for existing Bathhouse, 1947. Tickets were originally sold from the central rotunda. PICA 20162, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



Existing 1947 Bathhouse. Originally, tickets were sold through ticket windows in the glass rotunda.

With tickets in hand, women would head left and men would head right, each passing through the Bathhouse to gender-specific dressing areas and then on to the Pool.

One of the defining functional aspects of the Bathhouse was its double-level basket storage spaces; one for men and one for women. These spaces were designed for cross ventilation; they have operable windows on the Pool side and tall openings filled with no more than a security mesh on other sides. While the use of baskets is a thing of the past, the spaces are still intact. One of them houses the “Splash!” exhibit and the other houses classroom spaces; both parts of the Beverly S. Sheffield Education Center.

The Bathhouse is, perhaps, most famous for its open-air dressing areas. They are characterized by benches under concrete shade structures, and outdoor showers and landscape plots in the middle. The men’s area is largely open, so it has clear lines of sight from one end to the other. The women’s area has open areas and structures for private cubicles, so lines of sight are less open there.

The Bathhouse also includes restrooms for public, non-swimmers’ use, and can be accessed from the park side without the requirement of buying a ticket. While the Bathhouse generally closes when the Pool closes, these restrooms are open 365 days a year, except during freezing conditions. They provide the main restroom facilities for the north side of the Pool.

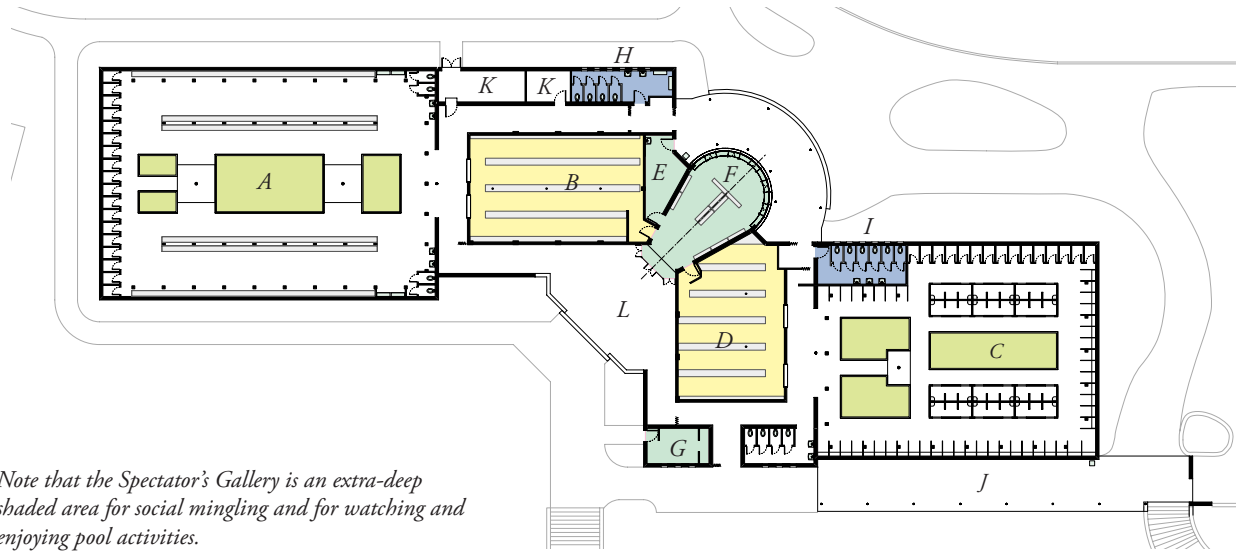
The Bathhouse Today

The Beverly S. Sheffield Education Center occupies the three central spaces of the building, the glass rotunda and the spaces to either side originally designed for basket storage. The Sheffield Center was installed in the early 1990s, and is dedicated to public education on matters related to the aquifer. It includes the Splash! exhibit, located where the men’s basket room was, a Gallery in the rotunda and two classrooms, located where the women’s basket room was. Splash! is an immersive exhibit, where the visitor is given an experience intended to mimic a walk through underground aquifer passages. Though it could use some freshening, it is attractive and well-designed and continues to be popular.

The Gallery features exhibits in the naturally lighted rotunda. They range in approach from posters and photographs to rocks and other natural artifacts. There is a rack of brochures, too. Generally the Gallery is a second stop after taking in Splash!

The two classrooms provide an educational program venue, mostly for school groups.

The outdoor dressing areas are still in use, much as they have been since the building



1946 Plan

- A. Men's Dressing Area
- B. Men's Basket Storage
- C. Women's Dressing Area
- D. Women's Basket Storage
- E. Manager's Office
- F. Ticket Sales
- G. Lifeguard's Lounge
- H. Men's Public Restroom
- I. Women's Public Restroom
- J. Spectator's Gallery
- K. Storage
- L. Entry Forecourt

Note that the Spectator's Gallery is an extra-deep shaded area for social mingling and for watching and enjoying pool activities.

opened. The Men's Area is generally the same open-air dressing space as always with wood benches under concrete shade canopies, outdoor showers and attractive areas of vegetation. More noticeable changes can be seen in the Women's Area, where some of its space was lost when the lifeguard and manager's offices were relocated in the 1960s. To accommodate that construction, some of the bench and shade canopy system was lost.

The public restrooms are also in their original locations, but they have been modified to satisfy the ADA, which has resulted in a decrease in fixture numbers.

Since storage is at a premium, equipment can be found in spare locations throughout the building including the former Lifeguard's Lounge and in the original passageway between the rotunda and the Men's Dressing area. Some of it is pool operations equipment, some of it is lawn and pool cleaning equipment and some of it is Watershed equipment (scuba gear and emergency response gear).

All of the occupied spaces are on the ground floor, but a computer space above Splash! deserves mention. It houses a handful of the computers that generally run on their own. But they sometimes require time and attention, and because the space is only accessible by a ladder located in another cramped room, a goal was set to try to find a new location on the ground floor.



The central rotunda was designed as a generous space, intended to accommodate as many as five ticket takers plus a substantial towel and bathing suit rental operation. PICA 17393, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



The current main entry to Barton Springs Pool.

For more than a generation, the Lifeguard's Lounge/Manager's Office has been located in a 1960s addition placed in the southeast corner of the Women's Dressing area. Tickets are sold through a window that faces the Tree Court. A small canopy over the window was added to protect the customer from the elements. Facing south, two windows look out onto the Pool, and a door gives access. Originally the area just outside was a "Spectator's Gallery", a deep, shaded loggia intended for lounging and socializing and taking in the view of the Pool. Today it is bisected by a handicapped ramp, which makes it more of a passageway than the social space it was originally designed to be.

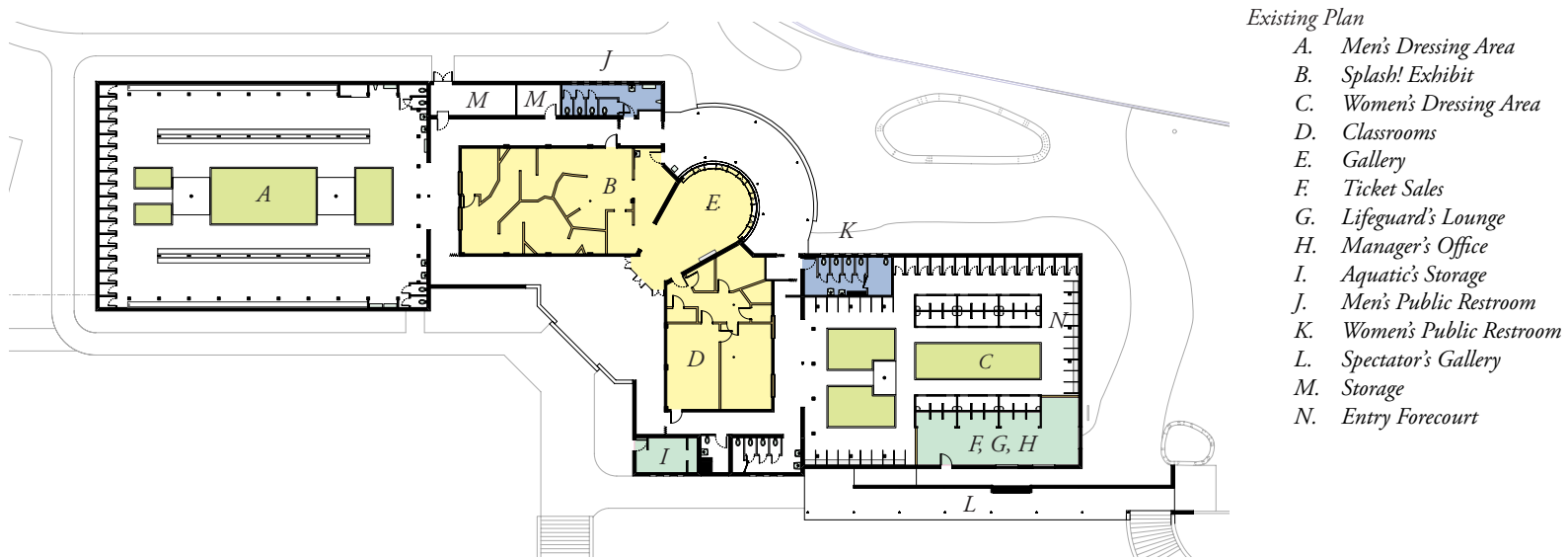
Building Condition

For the purposes of this plan, the building's condition was evaluated by examining drawing archives and by visual observations at the building by architects, engineers and roofing consultants. The planners also asked the operations staff, maintenance staff and swimmers for observations that could be of interest.

The building shell is load-bearing masonry on continuous concrete footings. The exterior is white limestone and the interior is glazed structural clay tile. The exterior appears to be stable and to be in generally good condition. Many of the interior structural clay tiles are experiencing cracking and spalling. In some cases, it appears to be due to corroding reinforcing steel expanding within the block, leading to cracks and breaks. In other cases, it is due to stresses from door hinges mounted directly to the blocks. And in still other cases, breakage appears to have been caused by heavy use in confined spaces. While all of this is unsightly, and it has certainly weakened the construction in the areas of the damage, it does not appear to be of such severity as to be threatening the structural integrity of the building at this time. Nonetheless, the structural clay tile is so important to the character of the building, that repairing and/or replacing it will be an important component of any rehabilitation effort.

The wood framing of the roof structure appears to be intact as do the steel beams and columns that support it. All of the original steel windows remain. Some show some surface rust and some have areas of compromising corrosion. In general, they appear serviceable. As was normal of the era, all of the glass is clear single pane.

One of the defining features of the two dressing areas are the concrete canopies and their "T" shaped concrete supports. As a collection, they seem to be structurally sound. Aside from the repair of minor spalling, they should generally be reused as they are.



- Existing Plan
- A. Men's Dressing Area
 - B. Splash! Exhibit
 - C. Women's Dressing Area
 - D. Classrooms
 - E. Gallery
 - F. Ticket Sales
 - G. Lifeguard's Lounge
 - H. Manager's Office
 - I. Aquatic's Storage
 - J. Men's Public Restroom
 - K. Women's Public Restroom
 - L. Spectator's Gallery
 - M. Storage
 - N. Entry Forecourt

The roof was evaluated by a roofing consultant who observed some leaks and that its general condition is poor. More troubling, several areas of the roof are designed with parapet walls on all sides. These areas have primary drains but not overflow drains, a code violation and a safety hazard. Roof replacement is a short-term recommendation of this plan.

The staff reported that the current air conditioning system is faltering, an assessment echoed by a mechanical engineer. HVAC system replacement is a short-term recommendation of this plan.

The electrical service appears to be adequate for future needs, but the location of the panels in the outdoor corridor between the rotunda and the Men's Dressing Area is noisy and not convenient to a new design. The electrical fixtures are generally not energy efficient and should be replaced with new, more efficient fixtures. Furthermore, numerous surface-mounted conduits can be seen on the building, suggesting a series of alterations and additions over the life of the building. Removing these and relocating their service in less conspicuous routes should be a part of any rehabilitation effort. From a practical standpoint, this could result in the replacement of all of the electrical service.

There are a range of ages and types of plumbing fixtures in the building. None of them appear to be water-conserving fixtures. To the extent that this plan will likely involve mov-

Three components of the Beverly S. Sheffield Education Center now occupy the building's central spaces, the Splash! Exhibit (B), the Classrooms (D) and the Gallery (E). The relocated ticket-taking operation required the installation of a ramp and stair apparatus to manage level changes, effectively eliminating the social space of the Spectator's Gallery. Note that the public restrooms are still located in their original spaces, but that their fixture numbers have been reduced due to ADA retrofits.



Men's Dressing Area, open and attractively landscaped, should retain its historic character.



The Women's Dressing Area should be redesigned for a more open feel, while still offering a range of privacy options. This image shows the relocated Lifeguard's Lounge/Manager's Office, and the space it took from the Women's Area.

ing and redesigning restrooms, and recognizing that this rehabilitation effort is intended to extend the life of the building for many decades, this plan is using a total plumbing replacement as its working assumption. It should also be said that the addition of rainwater collection and shower and lavatory water reuse systems would also necessitate significant replumbing.

OBSERVATIONS ON EXISTING FUNCTIONS

Men's Dressing Area--Anecdotal reports from users and staff indicate that the number of showers and toilets is thought to be adequate, and that the cubicles at the west end of the space are under used. There generally seemed to be openness to the possibility of dedicating some of the space to another use if it contributed to an overall success. Open-to-the-sky showers were considered to be an essential feature of the Dressing Area experience. The planners were cautioned against any effort that might shroud them or put them under a canopy.

Women's Dressing Area--Anecdotal reports from users and staff indicate that the number of showers is adequate, but some felt that some additional toilets would be welcome. There were also some reports, from this group and from others, indicating that the Women's Area was under used in general and the cubicle dressing accommodations were under used in particular, especially in the aisle along the north wall. Suspecting that a possible explanation might be the design and condition of the cubicles, the planners compared for the women the design of the Men's side with the design of the Women's. In general, the idea that more openness, while keeping a range of privacy options, was seen as an improvement. A tour of the recently-opened bathhouse at Deep Eddy with a different group confirmed the sentiment. Like the men, the open-to-the-sky showers on the women's side were considered to be an essential feature of the Dressing Area experience.

Lifeguard's Lounge/Manager's Office--The Lifeguard's Lounge/Manager's Office was relocated to its current space in the 1960s as an experiment to improve the ability to see the Pool, and it has been there ever since. The change did, indeed, improve visibility, but it came at a cost. It made the Pool entry more difficult to find, and it required construction to manage a level change that diminished the viability of the Spectator's Gallery as the social space it was originally designed to be. It also made ticket sales (and crowd management) more difficult during peak periods, since the physical arrangement only accommodated one clerk.

In discussions with Aquatics staff, the planners learned that the currently accepted pool-management practice involves the manager walking the perimeter of the Pool; not sitting

in an office. They also learned that the sophistication of today's communications equipment diminished (but did not eliminate) the importance of visual proximity to the Pool. In short, the current location was not so sacrosanct that it could not be moved if a suitable alternative could be found, and significantly, the same level of visual access was not a requirement.

Sheffield Center--For many people, the Splash! exhibit is the Beverly S. Sheffield Education Center, not realizing that the Sheffield also includes the Gallery and two classrooms. Splash! is announced by a large banner draped over the building, and a visit to it is instantly compelling. Its immersive design literally envelops the participant in its enthusiasm and its message. Splash! is professionally designed and it is rigorously maintained, and it continues to be popular.

In the interest of exploring options, planners discussed a number of possibilities for Splash! with staff; moving it, reconfiguring it, reimagining it. Part of the motivation was to simply be thorough, but another was to look for ways to relieve crowding within the building. If there was an opportunity to be found, it would be in reassigning the space to a function that could take advantage of the extra tall space and the potential for daylighting through the large Bathhouse windows.

But moving Splash! would be expensive and any other location would be less prominent, which would likely dampen its important educational mission. In the end, the planners came to believe that Splash! has become a vital component of the Barton Springs experience, and that it should remain where it is. In fact, its prominence (along with the rest of the Sheffield Center) should be amplified.

By comparison to Splash!, the Gallery seems undernourished. Splash! looks like professional exhibitry, and (with apologies to an overworked, underfunded staff) the Gallery looks homemade. The Gallery is self-guided, which is fine for casual exploring, but it frequently leads would-be visitors to wonder whether the space is open to the public, diminishing the impact this important amenity could offer to the park and to the city.

The classrooms seem incongruous in their proximity to the Gallery. When they are not in use, Gallery visitors frequently venture awkwardly into them, not knowing that they are not a logical next step for the visit. Nature Center staff confirms that observation, explaining that they are located in the Bathhouse because space was available there at the time they were needed. In further discussions, the planners learned that the classroom programs generally involve a long walking trip to the creekbed downstream from the Pool to collect



With a single area drain, and no overflow drain, a clog could lead to a catastrophic roof collapse.



Aside from the deterioration, the preponderance of masonry toilet partitions gives the place a crowded feel. A rehabilitated Bathhouse should include more generous maneuvering clearances throughout.



Aside from the masonry deterioration, some of the Women's Dressing area seems cramped and dank. Regular swimmers report that this area is rarely used.



Electrical upgrades are installed unattractively, rendering this otherwise usable space good only for storage.

rocks, bringing them back to the classroom to discuss them. From a practical standpoint, this is inconvenient, plus, it brings considerable noise and mud through an otherwise contemplative space. It should also be mentioned that the classrooms are windowless additions that missed an opportunity to take advantage of a space with tall ceilings and generous windows. A new, more convenient location, if one could be found, could free up some space in the Bathhouse, and allow for a use more complementary to the Splash! and the Gallery experiences, and one that would take better advantage of the existing architecture.

A related matter, near, but not in the Bathhouse, is the Nature Center storage of bicycles in the vault below the bandstand, the 1920s construction just across the parking lot from the Bathhouse. These bikes have a program use, but that particular storage location is more a matter of availability than necessity. Again, if a more convenient location could be found, some equipment currently stored in the Bathhouse could be moved into the vault.

Restrooms--In the original design, the restroom spaces were designed to tighter tolerances than is customary today, giving them a somewhat claustrophobic feeling by today's standards (not even accounting for ADA clearances). Part of that feeling is traceable to the decision to use glazed structural clay tiles for the partitions, which at 4" thick, consume considerable floor space. And because they are solid all the way to the ground, they make the restrooms difficult to clean. Furthermore, because they are opaque, they contribute to an impression that someone may be lurking just out of view; an unpleasant thought in public restrooms.

Staff emphasized the special importance of the two public restrooms, since they are the only restrooms for much of the north side including the Zilker Hillside Theater. Their importance dictates that they remain open every day of the year except when it freezes. Finding a way to add fixtures would be seen as a plus.

Storage--Discussions with staff revealed that much of the stored equipment needs to stay in the Bathhouse, but that some pool cleaning equipment only needs to be convenient to the Pool, but not necessarily in the Bathhouse. The Watershed equipment definitely needs to be in the Bathhouse, and the location for the emergency response gear would be improved if it could be relocated from the attic above the classrooms to the ground floor.

Connections--The Bathhouse is strategically located with respect to three important trails. A new 31 1/2 mile Austin-Kyle trail system was announced in the Fall of 2007. For the most part, it will link parcels of land acquired to protect them from development and to preserve water quality in sensitive recharge areas, including Barton Creek. Its Austin trail-

head will begin at the Barton Springs Bathhouse. The Barton Creek Greenbelt is Austin's most popular greenbelt, and it also begins at the Bathhouse.

The Zilker Trail currently exists, but in an incomplete form. This trail grew from the observation that foot travel from the north side to the south side is not possible without paying for admission to the Pool. When complete it will extend the Town Lake Hike and Bike Trail west along the south bank to a bridge upstream of the Pool, then return to Lady Bird Lake along the north bank. The bridge is scheduled for construction within the year.

One might reasonably expect that the new Austin-Kyle trail and a completed Zilker Trail will bring more interest and attention to the park (and the Bathhouse) than already exists.

Recommendations

Upgrade gallery and create a Visitor's Center

The Beverly S. Sheffield Education Center serves a valuable service by offering a depth of enjoyment to the park experience that is not available elsewhere in the park. And by virtue of its location in Zilker's most prominent building, it serves as a natural place of beginning, especially for the first time visitor. This plan recommends raising the profile of the Sheffield Center by upgrading the Gallery and by creating a Visitor's Center to replace the two classrooms. The idea is intended to extend and give official voice to the long tradition of love and advocacy for the place, and to create a central organizing experience for the visitor, where the rich historic and natural stories of the place are easy to access and enjoy. This invigorated Sheffield Center would feature real-time data on spring flow, water chemistry and flood activity among other things. The Visitor's Center would feature exhibits on areas of interest; the people, the events, the natural wonder. It could also serve as an event location, for lectures, receptions and small performances. A number of successful local models can be emulated--the Visitor's Center at the Texas State Capitol and the Visitor's Center at Westcave Preserve are but two examples. Even the nearby Umlauf Sculpture Garden & Museum might suggest possibilities as a venue for events and small performances.

Indeed, the mission of the Sheffield Center should be seen as extending beyond the walls of the Bathhouse; it should be felt throughout the park by means of a comprehensive interpretive plan.

Return ticket purchasing to the rotunda

This plan also recommends returning the ticket purchase transaction to its original location, the central glass rotunda, to give a personal face to the park's most prominent building, and to allow for ticket-sales flexibility, especially during periods of peak demand.



Plumbing fixtures vary in age and condition. Trough urinals (right) do not meet current code. None of the fixtures are low water-use fixtures.



The relocation of the Lifeguard's Lounge/Manager's Office in the 1960s required this elevated passage to account for a level change, changing what was designed to be a shaded social space into more of a passageway.



What were originally designed as generous openings into the basket rooms are covered with vinyl siding. A rehabilitated Bathhouse should replace the siding with glass to create a light-filled, double-height space.

Upgrade Bathhouse

This plan recommends updating the bathhouse parts of the building, making them more comfortable and making them more modern, while respecting their historic architectural heritage. One significant modification would be in the Women's Dressing Area, where a new sense of air and light should replace some of what seems cramped and dank to today's eyes. And this plan recommends removing the current Lifeguard Lounge/Manager's Office.

Both Bathhouse dressing areas – the men's side and the women's – have courtyards with planting areas that are open to the sky. Both have panels of well-watered St. Augustine that offer opportunities for private sunbathing. Both also have planting beds with exotic vegetation. The Men's Dressing Area courtyard, tended for many years by Frank Fisher, is especially lovely. The bamboo grove, the banana planting, and the planters by the entry and foyer show care, affection and intelligence, and are a delight. The Women's Dressing Area is also lovely, with cannas and violets. Adding roof planters, like those on the men's side to the women's side, would be a wonderful and exotic addition, since there are volunteers available to care for them.

Reconfigure public restrooms

This plan also recommends reconfiguring the public restrooms to increase their number of fixtures and to make them more comfortable.

Significant Assumptions

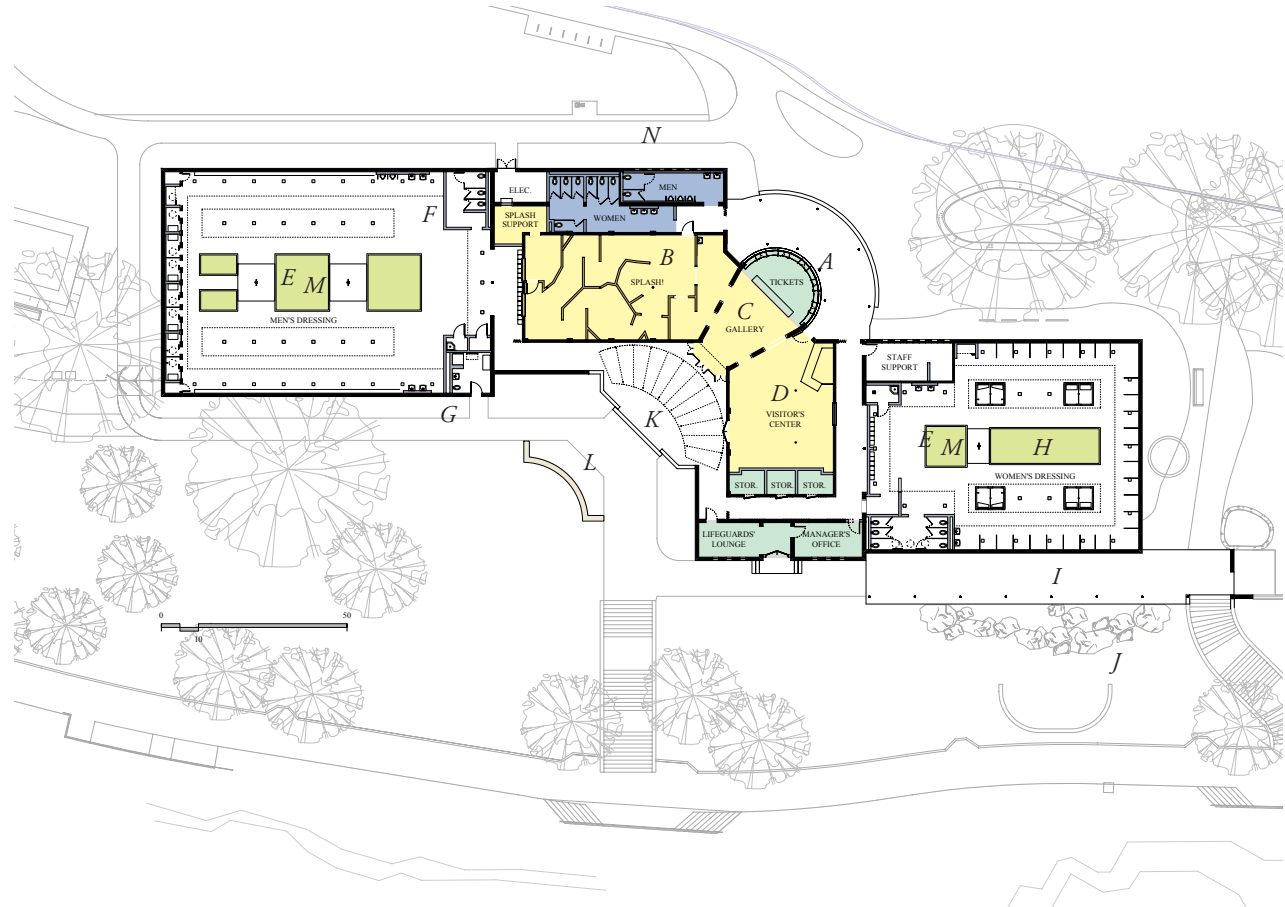
This proposal rests on two significant assumptions whose resolution is beyond the scope of this report. One, that alternative accommodations can be found for certain program spaces and storage requirements. The maintenance yard (assuming that maintenance operations can be relocated) offers tantalizing possibilities for relocating the Sheffield classrooms and the Nature Center bikes as well as some pool operations equipment. But the fate of the maintenance center is uncertain at this time, and in any event is beyond the scope of this plan.

And two, that staffing and operational requirements brought on by amplifying the role of the Sheffield Center by adding a Visitor's Center and expanding Gallery can be resolved. Clearly, this proposal will require more staff and a larger operations budget.

These two assumptions are so fundamental to this proposal that the planners believe that no rehabilitation effort of significant scope should be undertaken at all unless they are addressed and satisfied.

Proposed Bathhouse

- A. Return ticket sales to their original location.
- B. Splash! exhibit remains in its current location.
- C. New Visitor Center function offers park history and information, while serving as “lobby” for the Splash! exhibit.
- D. New Gallery to display real-time technical data, such as flow rates and water chemistry, about springs and aquifer.
- E. Outdoor showers. No umbrellas, no canopies.
- F. New water closet space for greater privacy.
- G. New Unisex Restrooms for family convenience.
- H. Women’s Dressing area redesigned for more open feel, while still offering a range of privacy options.
- I. Remove non-original construction to recreate full-depth “Spectator’s Gallery”.
- J. New Boulder Garden.
- K. New overhead shade canopy.
- L. Widen intersection with a low stone wall, and wider walk.
- M. Solar hot water for men’s and women’s showers.
- N. Consolidate public restrooms in this location.



Returning the ticket-taking operation (A) to the central rotunda improves service during “peak” hours, and gives the building a much-needed human face. And without the level-change apparatus, the Spectator’s Gallery (I) is once again a social space. The new importance of the Entry Forecourt as a gathering and dispersal space is acknowledged with the addition of the shade canopy (K) and the widened intersection (L).



Seen from above, the Visitor's Center takes advantage of the double height space and the generous windows.



The Gallery should feature real-time data on spring flow, water chemistry and flood activity among other things. Photo: Clark Hancock

Process

The planners met with staff and swimmers on numerous occasions, asking questions, sharing sketches and discussing alternatives. They also visited the Pool and Bathhouse at various times watching users as they engaged in a range of activities. The intention, of course, was to learn about the patterns of use in hopes of uncovering opportunities for a successful outcome. The process began with a discussion of current uses and how well they function.

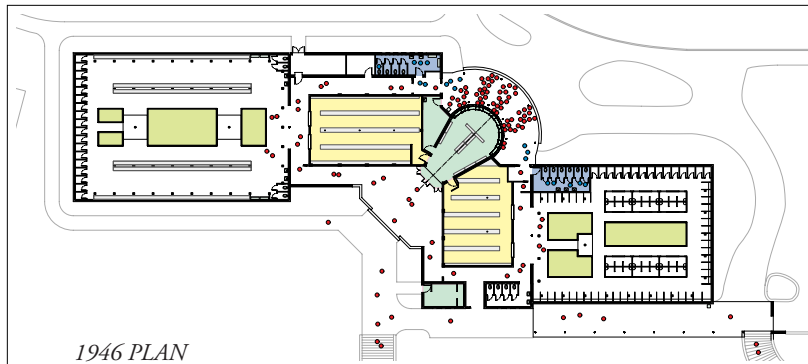
As they formulated an approach to treating the building itself, the planners considered two general propositions:

Because of the building's historic status, alterations to the exterior of the building were avoided where possible. In a related sense, alterations to the dressing areas were undertaken with sensitivity and attention to retaining the character of the existing architecture.

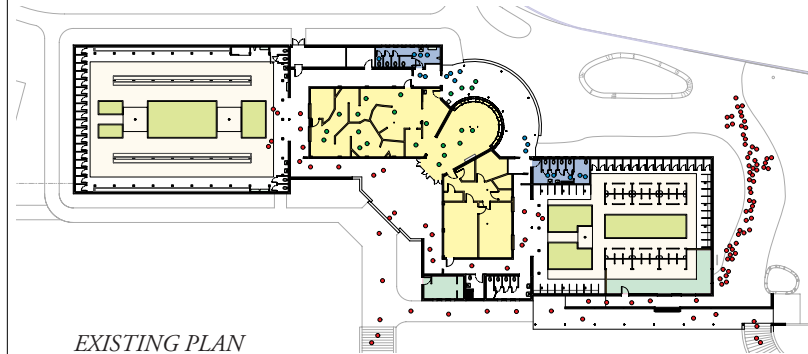
Proposals that might add new buildings (to add more storage, for example) were seen as a last resort. First, the north side of the park, particularly along the edge of the creek, is already appropriately full. And second, because the site is on the National Register of Historic Places, its general ambiance was seen as something important to respect and to preserve.

The search for solutions to functional and space-related challenges led the planners to consider a wide range of options, rejecting many:

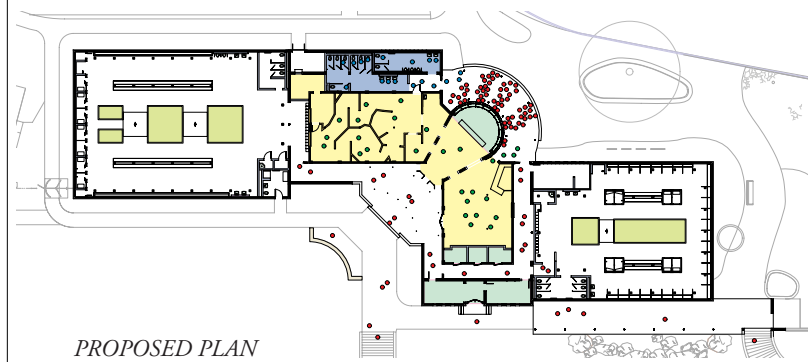
- Add a second level. This would have relieved overcrowding, but it would have greatly complicated crowd management. Plus, it would have added building code complications that would have been difficult to overcome.*
- Move the Splash! exhibit. This would have freed up space, but where would it go? It is in a logical place now. Plus, moving it would have been very expensive.*
- Add storage to the west end of the Men's Dressing Area. This would have satisfied some storage needs, but would have required a series of doors on the western exterior wall.*
- Relocate public restrooms to the east end of the Women's Dressing Area. This would have taken substantial space from the Women's Dressing Area. Plus, it would have added doors to the east wall.*
- Make an addition to the building to ease overcrowding. But where? The north, south and east sides are fully accounted for. And the west side is the Pecan Grove, a lightly used (by Barton Springs standards), but lovely space.*



1946 PLAN



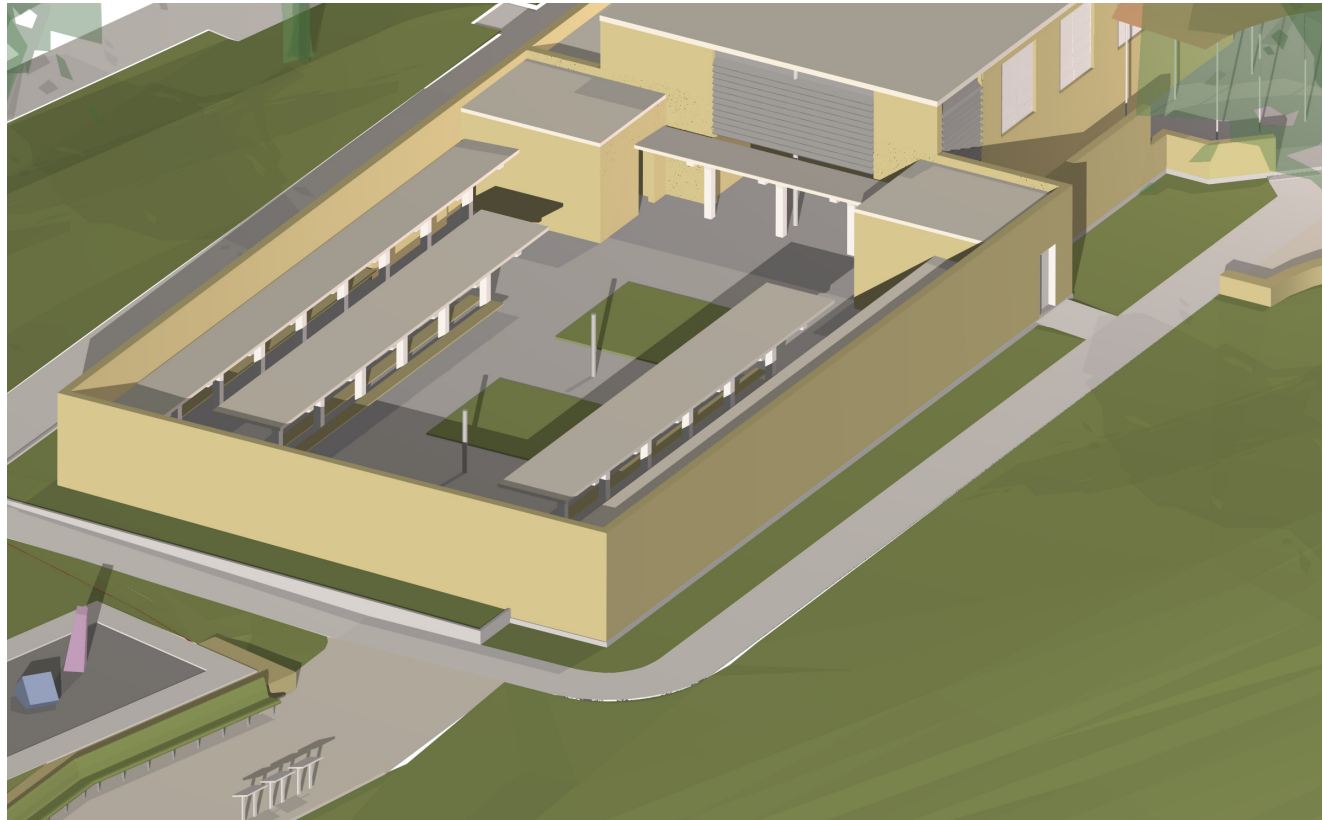
EXISTING PLAN



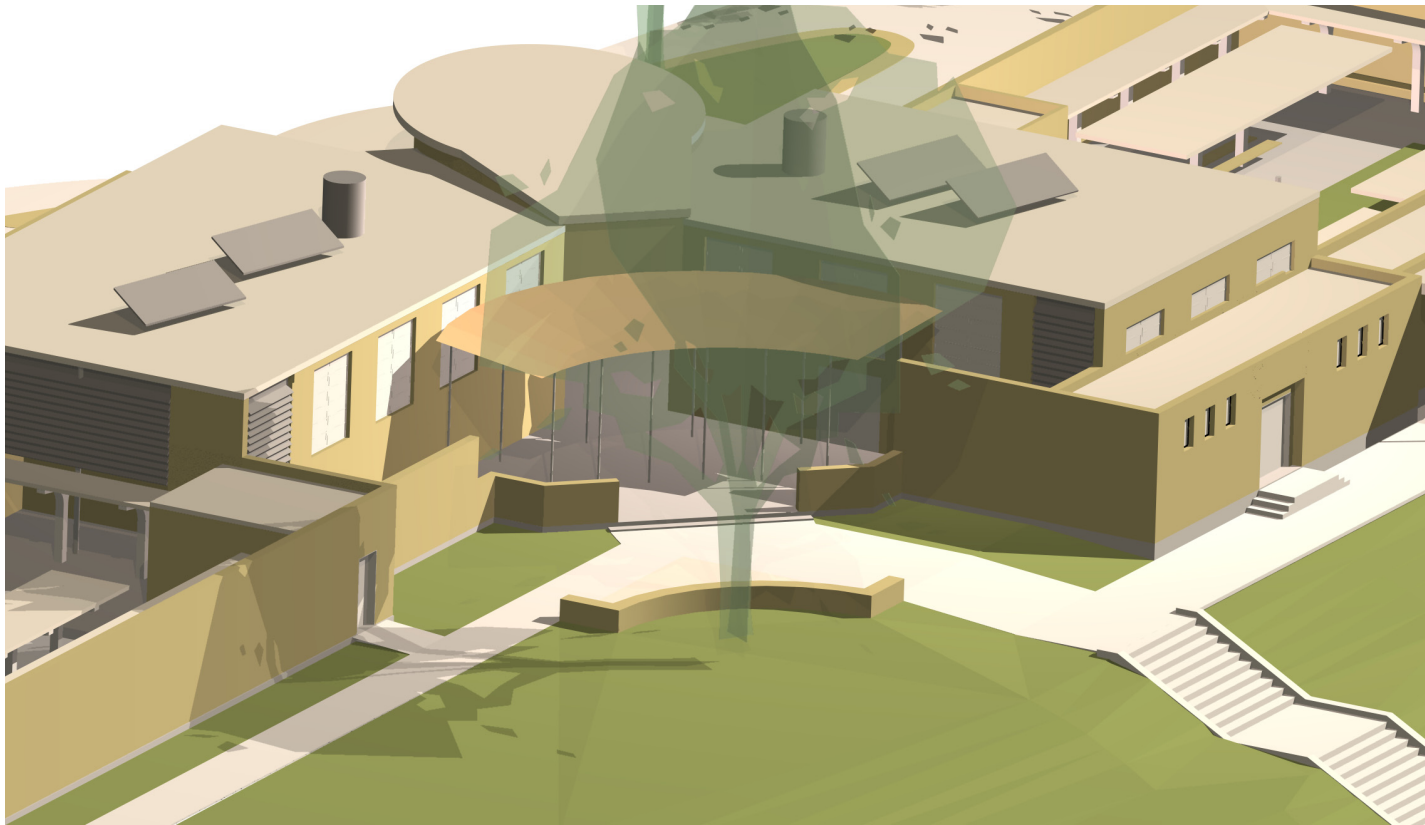
PROPOSED PLAN

The planning process compared circulation patterns of the 1946 plan, the existing plan and the proposed plan. At the request of Aquatics staff, special consideration was given to "peak usage"; those summer afternoons when thousands of swimmers can show up all at once.

Each of these three diagrams show the same number of swimmers (red dots), the same number of public restroom users (blue dots) and the same number of Sheffield Center visitors (green dots), except for the 1946 Plan, when the Sheffield did not exist.



The Men's Dressing Area remains much like it is today, generally open with benches under concrete canopies and landscaped squares in the middle. Note the addition of the Unisex Restroom and the water closet room, both near the taller volume.



The Entry Forecourt features a new shade canopy for comfort and to create a more human scale. The low wall is intended to widen the sidewalk intersection and to create a social space under the shade of a mature tree. Note the rooftop solar hot water collectors.

Notes on Sustainability

The rehabilitation of the existing Bathhouse offers a number of exciting opportunities for using resources more wisely including the following:

- Solar hot water.
- Improved roof insulation.
- Improved energy performance of windows.
- Energy efficient lighting.
- Low water-use plumbing fixtures.
- Rainwater harvesting.
- Shower and lavatory water collection and reuse.
- High performance air conditioner, such as the “geothermal” unit seen at the Westcave Preserve.
- A new Pool side-shade structure at the Entry Forecourt to improve visitor comfort and to shade the exposed windows of the rotunda.

There are also opportunities in the areas immediately surrounding the building:

- Hybrid car-only parking spaces.
- Additional trees in the Tree Court to improve the building microclimate.
- More bike racks to encourage alternate modes of transportation.
- Boulder garden to soften the modern architecture and to introduce native Texas plants in areas that are now difficult to maintain and to irrigate.
- Native Texas, xeriscape landscape around building perimeter.



The Women's Dressing Area is redesigned to introduce a new sense of air and light, while offering a range of privacy options. Note that the existing Lifeguard's Lounge/Manager's Office has been removed. Note the Boulder Garden, softening the modern architecture while also extending the social space of the Spectator's Gallery.



Many of the subordinate roofs are flat, and are surrounded by parapet walls. Because they are designed with a primary roof drain and no overflow drain, they do not meet today's code (above). Some of the roof membranes are pulling away from their substrates and puckering (below).

BUILDING

Rehabilitate Existing Bathhouse (Phase 1)

In the course of the public input process, a strong sentiment in favor of focusing on water quality issues emerged, which led to assigning most bathhouse rehabilitation matters to a lower priority. Nonetheless, because the roof was old, the planning team had commissioned a roof conditions assessment, and learned that the roof is designed in a way that does not meet current safety standards.

Specifically, many of the subordinate roofs are flat, and are surrounded by parapet walls. Today's code requires such roofs to have both a primary roof drain as well as an overflow drain. The purpose is to protect against a clogged primary drain allowing water to accumulate and a catastrophic roof failure to result. These existing roofs do not have overflow drains. Clearly, this is a life-safety matter.

Instead of replacing parts of the roof, this plan recommends that the entire roof be replaced at this time. The existing roof is old and it leaks and its insulation is questionable anyway, so an entire roof replacement makes sense from an economy-of-scale standpoint. This work should include new insulation, flashings and new code-compliant drains.

This plan also recommends that rooftop solar hot water collectors be installed at the same time. Since their support fittings will necessarily penetrate the roof, using the roof replacement as an opportunity to perform both tasks seems advisable.