**Meeting 2020 June 18**

COMMISSION REPORT

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| **TO:** | CHAIR AND MEMBERS<br>COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION | **DATE:** | 2020 June 10 |
| **FROM:** | DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING | **FILE:** | 77000 05 |
| **SUBJECT:** | **ALTA VISTA RESERVOIR VENT** | | |
| **PURPOSE:** | To seek authorization from the Community Heritage Commission to prepare a report on the Alta Vista Reservoir Vent, outlining its potential conservation and protection as a civic heritage feature. | | |

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** staff prepare a report for consideration regarding the potential conservation and protection of the Alta Vista Reservoir Vent as a civic heritage feature.

**REPORT**

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

In March 2019, Council approved a plan to demolish the 1913 Alta Vista reservoir located at 5172 McKee Street and expand the Alta Vista Reservoir Park site. During this project, the heritage value of the surviving Alta Vista Reservoir Vent was identified by City staff. This report provides information on the history and heritage value of the Alta Vista Reservoir Vent, and recommends that the Community Heritage Commission authorize staff to prepare a report for consideration of its conservation, relocation in Alta Vista Reservoir Park, and protection under a Heritage Designation Bylaw.

The City of Burnaby's Municipal Heritage Policy for Municipally Owned Buildings and Sites, approved by Council on 1991 July 08, includes four policy statements to support identification and conservation of heritage resources owned by the City. Policies #2 and #3 include review and expansion of the City's inventory of civic heritage resources as potential sites and resources are identified. The City has designated several civic heritage resources which are masonry features, such as cenotaphs, stone walls, gates, and arches.

## 2.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

Evaluating resources owned by the City for protection and designation as significant heritage resources aligns with the following goals and sub-goals of the *Corporate Strategic Plan*:

- **A Dynamic Community**
  - City facilities and infrastructure – Build and maintain infrastructure that meets the needs of our growing community.

- **A Thriving Organization**
  - Reliable services, technology and information – Protect the integrity and security of City information, services and assets.

In addition to these goals, Burnaby's Official Community Plan includes the direction under its Heritage Policy (12.4.4) that the City continue its stewardship of civic heritage resources.

## 3.0 ALTA VISTA RESERVOIR VENT

The Alta Vista Reservoir was constructed in 1913, as part of the Municipality of Burnaby's early waterworks infrastructure. A waterworks system delivering water from Seymour Creek in North Vancouver to Burnaby homes and businesses began operation in 1912. The system was a significant engineering work in 1912, and enabled the young municipality to support development and population growth. The event was marked by the Municipality with an official civic holiday known as "Splash Day" and celebrated in Central Park with speeches and fanfare.

The early waterworks system used pumps to deliver water to reservoirs located on high points of land in the community, including Capitol Hill and Alta Vista. Distribution of water from the reservoirs to customers relied on gravity.

The Alta Vista Reservoir was constructed from reinforced concrete, with pillars supporting an arched ceiling (***Attachment #1***). It consisted of a large central tank, with an intake chamber and outlet chamber on either end. All water entered the reservoir through the intake chamber, where a float valve system automated shut down of the flow of water into the reservoir to prevent over-filling. A large vent was constructed over the intake chamber to release air pressure.

The vent consists of a cast iron pipe inside a concrete column with a decorative cast iron grate at the top (***Attachment #2***). The contract documents for construction of the reservoir (which are in the collection of the City of Burnaby Archives) specified the purchase of the pipe and grate from the supply company Glenfield & Kennedy (***Attachment #3***). A tapered octagonal concrete column was constructed around the cast iron pipe, giving the vent a decorative quality. Standing at over 3.6 metres (12 feet) on a high point of land, the vent served as a visible reminder of the engineering works that lay beneath the ground, and was a landmark in the neighbourhood and unique feature of Alta Vista Reservoir Park (***Attachment #4***).

The reservoir was decommissioned in the early 2000s. At its 2019 March 25 meeting, Council approved a plan to demolish the reservoir to expand Alta Vista Reservoir Park and its playground. The heritage value of the vent was identified by staff during planning for the demolition. The vent was removed from the reservoir during demolition, and transferred to off-site storage by Parks Development staff.

The heritage value of the Alta Vista Reservoir Vent lies in its association with Burnaby's early waterworks system, which significantly impacted the community's growth and development. It is the only remaining physical evidence of the Alta Vista Reservoir, and has the potential to be re-incorporated into the Alta Vista Reservoir Park as a historical feature to commemorate the park's former use and history.

## 4.0 NEXT STEPS

With authorization from the Community Heritage Commission, staff will prepare a conservation and designation report for the consideration of the Community Heritage Commission and Council. The report will include costs for repairing the vent, a plan for its re-installation in Alta Vista Reservoir Park adjacent to its original location, and installation of interpretive signage.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

This report recommends that staff be authorized to prepare a report for the consideration of the Community Heritage Commission for protection of the Alta Vista Reservoir Vent, which staff have identified as having significant heritage value. With approval of this report's recommendation, staff will proceed with preparation of a more detailed report for consideration.

E.W. Kozak, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

LC:sa
***Attachments***

cc: City Manager
Director Finance
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
City Clerk

**Attachment #1**


Photograph of the interior of the reservoir taken during its demolition in November, 2019. The Alta Vista Reservoir Vent is visible at the top of the photograph, wrapped to protect it during removal.

**Attachment #2**

The Alta Vista Reservoir Vent in its original location, prior to demolition of the reservoir.

**Attachment #3**



# Reservoir Ventilators.

Fig. C 87.

Fig. C 87a.

Fig. C 170.

Fig. C 171.

| Dia. | Prices. | | | | Length Over All. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fig. C 87. | Fig. C 87a. | Fig. C 170. | Fig. C 171. | Fig. C 87. | Fig. C 87a. | Fig. C 170. | Fig. C 171. |
| 2" | | | | | 0' 10" | 2' 5" | 2' 4" | 2' 4" |
| 3" | | | | | 0' 11" | 2' 9½" | 2' 7½" | 2' 7½" |
| 4" | | | | | 1' 2½" | 3' 1" | 2' 11" | 2' 11" |
| 5" | | | | | 1' 5" | 3' 4½" | 3' 5½" | 3' 5½" |
| 6" | | | | | 1' 7" | 3' 9" | 4' 0" | 4' 0" |
| 7" | | | | | 1' 11" | 4' 3" | 4' 4" | 4' 4" |
| 8" | | | | | 2' 2" | 4' 10½" | 4' 8" | 4' 8" |
| 9" | | | | | 2' 4½" | 5' 5½" | 5' 3" | 5' 3" |

Glenfield & Kennedy were suppliers of engineering equipment for water works and sanitary engineering projects. Page 57 of their 1916 catalogue includes C87a, the reservoir vent specified for the Alta Vista Reservoir.

**Attachment #4**

The Alta Vista Reservoir Vent has been a landmark at the reservoir site since the reservoir was constructed in 1913.