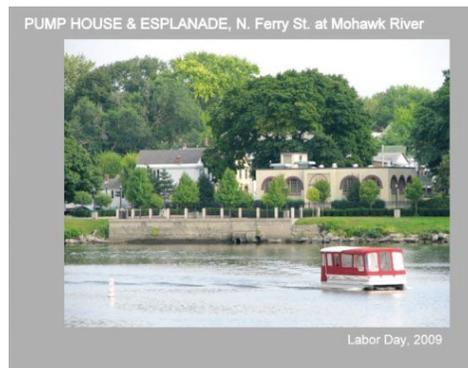


# Questions about the future of the Old Pump House

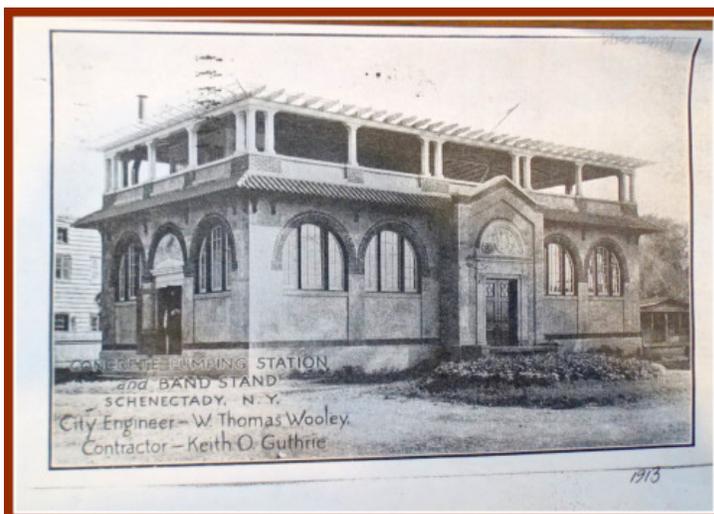
<https://snowmenatthegates.com/2017/07/18/questions-about-the-future-of-the-old-pump-house/>



.. originally in "[suns along the Mohawk](#)" (July 17, 2017)



above: North Ferry St. Pump House on [R] Labor Day 2009 and [L] on the day of the Irene Flood (August 2011)



.. above: from the collection of the Schenectady County Historical Society, Grems-Doolittle Library

Many people in the Stockade and Schenectady had hoped that the Old Pump House would be retro-fitted and rehabilitated instead of building an entirely new pump station. That battle has concluded, and there [will be a newly-constructed pump station](#) to replace the venerable old one. However, one issue that I believe will need a considerable amount of deliberation (more than is possible at the special meeting of the Association and neighborhood on the new pump station revision) is the fate of the Old Pump House. That may be especially true in a City that [recently "lost" the Old Nicholas Building](#), and thereby angered many of its residents.



*Kitchen Jazz (2013)*

Furthermore, consideration of the future of the Old Pump House, which was constructed in 1913 (see rendition above), is logically interwoven with the design of the New Pump Station and its lot. The next stage in the creation of the new pump station is, of course, its architectural/exterior design. It would seem strange to decide upon the exterior design of the New Pump Station without knowing whether the Old Pump House is likely to still be standing beside it, just a couple of feet away and sharing the same "parkscape".

- If, for example, the east wall of the new pump station abuts the old House (as in the sketch near the top of this posting), it would probably be unadorned, without windows, etc. But, if the Old Pump House is coming down, we would replace a quaint and attractive scene from the park and river with the nearly blank side of the 125 North Ferry Street, a two-family dwelling, and the larger New Pump Station facility, which would be in full view on all sides.



Frankly, I do not know "how popular" the Old Pump House ["OPH"] is among various segments of the Schenectady community and its leaders. Nor do I have any idea

what it would cost to keep it adequately maintained, and to remove pumping apparatus and otherwise convert it to some new community or park use. One reason given by the City's engineers for needing a separate, new pump station is that the Old Pump House has "shifted" off its foundation. Requests for proof of this claim have not been answered. The City has stated that the old structure shifted about a foot, but others say it was less than an inch and the shift might have been decades ago. Any necessary stabilization of the structure is, of course, one required expense, if OPH is to be allowed to stand.

As you can see from the original 1913 rendering above of the "Concrete Pumping Station", it had a Bandstand on top when it was built. Of course, at that time, it was only a water-pumping station. Given many decades dealing with sewerage, the facility and the grounds around it may need to be "remediated" in some form to remove any toxic substances before it can be removed. [Could Rush Street Gaming and Galesi Group (Rivers Casino and Mohawk Harbor) continue their reputation for removing brown-fields by offering to fund the refurbishing of the Old Pump House as a community grant program, on the scale of [Rush Street giveaways](#) in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Des Plaines?]



One very big problem with retaining the Old Pump House is the current lack of any plan by the City for maintaining it and making sure that it is a secure building in any period in which it is empty and not used for a new purposes. The lack of a plan or set of alternatives presented to the public by City Hall, despite the Mayor having decided at least three years ago to build a new pumping station, suggests there is little will within the McCarthy Administration to spend -- or seek from preservationist sources -- funds needed to care for the Old Pump House appropriately. Furthermore, Assemblyman Phil Steck is already a vocal proponent of taking it down, and has offered to submit a bill to the NYS Legislature taking the lot and the structure out of the Stockade Historic District.



Despite my personal fondness for the Old Pump House, I need to learn much more about the options, pros and cons, and costs of alternatives, before giving its

survival a thumbs up or down. I believe many people feel strongly about OPH, while others are indifferent, or think another park use could be made of that part of the current pump station lot if it is removed. To me, it is a unique sight from the river and the park, beloved by many, some of whom do not even know what purpose it serves, and is a special structure from a time when industrial architecture had style. Some of my favorite photos include the old pump house. But, I would like to hear a focused debate about the pros and cons of keeping or demolishing or relocating the exterior of the structure, including relative cost of each viable option, before having to come to a conclusion.



- If you have an opinion on the future of the Old Pump House, or questions you, too, would like answered, please let the Stockade Association know, and the Mayor and City Council, along with the media. Click for [City Council contact information](#).



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