

# Hall of Waters



The Hall of Waters is significant geologically, commercially, and medically as the site of this first spring discovered in town, Siloam Spring. Siloam Spring, at that time, was the only natural supply of ferro-manganese mineral water in the United States and one of only five known worldwide. At the very onset of the PWA program in 1933, the City petitioned for a loan and grant to complete an ambitious mineral waters project which would consolidate all the springs and wells, and build a comprehensive city-owned hydrotherapy and mineral waters system. When Missouri's PWA projects were finally approved in 1935, the Hall of Waters project was second on the list.

Architecturally, the \$1,000,000 Hall of Waters is significant as the most ambitious project to have been undertaken by the Federal Public Works Administration in Missouri, and possibly, in the Midwest. Moreover, the building is notable and unique

in its outstanding Art Deco and Depression Modern styling relating to water and water gods. Inside the Hall of Waters building, the various waters were dispensed for drinking purposes at the “world’s longest water bar,” bottled and shipped around the world, and used for hydrotherapy treatments in the building.

Built from 1936 to 1939, the Hall of Waters is generally a “T” shaped building. The majority of the structure is cast in place concrete with an exterior skin of ashlar stone, cast stone with carved limestone accents, and exposed concrete. There are a total of five levels with four above ground and a basement story completely underground. Exterior trim includes glazed tile, cut stone, and various metals, including the elaborate bronze main entry doors.

Excelsior Springs’ city offices have been located in the Hall of Waters



since the 1940s. The pool was closed in 1991, damaged by flooding. A community development block grant helped with some building repairs after a flood in 1993, including window replacement in the Hall of Springs, cleaning and sealing of the exterior facade, repointing of mortar joints, glass block



repair to the tower, upgrading the elevator to meet ADA standards, skylight improvements, upgrades to the exterior entrance doors, upgrades to the restrooms and miscellaneous electrical and plumbing upgrades. The spa department closed in 2007 due to additional infrastructure improvements needed at that time that there was no funding source for.

A Hall of Waters Steering Committee was formed by the City in late 2012 in order to gather input about potential adaptive re-use alternatives. Proposed uses should provide insight for revenue sources and help provide heritage tourism opportunities for visitors to experience. It is imperative to maintain the historic presence of the building through its sense of place, materials, and setting. Even though the Water Bar no longer serves various mineral waters and the pool and spa are closed, the Hall of Waters continues to tell the story of the development of Excelsior Springs like no other structure and is considered to be eligible as a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.



Photos:

Visitors to Excelsior Springs gathered at the Hall of Waters to watch the total eclipse of 2017.

Competition-size swimming pool and viewing balcony located under the Hall of Springs.

Hall of Springs featuring world's longest water bar is still used as a Visitor Center and for community events.

Deterioration in the well room, which houses Old Siloam, our original spring. The well room features the last remaining portion of foundation to the Siloam Pavilion, which was designed by landscape architect George Kessler, as well as other remnants from our past. These areas need to be conditioned through a proper ventilation system to stop the deterioration of lower building levels.

