

Repair and Seismic Stabilization of Enders Memorial Shelter by Steve Ennis, AIA

Most people familiar with Ashland, Oregon, know the Butler Bandshell in Lithia Park. Approximately 100 feet north of the Butler Bandshell is the Enders Memorial Shelter. A restoration of this nearly 100 year old structure was just completed. The design team included Architect Jerome White of Kistler + Small + White, and Structural Engineer Allan Goffe of ACE Engineering, LLC. Steve Ennis, AIA provided bidding and construction phase Project Management Services for Bruce Dickens, the Parks Superintendent at the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department. The construction was completed by Wes Norton of Roxy Ann Rock.

Just west of Ashland Creek, the Enders Memorial Shelter is an octagonal structure with a slab on grade, eight 16” diameter peeled logs supporting a wood roof structure covered in wood shingles. In the center of the Enders Shelter is a raised stone fountain with two water faucets. Like Lithia Park, the Enders Memorial Shelter is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the restoration had to be approved by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Ashland’s Lithia Park began with eight acres in 1892 as a place where the Chautauqua Association could bring entertainment and culture to southern Oregon. The Chautauqua Association constructed a domed building for their shows, the walls of which now surround the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Elizabethan Theater. In 1908 at the urging of the Women’s Civic Improvement Club, the people of Ashland passed a measure to include park maintenance in the City Charter. The following year the old flour mill was torn down, a park board was elected, and additional acres bordering Ashland Creek were acquired.

In 1910 the lower duck pond and waterfall feeding it were constructed, while Bert Greer, an ambitious newspaper editor conceived of making Ashland a world-famous spa by capitalizing on the Lithia springs of the area. The development of today's park began in 1914 with the hiring of John McLaren (also designer of San Francisco's Golden Gate Park) as landscape architect. Lithia Park embodies the distinctive characteristics of park design in the tradition of Frederick Law Olmsted. McLaren's landscape plan for Lithia Park was organic in layout, following the natural canyon of the water course. Today 42 of Lithia Park’s 93 acres are listed in the National Register.

The Enders Memorial Shelter is named after the Enders family, Ashland residents from approximately 1910 to 1927. The Enders family was involved in constructing the Elks Building and the Ashland Springs Hotel (formerly Lithia Springs Hotel). The shelter was remodeled after its initial installation, with the stone fountain installed to provide the first access to water rich in lithium—now known as Lithia water. The Enders Memorial Shelter is the last of three similar structures constructed adjacent to a turnabout that was the formal entrance to the park in 1916. Historic photographs show one of the identical structures to the west and the original raised bandstand to the south.



Enders Shelter, 1916

By 2012, the Enders Shelter had fallen into disrepair with both safety and structural issues. The bases of the wood columns were rotting and the wood shingles were covered in moss. Years of erosion from the nearby creek caused differential settlement of the concrete slab, which was becoming a hazard. Architect Jerome White was hired to evaluate the Enders Shelter and provide potential options. Options discussed included demolition, repairing the shelter as is, repairing the foundation and stabilizing columns and beams all around, and removing and replacing both upper and lower sections. Structural Engineer Allan Goffe concluded that most of the existing structure needed to be replaced to bring it up to current building code standards.



Enders Shelter, 2012

Given the historic designation of the shelter and its proximity to Ashland Creek, replacing it might not have been feasible. The Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission voted to repair the existing shelter rather than replacing it. They instructed the design team to restore and replicate as much of the original shelter as possible.

The repair and seismic restoration project went out for public bid in May of 2013 and construction was completed in August. The concrete slab was removed and replaced with a new slab supported by a continuous grade beam. The 16” diameter peeled logs were replaced with new logs, which sit on 15” high by 24” diameter raised concrete bases above 30” diameter by 4’-3” deep concrete footings. The tops of the logs were tied together with steel rods and turnbuckles which meet at a new steel collar surrounding the existing center king post. The existing roof rafters and skip sheathing were in reasonably good condition, with a few members replaced as required. The new cedar shake roofing was fire-treated to meet the requirements of the Ashland Fire Department. Three rows of zinc strips were added to the roof to prevent growth of fungus and the top of the roof was capped in copper.



Enders Shelter, 2013

Inside the Enders Shelter, the existing raised stone fountain was sand-blasted to remove decades of brown stains from the Lithia water. The Lithia water fountain and supply line were replaced, as were the catch basin and drain line that lead to Ashland Creek. A long ago removed domestic water fountain and line were also replaced. Uneven flagstone paving around the fountain was replaced with concrete to provide better accessibility to the fountain and 2” high concrete curbs were installed along the edge of the concrete slab adjacent to the creek as edge protection for wheelchairs.

Throughout the construction phase general contractor Roxy Ann Rock worked closely with Ashland Parks and Recreation to minimize impact on the adjacent heavily-used park and bandshell. Access to the construction area was limited to one sidewalk, with two feet of wood chips placed on the landscaping to minimize impact to tree roots and lawns. The completed project has been well received by the park users and plans for a re-dedication of the nearly 100 year old Enders Memorial Shelter are being developed.