

= Sunol Water Temple =

The Sunol Water Temple is located at 505 Paloma Way in Sunol , California . Designed by Willis Polk , the 59 foot high classical pavilion is made up of twelve concrete Corinthian columns and a concrete ring girder that supports the conical wood and tile roof . Inside the temple , water originally from the Pleasanton well fields and Arroyo de la Laguna flowed into a white tiled cistern before plunging into a deeper water channel carrying water from the filter galleries to the Niles Aqueduct in Niles Canyon and across San Francisco Bay near the Dumbarton Bridge . The roof covering the cistern has paintings depicting Indian maidens carrying water vessels . The temple is open to the public Monday to Friday , 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

= = History = =

Since the mid @-@ 19th century a private company , the Spring Valley Water Company ( SVWC ) , owned much of the Alameda Creek Watershed and had held a monopoly on water service to San Francisco . In 1906 , William Bowers Bourn II , a major stockholder in the SVWC , and owner of the giant Empire gold mine , hired Willis Polk to design a " water temple " atop the spot where three subterranean water sources converge ( a pipe from the Arroyo de la Laguna , Alameda Creek , through the Sunol infiltration galleries , and a 30 @-@ inch pipeline from the artesian well field of Pleasanton ) Some sources claim Bourn wanted to sell the water company to the City of San Francisco and saw the temple as a way to appeal to San Francisco voters , who would have to approve the purchase ( municipal efforts to buy out the SVWC had been a source of constant controversy from as early as 1873 , when the first attempt to purchase it was turned down by the voters because the price was too high ) . Other sources claim that as one born into wealth and classically educated , Bourn was partially motivated by a sense of civic responsibility .

Polk 's design , modeled after the ancient Temple of Vesta in Tivoli , Italy , was constructed in 1910 ( Tivoli is where many of the waters that fed Rome converged in the foothills of the Apennines ) . Prior to the construction of the Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct , half of San Francisco 's water supply ( 6 million gallons a day ) passed through the Sunol temple . The SVWC , including the temple , was purchased by San Francisco in 1930 for \$ 40 million .

For decades the Water Temple received many visitors and was a popular location for picnickers . By the 1980s the water temple had badly deteriorated , and was severely damaged in 1989 's Loma Prieta earthquake , leading some community leaders to call for its demolition . The site was closed to the public because of safety concerns . A community effort led to the temple 's restoration from 1997 to 2001 , at a cost of \$ 1 @. @ 2 million , including seismic and accessibility upgrades . Following its restoration the temple opened again to the public . Today any water that flows through the temple is not part of the potable water supply .

Fields adjacent to the temple belong to the city of San Francisco which has authorized the digging of a gravel quarry on the site . Local residents concerned about the temple 's future brought a lawsuit to attempt block the quarry project , but eventually ran out of funds and dropped the suit .

In June 2006 , a new facility named the Sunol Agricultural Park was opened on a site adjacent to the temple . The park provides space for small businesses and nonprofit groups to grow produce and is a project of a non @-@ profit called Sustainable Agriculture Education ( SAGE ) . The park serves a platform for service and educational programs related to sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation .

= = Inscription = =

" I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry lands springs of water . [ Isaiah 41 : 18b ]  
The streams whereof shall make glad the city . [ Psalms 46 : 4 ] S.V.W.C. MCMX [ Spring Valley Water Company 1910 ] "