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CASE STUDY

Alki Pump Station | Seattle, Washington

BILCO Doors Help Artist Bring Color to Seattle Pump Station

BILCO'S terrazzo doors proved valuable in a unique wastewater system refurbishment in Seattle.

The primary task for Seattle Public Utilities centered on revamping the Alki Pump Station. The former station, built in 1959, was an airlift style facility that had reached the end of its useful life. The rebuilt station uses centrifugal pumps. In addition, the community had changed from mostly single-family homes to multi-family residential buildings, creating the need for a more reliable system.

As part of the project, the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS) worked with SPU and artist Sarah Thompson Moore to create "Tracing Alki," a public artwork. Inspired by a topographic map of West Seattle printed in 1894, "Tracing Alki" incorporates the natural history of the area before European settlement. The artwork was created to interact with the natural environment.

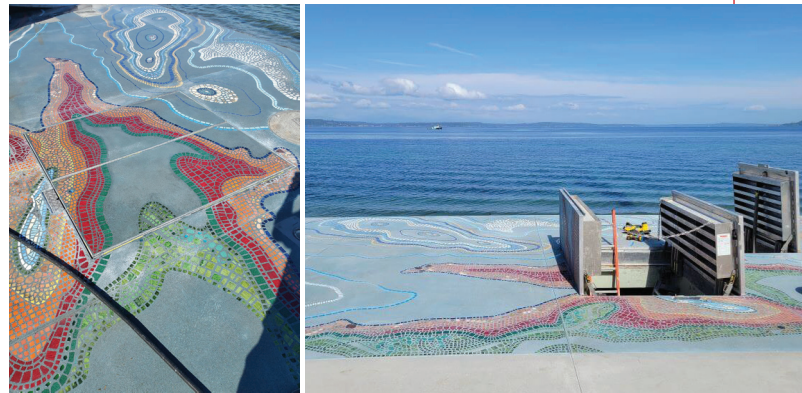
Thompson Moore developed the artwork by loosely gluing thousands of tiles on a fabric scrim at her artist's studio.

The project covers 1,200 square feet, and the area was divided into manageably sized panels while concrete was poured and tooled. Thompson Moore worked with the contractor on precise placement of the tiles. After allowing the concrete to cure, the scrim backing was removed, leaving the tiles in the pavement.

Some of the tiles were placed on two floor doors manufactured by BILCO. One door was a 5-foot x 5-foot double leaf door, and the other was a single leaf door that measured 3-feet, 3-inches by 3-feet, 9-inches.

The doors were equipped with a pan-type cover that can accept a variety of flooring materials. The cover is designed with a 1-inch fillable pan for field installation of architectural flooring material. The doors allow access to equipment for repair and replacement of parts. In most instances, the BILCO terrazzo doors are used for interior applications where decorative flooring materials are specified.

In addition, the doors are equipped with AASHTO H-20 wheel-loading, which allows for truck axle loading of 32,000 pounds. Harbor Pacific Contractors procured the doors for the project from Anderson Specialties, BILCO's manufacturer's representative in Seattle.



"BILCO hatches were submitted by contractor and met the design requirements," said Avery Reger, P.E., of SPU. "There were limited manufacturers that could produce a hatch with an inlay pan for the concrete and tile artwork that was to be installed. Being able to extend the artwork on to the hatches was important for the artist's vision and hides them in plain sight without affecting the accessibility of the station."

The pump station conversion will reduce the risk of failure, improve system reliability and performance, and reduce maintenance costs. But the facelift also provides an unusual aesthetic for a pump station, creating a visual appeal that is not usually associated with such projects.

"Often wastewater utility projects are an out-of-sight, out-of-mind thing for the general public," Reger said. "This project seized an opportunity to turn an otherwise unremarkable space into one that the public can truly appreciate, and it invites the public to better understand our wastewater system and our connection with the surrounding water bodies."



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