

“The Draw at Sugar House” is an award-winning design that combines engineering, sculpture, landscaping, flood control, wildlife habitat, and outdoor classroom into one extraordinary structure. The Draw will allow floodwater that overtops the detention basin in Sugar House Park to flow under an eight-lane highway and drain safely into Parley’s Creek in Hidden Hollow. In addition, the pedestrian tunnel, retaining walls, and flood control elements are sculptural features that evoke the historical journey of 19th century pioneers into Salt Lake Valley.

“Draw” was used by Utah’s earliest settlers to describe the sunken riparian corridors that carried water off the Wasatch Mountains, most of which have now been filled. Our modern under-highway pedestrian crossing replaces the former natural ravine, while Parley’s Creek in Hidden Hollow is a remnant of this landform.

There are two major sculptural elements in this project. On the west side of 1300 East is a paved, sunken “slot canyon” between tall retaining walls that was inspired by one of the most famous landscapes in American history — Echo Canyon — a natural conduit through the mountains, used for thousands of years by wildlife and Native Americans migrating between the Rockies and the Great Basin. This armored “canyon” incorporates Parley’s Trail, food, habitat and water for wildlife, an historical narrative, and the floodwalls and spillway for a dam that conveys floodwater to Parley’s Creek in Hidden Hollow. This portion of the Draw was completed in 2014.

On the east side of the 1300 East, a sculptural “Sego Lily” will rise more than 30 feet above grassy berms along the edge of Sugar House Park. The Sego Lily, with its central plaza, and sculpted shotcrete petals (floodwalls) provides a controlled path for catastrophic floods, channeling the water under the highway and down Echo Canyon into Parley’s Creek.

The Sego Lily Plaza and Dam is the focal point of the Draw at Sugar House. The Sego lily is a sacred plant to Native Americans and also Utah’s state flower. It is a major piece of water-control and transportation infrastructure, incorporating Parley’s Trail, which links the Bonneville Shoreline Trail to the Provo-Jordan River Parkway.

As environmental art, “The Draw at Sugar House” recreates in miniature a series of sculptural landmarks that guided travelers along the Hastings-Mormon Trail. Echo Canyon was the final leg of the journey before crossing the Weber River and scaling the Wasatch Mountains. Journalists constantly commented on places like Cache Cave, the “bird place” where loud chirping could be heard from within the canyon wall, “The Witches”, who’s tops “looked like witches bonnets”, and their joy at seeing their first view of the valley.

The bowl of the “Sego Lily” is shaped like the Salt Lake Valley, and the berms of the dam can be seen from several overlooks as miniaturized Wasatch and Oquirrh mountain ranges, stretching off into the distance.

Patricia Johanson designed “The Draw at Sugar House”. Patricia Johanson is known for her large-scale art projects that create aesthetic and practical habitats for humans and wildlife. She designs her functional art projects, created with and in the natural landscape, to solve infrastructure and environmental problems, but also to reconnect city-dwellers with nature and with the history of a place. These project designs date from 1969, making her a pioneer in the field of ecological-art (or eco-art.)

“For over forty years, Patricia has patiently insisted that art can heal the earth. Her designs satisfy deep human needs for beauty, belonging and historical memory, in the middle of urban centers.” Barbara Matilsky.

Please view at <http://patriciajohanson.com/projects/salt-lake-city.html>.

Construction of the “Sego Lily” will begin September 2017. During construction access through the 1300 East pedestrian tunnel will be limited. Closure dates and detours will be posted at the tunnel.