The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649 Seattle WA 98124-4649
Street Address: 700 5th Ave Suite 1700

LPB 418/14

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: **Fire Station No. 5**
925 Alaskan Way

Legal Description: Portion of Madison Street as established by Seattle ordinance 815, lying between inner Harbor line and Alaskan Way, lying south of block 181 and north of block 198, Seattle Tide Lands, less the south ten feet as vacated under ordinance 6519, less northern area under right way use permit, all located in the SE quarter of Section 31, township 25, Range 4, in King County Washington.

At the public meeting held on July 16, 2014 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of Fire Station No. 5 at 925 Alaskan Way as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standards for designation of SMC 25.12.350:

C. It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, City, state or nation.

D. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or a method of construction.

F. Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the City and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the City.

DESCRIPTION

The Setting and Site

Fire Station No. 5 is located on the west side of Alaskan Way, with Pier 55 – the Washington State Ferry Terminal and dock – to the south. To its north there is the historic Pier 54, a large pier shed containing Ivar's restaurant, café, and offices on its first floor along with a local retail institution, Ye Olde Curiosity Shop. The upper floor of this heavy timber and wood gable-roofed structure is largely vacant. Among these larger structures, the fire station has a relatively small presence.

Alaskan Way is a roadbed with a paved width of approximately 120'. Across it and to the east of the station there are large concrete and brick masonry buildings dating from the early 20th century, which have been transformed into offices and retail functions, but these are largely obscured by the Highway 99/Alaskan Way Viaduct. The viaduct structure is scheduled to be replaced by a tunnel in the next several years, with plans for new public open space and a park, which will extend from the waterfront up to Western Avenue at Bell Street.

The site was a portion of Madison Street, established by Seattle ordinance, which extended into the original Seattle Tidelands and the inner harbor line of Elliott Bay from Alaskan Way lying between the inner Harbor line and Alaskan Way. Made up by pilings supporting the building, along with concrete aprons and decks and a ramp leading to a floating dock, it comprises 36,540 square feet or 0.84 acres. The west property line, which runs over the water, is 140'-long. The 165'-long eastern property line is angled to follow the Alaskan Way right-of-way, while the north, south, and west property lines follow more typical orientation and the city's street grid. (The building's footprint is also set to the orthogonal city grid, with true north to the northwest, cited as reference north in this report.) The original plot plan indicates a narrow portion of Pier 54 extends along the north property line, along with an open, preexisting concrete terrace to the northeast of the station. This terrace, which appears to have been a place for public views of the water, has been leased and is partially covered by a temporary outdoor dining structure for the Ivar's take-out café at Pier 54.

The station structure is situated on the southern three-quarters of the site, with a wide sidewalk of an estimated 16' extending along the front of it. The original plot plan shows its coverage in comparison to the smaller footprint of the earlier firehouse on the site, which appears to have been a square shape of approximately 35'.

The new station design created a large deck, finished with concrete paving scored in a 6' square grid, with a pattern of aggregate and smooth finishes. Due to the angled property line, the apparatus bay was set back approximately 18' to 45' from the sidewalk and property line to allow for an apron. The new building setbacks were 3' at the south property line and an estimated 35' at the north property line. The deck originally extended approximately 24' north of the station, in what appears to have been a publicly accessible viewing area. To the back (west) the deck extended another 20', terminating in the center with an angled, 9'-deep landing that led to a ramp. The ramp met a 12'-wide by 98'-long floating wharf onto which fireboats were frequently tied. With exception of the patterned paving there was very little site treatment. Six square-shaped concrete planters were called out, with four placed near the north edge of the deck, along with tall aluminum flag pole near the northeast corner.

The Building

Robert Durham originally proposed a simple rectangular building for the site, apparently without hose tower, which was redesigned in response to the controversy over its utilitarian design and perceived view blockage. A review of the original drawings suggests that the constructed station building retained some of the earlier design's structural aspect, but with considerable adjustments in the massing to emphasize the apparatus bay and reduce the overall mass and width of the first floor. The new design was intended to be more transparent

as well to afford views through it to Elliott Bay. It was constructed in 1963, for an estimated $300,000 according to permit records.

The existing flat-roofed building is an L-shaped structure with a hose tower placed near the open interior corner, facing to the northeast. Its massing encloses a rectangle with overall dimensions of 72'-8" by 36'-10" on the two-story western portion, and a shorter mass, approximately 36' square, which projects eastward and contains the apparatus bay. The hose tower, approximately 10' square and 57' tall, is set on the north side of the apparatus bay. It, like the other portions of the building, features a 3'-deep roof overhang. Unlike the other, flat-roofed portions of the building, the hose tower roof is hipped with its concrete slab rising 1'-4" to a center, 10"-wide metal ventilator. The western two-story rectangle is open at the grade level (elevation 6.5') on its northern 18', resulting in a reduced first floor footprint approximately 55' in width. Only the second floor extended to the full 72'-8" width. The covered open space was originally enclosed by 3'-tall aluminum screening and gates as well as a 1'-6"-deep beam along the west side.

The structure is a concrete frame with a grid of concrete columns set at 6'-centers along the perimeter, supporting pre-cast reinforced concrete Tee beams and concrete second floor and roof decks. These elements are expressed on the exterior facades, where the pre-cast sections extend to support flat roof overhangs on the east and west sides of the two-story building section and on the north and south of the apparatus bay. The concrete frame is further emphasized by the cladding – a system of pre-cast marblechip aggregate panels, known generally as "marblecrete." These panels are set precisely between the exposed concrete structural pilasters on two sides of the apparatus bay and the front and back of the two story section. Roof edges are detailed with a flat aluminum fascia. Exterior facades on the north and south featured only the aggregate pre-cast cladding panels with no openings on the second floors; openings on the first floor level were set only into northern facades of the apparatus bay and watch office. Interior walls were concrete and concrete block, originally treated with plaster finishes and/or painted.

At the first floor the original apparatus bay was finished with a single, wide door, fitted with glazed units. Additional larger panels of ¼" plate glass were placed into aluminum frames at the first floor, within three bays (an 18'-width) at the east end of the north facade of the apparatus bay, and within two bays (12') of the watch office. A large red number "5" was placed to the south of the wide apparatus door, and lettering above it identified the building, "Seattle Fire Department."

Aluminum-framed windows throughout the station were designed with a rational pattern to fit into the structural grid, where they were separated by columns. Selected in response to interior functions they were set with consistent sill heights throughout the second floor. Window head heights and sizes varied however, with smaller windows, some with opaque glazing, on the second floor east facade. These windows were shaped to fit between the pre-cast Tees, with typical widths of approximately 5' and heights of up to 2'-5-1/16". Sill heights on this facade were set consistently at 7'-3-1/4", which provided privacy to the occupants. On the west facade, on both the first and second floors, the windows were larger, 3'-11"-tall by 5'-wide, aluminum framed units and contained a large upper panel and two

lower panels, one of which was an operable slider. These were set at consistent head heights of approximately 7’ (with the precast panels above and below) to allow for viewing outward by station personnel.

The original hose tower was detailed to express the light-weight concrete frame, with corner windows fitted with obscure wire glass, and welded bent steel ladder rungs on the interior. The tower structure included columns cross-members, and shaped precast panels at each of its four levels. The same precast marble aggregate panels were used as cladding between these divisions and the vertical framing elements. The top of the hose tower contained operable jalousies (thin horizontal blind-like glass in a metal frame), also fitted with obscure wire glass. An aluminum fascia was placed along the edges of its low-sloped hipped roof.

The two-story portion of the building featured a floor-to-floor height of 10’-8” at the first floor and approximately 9’-9” at the second floor, with beam sections extending below the slab. Interior spaces at the first floor included an equipment storage space and mechanical room in the southwest corner and a kitchen/multi-purpose room in the center of the western part of the building, separated from a study room, toilet room and watch office by a corridor that led from the apparatus bay to the back entry. The watch room was also a fully enclosed space, with doors into it on three sides accessing the exterior or corridor spaces.

A manufactured steel-frame stair with pre-cast treads led from a side corridor to the second-floor landing and corridor. This space led directly to two small, approximate 12’-square officer’s rooms and contained a metal fire pole, which was set within a corner of the corridor. To the south, the approximately 36’- square dormitory room, planned for up to 16 firemen in single beds, was a single volume, with one of the two fire poles set within an opening in near the east wall. To the north there was a large locker room in the northwest corner and a toilet/shower room in the northeast corner.

Interior finishes originally included painted plaster, suspended plaster ceilings, and concrete and resilient flooring. Acoustic tiles were adhered directly to some ceiling areas, including onto the pre-cast Tee beams, while in the first-floor watch office and second-floor officers' rooms, acoustic tiles on suspended ceilings were installed. Painted gypsum wallboard has been used for partition finishes, along with newer vinyl flooring and rubber base in later renovation projects, and original acoustic tiles have been replaced. Hard surfaces continued to affect interior acoustics, and the station suffers from lack of adequate ventilation, particularly on the second floor.

The apparatus bay is frontal on the site, in keeping with the original program charge to create a visible, “demonstration” fire station. Public access was intended to be only on the north side of the building rather than in front on the apron, but because of the glazed apparatus door and windows in two bays on the north facade, the interior space was somewhat visible to the exterior on both sides. For long periods the station held a historic engine in addition to an operating engine. At times this vehicle was brought out to the apron for display.

Changes over Time
In 1989-90 the station was renovated, under a design by Bob Wagoner of Boyle Wagoner Architects. The approximately $250,000 project did not address the site or piers, and was undertaken largely to upgrade building systems and remodel spaces to accommodate some ADA upgrades and the needs of fire fighters, including female personnel. The scope involved select interior demolition and remodeling of the watch room, kitchen/dining room and service spaces on the first floor, and of the entire second floor (toilet/shower and locker rooms on the north side and dormitory areas on the south side).

A new reception space and reconfigured watch room and study room were provided at the first floor, along with remodeling of the existing beanery (kitchen) with new cabinets, appliances and lockers. An exercise/weight room, officer's room, partitioned bunkroom, and new bathrooms and locker areas were created on the second floor. Despite some expressed concerns about their safety, the two existing metal fire poles were retained and enclosed – one in a separate closet-size room and the other by a gate.

In addition, the small space on the west side of the hose tower, which held laundry equipment, was revised with removal and infill of a former door into the apparatus bay, while a new person door was inserted into the north façade wall to the east of the hose tower. The original single apparatus door was replaced by two separate, fully glazed, aluminum-framed roll-up doors and a central concrete column, clad with a wide, half-round steel pipe. A new aluminum-framed storefront system with insulated glazing was installed in the north facade of the reception/watch room to replace an original entry, and the entry door to this space relocated to the east facade, where it faced directly toward the sidewalk. This latter change accommodated more private use of the covered open space to the north, below the second floor, for personnel parking, which led to its further screening.

Reinforced concrete shear walls were added at select places above the deck on the interior, and mechanical heating, electrical and plumbing systems replaced. No work was undertaken below the deck or at the piers at this time.

In 1995 another partial upgrade was undertaken, designed by architect Ken Kubota of Kubota Kato. This estimated $125,000 project involved partial seismic improvements with structural reinforcement of the lower half of the four-level hose tower, which resulted in concrete infill at the original glazed corners. A new exterior door was inserted on the building's north facade, interior cabinets, and new steel railings with screen infill panels on the perimeter of the deck. Some of the new and original concrete walls and portions of the original concrete structure were painted. The bright red paint scheme disregarded the material quality of the original concrete and considerably reduced the building's Modern expression in favor of a more graphic design.

Other construction on the site and changes to building are documented by the following permit records:

- 1963 Erect and maintain sign
- 1964 Hot water boiler

- 1982 Remove two existing dolphins, drive new piling, install a 10'x152' mooring float with access ramp, install two 7-pile dolphins and jib crane (This project involved some pile driving and necessitated extensive shoreline permits.)
- 1992 Seismic upgrade of existing concrete deck, including addition of new batter piles and pile caps, an estimated $520,000 project designed by KPFF Engineers

Records are not available that document two visible changes to the building. Over time, portions of its concrete frame and aluminum fascia trim were painted, including the projecting Tee beams below the roof overhangs, and the steel reinforcement at the lower corners of the hose tower. These seemingly minor changes in finish have reduced the sense of materiality and "honesty" that characterized the original building. Also, the original station was designed to allow for views of the water from the public sidewalk and through the open part of the structure toward the north, and views into the apparatus of an operating station. Over time the low gates that surrounded the east and north sides of the open area were replaced by taller, more secure, chain-link fencing, fitted with plastic strips to limit visibility. This area of the fire station and the open west deck are presently crowded with equipment and vehicles. Meanwhile views of the water are provided along the nearby south deck of Pier 54 and from other piers and public open spaces along the central waterfront.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Development of Seattle's Central Waterfront

The nearby area known as Pioneer Square, south and east of Fire Station No. 5, was Seattle's first town site. By the 1850s, pioneers David Maynard, Henry Yesler, and Carson Boren owned land there, attracted by the relatively flat topography and proximity to a deep harbor. Yesler established a sawmill in 1853, approximately at the foot of present-day Yesler Way at 1st Avenue, three blocks from the subject site. Yesler's mill and wharf became the center of an early commercial district, which consisted primarily of vernacular wood commercial buildings and residences. In 1887, the Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern

Railroad extended along the waterfront, with its depot near the foot of Columbia Street, in proximity to the subject site. Tacoma was chosen in the 1890s over Seattle as the original western terminus of the Northern Pacific's transcontinental railroad, but the fledgling city of Seattle continued to serve as a shipping hub, utilizing steamers and schooners for transporting goods to and from the city and around the Puget Sound.

On June 6, 1889, the Great Seattle Fire began near the corner of Front Street (1st Avenue) and Madison Street. It went on to destroy the central portion of the city. Initially concentrated on 1st Avenue between Madison and Columbia Streets, just two blocks east of the subject site, the fire spread to burn a reported 50 city blocks. The area was reconstructed quickly with "fireproof" materials of brick, stone, and terra cotta as required by new city ordinances. These buildings give the present Pioneer Square Historic District its cohesive, late-19th-century character. By the early 1890s, 1st and Western Avenues (at the time called Front Street and West Street) were filled with commercial activity, including grain and feed warehouses, commission houses (wholesalers), and manufacturing, and numerous small and large hotels. Seattle suffered the effects of the world-wide economic depression of 1893, the

same year the Great Northern transcontinental line to Seattle was completed, along with its small depot building. The effects of the Klondike Gold Rush swept through Seattle beginning in 1897, inflating the city's economy and promoting more construction.

In the 1890s, the Great Northern Railroad was granted a right-of-way along the central waterfront. To accommodate both this line and the existing Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern route, Railroad Avenue (present-day Alaskan Way) was created with its width set at 120' feet. As the original Columbia Street depot became increasingly run-down, railroad owners sought property for a new larger and more impressive depot. Great Northern Railway owner James J. Hill lobbied against siting it on the waterfront, asserting it would result in additional tracks and increased congestion. King Street Station (1904-06) was ultimately built at 3rd Avenue between Jackson and King Streets, followed by Union Station (1910-11). Meanwhile, City Engineer R.H. Thomson convinced Hill to build the Great Northern Tunnel, alleviating the rail congestion on Railroad Avenue. The tunnel ran from its southern portal, at 4th Avenue and South Washington Street, to a northern portal in Belltown, at Elliott Avenue between Stewart and Virginia Streets. The tunnel construction began in 1905 and it went into service in May 1906, upon completion of the King Street Station.

The pier sheds of the central waterfront, presently known as Piers 54, 55, 56, 57 and 59, date largely from the early 1900s, along with associated decks and wharfs that served various functions including warehouses, steamship offices, and passenger waiting areas. Two small railroad stations remained on the waterfront in 1908, including the old "Union Depot" at Western Avenue and Columbia Street (1908 Baist Map, cited in Sheridan, "Context Statement: the Central Waterfront," p. 19).

A concrete sea wall was built in 1911 to 1916 along the waterfront, from Washington to Madison Streets, to protect these buildings and other central city businesses, such the hotels and office buildings along 1st Avenue. However, by the 1920s, Seattle's central business district had clearly moved northward and away from Pioneer Square and the areas near the firehouse. (ibid, p. 26). The 1923 Zoning Ordinance established the area between the waterfront and Western Avenue as a manufacturing district, reinforcing its industrial nature, while blocks to the east were zoned commercial.

Railroad Avenue remained a transportation route and its expansive width was almost fully occupied by railroad tracks. By the end of the 1920s, however, the rail lines had been consolidated to two tracks on either side of a new vehicle route, reflecting the rise of truck and auto transport (ibid, p. 40). By 1930 Railroad Avenue suffered from traffic congestion of trains, trucks, and wagons, which made it unsafe for pedestrians. Furthermore, the pilings below the 150'-wide heavy timber trestle were rotting and the roadbed was deteriorating. In response, the city constructed a new seawall between 1934 and 1936, extending it north to Broad Street. The waterfront below the street was filled, and in 1940, Railroad Avenue was paved and renamed Alaskan Way (Stein, 2007).

Congestion on the new roadbed remained, even as the waterfront entered a period of decline after World War II. Shipping methods changed and shipbuilding and other water-related businesses languished. Plans were soon underway to construct a raised viaduct along the

waterfront to reduce traffic on Alaskan Way. The viaduct was constructed eventually in 1949-60 as an extension of Highway 99. The Battery Street Tunnel, completed in 1953, was part of the project. Originally conceived as a bypass expressway, the Viaduct was changed with construction of access ramps at Seneca Street in 1961 and Columbia Street in 1966. The nearby neighborhood streets of Western and 1st Avenues remained largely unchanged into the 1960s. Between the 1960s and 1980s, various pier owners began renovations to attract more tourists, and Pioneer Square was designated a historic district at both the federal and local levels in 1970. A number of buildings in the area were rehabilitated as a result in the 1970s and 1980s.

A privately owned, multi-story pier was built by the Canadian Pacific Railroad directly to the south of the fire station property in 1910. Destroyed by fire in 1914, it was quickly rebuilt in an ornate style that featured a 108'-tall tower. Known as the Grand Trunk Pacific Dock, the structure contained offices, storage spaces, and a cargo and passenger terminal for the "mosquito fleet" of privately-owned steamboats, which traveled on over two dozen routes throughout Puget Sound. In the 1930s the building was replaced by a more linear, Art Deco-style structure set along Railroad Avenue, which was built to serve automobile ferries. (Dorpat, January 24, 2014).

By 1951 this adjacent property was part of a private ferry system owned by the Puget Sound Navigation Company, which had a monopoly on all cross-sound ferry traffic. Facing financial difficulties, the company sold its system to the state (Washington State Ferries). The state acquired the terminal and dock property for $500,000. It subsequently demolished the facility and replaced the dock in 1964, replacing the older structure with a Modern-style building. In the 1990s the State Ferry System added a two-story glass entry to the building. Its dock extends on both sides of the terminal and holds vehicles traveling to and from Bremerton and Bainbridge Island.

Historic Overview of the Seattle Fire Department

Note: The following text section, adapted and edited with some additions, is derived in part from Cathy Wickwire, "Survey Report: Comprehensive Inventory of City-Owned Historic Resources Seattle, Washington," 2001.

Early Fire Fighting in Seattle

Seattle's early fire-fighting efforts were similar to those in other pioneer communities. Citizen-manned bucket brigades were used before the first official volunteer company was organized in July 1870. In July 1876, citizens of Seattle organized another volunteer fire department, Seattle Engine Company No. 1, and raised money through subscriptions to purchase equipment. A steam-operated pumper arrived by ship in February 1879. In April 1884, the Seattle Volunteer Fire Department was officially formed by City Ordinance. Between 1888 and 1893, the department added new companies and equipment, and successfully fought fires despite an inadequate water system. In 1888 the City began to professionalize its fire-fighting personnel, with the City Council approving salaries for engineers and drivers.

As previously noted, the Great Seattle Fire of 1889 was a pivotal event for the City and it directly affected its fire department. The fire quickly grew beyond the capabilities of the volunteer fire department and the water system. By evening, it had extended southward from its origins and had destroyed an estimated 50 square blocks of mostly wood-frame buildings that made up the city's central commercial area and its waterfront wharfs. Immediate reforms after the fire included the establishment of a voter-approved municipal water system and a paid, professional fire department.

On October 17, 1889, City Council Ordinance No. 1212 was passed to create the Seattle Fire Department. The new Fire Department went into service on October 26, 1889. Its first wood-frame fire stations were completed in July 1890. Four more stations were opened in the following six months. The first firehouse outside of the downtown area opened at Broadway and Terrace Street on First Hill in December 1890. On January 3, 1891, the department's first fireboat, the "Snoqualmie," was placed into service along with the original Fire Station No. 5, a small one-story, wood-frame waterfront structure at the foot of Madison Street.

New stations also opened gradually to extend fire fighting services to outlying neighborhoods. These buildings and those in the downtown areas often "accommodated similar programs and conformed to the general functional arrangements that had emerged as typical for American fire station construction in the post-Civil War period" (Ochsner and Andersen, p. 213). Nearly half of the architects in the city worked on these stations, according to a *Post Intelligencer* report, including Willis A. Ritchie, Charles A. Alexander, Charles Saunders and Edwin W. Houghton. These men looked to design precedents in Chicago, another booming city that had responded to a devastating fire with a vigorous building program. As a result, there were a number of robust Richardsonian Romanesque-style firehouses of brick and stone constructed in Seattle in the period of 1890 to 1893 (Ochsner and Andersen, pp. 213-18). These buildings were sited throughout Seattle due to the critical need for additional stations that arose with the City's North Seattle Annexation of May 1891, which doubled its size. The annexed area consisted of the northern ends of Capitol and Queen Anne Hills, and the neighborhoods of Magnolia, Fremont, Wallingford, Green Lake, Latona, and Brooklyn (the University District).

The Early 20th Century

The beginning of the 20th century ushered in three decades of growth for the Seattle Fire Department, resulting in the basis for the present network of fire stations. In the first decade alone, 21 new "permanent" stations were built. Most of these were two-story wood-frame structures. The additional fire stations in the downtown, Queen Anne Hill, Capitol Hill, First Hill, and Central Area neighborhoods improved service in these areas. New firehouses in Madrona, Beacon Hill, Green Lake, University District, Cascade, and Greenwood neighborhoods, and the city's south industrial area, extended service to some of these regions for the first time. In the 1910s, SFD built 12 more "permanent" stations, including five replacement buildings. Half of these were wood-frame structures while the others were brick masonry or reinforced concrete. The replacement structures were of masonry construction.

Between 1921 and 1930, ten new fire stations were completed; eight of these replaced earlier structures. Unlike most of the early bearing masonry stations, all but two of the new stations

were constructed of reinforced concrete. By this time, two decades of growth had brought fire protection services to most areas of the city. However, many of the early firehouses were considered too small or too old to accommodate modern fire-fighting equipment and motorized vehicles. The last horse-drawn apparatus was used in 1924, after which time the horses were retired. During the 1930s, the Fire Department suffered the effects of the Great Depression. Between April 1933 and January 1934, many stations were closed, and hundreds of firemen were laid off. Only two new permanent fire stations were constructed that decade: Station No. 6 in 1932, a new Art Deco-style building of reinforced concrete, and Station No. 41 in 1934, which was designed and built by the Civil Works Administration (CWA, a Depression era federal relief agency) as the first station in Magnolia.

The Post-War Period

In the early 1940s through the early 1950s, Seattle annexed extensive areas north and northeast of the city limits, pushing the boundary north from 85th to 145th Street. As part of the annexations, Seattle acquired the facilities of several King County fire districts in the north end. Three of these stations were immediately converted into Seattle Fire Department stations, while the fourth was mothballed for a ten year period before it was put into service as Fire Station No. 35 in north Ballard. New station projects dating from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s included fire stations that replaced early 20th century wood frame structures, such as the former Stations No. 9 in Fremont and No. 21 in Greenwood, and new buildings such as former Station No. 28 in Rainier Beach.

These buildings and the stations in the city's newly annexed areas include flat-roofed buildings, along with a single pitched-roof one. In photographs they appear to have featured relatively simple Moderne and Modern style designs. The effort to minimize costs is apparent in the sizes of the early post-war stations, and most of these buildings were smaller than later stations. At least one station, the former No. 31, (1949, designed by Albert Nelson Associates, and replaced in 1973) featured hose dryers rather than a more expensive hose tower (Galen Thomaier, Last Resort Fire Station Museum, interview January 29, 2014).

Architect Fred B. Stephen designed at least three other stations from this period, which explains their formal similarity. Three different Seattle architectural firms were commissioned to design four new stations in the early 1960s, which are cited by their numbers, addresses, opening dates, original designers, and subsequent changes:

- Station No. 8 at 110 Lee Street, Queen Anne Hill, 1963, designed by Peterson and Adams (extensively remodeled and expanded in 1986, renovation, addition and seismic upgrade in 2013)
- Station No. 5 at 925 Alaskan Way on the central waterfront, 1963, designed by architect Robert Durham (renovated in 1990 and partial upgrade and seismic improvements in 1995)
- Station No. 22, 1964, designed by La Monte Shorett (upgraded in 2001)
- Station No. 40, at 9401 35th Avenue NE in Wedgewood, 1965, designed by architects Leonard W. Bindon and John L. Wright (updated in 2013)

- Station No. 32 at 3715 SW Alaska Street near the West Seattle Bridge, 1967, also designed by Bindon and Wright (remodeled and updated in the 1989s, 1990s and in 2000)

Changes in the designs of fire stations in this period were made in response to growing service needs and emerging social conditions:

> The postwar SFD experienced a wave of significant material and organizational changes … (including) the installation of two-way radio communication in first-line vehicles in 1950, the 1958 upgrading of the aid car program with stretcher-bearing station wagons, and the 1959 adoption of a new Fire Code based upon national standards. Throughout this time, the SFD's institutional mandate continued to evolve beyond basic fire suppression. In 1970, the department's new Medic One program initiated the training and deployment of firefighters as first-response paramedic units throughout Seattle. In 1980, the specially trained and equipped Hazardous Materials Response Unit was deployed to respond to incidents involving dangerous chemicals, including fires, spills, and suspected drug labs. Some of the most consequential changes to the SFD at mid-century did not concern equipment but equality, as the department admitted its first African-American firefighter (Claude Harris) in 1959 and its first female firefighter (Bonnie Beers) in 1977. The ongoing commitment to the recruitment and training of under-utilized applicant pools substantially diversified the department's make-up; of the 49 firefighters enlisted in 1993, 9 were female and 11 of minority status. (Seattle Municipal Archives, "Record Group 2800, Fire Department," ca. 2010)

In the 1970s, the Seattle Fire Department closed four older stations and transferred responsibility for their service areas to nearby facilities. With funding from Forward Thrust, it built a new maintenance garage, the Charles Street Facility, on 8th Avenue South in the Dearborn area, and constructed or remodeled over a dozen stations. These stations are listed below chronologically by the year each one opened. They included replacements for ten older firehouses along with some stations in new areas of the city:

- No. 25, 1300 E Pine Street, 1970
- No. 27, 1000 S Myrtle Street at Ellis Avenue in Georgetown, 1970
- No. 11, 1514 SW Holden Street in the Highland Park area, 1971
- No. 29, 2931 Ferry Avenue SW in West Seattle's Admiral area, 1971
- No. 34, 32nd Avenue E at E Madison Street, 1971 (replaced in 2013)
- No. 19, Duwamish Avenue at S Spokane St., 1972 (demolished 1980 for the W. Seattle Bridge)
- No. 4, 26th SW and Florida Street, Harbor Island 1972 (demolished 1983 also for the bridge)
- No. 33, 9645 Renton Avenue S near Roxbury, in the Rainier Beach neighborhood, 1972
- No. 36, 3600 23rd Avenue SW at Spokane Street in the Delridge area, 1973
- No. 26, 800 S Cloverdale Street in South Park neighborhood, 1973
- No. 18, 1521 NW Market Street in Ballard, 1975

- No. 31, 1319 N Northgate Way at Stone Way N near Northgate, 1973 (replaced in 2013)
- No. 24, 401 N 130th Street near Aurora Avenue N., 1975

In the 1970s the Fire Department also reassigned its battalion units. Battalion vehicles – typically carryalls or vans – were assigned to each station along with an engine or ladder apparatus. The department began to categorized its stations into one four types by this date, each with specific site and building operational criteria, types of spaces and sizes.

In the mid-1980s, the Department undertook a program of modernization, substantially remodeling many of its stations and rehabilitating its older historic structures. These projects included upgrading of mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems, and access upgrades to meet ADA access requirements in its older firehouses dating through the 1960s – including No. 5.

Most of the projects from this period also involved new accommodations for female personnel. Women were admitted initially into the Department's recruit class, which was established primarily for minority trainees, in 1976. The first female candidate to successfully complete the training did so in 1977. By late 1987, despite some continued discrimination, Seattle had emerged as a national model for its recruitment, hiring and retention of women in the Fire Department, which employed a total of 54 female firefighters (Seattle Municipal Archives, ca. 2010).

A levy program provided for the replacement, upgrading, and renovation of 32 neighborhood fire stations, including the renovation of the subject building by Boyle Wagoner Architects in 1989. Concrete decks and piles were seismically upgraded in 1992, followed by additional seismic upgrading of the hose tower in 1995.

<u>The Fire Department in the 21st Century</u>
Beginning in 2003, the passage of a new, nine-year, $167 million levy program resulted in construction of new training facility, Emergency Operations Center, and Fire Alarm Center, along with establishment of emergency preparedness facilities, provision of disaster response equipment and new fire boats, development of increased emergency water supply capacity, and renovation of the Chief Seattle fireboat (Seattle Fire Department, "Fire Facilities and Emergency Response Levy").

New projects under this levy program have responded to the larger, wider, and longer apparatus. Typically the building programs called for sites that allowed for front and rear apparatus aprons, personnel parking, yard storage, trash enclosure, firefighter patio, and generator and fuel refill areas, along with a building of nearly 7,000 square feet to provide for necessary apparatus bay sizes and accessory functions, crew and administrative spaces, service rooms and circulation, including hose washing storage and drying racks. Diagrams for the program indicated a typical bay of 20' by 67' for each apparatus, and back-in or through-drive bays (Seattle Fire Department, December 18, 2002, pp. 2-7).

According to the Seattle Fire Department's "Department Profile" and "2012 Personnel Profile," the Department "has evolved from an organization focused only on fire fighting, to

one that includes other critical services such as building inspections, fire code enforcement, tactical rescues and public education." In 2012, the department's personnel totaled 981 including 38 chiefs, 207 on-duty firefighters, 76 paramedics, and 84 non-uniform personnel. All 981 personnel are EMT Certified Medics.

Modern Style Fire Stations

Funding for construction of any new municipal facilities, including fire stations, was largely eliminated during the Depression. Private investment diminished as well, and many building needs remained unmet while resources were devoted to the war effort during World War II. Construction occurred with the expansion of military facilities and public housing for war workers who flooded the region. Nonetheless, the City of Seattle's Planning Commission began planning for new construction as early as 1943-44. The late 1940s and early 1950s saw an immense number of new projects – hospitals, schools, libraries, infrastructure and transportation systems, as well as new municipal buildings, including fire stations.

This pattern of development was typical in cities throughout the nation. The emergence of Modernism as an accepted style for these buildings was also typical. In this sense, the designs for fire stations from this period are consistent with those for other public buildings, with the exception of their greater functional focus.

The trend toward Modernism was influenced by recent graduates from the University of Washington, who had been trained in Modern design, and by noteworthy projects by Seattle architects Paul Thiry, J. Lister Holmes, Paul Kirk, Lionel Pries and others, which were published and recognized for their forward-looking "regionalism." Urban transformation of Seattle and Bellevue occurred with the ascendance of the post-war development, which resulted in suburban residential projects; the Northgate and Bellevue Mall shopping centers; and Modernist downtown buildings and skyscrapers, such as the 1951 Public Safety Building, 1956-58 Seattle Public Library, 1959-61 Municipal Buildings, 1958 Logan Building, and the city's first skyscraper, the 1959 Norton Building (Ochsner, p. xxxi-xxxv).

The 1962 Seattle World's Fair/Century 21 exposition was a powerful manifestation of the city's progress and economic growth, and the ascendant position of its aerospace, technology, and distribution industries. Buildings and structures of the exposition embodied new technologies and materials and expressive Modern designs. By the end of the fair, mid-century Modernism was fully embraced. The early 1960s saw construction of the Seattle First National Bank in 1965, and exciting new work by local architects and engineers such as Robert Dietz, Wendell Lovett, NBBJ, Fred Bassetti, Jack Morse, Ibsen Nelson, TRA and Worthington, Skilling, Helle & Jackson (later Skilling, Helle, Christiansen, Robertson), as well as nationally-recognized designers such as SOM, Minoru Yamasaki, and Emery Roth and Sons. Many of these well-recognized designers were selected to design small municipal projects, such as those for the Seattle Public Library and Seattle Public Schools.

While the stations dating from the late 1940s and 1950s appear to embody aspects of Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles, those from the mid-1960s were created during a period of mature Modernism. Many of the technical innovations and new materials, which had emerged from the earlier post-war period and were developed further at the Seattle World's

Fair, had become systemized and more commonplace. By this date Modernism had been embraced by the architect/engineering professions, and was well accepted as the norm by corporate and institutional clients. While the social idealism and founding principles of Modernism evolved in Northwest Regional designs, functionality and cost efficient construction techniques served as the basis of many public and commercial projects.

The Seattle fire stations from the mid-1960s are characterized generally by varied and asymmetrical massing that identifies different internal functions. Made of fire-resistant framing materials, such as steel and concrete, they typically had flat roofs, some with deep overhanging sections, and infill walls of masonry veneer, pre-cast concrete, marblecrete and other panel systems, aluminum-framed windows, and flush, steel- or aluminum-framed door assemblies. Construction techniques and materials were emphasized in the designs. Windows were placed in abstract compositions on largely solid facades or in expansive openings, where they were sometimes assembled in horizontal strips or made up by consistent sized units. With exception of those on small sites, the buildings were typically single stories, with the apparatus bay in a prominent, usually central position, with separate, lower-scale wings for offices and the beanery, and the sleeping/bathroom quarters. Exposed structural systems and functionality appear to have been paramount in these designs.

The Station's Construction History

Original architectural drawings on file at the Seattle Fire Department and in the DPD Microfilm Records date from 1962, and construction of Fire Station No. 5 was completed in late 1963. It was the fourth fire station on the same property at the foot of Madison Street, replacing a prior station dating from 1917. That station, which received an awkward third-floor addition, had previously been vacated due to structural concerns. (This station had been built as a "movable" structure, which undoubtedly contributed to its instability.) The earliest waterfront fire station, a single-story wood-frame building at the same site, had gone into service in January 1891. A larger, two-story frame building was constructed on the subject site in 1902, replacing the first station. In 1916, this second station was demolished and replaced with the two-story brick masonry structure, which was completed the following year.

A review of archival *Seattle Times* articles reveals the background and an initial controversy surrounding the subject building's design. In August 1958, the City approved a contract for the architectural firm of Durham Anderson & Freed to design a new fire station at the foot of Madison Street on Alaskan Way (*Seattle Times*, August 28, 1958). By May 1959, the Municipal Art Commission, of which architect Robert Durham was chairman, had approved the design with recommendations. These recommendations called for "the roof of the station [to] be constructed to serve as a promenade or observation deck for visitors and tourists" (*Seattle Times*, May 15, 1959).

The Board of Public Works was ready to call for bids for construction of Station No. 5 in November 1960, and a rendering and description were shown in local newspapers. The two-story building, which included 3,000 square feet of space on each floor, had room for "two engines, cooking facilities, storage and watch rooms" on the lower floor and dormitories above, along with services areas and docking for two fire boats, was apparently too simple

(*Seattle Times*, November 20, 1960). Some Port Commissioners criticized the straightforward, rectilinear design as a "cracker box," and they and Central Waterfront Improvement Committee members worried it would block water views and deter tourists. (*Seattle Times*, December 9, 1960). Shortly thereafter, City Council announced a 30-day delay in construction of the "controversial" station "to try to resolve a waterfront improvement dispute."

In late November 1961, more than three years after the City originally contracted with Durham Anderson & Freed to design the new station, the City Council authorized Durham "to discard existing plans and prepare a new design to meet Fire Department needs, provide views of the city's two fireboats and include a tourists' promenade area" (*Seattle Times*, November 21, 1961). The Council also authorized a higher budget for the expanded project. The older, existing fire station had already been closed due to structural weakness, and equipment and personnel were housed at the department's Pioneer Square headquarters, at 2nd Avenue South and South Main Street.

Durham completed new plans for Fire Station No. 5, providing for "a glassed area on the north side of the apparatus room to dramatize the fire equipment from both Alaskan Way and a public plaza," in February 1962 (*Seattle Times*, February 14, 1962). Although the new plans were received much more favorably than the original design had been, controversy remained over the demolition of the former station building and the cost of its replacement. City Council members indicated that the old station would not be demolished until after the World's Fair. Durham's construction drawings and specifications were subsequently approved by the City in October 1962 (*Seattle Times*, October 11, 1962). The following year, in November 1963, a newspaper article announced that dedication ceremonies for the new station were imminent (*Seattle Times*, November 24, 1963).

According to newspaper accounts, the newly constructed Fire Station No. 5 was well received. The building, which Durham conceived as a "demonstration station," received a national merit award in 1964 from a material industry group, the Prestressed Concrete Institute, and reportedly had more than 5,000 visitors each month that year (*Seattle Times*, September 13, 1964). "The marblecrete covering on the exterior panels, plus the wide expanses of glass, the openness of the tower's four corners so that inside lights etch the spire design against the night sky, the partial covering of the concrete deck to protect visitors during inclement weather—these and many other design details are fascinating to all guests" (ibid). In 1966 the Municipal Art Commission awarded the Seattle Fire Department a citation for "excellence of design of Seattle public buildings" for Fire Station No. 5. (Other citations were given to the Seattle Library Board for the Magnolia, Lake City, Southwest and Northeast Branch Libraries; Seattle City Light for landscaping of seven South End substations; and the Seattle Housing Authority for exterior remodeling of the Yesler Terrace Housing Project.) (*Seattle Times*, November 18, 1966.)

<u>The Original Designer, Robert L. Durham (1912–1998), and Durham Anderson & Freed</u>
Architect Fred B. Stephen designed six of Seattle's fire stations dating to the mid-1950s, while in the early 1960s different architectural firms were commissioned to design the remaining four new stations. One of these was Fire Station No. 5, which was designed by

architect Robert Durham, of Durham Anderson & Freed. The fire station was designed when Durham was 50 years old and in the midst of his prolific career. The son of an architect, Robert Lewis Durham (April 28, 1912–July 25, 1998) was born in Seattle in 1912 and raised in Tacoma. He was educated at the College of Puget Sound and graduated with a Bachelor in Architecture *cum laude* from the University of Washington in 1936. Graduating in the middle of the Depression, Durham was employed briefly by Seattle architect B. Dudley Stuart as a draftsman, and then by the Federal Housing Authority, where he was a cost analyst until 1941. Work was scarce during the brief period in the late 1930s and early 1940s when Durham was a sole practitioner and head of Robert L. Durham and Associates.

Taking on diverse projects, he designed a range of building types including residences in Seattle and elsewhere (1935-37, 1939); an addition to First Methodist Church in Hermiston, Idaho (1966); a cold storage warehouse for Okanogan Grower's Union, in Omak (1935); the Rainier Poultry Company Building, Seattle (1951); Nisqually River Bridge Approach/State Rout 1 Slough Bridges (1936); remodels of the downtown Seattle YWCA Building (ca. 1960); and the World's Fair Monorail Terminal No. 1. Durham's work for the YWCA continued through 1967.

Seattle AIA Chapter records indicate that architect Paul Hayden Kirk established his own firm in 1939, but that during World War II he worked in partnership with B. Dudley Stuart and Robert Durham as Stuart, Kirk & Durham, Associated Architects. (Paul Kirk went on in ca. 1945 to establish Chiarelli and Kirk with architect James Chiarelli, and later to form Kirk, Wallace, McKinley.)

Records also indicate that in 1941 Stuart and Durham formed another partnership, which lasted for a decade, until Stuart's retirement in 1951. Design projects by Stuart and Durham included the All Saints Episcopal Church, Burien (1951); alterations of the East Madison Street YMCA, Seattle; an early office building for the Association of General Contractors on the south slope of Queen Anne Hill (1950); a warehouse and office building for J. W. Warrack Company (unknown date); a residential park on Mercer Island (1948); and an auto dealership building for Smith-Gandy Ford (1946).

In 1954, Durham and architects Aaron Freed and David R. Anderson established Durham Anderson & Freed (DAF). For the balance of his career, Durham's work focused largely on non-residential projects, notably religious structures. A number of these projects were collaborations with architect Richard Peterson. According to archival records in the University of Washington Libraries' Durham Anderson & Freed Collection, the vast majority of the firm's projects produced when Robert Durham was actively involved, were churches, along with some military housing projects, small office or clinic buildings, banks, and residences. Durham designed Fire Station No. 5 when he was 50 years old, having practiced architecture for nearly three decades.

In 1975, the firm changed its name to Durham Anderson Freed/HDR to reflect its association with Henningson Durham & Richardson, a much larger, Omaha, Nebraska-based firm. (That firm closed in 1980, but HDR Architecture/HDR Engineering still maintains 181 offices in the U.S. and Guam, including eleven in Washington State in Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma,

Bellevue, Bellingham, Edmonds, Gig Harbor, Redmond, Olympia, Pasco; and an additional five in Oregon.) Robert Durham retired from HDR in 1980 and died in 1998, at the age of 87.

Durham was engaged in many civic affairs and was very active within the architectural community both locally and nationally. He served as the President of the Seattle Chapter AIA, and went on to serve as secretary of the Washington State Chapter in 1942, as a Board member in 1947-50, and President in 1954. In 1959 he was elected as an AIA Fellow in recognition of his commitment to design and to the profession. A chairman for Seattle's Municipal Arts Commission, Durham was selected to lead the Chairmanship of the Cultural Arts Advisory Board for the World's Fair in 1959-61. In 1965, he served as vice president and president-elect of the National AIA, which he served as President in 1967-68. He was also a board member and vice president of the Guild for Religious Architecture. Most documents describing Durham refer to his warmth and congeniality, ease with people, and considerable involvement with the local, regional, and national AIA.

As Northwest Modernism grew popular as a regional style in the mid-20th century, Durham recognized in it a trend toward "integrity…[and] harmony with nature" (*Seattle Times*, February 17, 1953). His early work with the Federal Housing Administration appears to have contributed to his interest in the use of pre-fabricated and modular components to reduce costs of "better-designed houses" (*University District Herald*, June 6, 1953). Durham, who had come of age in the 1930s, was harshly critical of the profit motives of some developers and planners, noting that "the suburban slums which they are now building are not dominated by the church steeple nor by the dome of the town hall, but by an enormous dollar sign invisible but still very real" (*Seattle Times*, April 23, 1967). As an advocate of Modern principles rather than stylistic expression, he wrote that, "[s]tyle as such may take one last dying breath, but it's a gone goose, because all over the world people expect to relate to houses today, rather than the romantic attraction of the past" (*Seattle Times*, February 17, 1953). One of many architects practicing in the Northwest Regional style during the period, Durham's efforts in Modernism largely focused on refinements to church design. Durham Anderson & Freed received considerable local and national attention for the design of churches, of which the firm produced more than 200, and earned several national awards for religious architecture.

Durham's design of the 1962 Fauntleroy Congregational Church 9140-9260 California Avenue SW in West Seattle (a designated City of Seattle Landmark) received a national Honor Award for Institutional Buildings in 1952 from the AIA. Other similar awards recognized the First Methodist Church, Mount Vernon, Washington in 1961. The Highland Covenant Church, Bellevue, placed first in the 1964 Church Awards Competition of the National Association of Evangelicals. National honors were given for St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church in Burien (where Durham was a member as well as designer), St. James Presbyterian Church in Bellingham, and several others. Several of these churches were cited also in Victor Steinbrueck's 1962 *Seattle Cityscape*. As previously noted, Fire Station No. 5 received an industry award from the Prestressed Concrete Institute in 1964.

The firm's 1971 library project at The Evergreen State College (TESC) is another impressive but late work by Durham Anderson & Freed, featuring a cast-in-place waffle slab system and

dramatic cantilever at the main entry. Durham cited the $8 million Evergreen building as "the largest building we have done in our thirty-year practice." Although most widely recognized for their church designs, Robert Durham and Durham Anderson & Freed's projects also included schools, banks, residences, and master plans.

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The features of the Landmark to be preserved include:
The exterior of the building and the surrounding pier apron and concrete deck; excluding the boat ramp, floating dock and fire boats

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