



May 17, 1985

The City of Seattle

## Landmarks Preservation Board

400 Yesler Building Seattle, Washington 98104 • (206) 625-4501

LPB148/85

### REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: Fire Station #2  
2318 Fourth Avenue  
Seattle, WA

Legal Description: Bell's Fifth Addition  
Block L  
Lot 4-6

At the public hearing held on May 15, 1985, the City of Seattle's Landmark Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Fire Station #2 as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following criteria of Ordinance 106348:

Section 3.01(3): 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;

Section 3.01(4): It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction;

Section 3.01(5): It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder;

The features of the Landmark to be preserved, include:

The exterior.

Fire Station #2 Descriptive:

Fire Station #2 was built in 1921 to replace two earlier horse era stations constructed in 1890, after the Great Seattle Fire of 1889. The building was designed to accommodate new motorized apparatus that had proved more efficient and economic than earlier fire fighting equipment and horse drawn carriages. In addition to its accommodating both Engine Company #2 and #4 and Ladder Company #4, the station house included the Fire Department auditorium and maintenance shop.

The detail of the two story concrete and inlaid brick building derives from earlier Seattle public works project designs. 1890 era fire stations were built in brick with some stucco and wood half timbered treatments. But early in the century, poured in-place and reinforced concrete began to be used for industrial type buildings and structures, including the Georgetown Steam Plant (1906) and the West Queen Anne Retaining Walls (1913). The latter concrete and inlaid brick project, designed by W.R. B. Willcox, would certainly have been familiar to Daniel Huntington, station designer, and then City Architect. The inlay treatment of the concrete facade and the circle patterned corbels and pediment forms of the 1921 fire house may have been inspired by the wall project.

The fire house has principal elevations on Battery Street and on Fourth Avenue. Five arched double doorways with windows at the second floor define the five interior bays along Fourth Avenue. Windows are early industrial sash windows. The simple concrete facade is delineated by infill brick panels that emphasize the arching above the doorways; the brick also appears as vertical lines with diamond crowns between each bay.

At the corners of the building as well as midway along Fourth Avenue, separating the fire house itself from the auditorium, are slightly taller "towers" and stairways. These sections have pedimented cornices delineated with inlaid brick and extending cornices appearing to be supported by circle motif corbels similar in design to those at the base of the lighting standards along the Queen Anne walls. French styled small pane windows with metal balconies and French doors at the ground level are unified by two story high arched brick surrounds that emphasize the vertical or "tower" character of these sections of the building.

The hose tower and auditorium along the east side of the building rise above the two story structure; their concrete exteriors are also decorated with narrow horizontal and vertical brick "lines" and diamond patterns. The entire effect is that of a simple, non-eclectic and functional design that effectively used inexpensive and up to date materials in a decoratively pleasing manner to produce unified, harmonious facades.

#### Fire Station #2 Significance:

According to Jim Stevenson, in his 1972 illustrated work Seattle Firehouses, Fire Station No.2 is the oldest operating fire station in the city. The city's replacement program has resulted in many of its early, horse-era stations being converted to other uses, including housing and office space. Fire Station #2 was opened in 1921 as quarters for Engine Company #2 and #4 and Ladder Company, #4; it replaced two older station houses built when the fire

department used horse drawn wagons. One of these, Fire Station #4, was located on the northeast corner of Fourth and Battery and had been built in 1890, along with six other station houses that were approved after the disastrous 1889 fire destroyed the downtown commercial district.

The fire station is an excellent example of industrial architecture that exceeds the bounds of pure function to present a very pleasing facade by the application of decorative brick inlay to a concrete frame. Although the building's use of reinforced concrete is not unusual--Seattle's major utility, Georgetown Steam Plant, utilized reinforced concrete in 1906--the fire station certainly was an early user of industrial sash metal windows. These were not routinely used elsewhere in the city until the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Terminal Sales Building may be one of the earliest uses of this type of window in a major commercial endeavor.

Unlike other fire stations, Fire Station #2 functioned as the principal meeting place for the Department, providing a large auditorium that in recent years has been considered for a stage for one of the city's performing groups. The station also housed a maintenance shop.

Daniel Huntington, architect for the Fire Station, had responsibility for a number of public and private projects. Born in 1871 in Newark, New Jersey, Huntington came to Seattle in 1904 and served as the City Architect from 1911-1925. In some of his work, he was associated with Carl Gould. It is also likely that he was familiar with and perhaps worked with W.R.B. Willcox, the designer of the Queen Anne Walls, because of the similarities in the use of concrete and inlaid brick for that project and the facade of the fire station. Huntington's work in Seattle includes the Lake Union Steam Plant, the Wallingford Police Station, Fremont Bridge tower and abutments, the Fremont Branch of the Seattle Public Library, the Piedmont Hotel (now the Evangeline Women's Residence on First Hill), the Green Lake Fire Station, and DAR Residence on Roy Street, and the QX Medical Fraternity House. In 1947, Huntington left Seattle for Oregon City, Oregon, but returned in 1955. In his later years, he was a water colorist.

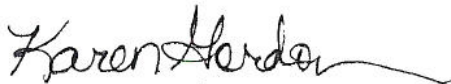
Biblio.

Jim Stevenson. Seattle Fire Houses, Seattle, 1972.

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Seattle Public Library Obit. file, notes by Victor Steinbrueck on  
Dan Huntington.

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Karen Gordon  
City Historic Preservation Officer

KG:dlv

cc: Beatrice Ryan DCLU (3)  
Susan Boyle, Chairperson, Landmarks Preservation Board  
Alex Harris

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