

Seattle Fire Station No. 13
Landmark Nomination Report
October 2004

1. Introduction

This landmark nomination report for Seattle Fire Station No. 13 is one of eight local landmark nominations for existing fire stations built by the City of Seattle in the 1920s and 1930s. These nominations are accompanied by a separate appendix that provides background on the nomination process, and a historic overview about the Seattle Fire Department, its organization, facilities, and fire fighting apparatus, and other information about the stations, and an expanded bibliography. Other separate nomination reports are provided for Fire Stations No. 6, 14, 16, 17, 37, 38 and 41.

Station No. 13 was built in 1928, and is one of five Mission Revival style stations presented for consideration as local landmarks. This station is located at 3601 Beacon Avenue South, on North Beacon Hill. The original building has Mission Revival and Moderne qualities, and is very similar in design to the 1928 era Station No. 38 in the Ravenna / Bryant area, and the 1930-era Station No. 16 in the Green Lake neighborhood. Architect George Stewart designed those two buildings.

The design for No. 13 is attributed, on the original drawings for a "Standard Two Company Fire Station", to the City Building Department, with a notation "Drawn by Baker." While the designer is not identified, the design itself appears to have been influenced by the work of architects George Stewart and Daniel Huntington.

This report includes the attached City of Seattle Landmark Nomination form, and descriptive text about the neighborhood context, and the historic and architectural significance of Fire Station No. 13. It includes a bibliography at the end of the text, which is followed by historic and contemporary maps, photos and drawings.

Background

This landmark nomination was developed by BOLA Architecture + Planning at the request of the City of Seattle, represented by its Fleets and Facilities Department. The City is providing the nominations for the eight fire stations in response to a historic 2001 survey of its public facilities. The survey concluded that these buildings may meet the designation criteria required of Seattle Landmarks. Formal evaluation by the Landmarks Preservation Board is sought to resolve the status of each of these properties as future changes are proposed for them. The levy-funded changes include the proposed seismic and safety upgrading and interior remodeling of Station No. 13 in 2008 and 2009.

Research

Research and development of this nomination report were undertaken in April - August 2004 by BOLA principal Susan Boyle, AIA, assisted by intern Matt Hamel and research assistant Angela Cassidy.

Research included several review meetings with the Seattle Fire Department (SFD), and collection of documents from its collection. Additional historic documents came from the following other sources:

- City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD, formerly DCLU), for drawings and permit file to document the original design, construction dates, and changes to the buildings
- UW Suzzallo and CAUP Libraries, and the UW Special Collections digital historic photo collection

- City of Seattle Clerk's Municipal Archives digital historic photo collection (Beacon Avenue and Beacon Hill, Fire Station No. 13), and historic annual reports of the Seattle Fire Department
- City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan
- City of Seattle Fleets and Facilities for drawings archives
- Seattle's Historic Preservation Program files for inventory survey forms of these and other fire stations
- HistoryLink.org on-line essays (Seattle Fire Department)
- Architectural publications on Mission Revival and Moderne architectural styles
Architectural history and other publications about the fire station as a building type, and fire fighting techniques, apparatus and organization in the early twentieth century
- Kroll Map Company, historic real estate and /or insurance maps to document neighborhood development
- The Seattle Public Library collections, including publications and newspaper articles on this fire station and Beacon Hill neighborhoods, and scrapbook clippings on original and later designers
- Personnel from the Seattle Fire Department, including those from Company No 13, for insight into the department and the station's history, and Galen K. Thomaier of the Last Resort Fire Dept. for information on the station's apparatus.
- City of Seattle Cultural Affairs Office for information on the public art at the station

On site research included several tours of the building and neighborhood to document the presence or loss of original design features, changes through time, and current conditions. Its neighborhood context and exterior and interior views of the station were documented with photographs, along with those of comparable buildings.

2. Property Data

Building Name:	Fire Station No. 13
Address:	3601 Beacon Avenue South, Seattle, Washington 98144
Location:	Southwest corner of Beacon Avenue South and South Spokane Street A Mission Revival style building on Beacon Hill
Tax ID No.:	1624049270
Legal Description:	162404 270 POR W ½ SD SEC LY W OF BEACON AVE & BETWEEN THE S LN OF SPOKANE & A LN DRAWN E FROM A PT 429.5 FT S OF ¼ COR ON THE W SD SEC & PLT S LN SDST PER SE ORD #65498 LESS POR SSPOKANE ST PER ORD #97337
Date of Construction:	1928
Original Designer:	Unknown. (Baker, of the Seattle Building Department, for "Standard Two Company Fire Station")
Later Designer:	I. M. Gorasht Architects, Seattle (1985)
Original Contractor:	Unknown
Original / Present Use:	Fire Station
Original/Present Owner:	City of Seattle

Property Size: Site, 1,950,181 sf (44.77 acres)

Building Size: Building, 4,329 gsf, according to current property tax records

3. Architectural Description

The Site

Completed in 1928, the reinforced concrete fire station building is located at 3601 Beacon Avenue South at the southwest corner of the intersection of South Spokane Street and Beacon Avenue South on Beacon Hill. Fire Station No. 13 is located at the northeast corner of the parcel, in close proximity to the two Beacon Hill Reservoirs. The present fire station site remains a part of the larger parcel of City-owned property presently located on either side of Beacon Avenue South. The Beacon Hill North and South Reservoirs and the Jefferson Park Golf Course occupy most of the property. Other City facilities include the Jefferson Community Center, Jefferson Park Lawn Bowling, and the Parks Department Horticulture Facility. (Wickwire, 1995 inventory form.)

According to the King County Tax Assessor's website, the site is 1,950,181 square feet (44.77 acres). This area contains the entire portion of Jefferson Park, west of Beacon Avenue South, including the Beacon Hill Reservoirs.

The original design drawings indicate a property boundary 120' from Beacon Avenue South and 104' back from the northwestern boundary corner. A "proposed usage line" identified in the 1986 drawing forms an obtuse L-shape, extending 122.5' west, along South Spokane Street, and 84.8' south, along Beacon Avenue South, then running perpendicular to these respective streets, back to the bottom of the earth berm slope of the reservoir. This line provides the delineation of the south and west boundary in two concave segments. The grade of the site directly around the Station slopes approximately 3' towards the west, with the reservoir berm rising approximately 25' immediately to the southwest.

The Fire Station is bordered by a four-lane street, South Spokane Street, which provides two lanes of two-way traffic in each direction. The front of the building faces onto Beacon Avenue South, a busy, four-lane street with a bus line. Historic photos and maps show that South Spokane Street was widened by approximately 12'-6" along its south edge at some point between 1940 and present time, and currently, no formal sidewalk exists along the street on the north side of the Station, although a dirt path has been worn. A 6' to 12' wide sidewalk along Beacon Avenue South terminates at the south edge of the apparatus driveway. The concrete driveway is 25' wide at the apparatus doors, and widens toward the street. It appears to have been replaced at some point, and has been modified slightly to accommodate the widening of the street, by removing a radius connection to a former sidewalk along South Spokane Street.

The original building formed a rectangular plan, set back 5' from the property line on the northeast corner, and 25' back from the east property line. Because of the street widening, the north side of the building appears quite close to the street. (The street alignment is not parallel with the building's north wall, and thus the open side space varies.)

The 1986 - 1987 addition of the L-shaped wing on the south side of the original building steps along the toe of the slope. A chain link fenced, paved parking lot is located on the west or back of the building. It is accessed from the basement via an exterior stair in the middle of the west wall, and from a back door to a first floor corridor. A concrete driveway near the northwest corner of the building, which appears to be

original, links the parking lot to South Spokane Street. A wooden fence enclosure at the southwest corner of the building contains a grilling area and small patio.

Landscaping is domestic in design, with several large deciduous trees and hedges around the southern side of the site, and conifer trees and low shrubs along the north, including a row of conifers along the north edge of the parking area which screen it from the street. On the south side of the building are flowering trees in an open lawn, which continue south into the park. Other site features include public art in the northeast corner, and a flagpole in the lawn southeast of the building.

The Building Structure and Exterior Features

The design of Station No. 13 closely follows that of a "Standard Two Company Fire Station," according to the October 17, 1927 drawings. It appears to have been very similar to the original design for Station No. 16, and somewhat similar but with a taller Apparatus Room as Station No. 38.

The building is a reinforced concrete structure with a tall, concrete foundation, concrete walls and parapets and a concrete frame and slab roofs. Beams in the Apparatus Room feature integral concrete brackets where they connect to exterior walls. The original exterior finish is stucco, with stucco-clad Mission/Spanish Revival stylistic features, including cast stone elements and detailing at the window sills, upper corners, and a cast, shallow arched opening over the Apparatus Room.

The original building measured 49'-6" wide by 68'-6" deep. A 1986-1987 renovation project added a one-story, 20'-10' by 36', L-shaped wing, which extended the west end and provide a south wing. The primary east elevation was originally asymmetrical, with a 33'-10" wide by 17'-10" tall Apparatus Room bay, flanked by a 11'-10" tall section to the north, which wraps around the north and west sides of the Apparatus Room. At the back of the Apparatus Room, the Hose Tower projects another 7'-2" from the higher roof, to a full height of 25 feet from grade. All the roofs are flat. These were refitted with insulation and built-up roofing in 1986 - 1987.

All of the building's original multi-paned industrial steel sash windows have been replaced by contemporary aluminum sash windows with double glazing, although the original cast stone sills remain. Most of the windows are rectangular, except for the transom over the apparatus doors, arched windows located on the south wall of the Apparatus Room, and a Palladian-style window in the east wall of the addition.

The apparatus bay on the principal east facade is emphasized by a semi-elliptical arched parapet wall, surround above the apparatus doors, and segmented transom windows. A concrete pier separates the two contemporary metal, overhead doors, which replaced the original pairs of steel double doors with steel sash upper panels.

Narrow concrete capitals wrap the corners of the engine bay and give the impression of pilasters. This detail is repeated with plain concrete bands on the building's other corners, including the corners of the small hose tower situated at the rear of the engine bay, as well as along the north elevation. On the northern portion of the lower east elevation, a large, plate-glass picture window was situated adjacent to a slightly recessed entrance door. The original door featured a single, large, plate-glass window and was emphasized by a cast stone surround and projecting head detail.

The north facade of the Apparatus Room originally featured three steel industrial clerestory windows, each with two, six-pane casement sash. Two similar clerestory windows are provided in the upper west facade of the Apparatus Room. Four industrial sash windows, which have similar glazing patterns, but

which are much larger and have arched head openings, are placed on the tall south facade. The main north elevation of the lower wing also contains three industrial sash type windows with taller proportions.

The current rear or west facade presents a blank wall on its northern portion and has a large, multi-paned window and a single entry door at the center. Originally it also contained a standard-sized window and smaller one, with obscure glass, on the southern portion, that illuminated the Dormitory / Bunk Room and Toilet Room. The exterior stairwell to the basement level is situated on this side of the building, located below the large window and enclosed by metal pipe railings.

All of the original windows featured narrow mullions and glazing bars, and similar glazing panes. The overall effect of the original, industrial-sash windows was a fine level of detailing in contrast to the solidity of the stucco-clad concrete walls. In 1987 the original windows were replaced with aluminum frame windows, which contain multi-paned sash with similar but not accurate mullion and glazing pattern. The window replacement enhanced the building's energy conservation, but effectively reduced some of the original contrast of scale and material.

The later south wing addition features a large Palladian-style window centered on its east elevation, and a contemporary bay window set within the recessed southwest corner. This addition features a stucco-like integrated exterior finish, EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System).

The use of stylistic features on Stations No. 13, 16, and 38 is restrained, particularly in contrast to the expressiveness qualities of Stations No. 37 (1925 - 1926) and 14 (1926 - 1927), which feature tile clad, gable and hip roofs which are based clearly on historic Spanish Missions and Mediterranean buildings. Station No. 13 was constructed five to six years after Stations No. 37 and 14, and its references to historical buildings are more muted. It is somewhat more direct than the two older stations by expressing a strength and solidity simply through the building mass and use of concrete, cast stone and stucco.

It is informative to compare the original design of Station No. 38 with those of Stations No. 13 and 16. The three buildings were conceived of as similar, and they appear to have been based on the standard or prototypical design. Each building originally had only a single L-shaped lower wing, containing semi-public and private station functions, which was placed to one side and the back of the taller Apparatus Room. This massing provided a clear hierarchy of forms and, along with the localized symmetrical composition of the Apparatus Room, reinforced the design's sense of strength and order. Each of these buildings was placed on a corner site, but all were frontal. The three stations feature similar references to the Mission Revival style, particularly in the arched opening and parapet above the apparatus doors, but have flat roofs and simpler cubic forms that foresee Modernism.

Additions and modifications to these building in 1987 have varied, and the appearance of the current Stations 13, 16 and 38 diverge somewhat. At Stations No. 16 and 38 the original single wing was retained. The construction of a new addition to Station No. 13 responded to the building's original design by providing a seemingly equivalent new wing on its south side.

The Plan and Interior Features

The tall Apparatus Room housed an Engine and the Battalion Chief's vehicle. In the northeast corner, off the Apparatus Room is the Watch Office, formerly the Instrument Room. In 1987, this space was reduced in size, and two closets into the Apparatus Room were removed. The building originally featured a fireplace and chimney along the south wall of the Watch Office, which have been removed. A single toilet room is provided presently on the west side of the Watch Office.

Officer's Rooms, which were located in the middle of the north wing, have been slightly reduced in size. The original Handball Court remains located in the northwest corner of the building, extending down a half level toward the Basement. A newer, sprung wood floor has been added over its original concrete slab. Wrapping around the west of the Apparatus Room there is a stair to the Basement, and access to the Hose Tower. Further west, the newer Beanery, dining area, and locker / shower rooms fill the west side of the original building, at the original location of the Dormitory / Bunk Room. A vaulted-ceiling hallway leads into the 1987 era addition and into the partitioned Dormitory / Bunk Room. In the Basement, the partially excavated space contains a Weight / Exercise Room (formerly a Drying Room), and space for storage and mechanical equipment.

The Apparatus Bay remains similar in form and finishes to the original room, with a concrete floor and cast concrete cove base, and plaster-coated concrete walls. Interior hollow clay tile partitions have been removed and replaced with wood framed partitions with painted gypsum wallboard surfaces. Exterior walls in the living spaces have been furred out with additional wood framing to provide space for insulation, and these also are surfaced with smooth finish painted gypsum wallboard.

Original floor details show a cove base extending to the floor of the crew spaces, and inlaid linoleum flooring. Current finishes include resilient flooring.

In 2000, a vehicle exhaust system was installed into the Apparatus Room, which included flexible ducting to the floor, and roof vents, to improve air quality within the Station.

Documented Changes to the Building

The following changes to the building are indicated in historic photos, drawings or DPD records, or have been observed at the building:

- October 1927: Original building (Seattle Building Department - Baker)
- 1933: Standard Two Company Fire Stations (Nos. 13, 38, & 39)
- ca. 1935: Automatic Coal Stokers purchased and installed (Council Ordinance 65320)
- ca. 1954: Install gasoline pumps (Council Ordinance 83131)
- July 1985: Dormitory Addition & Renovations (I. M. Gorasht Architects, Merv Gorasht, Principal), authorized by a Council-approved Conditional Use application
- June 2000: Exhaust System Upgrade (Architectural Interior Design Association)

Architects from the Morse Stafford Partnership described the 1986 - 1987 project in a 1983 study. The study called for the building's renovation, along with renovation of ten other stations and modifications to eight others for larger apparatus. It anticipated that Fire Station No. 13 would house one, 27' long pumper engine and would be staffed typically by up to seven personnel at any one time. The project budget was set in 1983 at \$358,000, and it was intended to provide upgrading to meet the 1979 UBC, and an additional 40-year life to the station.

The actual project, constructed by Barry J. Lamb Inc. and completed in February 1987, cost \$406,216. Work included replacement of original windows, relocation and construction of a new kitchen, new Dormitory / Bunk Rooms, new restrooms (with toiler/shower rooms for both women and men firefighters), upgrading of all systems, and many new finishes. The new addition provided for new Dormitory / Bunk Room spaces and Officer's Room. The project also included additional paving to the parking and driveways areas.

The 1986 - 1987 addition is similar to the original building in form and materials as the original building, but introduced a different level of refinement. (It utilized an EIFS system instead of stucco

cladding, but with similar texture and color as the adjacent original finish.) A Palladian assembly, with a center arched head window flanked by two rectangular ones, was placed in the frontal east facade of the addition. In the original building, by contrast, the windows were typically single units set into rectangular openings. Arched head openings were provided at only a few locations, such as the south windows in the Apparatus Room. On the interior, the addition provides several smooth-finish vaulted corridors leading to and in the Dormitory / Bunk Room area, a spatial feature that contrasts with the flat ceilings in the original station.

The addition, which is placed to the south and west of the Apparatus bay, is set back from the original primary facade, and is separated from the original mass by an open landscaped slot, which clearly distinguishes the old and new parts of the building. While the new addition seems less muscular and direct, it is sympathetic and respectful of the original building. The overall impression of the design is one of careful interpretation rather than mimicry. This addition to Station No. 13 contrasts with the more replicative one that was built at Station No. 6 at the same time.

Public artist Ellen Ziegler worked with architect Mervin Gorasht on Station No. 13, where she created seven small blocks of varied forms and materials -- concrete, stainless steel, sandstone, Cor-Ten, and terrazzo. The blocks have inlaid bronze letters calling out a Japanese folktale about self-sacrifice and a community coming together to fight a fire, and are placed in a curve on the northeast front lawn of the station.

Current Conditions and Use

According to the Seattle Fire Department's web site and other sources, Station 13 presently houses Engine Company 13. It has served as the lead station for Battalion 5, which covers most of southeast Seattle, since 1932. The Apparatus Bays contains a 2002 American La France 1500/500 (gallons per minute water capacity, and psi tank capacity) pumper engine, and the Battalion Chief's vehicle.

In 2002, the station responded to approximately 2,700 incidences. Of these, about 1,100 were in response to fire calls while 1,300 (48.2%) were in response to requests for emergency medical technician or paramedic assistance. Other dispatches involved investigations, rescues, and fuel leaks or spills and marine emergencies.

4. Historic Context

Historic Overview of the Seattle Fire Department

(Note: A more detailed overview of the Seattle Fire Department is provided in the appendix to the landmark nominations of the eight fire stations. This report includes an overview of the department and specific history of Station No. 13, and other fire stations in South Seattle the 1920s and 1930s. Information in this section is derived in part from Wickwire, 2001.)

After the Seattle Fire Department became well established in the city's downtown core, new stations were opened to extend service to newly annexed outlying areas and emerging streetcar neighborhoods. .

The 20th century ushered in three decades of growth for the Department and established the present network of fire stations. 21 new permanent fire stations were built between 1900 and 1910, including a new headquarters in Pioneer Square and five replacement fire stations. The majority of these were two-story, wood frame structures although six were constructed with brick. Three of the five structures, which replaced earlier buildings, were of masonry construction. New fire stations in Madrona, Beacon Hill, Green Lake, the University District, Cascade, Greenwood, and the Industrial area extended service to these neighborhoods for the first time.

Between 1900 and 1910, Seattle's population almost tripled from 80,671 to 237,194. The annexation of South Seattle in 1905 was the first expansion of the city in almost fifteen years, and initiated a series of annexations over the next five years. (In 1907 alone, there were seven separate annexations, including Southeast Seattle, Ravenna, South Park, Columbia City, Ballard, West Seattle, and Rainier Beach.) Georgetown was the last independent city annexed by Seattle in April 1910. These and other annexations doubled the size of the city and immediately increased its overall population.

Voters in these areas had approved the annexations based on promises of better municipal services, including professional fire protection services. However, it was several years before the Seattle Fire Department was able to finance paid companies within the 32 square miles annexed areas. New stations built in 1910 in south Seattle included Fire Station No. 26, which was constructed on the site of the old South Park Fire Station at 10th Avenue South and South Southern Street. Fire Station No. 27 opened in the old Georgetown City Hall building at 13th Avenue South and South Bailey Street. That same year, Fire Station No. 28 opened in the Rainier Valley. It remained the only fire station in all of the Rainier Valley until the 1914 construction of Fire Stations No. 30 in Mount Baker and No. 33 in Rainier Beach.

In the second decade of the 20th century, the Seattle Fire Department built twelve permanent stations and one temporary station, including five replacement stations. Half of the new stations were wood-frame structures while the other half were made of either brick or reinforced concrete. All five of the structures, which replaced earlier buildings, were of masonry construction. The Fire Department inaugurated service in Mount Baker, Wallingford, Rainier Beach, and Washington Park to address large geographic gaps in the service provided to the north, central and southeast areas of the city.

Between 1921 and 1930, ten new fire stations were completed, and all but two of them replaced earlier structures. Unlike most of the early masonry stations, only two of the new stations were made of brick while the rest, like Station No. 13, were of reinforced concrete construction. By this time, two decades of growth had brought fire protection services to most areas of the city. However, many of the early fire stations were considered too small or too old to accommodate modern, firefighting equipment and motorized vehicles, which necessitated their remodel or replacement. This was especially the case after 1924 when the gradual phase out of all horse-drawn apparatus was complete, and the last of the Department's horses were retired.

During the 1930s, the city suffered from the impact of the nationwide financial depression. The Seattle Fire Department closed many stations and laid off hundreds of firemen between April 1933 and January 1934. Staffing throughout the city remained low, and only two new permanent stations were completed in the late 1930s. This effort ended more than 30 years of growth for the department. Nonetheless, the early twentieth century construction effort resulted in forty new stations. Coverage had been extended to nearly all areas of the city.

Until 1949, the combination of the economic depression of the 1930s and shortages of labor and materials, and funds brought on by the Second World War halted construction of any new fire stations for a fifteen-year period.

Between 1965 and 1975 the Seattle Fire Department replaced ten older fire stations with modern new facilities and added service in West Seattle. The Department also closed four older stations and transferred responsibility for their service areas to nearby stations. The City eventually sold some of the former fire station buildings to private property owners but retained several others and converted them to new uses.

In 1987, a substantial renovation and rehabilitation of the building added a new wing on the south elevation. This program of modernization substantially remodeled many of the older stations, including Station No. 13, but treated them with sensitivity.

More than one hundred years after its establishment, the Seattle Fire Department continues its mission to curtail loss of life and property by fire through inspection and certification of building safety systems, public education, regulation of hazardous material storage, and fire suppression.

Construction History of Station No. 13

The current Station No. 13 replaced a 1904 era, two-story wood frame building located at the far northern end of Beacon Hill on 14th Avenue South and South Atlantic Street. The earlier station was one of nine fire stations that were built between 1894 and 1908, all following a similar design. At the time of its construction, this earlier station was in the heart of Beacon Hill's residential neighborhood. Over the next twenty years, however, the city expanded southward. Residential and commercial development shifted further to the south, necessitating a more centralized fire station location for Beacon Hill.

In 1911, the city's Water Department had completed construction of two large reservoirs with a combined capacity of 110,000,000 gallons on a 235-acre parcel of land, which Seattle had acquired from the state over ten years earlier. The Beacon Hill reservoirs were built as part of the Cedar River Water System No. 2, which added a second supply pipeline from the city's watershed and four reservoirs within the city limits.

Beacon Avenue was created over the alignment of both Cedar River pipelines, which had been placed to the east of the reservoirs. The pipeline alignment straightened a pre-existing meandering road on the ridge of Beacon Hill, and split the large parcel into two almost equal halves. In 1909, the City decided to transfer the 137 acres, which were not used for the reservoir and pipeline facilities, to the jurisdiction of the Parks Department. The Department later purchased the property and developed most of the land as the Jefferson Park Golf Course. The Olmsted Brothers prepared plans for the new park, but the reservoirs within it were not integrated into the park design as they had been at Lincoln Park and Volunteer Park.

The Fire Department decided to build a new station on Beacon Hill and selected a site that was already city owned, at the southwest corner of Beacon Avenue South and South Spokane Street. Thus the fire

station site is part of a larger parcel of City-owned property located on either side of Beacon Avenue South. The Beacon Hill North and South Reservoirs and the Jefferson Park Golf Course occupy the majority of the property. However, other City facilities include the Jefferson Community Center, Jefferson Park Lawn Bowling, and the Parks Department Horticulture Facility. (Wickwire, 1995, inventory sheet.)

Urban Design Features of the Surrounding Neighborhood

The neighborhood to the north of the station is made up by primarily single-family residences, with some small-scale apartments and commercial buildings on Beacon Avenue South. Across South Spokane Street to the north of the property is a three-story, brick clad apartment building, dating from 1925. Other residences appear to date primarily from the 1920s and 1930s. South of the station, Jefferson Park, Jefferson Park Golf Course and the city's water reservoir occupy open space on both sides of Beacon Avenue South.

The North Beacon Hill area includes several significant historic buildings, which have been recognized by local designation and/or listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Most prominent among these is the Pacific Medical Center/former U. S. Marine Hospital at 1200 12th Avenue South and the nearby Block Property at 1319 12th Avenue South. The Beacon Avenue First Baptist Church, at 1607 Forest Street, is another City of Seattle landmark. In 2003 nearby Cheasty Boulevard was designated as a local landmark due to its design by the Olmsteds, and its contribution to the identity of Beacon Hill.

The neighborhood surrounding the station, including the park is zoned SF 5000, with the exception of the corridor along Beacon Avenue South, which is zoned L-2 and NC1-40. The specific zoning designation of the station parcel is SF 5000, which allows construction of single-family residential buildings up to 35' in height and 35% lot coverage, or 1,750 square feet, whichever is greater.

The North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan of March 1999 set several goals. They included improvements to the business district / Urban Village area, rezoning of some areas to allow for some larger development while retaining some older houses. (The designated Urban Village Center is located with its southern boundary four blocks north of the fire station, extending thirteen blocks north to Massachusetts Street. It encompasses four to five blocks on either side of Beacon Avenue South, 12th and 14th Avenues South.)

The plan called for zoning changes to allow accessory dwelling units to "provide needed affordable housing without altering the character of the neighborhood." It also called for a new public library, which has since been constructed, and upgrading of Jefferson Park. This project is currently underway, with construction of a new community center and gym several blocks south of Station No. 13, and the proposed lidding of the nearby reservoir and creation of additional open space at the surface.

The Original Architect

The design of Station No. 13, as previously noted, is very similar to that of another contemporaneous station, No. 38, which was designed by architect George Stewart. Notation on the 1927 drawings for Stations No. 13 and 16, state "Plans by Baker" or "Drawn by Baker." Records about Stewart's work note that prior to his employment by the city he had worked with Seattle architects Daniel Huntington and Frank L. Baker, and the latter may have been the designer of Station No. 13. The original plan and elevation drawings indicate that many of the stylistic and design features are the same, and the buildings may well have been based on a standard design as had a number of earlier fire stations.

The appearance of a set of later drawings for "prototypical two-engine fire stations," by George Stewart, lends credit to this idea. The drawings include a plan and front elevation for a building which is very similar to Stations No. 13, 16 and 38, except that No. 38 is a single-engine facility with a single apparatus bay.

No information about an architect or engineer with the name of Frank Baker or surname Baker has been discovered during the research for the fire station nominations. The citation on the drawings is in the title block for the City Building Department, indicating that the department had overall responsibility for the design. Baker may have been employed by the city.

Mission Revival and Modernistic Styles

Five of Seattle's fire stations -- No. 37, 13, 14, 16, and 38 -- are based on the Mission Revival or Spanish Mission styles. Stations No. 14 and 37 are direct in their use of both Mediterranean and Mission forms and design elements, with their patterned stucco walls, tile clad gable and hip roofs, integration of bell towers, and surface patterns in gable ends. In contrast, Stations No. 13, 16 and 38 are more restrained, and suggest a less romantic or thematic use of the style. Their flat roofs and blocky massing seem to call upon some Art Deco precedents, and their simplicity and heavy mass seem to anticipate the Depression era.

The Mission Style is somewhat unusual in Seattle, and is more often associated with sunnier climates. Their use appears to be more common in more romantic or thematic building types, such as theaters, hotels and resorts, and housing, rather than in fire stations. The style flourished in California, before the 1920s and became popular in other areas of the country in 1915 to 1945.

Characteristics of the Mission style, include stucco walls and deeply recessed openings and exposed, carved rafter and beam-ends. The buildings sometime have front arcades and porches. Balconies, terraces, or patios provide a close indoor-outdoor relation. Decoration includes ornamental ironwork, glazed tiles, and friezes and panels with decorative motifs drawn from plants and geometric forms. Roof forms typically are low-pitched gables and hips with red tiles. Building plans include asymmetrical facades, as is evident on both Stations No. 14 and 37, as well as a stylistic subtype with symmetrical facades. (McAlester, p. 411 - 415.)

In contrast to the more ornate, decorative expression of Mission Revival and Art Deco buildings, Station No. 13 is a simpler, more straightforward design. Architectural historians have described its style in a variety of categories, which include "Starved" or "Stripped Classicism," "Moderne" and "Modernistic." Sources for this design are diffused, and include factory and industrial design, and functionalist designs from Europe in the 1920s. (McAlester, p. 464 - 465).

Classic revival design components include a strong sense of the building base, wall and top, and the use of symmetry in composition, but in these cases without the direct use of columns, fluted pilasters, capitals, porticos and other derivative features. In Seattle there are few buildings that use the Modernistic style or Stripped Classicism, in part because of the minimal building during the Depression era. However, there are some examples, including the US Federal Courthouse (1939, 1010 - 5th Avenue), and the Coca Cola Bottling Plant on Capitol Hill, and Fire Station No. 41 in Magnolia.

Other buildings that combine historic Mission Revival and Moderne elements in eclectic designs include the Lake Union Power Steam Plant (1912 - 1921, at Eastlake and Fairview Avenues East, by Daniel Huntington), the Cornish School of Art ca. 1920 at 710 Harvard Avenue East, by Albertson Wilson and Richardson), and the Columbia Elementary School (1922 but altered, by architect Floyd Naramore).

5. Bibliography

City of Seattle:

Department of Planning and Design:

Microfilm Permit and Drawing Files.

2000 US Census Statistics.

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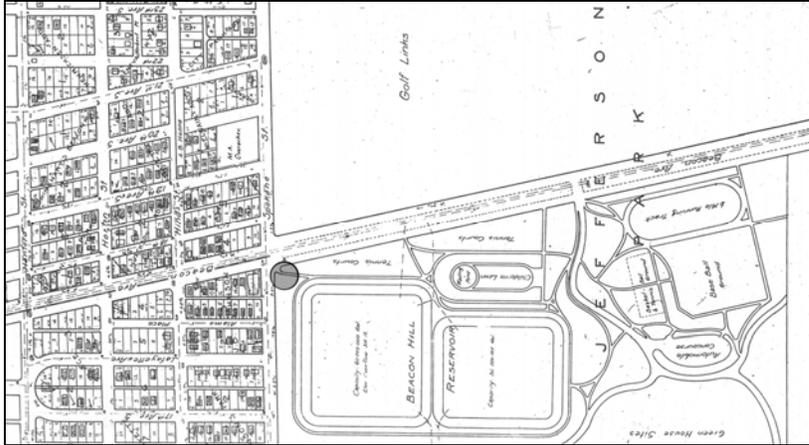
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There are multiple sources for drawings associated with the subject Fire Stations. Original construction drawings or full size copies for several of the stations are held at the City of Seattle's Fleets and Facilities Department. Most permit drawings for initial construction and later renovations are available from the Seattle Department of Planning and Design on microfiche, but many are of poor quality. The Seattle Municipal Archives also has some drawings from the Department of Administration Services' Facility Architectural Plans.

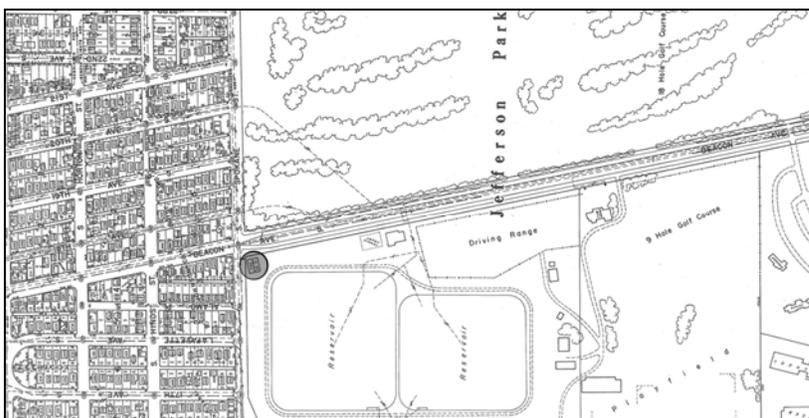
Below, excerpts from figure-ground maps of the neighborhood surrounding Station No. 13 in Seattle's Beacon Hill neighborhood, dating from 1912, 1940 and 2000, which show the gradual development of single-family residences north of Station No. 13 in ca. 1910 - 1940, and changes to Jefferson Park in the past four decades. Source: Kroll Map Company.



1912 Kroll Map



1940 Kroll Map

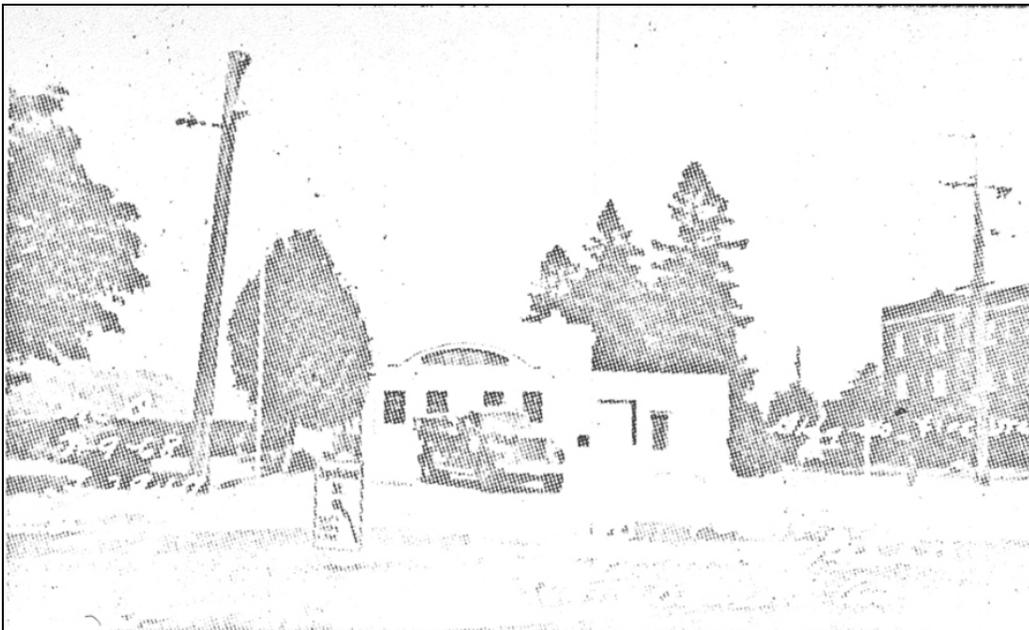


2000 Kroll Map



Above, sketch of the original Firehouse 13, which was located at 14th Avenue South and South Massachusetts Street, ca. 1970. Source: *Seattle Firehouses*.

Below, view of the east facade, looking west across Beacon Avenue South, ca. 1968. Source: King County Tax Assessment Records.





Above, view looking east along South Spokane Street, showing the north facade of the station at right. The street width was expanded at some point between 1940 and 2000, truncating the property. This and all contemporary photos are by BOLA, and date from April – August 2004, unless noted otherwise.

Below, view looking northeast from the site towards the Jefferson Park Apartments.





Above, contemporary view of the east facade, looking west across Beacon Avenue South.

Below, view of the east and north facades, looking southwest. Note the berm of the Beacon Hill Reservoir at left behind the station.





Above, view of the east facade, looking northwest.

Below, detail of a station plaque beside the north apparatus bay.





Above, detail of public art by artist Ellen Zeigler, which was funded by Seattle's 1% For Arts project. These pieces are located at the northeast corner of the station.

Below, view of north facade, looking south across South Spokane Street.





Above, view of the west facade, looking east across the parking lot.

Below, view looking northwest from the southwest corner, with grilling area and parking area beyond.





Above, view of the south facade, looking north. The portion of south wing in the foreground, at the left, is an addition added in 1987.

Below, detail of the corner window at the western end of the south facade of the addition.





Above, detail looking west at the 1987 addition, with its Palladian-type window.

Below, view looking south along Beacon Avenue South from the site towards Jefferson Park playfields and facilities. The reservoir is atop the fenced berm on the right.





Above, views looking southwest and northwest into the Apparatus Room, with Engine 13 and the Battalion Chief's buggy in place.

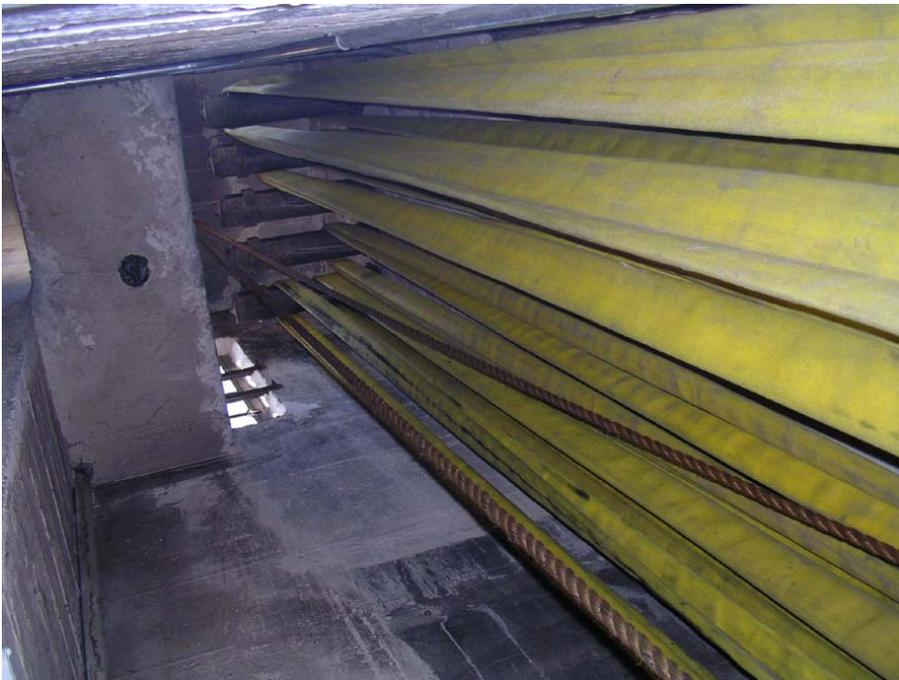
Below left, a view looking north in Apparatus Room, showing storage units at right for ready access. Below right, a view looking north in Apparatus Room. Note the arched head window openings (and door opening in the right photo), and the cast-in-place concrete beams and support brackets, similar to Station 16.





Above, the fire alarm bell on the west wall of the Apparatus Room.

Below, view looking up into the Hose Tower.





Above, view of Watch Office looking south.

Below, view of the Beanery, looking northwest. Use and interior features of this room date from 1987.





Above, view of the vaulted hallway and study desk in the south wing addition, looking south.

Below, view of the Handball Court, looking northeast.

