

# Landmarks Preservation Board

## Nomination Form

NAME (present) OLD FIRESTATION #25(historic) FIRE STATION #25ADDRESS 1400 HARVARD AVE.

## NOMINATION AS:

- ☒ Building  
☐ Site  
☐ Structure  
☐ District  
☐ Object

## NOMINATED UNDER CRITERIA (ORDINANCE 102229)

☒ (1) has significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation; or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or

☐ (2) is the site of an historic event with a significant effect upon society; or

☐ (3) exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community; or

☒ (4) portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or

☒ (5) embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering specimen; or

☐ (6) is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of Seattle; or

☒ (7) contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or

☐ (8) by being part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area, should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on a historic, cultural or architectural motif; or

☒ (9) owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or city; or

☐ (10) has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history.

NOMINEE Jim Stevensonaddress 1922 E. CALHOUN ST.phone EA9-4381Reviewed [Signature]

Historic Preservation Officer

date 12/18/74NOMINATION DATE 12/18/74

DEC 18 1974

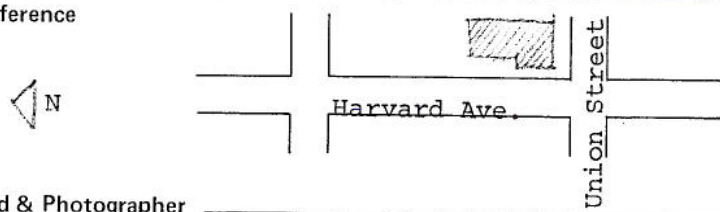
OFFICE OF HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION

BOARD SPONSOR

Margaret A. Corleydate Dec. 18, 1974

# Landmarks Preservation Board

## Seattle Historic Building Data Sheet

1. Name (common or present and/or historic) Old Station No. 25  
Harvard Avenue
2. Street and Number & East Union Street Block \_\_\_\_\_ Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Year Built 1909
3. Present Owner City of Seattle Present Use FM Radio Station
4. Interim Owner(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Interim Use(s) Youth Center
5. Original Owner City of Seattle Original Use Firehouse
6. Architect Sommerville & Coe Builder \_\_\_\_\_
7. Assessed Value: Building \_\_\_\_\_ Land \_\_\_\_\_ Assessors File No. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Classification:
- |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied           | Open to Public:<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <b>By appointment</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> No<br>Hours _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site                | <input type="checkbox"/> Private           | <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied                    |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structure           | <input type="checkbox"/> Both              | <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Object              |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatened by demolition      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other               |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown                       |  |
9. Neighborhood Information:
- A. Compatibility With Neighborhood
- Structure Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_
- Use Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Architecturally Strong Neighborhood
- Comments No  
apartment houses and clinics
- B. Importance to Neighborhood
- Great \_\_\_\_\_
- Moderate \_\_\_\_\_
- Minor \_\_\_\_\_
10. Special Research Sources (Be Specific, list name or item and where found)
- "Seattle Firehouses" by Jim Stevenson, 1971
- National Register Form
11. Cross Street Reference
- 
12. Photos Attached & Photographer Drawing by Jim Stevenson

## 13. Physical Description

A. Style of Architecture

E. Exterior Desecration of  
Original Design

Exterior None or little X  
 Interior Moderate amount X  
 Considerable \_\_\_\_\_

B. Construction Material

Brick &amp; Tile

C. No. of Stories

2½

F. Architectural worth at  
Example of Its Style

D. Condition

Excellent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Good X Exterior  
 Fair X Interior  
 Poor \_\_\_\_\_

Exceptional \_\_\_\_\_  
 Excellent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Good X  
 Fair \_\_\_\_\_  
 Poor \_\_\_\_\_

G. Notable Features: (Be specific, i.e., detailing, craftsmanship, proportions, materials, colors, interior, etc.  
 Refer to Guidelines of Landmarks Preservation Board).

Old Fire Station No. 25, built in 1909, is one of a small number of terraced fire stations built in this country. The sloping hill site location necessitated the use of a terraced design for the equipment floors, a feature which seems to be unique to the west coast. The 2½ storey building has an "L" shaped plan comprised of a partial basement, terraced equipment floor and second floor dormitory and offices. The southern most bay of the building is longer than the others to accommodate a long ladder rig, making the bottom of the "L" plan. Two firemen's poles, which serviced this bay, are located on the exterior wall line creating two bulges on the south elevation, shafts needed to provide enough clearance around the pole to allow passage for a sliding fireman. The exterior of the building is faced in red brick of common running bond. All the windows including the equipment door openings have brick arched heads. Both windows and equipment doors are wood with wood sash. The windows are double hung with the upper half multi-paned and the lower half a single sheet of glass. The equipment doors are multi-paned (all original doors remain), as well as the fixed windows directly above the doors. The roof has modestly sized eaves with paired brackets located between each equipment. The equipment bays are defined by the large equipment doors and paired second floor windows. The architectural drawings show decorative ironwork attached between the bays as well, but it has been removed. Paired brackets below the eaves are further emphasized by a soldier coursing of brick (bricks laid on end) below a round stone set into the exterior wall. Grey tile surfaces the steeply pitched hip roof of the building and hose tower. The hose tower is finished similarly except for a diamond-shaped brick pattern at the top of each corner. Two small dormers in the roof distinguish the large equipment bay, which is also distinguished by a flagpole at the second floor, and above the northern most bay housing the

Continued on insert



entrance and stairs to the second floor quarters.

The interior is designed to be entirely functional with little decoration. The equipment floor is divided into four terraced bays differentiated by interior wood columns supporting the upper floor. There is an elevational difference of approximately 2 feet between each successive bay, with the large southernmost bay being the highest. There were firepoles located between the equipment doors to service each bay with two poles built into the south wall to service the large south bay. The poles have been removed; however, the pole openings can be identified from below the second floor although they have been sealed from above. The rear of the building housed the stables, barn, and horse stalls, since the building was originally designed for horse-drawn equipment. Much of this original design remains. A horse ramp still leads from the alley into the building and along the rear of the old stalls. Each equipment bay had three stalls for horses. The horses stood on an iron grate which opened over the manure cellar below. Still remaining in some places is galvanized sheet metal covering the stable woodwork as protection from gnawing horses. A washing platform for the horses also remains. The remainder of the interior has been remodeled, when the fire station was converted entirely to motor equipment in 1920. The stalls, hayloft, and barn were dismantled and replaced with truck space, commissary lockers, a lounging room, watch office, and part of the long bay converted to a handball court.

#### 14. Significance

##### A. Major Significance

- ☐ Historical
- ☒ Architectural
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Cultural
- ☐ Geographical
- ☐ Archaeological

##### B. Level of Significance

- ☐ National
- ☒ State
- ☒ Community

##### C. Statement of Significance (Be specific, history, personages, events, etc.)

Numbers apply to Landmarks Ordinance criteria Section 6. Numbers not listed do not significantly apply to subject property.

Section 6

(1) Fire Station No. 25 is one of the first of a series of major firehouses built entirely of brick rather than wood. Even following the great Seattle Fire of 1889 the Fire Department continued to build wood structures for many years. Most of these later wooden stations were smaller ones in out-lying neighborhoods. Although designed for horses, Fire Station No. 25 was the first station in Seattle to be assigned a motor driven apparatus, a motorized hose and chemical wagon. The firehouse was placed in service with this and a horse drawn plain hose wagon. During the remainder of the horse era the firehouse also served as the Department's blacksmith shop, from which the smithy began his rounds of the other firehouses. In 1913 the Ladder Company 10 was established here with another motor truck. The last horse drawn wagon was replaced in 1920. The building still retains much of the original design recalling the era of horse drawn equipment (see notable features).

Section 6

(7) Designed in 1908 by the architectural firm of Sommerville and Coe, and built the following year, 1909, the station contained a unique feature of terraced equipment bays. Each succeeding bay dropped two feet lower than the adjacent bay as the site sloped down the hill. This design was immediately embroiled in controversy which lasted until the station was deactivated by the Fire Department in 1970. Firemen complained that the drop between each bay led to accidents when they rushed to their wagons. To reduce this possibility, the designer provided each level with its own brass pole from the dormitory above. This proved little remedy since each pole was a different length resulting in broken ankles from reaching the floor at different times depending upon which pole was taken. Another safety precaution was introduced. It involved placement of guard rails along the edge of each terrace. To ensure ready pressure in the horse drawn pumper, a steam line was installed from the basement to the equipment floor which could be coupled to the apparatus.

Surveyor Signature

*John Bohman*

Date

18 March 1975

Reviewed:

Historic Preservation Officer

Date