

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY NO.

HISTORIC NAME: Engine Co. ^{No. 4}
LOCATION: 212 Park Ave.

COMMON NAME: same
BLOCK/LOT 165/29

MUNICIPALITY: Hoboken
USGS QUAD:
OWNER/ADDRESS: Arthur Tsuchiya
212 Park Ave., Hoboken 07030

COUNTY: Hudson
UTM REFERENCES:
Zone/Easting/Northing

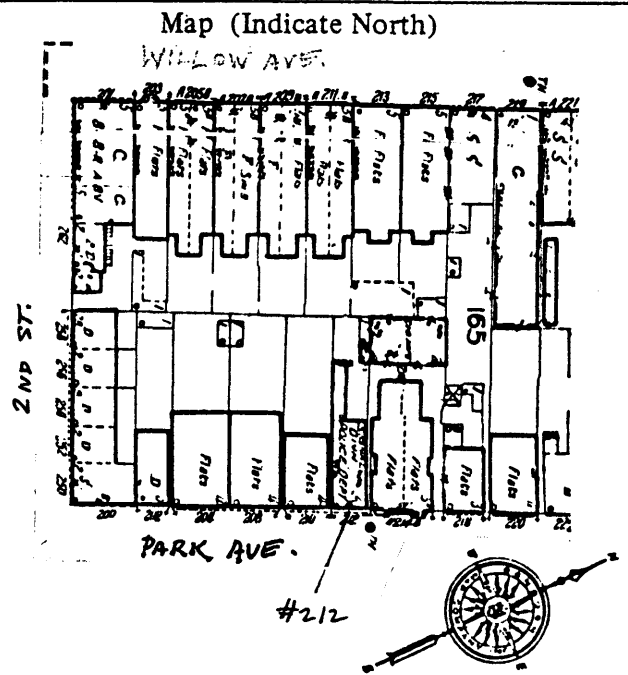
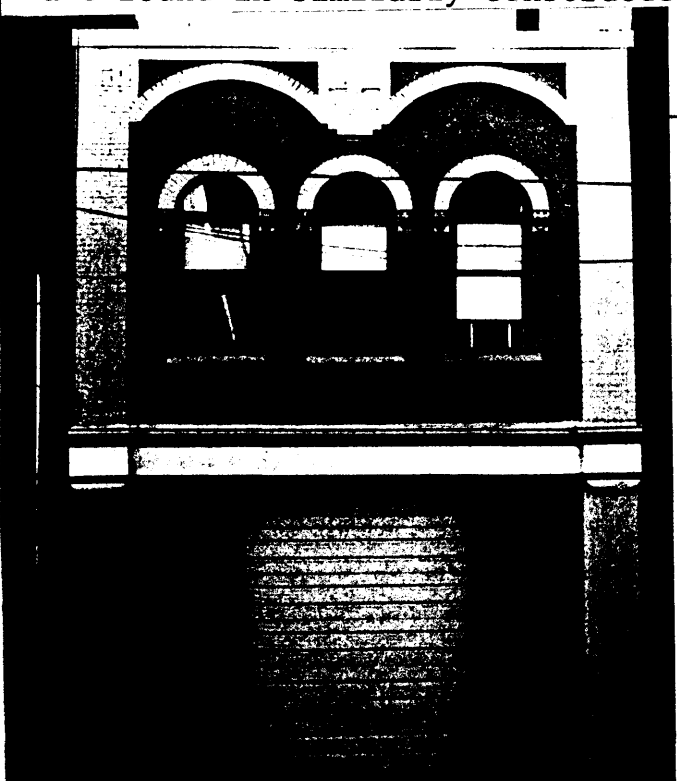
DESCRIPTION

Construction Date: late 1870's
Architect: unknown
Style: vernacular Italianate
Number of Stories: 2
Foundation: brick
Exterior Wall Fabric: brick, stretcher bond
Fenestration: 3 bays on 2nd fl.: 1 over 1, ^{originally} arch-headed; window on 1st fl. to left of engine door has been bricked in.
Roof/Chimneys: flat roof

Source of Date: visual inspection
Builder: unknown
Form/Plan Type: rectangular

Additional Architectural Description: 2nd storey windows have raised brick, arched lintels which terminate in ornamented brackets. The fire engine door is centered on the facade and is flanked by fluted cast-iron piers. The identifying sign/plaque of the firehouse spans the entire facade horizontally, and projects at either end to follow the brick piers of the north and south sides of the facade. The cornice was removed at an indeterminate date, leaving raised brick support arches below the parapet. This suggests that the cornice originally in place followed the arches, and may have been ornamented with foliate brackets, as are found in similarly-constructed buildings of the city.

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
109 WEST STATE STREET, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625 (609) 292 - 2023



Firehouse is located approximately mid-block, and is flush with the building line.

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Urban Suburban Scattered Buildings
 Open Space Woodland Residential Agricultural Village
 Industrial Downtown Commercial Highway Commercial Other

SIGNIFICANCE:

This is believed to be the oldest extant firehouse in Hoboken, a vestige of the earlier two-storey firehouse buildings of the 1850's and 1860's. These buildings typically had one or two apertures for engine doors. Together with 213 Bloomfield St., its dimensions were principally geared toward accomodating the hand-pumped steam engines, which were dragged to the scene of fires by the firemen.

Park Avenue was first known as "Meadow St." due to the proximity within one block of the salt meadow to the west which defined the edge of built-upon land. It is believed for this reason that this building was known as the "Meadow Company" in the early days of the Fire Department.

ORIGINAL USE: firehouse PRESENT USE: residence
 PHYSICAL CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Poor
 REGISTER ELIGIBILITY: Yes Possible No Part of District
 THREATS TO SITE: Roads Development Zoning Deterioration
 No Threat Other

COMMENTS: This building represents a tangible link to the fire-fighting history of the city, but alterations have compromised its architectural integrity. The finding of National Register eligibility for the structure would hold out the possibility of its future restoration, while providing a developmental context within which to view the other houses.

REFERENCES:

RECORDED BY: Patricia Florio
 ORGANIZATION: ---

DATE: February, 1983

HOBOKEN FIREHOUSES THEMATIC NOMINATION

ENGINE COMPANY # 4
212 Park Avenue

The deed to the property, 212 Park Ave., which is dated Oct. 31, 1860, transfers the ownership of the land from the Hoboken Land & Improvement Company to the City of Hoboken with the stipulation that it be used as a firehouse. According to Fire Dept. records, 212 Park Ave. was constructed "pre-1870," although no references were available supporting that date. In 1954, Engine Co. No. 4 was moved to Observer Highway, and was discontinued in 1964. The Police and Fire Signal Division became the occupants of 212 Park Ave. after Engine Co. No. 4 left the building, and remained its sole occupants until the building was auctioned off to its present owners. (This explains our confusion about the Sanborn map demarkation of "Police Dept." for the building.)

212 Park Ave. was included in the photographs of the appendix for the National Register Nomination, where it appears in the background of the middle photograph on Pg. 92 of the Board of Trade of Hoboken's ^{1912 bulletin} section on firehouses and apparatus. For your reference, I have made an additional print, enclosed with this letter. In the photograph, Chemical Engine No. 4 is in the foreground. The broad fascia running the length of the engine door, which is flanked by cast-iron piers, bears raised letters reading "Engine Co. No. 4 H.F.D." The present owners of the building inform me that traces of the raised letters still exist over the door aperture.

Revisions to the Fireman's Monument information, as we have discussed, entail expansion of the designated site to include the iron fencing around the monument; and the geographic orientation of the monument should be as follows: it occupies an area along Willow Ave. side of Church Square Park, midway between Fourth and Fifth Sts.



Chemical Engine No. 4 Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1

From: Hoboken Board of Trade Bulletin,
vol III, of Nov. 1912, p. 92.