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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instruction in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to compete all items.

__X__ New Submission _____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Firehouses in Washington, D.C.

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

The History of Firehouses in Washington, D.C., 1806-1945

C. Form Prepared by

name/title Sally Berk, Architectural Historian
organization D.C. Historic Preservation Office 6/2006
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city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets
the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing and related properties consistent with the National
Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the
Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (See continuation sheets for additional comments.)

DAVID MALONEY ACTING DC SHPO — 4-20-2007
Signature and title of certifying official — date

DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related
properties for listing in the National Register.

Patrick W. Andrus — 6/6/2007
Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

Thirty pre-World War II fire-fighting buildings remain in Washington, D.C. Two of these buildings - the firehouse at St. Elizabeth's Hospital and the one at the Navy Yard - were projects of the federal government. A third firehouse, the Vigilant in Georgetown, was a private endeavor, built during the era of volunteer firefighting. The twenty-seven remaining buildings were constructed under the auspices of the municipal government. Each building is unique, of superior design and quality materials, and a landmark of its neighborhood. Most are domestic in image and all are constructed of red brick, the principal material for residential buildings in the city.

The primary significance of the firehouses is their relationship to the development of the city during four distinct periods of construction. During the first two periods (pre-Civil War and the years between 1865-1897), the buildings were constructed in already established neighborhoods. During the third and fourth periods (1897-1916 and 1925-1945), their location was more calculated. Often firehouses were constructed in anticipation of development or to attract residents to new neighborhoods.

Firehouses are also significant for:

- their expression of civic architecture, particularly those constructed during the Third period (1897-1916), the critical years of the City Beautiful Movement. Most were the work of master architects.
- their representation of the professionalization of firefighting and for progress in firefighting technology;
- the role they played in the city's social history;
- the insight they provide into the Office of the Municipal Architect and that office's relationship to private architectural practice.

Finally, firehouses are significant for the role they played in the lives of the firefighters. As Robert McCarl stated in his study of Washington firefighters, "the focal point of the fire-fighting experience is the firehouse itself."[1]

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[1] McCarl, Robert. The District of Columbia Fire Fighter's Project, A Case Study in Occupational Folklife. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985.

The three oldest firehouses - the Vigilant, the Bank of Columbia, and Old Engine Company 6 - as well as Engine Company 3 and the facade of Old Engine Company 24 are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Six of the firehouses are considered to be contributing buildings within National Register-listed historic districts. The remaining 27 pre-World War II firehouses are eligible for listing in the National Register. Although most of them were renovated by the Fire Department in the 1980s, only the interiors were altered. With the exception of window and apparatus-door replacements, the exteriors of Washington's pre-World War II firehouses remain virtually unchanged; all are recognizable and retain sufficient integrity to qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, two firehouses - Old Union Engine House (1837) and Old Engine Company 2 (1910) - are reputedly in storage somewhere and could possibly be reassembled if their whereabouts become known.

THE CITY'S DEVELOPMENT

Efforts to establish a mercantile economy in Washington never proved to be particularly successful. Instead, the principal foundations of the city's economy have always been the presence of the federal government and the real estate industry. The residential component of the real estate industry has been its most constant, strongest during periods of expansion in government. The greatest of these periods, in both local and federal government, occurred during the last quarter of the nineteenth century when streets were platted north of Boundary Street (now Florida Avenue) outside the original L'Enfant planned city. One of the many consequences of this growth was a period of intense construction of municipal buildings during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first fifteen years of the twentieth. Sixteen firehouses were constructed between 1897 and 1916, almost one firehouse per year, manpowered by the the influx of veterans returning from the war with Spain. Significant periods of expansion also occurred during World War I and during the Great Depression. By the outbreak of World War II, there was little undeveloped land remaining within the boundaries of Washington, substantially curtailing development, both municipal and private, and effecting a change on both the design and location of firehouses.

HISTORY OF FIRE HOUSES IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Fire Companies

The earliest fire companies in Washington, as in other American cities, were organized and staffed on a voluntary basis, functioning much like social clubs. Although the men received no remuneration for their participation, they sought to be accepted into the more socially prominent companies that could assist in advancing their careers.

The companies were ethnically and socially stratified, some drawing their membership exclusively from the city's Italian population, some from the Irish, while some companies admitted only doctors, lawyers, and other professionals. The most prestigious company was the Columbia Fire Company, established 1806. Located in the firehouse closest to the Capitol, it was manned primarily by senators and congressmen.

In 1864, the district government approved "An Act to Organize a Paid Fire Department." Four men were paid full-time and six men per company were required to respond when they heard an alarm. At that time, there were three engines, one hook, and one ladder. The companies that comprised the fire department at that time were located at 21st Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, 12th and D streets, NW, south of the Capitol, and 438 Massachusetts Avenue, NW. Three years later, South Washington Fire Company No. 4 was added.

In the 1870s, as a result of the increasing complexity of both federal and municipal governments and the organizations they administered, firefighting became professionalized. Most fire departments across the country were modeled on the military hierarchy veterans had experienced during the Civil War. In Washington, the fire department became fully professionalized in 1871. The organization of the fire companies has changed little since then.[2]

An all-black company was organized in 1919 to ameliorate the difficulty African Americans were experiencing in being promoted to the rank of officer. They occupied Engine Company 4 at 474 Virginia Avenue, SW (demolished). The firefighters who were responsible for the creation of this company were assisted by many of Washington's prominent merchants, several of whom were immigrants and had, themselves, experienced discrimination. In 1945, the second all-black unit was formed and assigned to Engine Company No. 27 at 4201 Minnesota Avenue, N.E. Until 1962, when the third all-black company was formed and assigned to Engine Company No. 7 at 931 R Street, N.W., the department continued a separate staffing and promotional process.[3]

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[2] Fire Fighters' Association. One Hundred Years of Glory: A History of the District of Columbia Fire Department, 1871-1971. Washington, D.C.: Mt. Vernon Publishing Company, Inc., 1971.

[3] District of Columbia Fire Department. "Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration Honoring D.C.'s Black Men & Women in Blue." Program, July 13, 1985.

Firehouse Organization and Numbering:

Washington's earliest firehouses were identified by the names of the volunteer companies that occupied them. Among the most prominent were the Vigilant, Franklin, Columbia, Union, and South Washington. When firefighting was professionalized in the second half of the nineteenth century, the volunteer firehouses were purchased by the city and the names were replaced with letters or numbers according to an established city-wide system. Numbers were for engine companies and letters were assigned to hook and ladder companies, then known as truck companies. As new firehouses were constructed, they too were assigned a letter or number. When engine companies and truck companies were combined, they were at first identified by both letter and number. In 1906 when the system was restructured, all firehouses were identified by numbers. Today, some firehouses are still technically identified by two numbers - one for the engine company and one for the truck company. (In a few instances, the second number identifies a rescue squad.) Today, however, to simplify alarms, the fire department identifies each firehouse by a single number.

Letters and numbers were originally assigned chronologically as firehouses were acquired by the city or as new ones were constructed. Today, because so many firehouses have been demolished, new ones constructed, and companies combined, the numbers no longer represent chronology but simply the company that occupies the house. The companies have a complicated history that required a four-page list in the 1971 book One Hundred Years of Glory, produced by the D.C. Fire Fighters' Association to mark the centennial anniversary of the professionalization of firefighting in Washington.

Firehouse Architects

With two exceptions, all the architects of Washington's old firehouses were, in some way, associated with either the Office of Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury; with Alfred B. Mullett who served as its chief from 1866 to 1874; or with the firm of Hornblower and Marshall.[4] The Office of Supervising Architect was the predecessor of Washington's Office of Municipal Architect, established in 1909. The three men who headed the Office of Municipal Architect from its creation until after World War II were part of this network. Snowden Ashford, its first chief, serving from 1909 until 1921, had worked on federal projects with Mullett after he left the office. Albert L. Harris, chief from 1921 until 1934 had worked for Hornblower and

[4] Averill and Adams, architects of Engine Company 19, and Parks and Baxter, architects of Engine Company 10, appear to have had no connection with A.B. Mullett or the Office of Supervising Architect.

Marshall for many years, an architectural firm that had close ties to both Mullett and the Office of Supervising Architect. Nathan Wyeth, chief of the Office of Municipal Architect from 1934 until 1946, worked in the Office of Supervising Architect from 1904-1905.

In 1893, when demand for public buildings exceeded the capacity of the Office of Supervising Architect to provide them, Congress passed the Tarsney Act—an act that permitted the hiring of private architectural firms for the design of federal buildings. This permission was extended to Washington's Office of Municipal Architect in the early years of the twentieth century.

Edward W. Donn, Jr. wrote in his unpublished Architectural Reminiscences, "The older architects of the city, Joseph Hornblower, James Rush Marshall, Robert Stead, James G. Hill, Wm. M. Poindexter, Glenn Brown, Leon E. Dessez were the Washington chapter of the American Institute of Architects in the nineties and they jealously guarded its membership." All of these men also belonged to the Cosmos Club and often gathered there for discussions. This network led to design commissions for Leon Dessez, Appleton P. Clark, the Mullett brothers, Hornblower and Marshall, and Gregg and Leisenring.[5]

Influences on the location of firehouses

In addition to decisions made by the city commissioners, a variety of persons and organizations influenced the location of firehouses. In at least two instances, developers influenced the location of firehouses. Archibald McLachlen, developer of the Ontario Apartments, proposed construction of Engine Company 21 (1908) at 1763 Lanier Place, N.W. near the Ontario Apartment Building.[6] When first constructed, the firehouse provided an uninterrupted view of the Ontario Apartments from its rear lunette (now blocked by rowhouses and other apartment buildings). It is not known whether McLachlen simply used his influence or actually donated land or money for the firehouse. In the case of Engine Company 19, the influence is more obvious as Colonel Arthur E. Randle, developer, donated land for construction of the engine company at 2813 Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E., adjacent to his subdivision known as Randle Highlands.[7] Both Engine Companies 19 and 21, well-known landmarks, are more sophisticated in design and more luxuriously detailed than other firehouses of the period, suggesting that the developers may have contributed to the cost of their construction.

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[5] Several of these men also received contracts to design public schools.

[6] Darlene and Claude Glass. Video, "History of Engine Company No. 21," n.d.

[7] Mrs. John F. Snyder. "Pennsylvania Avenue Fire House is Historic Structural Landmark," The Courier, May 25, 1963.

Other influences worked against the construction of firehouses at proposed locations. For instance, in 1927, the Commission of Fine Arts succeeded in preventing a firehouse from being constructed on Sixteenth Street, NW. According to their minutes, "...the Commission approved the design presented by Mr. Harris for a Georgian Revival firehouse at 16th and Webster streets, NW. They preferred, however, that a new site should be found since 16th Street should be devoted to embassies, churches, and institutions."[8]

In 1929, a committee composed of citizens from the Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Trade, NCPPC, the Real Estate Board, and the Federation of Citizens' Associations met with representatives of the Fire Department, the Police Department, the Department of Recreation, and the Water Department to advise the Zoning Commission on a proposed zoning amendment that would allow these activities in residential zones.[9] Assumedly, they preferred that the firehouses be located on the fringes of residential neighborhoods. That same year, the Chevy Chase Citizens' Association agreed to a firehouse at the intersection of Connecticut and Nebraska avenues at the edge of a residential zone,[10] this to replace the one that had been denied for 16th and Warder streets, NW. In 1936, the Rhode Island Avenue Association successfully petitioned the city commissioners to construct a firehouse in the Brentwood area. Engine Company 10 was built at 1340 Rhode Island Avenue, NE, again on the edge of a residential zone.[11]

In 1940, the Georgetown Citizens' Association successfully opposed a proposal for a new firehouse near the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and River Road, NW on the premise that the site was already occupied by a branch library and should be reserved for expansion of the library.[12]

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[8] Commission of Fine Arts Minutes, December 8, 1927, Record Group 66, the National Archives.

[9] "Firehouse Zoning Policy Not Decided," July 8, 1929. Washington Star Archives, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.

[10] "Site for Fire House Near Homes Chosen," July 3, 1929. Washington Star Archives, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.

[11] "New Fire Station in Northeast Begun," December 6, 1936. Washington Star Archives, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library. Washingtoniana Collection. Vertical Files. "Fire Department: Engine Houses, 1815-1929, 1930-1939, 1940-1959." MLK, Jr. Library.

[12] "Firehouse Opposed at Wisconsin Avenue and River Road," The Evening Star, December 24, 1940.

In 1975, when Engine Company 21, 1763 Lanier Place, NW, was slated for demolition because of deterioration and obsolescence, the neighborhood successfully petitioned the city to rehabilitate it instead. Between 1982 and 1983, the firehouse was completely reconstructed on the interior. A new bell was placed in the bell tower.[13]

Downtown Firehouses

Only two firehouses remain downtown, the others having been forced out by 1) the high cost of land, and 2) the fact that they were among the oldest firehouses in the city and, as such, located closer to one another than modern firefighting technology required. A reorganization of the fire department in 1939 resulted in most downtown firehouses being declared redundant.[14] They remained in the possession of the Fire Department until gradually sold by the city for private use. Eventually, all but two were demolished to make room for commercial development. The city's chief librarian identified three of these downtown firehouses as being in areas that needed libraries.[15] None of the firehouses, however, were ever converted for that purpose.

The two downtown firehouses that do remain, Engine Company 3 at 439 New Jersey Avenue, NW (1916) and Engine Company 16 and Truck Company 3 at 1018 13th Street, NW (1932) are larger and more elaborately detailed than those in residential neighborhoods. Both contained offices and relate in both size and design to commercial architecture and to the buildings in the monumental core. They are indicative of the role that downtown firehouses played in the promotion of the central business district.

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[13] Glass, Darlene and Claude. Video, "History of Engine Company No. 21," n.d.

[14] "Fire Department Changes Urged in District," The Evening Star, November 8, 1939.

[15] "Three Firehouses Proposed for Branch Libraries," The Washington Star, January 28, 1940.

CONCLUSION

While other large American cities, those with strong mercantile economies, tended to have larger and often monumental firehouses, Washington's old firehouses depict a city of solidly middle-income neighborhoods. These firehouses have traditionally been community buildings, often havens for the needy. Today they bear signs which identify them as "Safe Places."

Despite the fact that some of the older buildings don't provide the comforts and conveniences of the modern ones (deferred maintenance and other forms of disinvestment have contributed to this condition), most of the firemen are devoted to their houses for their associations with history and tradition. Many of the firemen spend time between calls reading old daily journals and are experts on their firehouses. City residents value the firehouses for their somewhat whimsical designs and their symbolism of neighborhood cohesion. Appropriately, one of the old firehouses, made surplus by the city many years ago, now serves as a community center.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

Name of Property Type: **Firehouses**

Description:

Firehouses were erected in the city during four distinct periods of development: the Civil War Period (pre-1865); the Victorian Period (1865-1897); the City Beautiful Movement/Eclectic Period (1897-1916); and Inter-War Period (1924-1945). During these periods, firehouses share distinct typological and stylistic characteristics and have thus been classified accordingly. A more complete description of the firehouses within each of these periods follows.

Significance:

All of the city's pre-World War II firehouses are significant for their expression of civic architecture, particularly those constructed during the City Beautiful Movement (1897-1916). Most of the firehouses represent the work of master architects. In addition, firehouses are significant for their representation of the professionalization of firefighting and for progress in firefighting technology; the role they played in the city's social history; and the insight they provide into the Office of the Municipal Architect and that office's relationship to private architectural practice.

Registration Requirements:

All of the city's pre-World War II firehouses are eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C with Architecture and Community Planning and Development as the Areas of Significance. In order to be eligible for listing the buildings must retain their original exterior massing and detail. However, the buildings still retain integrity if the original doors and/or windows have been boarded up or replaced, as window and door replacements have systematically taken place to accommodate new technology in fire fighting. Similarly, the buildings retain integrity despite major alterations in the interiors. Most of the city's firehouses have been renovated on the interior to accommodate new firefighting technology.

Property Subtype: **Pre-Civil War (Volunteerism) Firehouses**

Description:

The firehouses of the first period, which lasted from the city's inception until the close of the Civil War,

were constructed during the era of volunteer firefighting. The pre-War firehouses were one-room sheds that protected a single piece of apparatus.

In the early nineteenth century, fire companies were formed and firehouses became somewhat more complex. They were now two-story, wood or brick, buildings with pitched roofs, gables usually fronting the street, and topped by belfries with which to call the men to action. They were modest and unornamented. The apparatus was housed on the ground floor and the firemen and hay loft on the second. Generally, the façade of the building consisted of a single apparatus door on the ground floor and two windows on the second floor. Built by the volunteer companies which occupied them, they were probably not architect-designed. Despite the fact that the fire companies were in constant competition with one another, this did not result in grand firehouses.

Only one firehouse remains from the Pre-Civil War (Volunteerism) period. The Old Vigilant Firehouse at 1066 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. (1844) is recognized as a landmark, listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places and is included within the Georgetown Historic District.

Name of Property Subtype: **Victorian Period (1865-1897) Firehouses**

Description:

During this period, the municipal government built approximately one dozen firehouses, of which at least five have been demolished. According to Rebecca Zurier in The American Firehouse: an Architectural and Social History, the typical urban firehouse, ubiquitous throughout the country, first appeared in the latter part of the nineteenth century and prevailed for almost a century.[16] It was narrow, two to three stories in height, mid-block, and red brick. Ornament was generally confined to the ground floor and the cornice of the facade. Hose drying towers, usually two-story shafts embedded in the building, were not visible on the exterior.

In Washington, the firehouses were located in established neighborhoods and designed to harmonize with the prevailing vernacular row house architecture. Only the buildings' distinctive apparatus doors, flat facades rather than the more common projecting bay window, differentiated them from the surrounding residential building forms. Typically in Washington, firehouses constructed mid-block were

16 Rebecca Zurier. The American Firehouse: an Architectural and Social History. New York: Abbeville Press, Inc., 1982, pp. 87-89.

invariably detached on at least one side. An alleyway, wide enough to lead the horses into the building through a side entrance, also gave access to the rear of the building and provided a modicum of outdoor space for the firemen.

The two-story plan divided the firefighting activities on the first floor from the firemen's living quarters on the second. The first floor was tri-partite in plan with the apparatus room at the front, the horse stalls behind, and the office at the rear. (Today, most control centers have been moved forward and are located directly behind the central door or window, often boarded up.) Most firehouses had a sitting room on the second floor. Those that did not usually had one on the first floor. (Since the renovation of the firehouses in the 1980s, all have sitting rooms on the first floor.)

The apparatus room accommodated one engine and one truck parked side-by-side,[17] with just enough space between the vehicles for the horses, tethered behind the vehicles, to run to the front of the apparatus and be harnessed to it. In the 1870s, the quick-hitch hanging harness was invented, a device which hung from the ceiling in front of the apparatus and dropped down automatically when the alarm sounded. Without any prodding, the horses would run directly into the harnesses which were then attached to the apparatus.[18]

The bunkroom, bathrooms, and officers' rooms were on the second floor; the bunkroom at the front, directly above the apparatus room. The rooms were connected vertically by poles, invented in 1878.[19] There were usually two poles - one at the front and one at the back of the apparatus room - although sometimes there were three or even four. The firemen were assigned to the bunk closest to their position on the vehicle below.

Various devices were invented for enclosing the poles to prevent odors from the horses rising to the bunkroom above, and later fumes from vehicles. The most common was a trap door that sprung open at the firemen's touch. When the firehouses were renovated in the 1980s, most of the poles were enclosed in closets at the second floor (with swinging doors for quick exit), to prevent not only fumes, but also unconditioned air from infiltrating the bunkroom.

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[17] Today, some firehouses also accommodate an ambulance which has to be parked behind another piece of apparatus.

[18] Zurier, p. 102.

[19] Zurier, p. 102.

The hayloft, or forage room as it was referred to on the original plans, was also on the second floor, connected by chute to the horse stalls below. The hayloft had a full-size exterior door on the alley side of the building with a hoist above it for loading hay into the room. Today, second-story exterior doors and hoists are the only visible signs of original haylofts.

All the firehouses of the Victorian period had the same facade composition. On the ground floor were two apparatus doors with an entrance between. If there were a side entrance, there would be a window between the apparatus doors. On the second floor was a bank of domestic windows with a flagpole integral to the design. Within this general *parti*, an array of designs resulted, varied by the application of either Classical, Jacobean, Queen Anne, or Romanesque details. It is these variations that made them neighborhood landmarks.

In 1870, when the fire companies were consolidated into one city-wide city system, the volunteer houses were acquired by the city and became a part of the system. Eight firehouses remain from the Victorian Period, four of which are listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites:

1) Old Engine Company 6 at 438 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, ca 1864. D.C. Landmark

2) Old Engine Company 5 at 3210 M Street, NW, 1883. D.C. Landmark.

3) Old Engine Company 7 at 931 R Street, NW, 1884-1885. Located in Strivers' Section Historic District (National Register-listed historic district)

4) St. Elizabeth's Engine House at 2700 Martin Luther King, Jr., Ave., SE, constructed 1890, Moved 1905. Located in the National Register-listed St. Elizabeth's Historic District.

5) Old Engine Company 9 at 1624 U Street, NW, 1893. Located in the Strivers' Section Historic District (National Register-listed historic district)

6) Old Engine House 10 at 1341 Maryland Avenue, NE, 1894.

7) Old Truck Company 4 at 219 M Street, NW, 1895. Located in the Mt. Vernon Square Historic District (National Register-listed historic district).

8) Old Engine Company 12, 1626 North Capitol Street, NW, 1897.

Name of Property Subtype: **City Beautiful Movement/Eclectic Period (1897-1916) Firehouses**

Description:

During the most influential period of the City Beautiful Movement, the design and location of civic buildings were partially determined by the intent to create landmarks that would foster civic pride. And, although the City Beautiful Movement was most often associated with neo-classical design, the firehouses of this period ranged in style from Queen Anne Victorian, to Dutch Revival, Georgian Revival, Italianate, Renaissance Revival, Beaux Arts, Mediterranean Revival, Tudor, and Towered French Eclectic. Zurier identifies this time as one of "Castles and Palaces, 1890-1918," when eclectic combinations or interpretations of revival architecture pervaded all building types.

The individualized designs of these firehouses resulted, in part, from having been designed by numerous private architectural firms. Imaginative, they were intended to attract new residents as well as to be compatible with nearby residential buildings. Because they often preceded by several years, the development of their neighborhoods, they were, in several instances, influential in the design of houses and apartment buildings that followed.

There are two reasons that the firehouses of this period often preceded development: first, because land was cheaper and easier to acquire in not-fully developed areas (the fire department was limited to a purchase price not to exceed 125% of the assessed value of the property)[20] and, second, because the firehouses were seen as tools for development. The success of the firehouse as an attraction is evidenced by the fact that at least two firehouses are known to have been located and designed according to the wishes of developers.

Despite the variety of architectural styles at this time, the interior plan remained basically the same. In fact, Washington firehouse plans remained essentially unchanged for seventy-five years. Even the introduction, in 1911, of motorized equipment, one of the most significant advances in firefighting technology, did little to alter the plan of the firehouse. The three firehouses built immediately after the introduction of motorized vehicles are identical in plan to their predecessors except that the horse stalls

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20 "Residents Oppose Fire Station," The Evening Star, October 20, 1927. Washingtoniana Collection. Vertical Files. "Fire Department: Engine Houses, 1815-1929, 1930-1939, 1940-1959." MLK, Jr. Library.

were eliminated.

With the rapid growth in the city's commercial core during this period, the downtown firehouse began to differentiate itself from those in the residential neighborhoods. The downtown firehouse, rather than being a landmark for a particular residential neighborhood, was an advertisement for the whole city, and thus became more monumental in scale and treatment. At this time, a third story was integral to some of the new firehouses, intended to accommodate the battalion chief's bedroom and office and/or a large room for use by the community or the firemen's recreation. Engine Company 3 at 439 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. (1916), one of the few firehouses with a third floor, is the only one known to have a pole connecting the third to the second floor.

After motorized apparatus was introduced in 1911, small buildings were provided at the rear of the firehouse, often designed in the same vernacular as the firehouse, where fuel for the apparatus was stored. These outbuildings are now used for storage since vehicles are fueled at gas stations. All the firehouses have basements, although rarely full-size, which contain the heating plant, storage, and sometimes a repair shop.

Fifteen remain from the City Beautiful Movement/Eclectic Period, six of which are listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites:

1) Engine Company 22 at 5760 Georgia Avenue, NW, 1897 (the city's oldest functioning firehouse).

2) Engine Company 20 at 4300 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, 1900.

3) Engine Company 5 at 3412 Dent Place, NW, 1900. (Located in the National Register-listed Georgetown Historic District.)

4) Old Engine Company 11 at 1338 Park Road, NW, 1900.

5) Engine Company 17, 1227 Monroe Street, NE, 1902.

6) Engine Company 25 at 3203 Martin Luther King Blvd., SE, 1902.

7) Navy Yard Engine Company, 1001 9th Street, SE, 1905. (Located within the National Register-listed Navy Yard Historic District.)

8) Engine Company 27 at 4201 Minnesota Avenue, NE, 1908.

9) Old Engine Company 26 at 2715 22nd Street, NE, 1908.

10) Engine Company 21 and Truck Company 9, 1763 Lanier Place, NW, 1908. (Located within the Mt. Pleasant Historic District.)

11) Engine Company 19, 2813 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, 1910.

12) Engine Company 23, 2119 G Street, NW, 1910.

13) Engine Company 24, 3702 Georgia Avenue, NW, 1911.

14) Engine Company 3 and Truck Company 1, 439 New Jersey Avenue, 1916. (Listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites.)

15) Engine Company 28 at 3522 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 1916. (Located within the National Register-listed Cleveland Park Historic District.)

Name of Property Subtype: **Inter-War/Colonial Revival Period Firehouses (1925-1945)**

Description:

Scarcity of building materials during and immediately after World War I resulted in a hiatus in firehouse construction between 1917 and the onset of the building boom of the 1920s. In 1925, the year that DCFD retired the last horse, the first post-war firehouse was constructed, introducing a new one-story type known as the "bungalow firehouse."[21] They were constructed in suburban areas of the city where land was still relatively easy to purchase and where it was feasible to build the more land-intensive one-story building.

Stylistically, these firehouses blended with the Colonial Revival houses that proliferated in residential neighborhoods at the time. It was the Commission of Fine Arts, created in 1910, that was responsible for instituting the Colonial Revival vernacular for Washington's municipal buildings. Charles Moore, who became chairman of the commission in 1915, was influential in establishing classical principles in

[21] "Design for Washington's First Bungalow Engine House," The Sunday Star, December 7, 1924.

the city's architecture. At first advocating a proper style of architecture for each type of public building, the commission eventually chose Colonial Revivalism as the appropriate one for schools, libraries, and firehouses.[22]

Two variations on the one-story firehouse were built in Washington. In the first scheme, the various functions were clearly articulated on the exterior. The dormitory and living room, each a separate mass, were located either to the side or at the rear of the apparatus room. The hose tower, now a prominent element in the composition, was located at the intersection of the apparatus room and the dormitory or the living room. The second scheme was symmetrical with the apparatus room in the center, the living room to one side and the bunkroom to the other. The hose tower was located at the rear, relegating it to a less prominent position in the whole composition.

The reason for the one-story firehouse has never been verified. Several veterans of the fire department believe they were intended to obviate fire poles and the injuries incurred in their use.[23] Only ten were built. In the 1960s, both one- and two-story firehouses were constructed. By the 1970s, the one-story firehouse was no longer constructed in Washington.

There were two exceptions to the one-story firehouse during the Colonial Revival period. First, Engine Company 10 (originally Truck Company 13) at 1342 Florida Avenue, N.E., built in 1925, is the one most often spoken of by veteran firemen because of its novelty. It was a hybrid of the traditional two-story and the newer one-story (until being remodeled in the 1980s.) It contained a two-story apparatus room surrounded by a balcony around which individual bedrooms were arranged. A skylight in the roof provided light for the apparatus room and balcony. Except for the hose tower, a prominent element in the center of the facade, the various functions are not articulated on the exterior. It is a simple, compact design on the exterior. The plan must not have been a successful one because only one was built. When it was remodeled, it was converted to the typical two-story plan lending credence to the suspicion that it was unsuccessful because it allowed noxious fumes to rise to the bunkrooms above.

The second exception to the one-story Colonial Revival firehouse is Engine Company 16, 1018 13th Street, NW, a project of the Works Project Administration. Built in 1932 in the heart of downtown where land was far too valuable to allow for a one-story building, Engine Company 16 is a three-story firehouse which originally included administrative offices on the second floor and a medical clinic for

[22] Commission of Fine Arts Minutes, February 15, 1911. Record Group 66, National Archives.

[23] Theodore Holmes, Chief of Public Relations. Interview, October 10, 1991.

both the fire department and the police department on the third floor.

The year 1925 also marks the year when kitchens were introduced into firehouses. In the nineteenth century, the firemen went home for meals. They were given a one-hour break for lunch and one hour for dinner, requiring they be assigned to firehouses close to their homes. Today all firehouses have kitchens. Those that were built without them have subsequently been retrofitted.

By the end of World War I, notions of the firehouse as a neighborhood amenity had changed. As the number of alarms increased, multiplying noise and traffic, firehouses came to be regarded as undesirable neighbors. In the 1920s, citizens' groups were mobilizing to oppose construction of firehouses in their neighborhoods. Several planned firehouses were successfully opposed. The speed with which motorized equipment enabled men to respond to alarms and the larger areas they were able to protect, obviated the need for firehouses to be as close to residences as they had previously been. Increasingly, firehouses were being constructed on the outskirts of residential districts, on major thoroughfares and commercial strips. After World War II, little vacant land remained within the city limits. In the 1960s, the two-story firehouse reappeared. Since the platting and selling of neighborhoods was no longer an objective of city government, new firehouses were built only when obsolescent ones needed replacement.

With Washington's rather late acceptance of the International Style, a significant shift in firehouse design was affected. Domestic images and historical references, which dominated firehouse design from 1864 until 1939, were replaced with functional aesthetic. The first firehouse to be designed according to the new aesthetic was Engine Company 14, 4801 North Capitol Street, NE. It continued the decades-long tradition of red brick, Colonial Revival architecture, but its design was so abstract as to constitute a wholly-new image. After World War II, three more firehouses were constructed in this abstracted Colonial Revival mode. The plans, however, remained surprisingly similar to those of the nineteenth century, indicating that the plans had always been reasonably efficient. But the image of the post-World War II firehouse was transformed from one of shelter to one of technology.[24]

Seven firehouses remain from the Colonial Revival Period.

1) Engine Company 29 at 4811 MacArthur Boulevard, NW, 1925.
2) Engine Company 10 at 1342 Florida Avenue, NE, 1925.

[24] When, in 1996, a new Engine Company 24 was constructed at Georgia Avenue and Fessenden Street, NW, domestic image for firehouses returned to Washington.

3) Engine Company 31 at 4930 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 1930.
4) Engine Company 16 and Truck Company 3, 1018 13th Street, NW, 1932.
5) Engine Company 26 at 1340 Rhode Island Avenue, NE, 1936.
6) Fire Alarm Headquarters at 300 McMillan Drive, NW, 1939.
7) Engine Company 14 at 4801 North Capitol Street, NE, 1945.

Name of Property Type: **Hose Towers**

Description:

Hose towers, the ubiquitous symbol of the American firehouse, appeared in the United States around 1840. While it is generally believed that the towers were used for observation and that men were assigned watch duty, this was not necessarily true within the city boundaries in Washington, D.C. By the time hose towers first appear on the exterior of firehouses within the city, a sophisticated fire alarm system had already been installed city-wide. In firehouses built between 1862 and 1902, there is no exterior evidence of hose towers. Instead, the towers are two-story shafts embedded in the building. However, as firehouses were constructed in outlying areas that went beyond the reach of municipal water or the call-box system, towers began to be introduced as prominent features of the façade. For instance, Engine Company 25 in Anacostia and Engine Company 17 in Brookland, both built beyond the call-box system, were designed with exterior towers as major elements of their facades. Several more firehouses were built with obvious hose towers before they were relegated to the side or rear of the building around 1911. When one-story firehouses were instituted in the 1920s, the hose tower necessarily extended beyond the roof of the building and became, again, a major design element.

The purpose of the hose tower was, more significantly, though for hanging hoses to dry. Until the latter half of the twentieth century, hoses were made of cotton that could mildew and rot. Today's hoses are made of dacron and there is no need to dry them. The tower became obsolete, however, before the introduction of dacron hoses when, in 1958, electric hose dryers were installed. Most hose towers are now used for storing hoses. In a few firehouses, intervening floors have been installed in the towers and the space is used for miscellaneous purposes.

The location of and access to the hose tower varies. All are accessed from the first floor; some only by an interior door, others also by an exterior door. In many of the firehouses, the only access to the top of the hose tower is by a two-story ladder. Some firehouses have an additional access at the second floor. These can take two forms. One is simply an opening onto the ladder leading to the top of the hose tower. The other, and more convenient condition, is a full staircase leading to a third-floor landing whose only purpose is to access the top of the hose tower.

There are firemen in the department today who remember that they were not allowed to return to bed after responding to a call, even on freezing nights, until the hoses had been hung to dry.

Significance/Registration Requirements:

In D.C. the hose towers are integral parts of the firehouse buildings and are significant elements of the firehouse. Because the hose tower is integral to the building, however, the tower is not considered eligible for listing as a separate element. In other words, the entire firehouse would qualify for listing, not simply the hose tower aspect of it.

G. Geographical Data

The boundaries of this Multiple Property Listing include the entire District of Columbia.

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

A study of firehouses in Washington, D.C., undertaken by the D.C. Historic Preservation Office in the early 1990s resulted in a comprehensive context on the history of pre-World War II firehouses and an intensive-level survey of the city's extant firehouse buildings. Following the initial study phase, a National Register Multiple Property document on the city's pre-World War II firehouses was prepared and individual D.C. Historic Landmark nomination forms were developed for certain extant buildings. Over the course of the next few years, the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board has heard the Multiple Property Document and several individual nominations and approved them for listing in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites. This cover document, being forwarded here (2007), is being accompanied by several individual National Register nominations.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: COVER DOCUMENTATION

MULTIPLE NAME: Firehouses in Washington DC MPS

STATE & COUNTY: WASHINGTON, District of Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 04/24/07 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 06/07/07
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 64500979

NOMINATOR: STATE

✓ ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT 6/6/2007 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

cover form describes the historic and architectural significance of the District of Columbia's firehouses from 1806-1945.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Cover

REVIEWER Patrick Andrus DISCIPLINE Historian

Phone _____ Date 6/6/2007

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

Engine Co. 16; 22; and 31 and Fire Department/Alarm Headquarters
Washington, DC

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WASHINGTON WEST QUADRANGLE

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA—MARYLAND—VIRGINIA

7.5 MINUTE SERIES

(TOPOGRAPHIC—BATHYMETRIC)

Engine Company 22
18 324240E
4314181N

Engine Company 31
18 320632E
4313717N

Fire Dept/Alarm Hdqtrs
18 324911E
4310363 N

Engine Company 16
18 323976 E
4307985 N

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey and the National Ocean Service

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, NCPS, and WSSC

Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1955. Field checked 1956. Revised 1965

Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Service from tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys. This information is not intended for navigational purposes

Mean low water (dotted) line and mean high water (heavy solid) line compiled by NOS from tide-coordinated aerial photographs. Apparent shoreline (outer edge of vegetation) shown by light solid line

Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Maryland coordinate system, and Virginia coordinate system, north zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 8 meters south and 26 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

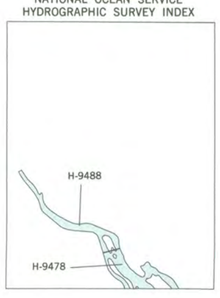
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1981 and other sources. This information not field checked
Map edited 1983

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY INDEX



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H-9488	1976	1:5,000	.01–.05

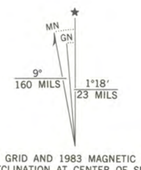
SCALE 1:24 000

1 0 1 MILE
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 .5 0 1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
BATHYMETRIC CONTOUR INTERVAL 1 METER WITH SUPPLEMENTARY 0.5 METER CONTOURS—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 0.4 METER

BASE MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
BATHYMETRIC SURVEY DATA COMPLIES WITH INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION (IHO) SPECIAL PUBLICATION 44 ACCURACY STANDARDS AND/OR STANDARDS USED AT THE DATE OF THE SURVEY
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION



UTM GRID AND 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty — Light-duty
Medium-duty — Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route — U. S. Route — State Route

WASHINGTON WEST, D. C.—MD.—VA.
38077-H1-TB-024

1965

PHOTOREVISED 1983
BATHYMETRY ADDED 1982

DMA 5561 I NE—SERIES V833

CONVERSION SCALES

Feet	Meters
15000	4500
14000	4000
13000	4000
12000	3500
11000	3000
10000	3000
9000	2500
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7000	2000
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4000	1000
3000	1000
2000	900
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0	700
	600
	500
	400
	300
	200
	100
	0

Feet	Meters
1	.3048
2	.6096
3	.9144
4	1.2192
5	1.5240
6	1.8288
7	2.1336
8	2.4384
9	2.7432
10	3.0480

To convert feet to meters multiply by .3048

To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

Exposed at low tide

DEPTH GRADIENT

Meters	Feet
0	0
5	16.4
10	32.8
15	49.2
20	65.6
25	82.0

Maximum depth

ISBN 0-607-13454-2

Firehouses in Washington, DC (MPS)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WASHINGTON WEST QUADRANGLE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA—MARYLAND—VIRGINIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES
(TOPOGRAPHIC-BATHYMETRIC)

Truck Co. F
18 323883
4310800
UTM Ref.

Engine Co. 29
18 322356
4309253
UTM Reference

ENGINE CO. 12
18 325754
4308712
UTM Reference

Engine Co. 23
18 322356
4307220
UTM Reference

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey and the National Ocean Service

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, NCPS, and WSSC

Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1955. Field checked 1956. Revised 1965

Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Service from tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys. This information is not intended for navigational purposes

Mean low water (dotted) line and mean high water (heavy solid) line compiled by NOS from tide-coordinated aerial photographs. Apparent shoreline (outer edge of vegetation) shown by light solid line

Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Maryland coordinate system, and Virginia coordinate system, north zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18
1927 North American Datum
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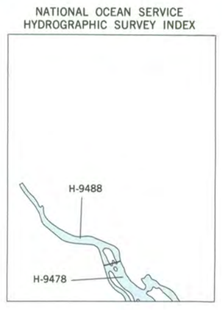
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY INDEX



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H-9488	1976	1:5,000	.01-.05

SCALE 1:24 000

1 0 1 MILE
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 .5 0 1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
BATHYMETRIC CONTOUR INTERVAL 1 METER WITH SUPPLEMENTARY
0.5 METER CONTOURS—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
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BASE MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
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NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852
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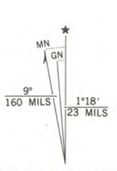
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION



UTM GRID AND 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty — Light-duty
Medium-duty — Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route — U. S. Route — State Route

WASHINGTON WEST, D. C.—MD.—VA.
38077-H1-TB-024

1965

PHOTOREVISED 1983
BATHYMETRY ADDED 1982
DMA 5561 I NE—SERIES V833

CONVERSION SCALES

Feet	Meters
1	.3048
2	.6096
3	.9144
4	1.2192
5	1.5240
6	1.8288
7	2.1336
8	2.4384
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10	3.0480

To convert feet to meters multiply by .3048

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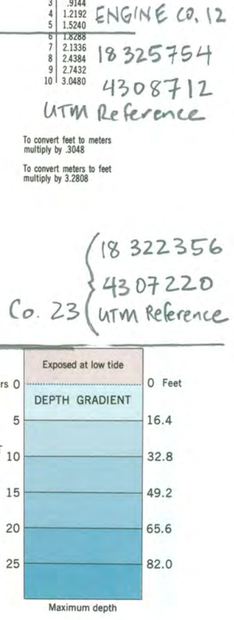

ISBN 0-607-91345-4

Firehouses in Washington, DC (MPS)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WASHINGTON EAST QUADRANGLE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA – MARYLAND
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC – BATHYMETRIC)

5562 II SE (KENSINGTON)
5562 III SW (BELTSVILLE)
5562 III SE (LAUREL)
5561 I NE (WASHINGTON WEST)
5561 IV NW (LANHAM)
5561 I SE (ALEXANDRIA)
5561 IV SW (ANACOSTIA)
5561 IV SE (UPPER MARLBORO)

77°00′ 39°00′ 76°52′30″ 38°52′30″

Engine Co. 17
18 327 523
4311134

(old) Engine Co. 26
18 329 036
4310091
UTM Reference

Truck House 13
18 327 696
43 07501
UTM Reference

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey and the National Ocean Survey

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, USCE, NCPS, and WSSC

Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1955. Field checked 1957. Revised 1965

Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Survey from tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys. Soundings compiled from NOS chart 12285. This information is not intended for navigational purposes

Mean low water (dotted) line and mean high water (heavy solid) line compiled by NOS from tide-coordinated aerial photographs. Apparent shoreline (outer edge of vegetation) shown by light solid line

Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Maryland coordinate system
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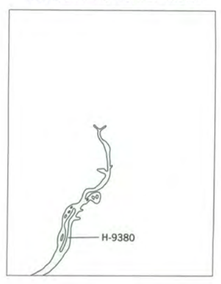
NATIONAL OCEAN SURVEY
HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY INDEX



HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY INFORMATION

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SCALE 1:24 000

1 MILE
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
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BATHYMETRIC CONTOUR INTERVAL 1 METER WITH SUPPLEMENTARY
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NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

UTM GRID AND 1965 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty
Medium-duty
Light-duty
Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route

CONVERSION SCALES

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11000	3000
10000	3000
9000	2500
8000	2500
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Meters 0 — 0 Feet
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PHOTOREVISED 1979
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INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1988