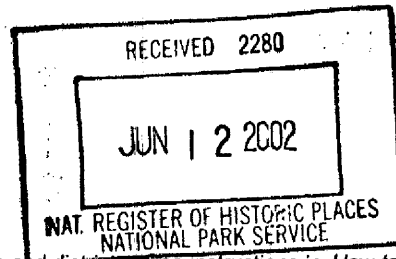


**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

808



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for 'not applicable.' For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instruction. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name: West End Hose Company Number 3

other names/site number:

**2. Location**

street and number: 15 Doughty Avenue

city or town: Borough of Somerville

state: New Jersey

county: Somerset County

N/A not for publication

N/A vicinity

zip code: 08876

*[Handwritten scribbles]*

**3. State/Federal/Tribal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Assistant Commissioner, Natural & Historic Resources, DSHPO

State or Federal agency and bureau

American Indian Tribe

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

American Indian Tribe

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other. (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

*[Handwritten Signature: Edson H. Beall]*

7-17-02

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government

Historic Subfunctions  
(Enter subcategories from instructions)

Fire Station

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation And Culture

Current Subfunctions  
(Enter subcategories from instructions)

Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

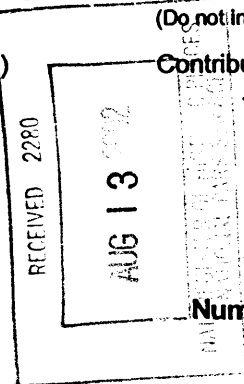
Late Victorian  
Romanesque

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation	Brick
Walls	Brick
Roof	Asphalt

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)



**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is

- A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes..
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Social History

**Period of Significance**

1888-1949

**Significant Dates**

1888

**Significant Person**

(Complete if criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Jacques Vanderbeck

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
- See continuation sheet for additional HABS/HAER documentation.

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- 
- 
- Local Government (Repository Name: Somerville Fire Museum)
- 
- Other (Repository Name: Somerville Public Library)

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property:** approximately .02 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	532320	4490180	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)



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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title: Margaret Newman, Historic Preservation Specialist

organization: Holt, Morgan, Russell Architects

date: 10/1/2001

street & number: 350 Alexander Street

telephone: (609) 984-0473

city or town: Princeton

state: New Jersey

zip code: 08540-

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: Borough of Somerville

street & number: P.O. Box 399, 25 West End Avenue

telephone: (908) 725-2300

city or town: Somerville

state: New Jersey

zip code: 08876-

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.* ).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget. Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

US GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1993 O - 350-416 QL :

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

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## Architectural Description

The West End Hose Company Firehouse is located at 15 Doughty Avenue in Somerville, Somerset County, New Jersey. A two-story brick building, it was built in 1888 in a simplified version of the Romanesque Revival style. Located in a neighborhood of mixed-use residential and commercial buildings (Photo 1), the Firehouse is now tightly book-ended by buildings on either side as well as on the back, although originally it was freestanding, accessible from all sides. The small structure housed the West End Hose Company until 1970, at which time the Fire Company was relocated to a new facility and the original building became the Somerville Fire Museum. Other than modifications to the doors that were necessitated by the purchase of more modern equipment, no substantive changes have been made to the building since its original construction. It remains in good physical condition.

In 1888, when the fire station was constructed, designers were borrowing freely from a number of different architectural styles and the stylistic distinctions that had hitherto been very clearly differentiated were becoming less recognizable. Eclecticism was the order of the day, and buildings were designed with elements from a number of different building traditions. Jacques Vanderbeck, the designer of the West End Hose Company building, borrowed heavily from the Romanesque Revival school of architecture, a strong, distinctly masculine architectural style that was widely used for churches and civic buildings throughout the late 19th century. The primary elements of the Romanesque Revival style are a monochromatic façade of brick or stone, highlighted with semi-circular openings that are often deeply recessed in the building face. The style relies on mass and scale, and eschews fussy or elaborate details. All of these elements are visible in the West Ender's building.

Although it is a mere eighteen feet wide and only two stories in height, the West End Hose Company building presents a distinctive appearance. This suited the purpose of the original West Enders, who fought hard to have the building constructed and who intended it to convey a sense of their own individuality.

The smooth pressed brick façade was constructed with tight butter joints while the side and back elevations are of a reddish-brown brick with conventional joints. As originally designed the building contained a single, man door located in the north one-third of the façade. This paneled door was topped by a transom highlighted with a bold "3", indicating that this was the third fire station in Somerville. Double-leaf, hinged doors occupied the remainder of the façade at the first floor. The bottom portions of these doors were paneled, and they were topped with single panes of glass set in decorative surrounds. Above these doors, at the second floor, was a shallow balcony. These elements were removed in about 1916 when the company purchased a Mack chemical truck that was too large for the existing opening.

Although the building has undergone some minor changes, the primary design element was, and continues to be, the large arched window at the second level (Photo 4). The semicircular top of the window is highlighted with squares of textured glass in a variety of vivid colors including blue, orange,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

## Architectural Description, continued

purple, yellow and green. The smooth brick façade is relieved only by a brick arch that corbels out slightly from the face of the masonry wall and outlines the window. The brick arch is highlighted with a granite keystone carved "WEST-END HOSE, 1888". The façade is further highlighted with simple details such as the chamfered vergeboards and the jerkin-head gable, a design element that was popular during this period.

The austerity of the building is relieved by decorative details such as the ornamental rafter tails. Since the construction of the adjacent buildings, these are barely discernible along the north and south sides of the building, but, as originally constructed, the curved profile and regular spacing provided relief and rhythm to the side elevations (Photo 11). Other than the soffit details, the only decoration at the side elevations consisted of the arched windows with brownstone sills that were located at the first floor.

A small building adjacent to the back of the fire station, constructed in the early twentieth century, precludes a survey of that elevation (Photo 5). No historic photographs of the back of the building have been uncovered, and the original appearance of this elevation remains uncertain. As originally constructed, there may have a rear entrance. From the interior there is no evidence of a doorway in the west wall of the building, but a closet constructed in this location may conceal evidence of a former opening. At the second floor of the west elevation there is no jerkin-head gable, and the only opening is a large wood grill located in the peak of the gable.

As with the exterior, few significant changes have been made to the interior. The detailing that has been altered has been covered up rather than removed. The ground floor remains largely open with a small closet and water closet located along the north wall behind the stairs, probably added in the mid-twentieth century. Original detailing like the beaded board wainscoting with decorative cap molding and baseboards remain. This space currently houses much of the Borough's original fire-fighting equipment. The stair balustrade and enclosure, also located along the north wall, are largely original (Photos 6, 7).

The second floor, like the first, retains most of its original fabric and that which is not visible has been covered with new material rather than removed. The second floor is divided into two spaces by the original door frame with an incised reeded design and bull's eye cornerblocks. This detailing is repeated throughout the second floor, including on the window frames and newel post (Photos 8, 12, 13). The room at the back of the building, Room 3, was originally a small reception area and now functions as a kitchen. The central feature of Room 3 is the original stair balustrade. The front space, Room 4, remains the meeting room for the fire station and is dominated by the large window on the east wall. The bottom section of the window consists of three, 1/1-light, double-hung sash units. Above is a semi-circular arch set with an array of multi-colored panes of textured glass. The frames have incised reeds and bull's eye cornerblocks, like the other frames in the space (Photo 9).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

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## Statement of Significance

The West End Hose Company Firehouse is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A as an indication of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century growth of Somerville, the seat of Somerset County. As Somerville expanded in the years after the establishment of the Central Railroad (1849), the thrust of the town's growth was to the north and west, away from City Hall and the former town center. Following the Civil War, the families who were relocating to the city did not want to live in the mercantile district in middle of town. Instead, they preferred to build country villas in the hills to the north of Somerville or to relocate to the quieter areas west of the commercial core. In 1887, following a devastating fire, a number of public petitions forced the Borough Council to acknowledge the need for additional services in the west end of Somerville. The following year, a special vote resulted in the creation of the West End Hose Company, and the subsequent construction of this building. The founding members of the West End Hose Company included locally prominent businessmen such as Daniel Robert, Joshua Doughty, Jr. and Albert Cammann, Jr.

The West End Hose Company Firehouse also is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as a well-preserved example of a Victorian-era firehouse. The diminutive building (18 feet wide by 44 feet long) that stands on Doughty Avenue is the only one of Somerville's four original fire stations that remains. Constructed in a simplified version of the Romanesque Revival architectural style, the brick structure has undergone very few alterations. The changes that have occurred, such as the addition of a roll-up door in the front elevation, were dictated by changes in the technology of fire-fighting itself.

The West End Hose Company occupied this structure until relocating to a new facility in 1970. Both the Fire Company and the building have continued to play an uninterrupted part in Somerville's history from their inception until the present time. In 1949 the West Enders became the first of Somerville's fire companies to be supplied with the latest in post-WWII fire-fighting equipment. On February 28, 1949, the Borough contracted with the American La-France Corporation for delivery of an Invader 750 GPM Pump and Hose Car, thereby marking Somerville's emergence as a modern fire-fighting department and capping the end of the Doughty Avenue station's period of significance.

Since 1970 the fire station has been the home of the Somerville Fire Museum. The building contains a wealth of photographs and fire-fighting memorabilia, and houses the Amoskeag Steamer, Somerville's first piece of steam-operated equipment, purchased at a price of \$5,000 in 1873.

## Historical Background

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Somerville was a small farming community with a population of slightly less than two hundred people. A map from 1812 shows Main Street running from east to west

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

## Statement of Significance, continued

with a sprinkling of approximately thirty houses and businesses on either side (Figure 1). Main Street was also known as the New Jersey Turnpike, which had been chartered in 1806 and was completed three years later. Bridge Street, the first local road extending from north to south, was opened in 1809.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 19th century the village did not extend much more than a block to either the north or south of the main thoroughfare, and the outlying area was comprised of a number of farms. The Court House, Jail and County Offices were situated at the east end of town on a block with the First Reformed Church. Slightly to the west was a school which was replaced in 1802 by the Brick Academy.<sup>2</sup> Nearby was the gallows.

Throughout the early years of the 19th century the town grew slowly. Abraham Messler, who came to the area in 1837 to assume the pastorate of the First Reformed Church, recalled that when he arrived Somerville "had three taverns, three stores, and perhaps five mechanic shops. There were sixty-two families living in it, embracing about four hundred and fifty souls." The town "still had but a single street, no sidewalks, no shade trees save a few fruit trees, and in winter the most distinguishing characteristic of the place was its mud."<sup>3</sup>

With the 1840s came the major development that would change the face of Somerville completely. In 1841 the Elizabeth and Somerville Railroad reached its western terminus in town. In 1847, after several years of economic trouble, the line was purchased by the Somerville and Easton Railroad Company, which in 1849 became the Central Railroad of New Jersey. In 1852 the tracks were extended to Easton and by the mid-1850s about one hundred passengers a day passed through the Somerville station, along with coal from Pennsylvania and agricultural products from the New Jersey farms.<sup>4</sup>

Telegraph lines connecting Somerville and New York City were installed in 1846, forging a link between the two communities which would have a profound and lasting effect on the small village. A map of Somerville published in 1850 shows that the town had begun to expand by that time. The railroad line is visible running just south of, and roughly parallel to, Main Street. A number of new streets have been constructed and the blocks between the two transit routes are filled with the names of business and property owners. The presence of a second hotel, a silversmith and a jewelry store are evidence of the growing prosperity of the village.

Yet, at mid-century, the community was just beginning its evolution. Writing before his death in 1911, Charles Clickner, a long-time Somerville resident, described the town in 1859 as a "quaint, country village, with a population of less than 2,000. Improvements were rare: here and there were brick sidewalks, gravel and dirt paths and no curbing. No electric lights, simply oil lamps, few and far between." Four passenger trains ran daily between New York and Easton and "the fire department consisted of one small hand engine. Its home was where the West End Hose Co. is now quartered."<sup>5</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

## Statement of Significance, continued

The railroads continued to expand and in 1864 the Central Railroad negotiated entry into Jersey City on its own lines and acquired ferry dockage in New York.<sup>6</sup> In 1868 the railroad formed its own real estate company, the Central Land Improvement Company, for the purpose of selling land owned by the railroad. The company also acted as an agent for any landowner along the line.<sup>7</sup> By the 1870s the Central Land Improvement Company was actively pursuing those who were disillusioned with life in New York City, and were encouraging relocation to Somerville and other near-by towns. Pamphlets and brochures distributed by real estate agents sang the praises of these communities and in particular described Somerville's healthy location and bucolic setting. One publication from 1873 described the "beauty and taste displayed in most of [Somerville's] private residences" and proclaimed the virtues of the "number and luxuriance of the trees, which provident hands in days gone by [had] planted along the streets."<sup>8</sup> Somerville enjoyed "a healthful atmosphere, while its quiet beauty [gave] it a charm to those in search of a peaceful retreat from the din and dust of the city."<sup>9</sup> At that time the town was a mere one hour and twenty-four minutes by express train from New York, with fifteen trains running each way daily.

The Somerset County Atlas of 1873 shows that Somerville had experienced a substantial population boom in the years following the Civil War (Figure 2). Abraham Messler recalled that in 1872 there were nearly 400 houses in town. "Instead of three stores, there were 43 stores and shops, and where there had been 450 inhabitants, there were at least 2,000. Where there had been only one church, there were now five."<sup>10</sup>

While still arranged in a linear fashion extending from east to west along Main Street, the town had begun to expand primarily to the northwest, but to the south as well. High and Cliff Streets now paralleled Main Street to the north, and contained numerous blocks filled with residential lots, schools and churches. The blocks between Main Street and the railroad to the south were filled with homes and shops, with growth extending to the other side of the tracks, along Harrison and 2nd Streets. The municipal center of the borough remained clustered at the east end of town, in its original location. The 1873 map shows the Court House, Clerk's Office and Surrogate's Office on a lot on the north side of Main Street, between Bridge and Grove Streets.

By 1880 Somerville's population was 3,108 and the primary thrust of the town's continued expansion was to the north and west. The families who were relocating from the city did not want to live in the middle of town. Instead, they preferred to build county villas in the hills to the north of Somerville or to relocate to the quieter areas west of the commercial core. It was this increasingly westward growth that spurred the development of the West End Hose Company (Figure 3).

The first local fire company was organized in 1835. Known as the Washington Fire Company, No. 1, it housed its equipment in a frame building which stood on the southeast corner of the former Court House

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

## Statement of Significance, continued

lot. Their apparatus consisted of a tub engine, so-called because water had to be carried to it in buckets while men on either side pumped long handles to force water through the hose line.<sup>11</sup>

From this first fire department, two new companies were formed in 1852, made necessary no doubt by Somerville's slow but steady expansion following the establishment of the railroad in 1842. One of the two groups was known as Union Fire Company, No. 1, and its headquarters was located on Doughty Avenue, in a small wood frame building on the site of the present Fire Museum. The property was given to the company by Mr. Joshua Doughty, Sr., the father of the Somerville businessman who would play a significant role in the later development of the West End Hose Company.

The second company was known as the Jersey Blues, No. 2. Their fire house was a brick building located behind a grocery store at the corners of Warren and Main Streets at the east end of town.

While hand-dug wells and cisterns were sufficient to meet the daily needs of the populace, in the event of fire the threat of an insufficient water supply was constant. In 1873, for the sum of \$5,000, the town purchased an Amoskeag Steamer which was capable of throwing a stream of water a considerable distance. However, at that time there were no fire hydrants to which it could be connected. To remedy the situation four large fire wells were built to hold water for use in case of an emergency: two were located on Main Street, the third was at the juncture of Main Street and West End Avenue and the fourth was located on High Street.<sup>12</sup>

In 1873, following the purchase of the steamer, the fire department was once again reorganized. At that time the Somerville Steam Fire Engine Company, No. 1, was established, in addition to a unit known as the Steamer Hose Company, No. 1, which had the responsibility of manning the hose carriage. However, in 1878 William Steele, representing sixty respectable citizens, petitioned the commissioners to form a new fire company because the Steamer Company was not holding regular meetings and had no money. On October 8, 1878, Engine Company, No. 1, the first of Somerville's long-term volunteer fire companies, was organized in its place.<sup>13</sup> The company's Amoskeag Steamer was housed in a building located on Maple Street. That building served as their headquarters until 1961, at which time the company moved to a new facility and the historic building was razed for a parking lot.

The second unit in the Somerville Fire Department, known as Central Hook and Ladder, was founded in June 1880. The cause of the split with Engine Company No. 1 is not known, although there is some indication that there was friction between the members of the two companies. Central Hook was formed by members of the Engine Company and others who were new to fire-fighting. The company purchased the first truck, with the members selling bonds at \$5.00 each to the residents of Somerville and Raritan. The equipment was housed in a frame building on Union Street until 1902 when a new building was dedicated.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

Statement of Significance, continued

**The Organization of the West End Hose Company**

In 1888 West End Hose Company No. 3 was organized "uptown" in order to meet the demands of the citizens for improved fire protection at the west end of Somerville. The organization of the new hose company was a hot topic of discussion for much of the latter part of 1887 and well into 1888.

The incident that started the debate was a fire that occurred at the barn of G. A. Yawger & Brothers in April 1887. The barn was burned to the ground before the Engine Company could extinguish the flames. Although the hose company was on the scene within eight minutes after the alarm was sounded, the engine did not arrive until fifteen minutes later and even then did not begin to pump water onto the flames.

The incident displeased a number of local citizens and in July a petition "with a large number of signatures" was presented to the Town Commissioners asking permission to form a new fire company.<sup>14</sup> This request was promptly turned down by a committee assigned to review the issue, yet the question did not die.

On January 12, 1888, the Unionist-Gazette reported that:

"Probably a larger gathering of citizens assembled at the engine company on Monday evening than has ever heretofore been known to attend the meeting of Town Commissioners, drawn together by the rumors of important action to be taken on matters in which all evinced a deep interest...The next important matter to come up was the petition containing thirty names of citizens for the formation of the West End Hose Company, and for recognition of such an organization by the Board. The petition was presented by N. B. Richardson, who in a very neat speech said that the citizens in the West end of town had been induced by a feeling of insecurity in case of fire, to call a meeting and organize a Hose Company. Officers had been elected and the organization perfected, but they now wanted equipment and a location assigned them."<sup>15</sup>

Richardson also presented a second petition with one hundred names from all over town, fully endorsing the first petition and recommending a "sufficient appropriation for the equipment and maintenance of a Hose Company." Mr. Richardson went on to note that if the necessity for such an organization did not already exist, it soon would.<sup>16</sup>

Because the Commissioners were unwilling to make a decision, the matter was referred to a committee for further discussion. The following week the committee recommended that the question should be submitted to the voters, and in hopes of dissuading the electorate they recommended that the substantial sum of \$1,000 should be appropriated for the start-up of the new company. A special election was held



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

## Statement of Significance, continued

three weeks later, on February 11, 1888, to decide the matter. Of 115 votes cast, 86 were in favor, versus 29 who were opposed.

It was resolved, therefore, that "the petition for the organization of a Hose Company in the West end of town, to be known as the West End Hose Company, be accepted and the same is hereby granted, and the persons named therein accepted as a part of the fire department of the town according to the terms of the petition recently presented to the Board." The minimum membership was put at twenty-five and a sum not to exceed \$1,000 was appropriated to equip the new company.

Thus, on February 16, 1888, twenty-nine charter members of the West End Hose Company met officially for the first time. They adopted as their motto "Not for self, but for others," and elected their first officers. Once Joshua Doughty, Jr. was recognized as foreman, the work of securing a building for their company was undertaken.

At the time that the \$1,000 appropriation was made, it had been assumed that the West Enders would take over the wooden structure on Doughty Avenue that had formerly housed the equipment of Union Fire Company No. 1. The Committee on Engines and Fire Apparatus of the Board of Commissioners had contracted for the provision of 500 feet of hose and a hose carriage for the West Enders. Because their only fire fighting apparatus consisted of a hose cart that was towed with ropes, it was believed that the existing building would be more than adequate for their needs.

Yet the West Enders were not content with the old structure, and within two months of their founding they were requesting additional funds for the construction of a new building. On April 12, 1888, the Unionist-Gazette reported that plans had been submitted to the Committee on Fire Apparatus for the erection of a new engine house. The plans contemplated a brick structure and would involve an additional expenditure of \$800, in addition to the initial appropriation.<sup>17</sup>

N. B. Richardson once again served as spokesman for the Company. During the discussion that followed, he admitted that such a structure would be a shelter for the apparatus, but exhorted the Commissioners to "bear in mind that the building proposed by the new plans would remain to be used by coming generations when we are cold and lying in our graves. All Boards", he continued, "do not have an opportunity to erect monuments on public lands."<sup>18</sup>

Despite Richardson's eloquence, the West Enders were promptly turned down. Several years earlier the Somerville Hook and Ladder Company had been equipped at their own expense, and it was felt by many of the Commissioners that the West Enders' request was extremely audacious.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 9West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

## Statement of Significance, continued

Yet, the firemen persevered, and in June the newspaper reported that at the monthly Commission meeting the West End Hose Company had "put in their usual plea for an additional appropriation of \$800 and that the old building be given them."<sup>19</sup> This time the request was referred for review to the Committee on Public Lands, who subsequently approved it.

On June 22, 1888, the Somerset Democrat reported that "Ground was broken this morning for the new house of the West End Hose Company. The building will be two stories high, and of brick. The plans were drawn by Architect Van Derbeek. It will be an ornament to the town when finished."<sup>20</sup>

The architect for the building, Jacques Vanderbeck, lived and practiced in Somerville. He is known to have designed at least one other fire house, the Engine House for Relief Hose Company #3, located in nearby Raritan. Other fire stations may also be attributable to him; however the details of his architectural practice have been lost. In fact, Vanderbeck's obituary, published in the Somerset Messenger-Gazette on October 18, 1932, barely mentioned his profession. Instead, the article discussed his role as a volunteer fireman, and praised his fifty-eight years of service with Somerville Engine Company No. 1. At the time of his death Vanderbeck had been the oldest member in point of service of the entire local fire-fighting force, and the photograph that accompanied his obituary showed him proudly in uniform.<sup>21</sup>

In order to save money on the construction costs, it is believed that the West Enders salvaged bricks from the local Cammann residence. Constructed by copper-mining magnate Albert Cammann in 1842 at a cost of \$32,000, the house had been purchased in 1868 by State Senator Eugene Doughty and had come to be known as Doughty's Castle. In 1888 the house was purchased by Daniel Robert, who razed the building to erect his elaborate new mansion, which has served since 1958 as Borough Hall.<sup>22</sup> Daniel Robert, Joshua Doughty, Jr., nephew of Eugene, and brother-in-law to Walter Cammann, son of Albert, were all charter members of the West End Hose Company, which lends credence to the story.

The picturesque architectural style of the fire station was intended to reflect the distinctiveness of the West Enders, and once completed, the small building was extravagantly praised. On New Year's afternoon and evening, 1889, the West Enders hosted "the most pleasing social affair that has taken place in Somerville for many years. The Company knew that many of her citizens would like to see the inside of their new house, and conceived the idea of giving them the opportunity."<sup>23</sup>

Over the course of that day, between 400 and 500 people attended the open house. The Democrat described the success of both the event and the building, and noted that, "To say the callers were well pleased, we have but to report one incident. Our reporter stood just outside of the door as two prominent ladies were leaving, when one of the two said: 'This house is a credit to the town.' 'Yes' was the answer, 'and so is the West End Hose Company.'<sup>24</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 10West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

## Statement of Significance, continued

In addition to the exterior brick construction, the floor was of concrete and the interior stairs and railings were of oak and black walnut. The newspaper description continued:

"At the head of the stairs is a small reception room. This is finished in hard wood and the floor is covered with a bright carpet. The inner room is quite large. This, too, is finished in hard wood. The floor is covered with a pretty brussels carpet, while here and there over the floor are strewn Persian rugs. The chairs are upholstered in red leather, as is also the settee. A handsome table stands in the center of the room, while on the wall hang some choice engravings, among them being the celebrated engraving of 'The Jerseys'. The rooms have a cozy, home-like appearance... We venture to say that there is not a Fire Company in this State that are more comfortably situated than the West End Hose Company."<sup>25</sup>

Constructed in 1888, West End Hose Company Number 3 was necessitated by the enormous growth of Somerville following the establishment of the Central Railroad. To support the town's burgeoning population, hundreds of residential, commercial and institutional units were built in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. These buildings were a mix of frame and brick structures, in both established and vernacular architectural styles. Unlike East Main Street which was primarily commercial in nature, West Main Street was comprised of residential frame buildings with a sprinkling of businesses. Doughty Avenue, which ran perpendicular to West Main Street, was a mix of residential and industrial uses; the north end of the street, in the area of the fire station, was predominantly residential in nature, and the southern blocks were almost entirely given over to industry and business. The Union Carriage Factory was located at the corner of Doughty Avenue and West Main Street and the Somerville Woolen Mill and a meat market were also located at this busy intersection. On the east side of Doughty Avenue, across from the Firehouse, was a livery and stable. By 1902, the south end of Doughty was fully developed and the buildings currently flanking the Firehouse, including the Carriage Factory to the south and a large frame and brick building to the north, had both been erected. The rest of Doughty Avenue slowly filled with single-family residences.<sup>26</sup> At the time of his death architect Vanderbeck lived on North Doughty Avenue and he was credited with the design of numerous of the houses in the blocks north of High Street.

Most of Somerville's residences designed in the later portion of the nineteenth century were set back from the curb with a generous expanse of lawn separating the house from the street. The industrial buildings, however, were generally built with their facades at the lot line, a pattern that the Hose Company followed. Setting it off from its residential counterparts physically manifested the station's significance as a public building and an object of civic pride. Like many late nineteenth century firehouses in New Jersey and throughout the country at large, the West End Hose Company was designed in a pared down version of the Romanesque Revival style. With its use of semi-circular openings, monochromatic facades and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 11West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

## Statement of Significance, continued

simplified detailing, this style was perfect for the utilitarian nature of the buildings; in addition, the style's strong, straightforward massing readily identified these buildings as significant elements in the community landscape.

Although built as part of the municipal fire department, the interior lay-out of the West End Hose Company is more typical of the volunteer firehouse-type, the standard plan of which combined first floor garage spaces with second floor meeting rooms. Usually designed as a single, unobstructed space, the ground floor was utilized for the maintenance and storage of necessary equipment such as engines and hoses. The second floor was used for meeting rooms and often had banks of windows to allow as much light as possible into the public spaces.<sup>27</sup> This same layout can be seen in earlier firehouses of Somerville, such as the no longer extant Engine Company, No. 1, which was built for a volunteer company. The Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House in Raritan, built six years after the West End Hose Company and also designed by Jacques Vanderbeck, also fell within this same pattern. The use of this design endured well into the twentieth century. Although larger, twentieth century firehouses often maintained this multi-story configuration with a utilitarian ground floor and meeting spaces or firemen's quarters above.<sup>28</sup> This design can be seen in two early twentieth century stations in Plainfield and a 1961 firehouse in Somerville.

The West Enders put their second story meeting space to good use, for in addition to their pursuits as firefighters the Company also developed a social side. On April 26, 1888, the newspaper reported that the West Enders had given their initial benefit on the previous Friday evening. The company had "secured the services of J. Leslie Gossin, an elocutionist of note, who recited eloquently...The entertainment was largely attended and the benefit a substantial one."<sup>29</sup> The firemen also gave dramatic productions under the name of the West End Dramatic Society and performed annual minstrel shows. Activities such as these earned them a reputation as a "blue-stocking" company.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout the following years, the West End Hose Company continued to break new ground in the area of fire-fighting. They were the first local company to institute regular drills, and in October 1889 the West Enders acquired the department's first rubber-tired hose wagon and drop harness. Mackey, the fine black horse who pulled it to fires, was the first horse in the Somerville Fire Department. Eight years later he was retired and his place was taken by a gray named Harry "who refused to let anything pass him on his way to a fire."<sup>31</sup>

The West Enders were instrumental in establishing the town's first fire alarm system in 1892. Many attempts had failed when the West Enders, in cooperation with the Central Hook and Ladder Company, succeeded in establishing a Gamewell fire alarm system in Somerville. The West End contributed more than a double portion, with the town paying only \$200 of the initial \$800 cost.<sup>32</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

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Statement of Significance, continued

The first motorized equipment in the Somerville Department was also owned by the West End Company. This, a Mack chemical and hose truck, was purchased in 1916 and undoubtedly precipitated the exterior changes that were made to the building facade. These changes included the removal of the small balcony and the installation of the roll-up door in place of the original glazed and paneled doors.

In 1929 the WEHC was provided with an American-LaFrance triple combination pumper. This was followed twenty years later by the purchase of an American-LaFrance Invader model 750 GPM fire truck, the first piece of equipment to be purchased for the Somerville Fire Department after the War. In 1969 the West End Company obtained the department's first diesel-powered truck, a Hahn 1250 GPM pumper. It was the arrival of this equipment that forced the West Enders to move from the Doughty Avenue station to their present location on High Street, as the equipment was too large for the small structure.

Since 1970 the station house has served as the Somerville Fire Museum. It is staffed by a group of volunteers, many of whom also serve as firefighters. Much of the Borough's original fire-fighting equipment is on display, including the magnificent 1873 Amoskeag Steamer.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> James Snell, History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1881, 664.
- <sup>2</sup> Henry P. Mason, "The Schoolhouses and Schools of Somerville," Somerset County Historical Quarterly, 1,1 (1912), 46.
- <sup>3</sup> Somerset Messenger-Gazette, 6/2/83.
- <sup>4</sup> Brock Haussamen, The Iron Horse in Somerset County, North Branch, NJ: Somerset County College, 1984, 114.
- <sup>5</sup> Somerset Messenger-Gazette, 3/28/85.
- <sup>6</sup> Heritage Studies, "Railroad Stations," 71.
- <sup>7</sup> Haussaman, 134.
- <sup>8</sup> George Catlin, Homes on the Central Railroad of New Jersey, 1873, 51.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid. 52.
- <sup>10</sup> Somerville Messenger-Gazette, 6/2/83
- <sup>11</sup> Somerville Fire Department Centennial Magazine, p. 8.
- <sup>12</sup> Somerville Messenger-Gazette, 4/4/91
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> The Unionist-Gazette, 7/87
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid. 1/12/1888.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid. 4/12/1888
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Somerset Democrat, 6/22/1888
- <sup>21</sup> Somerset Messenger-Gazette, 10/18/32
- <sup>22</sup> Somerville Messenger-Gazette, 3/24/77 and 1/22/80.
- <sup>23</sup> Somerset Democrat, 1/4/1889.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Sanborn Map Company, Insurance Map of Somerville, New Jersey, Sanborn Map Company, July 1885, 3; Sanborn Map Company, Insurance Map of Somerville, New Jersey, Sanborn Map Company, December 1895, 3; Sanborn Map Company, Insurance Map of Somerville, New Jersey, Sanborn Map Company, March 1902, 4.
- <sup>27</sup> Rebecca Zurier, The American Firehouse: An Architectural and Social History. New York: Abbeville Press, 1982, 98.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 13.
- <sup>29</sup> The Unionist-Gazette, 4/26/1888
- <sup>30</sup> Somerville Library, clippings file.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> Somerville Fire Department Centennial Magazine, 17.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 14

West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

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*The Courier-News*, Somerville, New Jersey

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United States Department of the Interior  
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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 15

West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

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United States Department of the Interior  
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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 16

West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

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# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 17

**West End Hose Company #3  
Somerset County, New Jersey**

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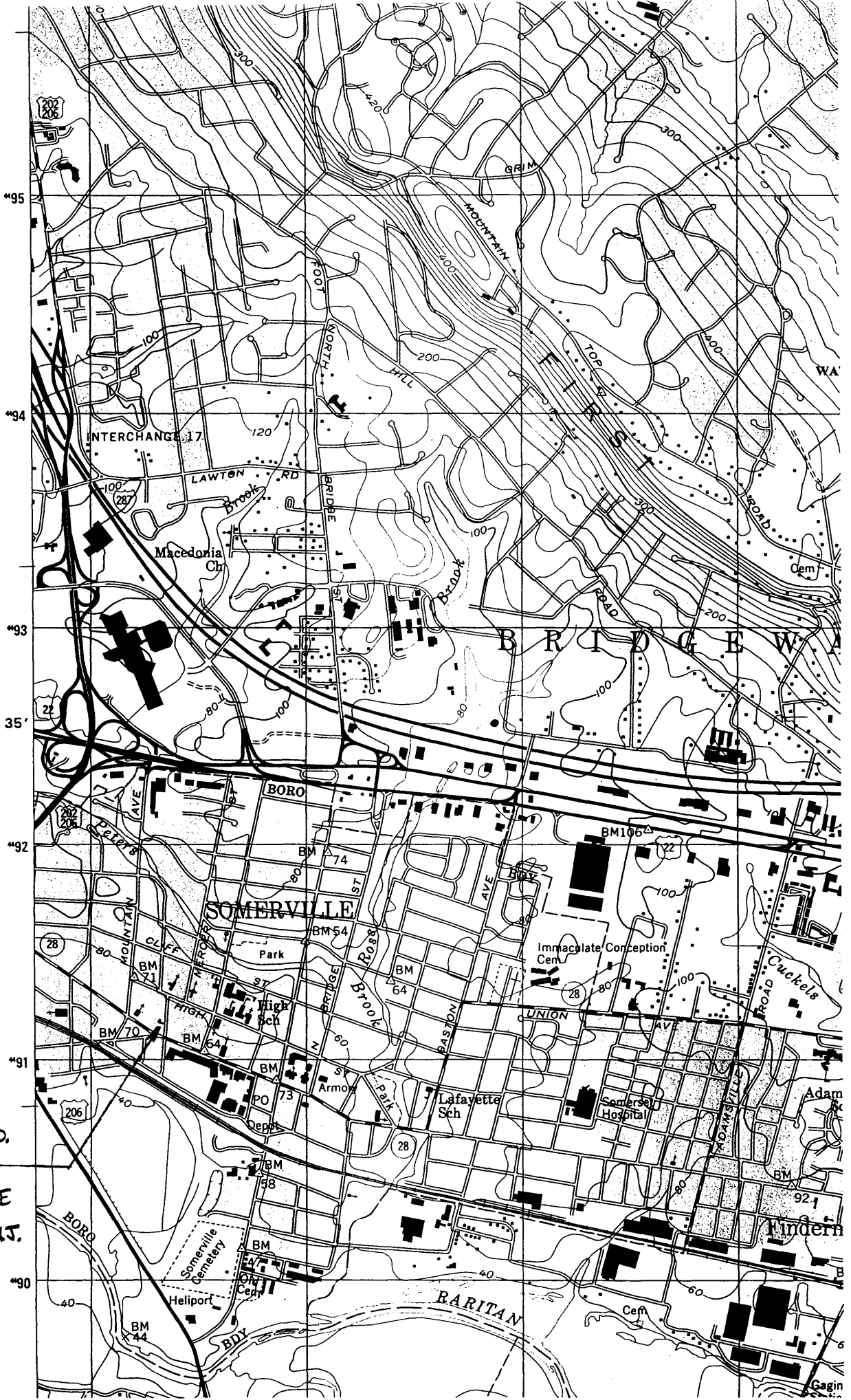
## **Geographical Data**

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

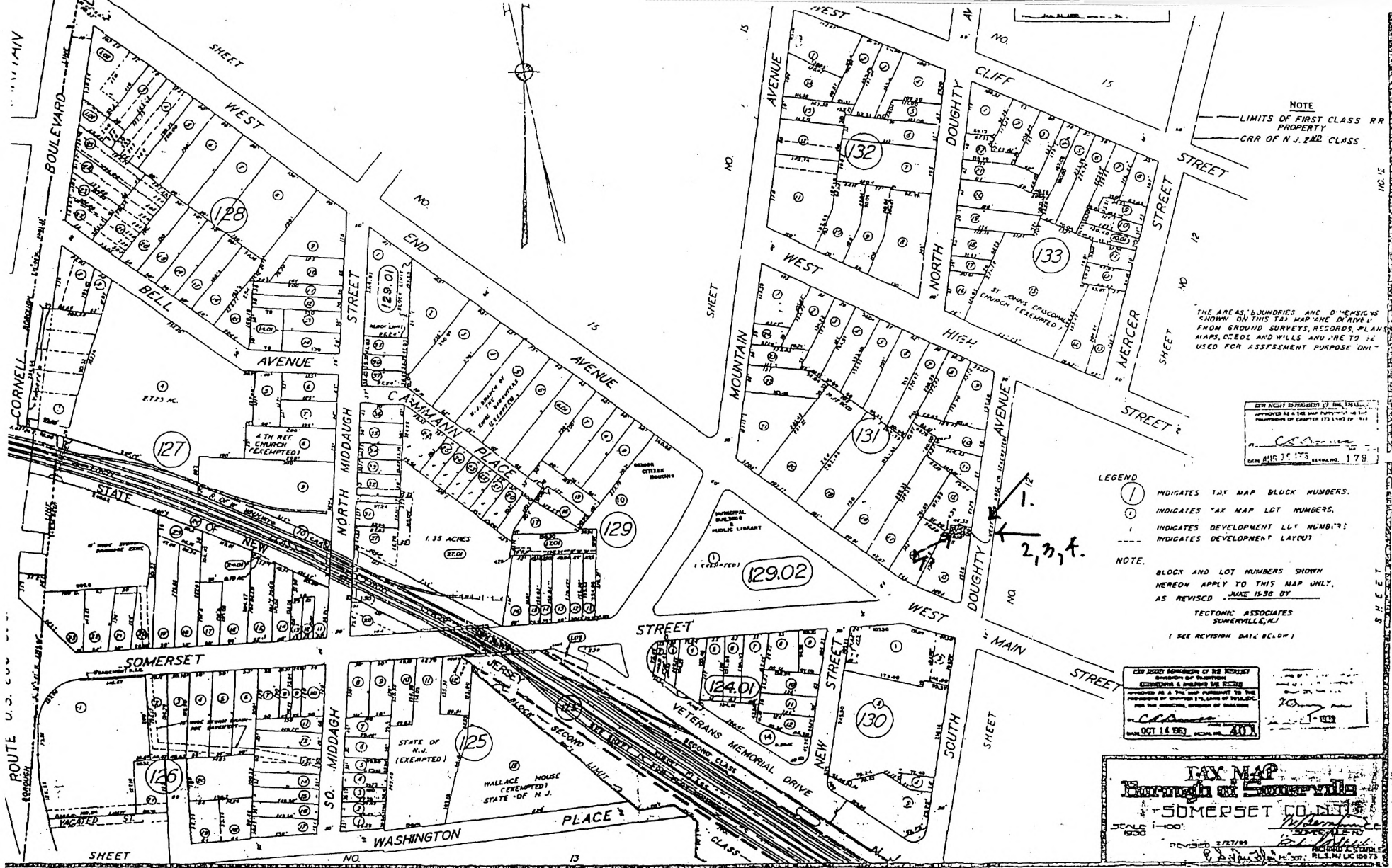
The site consists of .02 acre plot of land comprised by Lot 14 of Block 131

### **Boundary Justification**

The building historically and currently occupied the full footprint of the lot.



WEST END HOSE  
 COMPANY NUMBER 3.  
 15 DOUGHTY  
 STREET, SOMERVILLE  
 SOMERSET COUNTY, N.J.



NOTE  
 LIMITS OF FIRST CLASS RR  
 PROPERTY  
 CRR OF N. J. 2ND CLASS

THE AREAS, BOUNDARIES AND DIMENSIONS  
 SHOWN ON THIS TAX MAP ARE DERIVED  
 FROM GROUND SURVEYS, RECORDS, PLAT  
 MAPS, DEEDS AND WILLS AND ARE TO BE  
 USED FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSE ONLY

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY  
 DIVISION OF TAXATION  
 REVISED AS A TAX MAP PUBLISHED IN 1956  
 NUMBER OF CHAPTER 173 LVS OF 154  
 C. J. ...  
 DATE: APR. 16, 1973 REVISING: 179

- LEGEND
- ① INDICATES TAX MAP BLOCK NUMBERS.
  - ② INDICATES TAX MAP LOT NUMBERS.
  - ③ INDICATES DEVELOPMENT LOT NUMBER
  - INDICATES DEVELOPMENT LAYOUT

NOTE.  
 BLOCK AND LOT NUMBERS SHOWN  
 HEREON APPLY TO THIS MAP ONLY,  
 AS REVISED JUNE 1956 BY

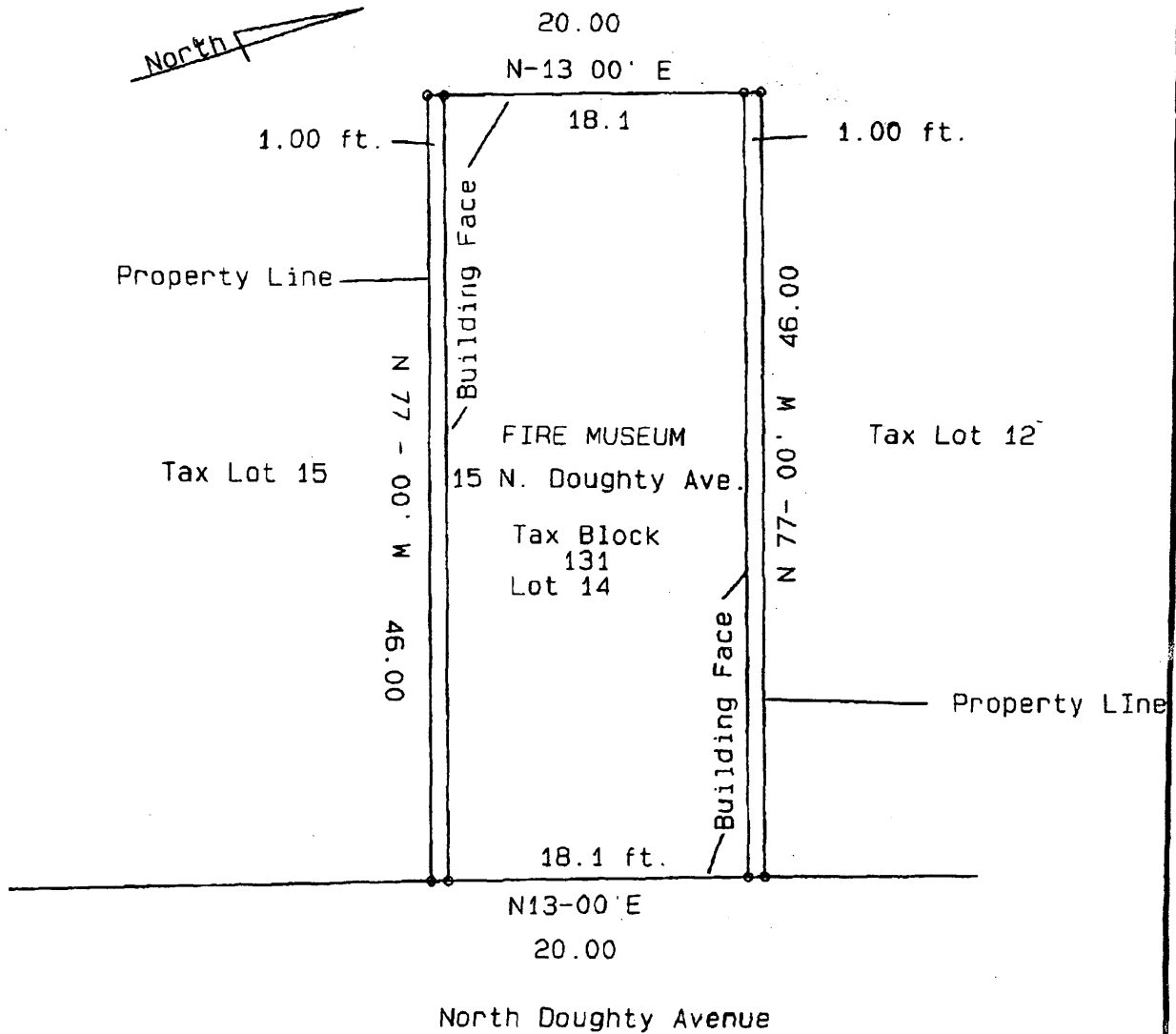
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 SOMERVILLE, N.J.  
 (SEE REVISION DATE BELOW)

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY  
 DIVISION OF TAXATION  
 CONTINUING & IMPROVING THE RECORDS  
 AS A TAX MAP PUBLISHED IN 1956  
 NUMBER OF CHAPTER 173 LVS OF 154  
 FOR THE DIVISION, SOMERVILLE, N.J.  
 C. J. ...  
 OCT 14 1953

**TAX MAP**  
**Borough of Somerville**  
**SOMERSET COUNTY**

SCALE 1"=100'  
 REVISED 2/27/69  
 P. J. ...

2, 3, 4.



Borough of Somerville  
Fire Museum

Scale: 1"=10

15 North Doughty Avenue

Date: 3/5/2002

Revised:

Drawn By: BJN

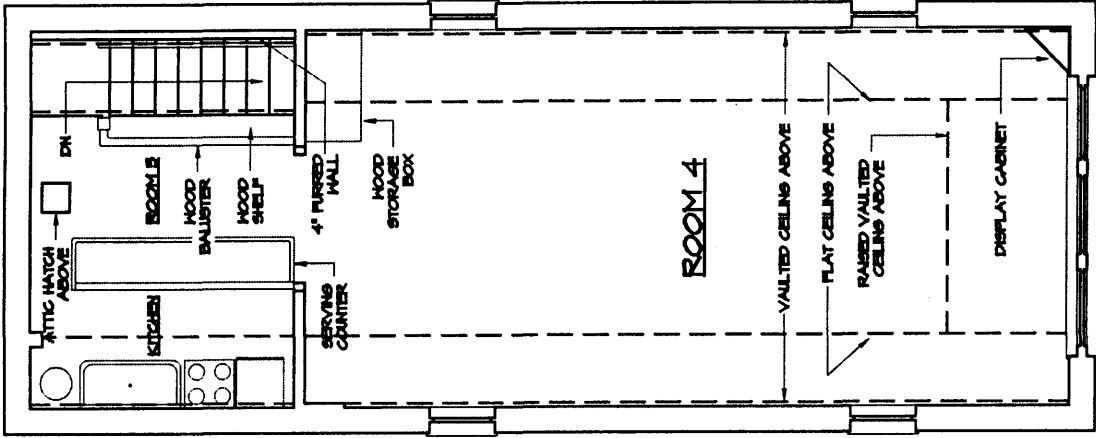
Job: 1

Surveyor: Brendan J. Nally, PLS Lic# 31662

West End Hose Company Number 3  
Somerset County, New Jersey



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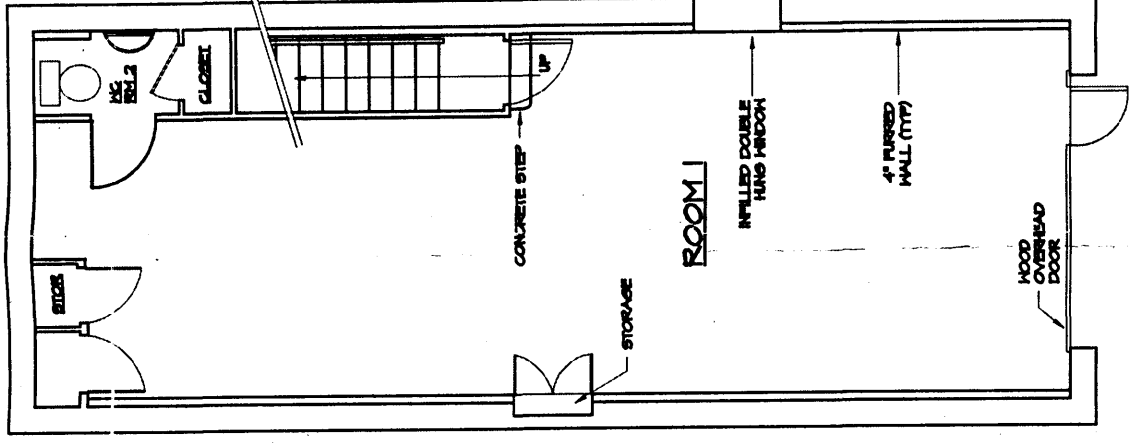


2 SECOND FLOOR PLAN

A-101

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

DOUGHTY AVENUE

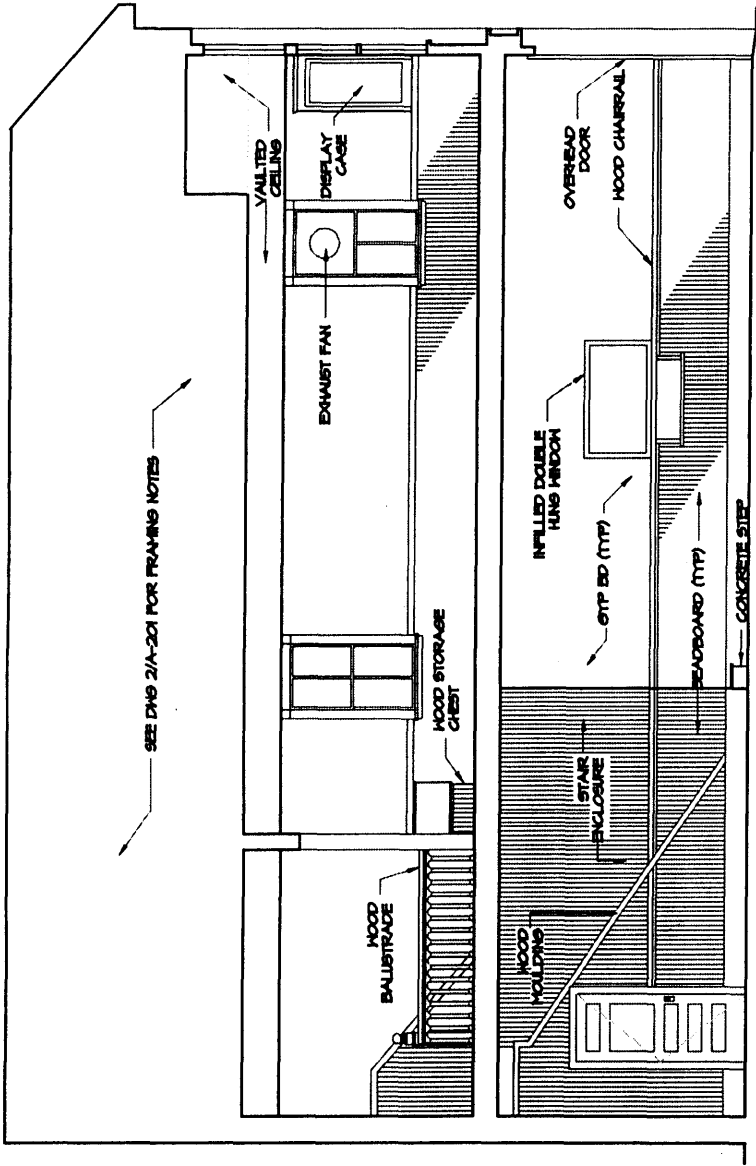


1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN

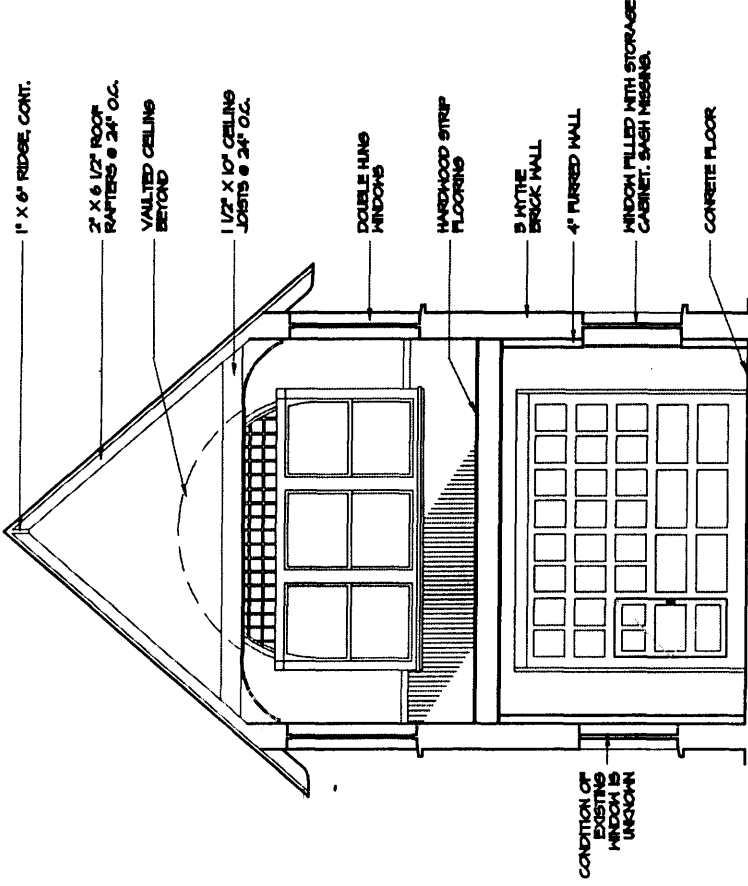
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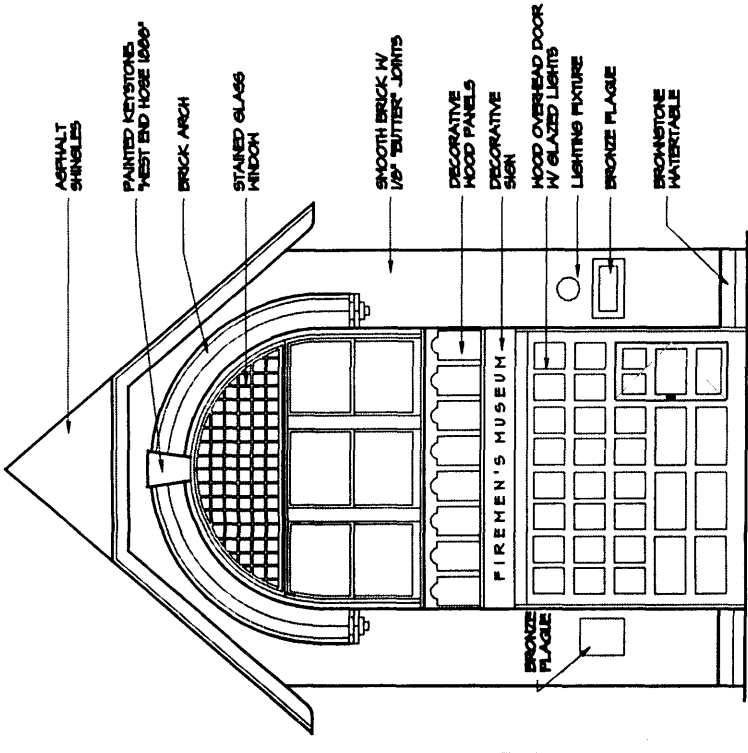
<p><b>SOMERVILLE FIRE MUSEUM</b></p>		<p><b>HOLT • MORGAN • RUSSELL ARCHITECTS, P.A.</b>          350 Alexander Street Princeton NJ 08540 609-924-1358 Fax 609-924-5985          ARCHITECTURE • PLANNING • INTERIORS • HISTORIC PRESERVATION</p>	SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"
			DRAWN BY: MW
<p>EXISTING FLOOR PLANS</p>			DATE: 3/19/01



1 LONGITUDINAL SECTION  
A-201 SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"



2 CROSS SECTION LOOKING EAST  
A-201 SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"



3 EAST ELEVATION  
A-201 SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

# SOMERVILLE FIRE MUSEUM



HOLT • MORGAN • RUSSELL ARCHITECTS, P.A.  
350 Alexander Street Princeton NJ 08540 609-924-1358 609-924-5985  
Fax 609-924-5985

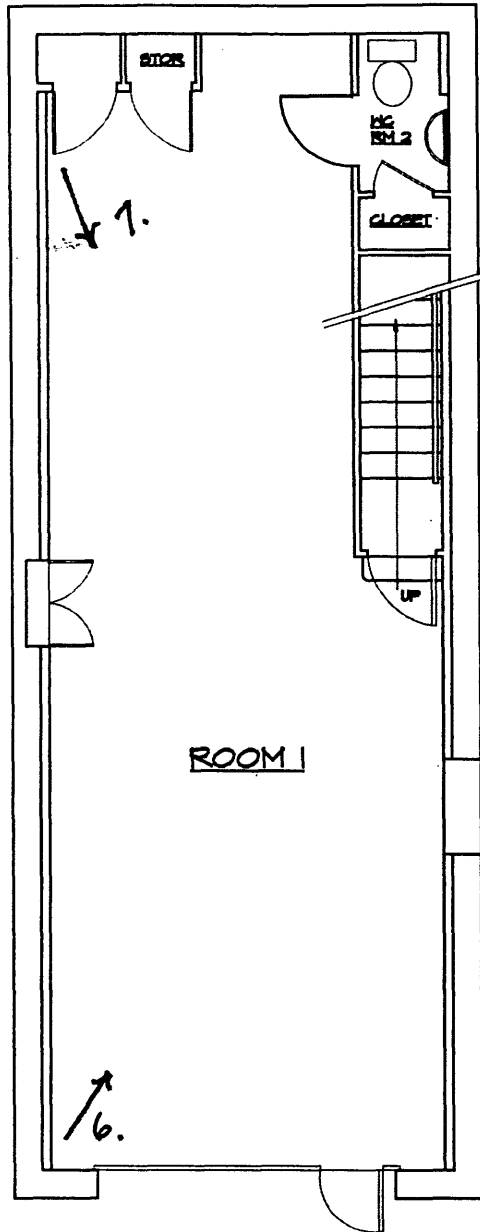
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EXISTING SECTIONS & ELEVATIONS

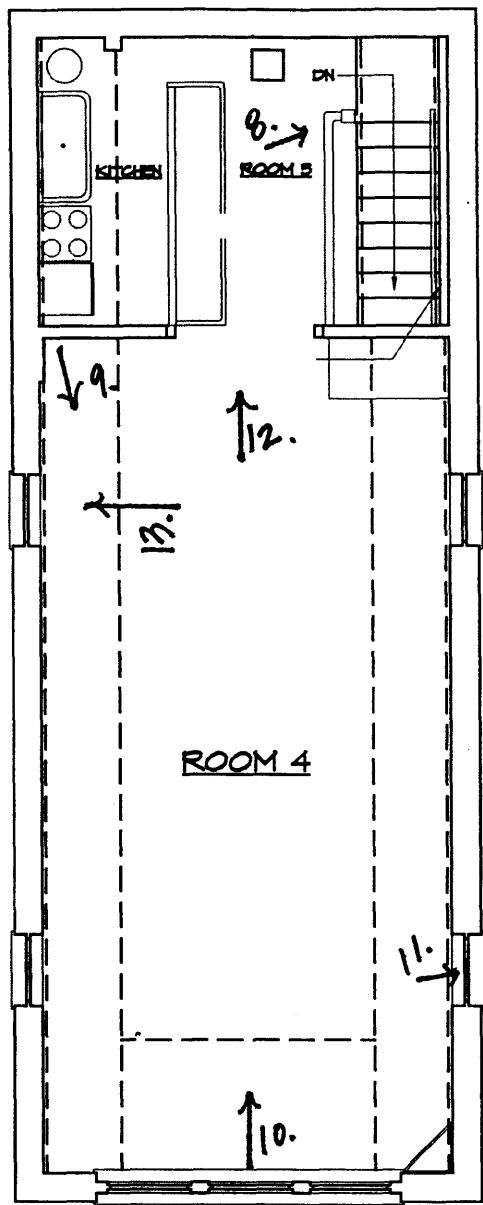
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FIRST FLOOR PLAN

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SOMERVILLE FIRE MUSEUM	DATE: 4/11/01
PHOTOGRAPHY LOCATIONS	1ST FL.





SECOND FLOOR PLAN

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SOMERVILLE FIRE MUSEUM		SCALE: NOT TO SCALE	
PHOTOGRAPHY LOCATIONS		DRAWN BY:	
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PHOTOGRAPHY LOCATIONS		2ND FL.	

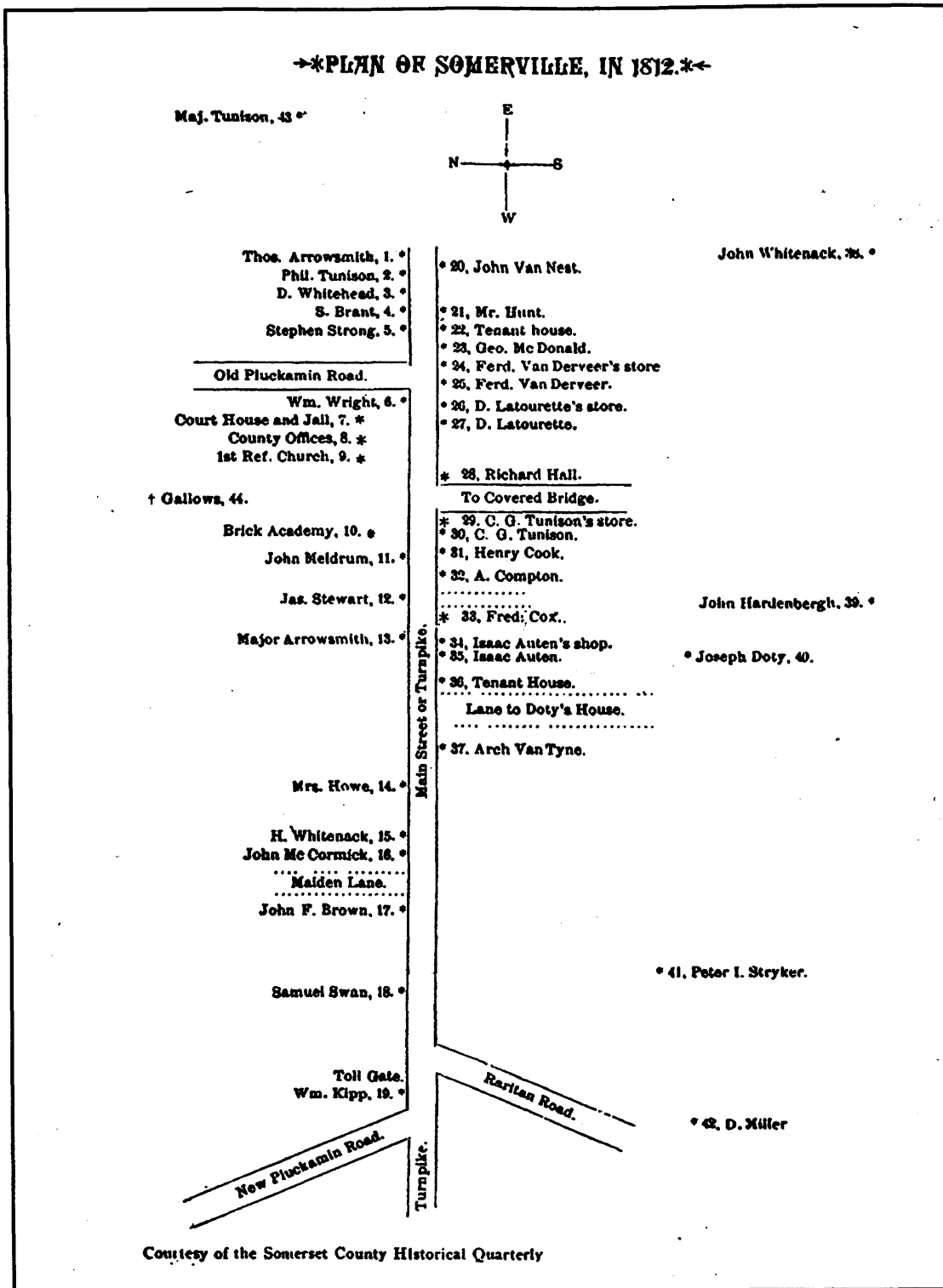


Figure 1. Map of Somerville, New Jersey, 1812 Somerville was a small town in 1812; the west end of town where West End Hose would be located was not yet developed.

West End Hose Company Number 3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

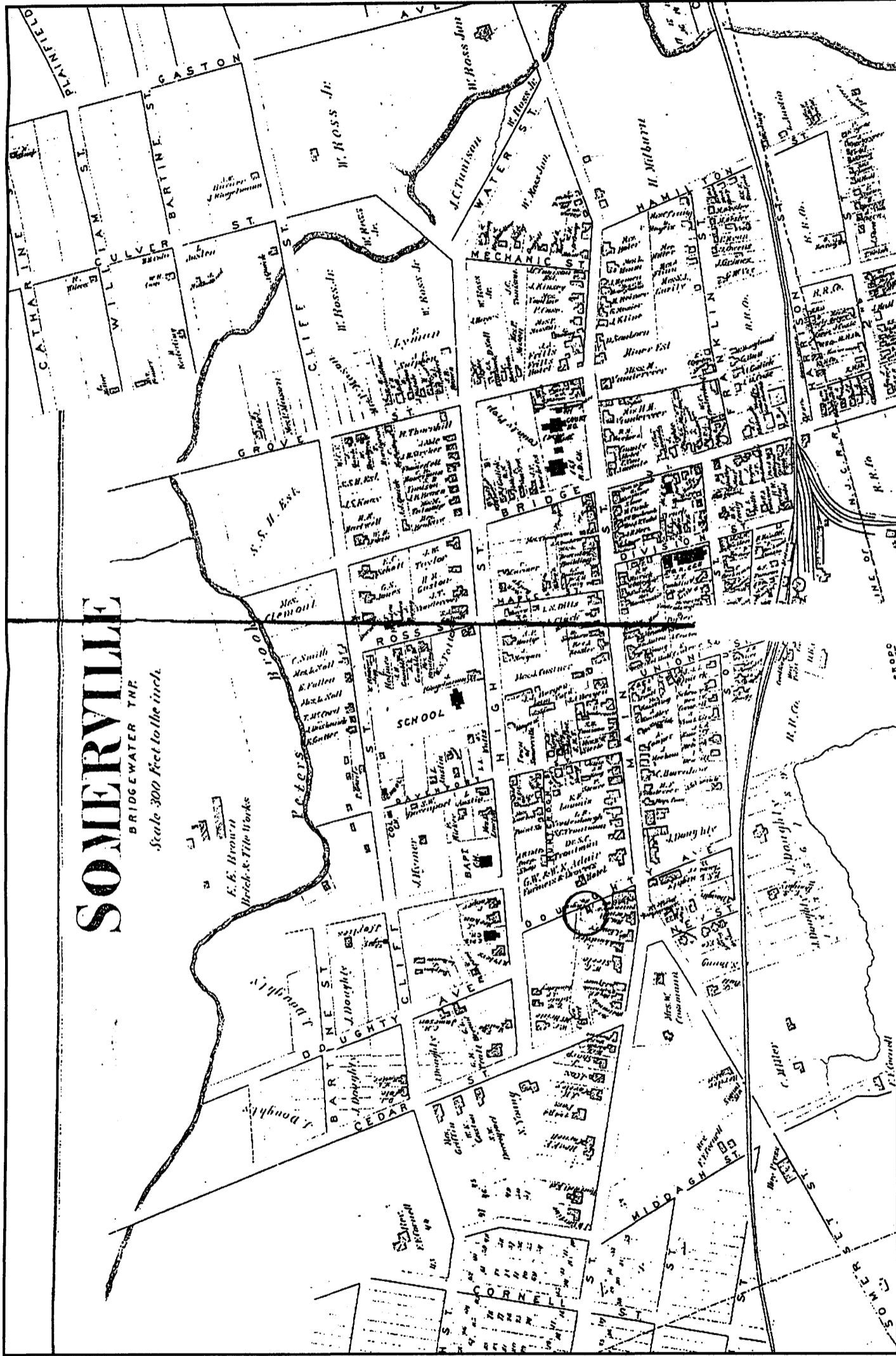


Figure 2. Somerville, New Jersey, 1873, showing the incremental growth of Somerville following the Central Railroad expansion of the 1860s. West End Hose Company Number 3 has not yet been constructed but its site is occupied by the small frame building of the Union Fire Company, No. 1

West End Hose Company Number 3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

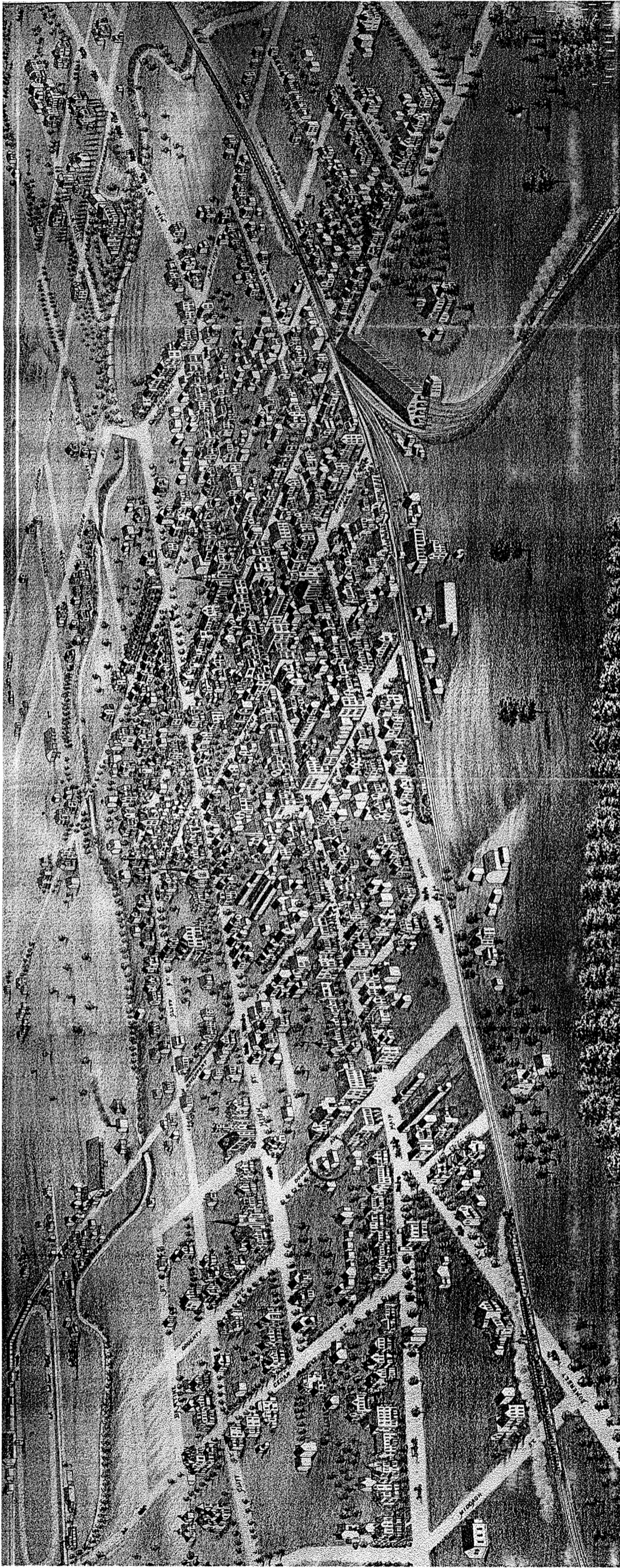


Figure 3. Somerville, New Jersey, 1882, showing the continued growth of Somerville following the Central Railroad expansion of the 1860s. West End Hose Company Number 3 has not yet been constructed but its site is occupied by the small frame building of the Union Fire Company, No. 1

West End Hose Company Number 3  
Somerset County, New Jersey



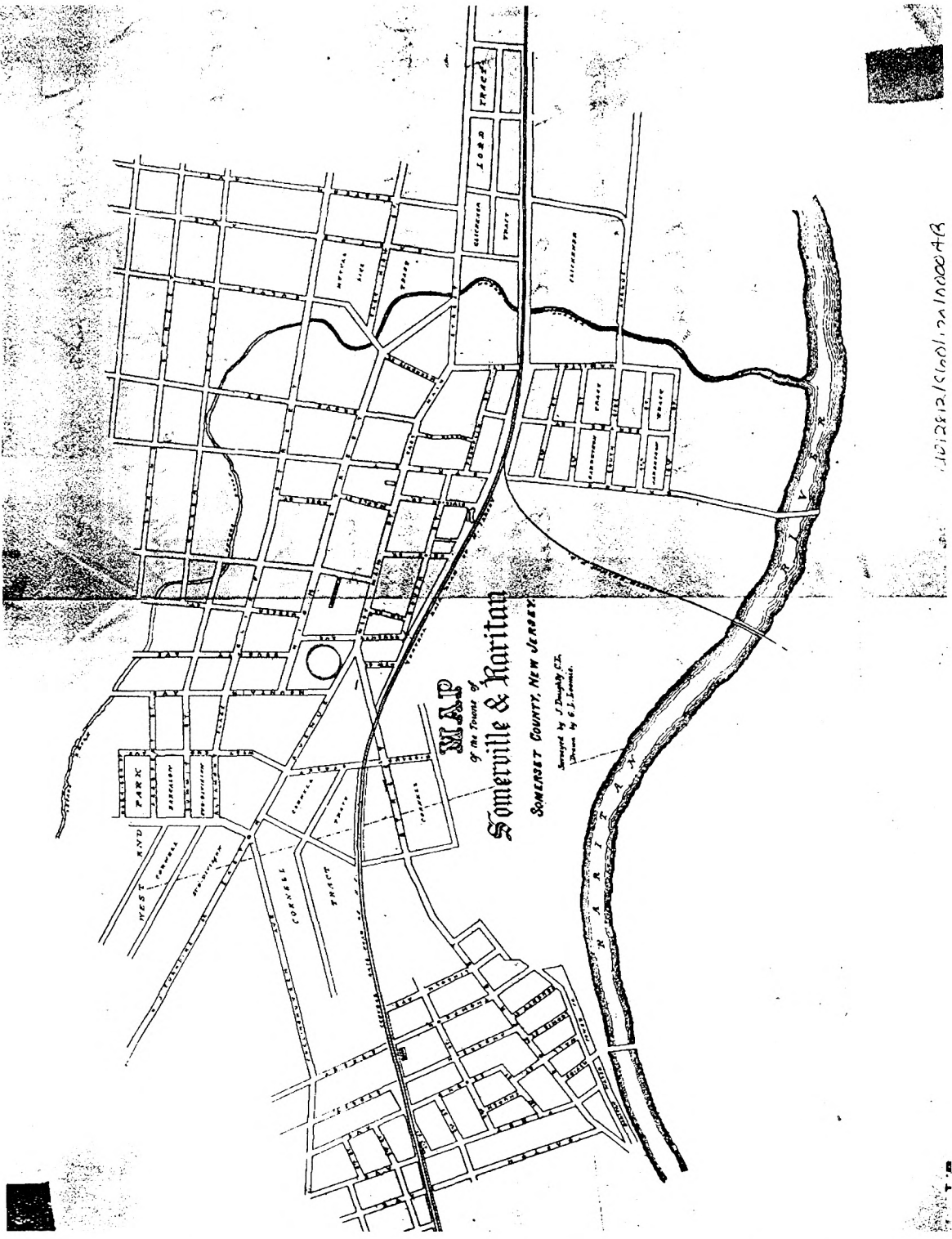


Figure 4. Map of Somerville, New Jersey, no date (ca. 1891) showing the expansion of Somerville to the west.

West End Hose Company Number 3  
Somerset County, New Jersey



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350 Alexander Street Princeton NJ 08540 609-924-1358 Fax 609-924-5985

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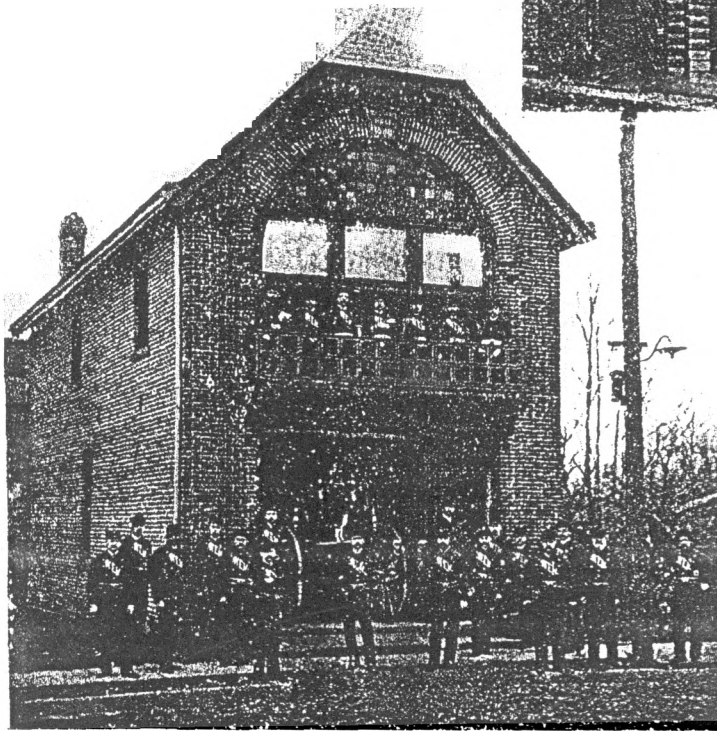
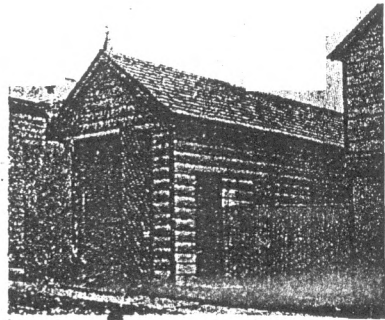
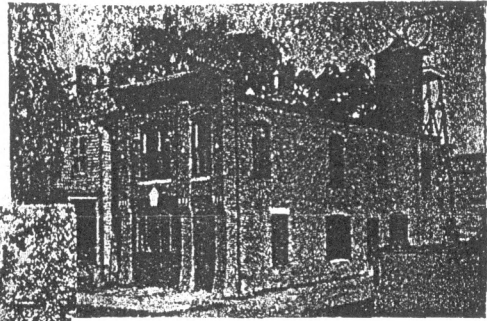
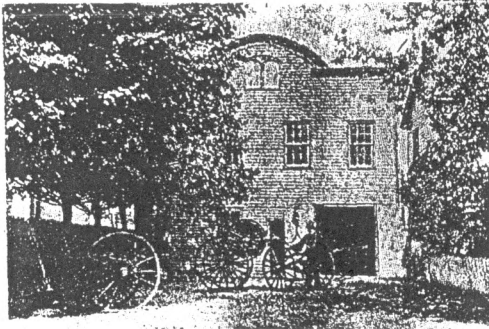
SOMERVILLE FIRE MUSEUM

SCALE: NOT-TO-SCALE

DRAWN BY:

DATE: 4/11/01

ORIGINAL FACADE BASED ON HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS



Relief Hose Co., Raritan

Somerville Engine Co.

West End Hose Co., Somerville

Central Hook and Ladder Co.

Historic Photograph 1. Lower left photo is West End Hose Company Firehouse, as originally constructed before the flanking buildings were erected, pre-1889. The other buildings represent the evolution of firehouse construction in Somerset County.

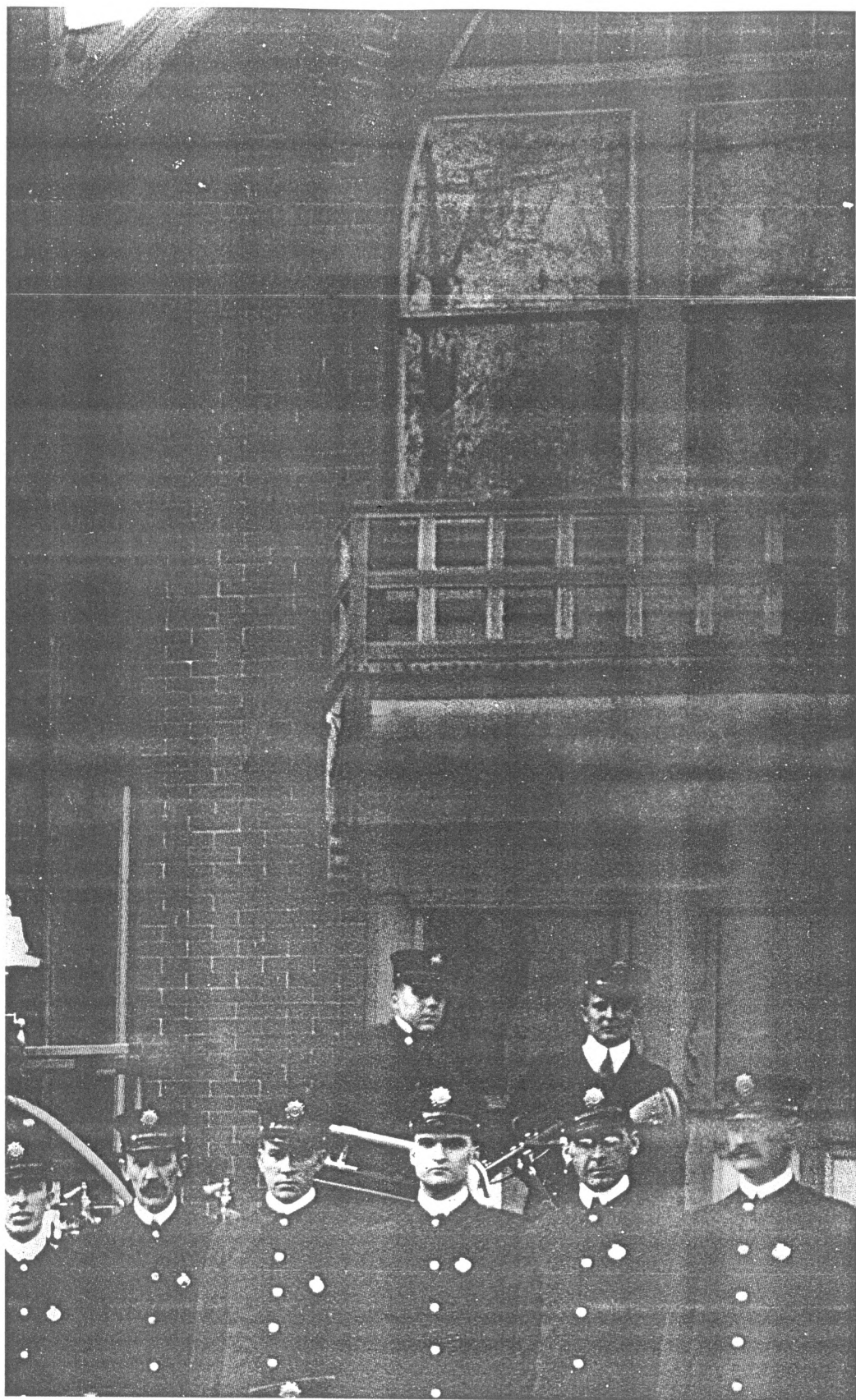
West End Hose Company  
Somerset County, New Jersey



Historic Photograph 2. West End Hose Company, ca. 1889  
Note: There is no building yet constructed to the south of the Firehouse

West End Hose Company Number 3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

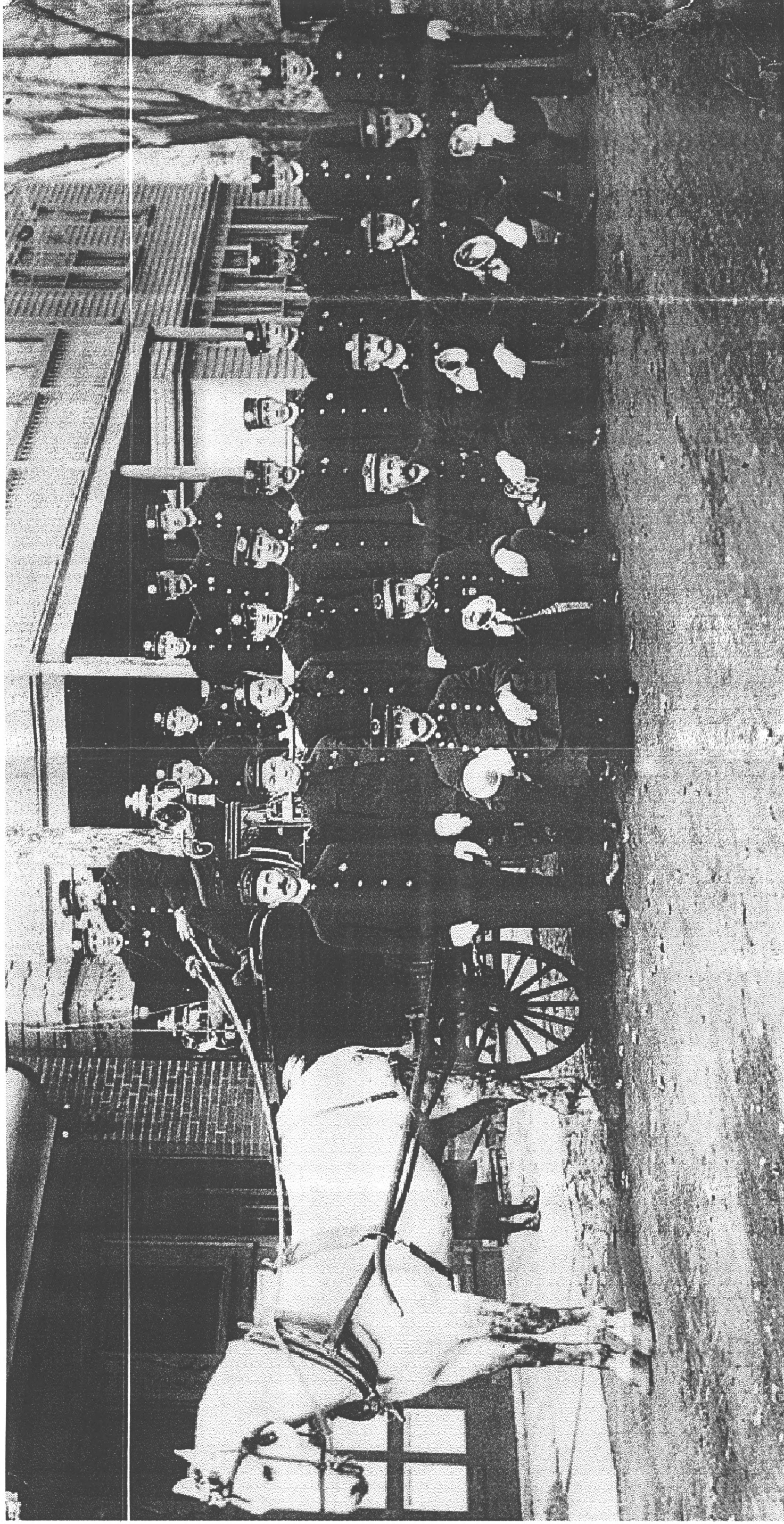




Historic Photograph 3. West End Hose Company, date unknown (pre-1916)  
Note: Original balcony and door

West End Hose Company Number 3  
Somerset County, New Jersey

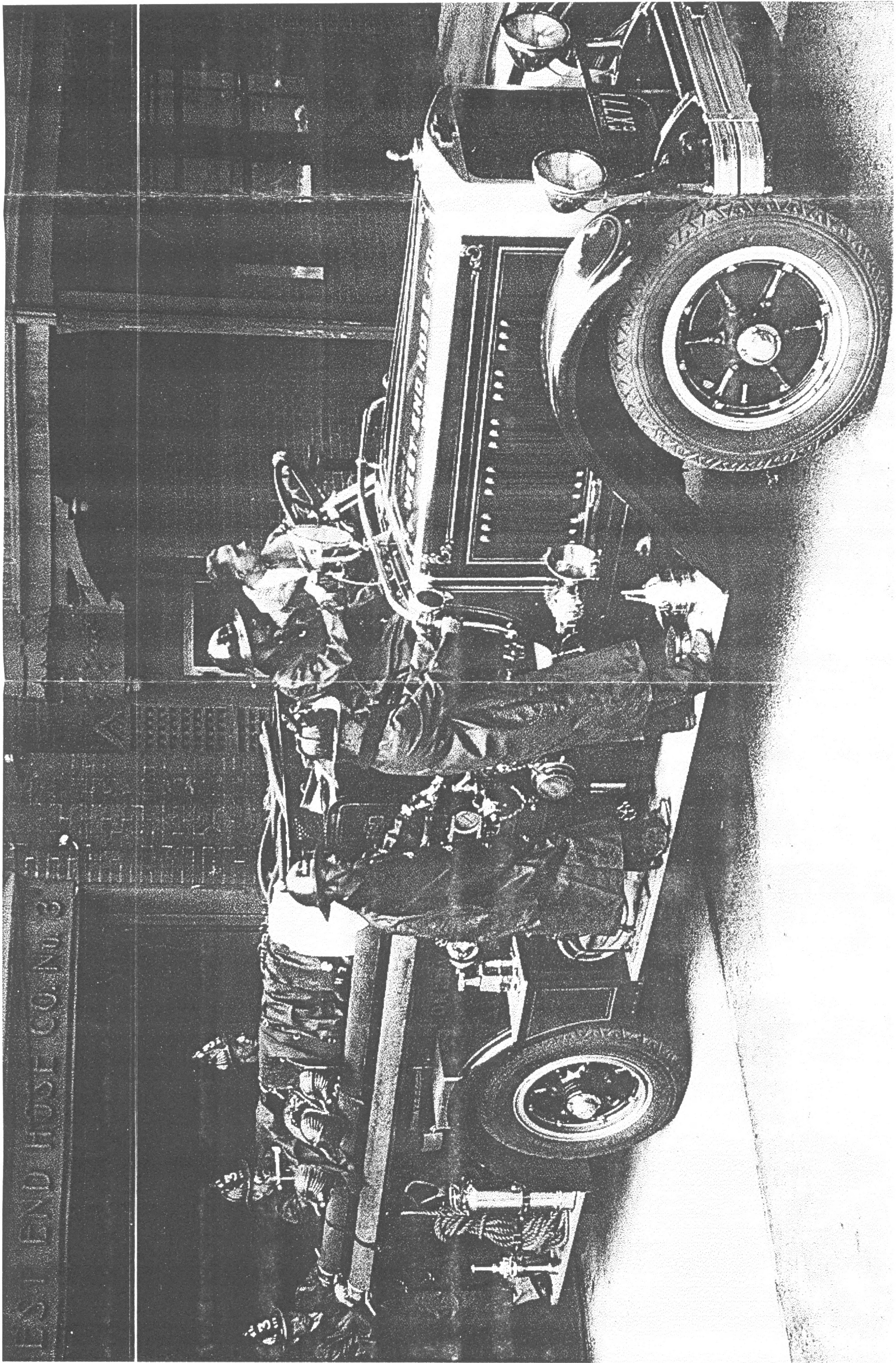




Historic Photograph 4. West End Hose Company, 1910  
Note: Original doors

West End Hose Company Number 3  
Somerset County, New Jersey





Historic Photograph 5. West End Hose Company with the 1929 American – LaFrance Fire Engine  
Note: The new door built ca. 1916 for the Company's first motorized equipment, a Mack chemical and hose truck

West End Hose Company Number 3  
Somerset County, New Jersey