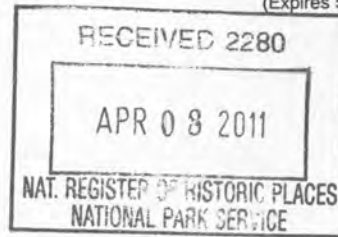


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



284

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Engine Company 27

other names/site number Old Chemical Company 1

2. Location

street & number 4201 Minnesota Avenue, N.E.

city or town Washington, D.C.

state Washington, D.C. code DC county _____ code 001 zip code 20008

<input type="checkbox"/>	not for publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

David Maloney Signature of certifying official/Title DAVID MALONEY, DC SHPO Date 1 April 2011

DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register _____ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register _____ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

5-18-11
Date of Action

Engine Company 27
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Firehouses in Washington, D.C.: 1806-1945

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/Fire Station

GOVERNMENT/Fire Station

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

19th CENTURY REVIVAL/Italianate

foundation: Brick

walls: Brick

roof: Asphalt Shingles

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Engine Company 27

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Summary Paragraph

Engine Company 27 is located at 4201 Minnesota Avenue, N.E. in northeast Washington, D.C. The fire station is located along the major boulevard in an industrial transportation corridor, across from the railroad tracks and I-295 which parallels the tracks on the opposite side. The building faces due west and is sited at a skewed angle to the avenue and the tracks both of which run SW-NE. When originally constructed in 1908 as Truck Company 1, this area—referred to as Bennings—was rural in nature with few residential buildings nearby. Today, the firehouse sits along the major transportation corridor at the edge of Deanwood and Eastland Gardens neighborhoods in northeast, D.C.

Designed by architect Leon Dessez, Engine Company 27 is a freestanding, two-story, three-bay-wide, painted brick building expressive of an Italian villa. The building is set upon a raised foundation and covered by an overhanging hipped roof with exposed rafter ends. Hipped dormers with paired windows sit on-center of the front and rear slopes of the roof, while two cupolas occupy the center section of the roof. The façade consists of two large and altered apparatus door openings on the first story, and three, single, 6/6 replacement windows on the second story. The building extends deep on its lot with a non-contributing brick oil house located at the rear.

Ornamentation on the firehouse is limited to a brick stringcourse between the first and second stories and stone keystones on-center of the second story window openings.

Narrative Description

The building is rectangular in plan and is divided into three bays on the front elevation and seven bays on the side walls. The west front elevation consists of two large apparatus door openings on the first story and three, single windows on the second story. The apparatus door openings—wide, rectangular openings filled with metal roll-up doors and separated by a narrow brick pier on-center—were altered from the building's original openings. Historically the apparatus doors were set within large arched openings and separated by a central pier with a narrow door cut into it. In order to accommodate larger fire trucks, the doors were enlarged and the upper arches were filled in with brick. In addition, the central pier was reduced in width and the narrow door was removed. A stone panel, historically recessed into the brick, but now applied to it, is inscribed with the building name "Engine Company 27" "D.C.F.D." This panel is located above the central pier, between the apparatus door openings. The number 27 has been altered from the original number.

A brick beltcourse separates the first story from the second and extends across all four walls of the building. The second story of the front elevation has three, single windows with original 6/6 sash. Rubbed, jack-arch lintels with central stone keystones cap the slightly recessed openings while stone sills form the base. The original windows have been replaced with vinyl ones.

The south side elevation offers a long brick wall extending towards the rear of the lot with five irregular bays of window openings and a single door opening. The door opening is located in the second bay from the front of the firehouse. This door opening, filled with a metal replacement fire door, is reached by a two-step stair, and is surmounted by a brick blind arch. The arch is formed of bricks with a single row of bricks on the outer arch projecting slightly from the others. A central stone keystone projects from the center of the arch. The remaining bays have single windows, all with replacement sash. The two bays towards the rear of the building and at the second story are longer than the others.

The north side wall is similarly five bays deep, with windows in each bay on both stories and a door towards the rear of this side wall. Here, the front windows on the second story are the longer ones, while the remaining ones are squatter. All of the windows have vinyl replacement sash.

The east rear elevation is divided into three bays with a central entry on the first story and windows to either side. The door—a double-wide opening—has been filled in with a smaller, single door opening, but the entire opening is still capped by a tall round arch. The arch springs from impost blocks and is formed of several rows of brick with a central brick keystone. The tympanum of the arch is filled with brick laid in a herringbone pattern. The second story features a long window opening above the rear entrance and two squatter single windows to either side.

A single-story addition projects off of the rear elevation, blocking the southern window opening on the first story of this elevation. A brick chimney stack rises from the southeast corner of the building and punches through the deep eave of the roof.

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The firehouse is covered in an overhanging, low-hipped roof with extremely wide eaves with exposed rater ends. Especially since the round-arched apparatus doors are no longer intact, these wide eaves give the building its primary architectural character.

A small ancillary red brick structure is located at the rear of the lot toward the northeast corner. The building is rectangular in plan with an at-grade slab foundation and a flat roof. A single, roll-up door occupies the front end wall of the building, while a single door opening is located along its southern side wall. The building does not contribute to the property.

Interior:

The interior of this firehouse was not accessible.

INTEGRITY

The building retains its integrity of location, and setting. The building's overall massing is intact and the building retains its character-defining overhanging hipped roof. The building has been altered significantly, whereby the distinctive arched openings have been removed and all of the building's windows have been replaced. Still, the building retains its quality of workmanship, and, as a functioning firehouse still retains its integrity of feeling and association.

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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 a 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture
Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

1908-1961

Significant Dates

1908; 1914; 1945

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Leon Dessez

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance for Engine Company 27 extends from 1908, the year the building was constructed to 1961, a date fifty years from the present.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Engine Company 27

Name of Property

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Constructed in 1908 as Chemical Company Number 1, Engine Company 27 survives as an example of a city firehouse, built during the third phase of construction of the city's pre-World War II firehouse buildings, as identified in the National Register Multiple Property document "*Firehouses in Washington, D.C.: 1806-1945.*" The building meets National Register Criteria A and C according to the Multiple Property Document, providing a good example of the associated property sub-type: Eclectic Period Firehouses 1897-1916.

Engine Company 27 was designed by Leon Dessez, the city's most prolific private firehouse architect, credited with designing at least six other firehouses in the city. It was erected in 1908 to accommodate Chemical Company 1, which was disbanded in 1914 when Engine 27 was formed. The building is a stripped-down version of Dessez's design for Tenleytown's Engine Company 20, which itself could be called a simplified, hipped-roofed, "villa" version of the Dessez's downtown Renaissance *palazzi*, Engine Company 3/ Old Engine 11. The handsome but simple Engine Company 27 originally had arched openings, but they were widened and flattened after the building was belatedly equipped with motor vehicles in 1924. The design was undoubtedly considered appropriate and sufficient for the remote, low-density neighborhood of modest frame houses known as "Benning," including the area today known as Deanwood.

Engine Company 27 is most important for housing the second African-American fire company in Washington, having received its officers from the first Number 4 Engine in 1945. Black firemen could only rise to command in these units, which had grown to only four in number when the racially segregated system began to be dismantled in the 1950s. This unit received a commendation as "Fire Company of the Year" in 1962 for saving nine lives at a Grant Street fire.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Engine Company 27 is significant in the Area of **Architecture** as an excellent example of a firehouse designed by private architect Leon Dessez in an Italianate villa style of architecture reflective of the Eclectic period in the design of the city's firehouses.

Engine Company 27 is significant in the Area of **Community Planning and Development** as an example of Chemical Company erected in a remote area of the city to protect the industrial railroad corridor. The firehouse is also significant as housing the city's second all-black unit, established in 1945.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

The context for firehouses, fully described in the National Register Multiple Property Listing: *Firehouses in Washington, D.C.: 1806-1945*, divides the construction of the city's firehouses into four chronological periods: Pre-Civil War (Volunteerism) Firehouse; Victorian Period Firehouses (1865-1897); City Beautiful Movement/Eclectic Period Firehouses (1897-1916); and Inter-War/Colonial Revival Period Firehouses (1925-1945). Engine Company 22 was constructed in 1897 at the juncture of the Victorian period, and the City Beautiful/Eclectic Period, but based upon its erection in an emerging suburban area, is considered to be part of the Eclectic Period.

As detailed in the Multiple Property document, firehouses built during the Eclectic Period generally followed the same design patterns as those of the Victorian era. However, these firehouses were often designed by private architects, outside of the Office of the Municipal Architect, in a variety of eclectic styles. The firehouses were also often built outside of the established downtown neighborhoods in the city's emerging residential subdivisions. Like the Victorian Period firehouses, firehouses of this period were generally small, two-or three-story red brick buildings with embedded hose towers. The two-story plan divided the firefighting activities on the first floor from the firemen's living quarters on the second. In 1911, motorized equipment was introduced, marking a significant advance in firefighting technology.

Engine Company 27 was originally constructed in 1908 to house Chemical Company No. 1 and its horse-drawn apparatus. The Chemical Company, located in the remote Benning area with few residential properties nearby, was likely erected to protect the industrial railroad corridor. Chemical companies were established in the developing areas that lacked public

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water service. The companies were equipped with engines that pumped chemical fire suppressants on the fires. Chemical trucks, resembling huge fire extinguishers on wheels operated on the same principal as the fire extinguisher. The top half of the extinguisher contained acid which, when the extinguisher was tipped, became activated by combining with the other ingredients. When a city-wide system of fire hydrants was installed in Washington, the use of chemical trucks was discontinued. In 1914, the newly established Engine Company 27 moved into the Chemical Company firehouse.

Due to its remote location and lack of context, Engine Company 27 stands as one of the city's most unassuming historic firehouses. Similar in design to Engine Company 20 in the Tenleytown neighborhood, designed by Leon Dessez eight years earlier, Engine Company 27 is smaller in scale and simpler in detail. It is a freestanding brick structure, historically characterized by its arched openings with brick voussoirs and stone keystones.

Leon Dessez:

Architect Leon Dessez was one of a small group of members of the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects that received multiple commissions for public buildings during the Eclectic Period of firehouse design in the city. Dessez was born in 1858 in Washington, D.C. and attended private and public schools in the city. At the age of 19, Dessez began his architectural training at the firm of Hornblower and Poindexter, later Hornblower and Marshall. The young architectural assistant spent three years with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers assisting Colonel Lincoln Casey with the construction of the Washington Monument. Dessez next worked for three years as an architectural and engineering draftsman at the Navy Yards. In 1886, he opened his own practice with an office in the Corcoran Building. In his practice, he combined his skills as an artistic designer with the engineering experience he acquired with the Army Corps and in the Navy docks. The next year, Dessez was a founding member of the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, a measure of his quick rise to local prominence in the architecture profession. He would later serve as the Chapter's Vice President and was a member that helped restore the Octagon House, which became the organization's headquarters.

Throughout the late 1880s, Dessez designed a number of prominent residences for well-to-do clients, and in 1893, he joined the Board of Directors of the Chevy Chase Land Company. Impressed by his work, Chevy Chase developer, Francis Newlands appointed Dessez as the Chief Architect of Chevy Chase, a position Dessez would retain for 25 years. In this capacity, Dessez designed a number of houses in and around Chevy Chase. In the late 1890s, Dessez became a pioneer in the use of steel reinforced concrete. His eight-story Century Office Building (1899) located at 412 5th Street, NW (demolished) may have been one of the first buildings in a major U. S. city to employ such a structural system.

In addition to his interest in innovative building techniques, Dessez became involved in municipal architecture around the turn of the century. Before his death in 1918, he designed a number of important civic buildings including the D.C. prison at Occoquan, Virginia, the hospital at the Soldiers' Home, the Miner Normal school and other schools, and at least six firehouses. In 1908, Dessez served on a commission to rewrite the District building regulations. He also served on a committee to inspect the DC public schools to ensure their safety. Dessez died from influenza during the 1918 pandemic.

Engine Company 27
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Berk, Sally L. "The History of Washington, D.C.'s Pre-World War II Firehouses," D.C. Historic Preservation Division, June 1992.

"Brightwood Citizens Want Fire and Police Service for that Section," *The Washington Post*, Sept. 28, 1895, p. 12.

"Flag to Fire Ladders: Brightwood Celebrates Over Her Engine Company," *The Washington Post*, August 7, 1897, p. 3.

National Register Multiple Property Document: *Firehouses in Washington, D.C., 1806-1945*.

"Selecting New Sites: Brightwood Engine House," *The Washington Post*, July 16, 1896, p. 10.

Washington Perspectives, Incorporated. "Firehouse Building Survey," D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development, 1986.

Zurier, Rebecca. *The American Firehouse: an Architectural and Social History*. New York:Abbeville Press, Inc., 1982.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 9,169 square feet
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 331412 4307485
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Engine Company 27
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Engine Company 27 is located at 4201 Minnesota Avenue. The property includes all of that lot of land in Square 5076 Lot 800 in the District of Columbia.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The lot of land has been associated with Engine Company 27 since its construction on the site in 1908.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally Berk and Kim Williams, Architectural Historians
organization D.C. Historic Preservation Office date March 1, 2011
street & number 1000 4th Street, SW telephone 202 442-8840
city or town Washington, D.C. state _____ zip code 20024
e-mail Kim.Williams@dc.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Engine Company 27

City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.

County: _____ State: _____

Photographer: Kim Williams

Date Photographed: March 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number: General View looking northwesterly along Minnesota Avenue, NE

Engine Company 27
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Name of Property: Engine Company 27

City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.

County: State:

Photographer: Kim Williams

Date Photographed: March 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West elevation looking northwesterly

2 of 5.

Name of Property: Engine Company 27

City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.

County: State:

Photographer: Kim Williams

Date Photographed: March 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West and North elevations

3 of 5.

Name of Property: Engine Company 27

City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.

County: State:

Photographer: Kim Williams

Date Photographed: March 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number: North Elevation

4 of 5.

Name of Property: Engine Company 27

City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.

County: State:

Photographer: Kim Williams

Date Photographed: March 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number: South Elevation

5 of 5.

Engine Company 27
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Property Owner:

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

name District of Columbia Fire Department
street & number 1923 Vermont Avenue, NW telephone _____
city or town Washington, D.C. state _____ zip code _____

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.460 et seq.).

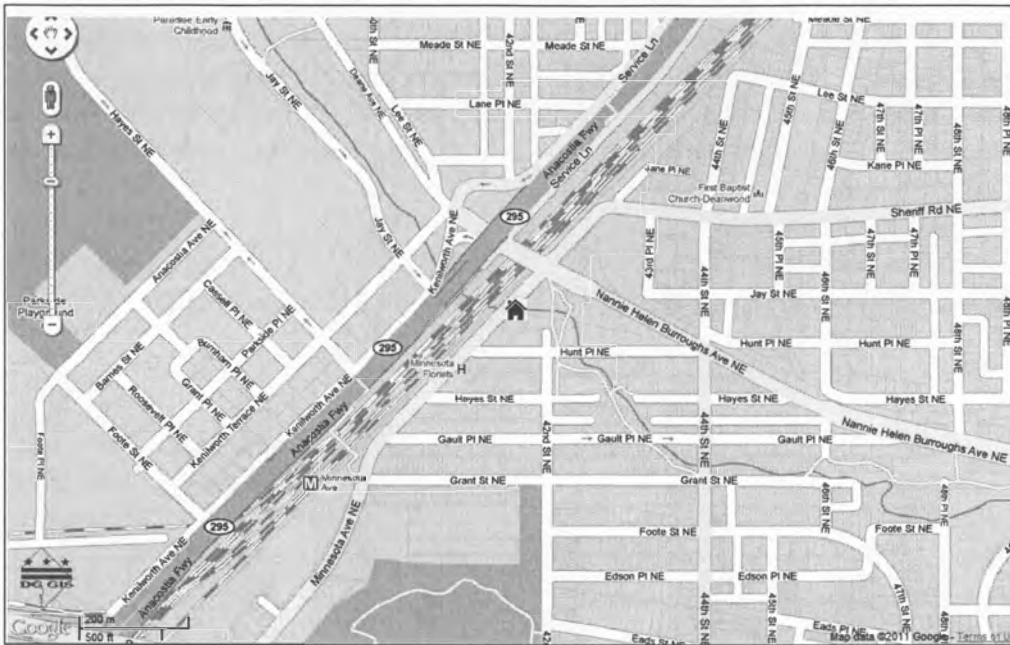
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

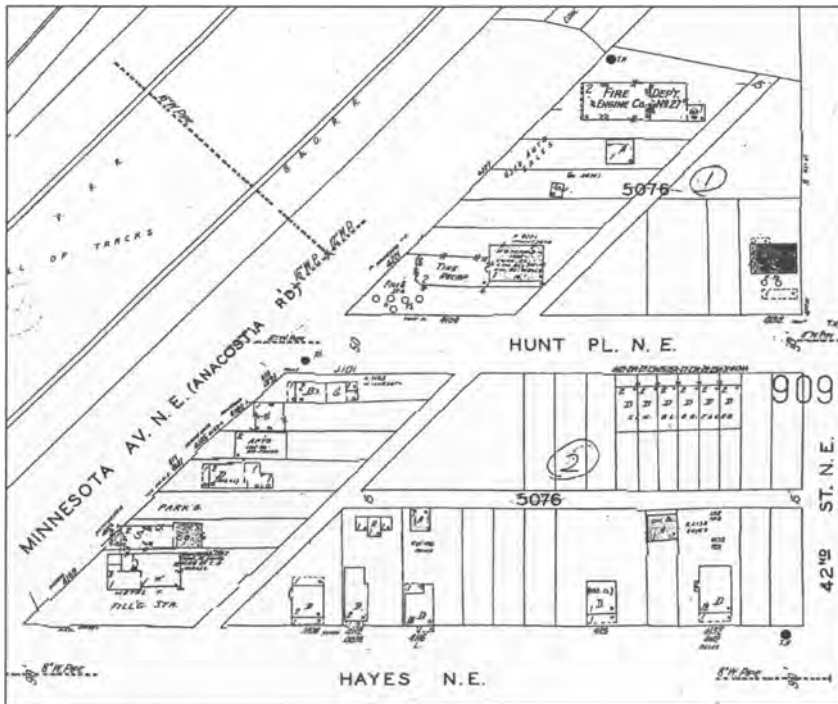
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Engine Company 27
Name of Property Washington, D.C.
County and State Firehouses in Washington, D.C.
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number MAPS/PLANS Page 1



Engine Company 27, 4201 Minnesota Avenue, N.E.



Engine Company 27, 4201 Minnesota Avenue, N.E.
(From Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1960)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Engine Company 27
Name of Property Washington, D.C.
County and State Firehouses in Washington, D.C.
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number MAPS/PLANS

Page 2



Engine Company 27 Historic Photo, pre-1924

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Engine Company 27
NAME:

MULTIPLE Firehouses in Washington DC MPS
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, District of Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 4/08/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/25/11
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/10/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/24/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000284

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 5-18-11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Snack Shop

PINE STATION

OIL CHANGE 129.99

ATM

0135664 IMG_3026_066

Engine Company 27

Washington, DC

General View looking northeasterly along Minnesota Ave.

Fujifilm WILLIAMS 03/29/11

Photo 1 of 5



ENGINEERED
BY 27
800-6



Jacques
Patterson

OIL
CHANGE
\$20.99

AIR

WM
800-952-7771

Sna

0135664 IMG_3025_065

Engine Company 27

Washington, DC

West elevation looking northeasterly

Photo 2 of 5



ENGINE CO.
No. 27
D.C.F.D.



0135664 IMG_3042_068

Engine Company 27

Washington, DC

West and north elevations

Photo 3 of 5



0135664 IMG_3047_069

Engine Company 27
Washington, DC
North elevation
Photo 4 of 5

Fuji WILLIAMS 03/29/11



Engine Company 27
Washington, DC
South elevation
Photo 5 of 5

Fuji 1 WILLIAM 03/29/11

01356664 IMG_3027_067

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64500979