

# HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM

APR 4 1985

State of Washington  
Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
111 W. 21st Ave. KL-11  
Olympia, WA 98504  
(206) 753-5010

## IDENTIFICATION SECTION

Site No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Site Name: Historic Fire Station No. 5  
Common Fire Station No. 4  
Field Recorder: Mark L. Brack  
Date Recorded: July 12, 1985  
Owner's Name: City of Tacoma  
Street: 747 Market Street  
City/Town: Tacoma  
County: Pierce  
Zip Code: 98402

## LOCATION SECTION

Street Number 1453 South 12th St  
City/Town Tacoma Zip Code 98405  
County Pierce Twp N/A Range \_\_\_\_\_ Sect \_\_\_\_\_ ¼ Sect \_\_\_\_\_  
Tax No./Parcel No. 201129-002-0  
UTM References Zone 10 Easting 541 220 Northing 523 2950  
Tacoma North, WA

Acreage: less than one.  
Legal boundary description: Alliance Addition to New Tacoma, Block 1129, Lots 7 - 12.

Status:  
National Register   
State Register   
Survey/Inventory   
Determined Eligible   
Other (NHL, HABS, HAER) Indicate

Classification Date:  
District  \_\_\_\_\_  
Site  \_\_\_\_\_  
Building  \_\_\_\_\_  
Structure  \_\_\_\_\_  
Object  \_\_\_\_\_

## PHOTOGRAPHY

1. Roll 1, Neg. #13  
Photography Neg. No.: 2  
(Roll No. + Frame No.)  
View: 1. west and south elevations, facing NE 2. south and east elevations, practice tower and garage, facing NW.  
Date: August 1985

## DESCRIPTION SECTION

### Materials & Features/Structural Types:

Roof Material: Roof Type:  
Wood Shingle  Gable   
Asbestos/Asphalt Shingle  Flat   
Slate  Monitor   
Tar  Gambrel   
Metal (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  Shed   
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Cladding (Exterior Wall Surfaces):  
Log   
Horizontal Wood Siding { Rustic/Novelty   
Clapboard   
Wood Shingle { Split Shakes   
Re-sawn   
Machine Shingle

Asbestos/Asphalt Shingle   
Brick Masonry   
Stone Masonry   
Stucco   
Terra Cotta   
Carrara Glass   
Vinyl/Aluminum Siding   
Other (specify) Concrete Brick

Foundation:  
Hip  Log   
Pyramid  Post & Pier   
Sawtooth  Stone   
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ Concrete   
Block   
Poured   
Brick   
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Height/No. of Stories:  
One   
One and one-half   
Two   
Two and one-half   
Three   
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### Style/Form: (Check one or more of the following)

Pioneer/Homestead  Dutch Colonial   
Greek Revival  Spanish Colonial   
Gothic Revival  English Revival   
Italianate  Bungalow   
Second Empire  Craftsman   
Stick/Eastlake  American Foursquare/  
Queen Anne  Classic Box   
Shingle Style  Prairie Style   
Richardsonian Romanesque  Art Deco/Moderne   
Chicago School/  
Sullivanesque  Commercial Vernacular   
Beau Arts Classicism  Vernacular   
Princess Anne  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_   
Neo-Colonial

Integrity: (include detailed description in 'Additional Description' section)

	Intact	Slight	Moderate	Excessive
Additions to house plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes to windows	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes to roof shape	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes to interior plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# NARRATIVE SECTION

Areas of Significance/Study Unit Themes: (check one or more of the following)

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              | <input type="checkbox"/> Military                           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture/Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Education                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Politics/Government/Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts   | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/Recreation  | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic Heritage (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> Science & Engineering              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Medicine           | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Movements/Organizations     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Planning/Development                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing/Industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                     |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____              |

Statement of Significance: (Reference names, dates, events, areas of significance/study

unit themes)  
 Date of Construction: 1935 (Period of significance: 1935)  
 Architect/Builder: Architect: Silas Nelsen

Historical Significance: Fire Station No. 5 is significant for its association with the development of Tacoma's vital municipal services, and the building itself is an example of the unemployment relief projects created by government during the Great Depression. The station is also an important local example of Depression-era fire station design. In 1933, the State Emergency Relief Administration gave a grant-in-aid (No. C275) to the City of Tacoma to erect two fire stations, Nos. 2 and 5. This was the second largest grant allotted to Pierce County projects during that year. These work relief projects were labor intensive and were aimed at reducing unemployment and stimulating the economy. The station was built of concrete brick and detailed with simple Art Deco/Moderne style motifs - a frequent choice of Depression-relief projects. Contributing to the significance of Station No. 5 is its garage and practice tower. These facilities were promoted as being part of a "fire college" where fire crews from all over the city would receive training. This element reflects the growth and increasing professionalization of the Tacoma Fire Department. Station No. 5 continues to serve its neighborhood, although it has been renamed Fire Station No. 4.

**Additional Description of Physical Appearance & Significant Architectural Features:**

(Architectural significance; can include interior & site features; address integrity issues specifically)

Fire Station No. 5 is located in a residential neighborhood composed primarily of one and one-and-one-half story wood-frame houses built in the first three decades of the century. However, post-World War II homes are scattered throughout the area, and an electrical utility sub-station is located immediately north of the station. The fire station and its garage and practice tower are constructed of large concrete blocks and they display elements of the Moderne and Art Deco styles. The apparatus room is the most prominent element of the station's main (south) facade. It is taller than the residential wing and also projects slightly forward. It has two large flat-arch doorways and is lit by a skylight. The residential wing's south facade has large aluminum-frame plate glass windows which replaced earlier sash that divided these window openings into three vertical panes. Other windows are original hinged and double-hung wood sash. A tall hose tower with attached chimney is located at the rear of the apparatus room. The cornice is composed of alternating bands of recessed and projecting brick courses that encircle the building and the hose tower. Other exterior details include: Art Deco style metal letters that identify the station, and decorative brickwork that creates parallel vertical lines above some windows. The vertical elements of the station's. (cont.)

Major Bibliographic References: (include books, periodicals, manuscripts, newspapers, legal documents, maps, photos, oral sources, etc.)

Nelsen, Silas, telephone interview, July 1985. (9025 Harborview Drive N., Gig Harbor, WA 98335)

Tacoma Fire Department Records (901 South Fawcett Avenue, Tacoma, WA )

Tacoma News Tribune, June 7, 1935.

Talbot, Clyde, and Decker, Ralph, 100 Years of Firefighting in the City of Destiny, Tacoma: Pyro Press, 1981.

Washington Relief Administration Files, Record Group 055, Boxes 7-9, 21, and 74 (available at Washington State Archives, Olympia, WA)

Original 1933 Blueprints (available at City of Tacoma's Building Division).

# HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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Site No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Name:

Historic  
Common

Fire Station No. 5

Fire Station No. 4

Additional Photographs: (include roll no. & frame no.; date; & view)

.....(Description cont.)

design are balanced against the horizontality of the cornice and massing. This creates a dynamic tension typical of Art Deco Moderne designs. The interior plan has been maintained and original features include: plywood lockers and wainscoting, bathroom fixtures, and wood and glass doors. To the rear of the station is an original three-bay garage and five-story practice tower. Two of the garage bays were later blocked-in for use as classrooms. The top story of the five-story practice tower is constructed of wood. The garage/practice tower structure contributes to the historical significance of the property.