

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **SEP 18 1984**

date entered **OCT 18 1984**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Engine House No. 4

and or common

2. Location

street & number 220-~~222~~-224 E. 26th St. not for publication

city, town Tacoma vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county Pierce code 053

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Tacoma

street & number 740 St. Helens

city, town Tacoma vicinity of state Washington 98402

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pierce County Auditor's Office

street & number 930 Tacoma Ave. S.

city, town Tacoma state Washington 98405

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(1)Tacoma Cultural Resources Survey
title(2)Historic American Engineering Record has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date (1)March 1981 federal state county local
(2)August 1979

(1)Tacoma Community Development Dept., 740 St. Helens, Tacoma, Washington 98402
depository for survey records (2)Historic American Engineering Record, Dept. of the Interior

city, town Washington state D.C.

7. Description

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Engine House No. 4 is a two-story brick firehouse with classically inspired terra cotta details and a prominent four story hose tower. The structure has been well maintained and its historic integrity has been preserved. The firehouse is located at the intersection of East 26th and East "C" Streets. The surrounding area is composed of commercial and light-industrial properties and vacant land. The new Tacoma Dome arena is located a few blocks to the south.

The firehouse is square in shape and sits upon a poured concrete foundation that has been incised in imitation of cut stone. The walls of the building are constructed of a very hard red brick that has slightly beveled edges and is laid in a stretcher bond.

The front or north facade is composed of three identical bays delineated by narrow projecting piers. Each bay has a large segmentally arched doorway on the ground floor and a band of three double-hung, six-over-six windows on the second floor. The doorway arch is made of radially laid bricks, the upper courses of which are corbelled. White cast stone panels adorn the imposts of this arch and also decorate the corners of the upstairs windows. Below the terra cotta lugsills of the windows are rows of diamond-shaped cast stone panels. Other details include a glazed white terra cotta cornice with mutules, brackets, and an oak-leaf pattern on the soffit. The center bay has an inset stone inscribed "Engine House No. 4." A metal light fixture is attached at the center of each doorway arch. The roof parapet has a raised rectangular center section ornamented with simple cast stone panels. A terra cotta coping once capped the parapet. A plain stepped parapet extends down the west side of the firehouse.

The building's east facade is very similar to the main elevation; however, segmentally arched windows rather than fire engine doors were constructed on the ground floor. One of these windows has a regular size door set in its center.

Attached to the southern corner of this facade is the four story hose and bell tower. The top of the tower was used to house the alarm bell and is articulated by a segmentally arched opening on each side. Beneath these openings is a terra cotta belt course. Capping the tower is a terra cotta cornice and parapet and a roof-mounted flag-pole. The tower's lower stories have narrow single pane windows and a segmentally arched doorway provides an entry on the east facade. Appended to this tower is a square one story ell. A part of the original composition, it maintains its terra cotta coping and cornice. This small ell conceals from street view a long single story shed-roof ell that runs the length of the station's rear or south facade. This ell and the flat roof of the main building each have skylights.

The exterior of the firehouse has been slightly altered. The warehouse abutting the firehouse on its west facade was built at a later date and has obscured the firehouse's original windows on this elevation. Roll-up doors in the bays for the fire engines have replaced the original folding doors. The recessed stub walls against which the original doors opened remain only on the center doorway. The second story double-hung windows of the south facade were replaced in the 1940's.

The first floor of the station originally contained an apparatus room in the front for fire fighting vehicles. Stalls, feed room, and a small lavatory were located at the rear of the building. On the second floor above the apparatus room was a dormitory, a locker room, large bathroom, and steam drying room. Surviving interior details include: the stairway; a high, decorative stamped metal ceiling; paneling; moldings on the wood posts, door and window surrounds; paneled doors; a plank floor; two brass sliding poles; and two wood lockers in the kitchen and three in the old reading room. The "Birchfield" boiler in the basement and the cast iron radiators also remain.

The interior has been extensively partitioned. Several downstairs walls made of vertical bead-and-groove paneling were probably added when the horses were removed in 1919. There is one between the east and center apparatus room doors, and several form

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

2

storage rooms and a maintenance shop in the single story ell. Later partitions of horizontal tongue-and-groove boards are also present. Upstairs partitions have been added to create offices in the old dormitory and reading room. A kitchen has been installed in the old locker room. The bath area has been reduced and the old steam drying room remodeled into a locker room with a recently installed sheetrock partition. Other recent additions include: modern baseboard radiators in the bath and locker rooms, a stair enclosure, and a dropped acoustical tile ceiling on the second floor.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1911–1912 **Builder/Architect** Frederic Shaw, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Engine House No. 4 is an excellent example of an early 20th century fire station. The design stems from national improvements in fire fighting technology and organization made in the 1870's and 1880's. Frederic Shaw, its architect, incorporated these features in a structure built as part of Tacoma's pre-World War I building boom. The firehouse also reflects the growth of municipal government and related social services that were stimulated by the progressive movements of this era.

The last third of the 19th century saw fire stations become more elaborate and prominent as municipal fire departments rose in both efficiency and public esteem. Improved steam pumpers, hose wagons, and ladder trucks increased the effectiveness of fire departments and demanded more room in the station, as did the horses that pulled them. Stalls and feed facilities near the engines, trained horses, and quick-attaching harnesses suspended from high ceilings all helped decrease the firemen's response time.

As in other cities, Tacoma's adoption of a full time paid fire department in 1889 required living accommodations at the station. The men were housed in a second or sometimes third story to separate them from the horses. When it opened in 1912, Engine House No. 4 contained facilities to shelter a second Metropolitan type pumper, a hose wagon, eight horses, and a crew of eight men. Kitchens were not included as the men usually ate at home or in nearby restaurants. Quick access to the apparatus was provided by sliding poles. Electrical alarms (such as the fire boxes Tacoma installed in 1896) which connected directly to the stations further reduced response time. The public increasingly considered firemen to be heroes as their effectiveness was improved by new technology and professionalization. Firehouses like Engine House No. 4 not only housed the new equipment and its crews, but stood as architectural monuments to the fire service.

Brick became the standard building material for these structures in the late 19th century, lingering on well into the 20th. It was cheaper than stone, fireproof, and suited the popular taste for diversity of color, pattern, and texture. Plain brick could be laid in a variety of patterns which were often combined with the depth and color of pressed and cut brick, terra cotta ornaments, and cast-stone insets. Hose towers added to the picturesque profiles of these buildings.

In the early 20th century, Tacoma shared in the country's economic expansion. The formation of the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company, the arrival of three national railroads, and improvements by the Northern Pacific Railway further fueled the local economy. Tacoma and other municipalities utilized this prosperity to increase spending on improvements such as sewers, street lighting, libraries, and schools. Progressives sought to improve the quality of urban life by erecting such public works. It was a period during which governments began to play an expanded, active role in providing for the health and happiness of their citizens. In 1911, Tacoma's government became one of the area's largest builders as it constructed the Green River Gravity Water System, the Nisqually Power Plant, street paving, sewers, two new bridges, a municipal dock, and two fire stations. Engine House No. 13 (3825 North 25th) was built in the Bungalow style to fit a residential district, while Engine House No. 4 was constructed with a more formal plan and neo-classical details to complement the commercial area. The Tacoma Ledger said the latter firehouse "probably will be the best in the city" and reported upon the station's completion that it "is said to be the most modern and finely equipped of any station of similar size in the Northwest."

9. Major Bibliographical References

Harvey, Paul W. "Tacoma Headlines," Tacoma News Tribune, Tacoma, Washington, 1962.
 Polk, R.L. & Co. Tacoma City Directory, 1900-1933.
 Tacoma, City of. Annual Report of the Tacoma Fire Department, 1911-1919, in Tacoma Public
 Library Northwest Room, Tacoma, Washington.

(continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Tacoma South

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	0	5	4	3	2	0	0	5	2	3	1	6	1	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing										

C

Zone			Easting				Northing														

D

Zone			Easting				Northing														

E

Zone			Easting				Northing														

F

Zone			Easting				Northing														

G

Zone			Easting				Northing														

H

Zone			Easting				Northing														

Verbal boundary description and justification

Three lots on the corner of East 26th and East "C" Streets, including the sloping drive behind the station. (Parcel #207618-005-0, lots 10-12, Block 7618, Tacoma Land Company 1st Addition.)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	code

state	n/a	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Wayne E. Wakefield

organization _____ date June 26, 1984

street & number 3804 Olympic Blvd. telephone (206) 564-0849

city or town Tacoma state Washington 98466

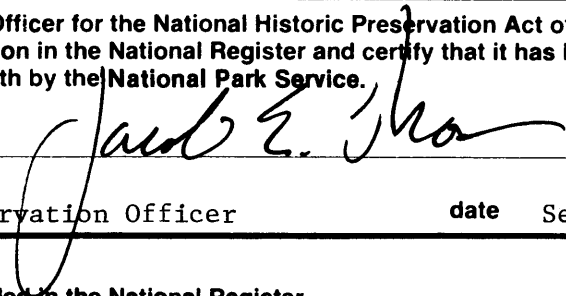
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____



title State Historic Preservation Officer date September 11, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 10-18-84

J. Alton Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

2

Engine House No. 4 remains a model of its type in the city of Tacoma. All other extant engine houses built before 1911 are small residential stations for one or two fire engines. Most of these are built in the Bungalow style with bracketed, overhanging gable roofs. A hose tower is either absent or very small. Engine House No. 9 (611 North Pine Street, National Register 1975), built in 1908, somewhat resembles a two story commercial structure, but has bay windows, hip roof, and dormer which also give it the appearance of a house. The only large station from this period, Engine House No. 2 (2701 Tacoma Avenue South), was entirely remodelled in 1935 in the Art Moderne Style. Engine House No. 4 is the only Tacoma station with elegant classically inspired details and a prominent hose tower. It is a true landmark rising above the relatively simple business blocks around Tacoma's City Waterway. It provides a visual link to Tacoma's past in contrast to the much altered Brown and Haley Candy Factory to the west and the modern Tacoma Dome to the southeast.

Land for the station was purchased by Tacoma for \$13,000 in March of 1911, and the City Council appropriated \$28,000 for the station's construction. Work began in July of 1911, and the station was ready for occupancy by January of 1912. In 1919, the Tacoma Fire Department probably modified the station when it made a complete changeover to motorized vehicles. An American LaFrance triple combination pumper replaced the station's old steamer at this time. The horse stalls were removed and partitions were added between the east and center apparatus doors and in the old barn area. The bathroom and locker room spaces may also have been changed to accommodate the smaller crew required by gasoline-powered equipment. Tacoma's adoption of the two platoon system in 1916 possibly encouraged the Fire Department to install a kitchen at the time of these other alterations for two shifts of men were required to be at the station during their entire watch, including mealtimes.

A portion of the structure was taken over for other municipal responsibilities in 1953. The building ceased fire station services in the early 1970's, and now serves the city as a storage and maintenance facility.

The firehouse architect, Frederic Shaw, was born in Sturgis, Michigan, in 1884, and came west in 1895. By 1904 he was serving as a draftsman for the prominent Tacoma architect, Frederick Heath. He later worked for D.H. White, James Teague of Seattle, C.A. Darmer, George Gove, the partnership of Heath and Gove, and the Tacoma City Engineer's Office. While employed by this city agency, Shaw supervised the design and construction of Engine House No. 4. He opened his own architectural office in 1915. His practice was interrupted by his service as a Coast Artillery officer, including overseas duty, during World War I. When he returned, he joined his brother, Stanley, in a partnership that lasted until 1929. The brothers designed several of Tacoma's commercial buildings, including the Pacific Savings Bank, two garage structures, and the Exeter Apartments. The Exeter Apartments and Engine House No. 4 are the only known remaining Shaw-designed buildings in Tacoma. However, further research will likely rediscover more of his commissions. Shaw was also active in business and civic affairs, serving for a time as a Pierce County Commissioner. In his spare time, Shaw designed and built model locomotives. In the early 1930's, Shaw moved to California, finally settling in Sausalito. He became chief architect for Henry Doelger Builders, but little is known of his designs for this company. By the 1950's he had retired, but pursued his interest in railroading with even greater vigor by writing two books, Oil Lamps and Iron Ponies and Casey Jones' Locker. The date of Shaw's death is not known.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

2

Tacoma/Pierce County Community Development Departments, et al. Tacoma/Pierce County Cultural Resource Survey, Tacoma, Washington, 1981.

Tacoma Society of Architects. The Tacoma Society of Architects, Builders Promotion Service, New York; Allstrum Printing Co., Tacoma, ca. 1920. A pamphlet of members' works now in the Tacoma Public Library's Northwest Room.

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

Who's Who in the West, 6th ed. Marquis-Who's Who, Chicago, 1958.

Who's Who in Washington. Arthur H. Allen, Publisher, Seattle, 1927.

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