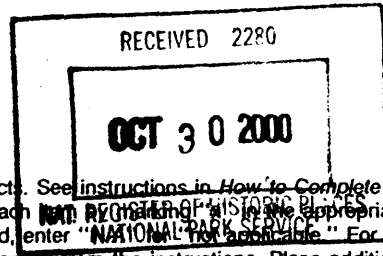


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1466



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 entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "NATIONAL PARK SERVICE." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. 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 Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 16 Anderson Street  not for publication

city or town Raritan Borough  vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Somerset code 035 zip code 08869

3. State/Federal 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] 10/18/00  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Assistant Commissioner, Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO  
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

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

Patrick Andrews

12/14/00

Name of Property

County and State

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
1		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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/Fire Station

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/Fire Station

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Gothic

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Sandstone

walls Brick

roof Synthetic

other Sandstone trim

Narrative Description

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

Please see Continuation Sheet.

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1894

Significant Dates

1894

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Van Derbeck, J.: Architect

A.R. Dilts, Hickey, & Brady:

Builders

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Name of Property

Somerset Co., NJ  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property approx. 0.2 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	8	5	3	0	9	7	0	4	4	9	0	7	1	5
Zone	Easting				Northing									

3 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

2 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

4 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

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.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Meredith Arms Bzdak, Architectural Historian

organization Ford Farewell Mills and Gatsch, Architects date July 2000

street & number 103 Carnegie Center, Suite 301 telephone 609/452-1777

city or town Princeton state NJ zip code 08540

**Additional Documentation**

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)

**Property Owner**

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

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ 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. 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.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House**  
Somerset County, New Jersey

### Description

Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House is located at 16 Anderson Street in the Borough of Raritan, Somerset County, New Jersey (Figures 1, 2, and 3). A two-story, brick building, it was completed in 1894 in the High Victorian Gothic style. Its most distinctive features include a three-story tower, stained glass windows, Art Nouveau signage, and sandstone trim. The Engine House is set within a late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century mixed-use residential and commercial neighborhood comprising two-story structures, many of them of frame construction, on relatively narrow lots with minimal setback (Photograph 1). The building's use, scale, and materials distinguish it from its residential neighbors, as does the fact that it is set back slightly from the street. A small, one-story addition identified on historic maps as "lock up" was appended to the rear of the building soon after its completion, circa 1894-1903. Between 1919 and 1928, a one-story frame shed (reputed to have been used as a stable for horses) and one-story frame garage were added to the property, and were linked to the Engine House by the lock-up wing. With at least the rear wings of the building being taken over for the Police Headquarters, the shed and garage were rebuilt using masonry construction circa 1928-1949. During the same period, the original brick Engine House received a two-story addition at its southeast corner. No substantive changes have been made to the building since that time, and it remains in fair physical condition.

The original portion of the Engine House is a two-story, brick building with a three-story tower (originally utilized to dry hoses) located at its northwest corner (Photograph 2). The building rests on a sandstone foundation. The main portion of the Engine House is capped by a shallow gabled roof fronted by a parapet, while the tower roof is pyramidal. The parapet is embellished with a denticulated, metal cornice. The construction is primarily masonry load bearing walls with wood frame floors, partitions, and roof systems. In places, the brick exterior has been clad with a brick faced stucco defined by a very thin pink mortar joint. Original 2/2 sash windows remain in most locations.

The primary, or west, elevation of the Engine House serves as the main entrance to the structure for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. This elevation is dominated by the three-story tower in the left bay and by the large garage opening to the right. At the tower, this elevation features a pedestrian entrance with a low stone sill at the ground story (Photograph 3). The entrance contains a single wood door flanked by wood paneled infill, capped by an eight-paneled transom,

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Somerset County, New JerseyDescription, cont.

and framed by a pointed arch, sandstone lintel that visually rests on brick piers with sandstone capitals. Historic photographs reveal that the transom was originally filled with leaded glass and had been replaced with the existing divided light transom by 1921. They also show that the configuration of the main entrance was changed from a double leaf batten door to a single leaf door with side panels between 1921 and 1947.

A narrow lancet window with a pointed arch, sandstone lintel defines the second story of the tower; its two single light windows are separated by a wood panel that exhibits a bead and reel type molding. The third story of the tower is clad with aluminum siding, and the tower roof is covered with an imitation slate. The tower's third story originally featured wood moldings, louvered panels, and decorative Ionic colonnettes; aluminum siding was added sometime after 1970. The extent to which original fabric remains beneath the siding is not known.

The garage opening in the right bay of the west elevation currently has a 24-paneled overhead garage door with four glass panels across the center (Photograph 4). Originally, this opening was occupied by a pair of carriage doors and a narrow pedestrian entrance with glass transom. According to historic photographs, these were removed sometime between 1921 and 1947. Changes were presumably made to accommodate a new, larger fire engine. The present garage door is capped by a metal panel, original to the building, that reads "Relief 2 Hose" in stylized lettering and ornament typical of the Art Nouveau period (Photograph 5); the panel is topped by a row of dentils. Above the panel is a group of six windows that are spanned by a large sandstone arch. The central keystone of the arch is inscribed as follows:

## Board of Commissioners/Building Com.

T. Richards  
?. Traynor  
?. Conboy  
R. Hickey - Pres.  
I.D. Dally - Sec.  
C.B. Berger  
C.F. Smith

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**Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey**

**Description, cont.**

The top three windows under the arch are fixed windows, two of which retain their original stained glass. The windows below are clear float glass with a square fixed window in the center and 1/1 sash to either side.

At the north (side) elevation of the Engine House, there is original red brick at the tower with a thin joint and red tinted mortar (Photograph 6). The remainder of the north elevation is brick faced stucco. Two windows are infilled with smaller, 1/1 sash windows and a different type of brick faced stucco. All windows feature sandstone sills, and the windows at the tower also have sandstone lintels (Photograph 7). Lintels on the remainder of the elevation have been covered with brick faced stucco.

The south elevation of the Engine House supports two pedestrian entrances; these entrances are capped with transoms (Photograph 8). Evidence from a photograph of 1893 indicates that one of these doors was originally a window. The original door retains a decorative pull and diagonal paneling (Photograph 9).

The ground floor of the Engine House is largely open and utilized as garage space (Photographs 10 and 11). Men's and Ladies' Rooms are located along the north wall, at the rear of the stairhall, and appear to have witnessed modification in the 1950s. The second floor comprises two large rooms, currently used for storage and meeting space and originally designed to support a meeting room and a reading room (Photographs 12,13, and 14). A considerable amount of original architectural woodwork from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century survives on the interior of the building, including bull's eye molding and trim at all door and window surrounds (Photograph 15). Other original details remaining on the ground floor include a door with diagonal tongue and groove paneling on the north wall just inside the main garage door, an original door at the south wall which has diagonal wood paneling, and a door on the east wall with obscure glass and multiple rectangular panels. The ceiling of the ground floor includes beaded tongue and groove paneling in the area above the engine bay.

A one-story, one-bay addition, originally used as the borough's "lock up," was appended to the rear (east) elevation of the Engine House circa 1894-1903. The wing is presently clad with brick faced stucco and capped with a shed roof. On the interior, the space is used for offices.

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4**Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House**  
**Somerset County, New Jersey****Description, cont.**

A third building campaign at the Engine House circa 1919-1928 resulted in the addition of a one-story, frame shed and frame garage. These additions were carried out in a linear fashion, with the shed wing located at the rear of the lock up, and the garage located at a right angle to the shed along the rear edge of the property. These buildings were replaced with masonry structures that stayed essentially within the same footprint circa 1928-1949. The shed wing has been covered with brick faced stucco, and features decorative white grilles in the wood siding under the eave. At present, the space is used for storage, conference space, and as the borough's Recreation Office and Fire Prevention Office (Photograph 16).

The 1 1/2-story, gable-roofed garage has been clad on the first story with brick faced stucco, while the upper half story is clad with aluminum siding (Photograph 17). The garage is essentially three bays in width, with the left bay occupied by the Recreation Office wing, and the center and right bay occupied by wood overhead garage doors. Board and batten wood doors are centrally located at the upper half story, and flanked by 6/6 wood sash windows. At the north elevation, the original window configuration has been altered. The eastern window is a metal, industrial sash; the western window has been divided into two windows and filled with concrete block. Windows at the southern elevation and eastern elevation (rear) have been filled with concrete block. The garage is currently used for storage.

Additions to the original have been confined to the rear of the property; they have not obscured any of the building's historic materials nor have they compromised the essential form and integrity of the structure (Photograph 18). Restoration of the Engine House, both interior and exterior, is scheduled to begin in 2001.



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

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**Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey**

## Statement of Significance

### Summary

The Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of a Victorian-era firehouse. A two-story, brick building, it was completed in 1894 in the High Victorian Gothic style. Its distinctive features include a three-story tower, stained glass windows, Art Nouveau signage, and sandstone trim. The building's use, scale, materials, and high degree of architectural embellishment distinguish it from its residential and commercial neighbors in Raritan, as does the fact that it is set back slightly from the street. In addition to serving as the headquarters for the fire company, the building has served at various points in time as a municipal court, council chambers, clerk's office, meetinghouse, and town library. It also served as the first headquarters of the Raritan First Aid Squad, established in 1933. While this structure continues to serve the community's public safety effort today, many firehouses from the Victorian era have been abandoned, demolished or adapted for new uses. Additions to the Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House have been confined to the rear of the property. They have not obscured any of the building's historic materials nor have they compromised the essential form and integrity of the structure.

### Historical Background

The Village of Raritan experienced a period of tremendous expansion beginning in the 1840s. A significant impetus to this expansion was the completion of the Delaware and Raritan Canal, which supported various industries along its banks, including a screw factory, agricultural works, and woolen mills. The Central Railroad of New Jersey brought additional growth to the region. As the Village sought to acquire the title of Town, the creation of municipal systems, including police and fire protection as well as road maintenance, became a priority.

The first fire company, Lafayette No. 1, was organized following a serious fire in 1847 that was centered at the corner of Somerset and Wall Streets.<sup>1</sup> The first firehouse was located on the east

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<sup>1</sup> "Relief Hose Company No. 2," 1995.

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Somerset County, New JerseyStatement of Significance, cont.

side of Wall Street; sometime later, the company moved to a new site near the public school.<sup>2</sup> Following an internal dispute among the members of Lafayette No. 1, the fire company was subsequently reorganized and renamed Washington No. 1. The Village of Raritan became the Town of Raritan in 1868 and shortly thereafter, on September 7, 1870, "Relief Hose Company" was formed from a reorganization of the Washington No. 1 company.

Raritan completed their water works, installing water mains and a pump house, circa 1882-83. At that time, the fire company abandoned use of their hand pumper and acquired new fire fighting apparatus that could be used in conjunction with fire hydrants. Simultaneously, the Relief Hose Company was reorganized for incorporation purposes and renamed Relief Hose Company No. 2.<sup>3</sup> Charter members of the company, listed in 1882, included: Job C. Kenyon, Daniel Smith, Henry C. Adair, John T. Conklin, John Burns, Michael Corcoran, John McWilliams, John Purcell, Charles Mehlenbeck, James Grogan, Wm. H. Cawley, Edward Dahoney, Richard Hickey, Eugene Dilts, Henry Becker, Thomas Enright, James C. Wyckoff, and Holcomb Dilts.<sup>4</sup>

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the land south of the railroad tracks, particularly near the Raritan River and along Somerset Street, had been much more intensely developed than land to the north. Seven blocks of Somerset Street were fully developed and included such commercial establishments as Garnsey's Hotel, People's Store and Ehni & Van Fleet (dry goods, groceries, etc), and Henry Benbrook's bakery and confectionery.<sup>5</sup> Anderson Street, where the Raritan Hose Company No. 2 Engine House would eventually be erected, supported several dwellings on its west side, but was relatively sparsely developed on the east side. The primary exception to this was the holdings of the Central Railroad of New Jersey, which occupied a large lot on the east side of Anderson just south of the railroad tracks. The Atlas of Somerset Co. New Jersey of 1873 shows that the future site of the Engine House was undeveloped, and, along with several other properties to either side, was under the ownership of the Whitenack family (Figure 4).

<sup>2</sup>"100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Relief Hose Company #2," 1970. As of 1970, the building had been moved to Second Avenue and reused as a dwelling.

<sup>3</sup>"Relief Hose Company No. 2," 1995.

<sup>4</sup>"100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Relief Hose Company #2," 1970.

<sup>5</sup>F. W. Beers, Atlas of Somerset Co. New Jersey, 1873.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey

### Statement of Significance, cont.

#### Chronological History of the Property

In 1892, the need for both a permanent headquarters for the fire company and a town hall led to the purchase of a lot for the construction of a new building that could accommodate both functions. A lot on the east side of Anderson Street was purchased from Mrs. A.H. Brokaw for \$475.00, and the Raritan Board of Commissioners passed a bond ordinance for \$4,000.00 in October 1893 to finance the building's construction. Although the building initially faced dwellings on the west side of Anderson Street, First Street was cut through to Anderson circa 1903-1910. This necessitated the removal of several homes, but the new arrangement gave the Engine House a more prominent position within the community as it was now at the end of a multi-block vista and could be clearly seen from First Avenue, one of the town's primary thoroughfares.

Architect J. Van Derbeck is credited with the design of the Engine House. Van Derbeck was not a prominent figure either locally or regionally; no record of him could be found in directories or other publications of the time. The commission to design the new fire headquarters/town hall would undoubtedly have been a significant opportunity for an architect, and Van Derbeck's solution was relatively unusual. Such prominent features as the stained glass windows and decorative signage were atypical for fire stations of the late nineteenth century, and suggest a designer who may have specialized in religious structures and who was aware of contemporary artistic trends beyond the field of architecture.

The firm of A.R. Dilts, Hickey, & Brady served as builders for the new fire headquarters/town hall. Their connection to Raritan in general and to the fire company specifically is more readily discernable than that of the architect. The 1873 Atlas of Somerset Co. New Jersey identifies an A.R. Dilts, Carpenter and Builder, at the corner of Somerset and Wall Streets. The Biographical and Portrait Cyclopaedia of the Third Congressional District of New Jersey, published in 1896, includes a biographical sketch of the Dilts family. H.R. Dilts (probably a misidentification of A.R.) is described as an early settler of Raritan and an extensive carpenter and builder for fifty years, "having erected a large proportion of the residences, business structures, and public

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Somerset County, New JerseyStatement of Significance, cont.

buildings in Raritan and Somerville.”<sup>6</sup> Dilts was born in Raritan in 1860, and had retired from active participation in the construction business by the time the Engine House was built, although the firm that he had established was still active. Early in Dilts’ career, he was a participant in local politics, serving as a freeholder of Bridgewater Township, and was also involved with the Raritan Baptist Church. His son, George, owner of one of Raritan’s general stores, was Treasurer of Relief Hose Co. No. 2 when the Engine House was constructed. An “R. Hickey” is identified within the central keystone of the Engine House as the President of the Board of Commissioners/Building Committee for the building, and Richard Hickey is listed as one of the charter members of Relief Hose Company No. 2, as are Eugene Dilts and Holcomb Dilts. Clearly, the Town of Raritan chose local builders with established connections to the community as well as the fire company.

The new building was completed in the spring of 1894. On May 10, 1894, the members of Relief Hose Co. No. 2 led a parade through the streets of Raritan to their new headquarters, accompanied by the Crescent Cornet Band. There they displayed their banner, acquired in 1890, which offered the company motto: “Where duty calls, there you will find us.”<sup>7</sup>

The commemorative book prepared for the company’s 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary states, “The new quarters of Relief Hose Company No. 2 were something of which the firemen were proud. The first floor consisted of a carriage house with wood floor and an adjoining public meeting room complete with fireplace. In a tower adjacent to the apparatus floor, 50-foot lengths of hose could be hung to dry by use of a rope and pulley. The second floor contained the Company’s meeting room and a reading room, the latter of which was decorated by parade and competition trophies as well as cherished gifts from other fire companies.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> S.T. Wiley, ed., Biographical and Portrait Cyclopaedia of the Third Congressional District of New Jersey, Philadelphia, 1896, 732-733.

<sup>7</sup> “Relief Hose Company No. 2,” 1995.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey**

**Statement of Significance, cont.**

Fire insurance maps of 1897 show the Engine House as originally constructed—a two-story masonry building, rectangular in plan, with a corner tower (Figure 5). A one-story, one-bay addition, originally used as the borough's "lock up," was appended to the rear (east) elevation of the Engine House circa 1894-1903 (Figure 6). A small, one-story shed was also added at the rear of the property during this period. A third building campaign at the Engine House circa 1919-1928 resulted in the addition of a one-story, frame shed and frame garage (Figure 7). These additions were carried out in a linear fashion, with the shed wing located at the rear of the lock up, and the garage located at a right angle to the shed along the rear edge of the property. These buildings were replaced with masonry structures that stayed essentially within the same footprint circa 1928-1949 (Figure 8). During the same period, the original brick Engine House received a two-story addition at its southeast corner. No substantive changes have been made to the building since that time. (See attached historic photographs.)<sup>9</sup>

To maintain interest in the fire company, which was a prime concern for the municipality, town officials sought to make the company "a center for social activity, holding dances, picnics, and parties for its members." In addition to serving as the headquarters for the fire company, the building has served at various points in time as a municipal court, council chambers, clerk's office, meeting house, and town library. The building also served as the first headquarters of the Raritan First Aid Squad, which was established in 1933.

In 1948, Raritan was incorporated as a Borough. Growth of the municipality and its government prompted the need for separate quarters for the fire company and the municipal offices. The Borough acquired land through donation for a new building for the fire company in 1956, and a new building was completed and occupied by 1959. In 1973, the Borough considered construction of another new station. Instead, the municipal offices were moved out of the Anderson Street building and into a new building on First Street. The Engine House was subsequently returned to use as a fire station and local meeting place. Today, it houses a single fire engine and is used for municipal storage on the second floor. The rear additions to the building support the Recreation Department and Bureau of Fire Prevention.

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<sup>9</sup> Photographs are taken from the Preservation Plan for the Engine House, prepared by Ford Farewell Mills and Gatsch, Architects, June 1999.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey**

**Statement of Significance, cont.**

**Architectural Significance**

The Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of a Victorian-era firehouse. Designed in the High Victorian Gothic style, the Engine House features details typical of the style, including pointed, arched masonry openings; the use of contrasting stone and brick; and narrow lancet windows. One of the Engine House's most distinctive design elements is its highly original Art Nouveau signage. Art Nouveau, principally an ornamental style, is considered to be one of the first modern movements in architecture as it broke completely with the classical past. Its forms, based on nature, were typically sinuous and lyrical. Examples of architectural ornament in the Art Nouveau style are rare in New Jersey, and such ornament was an unusual choice for a fire station. The Engine House is one of the only public buildings in Raritan designed to make a deliberate architectural statement, and it demonstrates the high level of craftsmanship that could be achieved by local architects and builders in the Somerset County region during the late nineteenth century.

In New Jersey, most hose companies were organized as communities began to experience rapid growth and the consequent risks associated with that growth. In some places, such expansion occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century; in many others, well into the twentieth. Most fire companies in the state have traditionally operated entirely with a volunteer force, although larger cities (such as Clifton or Jersey City) have paid forces. Most of the companies, whether paid or volunteer, initially borrowed space—such as a private residence, school, or local commercial enterprise—to use as a base of operations. Often, it was not until several years after a company had organized that they acquired land for a building and were able to outfit the building with the necessary equipment. In a number of communities, the fire department shared space with other municipal offices, typically the borough hall or police department. As facilities were outgrown, they were often adaptively reused by a municipality and witnessed physical changes that were sometimes radical. In some cases, the buildings were removed altogether and replaced by new, larger engine houses that could accommodate the most up-to-date fire-fighting equipment. In fact, it was usually the equipment on which the companies focused (this is clearly evident when reading municipal histories of various fire companies) and which drove successive changes to, or abandonment of, the actual physical space in which the companies were housed.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey**

**Statement of Significance, cont.**

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, New Jersey firehouses were typically designed in the Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Italian Villa, or Classical Revival mode. Such styles were able to convey an image of strength, solidity, and permanence, which in turn lent credibility and a sense of timelessness to the often newly formed fire company housed within. In addition, where stations were erected in the context of a commercial streetscape, the use of such styles allowed the buildings to harmonize with neighboring structures. The late nineteenth century stations in Burlington (Station No. 3 on Broad Street) and Bayonne (Engine Co. 5 on Avenue C) exemplify this trend. The less typical High Victorian Gothic elements of Raritan's Engine House, in contrast, set it apart from neighboring structures. This separateness is reinforced by the fact that the building is located in a neighborhood that is principally residential, set back from the street, and set at a distance from the buildings to either side of it. These characteristics lend credence to the supposition that the building's architect had a background in the design of ecclesiastical structures, which were usually sited on spacious, prominent lots within a community.

The delicacy of the stained glass windows and the Art Nouveau detailing of the signage at Raritan's Engine House also contrasts markedly with most fire stations throughout New Jersey. Typically, when signage was included on a fire station of this period, it consisted of incised lettering carved into a limestone or cast stone band, or straightforward raised lettering applied across the face of the building. The Relief Hose sign at Raritan is integrated into the overall design of the building and has remained a significant component of the building's identity. The Art Nouveau detailing would have been a novelty at the time that the building was completed, marking its architect as one who remained current with fashionable design trends.

The significance of Raritan's Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House, therefore, is based on its distinctive style and detailing within the context of New Jersey fire stations. Further, most Victorian era fire stations have fallen out of use or been altered significantly, where Raritan's Engine House has remained in use throughout its history and has witnessed only minimal (and reversible) alterations. Its significance is also based on its local prominence, where it exists as one of the only architectural statements within what has traditionally been, and remains, a simple, working-class borough.

United States Department of the Interior  
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Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House**  
Somerset County, New Jersey

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National Park Service

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**Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House**  
**Somerset County, New Jersey**

### Geographical Data

#### *Verbal Boundary Description*

The boundary of the Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House comprises Block 91, Lot 10 in the Borough of Raritan, Somerset County, New Jersey.

#### *Boundary Justification*

The boundary described above includes the entire parcel of land that is currently and historically associated with the Engine House.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
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Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Information: Photographs

**Photographs**

Name of Property:	Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House
County/State:	Somerset County, NJ
Photographer:	Meredith Arms Bzdak
Date of Photographs:	July 2000
Location of Original Negatives:	Ford Farewell Mills and Gatsch, Architects Princeton, New Jersey

1. Streetscape view, looking northeast toward Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House.
2. Looking northeast at primary (west) elevation.
3. Looking northeast at primary (west) and side (south) elevations. Note garage addition at rear.
4. Entrance detail, west elevation, looking northeast.
5. Garage entrance, west elevation, looking southeast.
6. Detail of Art Nouveau-style signage and stained glass window at west elevation; looking east.
7. Rear (east) and side (south) elevations, looking northwest.
8. Side (north) elevation, looking southwest.
9. Detail of original window at tower, looking southwest.
10. Entrance at side (south) elevation, looking northwest.
11. Recreation Department wing (c. 1928-49) at rear of Engine House, looking north.
12. Garage (c. 1928-49) at rear of Engine House, looking northeast.
13. Interior of Engine House, ground floor, looking west toward garage entrance.

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Additional Information: Photographs

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14. Interior of Engine House, ground floor, looking east to rear of building.
15. Interior of Engine House, ground floor, looking east; note original molding.
16. Interior of Engine House, second floor, front room, looking southeast.
17. Interior of Engine House, second floor, rear room, looking southwest.
18. Interior of Engine House, second floor, rear room, looking southeast.

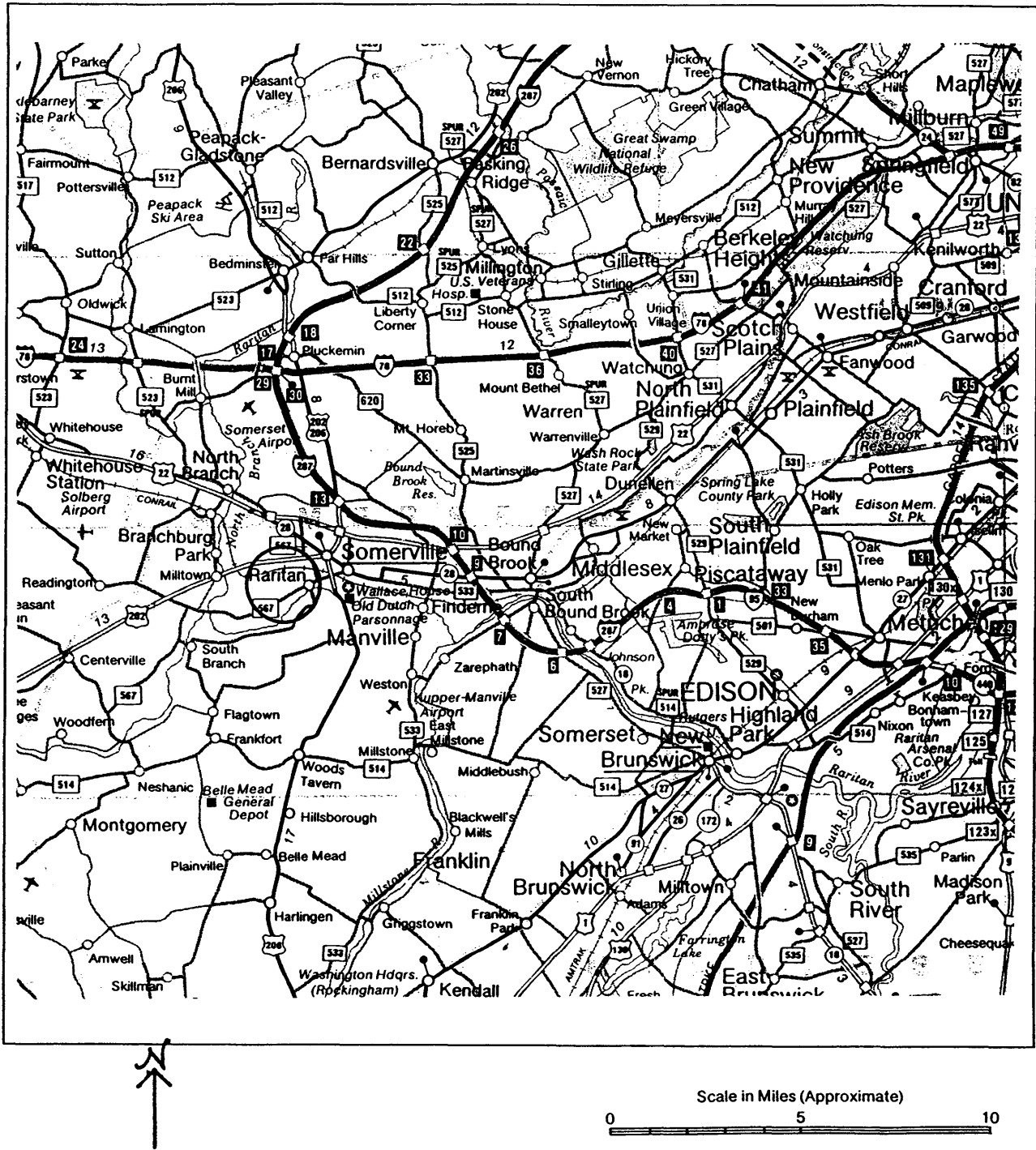


Figure 1. General Location.

Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey

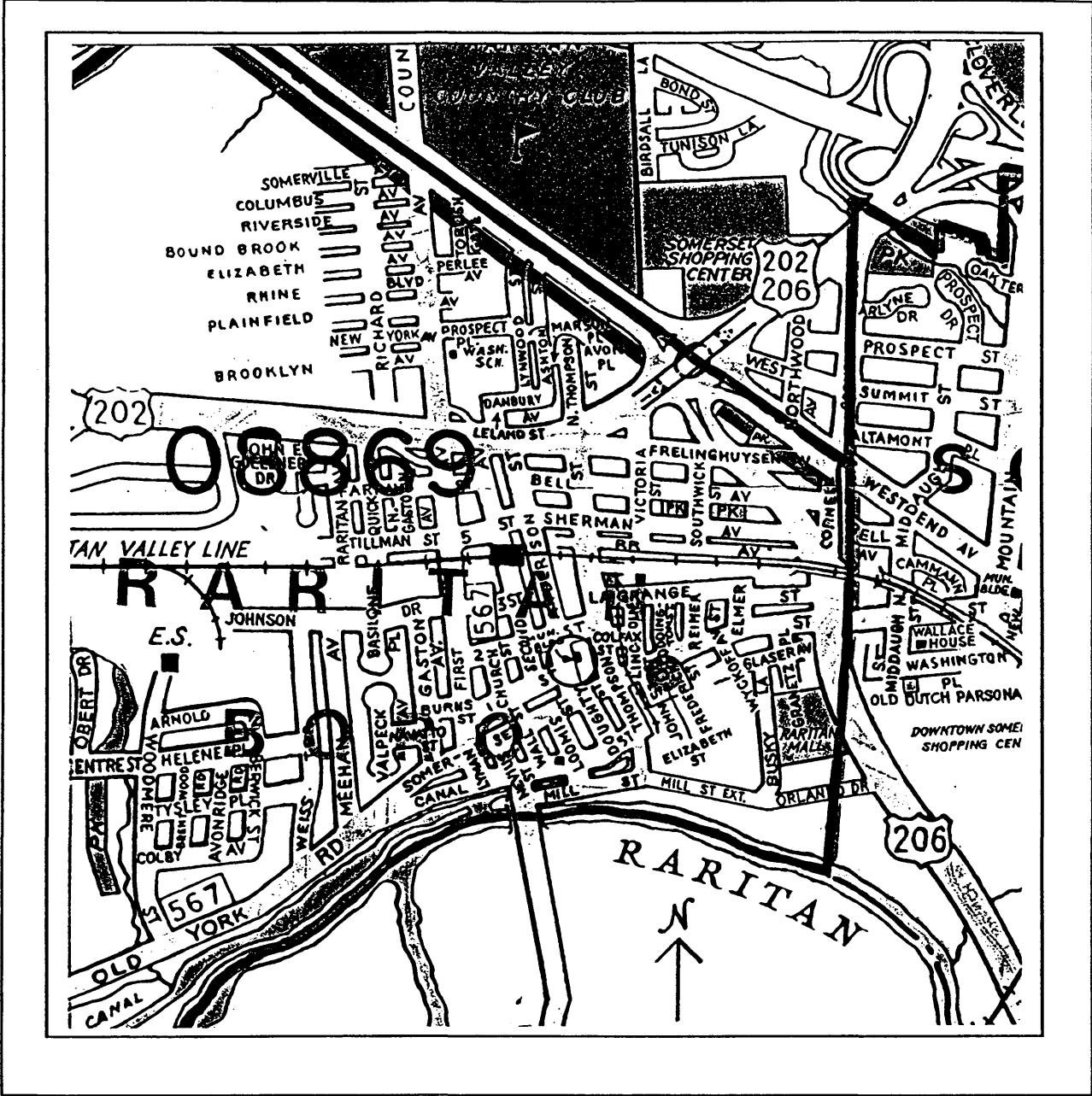


Figure 2. Raritan Borough.

Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey

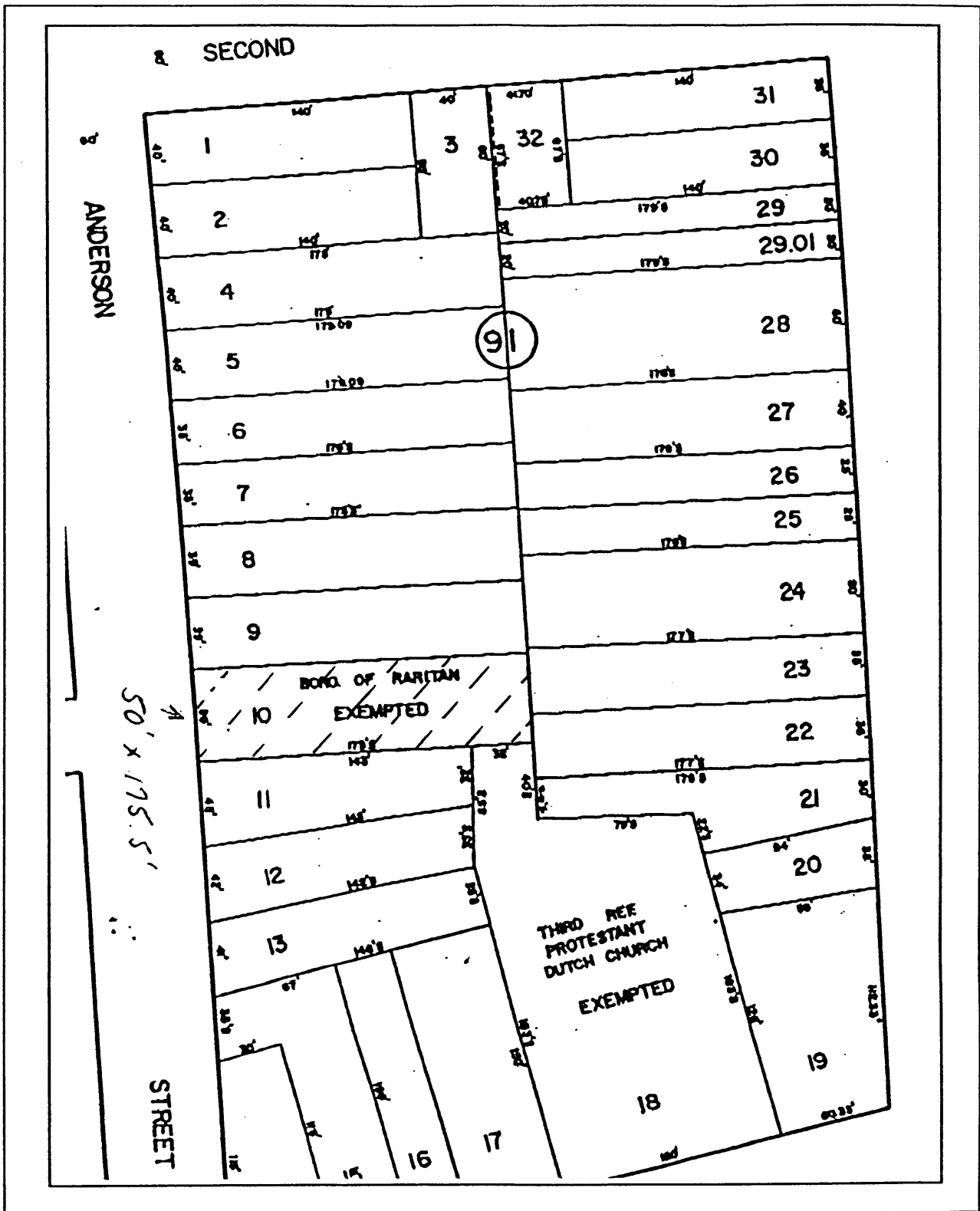
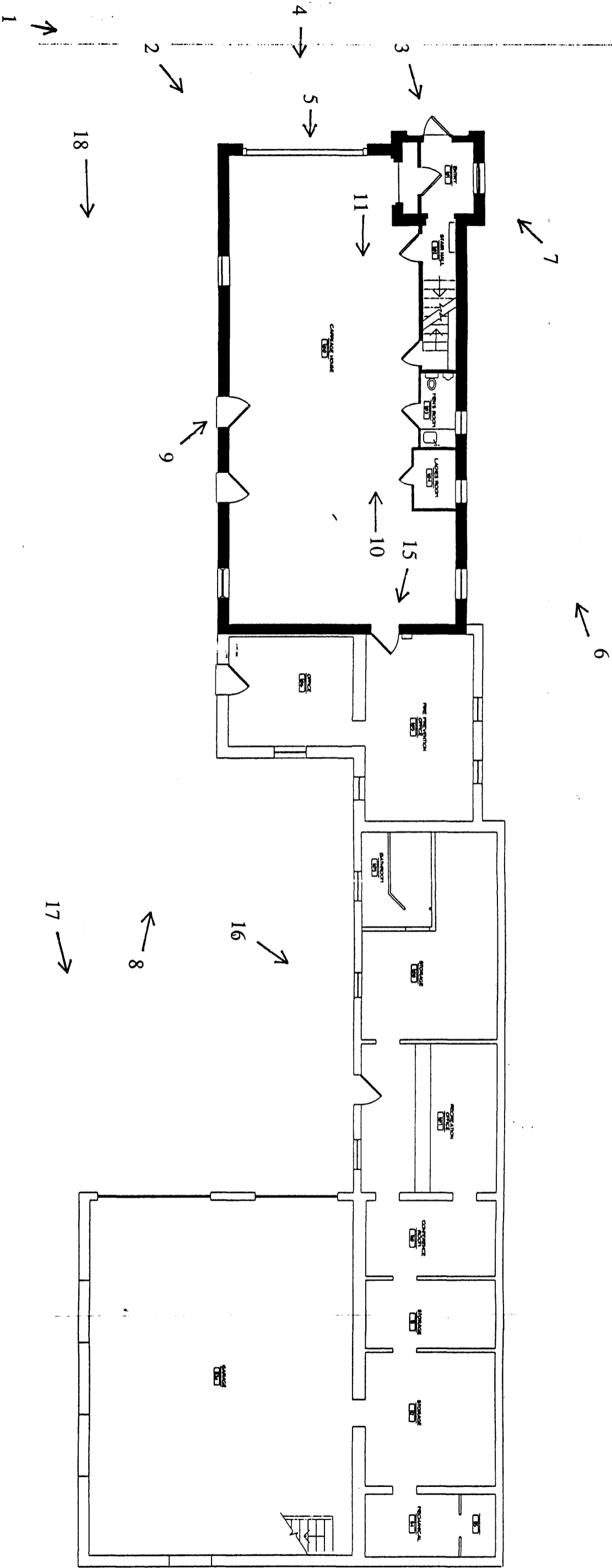


Figure 3. Raritan Borough Tax Map. The Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House is located on Lot 10.

Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey

KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS



**RARITAN FIREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR PLAN**

**A1**  
NOT TO SCALE

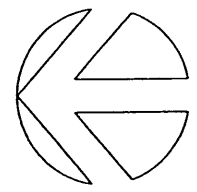
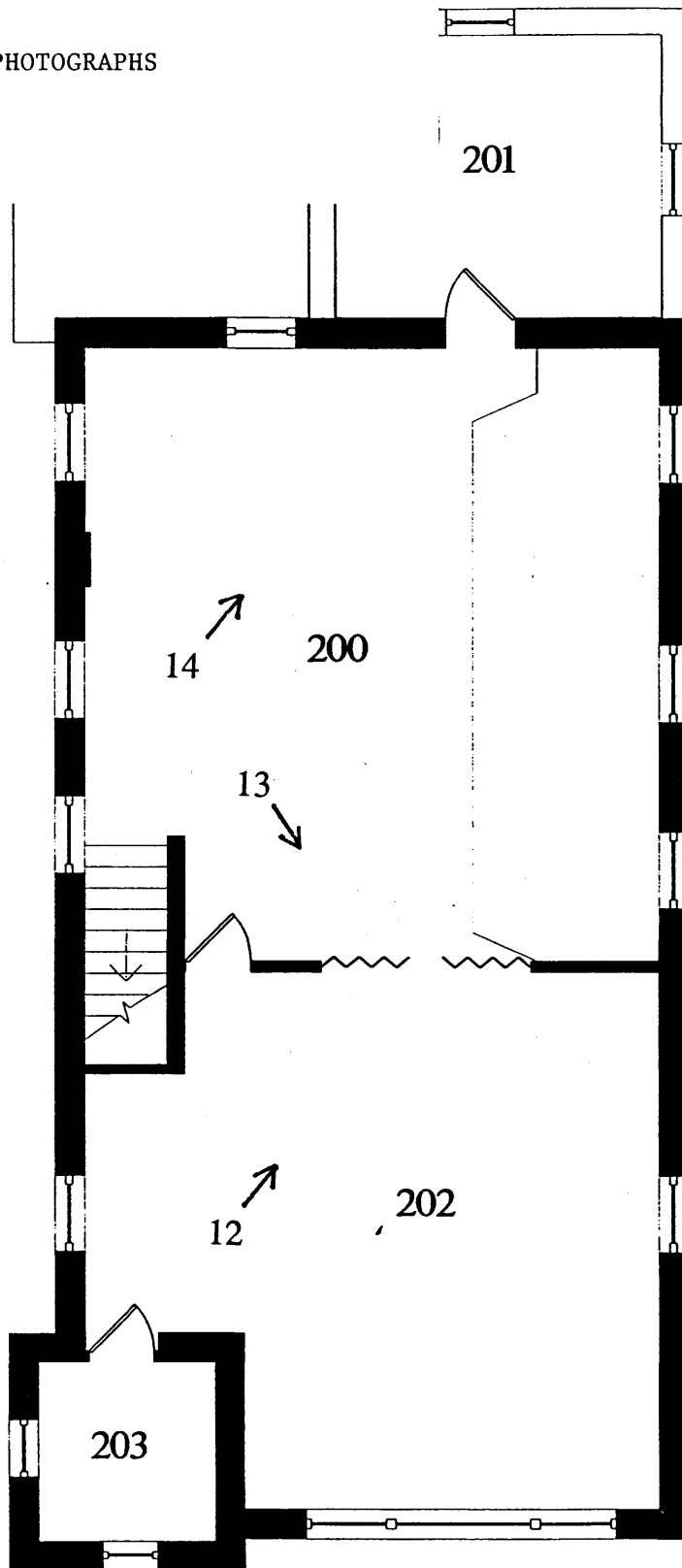
Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey

06/25/99 4:07 PM REH-dll.dwg KATHERINE

<b>A-1</b>	<b>RELIEF HOSE COMPANY NO. 2 ENGINE HOUSE</b> RARITAN NEW JERSEY	<b>FORD FAREWELL MILLS AND GATSCH ARCHITECTS</b> 664 MAPLETON ROAD, PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540-9538 609-452-1777 FAX 609-452-7192	Station and Date
	Prepared by: <b>GRS</b> Drawn by: <b>GRS</b> Date: <b>JUNE 15, 1999</b> Checked by: <b>GRS</b> Scale: <b>AS SHOWN</b>	Project No.: <b>9902</b> Drawing No.: <b>01</b> Title: <b>FIRST FLOOR PLAN</b> Date: <b>6/15/99</b>	Architect: <b>GRS</b> Designer: <b>GRS</b> Checker: <b>GRS</b> Date: <b>6/15/99</b>



KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS



Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey

PROJECT NAME: RARITAN FIREHOUSE

NO: 9926

**SECOND FLOOR PLAN - 1893 ENGINE HOUSE**

Date: JUNE 1999

Drawn by: MW

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

DWG NO.: -

FILE NAME: 85X8-FL1

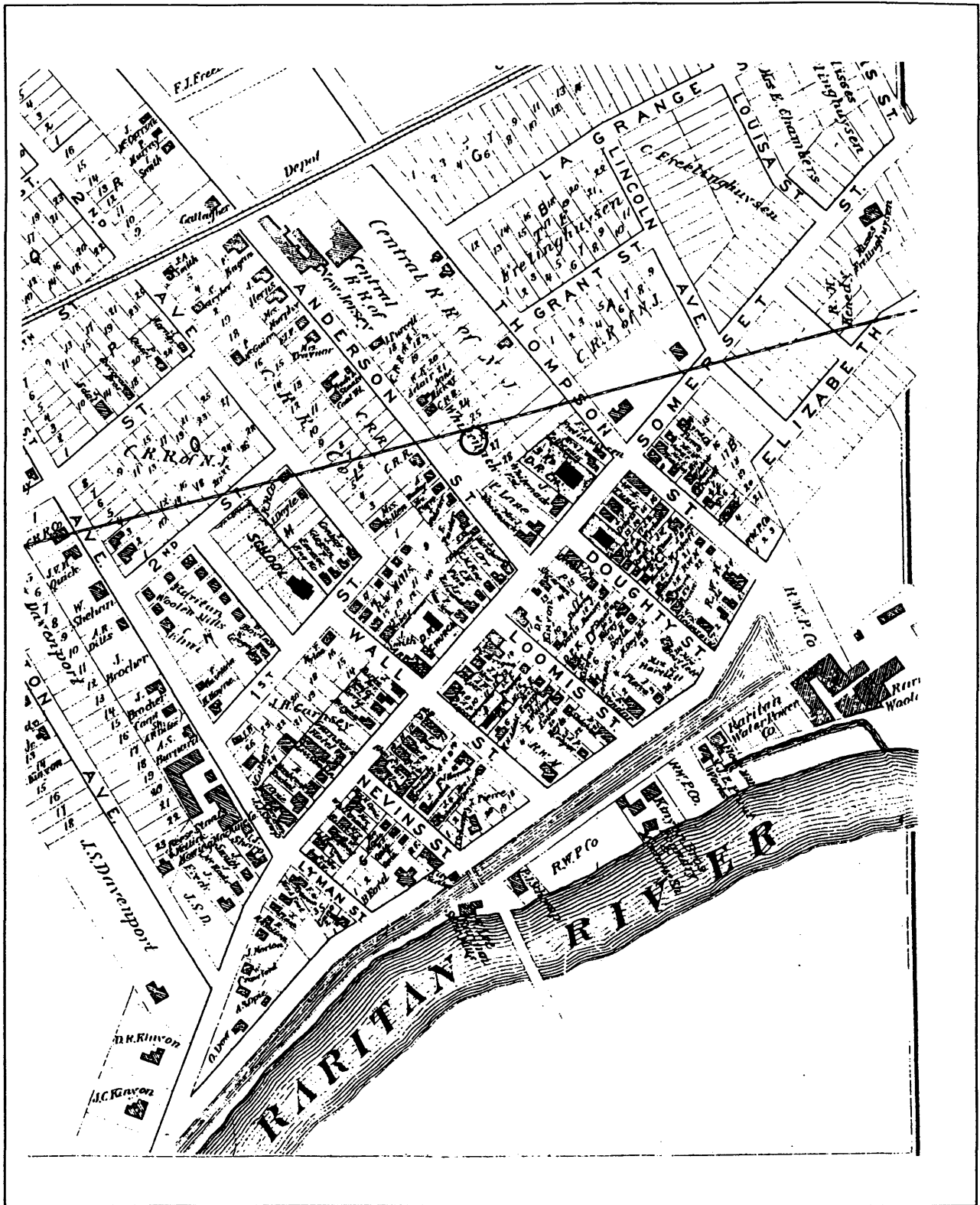


Figure 4. Beers, Comstock & Cline. Atlas of Somerset Co. New Jersey. 1873. Future site of Engine House circled.

Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey

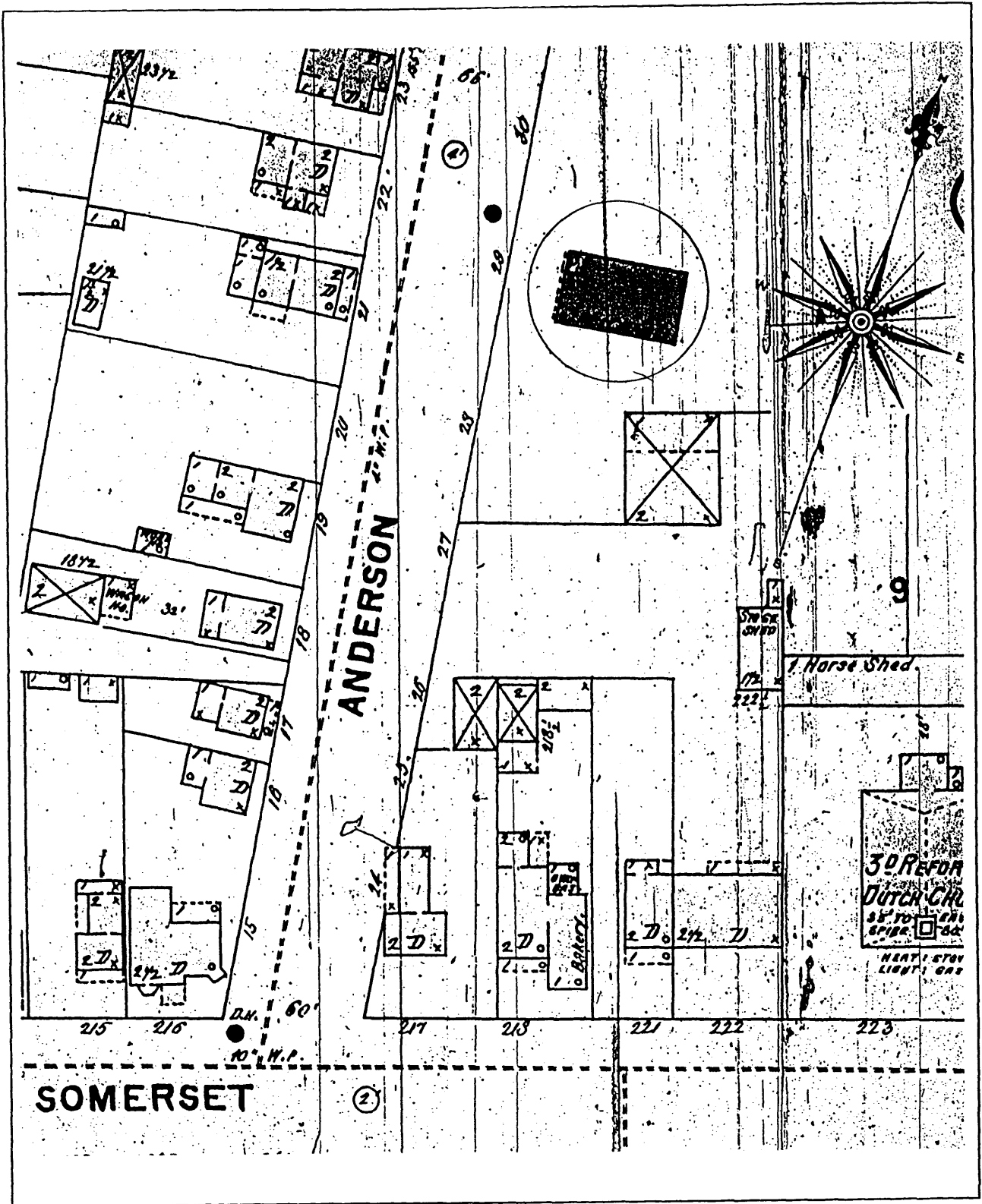


Figure 5. Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Ltd. Insurance Map of Raritan. 1897. Engine House circled.

Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey

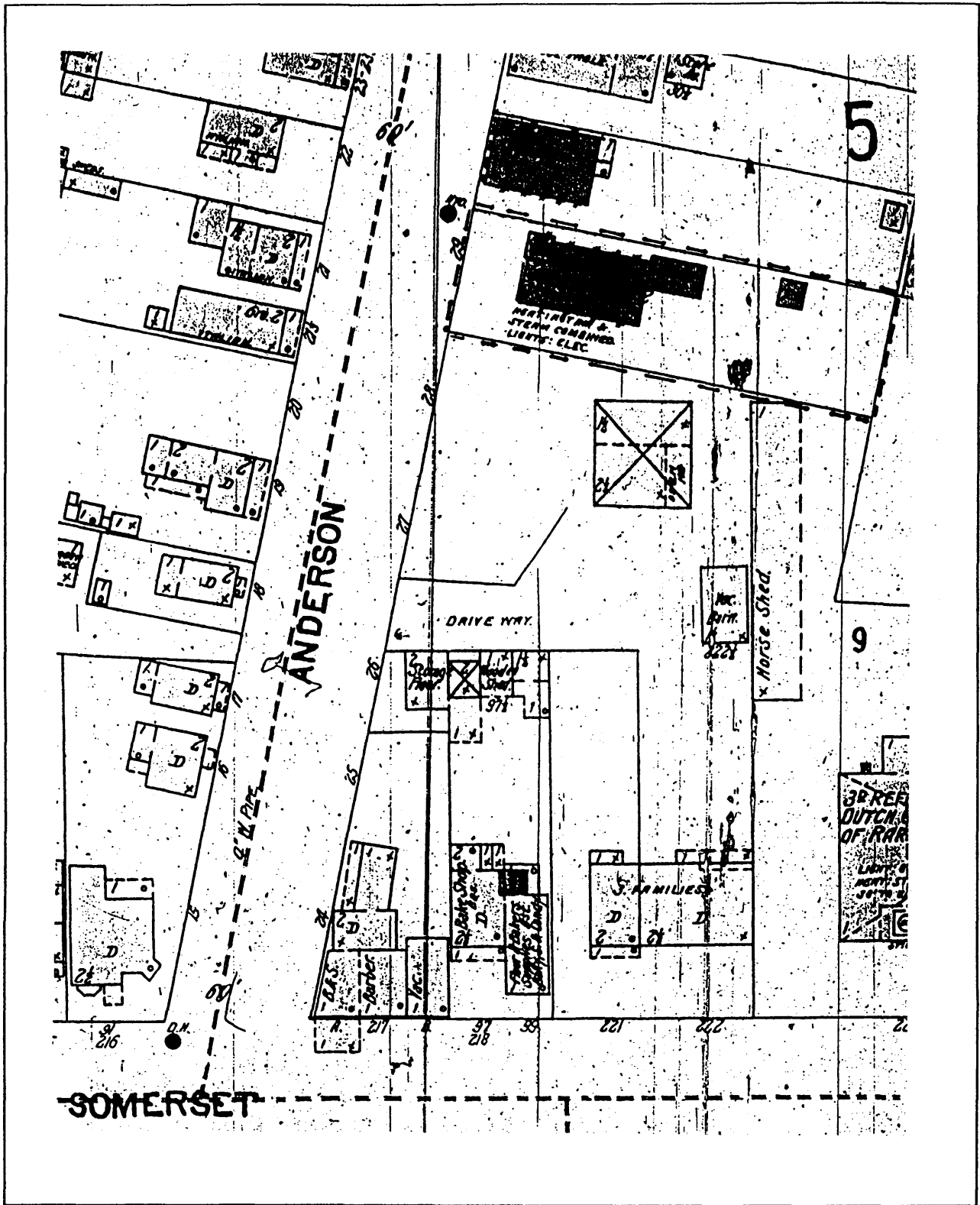


Figure 6. Sanborn Map Co. Insurance Map of Raritan. 1903.

Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey

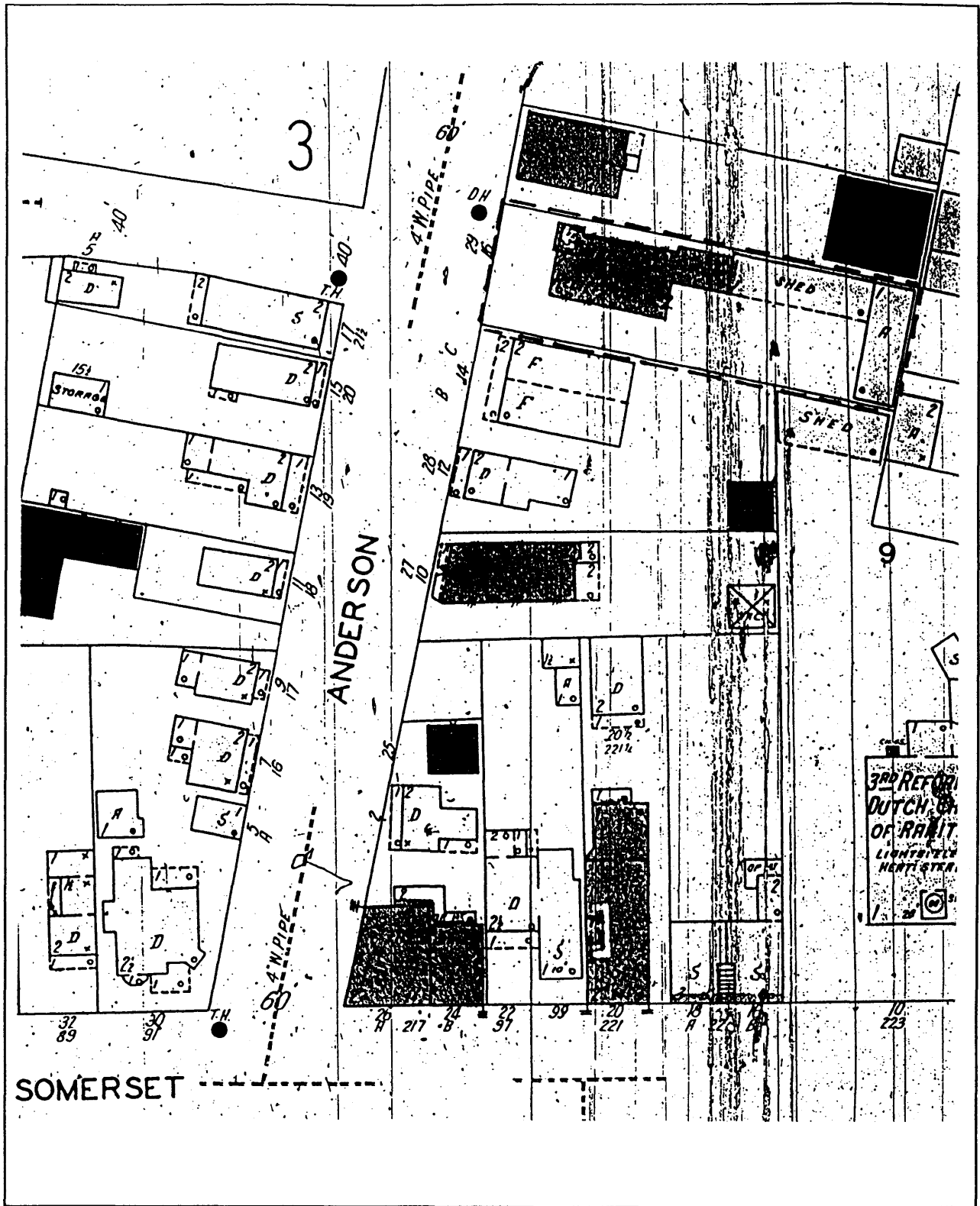


Figure 7. Sanborn Map Co. Insurance Map of Raritan. 1928.

Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey

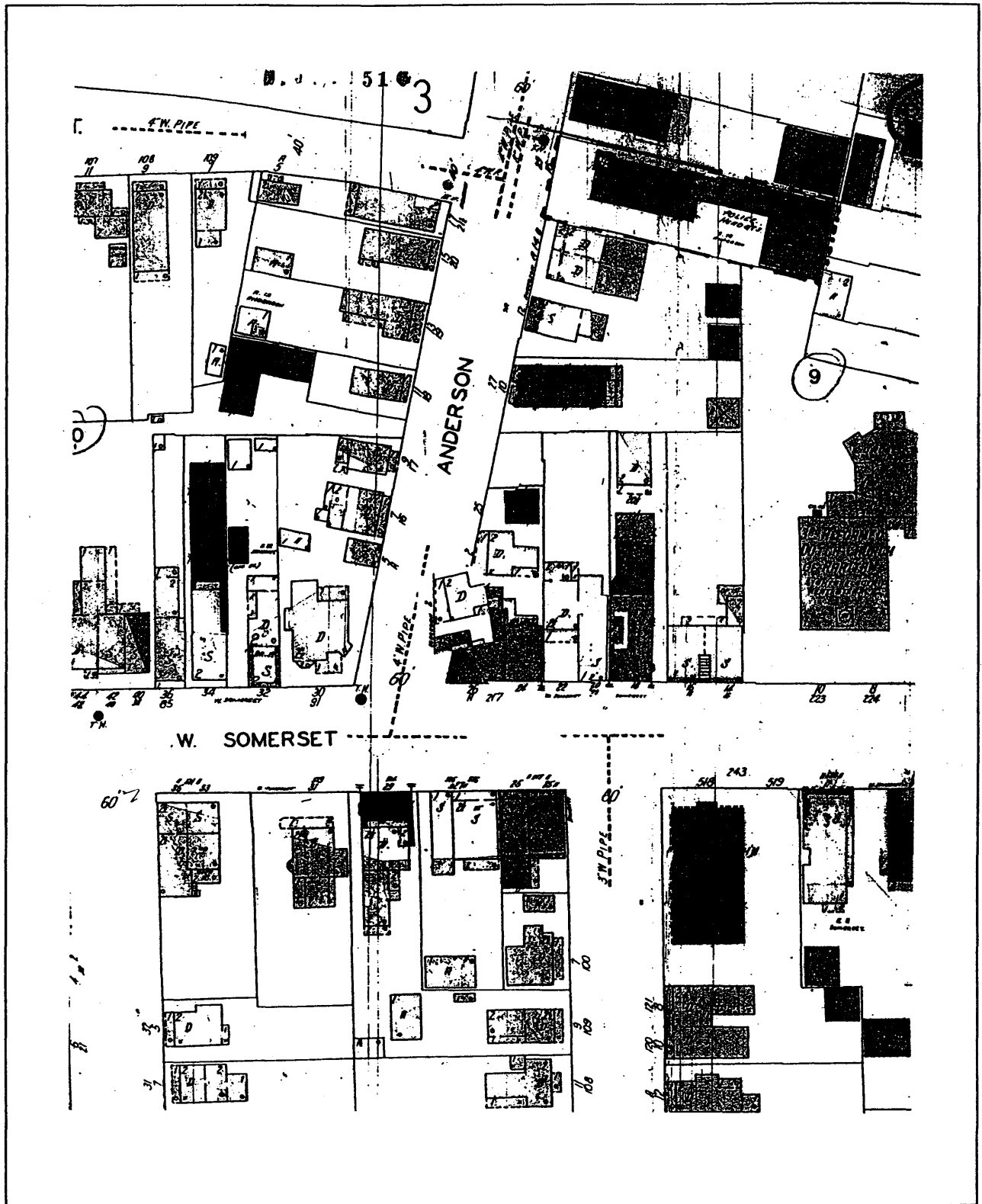
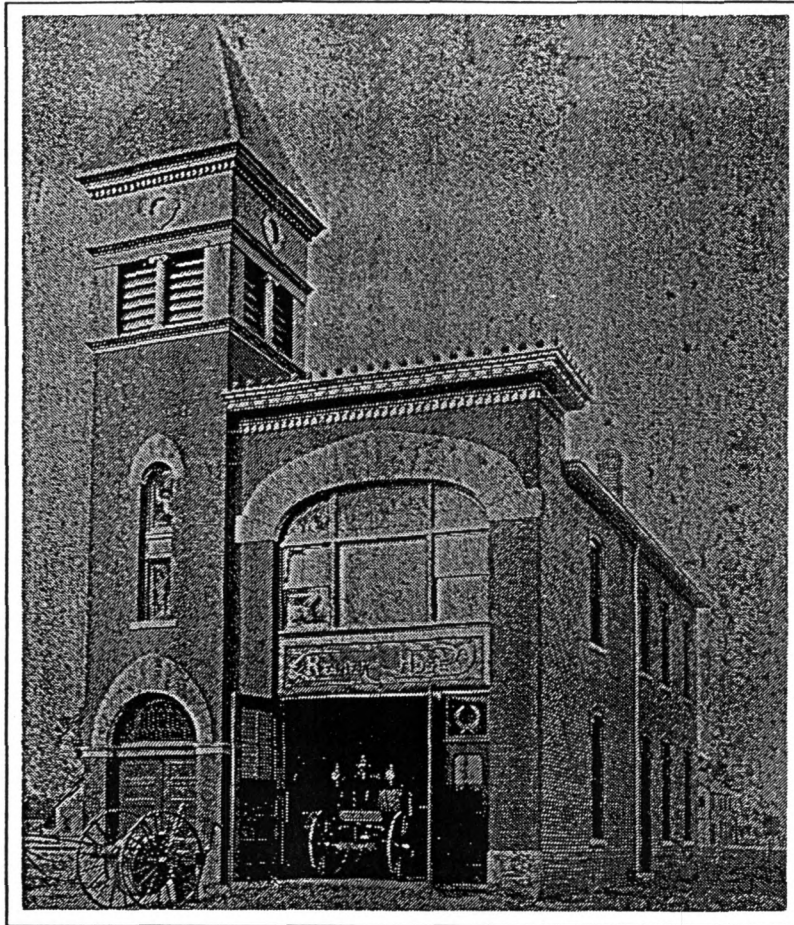


Figure 8. Sanborn Map Co. Insurance Map of Raritan. 1928 corrected to 1949.

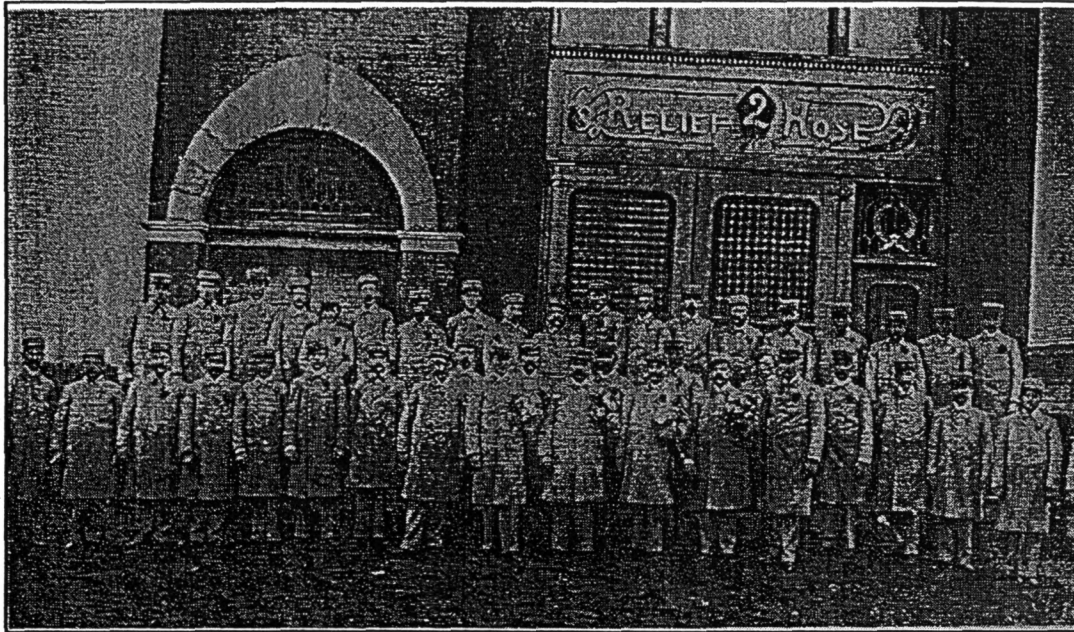
Relief Hose Company No. 2 Engine House  
Somerset County, New Jersey



The firehouse on Anderson Street as it appeared upon completion in 1893. Note the hose drying tower on the left. The 1847 hose jumper is parked outside, and the 1874 hose wagon is in the carriage house.

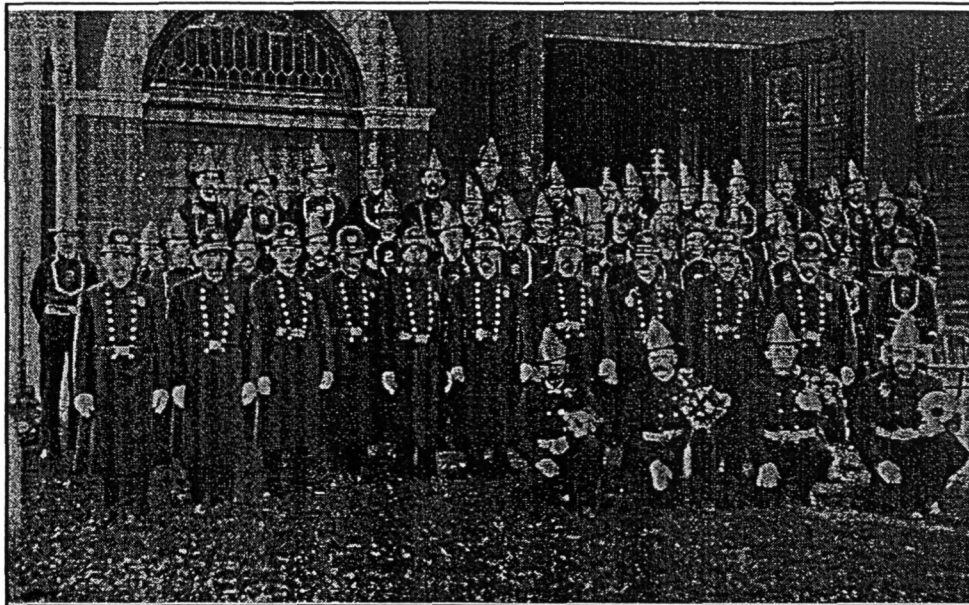
*Raritan Firehouse Preservation Plan*  
*Ford Farewell Mills and Gatsch, Architects*

*June 1999*



Relief Hose Company No. 2 during 1899, pictured in their new, custom tailored, dove colored uniforms.





Firemen pose for picture which was taken about 1903. Note the doors and windows are in their original configuration.

*Raritan Firehouse Preservation Plan*  
*Ford Farewell Mills and Gatsch, Architects*

*June 1999*



Raritan Exempt Firemen's Association. Taken about 1900. Note the configuration of the transom at tower door has changed to present configuration.

*Raritan Firehouse Preservation Plan*  
*Ford Farewell Mills and Gatsch, Architects*

*June 1999*

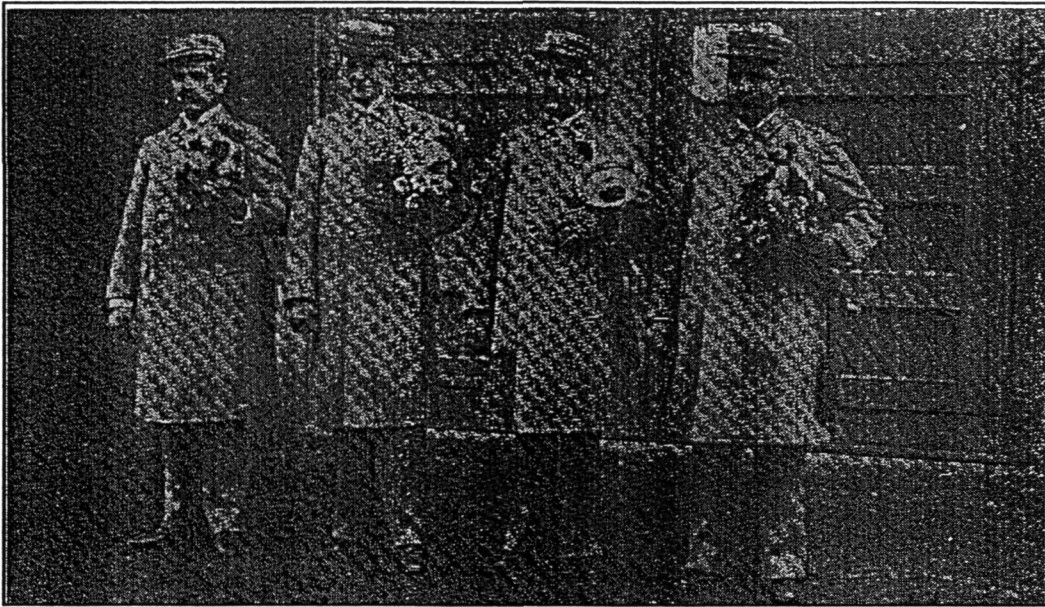
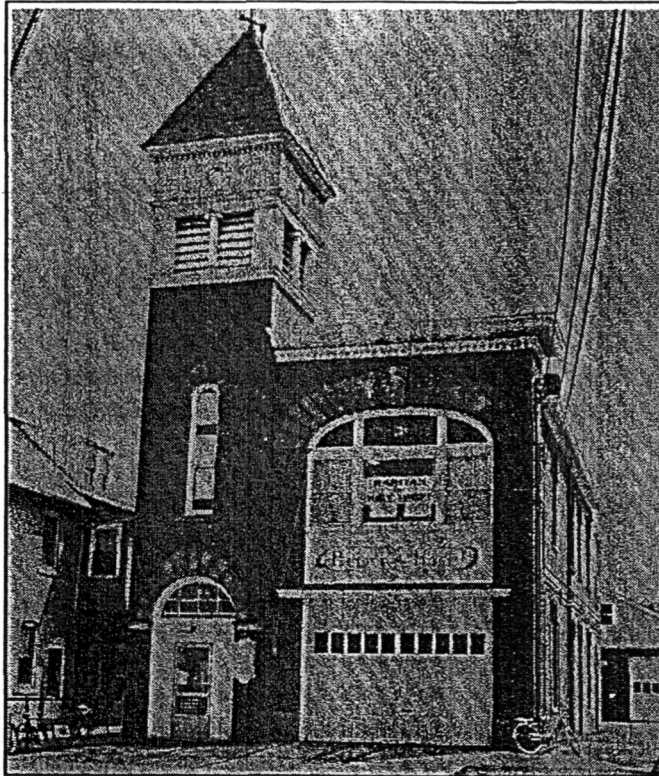


Photo taken about 1904. Note details on carriage opening doors.

*Raritan Firehouse Preservation Plan*  
*Ford Farewell Mills and Gatsch, Architects*

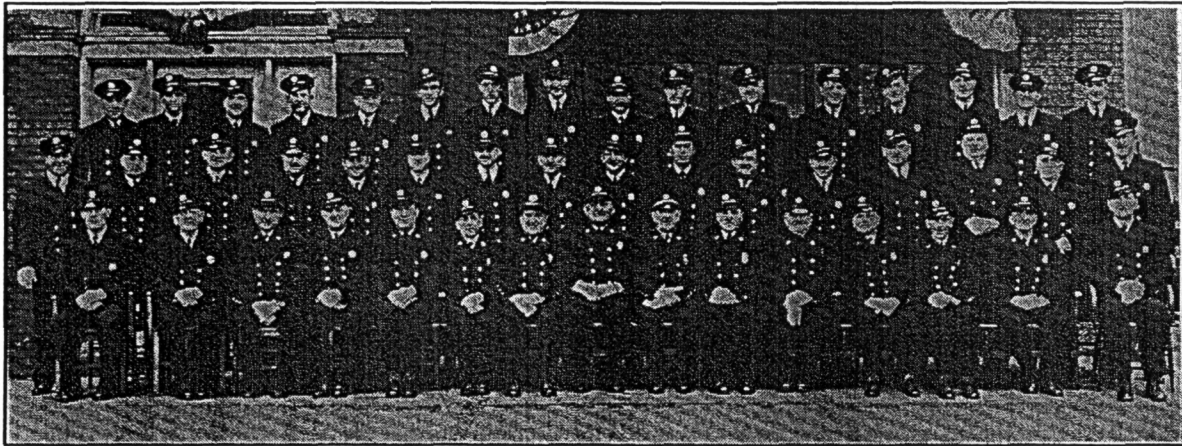
*June 1999*



Firehouse as it appeared in 1970. Note the wooden elements on the tower were still intact.

*Raritan Firehouse Preservation Plan*  
*Ford Farewell Mills and Gatsch, Architects*

*June 1999*



Photograph taken in 1947. Note that the configuration of the doors at the tower and carriage bay have been altered.

*Raritan Firehouse Preservation Plan*  
*Ford Farewell Mills and Gatsch, Architects*

*June 1999*