

HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM

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 Alarm Station
Common Fire Communications Center
Field Recorder: Mark Brack
Date Recorded: July 13, 1985
Owner's Name: City of Tacoma
Street: 747 Market Street
City/Town: Tacoma
County: Pierce
Zip Code: 98402

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

Classification Date: _____
District _____
Site _____
Building Previously 1981
Structure Surveyed
Object _____

LOCATION SECTION

Street Number 415 South Tacoma Avenue
City/Town Tacoma Zip Code 98402
County Pierce Twp. N/A Range _____ Sect _____ 1/4 Sect _____
Tax No./Parcel No. 200410-001-0
UTM References Zone 10 Easting 542020 Northing 5233940

Tacoma North, WA/
Acreage: less than one
Legal boundary description: New Tacoma Plat, Block 410, lots 1-4
(The Fire Alarm Station occupies lots 1-3, Station No. 1 occupies lot 4)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Neg. No.: Roll 2, Negative #12
(Roll No. + Frame No.)
View: North (main) and east elevations, facing S.E.
Date: August 1985

DESCRIPTION SECTION

Materials & Features/Structural Types:

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

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) _____

Foundation: Log
Post & Pier
Stone
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
Greek Revival
Gothic Revival
Italianate
Second Empire
Stick/Eastlake
Queen Anne
Shingle Style
Richardsonian Romanesque
Chicago School/
Sullivanesque
Beau Arts Classicism
Princess Anne
Neo-Colonial
Dutch Colonial
Spanish Colonial
English Revival
Bungalow
Craftsman
American Foursquare/
Classic Box
Prairie Style
Art Deco/Moderne
Commercial Vernacular
Vernacular
Other (specify) Utilitarian with Neo-Classical details

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

Additions to house plan
Changes to windows
Changes to roof shape
Changes to interior plan
Other (specify) _____

Intact	Slight	Moderate	Excessive
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

NARRATIVE SECTION

Area 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"/> <u>Architecture</u> /Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Politics/Government/Law</u> |
| <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: 1928-1930 (Period of significance: 1928-1935)

Architect/Builder: Morton J. Nicholson, Architect. Walesby Construction Company

Historical Significance: The Fire Alarm Station is significant for its association with the development of Tacoma and its vital municipal services. The building is also an important local example of innovations in firefighting technology, which dramatically improved fire protection systems. The Fire Alarm Station is technically not a fire station, for it houses no fire engines. Yet it performed a function that was crucial to the operation of the "modern" fire department. Its new equipment allowed the rapid transmission of emergency calls all over the city. Previously, the city's alarm system was not as coordinated or as efficient. The cost of the Fire Alarm Station and its equipment was high, but the expenditure was necessary if the city was to respond adequately to its increasing firefighting needs. The growth of the city and the general economic prosperity preceding the Depression prompted voters to approve a bond issue in 1928 that included funds for four new stations, the fireboat and the Fire Alarm Station. Unlike the other 1928 fire stations, the Fire Alarm Station does not imitate a domestic style. Rather, its vaguely classical lines suggest the efficient technological operations of the interior. The Fire Alarm Station exemplifies the growth of the city and the modernization of its municipal services, and it continues to reflect the important legacy of the Tacoma Fire Department.

Additional Description of Physical Appearance & Significant Architectural Features: The Fire Alarm Station is located in a neighborhood of mixed commercial ~~(Architectural significance can include interior & site features; address integrity issues specifically)~~ and residential properties. It is located on a sloping site, which allows the concrete basement to be completely above grade on the east elevation. The exposed concrete of the basement walls is scored in imitation of rusticated masonry. Above the basement, the building's concrete structure is concealed beneath a veneer of red, grey, yellow and beige textured bricks laid in a Flemish bond. Unlike Stations 10 and 14, the colored brick is not used to create a particular pattern. Buff-colored terra cotta is utilized for the exterior window and door surrounds, cornice, and coping on the parapet wall. These terra cotta elements are very simply detailed, the most decorative features being the narrow rope molding beneath the cornice and the "shouldered" door surround of the main entrance. Original multi-pane metal sash windows remain on the east elevation; however those on the north and west elevations were replaced with glass block approximately ten years ago. Other exterior features include: a concrete porch with metal railing on the north facade, a chimney flue for the heating system, and an elevated roof above the alarm equipment room. The most prominent alteration of the exterior was the addition of the large brick structure that abuts the south facade of the alarm station. This building was constructed as a city repair shop after World War II. (cont'd)

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

Tacoma Daily Ledger March 14, 1928 p.1.; Dec. 28, 1929, p. 12; February 2, 1930, p. 4-A.

Tacoma Fire Department Records (901 South Fawcett Ave., Tacoma, WA)

Tacoma News Tribune March 14, 1928 p1.

Talbot, Clyde and Ralph Decker 100 Years of Firefighting in the City of Destiny Tacoma: Pyro Press, 1981
Original 1928 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 Alarm Station

~~Fire Communications Center~~

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

Description (cont'd)

It utilizes materials and detailing that are similar to the alarm center's, but it is visually subservient to the older station and there is no internal connection between the two. The interior of the alarm center is divided into many small offices and a large alarm room. The basement contains the original boiler and an emergency power generating system. Within the last year, the original alarm system equipment was removed and replaced with a smaller and more efficient computerized system.