

OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY NO.

HISTORIC NAME: Engine House #3, Truck #2 COMMON NAME: Engine Co. #1, Truck Co. #2
LOCATION: 501 Observer Highway BLOCK/LOT 8A/1

MUNICIPALITY: Hoboken

COUNTY: Hudson

USGS QUAD:

UTM REFERENCES:

OWNER/ADDRESS: City of Hoboken, N.J. 07030

Zone/Easting/Northing

DESCRIPTION

Construction Date: 1892

Source of Date: plaque on western facade

Architect: Charles Fall

Builder: M. Foley & Son, masons; A.W.

Clayton, carpenter

Style: Romanesque Revival

Form/Plan Type: rectangular

Number of Stories: 2, with tower

Foundation: fieldstone

Exterior Wall Fabric: brick with sandstone trim

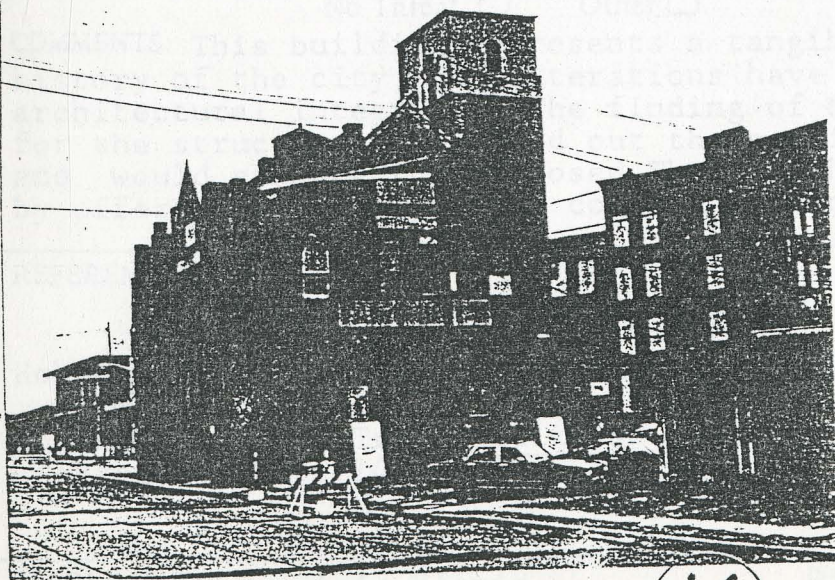
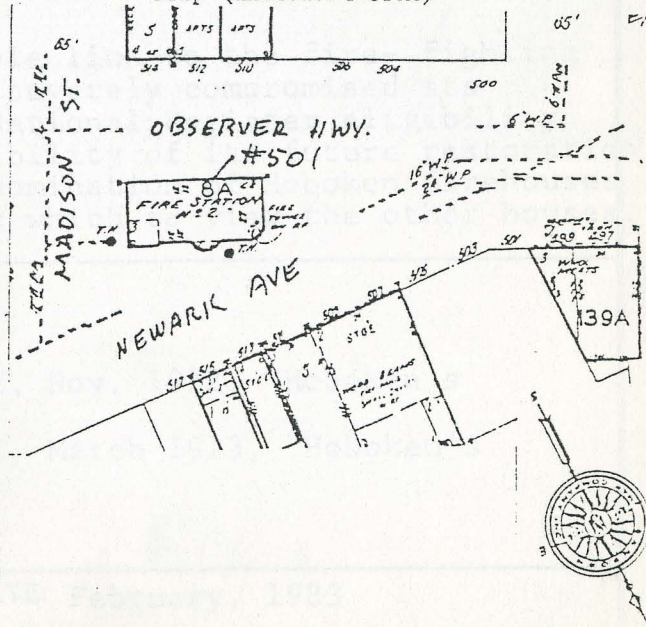
Fenestration: (var. on each facade): 1 over 1 on 1st floor; 1 over 1 on 2nd fl., with arched transoms.

Roof/Chimneys: central pitched roof on east/west axis; chimneys at central

Additional Architectural Description: Parapets of each facade.

The rectangular firehouse is on a triangular site at a major intersection and has a rectangular fire tower at its southeast corner. The building is of an orange-brown brick with brownstone trim and a fieldstone foundation. Its four sides featured moulded brick, carved decorative bandings, and a pleasing variety of materials. The rectangular tower originally terminated in a pyramidal slate roof. The area between the third storey level and the roof was filled in with a Romanesque arcade to suggest a belvedere. The rounded southeast corner featured a conical roof which rose to third storey level and was also presumably of slate. Although it is a visually prominent building the exterior changes detract from its importance as an architectural achievement.

Map (Indicate North)



(K)

SITING, BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION, AND RELATED STRUCTURES:

This firehouse is the southernmost one in the city, and is built on a triangular site at the intersection of Newark and Madison Sts.

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Urban ☒ Suburban ☐ Scattered Buildings ☐
 Open Space ☐ Woodland ☐ Residential ☒ Agricultural ☐ Village ☐
 Industrial ☒ Downtown Commerical ☐ Highway Commercial ☐ Other ☐

SIGNIFICANCE:

As the only free-standing firehouse built by the city until the yr. 1898, Engine Co. #1 was the grandest and most impressively-scaled of the Hoboken firehouses. Designed by Hoboken architect Charles Fall, the building featured the use of rectangular and circular towers at the corners of its southern facade. The laterally-oriented engine area provided maximum accessibility to all locations in the city. Its prominent corner location, apart from its functional aspects, also underscores the importance of the firehouse--a symbol of security and municipal planning--placed at a gateway area of the city. The alterations described the the reverse side are major ones that detract and obliterate the original architectural intent of a richly-ornamented structure. The historical importance of the building, however, remains intact.

ORIGINAL USE: firehouse
 PHYSICAL CONDITION: Excellent ☐ Good ☒ Fair ☐ Poor ☐
 REGISTER ELIGIBILITY: Yes ☒ Possible ☐ No ☐ Part of District ☒
 THREATS TO SITE: Roads ☐ Development ☒ Zoning ☐ Deterioration ☒
 No Threat ☐ Other ☐

PRESENT USE: same

COMMENTS. This building represents a tangible link to the fire-fighting history of the city, but alterations have severely compromised its architectural integrity. The finding of National Register eligibility for the structure would hold out the possibility of its future restoration and would enhance the proposed Thematic Nomination of Hoboken firehouses by offering a developmental context within which to view the other houses.

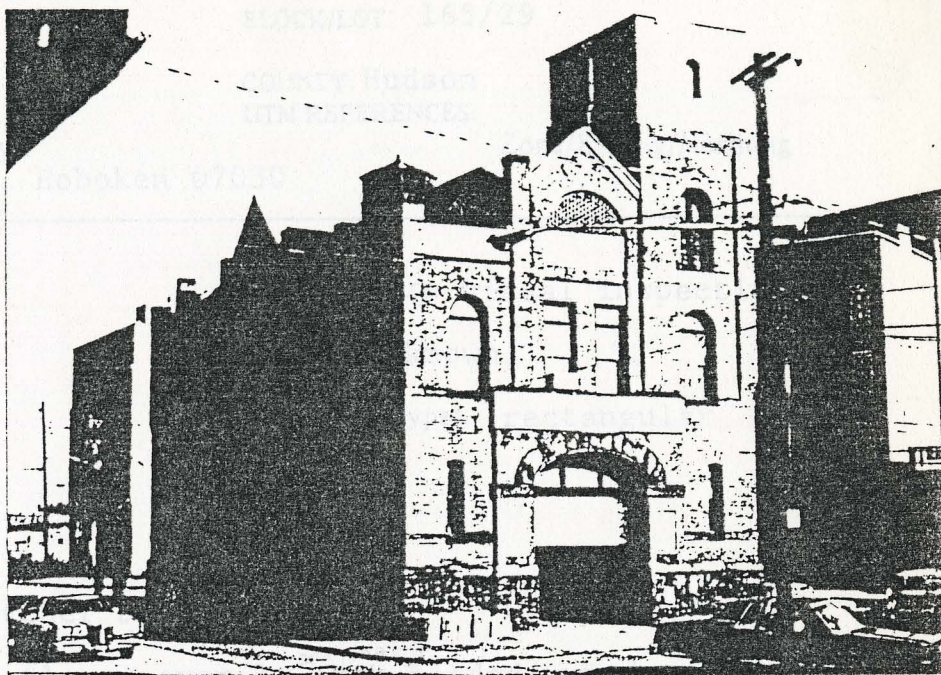
REFERENCES:

Hoboken Board of Trade, Bulletin, Vol. III, Nov. 1912, "Hoboken's Firefighters," pp. 91-95.
 Hoboken Board of Trade, Bulletin, Vol. III, March 1913, "Hoboken's Progress," pp. 149.

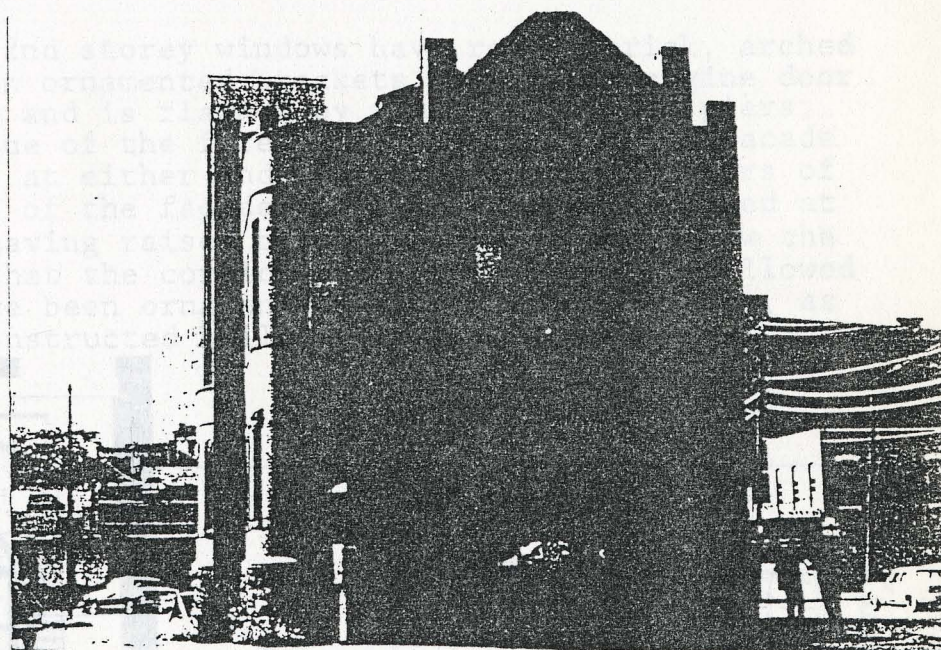
RECORDED BY: Patricia Florio
 ORGANIZATION: ---

DATE: February, 1983

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF 501 OBSERVER HIGHWAY:



view looking south east



view looking west