

**NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT**  
**PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM ON CD (MS WORD FORMAT)**

**1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE** (must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)

Street address: 100 West Highland Avenue

Postal code: 19118

Councilmanic District: 8

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: Engine 37

Common Name: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, Chestnut Hill Fire Station

**3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Building

Structure

Site

Object

**4. PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Condition:  excellent  good  fair  poor  ruins

Occupancy:  occupied  vacant  under construction  unknown

Current use: Firehouse

**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Attached.

**6. DESCRIPTION**

Attached, supplemented with current photographs.

**7. SIGNIFICANCE**

Statement of Significance attached.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1894 to 1959

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1894, 1959, ca. 1993

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: John T. Windrim

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan:

Original owner: City of Philadelphia

Other significant persons:

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Please attach a bibliography.

**9. NOMINATOR**

Name with Title: Sharon Reid, Intern (Edited by Emily Cooperman) Email: etcooperman@comcast.net

Organization: Chestnut Hill Historical Society

Date: 04/27/2015

Street Address: 8708 Germantown Ave.

Telephone: 215-247-0417 x201

City, State, and Postal Code: Philadelphia, PA, 19118

Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: \_\_\_\_\_

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Notice Issuance: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Final Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Designated  Rejected

**5: Boundary Description**

Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of West Highland Avenue and Shawnee Street in Chestnut Hill, the Chestnut Hill Firehouse's property boundary extends a distance of approximately 96 feet 8 inches southwest along the northwest side of West Highland Avenue; thence northwest paralleling Shawnee Street, for a distance of 109 feet; thence northeast, paralleling West Highland Avenue for a distance of approximately 96 feet 8 inches to the southwest side of Shawnee Street; thence southeast, along Shawnee Street, a distance of 109 feet to the beginning point. See Figure 1.

## 6: Description

The Chestnut Hill Firehouse, designed by John T. Windrim and constructed in 1894, is located at the northwest corner of West Highland Avenue and Shawnee Streets, in Philadelphia's Chestnut Hill neighborhood (Photo 1). This two and one-half story, gable-roofed, Richardsonian Romanesque-style, masonry building is roughly rectangular in plan, with its main, southeast elevation facing West Highland Avenue. A shallow bay and stair tower (Photo 2) project slightly from the southwest elevation, and a ground floor-level stone terrace extends beyond the building's northwest elevation (Photo 3). The building features a steeply gabled slate roof that is punctuated on its northeast and southwest elevations by both hipped and wall dormers (Photos 1-4). The base of the building is battered on its southeast, northeast, and northwest elevations. With the exception of the main, southeast elevation (Photo 5), the building is asymmetrically fenestrated. It is also clad in quarry-faced Wissahickon schist, which is laid in a coursed pattern and set in beds of grey mortar. On each elevation, the ashlar are graduated in size from bottom to top. All of the Firehouse's elevations are accented by sandstone ornament: belt courses set flush with each elevation, lintels, and thick, half-round arches. The sandstone exhibits weathering in a number of locations throughout the building, with some loss of material at the surface.

The building's principal, southeast, gable-end elevation is set back from the West Highland Avenue street line and is fronted by a concrete apron that extends around the side of the building on the southwest to the property line (Photos 1, 2; 4, 5). The apron serves for an occasional storage area for vehicles. On the secondary, northeastern elevation on Shawnee Street, a concrete sidewalk to the southwest of the curb line borders the building. The grade slopes down to the northwest on this elevation.

### *Southeast Elevation*

The Firehouse's southeast, main elevation (Photos 5, 6) rises two and one-half stories and features a symmetrical composition of openings. Flared sandstone coping accentuates the gable end's roofline and sitting at the roof's peak is a decorative stone finial. The base of the elevation is battered and consists of large, rectangular blocks of coursed quarry-faced Wissahickon schist. On the lower floor, access for fire trucks is provided by two large, round-arch openings that spring from a central pier (Photo 6). The sandstone voussoirs of the arches feature a raised molding at their outer edge. A foliate, Romanesque Revival boss-like bracket marks the point where the projecting moldings meet at the center and two smaller foliate brackets decorate the outer points where the arch moldings meet the sandstone beltcourse. Within each opening sits a large, top hinged, square garage door that is painted bright red (Photo 5). Historic photographs indicate that these doors do not date to the original construction; visual evidence suggests these were replaced in the 1950s or 1960s. Above each garage door, separated from it by a heavy, molded wood sill and set within the half-round archway is a fixed, wooden-framed, ten-light transom window with round-arch, wooden mullions with historic, translucent glass (see Photo 6). A circa-1900 photograph of the building (Figure 2) suggests that both of these fixed-sash transom windows are original. This photograph confirms that the decorative, wrought iron ornament affixed to the stonework between the two large arches (see Photo 6) is original. A granite date stone (Photo 7) is located to the right (northeast) of the half-round sandstone arch, at the northeast corner of the elevation. It is inscribed "1846 – 1894" to commemorate the date of the construction of the Harmony School that once stood on this property, and the date of the Firehouse's construction.

The second story of the building is noticeably delineated from both the first story and the gable by sandstone belt courses that span the width of the elevation. Set deep within the masonry wall and centered along this second-story level is a grouping of three equally sized and spaced rectangular windows. Each features its original wooden frame in which is set a one-over-one sash. The center and northeasternmost windows appear to contain their original sashes while the southwesternmost window sash has been replaced. Groupings of sandstone colonettes with Romanesque foliate capitals separate these windows from each other, and from the flanking wall sections. Both the sills of the windows and the bases of the colonettes merge with this story's lower sandstone belt course. The upper belt course forms the lintels and in the center, appears to be supported by the colonettes.

This elevation's third, gable story (Photo 8) is fenestrated by a central, symmetrical grouping of three small rectangular windows set within a sandstone surround and below a round-arched window. Together, the windows form a Serliana that is accented by the elevation's fourth and final sandstone belt course at the level of the lower windows' lintel. The lower set of windows features wood, 8-light, casement sash that are hung to swing toward the outside. The center, double casement window is separated from the adjacent windows by a single colonette with foliate capital. The topmost, round-arch window and its heavy, surrounding sandstone arch are set within a diaper pattern of small, square stones in which schist is alternated with sandstone that ranges in color—from light and dark grey to buff, silver-white, and grayish-pink.

#### *Northeast Elevation*

The Firestation's northeast elevation (Photos 1, 3) rises a full two and one-half stories above the sloping grade of Shawnee Street. The elevation is asymmetrically composed, with round-arch openings on the first floor and in the wall dormers of the three wall dormers grouped on the northwestern (rear) end of the elevation, and rectangular window openings on the second floor. The building is entered through an off-center door with a simple frame. A tall and narrow stone wall-chimney protrudes slightly from the face of the elevation from a sandstone bracket, beginning at the bottom of the second-story level and jutting well beyond the roofline. The main portion of the elevation is also banded by three sandstone belt courses that are set flush with the façade. The first-story belt course forms a transom for each first-story arched opening. The two belt courses spanning the width of the second-story both accent the elevation and visually form the sills and lintels for the story's windows.

The approximately five and one-half foot change in grade from this elevation's southeast to its northwest corner reveals one below-ground-level window and window well, thus announcing that the building rises above a basement. This basement level window has been infilled with concrete and a small metal louver. This elevation also features the retaining wall of a terrace (Photo 3) that rises to the level of the building's first story and extends beyond its northwest corner. This terrace wall is also clad in the same quarry-face schist that is found on the building, but it is topped with concrete paving. A metal railing stands at the edge of the terrace.

Just to the right of center, an arched doorway pierces the building at the level of the first story (Photo 9). This doorway is located several concrete steps above the sidewalk grade, and accented by the presence of a wrought iron rod-and-post metal railing that is painted dark green and appears to be original. Because of the slope of the Shawnee Street grade, there are four steps on the southeast and five on the northwest side of the staircase. The base of the staircase is constructed of the same quarry-faced schist found throughout the building. The stairs are constructed of brownstone, with the lower steps built of replacement concrete and concrete repairs. A wood doorframe containing a paneled wood

door sits deeply recessed within this opening. Both the door's frame and door appear to be original. The windows on the first floor of this elevation consist of rectangular openings separated from round-arch transoms by a sandstone beltcourse. Two windows are located the southeast of the door and one on the northwest. The rectangular, lower section of the southeasternmost window, located nearest the southeast corner of the elevation, has been infilled with quarry-faced schist. This opening's fixed-sash arched transom window is still in place. The second story of the northeast elevation features five large rectangular window openings that are equally sized but not equally spaced. Each opening contains a wood frame that is recessed in the wall. The two openings flanking the chimney feature sandstone frames. The three northwesternmost windows feature quarter-round columns that rise to foliate capitals on either side of the third floor windows. The sandstone lintels of the second floor windows as well as the schist of the wall between the second and third floor windows are recessed slightly, visually connecting the windows of the two floors. Each second floor opening features a one-over-one sash. The two decorative sandstone belt courses span the width of this story and frame each window from both above and below.

The top level of the building features a group of three conjoined, gabled dormers that form a wall gable and a hipped dormer above the roofline. The hipped dormer is located at the southeast end of the façade, and slightly offset from the two vertically aligned window openings on the first and second stories below. It features rounded jambs sheathed in asphalt shingles, and a French casement window. Each of this window's sashes features three lights. The triplet group is near the northwest end of the elevation. Each of its dormer peaks is topped by a decorative stone finial with a lightning rod, and both of the outer wall gables feature a flared eave. Each wall gable is fenestrated by a window group consisting of rectangular, lower, six-light French casement sash surmounted by and separated from a round-arched, multi-light sash by sandstone transom/beltcourse. Five tubular copper downspouts extend the height of the elevation from copper gutters at the roofline; two start at the level of the wall gables and two starting at the regular roofline. The gutter includes a fascia that extends below the roofline.

#### *Southwest Elevation*

The Firehouse's southwest, side elevation (Photos 2, 8) rises two and one-half stories above grade. Like the Shawnee Street elevation, it is asymmetrically composed. This elevation is visually organized into three sections by the projecting stair tower bay that is located off-center toward the front of the building.

The northwestern section of the building (Photo 8) features an arched entranceway and window on the first floor, two rectangular windows of different size and one oxeye window on the second floor, and one hipped dormer above the roofline. The entranceway is set within a half-round archway and is located immediately to the northwest of the projecting bay. This opening has been infilled with a replacement, dark green metal door that is right hinged and lit by one small, square light, and drywall and a large metal louver, painted dark green to match the color of the door. To the immediate northwest of the doorway an added, one-story small brick shed projects a depth of approximately 4 feet from the stone façade. To the northwest of this shed is an arched window opening that consists of a wooden frame set with a square, fixed-sash; a sandstone transom; and a wooden-framed fixed-sash arched window. A sandstone beltcourse runs at the level of the first floor windowsill across the two northwestern sections of the elevation.

Three windows, each of which is a different shape and size, pierce the second story in this section of the building. The outermost of the windows is vertically aligned with this section's first-story window

opening. The upper sash features a series of decorative, vertical mullions that stylistically mirror those found on the building's southeast elevation, below the two large arched openings. To the right of this window, but not horizontally aligned with it is a second, smaller rectangular opening. To compensate for its height, the window is set higher in the wall and is horizontally aligned with the top of the second-story window to its left. Further to the right of this window and vertically centered above the doorway is one oxeye window. This window is set within a large sandstone surround. It features a dark green frame. A sandstone belt course lines the top of the second-story, below the cornice.

A hipped dormer like that of the one on the northeast elevation is located at the upper level of the building.

The central section of the building is comprised of a double, projecting stair bay topped by two wall gables. The southeastern section of the bay is wider and projects slightly forward from the northeastern section, which rises above the more protruding section. The northwestern, more recessed section is lit by narrow windows that consist of two rectangular sections separated by a sandstone sill on the second floor and a sandstone band on the third; the window groups are surmounted by a small, round-arch sash set in a sandstone arch. The southeastern, protruding section of the bay is fenestrated on the first floor by the typical window of the first floor: a rectangular section surmounted by a round-arched section separated by a sandstone belt course. Two rectangular windows of unequal size light the interior stair on the second floor and are connected by sandstone beltcourses. A Serliana similar to that on front elevation lights the third floor. Both of the parts of the bay rise to gables with stone diaper work as on the main elevation, and the higher wall gable features decorative finials. The ashlar at the southeastern-most corner of this bay scarred and patched with concrete as a result of the removal of the stone arch that once connected the Firehouse with the next-door police station (Figures 3-5). The third, southeastern section of this elevation is narrow and fenestrated by the building's typical windows on the first and second floor.

#### *Northwest Elevation*

The Firehouse's northwest, or rear elevation (Photo 3) rises two and one-half stories above the grade of the stone terrace that is currently covered in concrete. Flared eaves accentuate the gable end's roofline and sitting at the roof's peak is a square stone finial that sits flush with the façade. This elevation features an asymmetrical composition of openings.

An arched, recessed entranceway pierces the first floor of the elevation northeast of center. The doorway contains a wooden frame in which is set one dark green wooden door. This door appears to be original and features four square, recessed panels on its bottom half over which is a large square light containing three panes. An angled sandstone transom sits directly above the doorway. The arched transom light has been infilled with sheet metal and two metal stacks, which jog to the left and extend vertically up the elevation and beyond the roofline, project from this opening.

The second-story of this elevation is asymmetrically fenestrated. One large rectangular window opening is located directly above the first-story's entranceway. This window is set with a one-over-one sash window set within an original wooden frame. This window opening features a thin sandstone sill that is the same width as the window opening, and a thick sandstone lintel that projects approximately 4 inches beyond both the left and right sides of the window. Located very close to the southwest corner of this elevation is a narrow rectangular window opening that is equal in height to the other second-story window opening. A circa-1900 photo reveals the same decorative pattern on the southeast elevation's large first-story arched transom windows (See Figure 3). The sandstone sill of this window is also the



Photo 1: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, southeast and northeast elevations, looking west from the intersection of West Highland Avenue and Shawnee Street.



Photo 2: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, southwest elevation and southeast elevations, looking north from West Highland Avenue



Photo 3: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, northeast and northwest elevations, looking south, with Shawnee Street at left and W. Highland Avenue at rear left.



Photo 4: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, northwest portion, southwest elevation, looking northeast, showing side entrance, stair tower, projecting bay at right, and hipped dormer.



Photo 5: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, southeast elevation, looking northwest.



Photo 6: Chestnut Hill Firehouse crew at south door, southeast elevation, looking northwest into interior

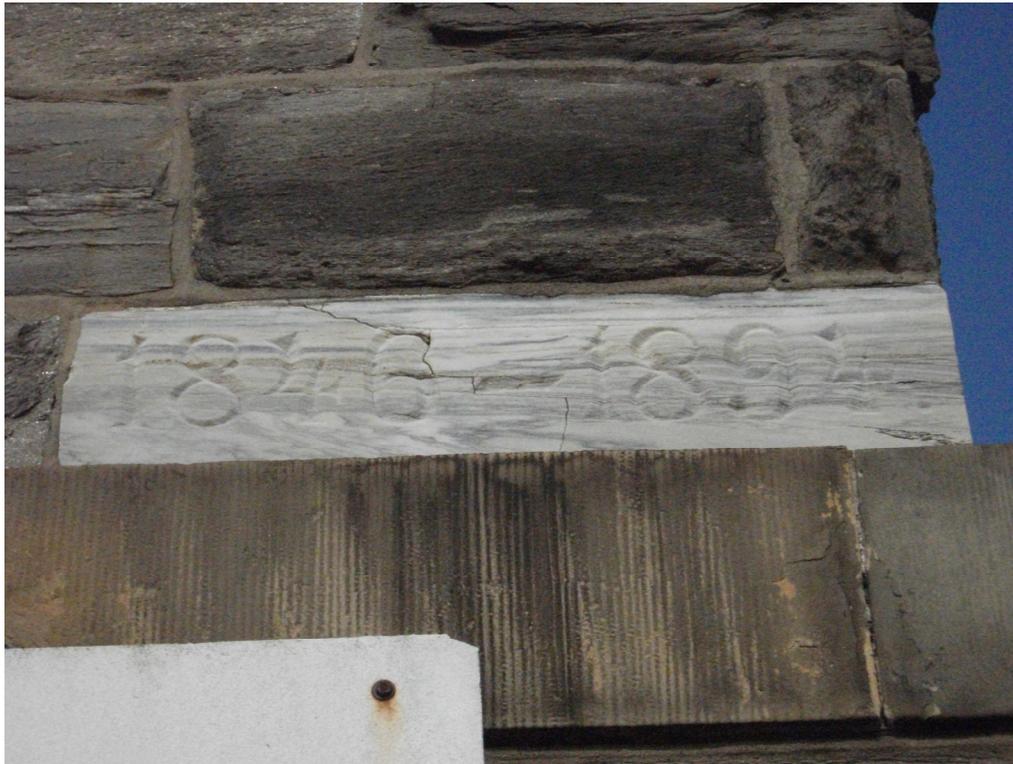


Photo 7: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, easternmost corner of building, showing date stone, looking northwest.



Photo 8: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, southeast elevation, third floor detail, looking northwest.



Photo 9: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, detail, northeast elevation, looking southwest from Shawnee Street, showing side door and stair.



Plot

Figure 1: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, plot boundaries



Figure 2: Chestnut Hill Firehouse's southeast elevation, first floor, ca. 1900, showing entrance door details. Collection the Chestnut Hill Historical Society.

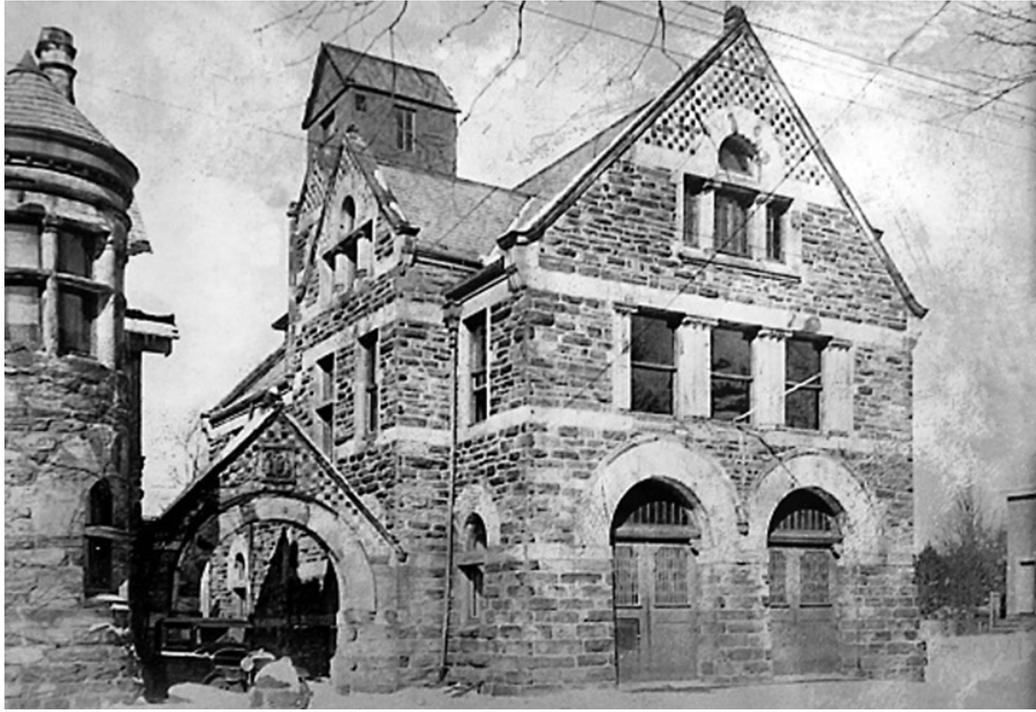


Figure 3: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, ca. 1900, showing the police sub-station and connecting archway that stood on location until the late 1950s. Collection the Chestnut Hill Historical Society.

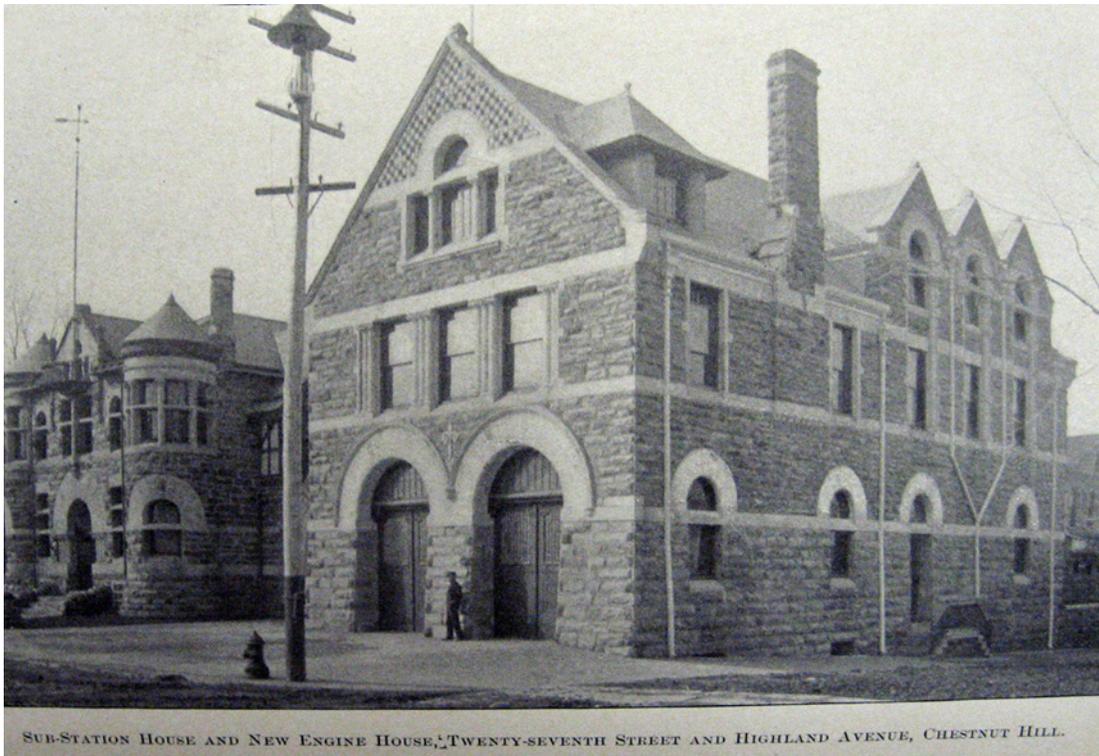


Figure 4: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, ca. 1894, showing its northeast and southwestern elevations and adjacent former police station. Source: Bureau of Fire, *Annual Report*, Philadelphia, 1894 (Philadelphia: Dunlap and Clark, 1895. Philadelphia City Archives, Fire Department: Record Group 74.1: Annual Reports 1886-1898).



Figure 5: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, ca. 1900, showing the police sub-station (left) and firehouse with connecting arch between them. Collection the Chestnut Hill Historical Society.

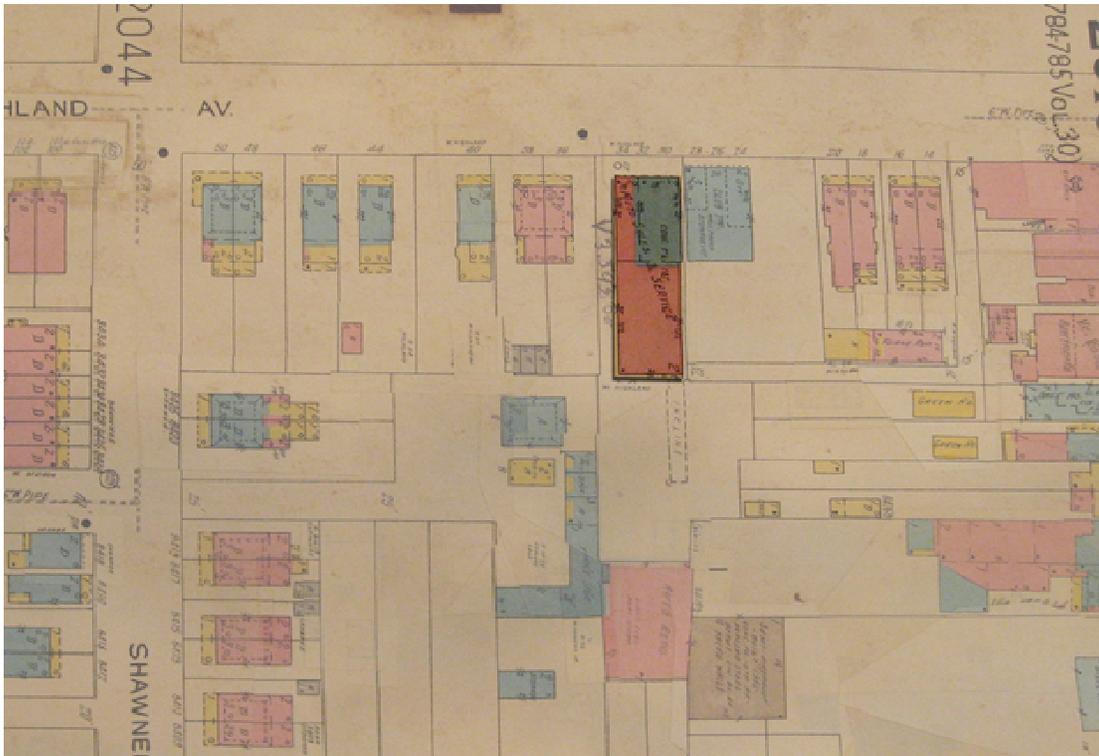


Figure 4: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, ca. 1894, showing its northeast and southwestern elevations and adjacent former police station. Source: Bureau of Fire, *Annual Report*, Philadelphia, 1894 (Philadelphia: Dunlap and Clark, 1895. Philadelphia City Archives, Fire Department: Record Group 74.1: Annual Reports 1886-1898).

same width as the window opening and its sandstone lintel extends approximately four inches beyond both the right and the left of the opening.

A large doorway pierces the third story center of this gable end. Set deep within the doorway is a wooden frame filled by two wood-paneled doors. Each door is an active leaf with two bottom panels and three vertically aligned top lights that evidence the same decorative mullions found below, on the second-story window. Immediately above the doorway is a thick, decorative sandstone belt course. Like the building's southeast-facing gable end, this elevation's roofline is clad in copingstone.

Although the Firehouse has experienced minor alterations since the time of its construction, it retains integrity. Historic photographs confirm that both building's current configuration and many of its details date to the period of its construction (Figures 2-4). The only exterior alterations consist of the removal of a stone archway that once connected the Firehouse to the adjoining lot's now-demolished police station, the addition of a small brick shed along the southwest elevation, and an infilled first floor window on the northeast elevation, the removal of a wooden hose tower that was once attached to the building's rear elevation. The vast majority of the window sash throughout were replaced circa 1993, but match the historic sash very closely in appearance and configuration, with true divide lights, thus not adversely affecting the building's integrity as a whole.

## 7. Significance

The Chestnut Hill Firehouse meets the following criteria for designation as established by the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 14-2007(5), of the Philadelphia Code:

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; and
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community

The Firehouse, built in 1894 from designs by the important Philadelphia architect John T. Windrim (1866-1934), is a highly visible landmark in a location in Chestnut Hill where the neighborhood's Germantown Avenue mercantile corridor gives way to surrounding residences. Architecturally, the Firehouse represents a time when architects were creative and experimental with firehouse designs, creating strong, individualistic statements in a variety of historicist styles that served as neighborhood landmarks. The building is also characteristic of a period in which firehouses in streetcar neighborhoods commonly mimicked large residences.<sup>1</sup> The Firehouse is also significant as a work of the John T. Windrim, one of Philadelphia's most important architects of public buildings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Firehouse is one of a small number of projects that John T. Windrim designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. It was recognized through Chestnut Hill's National Register of Historic Places, Historic District designation as "Chestnut Hill's finest example of the [Richardsonian] Romanesque Revival style."<sup>2</sup> The building retains the character-defining features of its original design, sustaining relatively minimal campaigns of alteration on its interior in 1951 and other renovations in 1993.<sup>3</sup> Since its construction in 1894, the Chestnut Hill Firehouse has served as the home of Engine Company Number 37 of the Philadelphia Fire Department, and is associated with the reform of Philadelphia's volunteer fire department and the subsequent development of the city's paid fire department. Further, the building is important for its association with the patterns of growth that significantly changed by the Philadelphia Fire Department during the 1890s.

### **Criteria (a) and (j)**

*(a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural*

<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Zurier, *The American Firehouse: An Architectural and Social History*, (New York: Abbeville Press, 1981), 135, 138.

<sup>2</sup> Jefferson M. Moak, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination for the Chestnut Hill Historic District." January 31, 1985. Chestnut Hill Historical Society, <http://chhist.org/pdfs/CH-NRnom.pdf>. Richardson's language or style of architecture is most commonly referenced as Richardsonian Romanesque. Author Jeffery Karl Ochsner points out, however, that architects emulating Richardson's style were interchangeably labeled as practitioners of the "Richardsonian Romanesque," "Romanesque revival," and the "Richardsonian." See Jeffery Karl Ochsner, "Seeing Richardson in His Time" *The Problem of the Romanesque Revival*, in Maureen Meister, ed., *H. H. Richardson: The Architect, His Peers, and Their Era* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 104.

<sup>3</sup> See John Charles Manton, *Cornerstones: A Guide to the Historic Sources, Sites, and Institutions of Chestnut Hill, Mount Airy, and Germantown, 1800-1920*, (Published for the Chestnut Hill Historical Society and the Friends of the Wissahickon Valley, 2000), Chapter 13, 5; and Katie Worrall, "Firehouse renovations underway," *The Chestnut Hill Local*, 26 August 1993.

*characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; and (j): Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community*

### Firefighting in Philadelphia

Philadelphia's firefighting history begins in the city's earliest period. This history spans a multitude of technological changes, and reflects both the gradual shift from a volunteer to a fully-professionalized, paid organization and the city's more general socio-political history. The modest beginnings of organized firefighting in the city came in 1695, when the small but rapidly expanding city instituted its first series of fire prevention laws. These basic regulations required each residential property owner to clean chimneys carefully and to keep a bucket suited for carrying water and extinguishing small fires in his or her respective dwelling. Fines collected from those who failed to adhere to the law were used to purchase additional buckets for use by the City.<sup>4</sup> During this early era, citizens—both male and female and of all ages—formed lines and passed buckets filled with water to collectively fight the city's fires.<sup>5</sup> Philadelphia did not purchase its first hand-pump engine until 1718. This apparatus was housed in a central, downtown location and inadequately served the entire original city.<sup>6</sup> Additional machines were purchased during the following two decades, but all were housed in Philadelphia proper—the two-square mile area situated between the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers, and Vine and South Streets. As a consequence of locating the firefighting apparatuses in what is now Center City, many, if not most of the townships and villages within the County of Philadelphia went either under- or completely un-protected from fire.<sup>7</sup>

In 1736, forty-one years after the city's first fire prevention laws were first instituted, Benjamin Franklin succeeded in establishing the city's first volunteer fire company: the Union Fire Company. This organization was modeled after the Boston, Massachusetts Fire Association and would be frequently replicated by groups forming new fire companies in both Philadelphia proper and in the surrounding villages and townships of the yet-to-be consolidated city.<sup>8</sup> Among the nearby communities that established fire companies in the mid- to late-eighteenth century was the Germantown township, encompassing the neighborhoods that are known today as Germantown, Mount Airy, and Chestnut Hill. This portion of Philadelphia County covered an expansive area stretching five and one-half miles in length. In the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, the Germantown settlement was not easily accessed by road from the original city (then bounded by the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers and Vine and South streets), and thus enjoyed no benefit from Philadelphia City's fire companies.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> John Thomas Scharff, and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884*, 3 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everets and Company, 1884), 1883.

<sup>5</sup> Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Scharff and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 3, 1883-1884.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 1884, 1886, 1904.

<sup>8</sup> Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 25; Scharff and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 3, 1884-1885. Scharff and Westcott note that Benjamin Franklin was largely responsible for the founding of the Union Fire Company. This company was formed with thirty members. Although other fire companies founded in Philadelphia in the mid-1700s modeled themselves after the Union Company, they often accepted more than thirty members. Like the Union Fire Company, however, members were typically well-known citizens and property owners—individuals with much to lose in the event of a fire. Interestingly, in addition to supplying his own buckets, each fireman supplied his own bags. These bags were used to collect belongings and save them from the fire; Untitled article, *The Beehive* 2, 6 (February, 22, 1922): 20. Chestnut Hill Historical Society, Folder: JMH, Firefighting #3.

<sup>9</sup> Scharff and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 3, 1886, 1904; David R. Contosta, *Suburb in the City: Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, 1850-1990*, (Ohio State University Press, 1992), 16. Contosta explains that in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Germantown Avenue, the Germantown, Mt. Airy, and the Chestnut Hill communities' "lifeline to the city" was in terrible condition and thus, was very difficult to navigate. ushistory.org, "Philadelphia History: Incorporated Districts, Boroughs, and townships in the County of Philadelphia, 1854," (The Independence Hall Association, 1999-2010), <http://www.ushistory.org/philadelphia/incorporated.html>.

Therefore, when the Germantown citizenry met in 1764 to discuss how best to protect themselves against fires, it was decided that three separate volunteer companies were needed. The Franklin Company was founded for Germantown's Upper Ward, the Washington Company for the Middle, and the Columbia Company for the Lower Ward.<sup>10</sup>

The invention of new and more effective firefighting technologies was a significant factor in the number of volunteer companies founded during the first quarter of the nineteenth century in both the City and the County of Philadelphia.<sup>11</sup> The work of volunteer firemen had been considered important in U.S. towns and cities in the eighteenth century, but it was not until the late 1820s and early 1830s that the public embraced the idea that fire companies were legitimate institutions that deserved separate and distinguishable quarters.<sup>12</sup> This change in perspective led to the construction in many communities of larger, permanent, and architecturally substantial fire stations. In addition to ground-floor equipment storage areas, these new stationhouses—both in Philadelphia and throughout the nation—typically included a second story.<sup>13</sup> This upper floor featured meeting rooms, lounges, and sometimes a library. With the addition of such spaces, the firehouse quickly became a club-like social center for both volunteer firemen and the surrounding neighborhood.<sup>14</sup> Members not only spent more time in the new and enlarged firehouse, but also hosted fancy and well-attended neighborhood dinners, parties, and balls in them.<sup>15</sup>

Although firefighting equipment and the social and political characteristics of fire companies were changing in the early nineteenth century, the firehouse did not require a complicated building program; thus, it was not necessary for them to be constructed in anything but a box-like or rectangular plan.<sup>16</sup> Starting in the 1820s, architects began to design fire stations in the popular Greek Revival style and to embellish fire station facades.<sup>17</sup> As technological advances occurred over the subsequent decades, volunteer companies chose to erect new, larger stationhouses in a variety of popular architectural styles.<sup>18</sup> Elaborate embellishment of the fire station façade became a standard of firehouse design by the 1850s, as each volunteer company sought, through its architecture, to visually outshine its competitors.<sup>19</sup> During this era, firefighters also spent increasingly more time at the firehouse and, as a

<sup>10</sup> Scharff and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 3, 1886; Philadelphia Fire Department, "Official Manual and Report of the Philadelphia Fire Department for 1894," (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Fire Department Relief Association, 1894), 2-3. Temple University, Urban Archives.

<sup>11</sup> Scharff and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 3, 1894, 1895-1901, 1903. In 1815 the Fairmount Water Works pumped water through buried pipes to hydrants placed throughout the two-square-mile city of Philadelphia. Hoses and hose trucks were also invented during this era. The invention of the hose and hose truck led to the establishment of many independent hose companies. For decades, these companies operated separately from regular fire companies. For more information see Neilly, "The Violent Volunteer Fire Department," 24-27.

<sup>12</sup> Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 32. Zurier also explains on pages 50 through 52, that early on, the public heroized firemen. Intense and often extremely violent rivalry between volunteer companies, however, eventually led the public to fear and find volunteer firemen distasteful. While as many firemen gained bad reputations as positive ones, the fearful public typically offered adulations to these men.

<sup>13</sup> Neilly, "The Violent Volunteer Fire Department," 130; Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 32.

<sup>14</sup> Neilly, "The Violent Volunteer Fire Department," 129.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew H. Neilly, "The Violent Volunteer Fire Department of Philadelphia, 1736-1871," PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1960, 130-133. Rebecca Zurier notes that volunteer firemen in the nineteenth century "wanted their quarters to look more elaborate than the neighboring buildings [and] to stand out as well." See Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 57.

<sup>16</sup> Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 132.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33, 37.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 57, 65, 58. Frequently, firehouses were designed with towers.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 57, 66, 69. According to Zurier, in 1853 Marriott Field of New York published *City Architecture: or Designs for Dwelling Houses, Stores, Hotels, Etc.* This book included a proposed design for a firehouse. This firehouse features a most elaborately designed façade.

consequence, firehouses designs came to include sleeping or “bunking quarters.”<sup>20</sup> Additional changes in firehouse designs took place during the next few decades. Perhaps the largest of these changes was the inclusion of horse stalls, tack, and grooming rooms within stationhouses.<sup>21</sup> Even with these additions, the configuration of the firehouse remained fairly simple and consistent throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century.

As the provision for meeting space on the upper floor and the use of that space for social activities suggests, and despite the fact that the primary function of the volunteer fire company was to fight blazes, this organization was, at its core, a social entity in much of the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> The fire company’s social basis can be seen in its organizational behavior. In accordance with Franklin’s Union Fire Company model, each volunteer company met monthly for a “social evening” that typically included a dinner over which the issues of fires and firefighting were discussed.<sup>23</sup> Volunteer fire company membership was also hard won. Like other types of fraternal organizations, those seeking fire company membership were forced to apply. As a consequence, membership brought with it a degree of prestige. While the social standing of a company’s members varied according to the socio-cultural and ethnic makeup of the neighborhood in which the organization was located, each fire company was nevertheless comprised of its respective community’s most prominent citizens.<sup>24</sup> Because neighborhoods were typically composed of citizens from similar social, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, each fire company came to represent a different special interest group. Unfortunately, prior to the 1854 Act of Consolidation, different ethnicities and conflicting interests and ideologies among the numerous fire companies in and around Philadelphia resulted in intense rivalry that often escalated into violence.<sup>25</sup> Also, because political parties in Philadelphia were relatively weak and unstructured during the nineteenth century before the Civil War, the highly organized, physically forceful, and powerful volunteer fire companies were able to exert substantial influence in their respective communities and districts. Often, these companies promoted their own loyal members to political office, thereby assuring that their needs and the needs of their respective community were met.<sup>26</sup> Thus, until the institution of the city’s paid fire department in 1871, Philadelphia had an excess of volunteer fire companies, and they

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<sup>20</sup> Neilly, “The Violent Volunteer Fire Department,” 138-139.

<sup>21</sup> Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 98-101. It was not common practice to stable horses within a firehouse until the 1870s. Prior to this time period, horses were quartered outside, in a separate building. As Zurier explains, moving the horses inside allowed them to become part of a “smoothly run machine.”

<sup>22</sup> Andrew H. Neilly, “The Violent Volunteer Fire Department of Philadelphia, 1736-1871.” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1960): 1. The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historian Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer explained, “the volunteer fire company was a social club. It became famous in a lot of fields more or less related, such as pageantry, society, and politics.” Ellis Paxton Oberholtzer, *A History of Philadelphia and Its People*, 4, (Philadelphia: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, no date): 306. Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 38.

<sup>23</sup> Scharff and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 3, 1910. Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 25.

<sup>24</sup> Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 38, 39. Like other types of clubs or fraternal organizations, of course, citizens seeking fire company membership were forced to apply. Class and status within the neighborhood largely determined who would versus who would not gain membership.

<sup>25</sup> Neilly, “The Violent Volunteer Fire Department of Philadelphia,” 62, 64-69, 73. Not all volunteers could be considered “outlaws” despite the fact that Philadelphia’s volunteer fire companies were plagued by violence from the late 1830s through the early 1850s. Peter McCaffery, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia: The Emergence of the Republican Machine 1867-1933*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993): 11-12. Zurier points out that rivalry among fire companies took place throughout the U.S., but was especially prevalent in cities. Zurier likens the violence to “gang warfare.” See *The American Firehouse*, 74-75. McCaffery, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia*, 23. “[V]olunteer fire companies had a long record of street-fighting, arson, shootings, and murder.”

<sup>26</sup> McCaffery, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia*, 11-12. According to McCaffery, political parties remained weak even after the 1854 Act of Consolidation. Volunteer fire companies remained powerful local political entities until the volunteer fire department was finally abolished at the end of 1870.

often functioned as much if not more as effective grass-roots political forces than necessary or particularly effective firefighting operations.<sup>27</sup>

### Firefighting in the Northwestern Section of Philadelphia

By the time that Germantown township's three volunteer fire companies were established in 1764, the northernmost section of this portion of Philadelphia County was known as Chestnut Hill. Although still a remote location relative to the original city, Chestnut Hill was situated in one of the largest metropolitan regions in America. This community was also located at the intersection of several major roadways that connected to outlying communities in Pennsylvania. As a consequence, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Chestnut Hill came to serve as a "gateway village" for those traveling in and out of Philadelphia County along the roads that are now Germantown Avenue and Bethlehem Pike. During this era the community was home to numerous merchants, mill owners, innkeepers, craftspeople, a handful of gentlemen farmers, and professionals.<sup>28</sup> While not densely populated and thus in need of a full government structure, Chestnut Hill was nevertheless large enough to merit the founding of associations to satisfy the basic needs of the community. A volunteer fire company was one such association needed by Chestnut Hill residents in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>29</sup> For decades, the closest company to Chestnut Hill was located nearly three miles away to the south. Even after the establishment of the Mount Airy Company in 1804, the neighborhood remained under-protected. The Chestnut Hill Fire Company was finally founded in 1815.<sup>30</sup>

Initially, the Chestnut Hill volunteer fire company operated out of a very modest, one-story wood frame building that stood on Germantown Avenue where West Evergreen Avenue now intersects it.<sup>31</sup> For unrecorded reasons, in 1835 the Chestnut Hill Fire Company changed its name to the Congress Fire Company. The company remained unincorporated for another eight years. In contrast to the majority of the city's other volunteer fire companies, Chestnut Hill's fire company remained without a multi-story station house until 1866.<sup>32</sup> The modest nature of the Congress Company's first, one-story station house was, despite the Philadelphia norm, conventional in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; villages and towns throughout the country commonly erected the most basic of structures to house their rudimentary firefighting equipment.<sup>33</sup> For decades, many like the Chestnut Hill Fire Company had

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McCaffery, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia*, 12.

<sup>28</sup> Contosta, *Suburb in the City*, 19-32. Chestnut Hill served as a "gateway village" from 1740 through 1850.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 32-34. Two other associations founded in Chestnut Hill during this time were a semi-public school system and burial grounds.

<sup>30</sup> Untitled article, "The Man on the Corner," 1910 news column. Chestnut Hill Historical Society, Folder: JMH, Firefighting #3. According to this article, Chestnut Hill was originally serviced by Germantown's Franklin Company.

<sup>31</sup> Untitled article, "The Man on the Corner," 1915 news column. Chestnut Hill Historical Society, Folder: JMH, Firefighting #3.

<sup>32</sup> Scharff and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 3, 1886. The Chestnut Hill Fire Company was officially founded on May 11, 1815. Contosta, *Suburb in the City*, 34; Untitled article, "The Man on the Corner," 1910; Untitled article. *The Beehive*, Vol. II, No. 6, February, 22, 1922, pg. 20. Chestnut Hill Historical Society, Folder: 101 West Highland Avenue, Chestnut Hill Fire House; Reverend S. F. Hotchkin, *Ancient and Modern Germantown, Mt. Airy, and Chestnut Hill*, (Philadelphia: P. W. Zeigler and Company, 1889): 415. Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 40, 42. Volunteer fire companies chose their names very intentionally. Some companies chose patriotic names, some the names of Native American tribes, and others chose dramatic names like "Defiance," "Good Intent," and "Venerable." Since volunteer fire companies were also known to be rivalrous it is possible that a special name was chosen by each company in an attempt to differentiate itself and outshine the others. For information about the competitive nature of the volunteer companies in Philadelphia see, generally, Neilly, "The Violent Volunteer Fire Department of Philadelphia, 1736-1871."

<sup>33</sup> Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 17, 32. According to Zurier, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it was not uncommon for towns to house their fire equipment in basic wooden structures. Such edifices sufficed as firehouses until either new equipment was purchased or a new type of organization requiring on-site sleeping quarters was formed. Hotchkin, *Ancient and Modern Germantown*, 415; Untitled article, "The Man on the Corner," 1910; Scharff and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 3, 1909.

little but a hand-pump engine, a ladder, and sets of buckets to store.<sup>34</sup> As was common in most early volunteer companies, the Chestnut Hill company's membership included many of the area's most prominent residents of the time.<sup>35</sup> These volunteers lived in close proximity to the firehouse and held their meetings in private homes or local establishments.<sup>36</sup>

### The Initial Reform and the Late-Nineteenth Century Growth of the Philadelphia Fire Department

The year after the Act of Consolidation of 1854, members of Philadelphia's City Council passed a law that authorized the creation of an official city fire department. Despite the creation of this department and the basic set of regulations that was subsequently imposed on all volunteer companies, no paid fire department was instituted. Also, to the dismay of many citizens, neither the power that volunteers wielded nor their pensions were squelched by this 1855 legislation.<sup>37</sup> William S. Stokley, President of the City of Philadelphia's Select Council, and former volunteer fireman, introduced a bill in 1867 to again try to reorganize the volunteer fire department.<sup>38</sup> A city-controlled, paid department was not established in Philadelphia, however, until December 31, 1870.<sup>39</sup> Like other municipalities—New York, Boston, and Cincinnati, for example—that had previously passed ordinances and established paid departments, Philadelphia set to work in 1871 to determine how many companies it needed and where it was that these companies should be located.<sup>40</sup> At this time, the department was small in size, with a modest twenty-two engine companies and five hook and ladder trucks.<sup>41</sup> Over the next several decades, the Philadelphia Fire Department again expanded. Its growth was, however, both carefully and purposely planned and controlled by the city.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 13-14, 20. Scharff and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 3, 1909; Untitled article, "The Man on the Corner," 1910. Until the 1850s, most of Philadelphia's fire companies relied on hand-pump engines. While many companies had hoses, they would not see steam engines until the late 1850s.

<sup>35</sup> Macfarlane, *History of Early Chestnut Hill*, 112. The names of the various volunteers listed by Macfarlane appear throughout his book. Early volunteers included a number of notable early landowners. As time passed, not all volunteer companies would be comprised of the most well-known and wealthy. A volunteer fire company's membership reflected the socio-cultural demographic of the surrounding neighborhood. See Scharff and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 3, 1910.

<sup>36</sup> Before multi-story firehouses were constructed, volunteers held their meetings in local taverns, rented halls, and private residences. See Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 32.

<sup>37</sup> Neilly, "The Violent Volunteer Fire Department," 54-55. In 1853 the Committee of Twenty-five was appointed by the public to abolish the volunteer fire companies and put an end to the fire company induced or augmented riots that had plagued city neighborhoods for the better part of two and one-half decades. Because volunteer companies wielded such power, the volunteer system could not, however, be easily terminated in Philadelphia. The establishment of the official city fire department was, therefore, but a step in the direction toward the institution of a city-controlled, paid system. For more information see Neilly, 87-89.

<sup>38</sup> Committee of One, "The Report of a Committee of One on the Life and the Administration of the Honorable William S. Stokley Mayor of the City of Philadelphia," (Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, 1880): 7-9. According to author Peter McCafferty, Stokley, a Republican, was interested in fire department reforms because the "unruly and unpredictable and too much inclined to adopt independent lines of action" fire companies in Philadelphia were thwarting the Republican party's efforts to "unify political control of the city." See McCafferty, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia*, 23.

<sup>39</sup> Neilly, "The Violent Volunteer Fire Department," 187-189.

<sup>40</sup> According to historian Sam Bass Warner, in 1856 Philadelphia had an "excess" of seventy fire companies. See Sam Bass Warner, *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987): 11. Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 89-90. Zurier explains that after establishing a paid, municipally-run fire department, many cities chose to replace multiple volunteer stations in one area with a single, large, and more conveniently located stationhouse.

<sup>41</sup> Neilly, "The Violent Volunteer Fire Department," 194-195.

<sup>42</sup> Reading through the Annual Reports of the Bureau of Fire it becomes evident that the founding of new companies and the erection of new stationhouses was very purposeful.

Like many neighborhoods, Chestnut Hill lost its volunteer company when the city's fire department was formed.<sup>43</sup> For a decade and a half afterward, Chestnut Hill continued to rely on help from Germantown's Engine 19—located nearly three miles away.<sup>44</sup> The population of Chestnut Hill was, however, expanding rapidly during the 1870s and 1880s as more and more people either built permanent or summer residences in the area. It is likely that the Philadelphia Fire Department may have organized Chemical Engine Number 1 in Chestnut Hill in 1886 to help better protect this growing neighborhood from fires.<sup>45</sup> Whatever the cause, just five years later, in 1891, the city closed Chemical Engine Number 1 and instead instituted Engine Company Number 37.<sup>46</sup>

In 1887, William S. Stokley, former fireman, president of the city's select council, and three-term mayor of Philadelphia, was appointed the city's Director of Public Safety.<sup>47</sup> The fire department had slowly been improving its force—through the addition of firefighters, equipment, and some added companies—prior to Stokley's arrival. At Stokley's urging, however, Philadelphia began to realize that it was important to locate fire companies in some of the city's more remote neighborhoods. Also, within just a few years, Stokley managed to convince the city that it was less expensive either to buy an existing or construct a new stationhouse than to continue to rent inferior and poorly maintained buildings for fire company uses.<sup>48</sup> By the end of 1891, new companies were added to the force and new firehouses were thereby constructed in the Haddington, Paschalville, Roxborough, and Tacony neighborhoods.<sup>49</sup> Both the addition of new companies and the construction of new, appropriately sized and architecturally respectable municipal firehouses continued to occur throughout Philadelphia during the following three years. Of course, other municipal improvements were also taking place during this period, including the construction of new police headquarters and neighborhood substations, the construction of new sewer lines, schools, bridges, and bathhouses.<sup>50</sup> In addition to Stokley's influence, to some extent, the construction of the city's new firehouses—like the many municipal improvements that were taking place in the 1890s—was fueled by the philosophy of the City Beautiful Movement,

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<sup>43</sup> Macfarlane, *History of Early Chestnut Hill*, 112. The Congress Fire Company was no longer utilized for fighting fires following the establishment of the city's Department. This Company reportedly remained a functioning social club in Chestnut Hill, however, through 1880.

<sup>44</sup> Charles W. Hart, "Still Making History—Firefighters of Engine 37," *Chestnut Hill Local*, 3, 1985.

<sup>45</sup> Contosta, *Suburb in the City*, 53-64. Contosta talks about the numerous homes and hotels that cropped up in Chestnut Hill during the 1870s and early- to mid-1880s. Bill Bowes, Dan Kenny, Jim McNelis, Lenn Ottenbreit, and Jack Wright. *Hike Out: The History of the Philadelphia Fire Department*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Fire Department Historical Corporation, 1999, 35.

<sup>46</sup> Hart, "Still Making History."

<sup>47</sup> John Saint George Joyce, *Story of Philadelphia*, (Philadelphia: Rex Printing House, 1919): 284.

<sup>48</sup> Bureau of Fire: Annual Report, Philadelphia, 1887," (Philadelphia: Dunlap and Clark, 1888): 24-25. Philadelphia City Archives, Fire Department: Record Group 74.1: Annual Reports 1886-1898; "Bureau of Fire: Annual Report, Philadelphia, 1889," (Philadelphia: Dunlap and Clark, 1890): 18-19. Philadelphia City Archives, Fire Department: Record Group 74.1: Annual Reports 1886-1898; "Bureau of Fire: Annual Report, Philadelphia, 1891," (Philadelphia: Dunlap and Clark, 1892): 50-51. Philadelphia City Archives, Fire Department: Record Group 74.1: Annual Reports 1886-1898; Bureau of Fire: Annual Report, Philadelphia, 1894," (Philadelphia: Dunlap and Clark, 1895): 50-51. Philadelphia City Archives, Fire Department: Record Group 74.1: Annual Reports 1886-1898. In the Annual Report for 1894, Mayor Stuart explained, "Much attention has been given during the past four years [1891-1894] to the subject of increasing the efficiency of this most important [fire] Bureau." See page VII of this 1894 Annual Report. "New Station and Fire Houses: Director Stokley Urges the Erection of Several Rural Units," *Philadelphia Inquirer* 2 October 1890, 5, (NewsBank and/or the American Antiquarian Society).

<sup>49</sup> "Bureau of Fire: Annual Report, Philadelphia, 1891," 51; "Bureau of Fire: Annual Report, Philadelphia, 1892," Philadelphia: Dunlap and Clark, 1893): XLIII. Philadelphia City Archives, Fire Department: Record Group 74.1: Annual Reports 1886-1898.

<sup>50</sup> "Legislating for the City," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1 May 1891, 4, (NewsBank and/or the American Antiquarian Society); "New Station and Fire Houses," *Philadelphia Inquirer* 2 October 1890, 5.

popularized as a result of Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition. In Philadelphia, this movement most visibly manifested itself in such grand developments as the creation of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, but architecturally ambitious projects at a smaller scale such as the Chestnut Hill Firehouse were also part of this phenomenon.

The Chestnut Hill Firehouse, constructed in 1894, is significant for its association with this important period of modernization in the city's history of firefighting and the professionalization of its firefighting forces: a time in which a number of architecturally imposing firehouses were constructed in the peripheral areas of the city that were growing rapidly in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

*(d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen*

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, American architect Henry Hobson Richardson developed what has been interchangeably called the Richardsonian Romanesque "system," "language," and "image" of architecture.<sup>51</sup> Richardson, who initially trained at Harvard, also spent six years in Paris where he apprenticed as an architect and studied at the famed *École des Beaux-Arts*.<sup>52</sup> Richardson was well-versed in French methods of design and was exceptionally knowledgeable about European architectural traditions by the time he returned to the United States in 1865.<sup>53</sup> While his mid-nineteenth-century predecessors and his contemporaries designed in the popular French and English traditions, Richardson moved to experiment with the fusion of elements of the Syrian Early Christian, Byzantine, and French and Spanish Romanesque styles.<sup>54</sup> Richardson used elements from these three styles with regularity. He did so, however, while purposely incorporating into his works other architectural elements found in buildings already existing in the American landscape.<sup>55</sup>

Despite the advances in building technologies that developed during his lifetime, Richardson embraced masonry construction. As a consequence, lithic traditions in the communities where he practiced also proved major influences. In Boston, Massachusetts, for example, Richardson drew inspiration from and included elements of the "Boston granite style" and fused them with basic *Rundbogenstil*—traditions of building design.<sup>56</sup> Richardson's use of stone evoked in his buildings a sense of strength, permanence, and undeniable presence. He did not eschew the idea of the picturesque but instead strove to discipline it. Richardson designed "quiet and massive" forms that were different from, but no less monumental than the eclectically styled buildings of his day that showcased an amalgamation of disparate architectural features.<sup>57</sup> Drawing on his training at the *École*, Richardson also approached the "plan, massing, and the relationship of solids and voids" with purposeful restraint and order.<sup>58</sup>

Richardson provided design solutions for almost every American building type. As author Jeffery Karl Ochsner explains, "Richardsonian architecture appeared to offer a clear system that could be applied to

<sup>51</sup> James F. O'Gorman, *Three American Architects: Richardson, Sullivan, and Wright, 1865-1915*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 12; Ochsner, "Seeing Richardson in His Time," 123.

<sup>52</sup> James F. O'Gorman, *Living Architecture: A Biography of H. H. Richardson*, (New York: Simon and Schuster Editions, 1997), 63-67.

<sup>53</sup> O'Gorman, *Three American Architects*, 12.

<sup>54</sup> O'Gorman, *Three American Architects*, 25, 30.

<sup>55</sup> O'Gorman, *H. H. Richardson: Architectural Forms*, 53.

<sup>56</sup> O'Gorman, *Three American Architects*, 13, 20-21. O'Gorman explains that a primary characteristic of the *Rundbogenstil* was "Renaissance and Romanesque-inspired actuated blocks."

<sup>57</sup> O'Gorman, *Three American Architects*, 13-14, 37; Ochsner, "Seeing Richardson in His Time," 123; O'Gorman, *H.H. Richardson: Architectural Forms*, 32, 68.

<sup>58</sup> O'Gorman, *Three American Architects*, 37.

most of the design problems that they [American architects of the 1880s and 1890s] faced. His [Richardson's] architectural language... was widely applicable..."<sup>59</sup> As a result, Richardson's designs influenced American architectural trends both during his lifetime and in the decade and a half following his death. Countless architects throughout the nation emulated his designs and employed selections of his most recognized features when designing libraries, commercial, religious, transportation, and academic buildings, train stations, various civic and governmental edifices, and even private residences.<sup>60</sup> Firehouses, too, were eventually constructed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style.<sup>61</sup> When considering the dominant socio-cultural and political sentiments toward municipal fire departments and firemen of the 1890s, it is not surprising that architect John T. Windrim chose to design the Chestnut Hill Firehouse in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. By this time, Philadelphia's paid fire department was effectively operated by the city, and the citizenry typically viewed firemen with respect and gratitude.<sup>62</sup> As such, no remonstrance was expressed when public monies were used to construct stylish, commodious, and up-to-date firehouses. During this era a city's government also wanted each new firehouse to stand prominently and officially, as a symbol of municipal power and authority.<sup>63</sup> Presumably, Philadelphia was no exception.<sup>64</sup> The solid masonry-walled Richardsonian Romanesque architecture was known for its ability to produce "a sense of massive physical presence, of permanence, [and] timeless monumentality..." and therefore proved an excellent choice.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, Richardsonian Romanesque architecture was considered very fashionable. It was also a style that could be easily adapted for firehouse designs since these edifices had neither complicated programs nor specific shape and fenestration requirements. The style's features also worked well for firehouse design—especially the wide round archways, pride-inducing towers, and thick, imposing, and fireproof masonry walls.<sup>66</sup>

There is hardly a Richardsonian Romanesque feature that the 1894 Chestnut Hill Firehouse does not evidence. Overall, the firehouse exhibits Richardson's "disciplined approach" to both its massing, and ornamentation; with the exception of a singular projecting bay, a wall chimney, and a series of hipped

<sup>59</sup> Ochsner, "Seeing Richardson in His Time," 123.

<sup>60</sup> Ochsner, "Seeing Richardson in His Time," 123-132. Richardson, of course, employed his style in an equally impressive array of building types. For more information about Richardson's works, see James F. O'Gorman *H. H. Richardson: Architectural Forms for an American Society*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) and Jeffery Karl Ochsner, *H. H. Richardson, Complete Architectural Works* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982). In *The American Firehouse*, 117, author and art historian Rebecca Zurier notes that during the 1870s and 1880s the Richardsonian Romanesque style was popularly and successfully adapted for firehouses.

<sup>61</sup> Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 117. Although she does not explain why, Zurier notes, "the architects of fire stations stayed a good ten years behind the latest trend." As a consequence, firehouses would not be constructed in the Richardsonian Romanesque until the 1890s. Once the style was adopted for firehouses, however, this style was widely used.

<sup>62</sup> Philadelphia's paid fire department was technically established at the very end of 1870. It was not, however, until March of 1871 that the ordinance was finalized. In the interim, changes to the original ordinance were made. See Neilly, "The Volent Volunteer Fire Department," 191-193.

<sup>63</sup> Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 89, 117, 119, 135.

<sup>64</sup> As reported in the Annual Reports of the Philadelphia Fire Department, during the 1890s, the Philadelphia City government increasingly spent more money on fire and police station designs. See "Bureau of Fire: Annual Report, Philadelphia, 1891," (Philadelphia: Dunlap and Clark, 1892): 26. Philadelphia City Archives, Fire Department: Record Group 74.1: Annual Reports 1886-1898; "Bureau of Fire: Annual Report, Philadelphia, 1894," (Philadelphia: Dunlap and Clark, 1895). Philadelphia City Archives, Fire Department: Record Group 74.1: Annual Reports 1886-1898; "Bureau of Fire: Annual Report, Philadelphia, 1895," (Philadelphia: Dunlap and Clark, 1896): 54. Philadelphia City Archives, Fire Department: Record Group 74.1: Annual Reports 1886-1898; "Bureau of Fire: Annual Report, Philadelphia, 1896," (Philadelphia: Dunlap and Clark, 1897): 24. Philadelphia City Archives, Fire Department: Record Group 74.1: Annual Reports 1886-1898; "Bureau of Fire: Annual Report, Philadelphia, 1897," (Philadelphia: Dunlap and Clark, 1898): 30. Philadelphia City Archives, Fire Department: Record Group 74.1: Annual Reports 1886-1898.

<sup>65</sup> O'Gorman, *Living Architecture*, 109.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 117, 132.

and wall dormers that project beyond the roofline, the structure is a solid volume. The firehouse is asymmetrically fenestrated, with deeply recessed window and door openings; it presents a steep hipped roof punctuated by dormers and wall gables; it has parapetted gable ends, a decorative chimney, and features large half-round Roman arches, groupings of colonettes, a slate roof, and a sampling of other Romanesque carvings. In a true Richardsonian fashion, the building is also constructed of locally quarried masonry—Wissahickon schist—laid in a random ashlar pattern. The variegated natural pallet found in this schist is itself used as a decorative element and is also contrasted with the similarly toned sandstone trim; thus, life, ornament, and a restrained picturesque quality are brought to the building through the masonry work.<sup>67</sup> Despite the fact that the firehouse has undergone weathering and suffered a few exterior alterations during its one-hundred-and-eighteen years of service its envelope still features all of its Richardsonian Romanesque characteristics.

*(h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City*

In the summer of 1894, several months before the completion of architect John T. Windrim's Chestnut Hill Firehouse, this municipal building was already referenced as "handsome" and extolled as the "finest fire house in Philadelphia."<sup>68</sup> Over fifty years later, in 1948, the building was still being celebrated. "The crowning architectural triumph at 'The Hill,'" wrote Philadelphia historian, Horace M. Lippincott, "is the fire house and former police station at [West] Highland Avenue and Shawnee Street." "There are no words," he went on to say, "that can adequately describe this architectural aberration."<sup>69</sup> Moreover, in the 1985 National Register of Historic Places "Historic District Inventory of Buildings in Chestnut Hill", the Firehouse was not only listed as "significant," but it was also heralded as Chestnut Hill's "finest example of the Romanesque Revival style."<sup>70</sup>

Lamentably, the Firehouse's neighbor and architectural companion, the Chestnut Hill police station, was a casualty of demolition in 1959.<sup>71</sup> Even as this building was being dismantled, however, it was acknowledged that the police station was, indeed, a "landmark."<sup>72</sup> The Firehouse was no less of a monument. Nothing surrounding the Firehouse looks anything like it. Nor does anything in its vicinity even begin to compete with the undeniable presence that the Firehouse conveys. In a true Richardsonian Romanesque fashion, this building's dominant presence is communicated through its fortress-like massing and its load-bearing masonry walls. At the same time, the building exhibits a

<sup>67</sup> DelRosario, "Richardsonian Romanesque at Tulane University," April 29, 2009, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/102771761/Richardsonian-Romanesque-at-Tulane-University>; O'Gorman, *Three American Architects*, 37-41, 43-44; See also O'Gorman, *Living Architecture*, (1997). Throughout Chapters 6 through 10 O'Gorman discusses the characteristics of Richardson's work in the context of specific buildings. Also, Jeffrey Karl Ochsner's *H. H. Richardson: Complete Architectural Works*, (1982), provides photographic images of and written descriptions about many of the buildings that Richardson designed throughout his lifetime. Through these images and descriptions one can learn more about the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Particularly worth noting is Richardson's William H. Gratwick House, featured on page 433 of Ochsner's book. Many of the Chestnut Hill firehouse's features are present in this building.; O'Gorman, *Living Architecture*, 107. O'Gorman points out that in Richardson's later works he used ashlar that were less variegated in color.

<sup>68</sup> "The Pride of the Hill," Publication unknown, July 27, 1894.

<sup>69</sup> Horace Mather Lippincott, *A narrative of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia with some account of Springfield, Whitmarsh and Cheltenham Townships in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, (Jenkintown, PA: Old York Road Publishing Company, 1948), 90.

<sup>70</sup> Jefferson M. Moak, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination for the Chestnut Hill Historic District," January 31, 1985.

<sup>71</sup> "Landmark in the Hands of Wreckers," *The Chestnut Hill Local*, February 5, 1959. The Chestnut Hill Firehouse was originally connected to the neighboring sub-police station via a decorative arch that bore the City's coat of arms.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

restrained, yet noticeably “living,”<sup>73</sup> picturesque quality that results from the following: its load-bearing masonry walls are accented with sandstone beltcourses, lintels, sills, colonettes, and a selection of other ornaments, like finials; its base is battered and its ashlar diminishes in size from bottom to top; in select areas, the ashlar, which ranges subtly in both color and striation, is arranged in a diapering pattern; and its steep roof line is punctuated by a series of wall gables and hipped dormers.

*(e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation.*

Architect John Torrey Windrim designed Chestnut Hill’s Richardsonian Romanesque Firehouse in 1892. The building was constructed in 1894. The architect’s early career was inextricably linked to that of his father, architect James H. Windrim.<sup>74</sup> While the younger Windrim attained significance in the Philadelphia architectural scene, a discussion of his work necessitates mention of his father.

In 1866, at the time the younger Windrim was born in Philadelphia, his father was a fledgling architect and Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) employee.<sup>75</sup> The following year, James left his position with the PRR and opened his own architectural firm in the city. Although at the beginning of his independent career, James instantly gained recognition by winning the 1867 Philadelphia Masonic Temple design competition.<sup>76</sup> Additional public commissions and architectural appointments quickly followed. In 1871 James was appointed the architect of the Girard Estate and in 1872 he was awarded the contract for the design of the city’s Academy of Natural Sciences building. Thus, within a short time period both the Windrim family name and the Windrim architectural firm were quickly elevated in status with the city of Philadelphia.<sup>77</sup>

The architectural distinction that James cultivated in Philadelphia proved very beneficial to his son. In 1882, when many of Windrim’s contemporaries began studying architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, Windrim started his architectural training in his father’s office.<sup>78</sup> By the time that James was called to Washington, D.C. in 1889 to supervise the design of the U.S. Treasury building, the Windrim firm was well-recognized for revival-style designs of public, municipal, and commercial buildings. Windrim, who by 1899 was adequately trained to design the aforementioned revival styles, was also well positioned to oversee the operations of his family’s firm.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> O’Gorman, *Three American Architects*, 34, 44.

<sup>74</sup> Sandra L. Tatman, “John T. Windrim (1866-1934): Architect,” (Philadelphia: The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 2012). Accessed on October 28, 2012. Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, [http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/21563](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/21563); “John Torrey Windrim,” (Philadelphia: University Archives and Records Center 2012). Accessed on October 28, 2012. Penn Biographies, [http://www.archives.upenn.edu/people/1800s/windrim\\_john.html](http://www.archives.upenn.edu/people/1800s/windrim_john.html).

<sup>75</sup> Sandra L. Tatman, “Windrim, James Hamilton (1840-1919): Architect,” Philadelphia Architects and Buildings. (The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 2012). Accessed on October 28, 2012, [http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/21564](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/21564).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* In 1871 James Windrim was appointed by the Board of City Trusts as the architect of the Girard Estate and in 1872 he was commissioned to design the Academy of Natural Sciences building.

<sup>78</sup> Architectural courses were offered at the University of Pennsylvania starting in 1868. The program was still nascent in 1882, when John T. Windrim began his training in his father’s architectural office. It is therefore not surprising that John followed what was at the time the traditional path of architectural training through apprenticeship. For information on the founding of the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture, see Penn Design, “History of the School,” (University of Pennsylvania School of Design, 2012), Accessed on October 28, 2012, <http://www.design.upenn.edu/about/history-school>; Tatman, “Windrim, John Torrey.”

<sup>79</sup> Tatman, “Windrim, John Torrey.”

James Windrim returned to Philadelphia in 1891 and was immediately appointed the city's Director of Public Works—a position he would hold through 1895.<sup>80</sup> During James's tenure as Director, Windrim assumed official leadership of his family's firm and was awarded a number of municipal contracts for police and fire stations—presumably as a result of the influence and power that his father wielded in his new directorial position.<sup>81</sup> Among the younger Windrim's commissions during this time period were the police station at North Front and Westmoreland Streets (1892); the Engine #29 Fire station on the 1200 block of North 4<sup>th</sup> Street (1895); Southwark's Engine #3 firehouse on the 100 block of Queen Street (1893); the Central Fire Station on the 2100 block of Market Street (1894-5); Fire stations at 6<sup>th</sup> and Sansom Streets and the 1000 block of Belmont Avenue in West Philadelphia (1895); the 26<sup>th</sup> District police station on the 2100 block of East Dauphin Street (1895-1896); the firehouse at 26<sup>th</sup> and York Streets (1894); the Quarry Street firehouse (1899); and Chestnut Hill's police station and fire house (1894)<sup>82</sup>.

James returned to work for his ever-growing firm in 1895, when his appointment with the city expired. The Windrim firm was continually awarded contracts for public buildings throughout subsequent decades. After James's departure from City Hall, however, it appears that the firm's design of fire and police stations quickly came to a halt.<sup>83</sup> John Windrim continued to design many of the public buildings erected from the mid-1890s until the time of his death in 1934, and many of his projects were collaborations with either his father or other architects that the firm employed.<sup>84</sup> John's designs were highly influential and he was well respected in the City of Philadelphia, the region, and even beyond.<sup>85</sup> As the Windrim firm's portfolio reveals, John Windrim was associated with the design of numerous office buildings and banks in addition to a smattering of theaters, public libraries, factories, stores, and residences. He is perhaps best known for the numerous offices and exchanges that he designed for the Bell Telephone Company, and for the Philadelphia Electric Company offices, stations, and substations. In downtown Philadelphia, John Windrim is most noted for his involvement in such prominent landmark designs as the John Wanamaker Department Store, the Municipal Courthouse (also known as the Family Court Building), and along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, both the Franklin Institute and the Bell Telephone Company's Central Office building.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Tatman, "Windrim, James Hamilton."

<sup>81</sup> "Recent Brick and Terra-Cotta Work in American Cities," *The Brickbuilder*, 134.

<sup>82</sup> *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, v. 7, n. 40, p. 1495, 10/5/1892; Zenovia Campbell, "Historic firehouse provide a glimpse of the past," 24 May 2012, Zenovia Campbell. Accessed on October 29, 2012, <http://zencampbell.com/historic-firehouse-provides-a-glimpse-of-the-past/>; "Central Fire Station. New Station About to be Erected at Twenty-First and Market Streets," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3 November 1894. Accessed on November 2, 2012 at <http://docs.newsbank.com/s/HistArchive/ahnpdoc/EANX/113FC101D8290348/0EC297002C4725AF>; "New Fire Station. It Will be Opened for Use in a Few Days," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7 March 1895. Accessed on November 2, 2012, <http://docs.newsbank.com/s/HistArchive/ahnpdoc/EANX/11466260F3DD2D08/0EC297002C4725AF>; "The Latest News in Real Estate. Business among the Operative Builders Keeps at a Rushing Pace," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 10 November 1895. Accessed on November 2, 2012, <http://docs.newsbank.com/s/HistArchive/ahnpdoc/EANX/113B27FE45DA2758/0EC297002C4725AF>

<sup>83</sup> It is possible that the Windrim firm was responsible for the design of firehouses and police stations following the elder Windrim's departure from the City's Department of Public Works. I did not, however, uncover any information relating to a Windrim-designed firehouse or police station following the completion of the 26<sup>th</sup> District police station in 1896.

<sup>84</sup> One of the Windrim firm's most noted architects was W.R. Morton Keast, a designer who took over the firm after John's death. Keast, for example, is said to have technically been responsible for the design of the Franklin Institute. See Sandra L. Tatman, "Keast, William Richard Morton (1888-1973), Architect: Biography," *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*. The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 2012. Accessed on October 28, 2012, [http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/25018](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/25018).

<sup>85</sup> Many of the Bell Telephone Company's offices and exchanges were located in other parts of Pennsylvania, such as Wilkes-Barre, Easton, and Northumberland County.

<sup>86</sup> Tatman, "Windrim, John Torrey (1866-1934), Architect: Projects," 1-10.

Architects throughout the United States were still popularly designing in the Richardsonian Romanesque when, in 1892, Windrim completed his scheme for the Chestnut Hill firehouse and the now-demolished police station.<sup>87</sup> Just one year later, however, architecture in the United States would begin to shift its stylistic focus. As a result of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, neo-classicizing styles (often called “Beaux-Arts”) rose to greater popularity.<sup>88</sup> Like many of his contemporaries, Windrim soon adapted this new style trend. He mastered the style and became known within his lifetime as Philadelphia’s most recognized classical revival architect.<sup>89</sup> Buildings like the Chestnut Hill Firehouse demonstrate that early in his career John worked in another idiom and that even as a young practitioner he was capable of creatively designing in a range of styles.

Examination of John’s police and firehouse designs reveals that Windrim’s earlier stations—the Chestnut Hill Police Station and Firehouse, and the York Street firehouse—were the most overtly Richardsonian Romanesque in form, style, and massing. Each of stations was a masonry building clad in coursed, quarry-faced stone. Each also exhibited asymmetrical fenestration patterns, deep-set windows and doors, massive rounded arches, decorative stone bands, steep hipped roofs topped with finials, decorative chimneys, wall gables, arched windows, columns and colonettes. The Chestnut Hill Police Station and the York Street firehouse even had towers—another quintessential Richardsonian Romanesque architectural design element.<sup>90</sup> John’s North 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Belmont Avenue firehouses display a sampling of these same design elements. Since neither of these latter two was built as free-standing, however, neither was as elaborately decorated as the aforementioned three works.<sup>91</sup> When looking at other municipal buildings that Windrim designed it becomes clear that Windrim was knowledgeable about and comfortable designing in a range of architectural styles. Windrim’s Queen Street firehouse and the Trenton and Dauphin Street police station evidence his use of the Queen Ann and the Renaissance revival styles, respectively. Central Fire Station on the 2100 block of Market Street, on the other hand, showed Windrim’s ability to design a successful firehouse in the newly popular classical revival style.

Windrim’s designs for his firehouses respond to three different important factors. First, while firehouses were called on to present an image of solidity and authority, at the end of the nineteenth century, there was no set firehouse configuration. In fact, in an effort to set firehouses apart from other municipal

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<sup>87</sup> Ochsner, “Seeing Richardson in His Time,” 123. Although the Chestnut Hill police station was opened nearly a year before construction on the next-door firehouse began, Windrim designed these two buildings at the same time. See “New Police and Fire Station,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 8, October 4, 1894.

<sup>88</sup> Mark Gelertner, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in their Cultural and Technological Context*, (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 203; David B. Brownlee, *Building the City Beautiful: The Benjamin Franklin Parkway and the Philadelphia Museum of Art*, (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1989), 3.

<sup>89</sup> Tatman, “Windrim, John Torrey (1866-1934), Architect: Biography.”

<sup>90</sup> The following sources contain lists of Richardsonian Romanesque revival style features: City of Cincinnati: Planning and Buildings, “Richardsonian Romanesque: 1880-1900, (City Planning and Buildings, 2012), [http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/historic-conservation/major-architectural-styles/Richardsonian\\_romaneseque-1880-to-1900/](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/historic-conservation/major-architectural-styles/Richardsonian_romaneseque-1880-to-1900/); Anthony DelRosario, “Richardsonian Romanesque at Tulane University.” As noted, many Richardsonian Romanesque revival buildings also had towers—an element present on the York Street firehouse and the Chestnut Hill police station. More dispersed, but detailed information about H. H. Richardson’s style and common architectural elements can be found in Jeffrey Karl Ochsner’s *H. H. Richardson, Complete Architectural Works* and in James F. O’Gorman’s *Three American Architects: Richardson, Sullivan, and Wright, 1865-1915* and *H. H. Richardson, Architectural Forms for an American Society*.

<sup>91</sup> Both the North 4<sup>th</sup> Street and the Belmont Avenue station houses were constructed in more densely built areas of the city and were thus, flanked on either side by other buildings. An 1896 article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* references the Belmont Avenue station as having a “handsomely ornamented front,” but does not laud its design as do articles written about the Chestnut Hill Firehouse, the Chestnut Hill sub-police station, and the firehouse at York and 26<sup>th</sup> Streets. See “New Fire House: West Philadelphia Boys Will Occupy it To-morrow,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5, July 21, 1896.

buildings, architects of the era were encouraged to be creative in these designs.<sup>92</sup> Second, given that Windrim was still an early point in his professional career when he was designing the firehouses, he may have embraced the opportunity to experiment with a popular mode: a mode that adapted itself to a wide variety of building types. Finally, during this era it was commonplace for the suburban sections of the city to have large freestanding firehouses that stood as architectural complements to the surrounding residences.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the location of each of Windrim's firehouse commissions—be it in a densely built area of the city or in a "streetcar suburb"—was reflected his design choice.

Windrim is credited with the design of at least twelve Philadelphia police and fire stations, including the Chestnut Hill Firehouse. Unfortunately, however, most of these structures have been razed. Of the few that survive, only the Chestnut Hill station stands in a semi-suburban setting. The large lot on which the Chestnut Hill Firehouse was to be built provided Windrim with an opportunity not just to apply Richardsonian Romanesque elements to one façade—as he did in the case of both the extant North 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Belmont Avenue station houses—but to instead design an entire building in H. H. Richardson's Romanesque picturesque approach to building massing and style. Today, the Chestnut Hill Firehouse alone stands as a testament to both Windrim's early and fleeting journey into the implementation of Richardsonian Romanesque.

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<sup>92</sup> Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 135.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 117, 132, 138.

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### **Active Late Nineteenth- to Early-Twentieth -Century Philadelphia Firehouses**

Engine 37	101 West Highland Avenue	1894
Engine 50, Ladder 12	1235 West Cambria Street	1901
Engine 59, Ladder 18	2201 West Hunting Park	1907
Engine 54	1923 North 63 <sup>rd</sup> Street	1908
Engine 44	2340 Haverford Avenue	1908
Engine 6, Ladder 16	2601 Belgrade Street	1913
Engine 14, Ladder 15	1652 Foulkrod Street	1927
Engine 69	8201 Tinicum Avenue	1927
Engine 12	4545-4447 Main Street	1927
Engine 71, Ladder 28	1600 Cottman Avenue	1931
Engine 70	4800 Langdon Street	1931