

## COMMENT ON NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

**ADDRESS: 1221-25 N 4TH ST, Engine Company No. 29**

**OVERVIEW:** The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has requested comments from the Philadelphia Historical Commission on the National Register nomination of 1221-25 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street located in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia and historically known as Engine Company No. 29. PHMC is charged with implementing federal historic preservation regulations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including overseeing the National Register of Historic Places in the state. PHMC reviews all such nominations before forwarding them to the National Park Service for action. As part of the process, PHMC must solicit comments on every National Register nomination from the appropriate local government. The Philadelphia Historical Commission speaks on behalf of the City of Philadelphia in historic preservation matters including the review of National Register nominations. Under federal regulation, the local government not only must provide comments, but must also provide a forum for public comment on nominations. Such a forum is provided during the Philadelphia Historical Commission's meetings.

According to the nomination, Engine Company No. 29 is significant under Criterion C in the Area of Architecture, as an intact and rare example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture in Philadelphia. Built in 1895, during the "Golden Age of fire house design," the building was designed by prolific Philadelphia architect John Windrim (1866-1934). The building was constructed during a period of significant architectural achievement in fire house design and of significant growth and formalization of the Philadelphia City Fire Department. It represents the City's evolving efforts to improve fire response strategies. The period of significance begins in 1895, when the building was constructed, and ends in 1979, when the building ceased to operate as a fire station. The Philadelphia Historical Commission individually listed the property on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 1989.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Engine Company No. 29

Other names/site number: NA

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

## 2. Location

Street & number: 1221-1225 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street

City or town: Philadelphia State: PA County: Philadelphia

Not for Publication: NA Vicinity: NA

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☐ local Applicable National Register Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Signature of certifying official:

Date

Deputy SHPO/Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

Title/State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title/State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register

☐ determined eligible for the National Register

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

### Category of Property

Building(s)

☒

District

☐

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

0

buildings

0

0

sites

0

0

structures

0

0

objects

1

0

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:** Government/Fire Station

**Current Functions:** Vacant/Not in Use

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## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification:** NA

**Principal exterior materials of the property:** Brick

### Narrative Description

Engine Company No. 29 stands at 1221-1225 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia. The 3-story building has brownstone cladding on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor with brown, Roman brick and terra cotta detailing above. It was constructed in 1895. The building retains its integrity, as both the overall form and defining architectural features remain intact since the time of construction.

The building is located on the east side of N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street between W. Girard Avenue to the south and W. Thompson Street to the north. The lot extends east to N. Orianna Street. The building is approximately one mile west of the Delaware River. The building only occupies the western half of the flat, rectangular lot. The remainder contains an open, paved lot (Photograph #4). Concrete sidewalks abut the lot to the east and west. Abutting the north side of the building is 1227 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, which was originally built as a Lutheran Church and later used as a box factory. Abutting the south side of the building is 1219 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, a 3-story brick rowhouse.

The building fits appropriately within the context of its block, which is largely occupied by late 19<sup>th</sup> century, 2- and 3-story, brick residential buildings. The exception to this is the church to the north of the subject property and an early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial building, which is located to the north of the church. The surrounding neighborhood consists of a mix of late nineteenth century two- and three-story brick row houses, scattered low-rise industrial buildings and empty lots.

The building has a square footprint and was constructed in a single phase, beginning in 1895. The west (primary) elevation faces N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street and is three bays wide on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and five bays wide above (Photographs #1 and 2). The 1<sup>st</sup> floor is clad in coursed, rusticated brownstone that has a black, anti-graffiti coating. Each opening contains an arched, brownstone head with contemporary infill, with the center opening being slightly larger. The original, wood doors remain in the outer bays (Photographs #6). The double-leaf doors contain two panels above multi-light arched glazing. The center bay contains contemporary infill. Between the bays are eight petal, Brownstone rosettes set on a white marble circle with a white marble center and Brownstone edging. To the north of the northernmost bay is a 1-story, square, brownstone projection with a gabled top. To the south of the southernmost bay is a 3-story, brownstone projection with a square base and rounded tower above. There is a single door opening with contemporary infill on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, a single, narrow 1-light window on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and three single, narrow 1-light windows on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors are clad in Roman brick. Flanking the

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center bay are bunched, rounded, brick pilasters with Romanesque capitals that support a brownstone arched. The outer bays are flanked by single rounded, brick pilasters with Romanesque capitals. Between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors between the two outermost bays is a scrolled metal grill. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor all bays contain paired 1/1 aluminum replacement windows with a 1-light replacement transom and rusticated brownstone surrounds. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, the outermost bays contain paired 1/1 aluminum replacement windows with a 1-light replacement transom, rusticated brownstone surrounds, continuous rusticated brownstone heads and a Romanesque capital at the top of the divider mullion. Along the outer portions of the roofline is a painted, denticulated stone cornice above a band of small roundels, reflective of those on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Above the center portion of the roofline is a crenellated brownstone band flanked by animal heads above a brownstone and white marble checkerboard.

The north and south elevations are completely clad in brown brick with no openings.

The east elevation faces the interior of the block (Photograph #3). It is clad in brown brick with a shallow corbelled, brick cornice. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor is five bays wide. The first, second and fourth bays from the south contain window openings with stone sills, jack arched, brick heads and contemporary infill. The third bay from the south contains a large opening with contemporary infill. The northernmost bay contains a single door opening with contemporary infill. The opening was likely originally a matching window, as the jack arched, brick head remains visible. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is seven bays wide and all bays have stone sills and jack arched, brick heads. Some of the original 2/2 wood windows with 1-light wood transoms remain. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is three bays wide and all bays have stone sills and jack arched, brick heads. The outer bays are smaller and contain 3-light, wood casement windows. The center bay is larger and contains contemporary infill.

The building has a flat roof with a shallow brick parapet along all elevations and a brick chimney in the northeast corner. There is a lightwell in the center of the floor plate, which is covered by a flat, multi-light skylight at the 1<sup>st</sup> floor level (Photograph #7).

*Interior*

The interior of the building has four stairways. There are two U-return stairways near the northwest and southwest corners. Both stairways have wood treads, risers and railings and provide access between all floors (Photographs #10 and 17). There is a metal, spiral stairway also near the southwest corner, which provides access between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors (Photograph #5). There is a straight-run wood stairway near the northeast corner, which also provides access between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors. There is no elevator.

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On the interior of the building, the 1<sup>st</sup> floor is open in plan with concrete floors, painted wood ceilings and beams and a grid of painted metal columns (Photographs #5 and 8). As it was originally used as the primary garage space for the engines, this configuration is appropriate. Temporary, freestanding plywood pods have been built along the north and south elevations. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor has two larger spaces along the east elevation and smaller rooms along the west elevation, which have no consistent arrangement (Photographs #9, 11 and 12). The eastern spaces were originally used as sleeping areas while the smaller, western rooms were used for back rooms and sitting rooms. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, the eastern half of the floor plate is largely unfinished with a contemporary, built out area in the center (Photographs #20 and 21). This space was originally used as a gymnasium. The western half of the floor plate contains a series of smaller rooms with an axial arrangement (Photographs #13-16, 18 and 19). The three rooms along the west elevation originally contained the quarters for the District Engineer, which accounts for their higher level of finish, including a fireplace with a glazed brick and terra cotta surround in the southwest corner (Photograph #15). On both floors, the finishes consist of floors of vinyl tile, carpet and wood; walls of painted plaster, contemporary wood paneling and exposed painted brick; and ceilings of painted plaster and dropped acoustical tile. In some locations, the painted wood baseboard, window trim, doors and door trim remain. The fire pole also remains on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (Photograph #10).

### *Integrity*

Engine Company No. 29 retains integrity. Both the overall form and the defining architectural characteristics remain, including its brownstone and brick masonry sections, brownstone and white marble detailing, regular window openings, large carriage door openings, and interior configuration and finishes. While some of the window units have been replaced, none of the openings have been altered, with the exception of one on the rear elevation, and the original configuration is known. Additionally, no new window openings have been created. While the two smaller arched doors have been removed, the larger, center door, which had a matching configuration remains. The only other alteration to the exterior is the removal of the flagpole and railing in the center of the west elevation above the roofline (Figure #1). The quality, placement and condition of the construction materials, as well as the detailed Richardsonian Romanesque style are both highly characteristic of the period and also all remain wholly intact.

The building remains intact from its original construction with no demolition or new constructions. On the interior of the building, the room arrangements and finishes remain similarly intact. Although the fire equipment has been removed and the building is currently vacant, its original municipal function clearly remains.

The overall location and setting of the building remain intact since the initial construction, with a combination of surrounding residential and commercial buildings. The design and materials similarly

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retain their integrity. The workmanship is expressed in a consistent architectural style, is of good quality and is in keeping with contemporary trends. The feeling and associations of the building also have a high level of integrity, in large part because of the integrity of the previous five aspects. Although the equipment, furnishings and people have long since departed, the detailed architectural fabric and intact finishes effectively relay the sense of place and the notable civic building.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

- ☐ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance:** Architecture

**Period of Significance:** 1895

**Significant Dates:** 1895

**Significant Person:** NA

**Cultural Affiliation:** NA

**Architect/Builder:** Windrim, John Torrey



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## Statement of Significance

Engine Company No. 29, constructed in 1895, is significant under Criterion C, Architecture, as an intact and rare example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture in Philadelphia, built during the “Golden Age of fire house design” and as a civic work of prolific Philadelphia architect John Torrey Windrim (1866-1934), who was particularly well known for his contributions to public buildings in the city.<sup>1</sup> The building was constructed not only during a period of significant architectural achievement in fire house design but also during a period of significant growth and formalization of the Philadelphia City fire department, as part of the city’s evolving efforts to improve fire response strategies. The building is consequently representative of a unique period of fire house history in Philadelphia. The period of significance begins in 1895, when the building was constructed and ends in 1979, when the building ceased to operate as a fire station. The building was individually listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 1989.

### *Building History*

Engine Company No. 29 was organized on December 5, 1883 at 1048 N. Lawrence Street (demolished) with twelve employees.<sup>2</sup> In May 1894, the subject lot, which measured sixty feet by 160 feet, was purchased for \$13,000.<sup>3</sup> At the time of purchase, the lot was occupied by six buildings, three along the east and west ends.<sup>4</sup> The following year, all six buildings were removed the building was completed at a cost of \$30,611.07.<sup>5</sup> The building first appears on an 1895 Baist Atlas, in its current configuration (Figure #2). The existing open lot to the east is also shown. An article from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* describes the building as a truck and engine house with brownstone on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and terra cotta and Pompeian brick above.<sup>6</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> floor contained the apparatus of the Engine Company, Chemical Engine Company and Truck G.<sup>7</sup> Although the exact configuration is not known, it is likely that the engines were lined up along the western half of the floor plate with the stables located to the east. This was a typical configuration.<sup>8</sup> The exact use of the rear lot is not known, but it was presumably used for parking,

<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Zurier, *The American Firehouse: An Architectural and Social History* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1981): 127.

<sup>2</sup> 1048 N. Lawrence Street is two blocks from the subject property.

<sup>3</sup> “Real Estate.” *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide* (30 May 1894): 253; “A Site for a New Fire House.” *The Times* (2 September 1893): 7. It is not clear how or why that specific lot was chosen, but it was typical for a firehouse to run from street to street for easy access and to be located as close to a wide, main street, such as W. Girard Avenue, as possible. Zurier, 90.

<sup>4</sup> Hopkins Atlas, 1875.

<sup>5</sup> “Real Estate.”

<sup>6</sup> “A New Engine House.” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (28 February 1895): 10.

<sup>7</sup> A chemical fire engine extinguished fires not using a pump but refers to the method of mixing soda with acid to create a chemical reaction, which resulted in sufficient pressure in the tank to force the water through the hose.

<sup>8</sup> Zurier, 99.

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storage and maintenance. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor had a “large sleeping room, rooms for the two foremen, back rooms, lavatories and sitting rooms. A large gymnasium, feed room, drying room and comfortable quarters for [the District Engineer] take up the third floor.”<sup>9</sup> This was a typical configuration for fire houses at that time. At the time, the building was described as ““one of the finest and most thoroughly equipped in the city.”<sup>10</sup>

A 1917 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows no change, but the addition of a 1-story frame shed in the southeast corner of the lot (Figure #3).<sup>11</sup> It is listed as “Fire Dep’t Engine Co. No 29, Truck Co. No. 7, Chemical Co. No. 2.” An annotation on the map says that the employees included twelve men who worked with the Engine Company, thirteen men who worked with the Truck Company, five men who worked with the Chemical Company, plus the Deputy Chief and Auto Driver.<sup>12</sup>

By the late 1970s, changes to equipment and procedures, in particular the relationship between the size of the trucks and the size of the existing openings, meant that historic firehouses ultimately became obsolete. The building consequently closed in 1979 when a new station was built at N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street and W. Girard Avenue. Since that time, the building was used by the city as a storage facility and the open lot was used for parking. The building is currently vacant.

*A Brief Review of Richardsonian Romanesque Design*

Romanesque architecture is a Medieval style that dates to around the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Characterized by continuous round arches and heavy masonry facades, the Romanesque style is typically seen on religious and municipal buildings. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as part of a larger Romantic movement toward revivalist styles, including Renaissance Revival, Gothic Revival and Colonial Revival styles, Romanesque Revival style architecture rose to prominence. In general, Romanesque Revival style adapted the archetypal components of the Romanesque style to be compatible with late 19<sup>th</sup> century programmatic requirements.

As a style, Romanesque Revival architecture did not gain a until it was reimagined by Henry Hobson Richardson. Richardson, after having attended Harvard University and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, reimagined the style by incorporating other historic references, including Italian palazzos and Byzantine churches. It was through this reinterpretation of the style that it gained a widespread application on public, educational and religious buildings.

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<sup>9</sup> “A New Engine House,” 10.

<sup>10</sup> “A Palace for Fire Fighters.” *The Times* (28 February 1895): 8.

<sup>11</sup> The shed does not appear on a 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

<sup>12</sup> In general, the firemen consisted of “foremen [who] were in charge of the station, took attendance, and managed operations; enginemen [who] cleaned and repaired the engines; drivers [who] took care of the horses; firemen [who] drove the engine carts and attended the fires; [and] hosemen [who] maintained the hoses.” “1026-1028 Belmont Avenue.” *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places* (2016): 23.

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Aesthetically, Richardson treated each building as a single, masonry volume with “uniformly warm color, round arches and large, simple shapes.”<sup>13</sup> Secondary characteristics included decorative detailing, such as colonettes, semicircular windows, coursing, Romanesque carvings, punctured roof lines, squat columns, round towers, rustication, partial symmetry and polychromatic plaques. The result was a structural both intimidating and romantic, calling on the narrative of the past to fulfill the requirements of the present.

Although the Richardsonian Romanesque style is underrepresented in Philadelphia, the subject property is an archetypal example of the form.<sup>14</sup> It presents a fortress-like façade with rusticated masonry, round arches, rectangular windows, asymmetrical tower projections, clustered columns, a semicircular window and brownstone, terra cotta and marble detailing.

Programmatically, this “architectural language... was widely applicable.”<sup>15</sup> The wide arches allowed trucks to easily pass in and out. The asymmetrically placed towers, which were moved to the front of the façade, added prominence but detracted from functionality.<sup>16</sup> The flexibility in the arrangement of the façade allowed each company to adjust the configuration to suit their interior needs. The formal, heavy masonry conveyed “a sense of massive physical presence, of permanence, [and] timeless monumentality”, effectively presenting a “symbol of municipal power and authority.”<sup>17</sup> Although it has been said that “architects of fire stations stayed a good ten years behind this latest trend, they eventually used the Richardsonian round arches and towers with great success.”<sup>18</sup>

In 1893, shortly before the construction of the subject property, the World’s Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago. Among the large number of advancements that it inspired was the idea of the City Beautiful movement and a resurgence of Neoclassical and Beaux Arts style architecture. Both for Windrim personally, as well as across the country, these new styles represented a vision for the future that ultimately dominated his portfolio.

#### *A Brief Review of Fire Station Architecture*

An understanding of fire station architecture in Philadelphia must be understood within the larger context of firefighting in the city. The history of firefighting in Philadelphia is a significant sub-topic

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<sup>13</sup> Zurier, 117.

<sup>14</sup> Jean M. Farnsworth, Carmen R. Croce and Joseph F. Chorpennig, Eds., *Stained Glass in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, PA: St. Joseph’s University Press, 2002): 99.

<sup>15</sup> Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, *H.H. Richardson, Complete Architectural Works* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982): 123.

<sup>16</sup> Zurier, 113.

<sup>17</sup> Zurier, 117; “100 West Highland Avenue.” *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places* (2015): 15.

<sup>18</sup> Zurier, 117.

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but can briefly be understood as the development from smaller, volunteer organizations to a powerful and professional paid organization. Although fire prevention laws were mandated in Philadelphia as early as 1695, it was not until 1736 that Benjamin Franklin established the Union Fire Company, which was the city's first volunteer entity.<sup>19</sup> From that point until 1870, fire stations in Philadelphia operated as independent entities, which often had significant rivalries and were, consequently, frequently adopting ways to "out do" each other. An 1849 article from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* describes one approach to this, during a parade:

Grand beyond description. The gorgeous banners of every hue and shade, the beautifully decorated engines and hose carriages, the unnumbered fire horns, the wreaths, bouquets, and different emblems of the respective fire company, were showered from nearly every window, added greatly to one of the most grand and lovely spectacles that has ever taken place in the Quaker City. [It] is an occasion that will doubtless be remembered for years to come.<sup>20</sup>

Another approach that was taken to differentiate themselves was through the buildings in which they worked.<sup>21</sup> Beginning in the 1830s, firehouses began to be built as formal, architectural buildings in their communities with equipment and storage areas on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and dormitories and communal space above.<sup>22</sup>

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Philadelphia saw a period of significant population growth. One of the repercussions of this was that local government saw a need for increased civic stability and an expansion of municipal services. On December 31, 1870, a city-controlled, paid fire department was established in Philadelphia.<sup>23</sup> The ordinance mandated not only consolidated the individual stations under a single umbrella but also established the hierarchy of the institution, who could be hired, how infrastructure was to be distributed and when reforms could be made. It also, along with the ordinances for other city agencies, provided a large and stable source to fund an "ambitious building campaign responsible for scores of architecturally distinctive firehouses, police stations, [and] public bath houses in neighborhoods across the city."<sup>24</sup> This also consequently meant "obliterating the old police and fire

<sup>19</sup> For a more detailed history, see "100 West Highland Avenue" pages 8-9.

<sup>20</sup> Ken Finkel. "Taming the Fight in Philadelphia Firefighting." <https://blog.phillyhistory.org/index.php/2015/07/taming-the-fight-in-philadelphia-firefighting/>. Accessed on September 28, 2020.

<sup>21</sup> "100 West Highland Avenue," 9.

<sup>22</sup> "100 West Highland Avenue," 9.

<sup>23</sup> Andrew M. Neilly. *The Violent Volunteers; A History of the Volunteer Fire Department of Philadelphia, 1736 - 1871* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1960): 187-189. The Police Department in Philadelphia was consolidated in 1854

<sup>24</sup> "1401 S. Water Street." *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places* (2017): 6. This drive for municipal improvements were in part driven by the philosophy of the City Beautiful movement.

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stations and putting in their places buildings that will be ornaments.”<sup>25</sup> Although built as part of a city agency, these elaborate fire houses were an extension of this early fanfare and exuberance. This approach of using fire houses for public relations purposed was also adopted in numerous cities across the country, including Boston, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh.

These new buildings served not only as a programmatic anchor for a neighborhood but also an economic one. An 1894 article from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* describes how after the Front and Westmoreland firehouse was built, “immediately some 200 houses sprung up around it, more than doubling the value of lots within a radius of several squares.”<sup>26</sup>

Between 1891 and 1895, the period in which Windrim saw a particular increase in his firehouse commissions, the Fire Department expanded from 542 to 745 men, from thirty-four to forty-four engines and constructed twelve new firehouses.<sup>27</sup> Of the latter category, all were more substantive than those constructed by the volunteer groups.

Historically, although a fire station needed to look official and be recognizable, there was no “no prevailing ‘proper’ style for a fire station, [so] architects tried nearly all of them.”<sup>28</sup> The programmatic flexibility of the firehouse – namely that all it had to have were two or three stories, large doors and some windows – meant that architects were able to create “opulent fire stations constituted political as well as architectural statements.”<sup>29</sup> As such, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the evolution of the firehouse as a distinct building type, “when architects were creative and experimental with firehouse designs, creating strong, individualistic statements in a variety of historicist styles that served as neighborhood landmarks.”<sup>30</sup> The subject property falls perfectly within this description, acting as an architecturally distinctive local anchor that served the community for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### *John Torrey Windrim (1866-1934)*

John Torrey Windrim was arguably Philadelphia’s preeminent civic architect of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Apart from numerous city commissions for court houses, museums, and other civic buildings, Windrim and his firm designed many large office buildings, banks, hospitals, theaters and private residences for Philadelphia’s most prominent companies, institutions, and residents. Some of the firm’s most acclaimed Philadelphia work includes the Commonwealth Title & Trust Company Building, a fifteen-story Beaux-Arts style bank and office tower at 1201 Chestnut Street

<sup>25</sup> “Police and Fire Stations,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (17 October 1894): 3

<sup>26</sup> “Central Fire Station,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (11 March 1894): 5.

<sup>27</sup> “Engine House #29,” *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places* (1989): 8:3; “1401 S. Water Street,” 7.

<sup>28</sup> Zurier, 135, 146.

<sup>29</sup> Zurier, 132, 146.

<sup>30</sup> “100 West Highland Avenue,” 7.

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(1901); the Franklin Institute Science Museum, a Classical Revival limestone edifice on Logan Square (1931); and the Lincoln-Liberty Building, an Art Deco high-rise office tower at 1 South Broad Street (1932). “Due to the visibility of his projects,” historian Sandra L. Tatman writes, “Windrim became the best-known Philadelphia practitioner of the classical revival style often designated as Beaux Arts.”<sup>31</sup> The Family Court Building (1940) on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway is an excellent example of his work during this period.

If that sentence summarizes Windrim at the end of his career, the beginning of his career had a very different aesthetic. He began his career in 1882, working for his father, James Hamilton Windrim, a prominent Philadelphia architect, who had numerous educational, commercial and municipal commissions. When his father was appointed Supervising Architect of the U. S. Treasury in 1889 and spending significant time away from the city, Windrim fulfilled a larger role in the firm, one that was only expanded in 1892, when his father returned to Philadelphia having been appointed Director of Public Works. It was during this period that Windrim began his significant contributions to the municipal architecture of Philadelphia and also during this period that the subject property was constructed.

Windrim began his foray into firehouse design during a period known as Philadelphia’s “Fin-de-siecle” Firehouse Boom.”<sup>32</sup> Although his designs embraced a range of styles, he leaned heavily toward European Revivalist styles, interspersing historical inspirations, such as the Italian palazzo, as can be seen at the Horticultural Hall (1876, demolished) (Figure #4). In an 1895 article in *The Times*, Windrim is referred to as saying, the “design of a fire house, the practical arrangement, convenience and comfort of the interior is of the first importance. Then to adopt an architectural style of [the] exterior as suggestive, massive and appropriate as possible...”<sup>33</sup> It was in this context that the subject property was designed, “an outstanding and rare example of the Richardson Romanesque style in Philadelphia.”<sup>34</sup>

*Comparable Fire Stations by John Torrey Windrim*

Between 1892 and 1899, Windrim designed twelve police and fire stations in Philadelphia, including the subject property.<sup>35</sup> The remaining eleven buildings are listed below, six of which are extant:

<sup>31</sup> “John Torrey Windrim.” [www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/21563](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/21563). Accessed on September 28, 2020.

<sup>32</sup> Ken Finkel. “Philadelphia Architects on Fire(houses).” <https://blog.phillyhistory.org/index.php/2015/08/philadelphia-architects-on-firehouses/>. Accessed on September 28, 2020.

<sup>33</sup> “A Model Fire Department.” *The Times* (26 April 1895): 17.

<sup>34</sup> “Engine House #29,” 8:1.

<sup>35</sup> “26<sup>th</sup> District Police and Patrol Station.” *National Register of Historic Places* (1984): 8:1. Between 1890 and 1910, the Department of Public Works built approximately fifty fire houses and police stations in Philadelphia. PA on Firehouses.

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1. Engine Company No. 42. N. Front and W. Westmoreland Streets, 1892, Style unknown, Demolished.
2. Engine Company No. 2. W. Berks and N. Warnock Streets, 1893, Romanesque Revival style, Demolished (Figure #5).
3. Engine Company No. 3. 117 Queen Street, 1893, Renaissance Revival style (Figure #6).
4. Engine Company No. 37. 101 W. Highland Avenue, 1894, Richardsonian Romanesque style. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places* (2015) (Figure #7).
5. Engine Company No. 43. 2110-2114 Market Street, 1894, Renaissance Revival style, Demolished (Figure #8).
6. Engine Company No. 46. 1401 S. Water Street, 1894, Flemish Revival style. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places* (2017) (Figure #9).
7. Engine Company No. 45. N. 26<sup>th</sup> and York Streets, 1895, Romanesque Revival style, Demolished (Figure #10).
8. Engine Company No. 32. S. 6<sup>th</sup> and Sansom Streets, 1895, Style unknown, Demolished.
9. Engine Company No. 16. 1026-1028 Belmont Avenue, 1896, Renaissance Revival style. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places* (2016) (Figure #11).
10. 26<sup>th</sup> District Police and Patrol Station, E. Dauphin Avenue and Trenton Street, 1896, Romanesque Revival Style. *National Register of Historic Places* (1984) (Figure #12).
11. Engine Company No. 8. N. 2<sup>nd</sup> and Quarry Streets, 1899, Renaissance Revival Style (Figure #13).

In comparing the above properties to the subject property, it is interesting to consider the various components of architectural overlap, as well as the elements that make each property wholly distinct. For example, the subject property shares the same rusticated brownstone base, Roman brick and round end projection as Engine Company No. 2, but that building has a prominent hipped roofline and fire tower that set it apart. The subject property has the same 1<sup>st</sup> floor configuration as Engine Company No. 43 with three arched openings, as well as its overall massing, but that property has limestone cladding on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, no projections and the upper floors clearly categorize it as more of a Renaissance Revival style, Palazzo building. Engine Company No. 37, which is also categorized as a Richardsonian Romanesque style building, certainly shares some overlap with the subject property, such as arched 1<sup>st</sup> floor openings, rectangular window openings, a symmetrical façade, a centered, arched window near the roofline, bunched pilasters and checkerboard detailing. However, the differences between the two – amount of rusticated stone, pitch of the roofline, overall massing – cause these buildings to be read as completely architecturally distinct. As such, the subject property fits squarely within the greater context of Windrim's designs for late 19<sup>th</sup> century fire houses, but also stands as a unique representation of his vision, acting as a landmark within the scale of the neighborhood in which it was built.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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"A Palace for Fire Fighters." *The Times* (28 February 1895): 8.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** N/A

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**Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than 1 acre

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property corresponds to current tax parcel #781463400, as presented in Figure 15, Site Plan with NR Boundary.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes all resources and land associated with the Engine Company No. 29, and does not exclude any known buildings, structures, or acreage.

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**10. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Logan I. Ferguson, Senior Associate

organization: Powers & Company, Inc.

street & number: 1315 Walnut Street, Suite 1717

city or town: Philadelphia

state: PA

zip code: 19107

e-mail: logan@powersco.net

telephone: (215) 636-0192

date: October 2020

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photograph Log

Name of Property: Engine House No. 29

City or Vicinity: Philadelphia County: Philadelphia State: PA

Photographer: Robert Powers, Powers and Company, Inc.

Date Photographed: September 2020

<i>Photograph #</i>	<i>Description of Photograph</i>
1.	West elevation, view northeast
2.	North and west elevations, view southeast
3.	East elevation, view west
4.	Lot, view east
5.	1 <sup>st</sup> floor, view southwest
6.	1 <sup>st</sup> floor, view northwest
7.	1 <sup>st</sup> floor, Skylight, view south
8.	1 <sup>st</sup> floor, view southeast
9.	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor, view south
10.	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor, Stairway, view north
11.	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor, view northwest
12.	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor, view northwest
13.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view west
14.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view west
15.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view south
16.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view west
17.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, Stairway, view west
18.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view northeast
19.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view northeast
20.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view south
21.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view north

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**Photograph 1** – West elevation, view northeast



**Photograph 2** – North and west elevations, view southeast



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**Photograph 3 – East elevation, view west**



**Photograph 4 – Lot, view east**



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**Photograph 5** – 1st floor, view southwest



**Photograph 6** – 1st floor, view northwest

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**Photograph 7 – 1st floor, Skylight, view south**



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**Photograph 8** – 1st floor, view southeast



**Photograph 9** – 2nd floor, view south

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**Photograph 10** – 2nd floor, Stairway, view north



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**Photograph 11** – 2nd floor, view northwest



**Photograph 12** – 2nd floor, view northwest

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**Photograph 13** – 3rd floor, view west



**Photograph 14** – 3rd floor, view west



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**Photograph 15** – 3rd floor, view south

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**Photograph 16 – 3rd floor, view west**

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**Photograph 17 – 3rd floor, Stairway, view west**



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**Photograph 18** – 3rd floor, view northeast



**Photograph 19** – 3rd floor, view northeast

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**Photograph 20** – 3rd floor, view south



**Photograph 21** – 3rd floor, view north



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6.	Engine Company No. 3. 117 Queen Street, 1893, Renaissance Revival style. <a href="https://www.phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/Detail.aspx?assetId=52033">https://www.phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/Detail.aspx?assetId=52033</a> . Accessed on November 19, 2020.
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9.	Engine Company No. 46. 1401 S. Water Street, 1894, Flemish Revival style. Courtesy Google Street view on November 19, 2020.
10.	Engine Company No. 45. N. 26 <sup>th</sup> and York Streets, 1895, Romanesque Revival style, Demolished. <a href="https://www.phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/Detail.aspx?assetId=52026">https://www.phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/Detail.aspx?assetId=52026</a> . Accessed on November 19, 2020.
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13.	Engine Company No. 8, N. 2 <sup>nd</sup> and Quarry Streets, 1899, Renaissance Revival style. "New Fire House on Second Street." <i>The Philadelphia Inquirer</i> (8 March 1899): np.
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Figure 1 – Photograph, 1896.

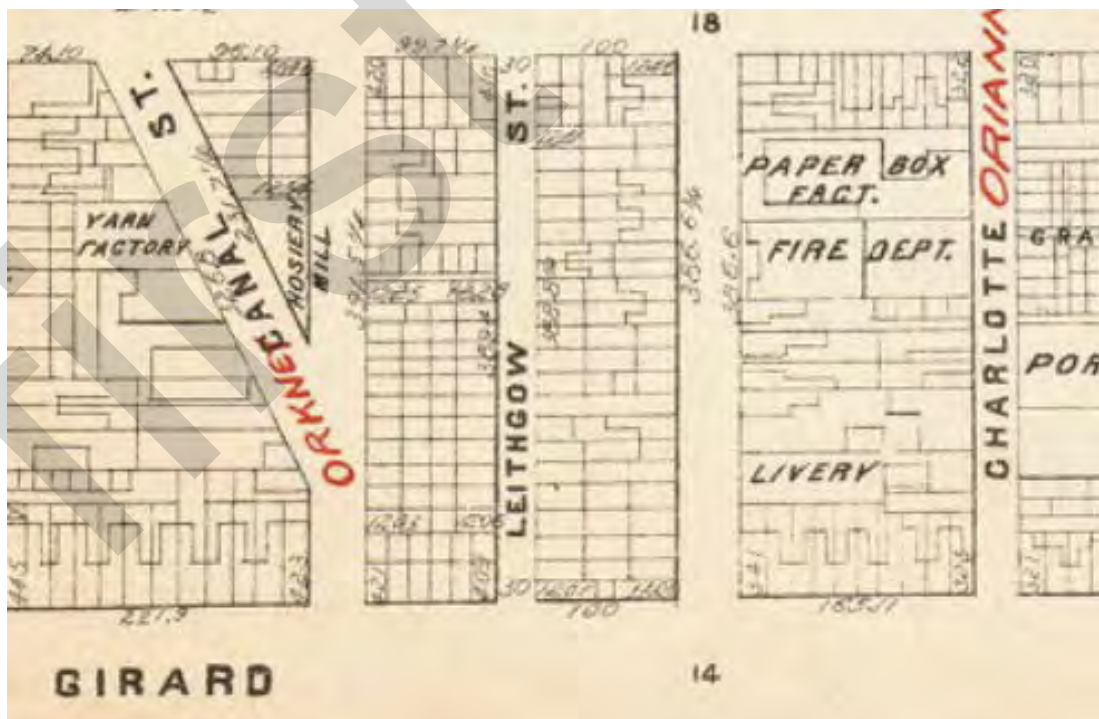


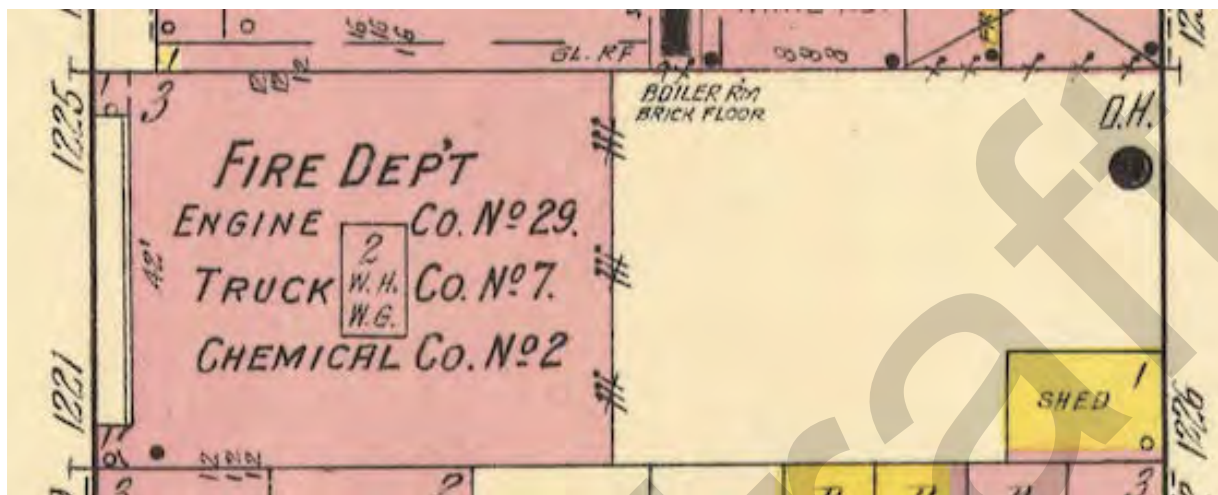
Figure 2 – Baist Atlas, 1895. The subject property is near the top right of the image.

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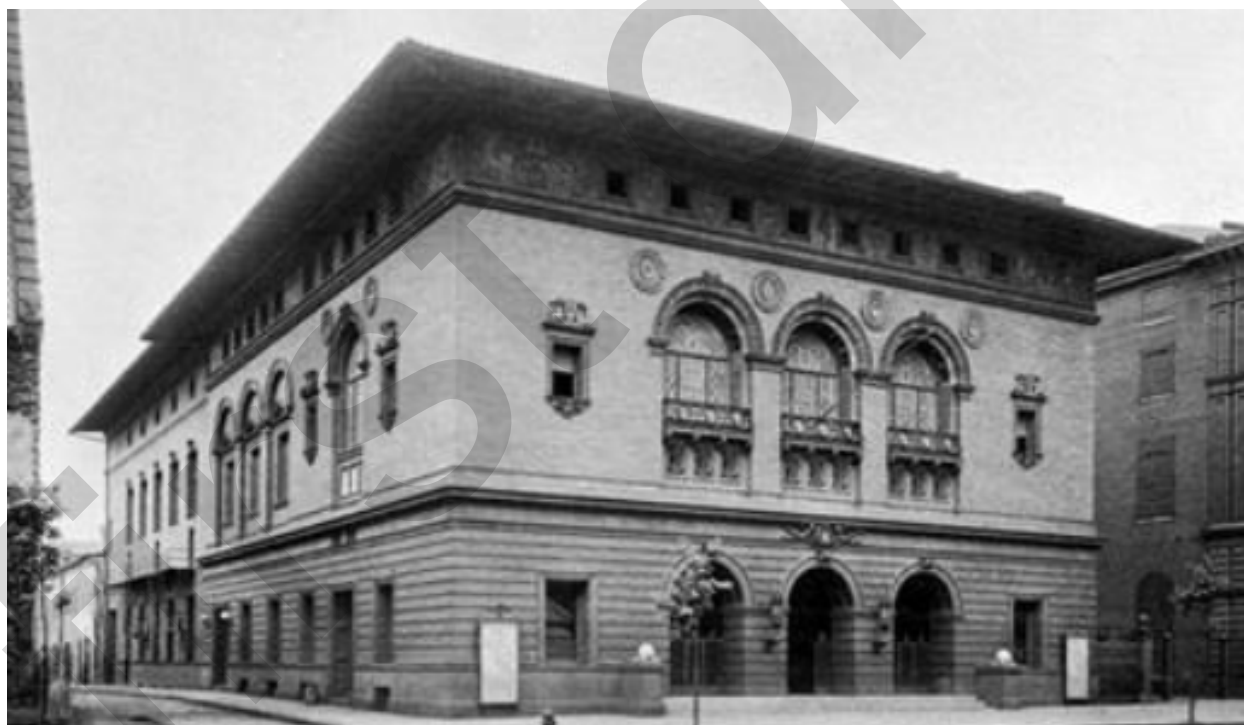
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**Figure 4** – Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1917. The only change is the addition of a 1-story frame shed in the southeast corner of the lot.



**Figure 4** – Horticultural Hall, 1876.

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**Figure 5** – Engine Company No. 2. W. Berks and N. Warnock Streets, 1893. Demolished. The building has similar massing, materials, detailing and projections as the subject property.



**Figure 6** – Engine Company No. 3. 117 Queen Street, 1893. The building has similar fenestration patterns and materials as the subject property. The exterior remains intact from the time of construction.

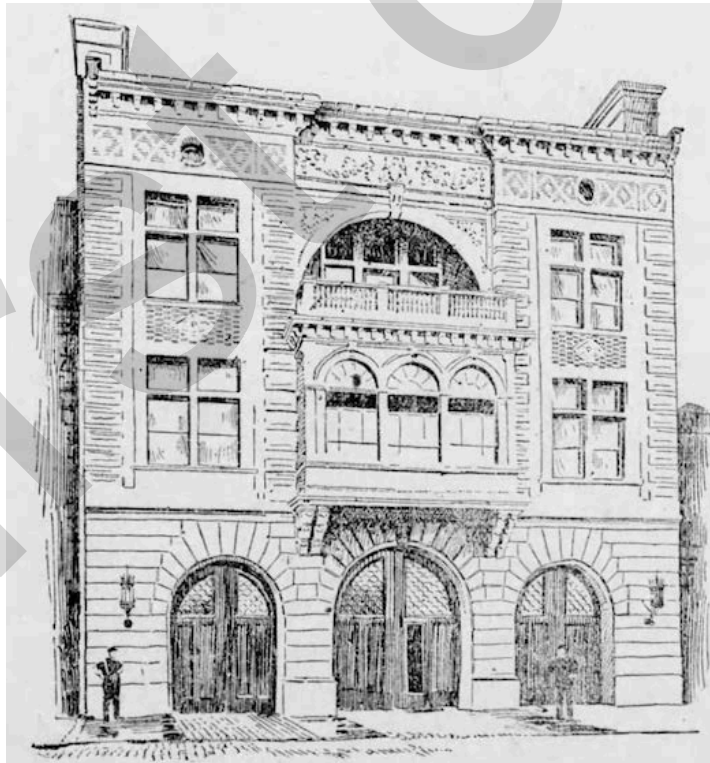


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**Figure 7** – Engine Company No. 37. 101 W. Highland Avenue, 1894. The building has similar fenestration patters and detailing as the subject property. The exterior remains intact from the time of construction.



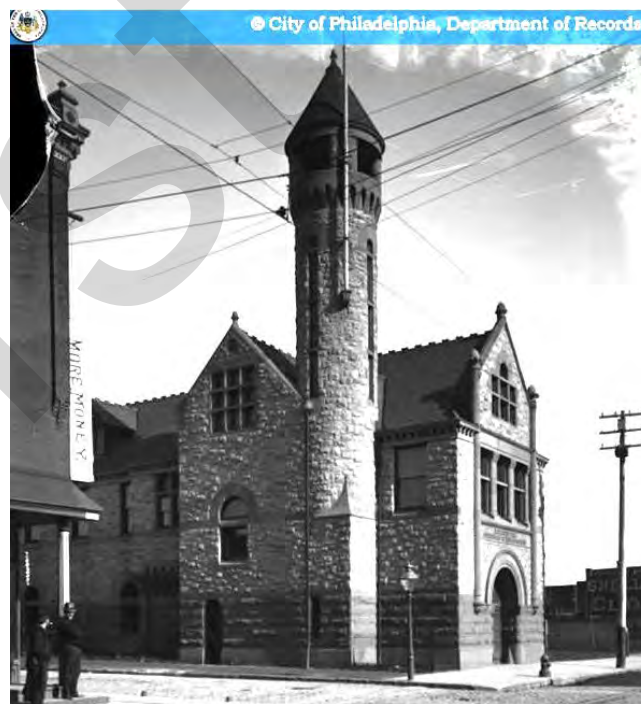
**Figure 8** – Engine Company No. 43. 2110-2114 Market Street, 1894. Demolished. The building has similar fenestration patters, massing and materials as the subject property.

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**Figure 9** – Engine Company No. 46. 1401 S. Water Street, 1894. The building has detailing and materials as the subject property. The exterior remains intact from the time of construction.



**Figure 10** – Engine Company No. 45. N. 26<sup>th</sup> and York Streets, 1895. Demolished. The building has similar massing, detailing and materials as the subject property.

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**Figure 11** – Engine Company No. 16, 1026-1028 Belmont Avenue, 1896. The building has similar massing and detailing as the subject property. The exterior remains relatively intact from the time of construction.



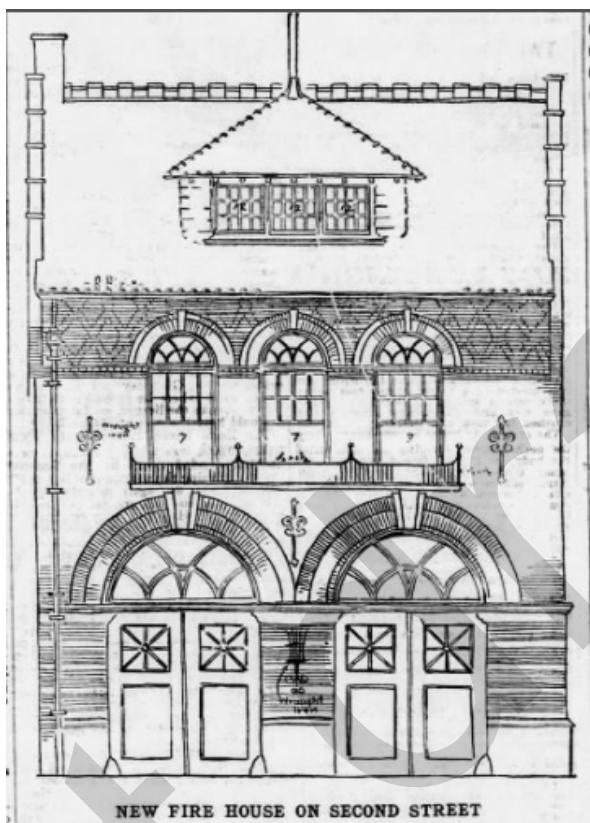
**Figure 12** – 26<sup>th</sup> District Police and Patrol Station, E. Dauphin Avenue and Trenton Street, 1896. The building has materials and detailing as the subject property. The exterior remains intact from the time of construction.

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**Figure 13** – Engine Company No. 8, N. 2<sup>nd</sup> and Quarry Streets, 1899, Renaissance Revival style. The building has similar massing and detailing as the subject property. The exterior remains intact from the time of construction.



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Figure 14 – USGS Map. Subject property shown in blue.

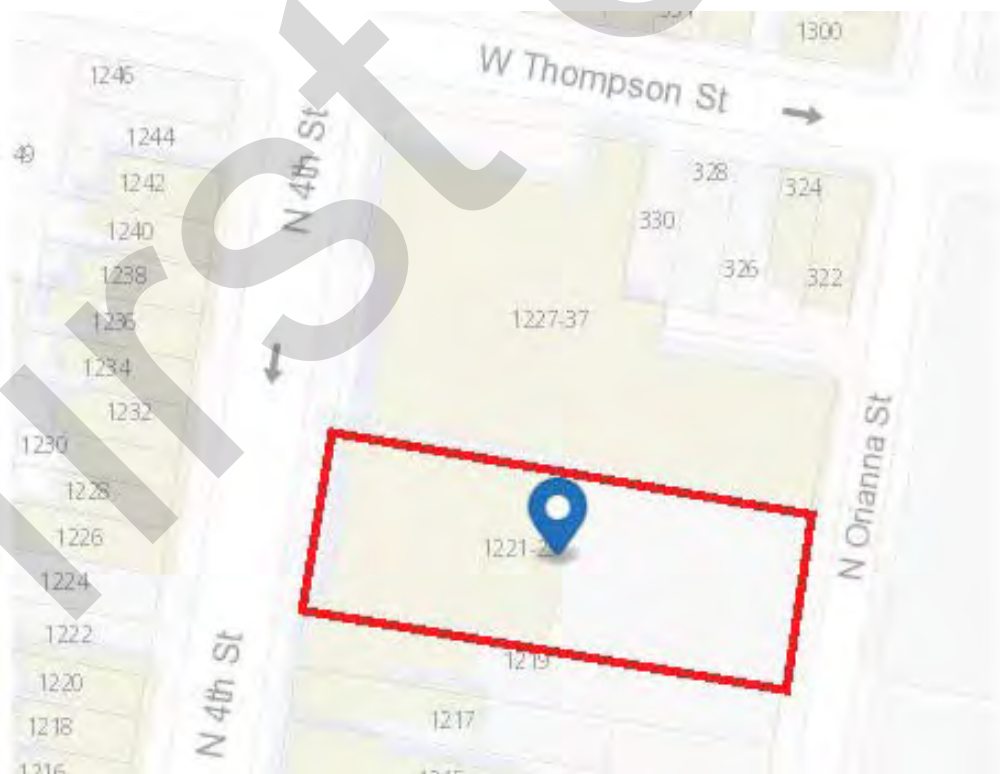
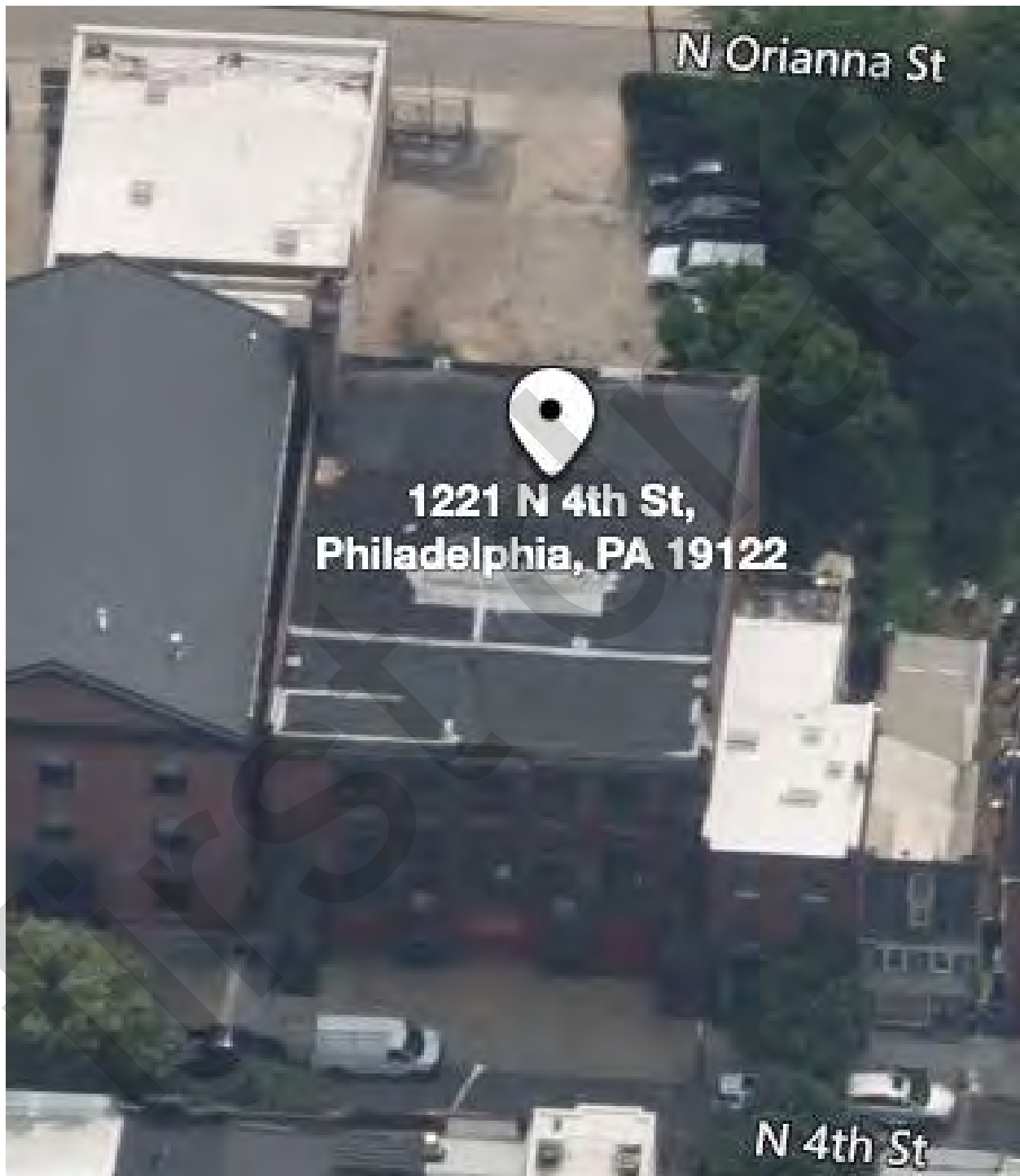


Figure 15 – Site Plan with NR Boundary shown in red.



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**Figure 16** – Aerial Photograph, 2020. West elevation, view east.

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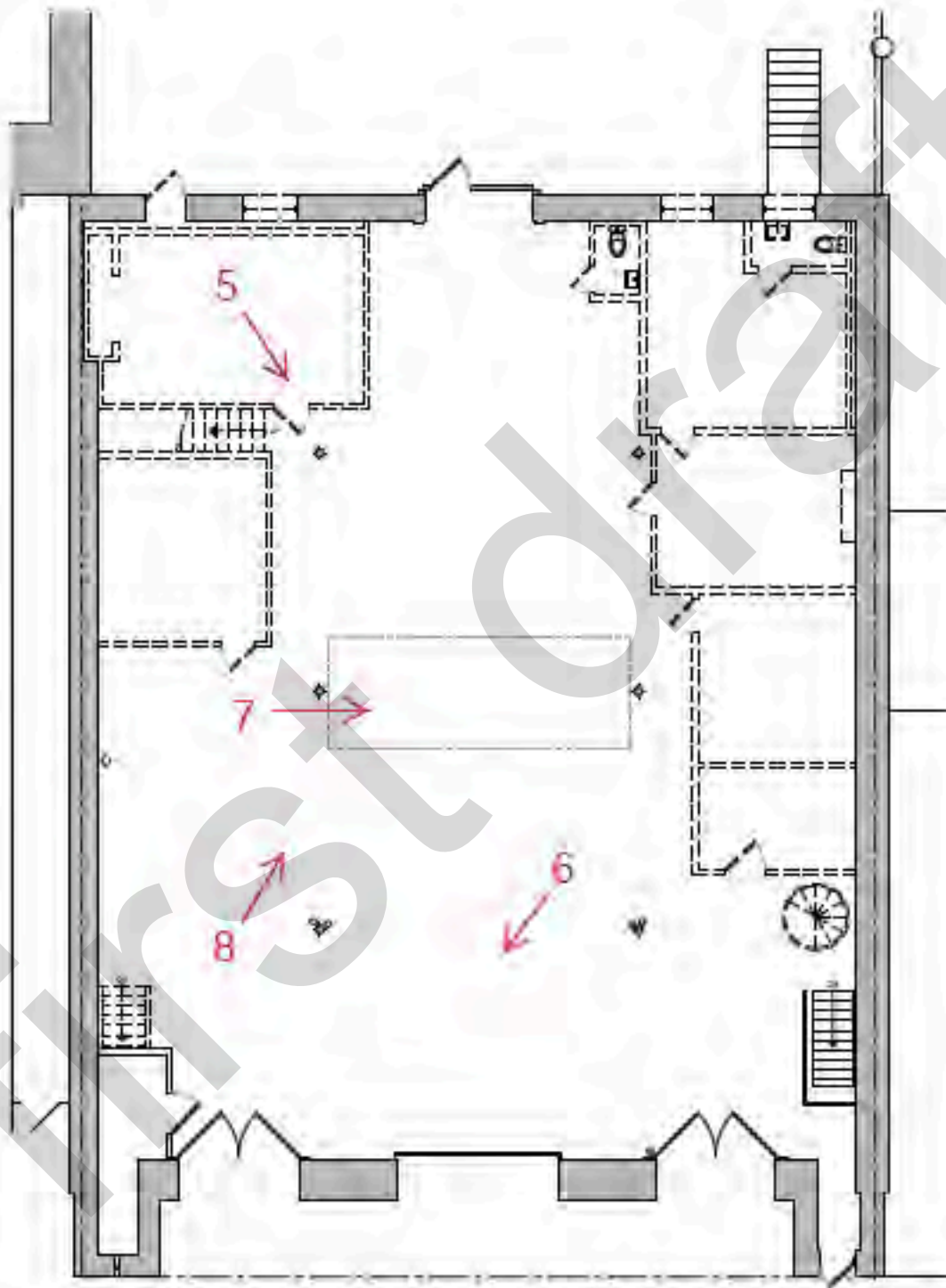
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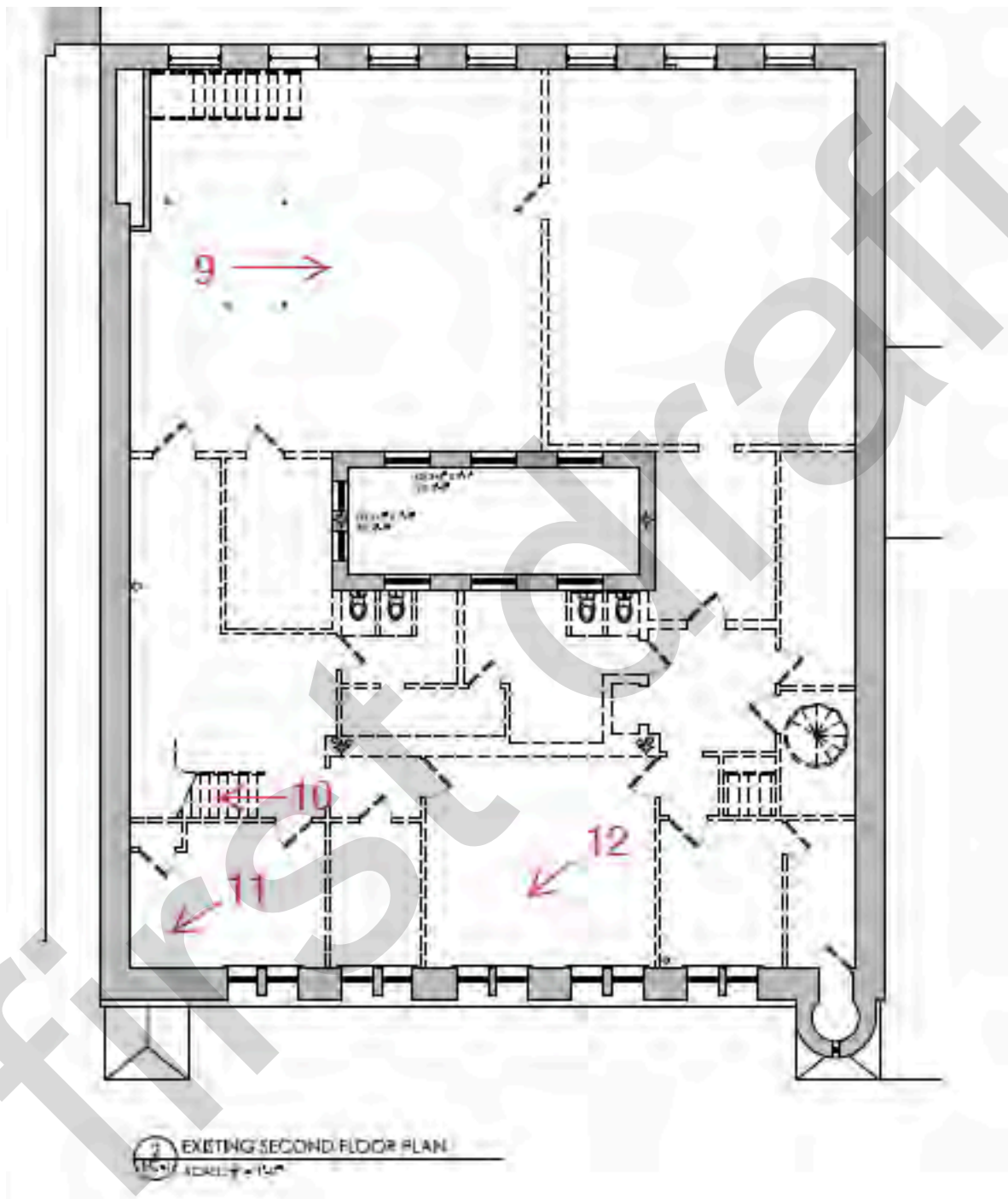
EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

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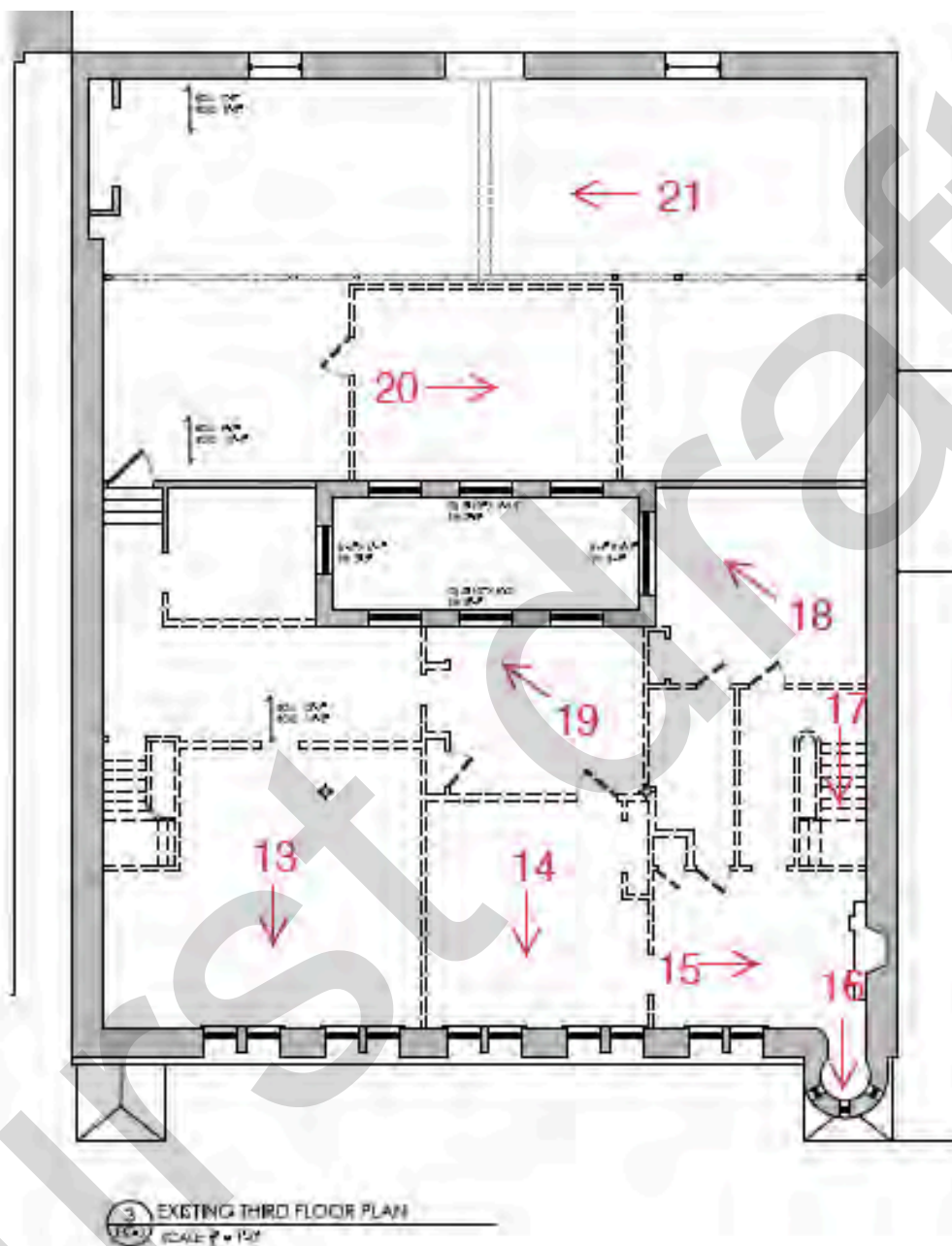


Figure 17 – Existing Plans with Photograph Key.

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**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.