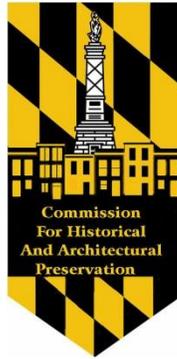


**Baltimore City
Commission for Historical and
Architectural Preservation**



**Landmark Designation Report
January 10, 2023**

Engine Company 14 Firehouse
1908 Hollins Street
Baltimore, Maryland



Commission for Historical & Architectural Preservation

ERIC HOLCOMB, *Executive Director*

Charles L. Benton, Jr. Building 417 East Fayette Street Eighth Floor Baltimore, MD 21202-3416
410-396-4866



BRANDON M. SCOTT
Mayor



CHRIS RYER
Director

Significance Summary

The Engine Company No. 14 firehouse in the Boyd-Booth neighborhood was originally constructed in 1888, and is the longest-operating firehouse in Baltimore City. This firehouse was long advocated for by residents of this portion of the city in the late 19th century. The building was altered in 1902, when it received a new façade and a rear addition, resulting in the building that stands today. Originally designed by Inspector of Buildings J. Theodore Ostler, the alterations were designed by a subsequent inspector of Buildings, Edward D. Preston and is a handsome example of late nineteenth and early twentieth century municipal architecture. The building retains sufficient physical integrity to convey its historic association. This firehouse and the generations of firefighters in Engine Company 14 have served southwest Baltimore City for over 130 years.

Architectural Description

Engine Company No. 14 is located on the north side of the 1900 block of Hollins Street in the Boyd-Booth neighborhood, between South Monroe Street to the east and South Payson Street to the west. The rear of the property is accessed from Booth Street, an alley street, which due to a significant change in topography, is a full story higher than Hollins Street. The property is 62.5 feet wide and 130 feet long. The two-story brick firehouse is semi-detached. It is located on the east portion of the lot, abutting a two-story rowhouse. The building has a low-sloped roof, which drains to the west elevation, which has a gutter system. The remainder of the lot serves as a parking lot for the firehouse. There is a stone retaining wall at the rear of the lot adjacent to the building, at grade with Booth Street.

The firehouse is faced with ironstone Roman brick on the façade, and common brick on the side and rear elevations. The first floor of the façade features a marble base with two half-glazed wood pedestrian doors flanking a large central non-historic garage door. There is a pressed metal cornice above the first floor. The second floor features five arched window openings that hold non-wood replacement windows with rusticated brownstone sills and a projecting brownstone beltcourse. The façade is topped with an ornate pressed metal false cornice. A large flagpole is located below the center window on the second floor.

The west elevation extends to the rear of the lot, and has eleven bays. The window openings have non-wood replacement windows, rusticated brownstone sills and arched lintels. A frame hometower is located near the rear of the building, and rises an additional two stories above the roof of the firehouse. The second floor of the east elevation is visible from Booth Street, the rear alley street, and, unusually, has window openings, even though this portion of the building is abutting the property line. The rear elevation is accessible from Booth Street. Due to the significant topographical change, the first floor of the firehouse is below grade, and the second story is at grade on this street. Two bays wide, there is a door opening with a transom window and a bricked-in window opening on the rear elevation.

A rear addition was constructed in 1902, and this is visible on the east and west elevations – there are seams in the brick wall where the bricks of the addition abut the bricks of the original building.

The seam on the east elevation is the most visible; the seam on the west elevation is largely obscured by a metal downspout.

Property History

Engine Company No. 14 was organized in July 1888. This parcel, an unimproved lot, was purchased by Mayor and City Council from Frank M. Harmison, Trustee, for \$3,000 on September 24, 1887 to serve as the firehouse for this company.¹

It was common in the late 19th and early 20th century for municipal buildings to be designed by the Inspector of Buildings. The Inspector of Buildings in 1887 was J. Theodore Oster, and his Annual Report indicates that he designed the firehouse, noting that “A delay in selecting the site and other matters connected with the title of the property, rendered it late in the season before I could prepare the drawings...The drawings for this house provide for all the requirements of the Fire Department, their wishes have been consulted, and where possible adopted; and I think when completed, the building will be found in every way satisfactory.”² James B. Yeatman was the builder.³

The firehouse was completed in 1888, and was described in the Fire Department’s Annual Report:

The house for No. 14 Engine Company, is located on Hollins street, west of Monroe street. It is a two story brick building, 25 feet front and 110 feet deep. The lot is 63 feet front, and 132 feet in depth. The first and second stories are finished in the same manner as the house for No. 6 Hook and Ladder Company. On each side of the front entrance there are towers fifty-five feet high. One is used as the belfry and the other to hang the hose in. The company went into service July, 1888.⁴

The Inspector of Buildings reported in his 1889 annual report that the firehouse was “one of the best built and most convenient houses in the Department.”⁵

The first engine for the firehouse was a 1888 steamer engine built by Clapp & Jones of Hudson, NY, and is now in the collections of the Fire Museum of Maryland.⁶ The fire apparatuses were originally horse-drawn, and Baltimore City firehouses were built with stalls for horses until 1920.⁷ In the 1887 Annual Report of the Fire Department, a request was made for an additional appropriation to be made for the Engine Company 14 firehouse in order to build a two-story brick stable at the rear of the lot for the reserve, sick, and disabled horses of the Fire Department.⁸ However, it appears that this request was not honored.

The 1901 Annual Report of the Inspector of Buildings mentioned that there had been an intention to do “considerable work” to improve the firehouse in 1901, including an enlargement of the hose tower, but the work was not completed due to other emergencies throughout the year.⁹

In 1902, the firehouse was “rebuilt”, according to the Annual Report of the Inspector of Buildings.¹⁰ This work was not born out of any calamity or destruction to the original firehouse.

Instead, the reconstruction was part of a larger renovation campaign undertaken by the Inspector of Buildings, which included rebuilding six of the engine houses, with “the work being done in an artistic and thoroughly workman-like manner and deserving of the highest commendation.”¹¹ Instead of enlarging the hose tower as previously intended, a new one was constructed at the rear of the building, and a 22’ long two-story addition was constructed at the rear, extending the firehouse to the full depth of the lot. (Map 5) This allowed access to the rear of the second floor of the firehouse from Booth Street because the grade of Booth Street is a full story higher than that of Hollins Street. The most significant alterations were on the façade: the belltower and hometower were removed, and the façade that exists today was constructed. This project cost \$10,665 to complete.¹² Edward D. Preston was the Inspector of Buildings at that time, and J. Clifford Spedden was the draftsman for that department.¹³ It is likely that the new façade was an intentional stylistic branding of the firehouses on the part of the Inspector of Buildings.

Contextual History

The Engine Company 14 firehouse is the oldest continuous-operating firehouse in Baltimore City, and it is one of the most active firehouses in Baltimore City.¹⁴ The firehouse is located in southwest Baltimore, in the Boyd-Booth neighborhood, several blocks west of Union Square.

The City of Baltimore established a professional Fire Department in 1858, after more than a hundred years of service by various volunteer fire departments.¹⁵ As the city expanded, firehouses were added to newly developed parts of the city. Following the Great Baltimore Fire in 1904 that destroyed 70 blocks in downtown Baltimore (which other fire companies could not respond to because their hoses did not connect to the fire hydrants), national standards in firefighting equipment and protocols were developed.¹⁶

This portion of the city developed rapidly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In the 1881 *Annual Report of the Board of Fire Commissioners*, which was submitted to the Mayor and City Council, the Board recommended the construction of fire houses in various parts of the city, including in this vicinity, stating “Another section that is in need of better protection from fire is that portion lying west of Stricker and south of Baltimore streets. It is thickly built up to the city boundary with dwelling houses, breweries, slaughterhouses, and other valuable property.”¹⁷

This recommendation was not acted upon by the Mayor and City Council. Thus, in the 1886 *Annual Report of Fire Commissioners*, there was a renewed request for the addition of a firehouse in this portion of the city:

An engine company is required in the western section, somewhere in the vicinity of Mount and Hollins streets, to afford proper protection to that rapidly growing part of the city. The last engine company, No. 13, was organized in January, 1876, and since that time about eighteen thousand houses have been built, and a great number of them are large warehouses and manufacturing establishments. During the last ten years, the style of buildings has entirely changed, as they are carried up to great heights and filled

with valuable and often combustible goods, and no matter how large the building is that is burning, we cannot bring more than eleven engines and three trucks in service...¹⁸

In 1888, after years of requests, the Fire Department was given the funding to organize two new Companies: the No. 14 Engine Company which occupies this building, and No. 6 Hook and Ladder Company.¹⁹ It was reported in the *Baltimore Sun* that various residents of the neighborhood took credit for convincing the Mayor to sign the Ordinance appropriating the funds for this firehouse on Hollins Street.²⁰ This was clearly a long-desired resource for the community. That same year, the City also gained seven fire department houses from Baltimore County, when the City annexed 17 square miles of land to the west and north of the City.²¹

When Engine Company 14 was established, it had eleven members, with five permanent employees and six on-call employees. All of them lived less than a half mile from the firehouse, with two employees even living on the same block.²² While living near one's place of employment was common in the late 19th century, it was likely imperative for firefighters, especially those serving on-call. Firehouses have long been centers of community and service, and the Engine Company 14 firehouse was part of that tradition. Members of this Company in 1888 founded the "Register Literary and Pleasure Association" and hosted performances of songs and recitations at the firehouse.²³ In the 1980s, the firehouse was a distribution center for the Coats for Kids campaign, which gave away winter coats to children that needed them.²⁴

Today, Engine Company 14 is one of the most active firehouses in Baltimore City.²⁵ Through the Company's long history, members have received commendations for their bravery during their responses, and some were injured while trying to save lives.²⁶ Two firefighters from this Company recently died while fighting a fire. On January 24, 2022, two members of Engine Company 14, Firefighter/Paramedic Kelsey Sadler and EMT/Firefighter Kenneth Lacayo died while fighting a fire in a vacant rowhome the 200 block of S. Stricker Street.²⁷ Lieutenant Paul Butrim also died and EMT/firefighter John McMaster was hospitalized in critical condition. This was one of the deadliest fires for first responders in Baltimore's history.²⁸

A statement written by Mayor Latrobe in his 1887 Annual Report praising the Fire Department still rings true today: "[I]ts efficiency will compare most favorably with that of any city in the country. Its members are well-trained, experienced, and brave; again and again have they proved their courage and endurance."²⁹

Engine Company No. 14 will join four firehouses that are designated as Baltimore City Landmarks:

- Engine House No. 6 at 416 N. Gay Street, built 1853, designated in 1975, currently the Baltimore City Fire Museum
- Walters Bath House and Engine House #10 at 906 Washington Boulevard, built 1872, designated 2002, currently a mixed-used development
- Fire Engine Company No. 25 at 2140 McCulloh Street, built 1904, designated in 2003, currently the headquarters of the Druid Heights Community Development Corporation.

- Truck Company No. 5 (Oliver Community Firehouse) at 1220 E. Oliver Street, built 1905, designation in progress, currently vacant but proposed to be the African American Firefighters Museum

Application of Landmark Designation Criteria

The property meets CHAP Landmark Designation criteria, as follows:

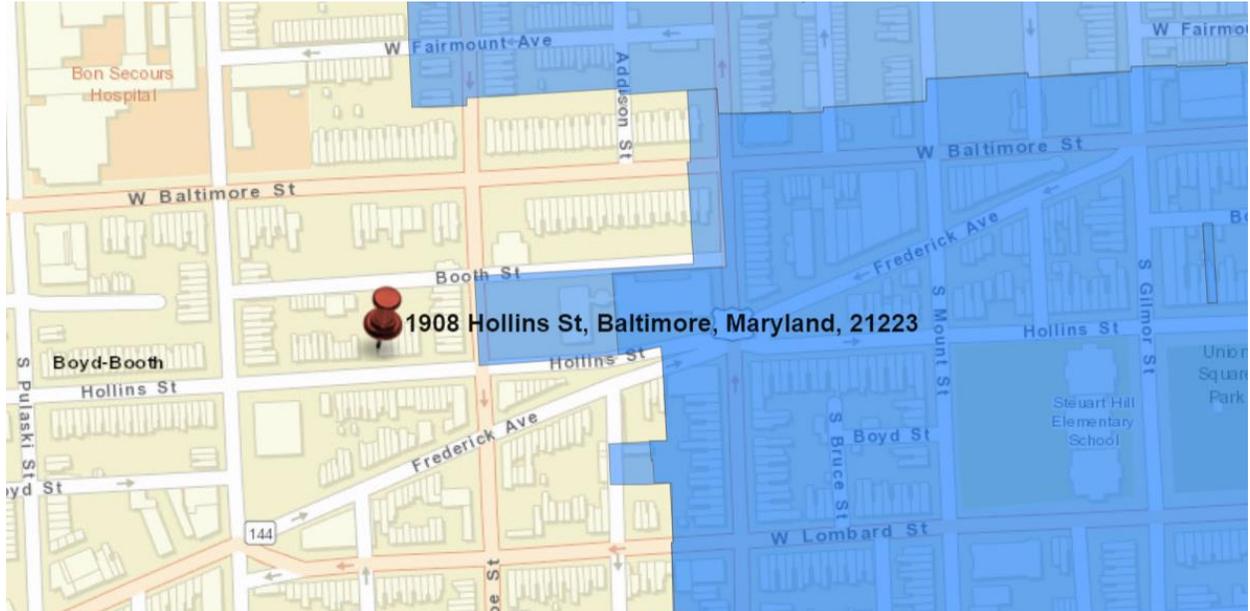
The quality of significance in Baltimore history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, public interiors, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

B. A Baltimore City Landmark may be a site, structure, landscape, building (or portion thereof), place, work of art, or other object:

1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history; or
3. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

The Engine Company No. 14 firehouse in the Boyd-Booth neighborhood was originally constructed in 1888, and is the longest-operating firehouse in Baltimore City. This firehouse was long advocated for by residents of this portion of the city in the late 19th century. The building was altered in 1902, when it received a new façade and a rear addition, resulting in the building that is stands today. Originally designed by Inspector of Buildings J. Theodore Ostler, the alterations were designed by a subsequent inspector of Buildings, Edward D. Preston and is a handsome example of late nineteenth and early twentieth century municipal architecture. The building retains sufficient physical integrity to convey its historic association. This firehouse and the generations of firefighters in Engine Company 14 have served southwest Baltimore City for over 130 years.

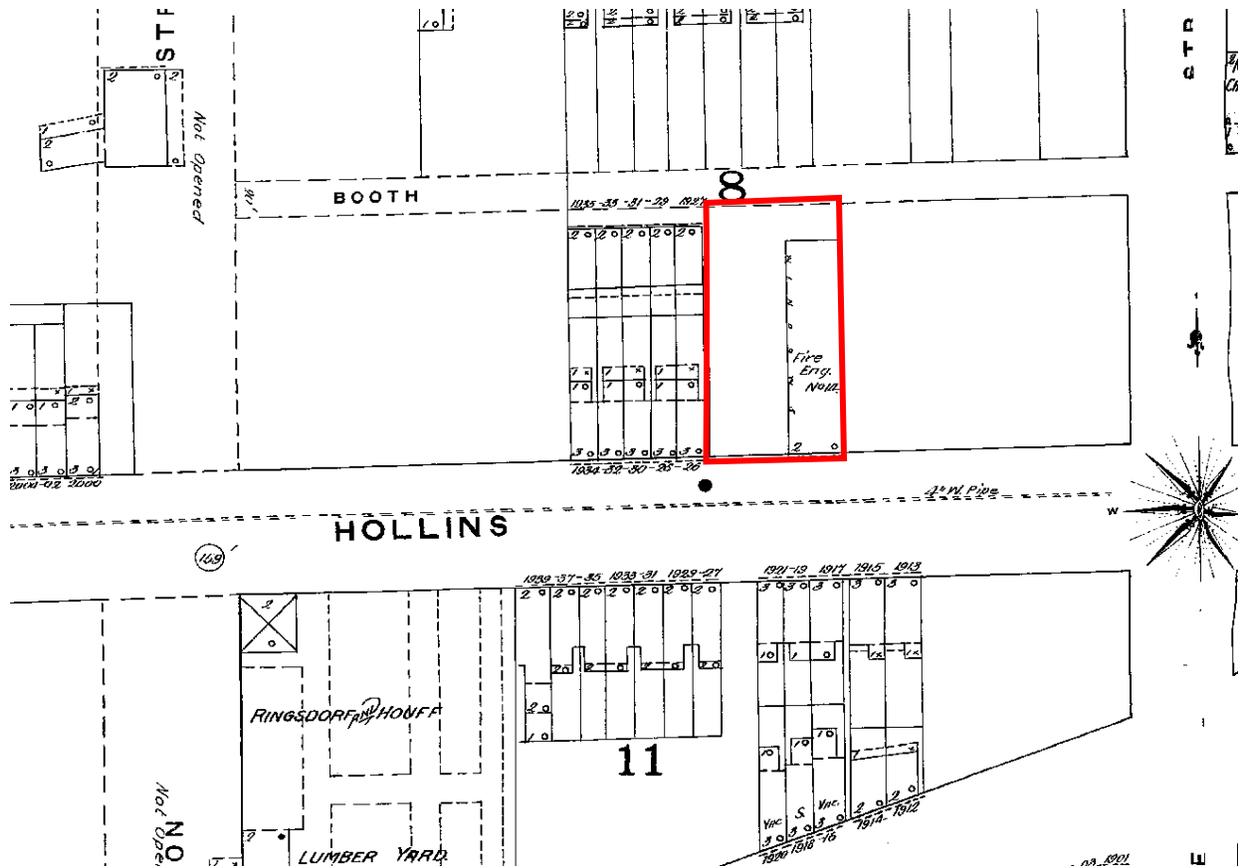
MAPS AND PHOTOS



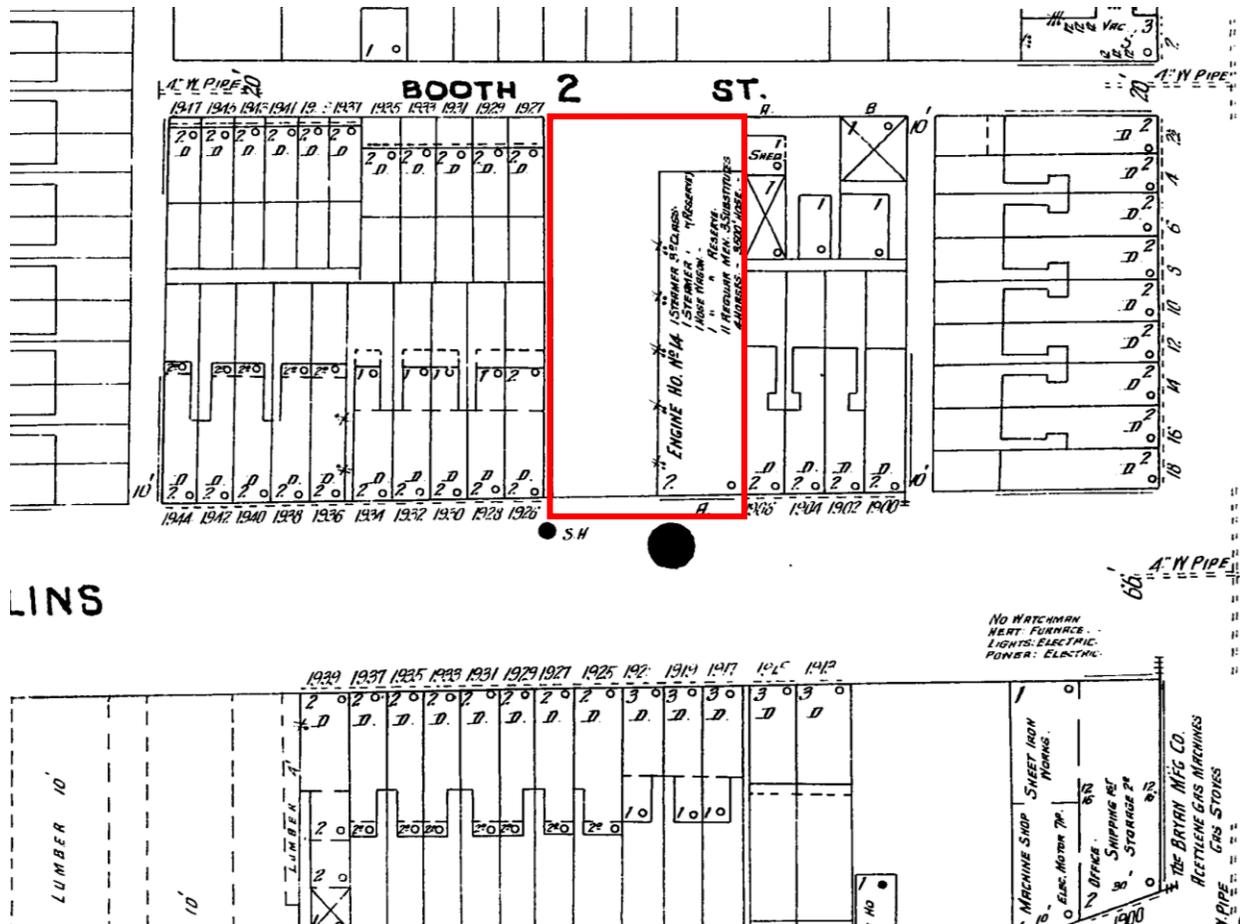
Map 1: Location of the property. The blue overlay shows federal and local historic districts.



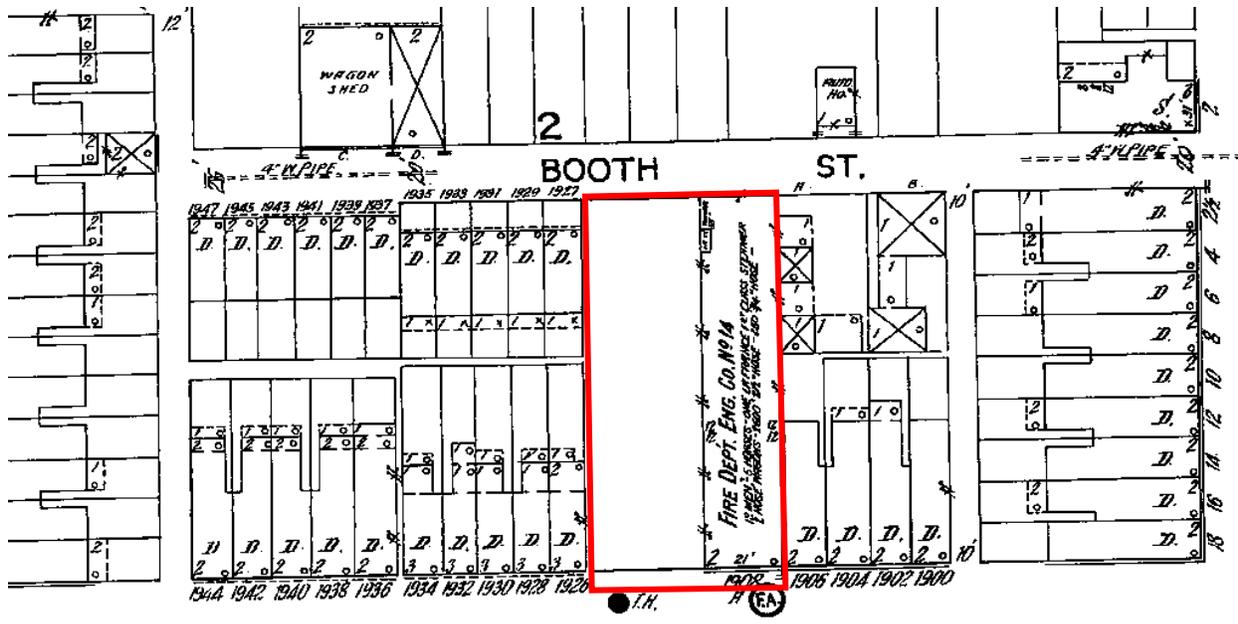
Map 2: Location of the property, outlined in red.



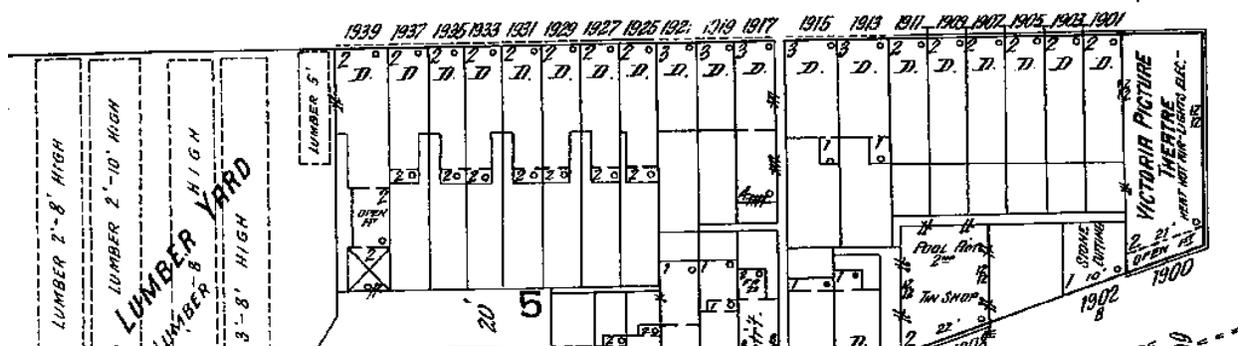
Map 3: 1890 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Volume 3, Page 90A), depicting the 1888 building.



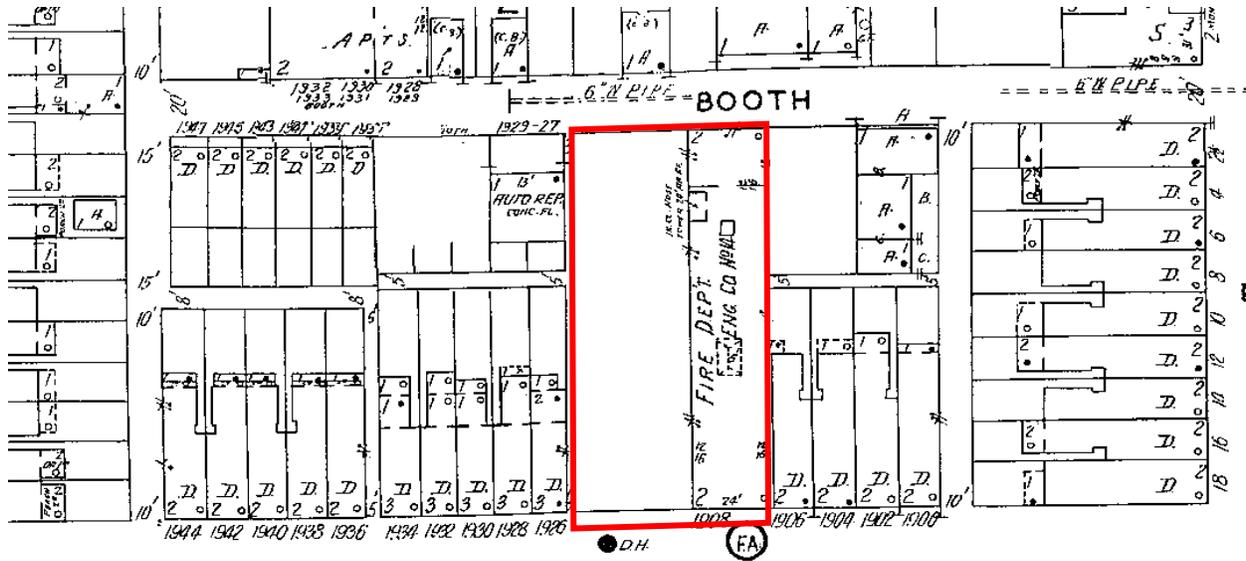
Map 4: 1901-1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Volume 1, 1901, Sheet 27), depicting Engine House No. 14, which had, according to the map, 2 Steamers, 3rd class (one of which was reserve), two hose wagons (one of which was reserve), 11 regular men, 3 substitutes, four horses, and 3500 feet of hose.



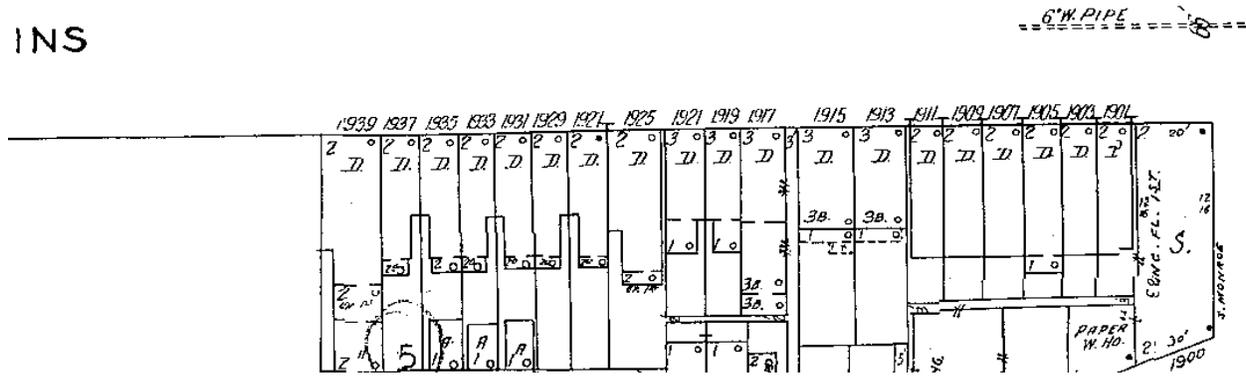
LLINS



Map 5: 1914-1915 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Volume 6, 1914, Sheet 536) The building now extends the full depth of the lot [add more]



INS



Map 5: 1914-1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Volume 8, 1928-1951, Sheet 1205)

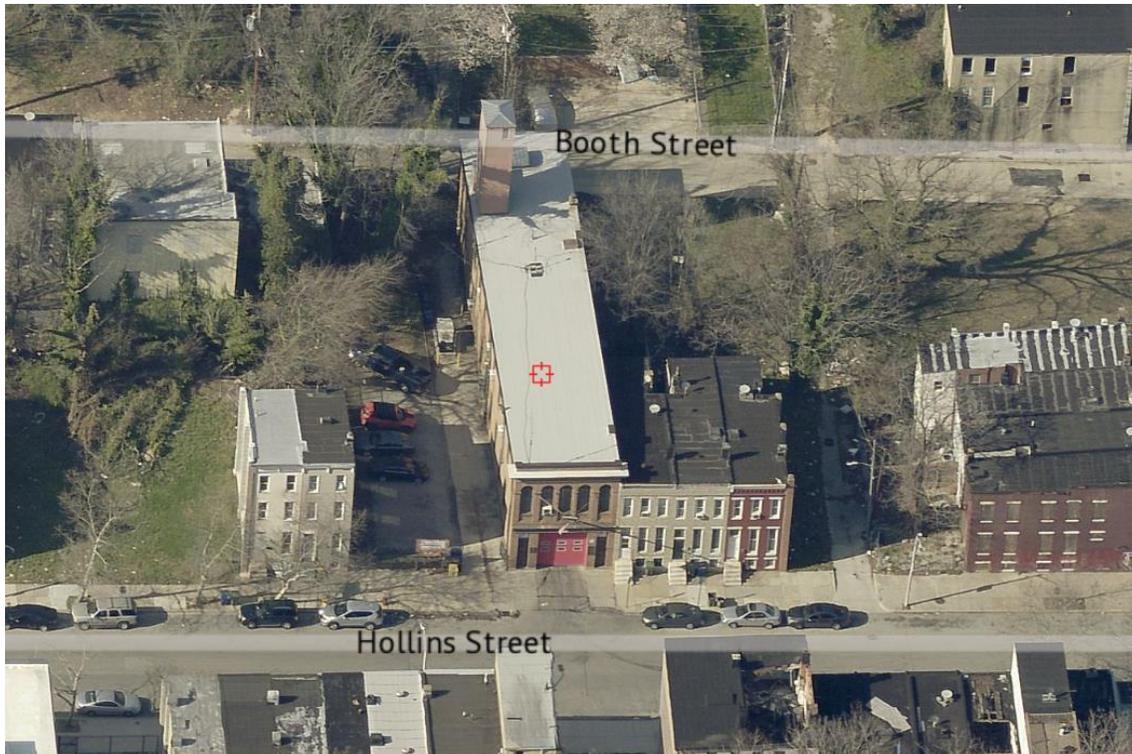


Image 1: 2022 Aerial Photo of property, view from South. (Eagleview)



Image 2: 2022 Aerial Photo of property, view from North. (Eagleview)

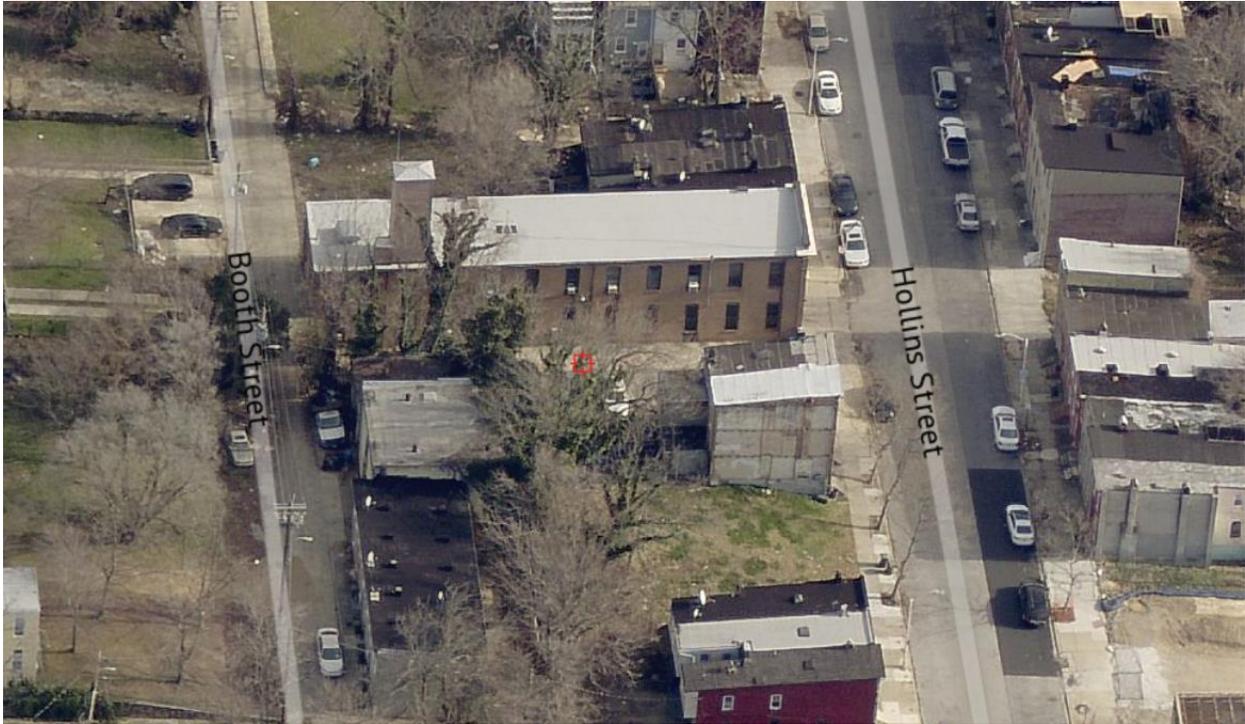


Image 3: 2020 Aerial Photo of property, view from West. (Eagleview)



Image 4: 2022 Aerial Photo of property, view from East. (Eagleview)



Image 5: Façade of property.



Image 6: Front and side elevation.



Image 6: Architectural details of façade.



Image 7: Plaque on façade.



Image 8: West elevation at the rear of the property. The rear two bays of this elevation are a 1902 addition. Also visible is the stone retaining wall, which demonstrates the significant grade change between Booth Street, an alley street, and Hollins Street.



Image 9: East and rear elevation, viewed from Booth Street.



Image 10: Rear elevation.



Image 12: Rear and west elevation.

¹ “Baltimore City Superior Court Land Records, Liber JB 1158, Folio 222-224,” n.d., accessed December 6, 2022.

² Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers* (Baltimore, 1888), 324, 336, <http://archive.org/details/mayorsmessage18871balt>.

³ Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, 324.

⁴ Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers* (Baltimore, 1889), 1054, <http://archive.org/details/mayorsmessage18882balt>.

⁵ Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers* (Baltimore, 1889), 827, <http://archive.org/details/mayorsmessage18881balt>.

⁶ “Libel Against a Schooner Dismissed,” *The Sun* (1837-), July 4, 1888; “125 Years Later, Still Battling Blazes,” *The Baltimore Sun*, October 3, 2013, sec. LOCAL.

-
- ⁷ Gerry Grimm, “The Baltimore Firehouse: An Introductory Essay” (CHAP files, Baltimore City Department of Planning, n.d.), 3.
- ⁸ Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers*, 1888, sec. Report of the Fire Department, page 754.
- ⁹ Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers* (Baltimore, 1902), 64, <http://archive.org/details/mayorsmessage1901balt>.
- ¹⁰ Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers* (Baltimore, 1903), sec. Annual Report of the Inspector of Buildings, pg. 5 and 32, <http://archive.org/details/mayorsmessage19022balt>.
- ¹¹ Baltimore (Md.). Fire Department and Baltimore (Md.). Fire Department, *Annual Report of the Board of Fire Commissioners to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for the Year Ending* (Baltimore, Md. : John Murphy Co., 1902), 6, <http://archive.org/details/annualreportofbo1902balt>.
- ¹² Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers*, 1903, sec. Annual Report of the Inspector of Buildings, page 32.
- ¹³ Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, sec. Annual Report of the Inspector of Buildings, pg. 2.
- ¹⁴ Kurt Waters, “Ten Historic Fire Houses in Maryland,” Preservation Maryland, July 2, 2016, <https://www.preservationmaryland.org/maryland-historic-fire-houses/>.
- ¹⁵ “History,” Baltimore City Fire Department, October 25, 2016, <https://fire.baltimorecity.gov/history-0>.
- ¹⁶ “History.”
- ¹⁷ Baltimore (Md.). Fire Department and Baltimore (Md.). Fire Department, *Annual Report of the Board of Fire Commissioners to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for the Year Ending* (Baltimore, Md. : John Murphy Co., 1881), 72, <http://archive.org/details/annualreportofbo1881balt>.
- ¹⁸ Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers* (Baltimore, 1886), 1285, <http://archive.org/details/mayorsmessage1885balt>.
- ¹⁹ Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers*, 1889, 1018.
- ²⁰ Reported for the Baltimore Sun, “SIGNING CITY ORDINANCES: Mayor Latrobe’s Opinion of Certain Appropriations by the City Council,” *The Sun (1837-)*, March 28, 1888.
- ²¹ Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers*, 1889, 1017.
- ²² Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, 1099.
- ²³ “Outing in the Catskills,” *The Sun (1837-)*, August 15, 1888.
- ²⁴ “Coats for Children to Be Distributed at Firehouses, Schools,” *The Sun (1837-)*, November 25, 1888; “25,000 Coats to Be Distributed Free to Youngsters,” *The Sun (1837-)*, December 3, 1889, sec. Maryland.
- ²⁵ Waters, “Ten Historic Fire Houses in Maryland.”
- ²⁶ “FIREMEN HIT POLICE CLAIM: Solely Responsible For Finding Body In Fire, They Say,” *The Sun (1837-)*, May 6, 1949; Roger Twigg, “Hot Air Duct Suspected in Baltimore Fire That Kills 3,” *The Sun (1837-)*, December 31, 1987.
- ²⁷ “Three Firefighters Killed, One in Critical Condition after Being Trapped in Blaze in Vacant Baltimore Rowhome,” Baltimore Sun, accessed January 8, 2023, <https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-vacant-home-fire-stricker-firefighters-trapped-20220124-pzy6peo3ufbjppw772xlfmhae-story.html>.
- ²⁸ “Three Firefighters Killed, One in Critical Condition after Being Trapped in Blaze in Vacant Baltimore Rowhome.”
- ²⁹ Baltimore (Md.). Mayor, *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers*, 1888, 43.