

ENGINE COMPANY 252

/originally Engine Company 52/later Engine Company 152,
617 Central Avenue, Brooklyn.
Built 1896-97; architect Parfitt Brothers.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 3429, Lot 3.

On September 19, 1995, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of Engine Company 252, Brooklyn, and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1).¹ Five people, including a member of Engine Co. 252, spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

Summary

Engine Company 252, built in 1896-97 for the City of Brooklyn, is a major design by the prominent Brooklyn architectural firm of Parfitt Brothers. One of the finest firehouses ever erected in Brooklyn, it is a reflection of the expansion of the Brooklyn Fire Department in the 1890s. The building was erected in southern Bushwick, a section of Brooklyn that experienced intensive development in the late 1880s and 1890s. The design of the firehouse, a Flemish Revival style structure with a prominent scrolled front gable and stepped end gables, may allude to the seventeenth-century history of Bushwick as a Dutch settlement. It is constructed of brick and Lake Superior red sandstone with subtly contrasting terra-cotta detail and iron pilasters. The intricate carved lintel above the ground story incorporates shields, the name of the engine company, the date of 1896, and "BFD," the initials of the Brooklyn Fire Department. Since April 1, 1897, when it was officially placed into service for Brooklyn's Engine Company 52 (later Engine Company 152, and since 1913 Engine Company 252), the building has been in continuous use and remains a symbol of the importance of the fire department to the city's residential communities.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Development of Bushwick²

Engine Company 252 is located near the southern end of Bushwick, in an area that was not developed until the final years of the nineteenth century. Bushwick, one of the six colonial villages that now comprise the borough of Brooklyn, was historically the area generally bounded by the East River, Division Street, Broadway, Highland Boulevard, and the Queens County boundary. It included today's neighborhoods of Williamsburg, Greenpoint, and Bushwick. European settlement in Bushwick is variously dated to the late 1630s or early 1640s.

A village settlement named Boswijk, or "town in the woods," by Governor Peter Stuyvesant was laid out in 1660 when fourteen Frenchmen and a Dutch interpreter settled near Union and Conselyea streets in what is now Williamsburg. By the time of the Revolutionary War, there were three small settlements in Bushwick, all of them near the northern part of the village. The remainder of Bushwick was laid out as farms. This includes the area at the southern tip of the community where Engine Company 252 is located.³

The section of Bushwick closest to the East River developed rapidly in the nineteenth century, becoming the independent city of Williamsburg, which merged with the City of Brooklyn in 1855. At this time, the town of Bushwick also merged with Brooklyn; these new sections became known as the Eastern District. Bushwick (as opposed to Williamsburg and Greenpoint) remained sparsely settled until the late nineteenth century since this inland area was poorly served by transit lines.⁴

It was the opening of an elevated railroad in 1889 on Broadway that finally created a climate conducive to extensive residential development in Bushwick.⁵ In the 1890s, following the opening of the el, speculative development exploded in Bushwick. Much of the new housing took the form of wooden rowhouses and tenements. Most of the people who moved to the newly accessible region were immigrants, many of whom were from Germany. Development in southern Bushwick moved northeast from the elevated line.⁶ Initially Engine Company 252 stood in isolation; it was the only building on the blockfront of Central Avenue between Schaeffer and Decatur Streets in 1898.⁷

As the population of Bushwick increased, the city of Brooklyn invested in public buildings to serve the needs of the new residents. The late nineteenth century was a period of rapid expansion of the civic realm, with the construction of many new schools, police and fire stations, park pavilions, and other civic structures. These buildings were usually well-built masonry structures, many of great architectural distinction; they were often the most impressive structures in the neighborhood. Among the finest of these new civic structures was Engine Company 252.

The Brooklyn Fire Department: A Brief History⁸

In the early nineteenth century, Bushwick, which was not yet a part of Brooklyn, had no organized fire protection. The first fire companies in what would become known as the Eastern District were organized in 1834, when the village of Williamsburg petitioned the State Legislature to permit the establishment of two fire companies and the purchase of two engines.

Early fire companies in Brooklyn were volunteer units, each with its own equipment and personnel. The efficiency of these units varied, depending on the conditions of the firehouse and the engines and the training of members. The idea of creating a paid fire department, organized as a part of the city's government, was first suggested in Brooklyn in 1858, but the move went nowhere since the politically well-connected volunteer companies (many of which doubled as political clubs) were opposed. The organization of a professional department in New York City first occurred in October 1865. The bill establishing the Brooklyn Fire Department was enacted in 1869. The department was to have a chief overseen by four commissioners.

Some companies were closed, new apparatus was ordered, and many of the firehouses were rebuilt. The several thousand volunteers who had manned the many firehouses of the volunteer department were replaced by only a few hundred professional fire fighters. In 1880, for example, 235 men worked in nineteen companies.⁹

Brooklyn's population expanded rapidly in the decades after the formation of the Brooklyn Fire Department as hundreds of thousands of new residents moved to the city and as the city of Brooklyn annexed outlying regions. Brooklyn's population escalated from 396,099 in 1870, to

566,663 in 1880, 806,343, in 1890, and 1,166,582 in 1900. With the increase in population came a corresponding expansion of the developed sections of Brooklyn and the need for additional fire companies. The need was especially acute in areas such as Bushwick and the more suburban neighborhoods in southern Brooklyn that were primarily developed with frame houses.

In 1895, four new companies were organized and fifteen new firehouses were under construction. Additional engine companies were founded and firehouses erected in the next few years. The commitment on the part of Brooklyn's government to expend money for the construction of new firehouses may have resulted not only from the pressing need for these buildings, but also from the fact that rival New York City had erected many impressive new buildings during the previous fifteen years, far outstripping Brooklyn in both the number and quality of firehouses.

The new firehouses offered greatly improved comfort and efficiency. In 1896, the Commissioner of the Brooklyn Fire Department wrote:

The new houses have been fitted up with every convenience for the comfort of the men that is consistent with proper discipline. The toilet appliances have been put up with a proper regard for sanitation, bathrooms and lavatories have been supplied, ventilation has been carefully considered, and separate sleeping apartments for the officers have been provided. The men deserve this consideration, and an improvement in their physique and morale will be the resulting consequence. It is very different in the old houses -- poor ventilation, imperfect plumbing and crowded dormitories have resulted in sickness, grumbling and discontent.¹⁰

General Firehouse Design¹¹

Architect Marriott Field first discussed the idea of differentiating the firehouse from the conventional stable building type in his *City Architecture*, published in 1853.¹² Field advocated a heroic architecture for firehouses as a means of identifying such buildings and their civic nature: he recommended that firehouses be ornamented with appropriate symbolic details, such as flames, trumpets, hooks, ladders, and hoses. However, it wasn't until the professionalization of fire departments, that money was expended on the

construction of such impressive civic buildings. In New York City, firehouses of architectural distinction first appeared in the 1880s when Napoleon Le Brun & Son (after 1888, Napoleon Le Brun & Sons) began designing small buildings for the New York City Fire Department. Although the firm's earliest firehouse designs were relatively simple, as the 1880s progressed their buildings became more distinguished and more clearly identifiable as firehouses. In Brooklyn, after the establishment of the Fire Department, the volunteer firehouses were adapted to the needs of the professional department. The new firehouses required in the 1890s were planned as prominent civic structures. Since firehouses were among the few buildings erected by civic authorities in residential neighborhoods, their design was an important symbol of the civic realm.

Firehouses in an urban setting tend to be fairly simple in design. The nineteenth-century firehouse needed space for the fire engine and other apparatus, and it required stalls for the horses that pulled the engines. It was also necessary to provide an office for the foreman of the company and a room or rooms where the firemen could spend their time between fires. This was especially important in Brooklyn, where firefighters were required to sleep in their respective firehouses and were only given twelve hours leave every ten days.¹³ Firehouses were almost always located on mid-block sites since these were less expensive than more prominent corner sites. Since plots were narrow, firehouses tended to be three stories tall, with the apparatus stored on the ground story and rooms for the company above. Within the confines of this basic form, talented architects, such as Parfitt Brothers, created exceptional buildings.

Engine Company 52 (now Engine Company 252)

Among the new companies established in the 1890s was Engine Company 52 in a rapidly developing section of southern Bushwick. Planning for the company's firehouse began in 1895 when the City of Brooklyn purchased a 25 foot x 100 foot plot of land in the middle of the blockfront of Central Avenue between Schaeffer Street and what was then known as Van Voorhees Street (now Decatur Street). In 1896, Parfitt Brothers, one of Brooklyn's leading architectural firms, was commissioned to design the new firehouse. This was the firm's fourth firehouse commission; it had designed three other buildings in

the preceding year (see below). Parfitt Brothers designed Brooklyn's finest neighborhood firehouse for Engine Company 52.¹⁴ The Flemish Revival style is consistent with the work of Parfitt Brothers. Many of the firm's best designs reflect a Flemish influence and are enlivened by picturesque gables (see below).

This style, with its use of such Dutch-inspired features as scrolled gables and iron tie rods also can be related to the history of Bushwick, one of the five colonial-era Dutch villages in what is now Brooklyn. In the late nineteenth century, as the interest in colonial design expanded in the United States, architects in the New York City area began to incorporate Dutch-inspired motifs into their work, echoing the Dutch colonial history in New York City, Brooklyn, and surrounding regions. In Manhattan, rowhouses, churches, carriage houses, skyscrapers, and other buildings were erected with stepped gables and other Dutch- or Flemish-inspired motifs.¹⁵ There was, in fact, a precedent for designing a Flemish Revival style firehouse: an engine company erected on Old Slip in Manhattan in 1884 to the design of Napoleon Le Brun & Sons, the firm responsible for most of New York City's firehouses in the 1880s and early 1890s.¹⁶

In Brooklyn, Flemish gables appeared on residential buildings and on public projects.¹⁷ Not only did Parfitt Brothers use a Dutch gable at Engine Company 52, but Dutch-inspired stepped gables also appear on the firm's Engine Company 53 on 86th Street in Bath Beach designed in 1895, the year before Engine Company 52 was designed.¹⁸

Engine Company 52 was formally opened on April 1, 1897. Described in the press as "a model of its kind," the building was designed to house the firefighting apparatus (originally a steam fire engine and a four-hose wagon) and horses on the ground floor; the foreman's office, a sleeping room for the foreman and his assistant, and a general sleeping room for the firefighters on the second story; and a sitting room on the third story. This sitting room or day room was equipped with "a combination pool and billiard table and other pleasant devices for passing a leisured hour."¹⁹

On January 1, 1898, the City of Brooklyn was incorporated into Greater New York; as a result, the Brooklyn Fire Department became a part of the New York City Fire Department. In order to avoid confusion in the numbering of engine companies, all companies in Brooklyn were given the prefix "1";

thus Engine Company 52 became Engine Company 152. In 1913, engine companies in Brooklyn and Queens were given the prefix "2," leading to the present name -- Engine Company 252.²⁰

Parfitt Brothers²¹

Parfitt Brothers was among the most successful architectural firms in Brooklyn in the final two decades of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century, designing hundreds of residential buildings and a significant number of public and institutional structures. The firm was composed of three brothers, all of whom were English immigrants. Walter E. Parfitt (d. 1925) was apparently the first of the three to arrive in Brooklyn, emigrating in about 1863. In 1869, city directories list Walter as involved in real estate. By 1875, when the Parfitt Brothers firm was established, Walter had been joined by his younger brother, Henry D. Parfitt (1848-1888). The third brother, Albert E. Parfitt (1863-1926), arrived in Brooklyn in 1882 and worked as a draftsman in the firm before becoming a junior partner. At the time that the Parfitt Brothers firm was established, most residential construction in Brooklyn consisted of brownstone-fronted rowhouses and flats in either the traditional Italianate style or the newer neo-Grec variant on this form. Parfitt Brothers designed hundreds of such buildings, including many examples in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Park Slope, two neighborhoods that were undergoing rapid development in the late 1870s and early 1880s.

Parfitt Brothers excelled in the design of Queen Anne style buildings and may have introduced the style into residential architecture in Brooklyn. The Queen Anne buildings designed by Parfitt Brothers have an especially English flavor and are undoubtedly a reflection of the brothers' knowledge of design in their native England. The Queen Anne style became popular in America during the 1880s and Parfitt Brothers' first Queen Anne work, dating from 1881, is a pair of flats at 472 and 474 Lafayette Avenue between Franklin and Bedford Avenues. Among the distinguished single-family houses designed by the firm were the Dr. Cornelius N. Hoagland House and Carriage House (1882) at 410 Clinton Avenue and 409-411 Vanderbilt Avenue, now in the Clinton Hill Historic District, and the John S. James House (1887) at 9 Pierrepont Street, now in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District. Both houses are crowned by traditional sloping gables,

while the carriage house incorporated a Flemish gable not unlike that which would later appear on Engine Company 252.²² Parfitt Brothers also pioneered in the design of apartment houses for the middle class in Brooklyn. The firm was responsible for three superb early apartment houses, the Montague, Berkeley, and Grosvenor, 103, 115, and 117 Montague Street, all dating from 1885, now in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District. The Montague is distinguished by its sloping gables.

Beginning in the 1880s, Parfitt Brothers received commissions for a significant number of institutional buildings. Most of these buildings have been demolished, but four churches designed by Parfitt Brothers are extant -- the Nostrand Avenue Methodist Church (1881) on Nostrand Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Grace Methodist Church (1882) on Seventh Avenue and St. John's Place, now in the Park Slope Historic District, St. Augustine's R.C. Church (1888) on Sixth Avenue and Sterling Place in Park Slope (outside of the historic district), and the Embury Methodist Church (1894; now the Mount Lebanon Baptist Church) on Decatur Street, now in the Stuyvesant Heights Historic District.²³

In 1885, the City of Brooklyn commissioned its first work from the architects, a police courthouse located on Adams Street (demolished). The courthouse commission was followed by the Brooklyn Water Works' Ridgewood Pumping Station (1890-91; demolished) and by identical wooden shelters in City Park, Winthrop Park, and Bushwick Park (1896; all demolished).²⁴ The largest series of commissions came from the Brooklyn Fire Department, which commissioned four firehouses in 1895 and 1896: Engine Co. 43 (1895; now Engine Co. 243 and Hook and Ladder 168) on 18th Avenue and Engine Co. 53 (1895; now Engine Co. 253) on 86th Street, both in Bath Beach; Engine Co. 47 (1895; now Engine Co. 247) on 60th Street in Borough Park; and Engine Co. 52, now Engine Company 252, the subject of this report.

In 1896, Albert Parfitt left the firm, opening his own office and becoming heavily involved in the development of Bensonhurst-by-the-Sea, and the design of suburban houses in other neighborhoods in southwestern Brooklyn, including Bath Beach and Sea Gate. Walter E. Parfitt continued to practice and designed at least three additional firehouses: Engine Co. 120 (1906; now Engine Company 220) on 11th Street and Engine Co. 169 (1907; now Engine Co. 269) on Union Street, both in Park

Slope, and Engine Company 127 (1907; now Engine Company 227) on Herkimer Street at Ralph Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Description

Engine Co. 252 is a three-story building that occupies almost its entire lot on the north side of Central Avenue between Schaeffer and Decatur Streets. The facade is faced in red brick with a red Lake Superior sandstone ground story and iron and red terra-cotta trim. The building rests on a bluestone foundation that is approximately three feet high. In the center of the ground story is a vehicular entrance. A paneled wood and glass entry door that rolls up replaced the original double wooden doors that were hung on large wrought-iron hinges. The entry is flanked by narrow fluted cast-iron pilasters. To the left is a pedestrian entrance (with solid panel door) capped by a double transom (now covered in wood), while to the right is a rectangular window with a simple transom. At either end of this story are sandstone piers with alternating wide bands of smooth stone and projecting narrower bands of rock-faced stone. A wide stone lintel runs above the ground story. The lintel is divided into five panels: end panels with shields onto which are carved the number "52" and, in small letters, "BFD," for Brooklyn Fire Department; and central panels that read "BFD," "ENGINE 252," and "1896" in large letters. The panels are outlined with acanthus leaves.

The upper stories are faced in a textured red brick laid in common bond. The second story is articulated by a band of five windows set a terra-cotta surround keyed to the brickwork. The rectangular windows are topped by terra-cotta transom bars and segmental-arched transoms. A projecting terra-cotta sill runs below the windows. On the third story is a band of three segmental-arched windows, with a keyed surround and projecting sill echoing those below. To either side of this band of windows is a terra-cotta rosette set on a terra-cotta square that is flush with the brickwork. Four crockets project from the rosette and rest on a terra-cotta Greek cross that bisects the square.

A scrolled Flemish gable rises above the third-story windows. This gable is outlined by a terra-cotta molding ending in roundels. A decorative iron tie rod is set in the center of the gable. The gable rises above a mansard roof clad in tile. The original clay tiles have been replaced by what appears to be

a synthetic material that simulates the look of the original. To either end of the roof are stepped gables that run perpendicular to the street and cap the end walls separating the firehouse from adjacent lots. The stepped gable at the east (right) is finished with face brick (recently repointed with light-colored mortar), which is visible as it rises above the adjacent house. The interior face of the stepped gable to the west (left) is similarly finished.

The party wall on the west elevation of the building is completely visible since all of the buildings located to the west (left) of the firehouse

have been demolished. The wall is faced in common brick. The rear elevation of the building at the northern end of the lot is not visible. All of the original wood-framed window sash on the facade of the firehouse have been replaced by new sash incorporating screens and double glazing. The frames are red to match the red color of the brick and stone.

Report prepared by
Andrew S. Dolkart
Landmarks Consultant

NOTES

1. On April 13, 1982, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of Engine Company 252 (LP-1290). No final determination was made following this hearing.
2. This section is based on Eugene L. Armbruster, *Brooklyn's Eastern District* (Brooklyn, 1942); Brooklyn Daily Eagle, *Bushwick* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Daily Eagle, c. 1947); Henry Isham Hazelton, *The Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens Counties of Nassau and Suffolk Long Island, New York 1609-1924* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1925); and Henry R. Stiles, ed., *The Civil and Ecclesiastical History and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, New York from 1683 to 1884* (New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1884).
3. This area was divided into a series of relatively small plots; that which included Central Avenue between Schaeffer and Decatur Streets was owned by William Van Voorhees. Decatur Street was known as Van Voorhees Street until the late 1890s. Other streets in the area, including Chauncey, Cooper, Covert, Moffat, and Schaeffer Streets, were named for farm owners.
4. As late as 1886, an atlas indicates that southern Bushwick was primarily open land with scattered wood-frame structures. E. Robinson, *Robinson's Atlas of the City of Brooklyn* (New York: E. Robinson, 1886).
5. Sections of the elevated opened in 1885, with a connection to the Broadway ferry landing inaugurated on September 14, 1889. The Broadway line brought commuters to and from the Broadway ferry and also to and from the Brooklyn Bridge (via lines that ran on Lexington Avenue and Myrtle Avenue), permitting access to New York City along several routes. In the southern part of Bushwick, in the neighborhood surrounding Engine Company 252, the elevated stopped at Halsey Street and Chauncey Street. The elevated line ("J" line) is still extant and remains the major means of mass transit connecting Bushwick and Manhattan. Joseph Cunningham and Leonard DeHart, *A History of the New York City Subway System, Part II: Rapid Transit in Brooklyn* (privately printed, 1977), 12-13, 20.
6. Thus, by 1898, the blocks between Broadway and Bushwick Avenue and between Bushwick Avenue and Evergreen Avenue were almost solidly developed with wooden houses and a few masonry structures. The streets between Central Avenue and Hamburg Avenue (now Wilson Avenue) were less densely developed, and there was almost no development between Hamburg Avenue and the Queens line.
7. E. Belcher Hyde, *Atlas of the Brooklyn Borough of the City of New York*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: E. Belcher Hyde, 1898). By the early twentieth century, the remainder of southern Bushwick had been developed as additional wooden houses and a larger number of masonry tenements were erected on those sites that had not been developed in the nineteenth century. E. Belcher Hyde, *Atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn*, vol. 3 (Brooklyn: E. Belcher Hyde, 1904, updated to 1912).
8. This section is based on *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Department of Fire of the City of Brooklyn* (Brooklyn, 1890-1897); J. Frank Kernan, *Reminiscences of the Old Fire Laddies and Volunteer Fire Departments of New York and Brooklyn* (New York: M. Crane, 1885); *Our Firemen: The Official History of the Brooklyn Fire Department from the First Volunteer to the Latest Appointee* (Brooklyn, 1892); Daniel Pisark, "Old New York and Brooklyn Firehouses: Their Evolution, Architecture, and Preservation," paper prepared for the Landmarks Scholar Program of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1976; *Volunteer Fire Fighting in 19th-Century Brooklyn*, exhibition and exhibition catalogue (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Historical Society, 1995).
9. Pisark, 20.

10. *Annual Report...For the Year 1895* (1896), 15.
11. This section is partially based on "General Firehouse Design," in Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Engine Company Number 23 Designation Report*, LP-1563, report prepared by Charles Savage (New York: City of New York, 1989). The major source for firehouse architecture is Rebecca Zurier, *The American Firehouse: An Architectural and Social History* (New York: Abbeville, 1982).
12. Marriott Field, *City Architecture* (New York: G.P. Putnam & Co., 1853).
13. *Fire and Water*, Jan. 18, 1896, p. 29. Brooklyn firefighters generally supported the merger of Brooklyn with New York City because New York City firefighters had more liberal staffing rules.
14. The only building erected by the Brooklyn Fire Department that is of greater architectural significance is the Fire Headquarters (1891-92) on Jay Street designed by Frank Freeman. A designated New York City Landmark, the building has been converted to an apartment house.
15. Among the most prominent Dutch-inspired buildings in Manhattan are the West End Collegiate Church and Collegiate School (Robert Gibson, 1892-93; a designated landmark) on West End Avenue and West 77th Street and the William Baylis Carriage House (Charles W. Romeyn, 1899; a designated landmark) at 168 East 73rd Street.
16. The Le Brun firehouse is illustrated in Montgomery Schuyler, "The Work of N. Le Brun & Sons," *Architectural Record* 27 (May 1910), 373.
17. William Tubby was the leading architect to incorporate Dutch motifs into his work, employing stepped gables at his own home at 43 Willow Street (1888) and at another house at 124 Willow Street (1888), both now in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District, and at the Wallabout Market (1894; demolished). C.P.H. Gilbert also employed Dutch motifs on the house that he designed for developer Harvey Murdock at 11 Montgomery Place (1887-88) in the Park Slope Historic District. Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Park Slope Historic District Designation Report*, LP-0709 (New York: City of New York, 1973), 75.
18. An illustration of Engine Company 53 was published in *Architecture and Building* 23 (Sept. 14, 1895). Scrolled gables can also be found on German Renaissance structures, especially those erected in the port cities along the Baltic coast. Since late nineteenth-century Bushwick had a substantial German immigrant population, it is possible that Parfitt Brothers was alluding to this aspect of the community's heritage in the firehouse design. This interpretation has been suggested by Pisark, 58.
19. "Ready to Fight Fire," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Apr. 1, 1897, p. 2.
20. Except for this section discussing the history of the company, the building is referred to by its present name throughout the report.
21. Much of the discussion of Parfitt Brothers is based on Andrew S. Dolkart, "Important Regional Architects in Post-Civil War Brooklyn: A Study of Montrose Morris, William Tubby, Parfitt Brothers, and George Chappell," unpublished study funded by a grant from the Educational Facilities Laboratory's Architectural Fellowships Program, 1983. Other histories of the Parfitt Brothers firm are, "Parfitt Brothers," *An Historical and Descriptive Review of the City of Brooklyn* (New York: Historical Publishing Co., 1883), part 1, 158; "Parfitt Brothers," *Half-Century's Progress of the City of Brooklyn* (New York: International Publishing Co., 1886), 154; Henry D. Parfitt obituary, *American Architect and Building News* 24 (July 14, 1888), 13; "Walter E. Parfitt," *History of Architecture and the Building Trades of Greater New York* (New York: Union History Co., 1899), vol. 2, 363-364; F.N. Levy, ed. "Albert E. Parfitt," *American Art Annual* (Boston: Noyes Platt & Co., 1900), vol. 3, 123; *Key to the Architects of Greater New York* (NY: Forbes & Co., 1900), 49-50; *Key to the Architects of Greater New York* (NY: Forbes & Co., 1901), 53-54; Albert E. Parfitt obituary, *New York Times*, Oct. 19, 1926, p. 29; Henry F. and Elsie R. Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1970), 453-454. and William Lee Younger, "The Parfitt Brothers," *Gaslight Gazette* 1 (Mar. 1972), 10-14.
22. Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Clinton Hill Historic District Designation Report*, LP-2017, report prepared by Andrew S. Dolkart (New York: City of New York, 1981), 76-77, 152.
23. Nostrand Avenue M. E. Church is discussed in *Brooklyn Advance* 4 (Oct. 1880), 17, 23; Grace Methodist Church is discussed in LPC, *Park Slope*, 8-9, and *Brooklyn Advance* 6 (May 6, 1882), 125-126; St. Augustine's is illustrated in *Architecture and Building* 23 (Dec. 14, 1895); the Embury Methodist Church is discussed in Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Stuyvesant Heights Historic District Designation Report*, LP-0695 (New York: City of New York, 1971), 12, 23-24. Parfitt Brothers also designed Temple Israel (1890; demolished), Brooklyn's grandest nineteenth-century synagogue; see *Architecture and Building* 13 (Dec. 27, 1890); 14 (June 27, 1891); and 25 (Nov. 14, 1896).
24. The Ridgewood Pumping Station is discussed and illustrated in "The New Water Works," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 12, 1891, p. 18. The park shelter design is illustrated in *Architecture and Building* 26 (Jan. 30, 1897).

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that Engine Company 252 has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, Engine Company 252 is significant as one of the most distinguished firehouses in New York City; that it is an important building reflecting the expansion of civic architecture in the independent city of Brooklyn in the late nineteenth century; that as a major work by Parfitt Brothers, one of Brooklyn's finest architectural firms, it is an important architectural monument in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn; that as an example of Flemish Revival style architecture, it illustrates the popularity of this mode of colonial design in the New York City area with its heritage as a Dutch colonial settlement; and that it is a well-maintained civic building which continues to be used for its original purpose.

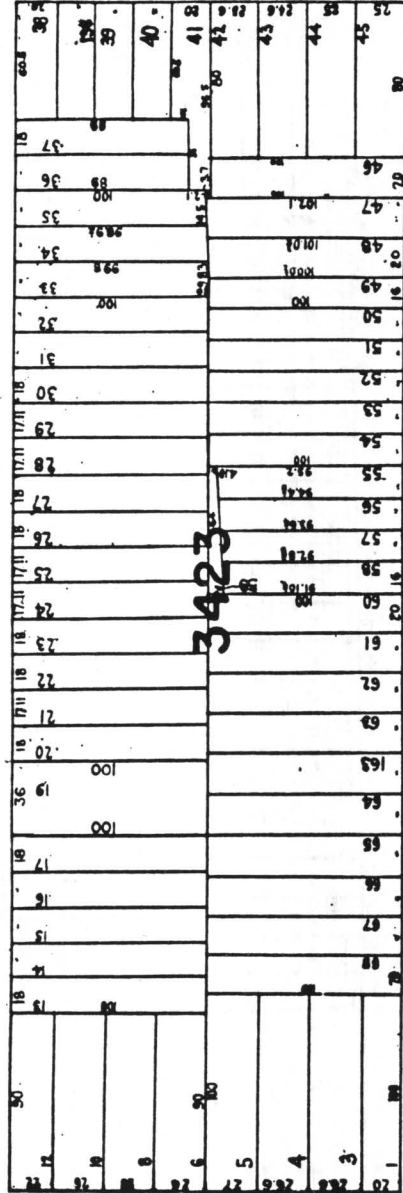
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3021 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark Engine Company 252, 617 Central Avenue, Borough of Brooklyn, and designates Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 3429, Lot 3, as its Landmark Site.



WILSON

AVE

1988-89



CENTRAL

ST.

SCHAEFFER

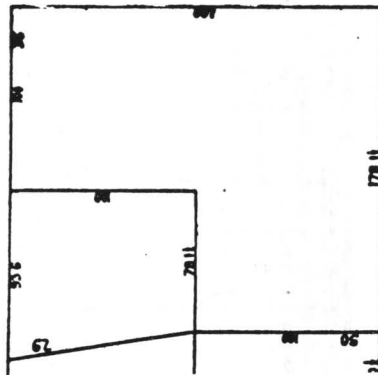
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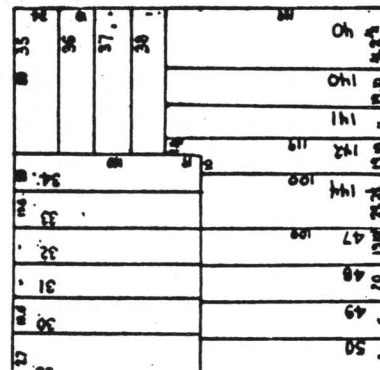
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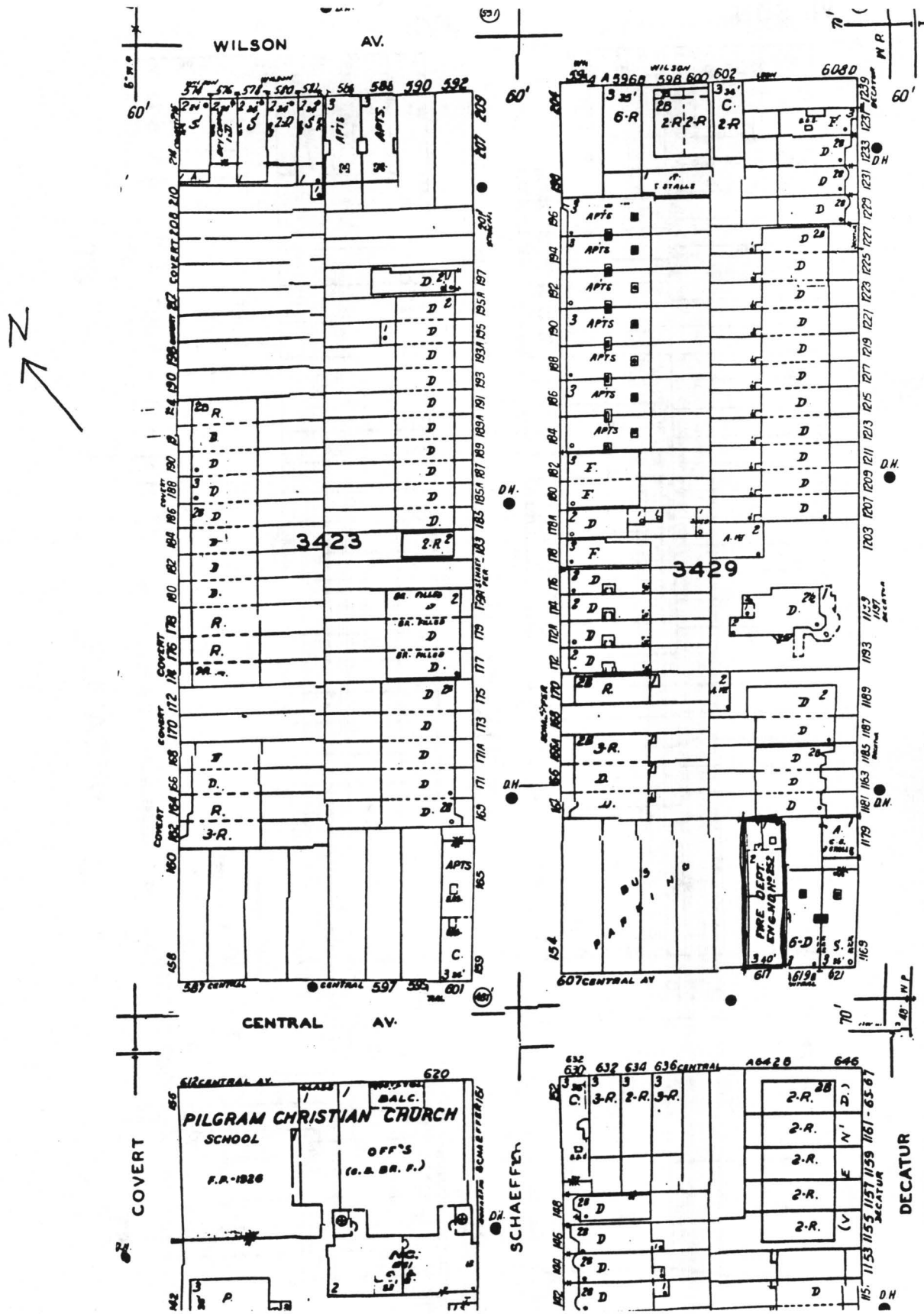


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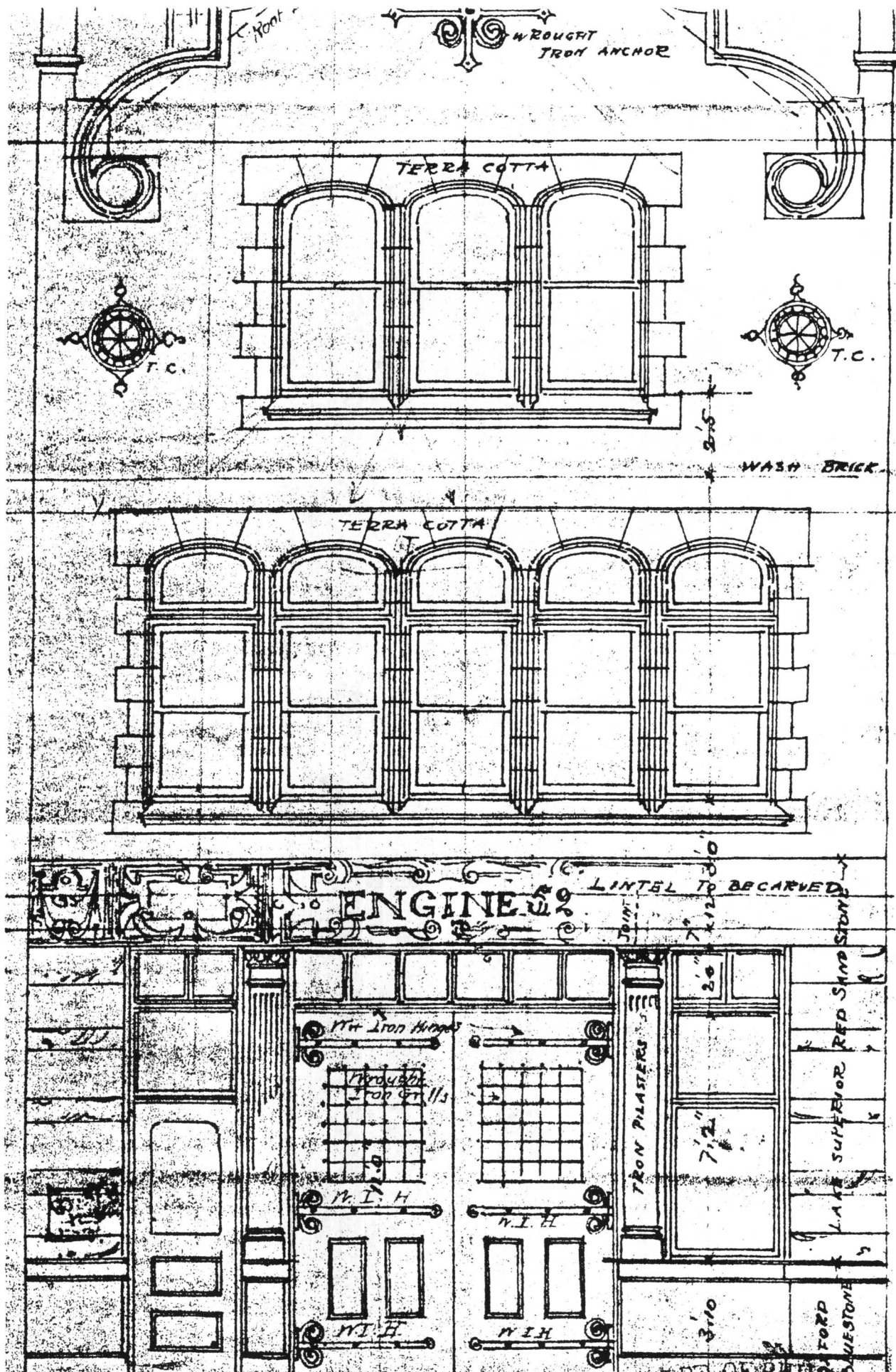
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Engine Company 252, 617 Central Avenue, Brooklyn.
Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 3429, Lot 3

Source: New York City Dept. of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map



Engine Company 252, 617 Central Avenue, Brooklyn. Tax Map Block 3429, Lot 3.
 Graphic Source: Insurance Maps of Brooklyn, N.Y. (N.Y.: Sanborn Map Co., 1926, updated 1994), vol 9, plate 20





Engine Company 252, 617 Central Avenue, Brooklyn.

Photo: Andrew S. Dolkart



Engine Company 252, 617 Central Avenue, Brooklyn.
(showing exposed side wall at left)

Photo: Andrew S. Dolkart



Detail of carved lintel



Detail of base at first story



Details of carved lintel

Photos: Andrew S. Dolkart



Detail of third story and scrolled gable at roof



Detail of window band at second story