

**FIREHOUSE, ENGINE COMPANY 40/ HOOK & LADDER COMPANY 21 (now ENGINE COMPANY 240/ BATTALION 48)**, 1307-1309 Prospect Avenue, Brooklyn. Built: 1895; architect: Peter J. Lauritzen

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5285, Lot 21

On December 11, 2012, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Firehouse, Engine Company 40/Hook & Ladder Company 21 (now Engine Company 240/ Battalion 48) and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 4). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. One speaker, representing the Historic Districts Council, spoke in support of the designation. There was no testimony in opposition to the designation. In January 2013, the Commission received a letter from Joseph Mastropietro, Assistant Commissioner of Facilities for the Fire Department, expressing the Fire Department's support for the designation.

### Summary

The Firehouse for Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21 was built in 1895 as part of a campaign by Brooklyn Fire Commissioner Frederick W. Wurster to replace the old firehouses housing the volunteer fire companies in Brooklyn's recently annexed districts with new up-to-date buildings suitable for modern equipment and full-time paid professional staff. This firehouse was built to serve the growing community of Windsor Terrace, located at the western edge of Flatbush between Prospect Park and Green-Wood Cemetery and replaced the firehouse of the Windsor Hose Company, a volunteer fire company, which had been in operation since 1888. This building was designed by the noted architect Peter J. Lauritzen, a Danish immigrant, who practiced in Washington D.C. before moving to Brooklyn and establishing an office in Manhattan in 1883.

It is one of eight firehouses he designed for the Brooklyn Fire Department between 1894 and 1897 and is his finest in the Romanesque Revival Style, a style favored for Brooklyn firehouses of the period and one in which Lauritzen was particularly at home, having produced distinguished works such as the Manhattan Athletic Club and Offerman Department Store. The building's imposing limestone and brick façade features an asymmetrical design, with a rusticated limestone ground story, round corner turret richly decorated with Romanesque motifs, a broad tripartite round arched window set off by a drip molding with label stops, a flat-arched double-window flanked by colonnettes, an elaborate arched cornice, and an asymmetric parapet. The quality of the building's materials, workmanship, and details distinguished it from the residential and commercial buildings in the neighborhood and were intended to create a sense of civic pride. Engine Company 40, now Engine Company 240, has been housed in this building and has served the Windsor Terrace neighborhood with distinction for over a century. Since 1978, the building has also been home to Battalion 48, which oversees Fire Department units within Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, and Borough Park.



## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Windsor Terrace

Windsor Terrace is a small residential enclave in northwestern Brooklyn set between Prospect Park and Green-wood Cemetery.<sup>1</sup> Located on the southeastern slope of the long terminal moraine that extends from northern Queens to Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, the area was inhabited by Gowanus and Werpos tribes of the Lenape People. During the Colonial period, Windsor Terrace became the northwestern boundary of the township of Flatbush. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the site that would be developed for this firehouse was part of the farm of William Williamse. The Williamse farm was conveyed to Garret Martense in 1731. It remained in the ownership of the Martense family until the 1895 and for most of its history was worked by members of the Martense family. The Martenses, like many of the farm-owners in 18<sup>th</sup> century Flatbush, relied heavily on slave labor in the eighteenth century and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century hired a mix of black and immigrant-European workers to help them tend the farm.

In 1838 Green-Wood Cemetery was established as picturesque rural cemetery on the terminal moraine to the southwest of the Martense farm. The presence of this park-like setting, the natural beauty of the area, and the opening of the Coney Island Plank Road (now Coney Island Avenue) in 1849-50, which provided easy access to downtown Brooklyn, encouraged speculators to acquire land in the area for future suburban development.<sup>2</sup> In 1849 real estate developer Robert Bell purchased the Vanderbilt farm to the north of the Martense farm as a development site for a new suburban enclave, which he named Windsor Terrace. Bell sold the Windsor Terrace development site to Edward Belknap in 1851. Belknap opened four new streets – Seeley Street, Vanderbilt Street, Adams Street (now Reeve Place), and Short Street (now Prospect Avenue) – and had the property divided into 49 building lots, which he called “Pleasant Cottage” sites. Belknap and his business associates lost their interest in Windsor Terrace in 1856.<sup>3</sup> By 1860 there were only about a dozen houses and 30 people living in the neighborhood. However, the construction of Prospect Park in the 1860s and the gradual sale of neighboring farms to developers in the 1860s and 1870s spurred further growth.

Following the Civil War, large numbers of Irish immigrants, mostly from County Longford and County Cavan, began settling in Windsor Terrace. In 1878, Holy Name Church was erected on Prospect Park West (Ninth Avenue) to serve residents and in 1885 Holy Name school opened. The neighborhood was also served by a public school (opened 1876) and by a Protestant chapel and Sunday school (established 1874). By 1890 there were approximately 150 houses in the Windsor Terrace.<sup>4</sup> Neighborhood amenities also included a post office at the corner of Coney Island Avenue and Greenwood Avenue, constructed in the 1890s, and several shops on Ninth Avenue.

The introduction of trolley lines running along Ninth Avenue and 15th Street encouraged further development of the neighborhood. Rowhouses began appearing in the early 1900s, many erected by developer William M. Calder who built and sold 700 houses in Windsor Terrace between 1902 and 1919. There were also hotels along Ocean Parkway and factories at the south end of the neighborhood near Green-Wood Cemetery. One of the most significant local employers was Pilgrim Laundry, which opened at Prospect and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenues in 1894.

During the 1920s, the promise of a subway link to Manhattan brought even more construction. This included several projects by Seeley Investors Inc., including single-family and two-family houses, two large apartment buildings on Prospect Avenue, and commercial buildings on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The opening of the IND South Brooklyn Line stations at 15<sup>th</sup>

Street/Prospect Park and Fort Hamilton Avenue in 1933 led to the replacement of many older houses with apartment buildings, a trend that continued in the post-World War II era.

In the 1950s the construction of the Prospect Expressway led to the demolition of many houses, churches, commercial and industrial buildings. The community had greater success in fighting developmental pressures in the 1980s and 1990s. Today Windsor Terrace is still largely a low-scale multi-ethnic working-class residential neighborhood. Notable residents have included the pre-eminent science fiction writer Isaac Asimov (1920-92), Pete and Denis Hamill, and Frank McCourt. Several movies have been shot in Windsor Park including *Dog Day Afternoon*, *As Good As It Gets*, *Angie*, *Pollack*, and *Smoke*.

### Volunteer Firefighting in Windsor Terrace

The volunteer Windsor Terrace Hose Company No. 3 was formed in January 1888 to protect this growing community, which previously had relied on the volunteer Washington Engine Company in downtown Flatbush for its fire protection.<sup>5</sup> The Windsor Company was initially supported by contributions from residents and businesses in Windsor Terrace but within a few months it was consolidated with the Washington Engine Company and the Melrose and Woodbine fire companies of Parkville to form the Flatbush Fire Department in order to secure funding from New York State to purchase new fire engines and hoses. Each of the companies had its own trustees who appointed a member to sit on the board of the Flatbush Fire Department. Quartered at 1286 Prospect Avenue, near the present fire house, the volunteer Windsor Company had about 40 members. It played an important social function in the neighborhood through its fund-raising dances, strawberry festivals, and participation in community parades, some as far afield as Bridgeport, Connecticut. The Windsor Hose Company was mustered out of duty when the new Engine Company 40 was completed and City of Brooklyn assumed responsibility for fire-fighting in the area. The last public event at the old firehouse was a reception on January 2, 1896, in which the company's foreman, William H. Hunter, was presented with a silver trumpet.<sup>6</sup> The Windsor Hose Company veterans continued to hold parades in Windsor Terrace until 1907. The old firehouse was altered for use as a public school.

### The Brooklyn Fire Department<sup>7</sup>

Early fire companies in Brooklyn were volunteer units, each with its own equipment and personnel. For the most part they were clustered close to the East River, in areas where the population and property values tended to be high. Brooklyn's first volunteer company, established in Brooklyn Heights in 1785, consisted of five men and one engineer, all of whom were chosen to serve for one-year terms at annually-held town meetings. A fire engine was purchased and a wooden barn constructed to store the apparatus on Front Street, close to the present site of Cadman Plaza. As part of their duties, volunteers were expected to "play, clean and inspect the engine" on a monthly basis.<sup>8</sup>

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Brooklyn's volunteer department had grown to an estimated 3,000 men. Despite its large size, losses from fires increased during this period and many city residents, as well as members of the insurance industry, contended that better protection would result from the creation of a paid, professional force like that found in other American cities.<sup>9</sup> Although reservations from volunteers slowed the adoption of such a plan, in 1869 a bill establishing the Brooklyn Fire Department was enacted. The impact on service was considerable: some companies were closed, new apparatus was ordered, and many 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 19 companies.<sup>10</sup>

Brooklyn experienced astonishing growth following the Civil War. The opening of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883 brought thousands of new workers and residents to the city. Between 1870 and 1890 the city's population doubled, resulting in the development of new commercial and residential districts away from the East River and Upper New York Bay. Linked to downtown Brooklyn and Manhattan by improved rail transportation and trolley service, the towns outside the city limits such as Flatbush, and New Utrecht, which had previously been largely rural, attracted considerable interest from real estate speculators and became increasingly suburbanized.

In April 1894, the New York State Legislature voted to allow Brooklyn to annex the outlying towns of Flatbush, Gravesend, New Utrecht and Flatlands.<sup>11</sup> Fire Commissioner Frederick W. Wurster, who had taken office in January 1894 with the intention of improving service and modernizing Brooklyn's firehouses, began an ambitious program to provide new firehouses in the recently annexed towns, where professional firefighters were to replace the volunteer companies.<sup>12</sup> Whereas, the New York City Fire Department hired a single architect, Napoleon Le Brun (after 1888, Napoleon Le Brun & Sons), who designed more than forty structures between 1879 and 1894, Brooklyn employed a number of local architects, including Frank Freeman, who had designed the department's Romanesque Revival headquarters on Jay Street (1892, a designated New York City Landmark), Peter J. Lauritzen, and Parfitt Brothers to design the new firehouses. Under Wurster's command, in 1895, five new companies were organized and housed in new three-story engine houses. According to the *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Department of Fire of the City of Brooklyn for the Year 1895*, these new three-story firehouses were "very superior in every respect to and a great improvement on the old style two-story houses in use by the Department."<sup>13</sup> An old building on DeKalb Avenue near Fort Greene Place was remodeled for use as a new water tower and 13 new firehouses, including Engine Company 40, were nearing completion. In addition every house in the department was improved, with "painting, carpentering, plumbing, caulking, masonry work, etc." as needed.<sup>14</sup> The report attributed "this magnificent and extensive enlargement and improvement of the general fire system" to Fire Commissioner Wurster.<sup>15</sup>

In October 1895, Wurster stepped down as fire commissioner to run for mayor. He was elected and became the last mayor of Brooklyn, serving from 1896-98. During his administration, additional engine companies were founded and firehouses erected. 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 15 years, far outstripping Brooklyn in both the number and quality of firehouses.

As symbols of urban growth and civic improvement, Brooklyn's new firehouses were praised for their aesthetic character and functional design. Most were fairly simple in plan, providing space for steam engines and other equipment on the ground floor as well as stalls for a team of horses in the rear. In addition, space was set aside for the office of the company foreman and rooms where firemen would spend time between fires. As Commissioner Wurster proudly wrote in 1895 "these new houses are of an entirely new design and construction from the present houses, and will, when completed, be a credit to the city and a boon to the firemen, who have

long felt the want of comfortable quarters. There is no other public servant so much confined to quarters as a fireman ... It is my desire to make their house as comfortable as possible.”<sup>16</sup>

With the consolidation of Brooklyn into Greater New York, the Brooklyn Fire Department was melded into the Fire Department of the City of New York. Buildings such as these fire houses are easily recognizable and announce themselves as distinct from private structures, using quality materials, workmanship and details to create buildings of lasting beauty and significance to their neighborhoods.

#### The Design of Firehouse, Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21 (now Fire Engine Company 240/ Battalion 48)<sup>17</sup>

The land for Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21, a lot measuring 40 by 100 feet, was purchased from Anna Martense Ferris at a cost of \$1,600 on April 1, 1895. Plans for the new building were filed with the Brooklyn Department of Buildings in May 1895 by architect Peter J. Lauritzen,<sup>18</sup> who was responsible for at least seven other firehouses erected in Brooklyn between 1894 and 1897. By June 1895, the cellar for the engine house had been dug and the foundations were being laid. In late December 1895, the *Brooklyn Eagle* carried an article describing the new firehouse, which was placed in service on January 20, 1896, as a “handsome and substantial” building. The building is 32 feet wide and 85 feet deep. It is two stories tall, has a cellar under the front portion of the building and a rear one-story extension, which was originally used to store hay and feed. Designed in the Romanesque Revival Style, the building’s façade has an asymmetrical design. It is faced with Wyoming bluestone, Indiana limestone, and pressed brick. The most striking feature is a circular corner tower with a richly carved stone base. Originally the tower had a conical roof that was sheathed with tiles. Other notable features include the banded rough-cut and smooth-faced rustication of the ground story, the flat-arched second story window opening set off by clustered Romanesque colonettes, the round-arched second-story window profiled by a molded archivolt, and the arched brick corbelling beneath the decorative brick parapet. The parapet rises at the south end of the façade to provide a counterbalance to the north corner tower.

Originally the large first story entrance opening was wider. (A vertical scar in the masonry above the south first story window marks the junction of the original corner pier and 20<sup>th</sup> century masonry infill.) The opening originally contained two pairs of paneled wood-and-glass doors for vehicles and a central pedestrian entrance surmounted by a transom. The vehicle entrances provided access for an engine, a hose wagon, and a hook and ladder truck, and the six horse stalls at the rear of the ground story. In the front was a raised platform for the foreman’s desk, containers for the electrical apparatus, and hose racks for holding 700 feet of stored hose. On the second story there was a sitting room, a dormitory for 12 men, and separate rooms for the foreman, assistant foreman, and company engineer. The tower at the northwest corner of building was likely used for drying hoses. Lauritzen also designed another two-story firehouse that featured an asymmetrically massed façade with a hose-drying tower for Engine Company 49/ Hook and Ladder Company 23 at 491 Rogers Avenue in Prospect-Lefferts Gardens in 1895. That design drew on Jacobean and medieval sources.

Though somewhat altered the building for Engine Company 40/ Hook and Ladder Company 21 is a fine example of the Romanesque Revival style, as applied to the firehouse building type. The style was a popular choice for firehouses in Brooklyn. It was employed for the Brooklyn Fire Department Headquarters Building at 365-67 Jay Street, near Fulton Street, and for the handsome brick and brownstone arcaded Engine Company 28 (now Engine Company

228) at 436 39<sup>th</sup> Street in Sunset Park (builder William J. Moran, 1889-91) and its twin Hook and Ladder Company 2 at 894 Bedford Avenue (builder William J. Moran, 1891-92, demolished). Lauritzen seems to have had a preference for the Romanesque Revival Style, employing it for such major works as the Manhattan Athletic Club (1890, demolished) at the southeast corner of Madison Avenue and East 45<sup>th</sup> Street, the Offerman Building (1890-93, a designated New York City Landmark) at 503-13 Fulton Street, 234-48 Duffield Street, Brooklyn, and the Union League Club (1889-90, now the Bhragg Square Senior Citizens' Center, altered) at Bedford Avenue and Dean Streets, within the Crown Heights North Historic District. Lauritzen designed at least one other Romanesque Revival firehouse, Engine Company 39 (now Engine Company 239) at 395 Fourth Avenue, in Park Slope, in 1895. Like Engine Company 40 it features multiple colonettes, drip moldings with small label stops, and an arched corbel table beneath an elaborate roofline parapet. Another Lauritzen firehouse, Engine Company 37 (now Engine Company 237) at 43 Morgan Avenue in Bushwick (1894) features a blend of Romanesque and Renaissance Revival elements, including certain elements that relate to the design of Engine Company 40, notably the banded stone rustication at the base of the building and the elaborate corbelling beneath a decorative brick parapet. Engine Company 40, however, stands apart among Lauritzen's firehouse designs for its incorporation of a Richardsonian Romanesque idiom, characterized by its heavy details, broad arches, dramatic asymmetric composition, irregular, complex roofline, and elaborate carved stone ornament.

#### Peter J. Lauritzen<sup>19</sup>

Peter J. Lauritzen was born in Jutland, Denmark, in 1847 and trained at the Polytechnic School in Copenhagen. He moved to Washington, D.C., in the late 1860s where he worked with the Treasury Department's supervising architect Alfred B. Mullett. In 1875 Lauritzen was appointed architect for the city of Washington, D. C. and from 1875 to 1883 served as consul for the Danish government.<sup>20</sup> He moved to New York City in 1883 and for two years headed the Jackson Architectural Iron Works, one of the oldest and most successful producers of iron building components in the metropolitan region.<sup>21</sup>

Lauritzen formed his own architectural practice around 1885. His earliest commission was the Manhattan Athletic Club (1889-90, demolished). Though he was not invited to participate in the limited competition for the club's design, his unsolicited proposal won and was built at the southeast corner of Madison Avenue and 45<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>22</sup> Six stories tall, the Romanesque Revival-style structure was distinguished by large arched entrances and mast-like corner towers. It was described by a contemporary writer as "bold and strong in form, subdued yet warm in color, rich and graceful in embellishment."<sup>23</sup> The unusual circumstance that led to Manhattan Athletic Club commission certainly enhanced Lauritzen's reputation and during the late 1880s and 1890s he was extremely active in Brooklyn. Among his finest works was the Union League Club (1889-90, later the Unity Club) on Bedford Avenue in Crown Heights. Faced in brick, granite and brownstone, the corner tower had a hipped roof and octagonal loggia. The interiors were well-equipped, featuring dining and reception rooms, as well as a bowling alley and shooting gallery. He also remodeled the former Hawley mansion at 563 Bedford Avenue in Williamsburg for use as the Hanover Club in 1890, and designed the Crescent Athletic Club (1895, demolished) at 25-27 Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights. These commissions led to residential projects, including houses for Nicholas Toerge (1890) on St. Marks Avenue, Wilson G. Randolph (1891) at 239 Hancock Place, and Frederick Mollenhauer (1896), founder of the

Mollenhauer sugar refinery, at 527 Bedford Avenue. Lauritzen also designed eight “engine and truck” houses (1894-97) for the Brooklyn Fire Department.<sup>24</sup>

#### Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder 21 (now Fire Engine Company 240/ Battalion 48)

The firehouse for Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21 was put into service in January 20, 1896. It was manned with experienced officers from several different Brooklyn fire companies; several of the firefighters were from former Flatbush volunteer companies. Engine 40 was equipped with a new 1895 Lafrance steamer and an 1896 P.J. Barrett hose wagon; the ladder company was equipped with an 1896 Holloway 50 foot City Service ladder truck with a 40 gallon chemical tank. The Engine Company fought its first fire at 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and Third Avenue on January 29, 1896. In February 1896, both Engine Company 40 and Ladder Company 21 were called to a fire in a three story frame building on Seeley Street, in Windsor Terrace.

Following Consolidation in January 1898, Brooklyn’s fire department became part of the Fire Department of New York. On April 15, 1898 Ladder Company 21 was disbanded and its ladder truck was assigned to Engine 40 to form a combination engine company equipped with an engine, hose wagon, and ladder truck. On October 1, 1899, Engine Company 40, was renamed Combined Engine Company 140 to differentiate it from Engine Company 40 in Manhattan. During its early years, the company was engaged in some major fires, including a conflagration in the stables of the Cheshire Improvement Company, which resulted in the death of 47 horses in 1897, an explosion and fire that destroyed the entire plant of Pain’s Fireworks Company in Flatbush in 1899, and an immensely destructive 1901 fire in the trolley car barns of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company at Flatbush and Vernon Avenues.

In 1913 New York City’s firehouses were again renumbered and the Engine Company 140 became Engine Company 240. In 1914, it lost its ladder truck when two ladder companies were placed in service in neighboring firehouses. In 1921, the company’s horse drawn equipment was replaced with a motorized fire truck. The new rig was wider than the company’s former horse drawn apparatus and the building’s original doors could not easily accommodate the new equipment.

In 1926, the wood infill for the old truck and pedestrian entrances to the building was removed. The opening was narrowed by adding limestone-faced masonry to the pier at the south end of the ground story façade, and a new window opening was created to match the window at the north end of the ground story.<sup>25</sup> A steel beam was installed above the center opening to support sliding steel-and-glass doors that replaced the original wood apparatus doors. The first floor interior was also altered with upgrades to the foreman’s platform, the floor, fire pole, and a re-configuration of the former stable area in the first story extension to create a recreation area for the fireman. Between 1928 and 1940 the original tile-covered conical roof and flagpole were removed from the tower. In the 1990s the cellar and first story concrete floors were replaced. In the early 2000s the firehouse’s kitchen was replaced and plumbing and mechanical works were upgraded. The original wood windows and framing including the wood mullions in the arched second story were removed and replaced with non-historic metal sash.

Today Engine Company 240 shares its firehouse with the 48<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which is a part of Division 11, under the Brooklyn Borough Command. The Battalion oversees several units within the neighboring bedroom communities of Park Slope, Windsor Terrace and Borough Park: currently Squad 1 at 788 Union Street, Engine 220, Ladder 122 at 530 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 395 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Engine 240 at 1309 Prospect Avenue; and Engine 282, Ladder 148 at 4210 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Originally organized in 1906, the battalion moved several times before settling at 1309 Prospect Avenue in 1978.

Unfortunately, both Engine Company 240 and Battalion 48 have lost men who died while in service at this firehouse. They were – Fireman Edward D. Lahey, who was killed in an accident on the way to a fire in 1907; Fireman Thomas J. Osborn, who died of a heart attack at the firehouse in 1941; Fireman Eugene F. Kelly and Robert W. Lane, who died of injuries sustained when a trolley sideswiped their engine in 1943; Lieutenant John A. Lyden, who was overcome by smoke in an arson fire in a group of commercial buildings in 1949; Fireman Joseph J. Tucker, who died in 1957 of injuries sustained while fighting a fire in 1956; and Battalion 48 Commander Joseph Grzelak and Firefighter Michael Bocchino, who were killed in the collapse of the North Tower of the World Trade Center, on September, 11, 2001. Bronze commemorative plaques honoring Battalion Commander Grzelak and Firefighter Bocchino have been installed flanking the north first story window.

### Description

Two story, three bay, firehouse; asymmetrical design. Faced at the first story with rusticated limestone above a (painted) bluestone base; second story and round corner tower faced with brick trimmed with stone; pressed metal cornice on tower, decorative brick parapet.

*Historic:* Base faced with alternating courses of dressed and quarry-faced limestone. Narrow trabeated window bay at north end of the ground story façade. Tower at north end of the façade has a limestone base resting on a pendant post; both post and base enriched with carved Romanesque decoration. Second story, paired windows in flat arched surround with colonettes, rusticated voussoirs. Large arched window opening set off by molded drip molding with label stops. Arched corbelling beneath parapet; Raised parapet at south end of roof ornamented with recessed rectangular panel edged with dentils.

*Alterations:* Base painted; remnants of old paint on stonework and old coating on brickwork. Steel overhead door supported by steel beam. Bay widened and window installed on south end of ground story façade. Windows replaced; non-historic light fixtures, bronze commemorative plaques on north bay; non-historic metal caution sign on south bay. Pipe attached to south end of façade near window. Original carved stone inscription over entry removed; non-historic sign above entry reads “Engine Co 240 Batt. 48.” Metal tube for wiring for no longer extant light fixtures above entry. Flagpole affixed to wall just below second story south end of façade.

### **South Elevation**

Brick wall painted. Through-the-wall air conditioner, window, and projecting brackets at second story. Non-historic metal fence at front of alley.

### **North Elevation**

Painted brick wall; large HVAC unit near front of building connected by ducts and electrical conduit to building; two first story windows near east end of the façade have non-historic one-over-one metal sash topped by transoms. Eastern window has air conditioning unit in first-story transom; two second-floor windows have non-historic replacement sash; non-historic metal brackets support air conditioner units above second-story windows; large exhaust duct extends from first story to above roof; supported by metal brackets attached to wall; historic brick chimney at roofline with non-historic cap. Historic wrought-iron fence at front of alley.



## Rear Wall

Second story visible from the street; three windows with non-historic metal sash installed c. 2008; non-historic metal (fire-escape) ladder from roof of extension to roof of main building.

Report researched and written by  
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### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup>This section on the early history of Windsor Terrace is based on Henry R. Stiles, *The Civil, Political and Ecclesiastical History and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, New York from 1683-1884* (New York: W.W. Munsell, 1884), 230-235; Brian Merlis and Lee A. Rosenzweig, *Brooklyn's Windsor Terrace, Kensington & Parkville Communities* (Brooklyn, NY: Israelowitz Publishing, c. 2010); Marc Linder and Lawrence S. Zacharias, *Of Cabbages and Kings County: Agriculture and the formation of Modern Brooklyn* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, c.1999); Charles A. Ditmas, *Historic Homesteads of Kings County* (Brooklyn, NY: C.A. Ditmas, 1909); John B. Manbeck, ed., *The Neighborhoods of Brooklyn* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> An advertisement for Windsor Terrace lots in 1854 described them as “the most elegant villa sites in the vicinity of New York ... [located] on hill side between Seeley Street and the Brooklyn line – overlooking the whole richly cultivated agricultural plains of Flatbush, with Sandy Hook and Rockaway, the waters of the lower bay and the Atlantic in the distance. Free from the city taxes and assessments, and within two and a half miles of Hamilton avenue ferry, of easy access by omnibus from Fulton ferry, and in the immediate vicinity of extensive and ornamental improvements.” See “Anthony J. Bleecker, Auctioneer,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Mar. 23, 1854, 3.

<sup>3</sup>“Foreclosure-Supreme Court, County of Kings,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Sept. 30, 1856, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Most were small frame buildings, but there were also architecturally elaborate villas and a group of still extant late 1880s brick row houses on Coney Island Avenue (Prospect Park Southwest) between Vanderbilt and Seeley Streets.

<sup>5</sup>For the Windsor Hose Company see “Flatbush Fire Companies,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Feb. 1, 1888, 2; “Flatbush Firemen,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Feb. 16, 1888, 2; “Going to Bridgeport,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 3, 1888, 2; “Great Fuss in Flatbush,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 25, 1888, 2; “To Inspect the Fire Department,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Sept. 26, 1888, 1; “Windsor Hose Company,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Feb. 17, 1889, 16; “Red Shirted Firemen Now,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 8, 1889, 1; “Excited Flatbush Firemen,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Aug. 10, 1889, 4; “Frolicsome Flatbush Firemen,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Nov. 29, 1889, 1; “Reception by Flatbush Firemen,” Jan. 16, 1890, 1; “Reviewed by Flower,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Aug. 19, 1893, 5.

<sup>6</sup>“A Trumpet for Foreman Hunter,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Jan. 2, 1896, 7.

<sup>7</sup>This section is adapted from “The Brooklyn Fire Department,” in Landmarks Preservation Commission *Fire Engine Company 253 Designation Report*, LP-1986, prepared by Matthew Postal (New York: City of New York, 1998), 2-3; *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).

<sup>8</sup> Stiles, 569.

<sup>9</sup> By the Civil War, many American cities had professional fire departments, including Boston (1837), Cincinnati (1853), St. Louis (1857), Chicago and Baltimore (both 1858).

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<sup>10</sup> Pisark, 20.

<sup>11</sup> On Annexation see “What Brooklyn Talks About: Annexation of Towns a Step toward Greater New York,” *New York Times*, May 6, 1894, 16; “County Towns as City Wards,” *New York Times*, Apr. 28, 1894, 9; Edwin G. Burroughs and Mike Wallace *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1220-1235.

<sup>12</sup> Wurster’s reforms included curtailing the runaway costs for installing a telegraphic system to link firehouses to neighborhood alarm boxes, addressing the need for greatly increased water pressure to fight fires, and lobbying for a greatly enlarged fire zone in which new wood buildings would be banned. He also cut costs, imposed greater discipline on firemen, and required them to work far longer hours. In addition to building new firehouses in the annexed districts he also upgraded or replaced existing Brooklyn firehouses. See “Fire Department Scandals,” *New York Times*, Jan. 31, 1894, 9; “Wurster to Mayor Schieren: Urgent Need of the Fire Department,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Dec. 31, 1894, 7; “Firemen’s Trials,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Jan. 8, 1895, 12; “Firemen All Over the City,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Apr. 22, 1894, 22.

<sup>13</sup> *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Department of Fire of the City of Brooklyn, N.Y. for the Year 1895* (Brooklyn, NY: Printed for the Corporation, 1896), 11.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Department of Fire of the City of Brooklyn, N.Y. for the Year 1894* (Brooklyn, NY: Printed for the Corporation, 1895), 16.

<sup>17</sup> The information in this section was derived from: “Engine 240 Centennial Celebration Booklet,” in the George F. Mand Library, FDNY Fire Academy, Randall’s Island, NY; New York State Parks & Recreation, Division of Historic Preservation “Engine Company 240 Building-Nomination Form, (1980) , prepared by Erin Drake; “Engine Company 240 Brooklyn, FDNY,” [http://nyfd.com/brooklyn\\_engines/engine\\_240.html](http://nyfd.com/brooklyn_engines/engine_240.html), accessed on 5/ 16/12; “Suburban News: Flatbush,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, June 5 10, 1895, 4; “For Windsor Terrace Firemen,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Dec. 22, 1895, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Brooklyn Department of Buildings, New Building Application 301-1895; original plans in Block 5285 Lot 21 folder, application missing.

<sup>19</sup> This section is adapted from the Landmarks Preservation Commission *Offerman Building Designation Report*, LP-2169, prepared by Matthew Postal (New York: City of New York, 2005), 3-4.

<sup>20</sup> In Washington D. C. Lauritzen designed and developed the Annie A. Cole residence at 1400-1402 Massachusetts Avenue (demolished) in 1874.

<sup>21</sup> See *A History of Real Estate, Building, and Architecture in New York City*, (1898/1967), 485-86.

<sup>22</sup> George Albert White, “History of the Manhattan Athletic Club,” *Outing*, July 1890.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 308.

<sup>24</sup> The following Brooklyn firehouses were designed by Lauritzen: Engine Company No. 35 (1894-95, now Engine Company No. 235) at 206 Monroe Street, in Bedford Stuyvesant; Engine Company No. 36 (1894-95, now Engine Company No. 236,) at 998 Liberty Avenue, in New Lots; Engine Company 37 (1894-95, now Engine Company 237) at 43 Morgan Avenue, in Bushwick; Engine Company 38 (now decommissioned, 1894-95) at 176 Norman Avenue in Greenpoint; Engine Company 39 (1895, now Engine Company 239) at 395 Fourth Avenue, in Park Slope ; Engine Company 40 (1895, now Engine Company 240) at 1309 Prospect Avenue, in Windsor Terrace; Engine Company 49, (1895-96, now Engine Company No. 249) at 491 Rogers Avenue, in Prospect-Lefferts Gardens; and Hook and Ladder No. 18 (1897, now Ladder Company No. 114) at 5209 Fifth Avenue, in Sunset Park. See *New York City National Register Thematic Group*, nomination by Office of Metropolitan History, Vol. II; and “100 Years of Service to Bay Ridge Brooklyn: Ladder Company 114” at [www.nyfd.com/history\\_ladder\\_114\\_1.html](http://www.nyfd.com/history_ladder_114_1.html).

<sup>25</sup> Alt. 1953-1926, filed by the Fire Department Division of Buildings, January 29, 1926. Plans on file in the Block 5285 Lot 21 folder, application missing.

## 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 Firehouse, Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21 (now Engine Company 240/ Battalion 48) 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 this firehouse for Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21, constructed in 1895, was built as part of a campaign by Brooklyn Fire Department Commissioner Frederick W. Wurster to replace the old firehouses housing the volunteer fire companies in Brooklyn's recently annexed districts with new buildings suitable for up-to-date equipment and full-time professional staff; that the firehouse for Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21 was built to serve the growing community of Windsor Terrace and replaced the firehouse of the volunteer Windsor Hose Company, which had been in operation since 1888; that it was designed by the noted architect Peter J. Lauritzen, a Danish immigrant, who practiced in Washington D.C. before moving to Brooklyn and establishing a practice in Manhattan in 1883; that it is one of eight firehouses that Lauritzen designed for the Brooklyn Fire Department between 1894 and 1897 and is his finest in the Romanesque Revival Style, a style favored Brooklyn firehouses of the period and one in which Lauritzen was particularly at home; that the building's imposing limestone and brick façade features an asymmetrical design with a rusticated limestone ground story, round corner turret richly decorated with Romanesque motifs, a broad round arched window set off by a drip molding with label stops, a flat-arched double-window flanked by colonnettes, an elaborate arched cornice, and an asymmetric parapet; that the quality of the building's materials, workmanship, and details distinguished it from the residential and commercial buildings in the neighborhood and were intended to create a sense of civic pride; that Engine Company 40, now Engine Company 240, has been housed in the present building and has served the Windsor Terrace neighborhood with distinction for over a century and that since 1978 the building has also been home to Battalion 48, which oversees Fire Department units in Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, and Borough Park.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 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 Firehouse, Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21 (now Engine Company 240/ Battalion 48), 1307-1309 Prospect Avenue, Brooklyn and designates as its Landmark Site Borough of the Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5285, Lot 21.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair  
Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Michael Devonshire, Joan Gerner,  
Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Roberta Washington, Commissioners



Firehouse, Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21 (now Engine Company 240/ Battalion 48)  
1307-1309 Prospect Avenue, Brooklyn  
Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map 5285/Lot 21  
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2013*





Firehouse, Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21  
Historic Photograph, 1895

Photo Source: *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Department of Fire of the City of Brooklyn, N.Y. for the Year 1895*

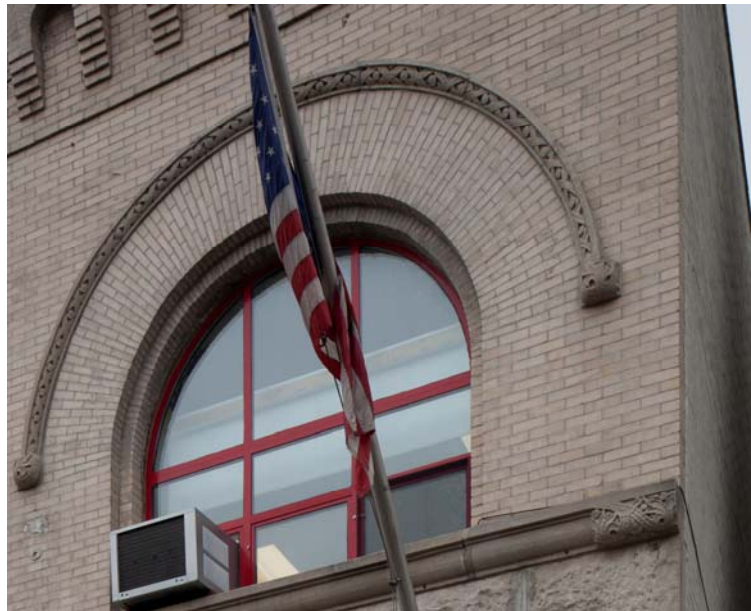


Firehouse, Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21 (now Engine Company 240/ Battalion 48)  
Historic Photo, c. 1960s-70s  
Photo Source: George F. Mand Library, FDNY Fire Academy





Firehouse, Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21 (now Engine Company 240/ Battalion 48)  
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2013*

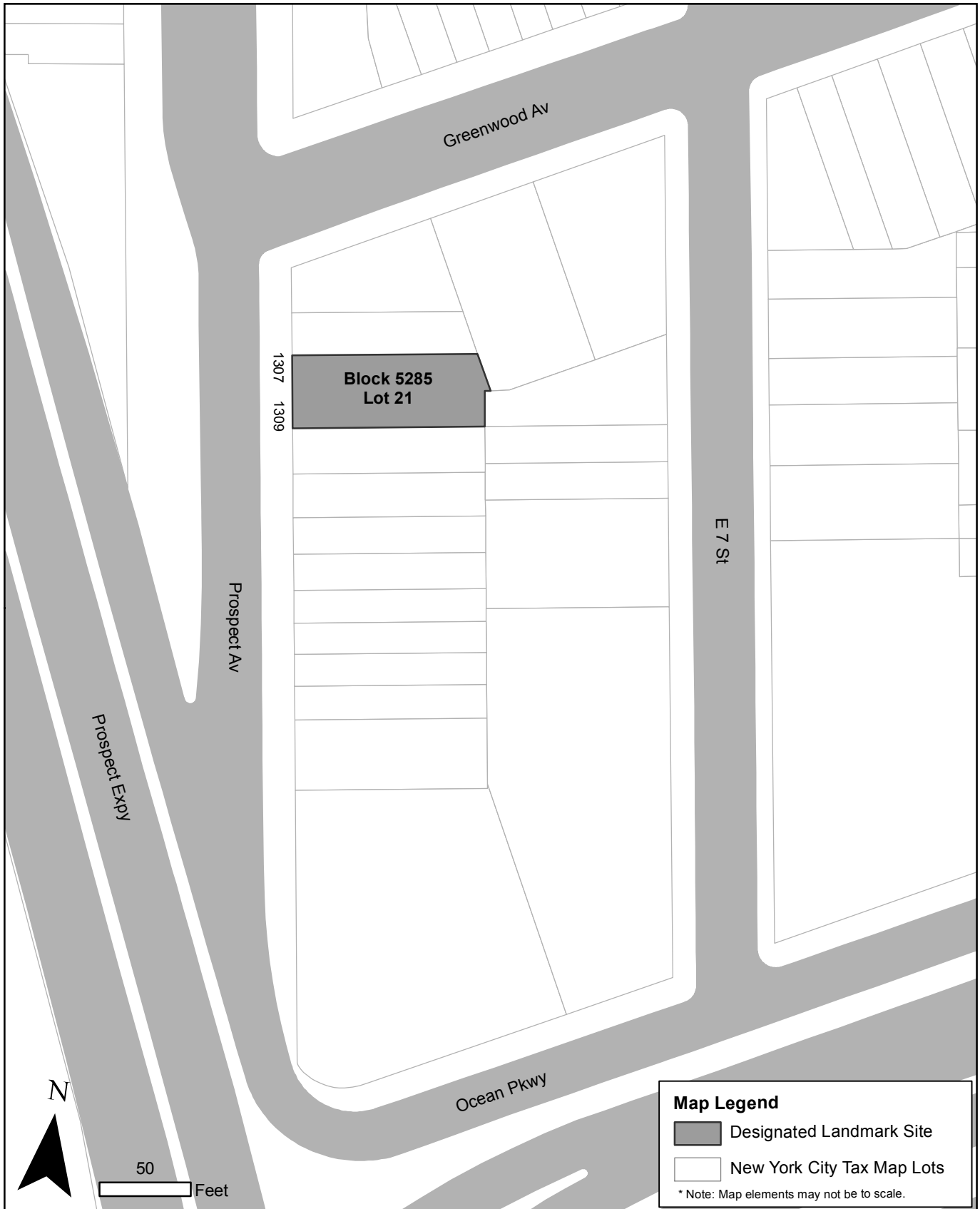


Firehouse, Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21 (now Engine Company 240/ Battalion48)  
*Photos: Christopher D. Brazee, 2013*





Firehouse, Engine Company 40/ Hook & Ladder Company 21 (now Engine Company 240/ Battalion 48)  
*Photos: Gale Harris, 2012*



FIREHOUSE, ENGINE COMPANY 40/HOOK & LADDER COMPANY 21 (NOW ENGINE COMPANY 240/BATTALION 48) (LP-2526), 1307-1309 Prospect Avenue  
 Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn, Tax Map Block 5258, Lot 21

Designated: February 12, 2013