

**FIREHOUSE, ENGINE COMPANY 268/ HOOK & LADDER COMPANY 137, 259
Beach 116th Street, Queens
Built, 1912-13; architect, Frank J. Helmle**

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 16212, Lot 14

On December 11, 2012, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Firehouse, Engine Company 268/ Hook & Ladder Company 137 and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 5). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There was one speaker in favor of designation, a representative of the Historic Districts Council. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Commission received one letter in support of designation from the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Summary

The imposing three-story Firehouse, Engine Company 268/ Hook & Ladder Company 137, in Rockaway Park section of Queens, was constructed in 1912-13 to serve the growing population of the Rockaway Peninsula, which had an increasing number of permanent residents following the completion of a train tunnel under the East River connecting Queens to Manhattan. Fire Engine Company 168 was organized on November 28, 1905, to replace a volunteer fire company when the paid fire department was extended to the Rockaway Peninsula. In 1913 the company name was changed to Fire Engine Company 268 when many fire companies throughout the city were renumbered so that no two companies would have the same number. Hook & Ladder Company 137 was organized that same year. In 1912 the Fire Department Commissioner decided that 15 of the 45 new firehouses constructed that year would have roof gardens for physical exercise. Three firehouses, including this one, were constructed with covered gardens; all three are nearly identical and were designed by prominent Brooklyn architect Frank J. Helmle. The firehouse, designed in the Colonial Revival style with Arts & Crafts elements, combines elements of these two popular early 20th century architectural styles. Characteristic of the Colonial Revival style are the symmetrical red-brick facade laid in Flemish double-stretcher bond, classical-inspired arched loggia, and projecting cornice with classical details. The Arts & Crafts style elements include the simplicity of the overall design, multi-color header bond laid in a diamond brick pattern at projecting brick piers, ceramic shields, and stepped parapet wall. The firehouse continues to serve the Rockaway Park community today.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Firefighting in New York¹

Even in the colonial period, the government of New York took the possibility of fire very seriously. Under Dutch rule all men were expected to participate in firefighting activities. After the English took over, the Common Council organized a force of 30 volunteer firefighters in 1737. They operated two Newsham hand pumpers that had recently been imported from London. By 1798, the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY), under the supervision of a chief engineer and six subordinates, was officially established by an act of the state legislature.

As the city grew, this force was augmented by new volunteer companies. In spite of growing numbers of firefighters and improvements in hoses and water supplies, fire was a significant threat in an increasingly densely built up city. Of particular significance was the “Great Fire” of December 16-17, 1835, which destroyed 20 blocks containing between 600 and 700 buildings. The damages resulting from several major fires between 1800 and 1850 led to the establishment of a building code, and an increase in the number of firemen from 600 in 1800 to more than 4,000 in 1865. Despite rapid growth, the department was often criticized for poor performance.² Intense competition between companies began to hinder firefighting with frequent brawls and acts of sabotage, often at the scenes of fires. During the Civil War, when fire personnel became harder to retain, public support grew for the creation of a professional firefighting force, similar to that which had been established in other cities and to the professional police force that had been created in New York in 1845.

In May 1865, the New York State Legislature established the Metropolitan Fire District, comprising the cities of New York (south of 86th Street) and Brooklyn. The act abolished the volunteer system and created the Metropolitan Fire Department, a paid professional force under the jurisdiction of the state government. By the end of the year, the city’s 124 volunteer companies with more than 4,000 men had retired or disbanded, to be replaced by 33 engine companies and 12 ladder companies operated by a force of 500 men. Immediate improvements included the use of more steam engines, horses and a somewhat reliable telegraph system. A military model was adopted for the firefighters, which involved the use of specialization, discipline, and merit. By 1870, regular service was extended to the “suburban districts” north of 86th Street and expanded still farther north after the annexation of parts of the Bronx in 1874. New techniques and equipment, including taller ladders and stronger steam engines, increased the department’s efficiency, as did the establishment, in 1883, of a training academy for personnel. The growth of the city during this period placed severe demands on the fire department to provide services, and in response the department undertook an ambitious building campaign. The area served by the FDNY nearly doubled after consolidation in 1898, when the departments in Brooklyn and numerous communities in Queens and Staten Island were incorporated into the city. On September 1, 1905 the paid fire department system was extended to Rockaway Beach, Arverne and Far Rockaway in Queens with the organization of five engine companies (including No. 168, now No. 268) and one hook and ladder company.³ After the turn of the century, the Fire Department acquired more modern apparatus and motorized vehicles, reflecting the need for faster response to fires

in taller buildings. Throughout the 20th century, the department has endeavored to keep up with the evolving city and its firefighting needs.

Firehouse Design⁴

By the early 20th century, the firehouse as a building type had evolved from the wooden storage shed used during the 17th century to an imposing architectural expression of civic character. As early as 1853, Marriott Field had argued in his *City Architecture: Designs for Dwelling Houses, Stores, Hotels, etc.* for symbolic architectural expression in municipal buildings, including firehouses. The 1854 Fireman's Hall,⁵ with its highly symbolic ornamentation reflected this approach, using flambeaux, hooks, ladders, and trumpets for its ornament.⁶

Between 1880 and 1895, Napoleon LeBrun & Son served as the official architectural firm for the fire department, designing 42 firehouses in a massive effort to modernize the facilities and to accommodate the growing population of the city. Although the firm's earliest designs were relatively simple, later buildings were more distinguished and more clearly identifiable as firehouses.

While the basic function and requirements of the firehouse were established early in its history, LeBrun is credited with standardizing the program, and introducing some minor, but important, innovations in the plan. Placing the horse stalls in the main part of the ground floor to reduce the time needed for hitching horses to the apparatus was one such innovation.⁷ Firehouses were usually located on mid-block sites because these were less expensive than more prominent corner sites. Since the sites were narrow, firehouses tended to be three stories tall, with the apparatus on the ground story and rooms for the company, including dormitory, kitchen and captain's office, above.

After 1895, the department commissioned a number of well-known architects to design firehouses. Influenced by the classical revival, which was highly popular throughout the country, New York firms such as Hoppin & Koen, Flagg & Chambers, and Horgan & Slatterly created facades with bold, classical style designs.

History of the Rockaway Peninsula⁸

The Rockaway Peninsula includes the villages of Woodmere, Cedarhurst, Lawrence, and Inwood in Nassau County at its eastern end and the neighborhoods of (from east to west) Far Rockaway, Edgemere, Arverne, Sommerville, Seaside, Rockaway Park, Belle Harbor, Neponsit, Roxbury and Breezy Point in the borough of Queens.⁹ The Peninsula is bounded on the south by the Atlantic Ocean and on the north by Jamaica Bay. Firehouse, Engine Company 268/ Hook & Ladder Company 137 is located in Rockaway Park.¹⁰

The most important factor in the development of the Rockaway Peninsula was transportation improvements that made the peninsula more accessible from the mainland. There were two roads during the 18th century connecting to Jamaica and Hempstead. Stages ran from the Marine Pavilion in Far Rockaway over the Jamaica and Rockaway Turnpike Road beginning in 1834, the year both were constructed by the same association of wealthy New Yorkers. The Marine Pavilion, built on a large parcel of land facing the Atlantic Ocean near present-day Beach 20th Street in Far Rockaway, was the first large hotel in the Rockaways. Before its destruction by fire in 1864 it was known as one of the finest hotels in the country. The Brooklyn and Rockaway Beach line

commenced operating trains from East New York to Canarsie where passengers were then taken by ferry boat across Jamaica Bay to Rockaway Beach. The South Side Railroad of Long Island constructed a branch line from Valley Stream to Far Rockaway in 1868-69 which was extended to Rockaway Beach in 1872. A parallel line was built in 1873 by the Long Island Railroad Company from Rockaway Junction (now Jamaica).

The first hotel constructed in Rockaway Beach was the Seaside Hotel in 1874, soon to be followed by many others fine hotels, as well as houses and bath houses, which catered to wealthy New Yorkers. Large pleasure steamers would dock at the Seaside landing piers. A trestle route over the Jamaica Bay was built in 1880 connecting Rockaway Beach and Brooklyn by the New York, Woodhaven and Rockaway Railroad Company. Local travel between the railroad station and the beach at Far Rockaway was provided by horse-drawn cars operated by the Rockaway Village Railroad Company (incorporated in March 1886). The boulevard connecting Rockaway Beach and Far Rockaway opened that same year and it is estimated that the permanent population at Rockaway Beach was about 1,000 persons. In 1897 electric trolley lines operated by the Ocean Electric Railway Company provided local service, the same year that the Village of Rockaway Beach was incorporated.

After consolidation of the Greater New York City in 1898, the western part of the peninsula that was part of Queens County in the Town of Hempstead became part of the Fifth Ward of the Borough of Queens.

When the train tunnel under the East River opened in 1910 it was possible for Rockaway residents to reach Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan within a half an hour. By 1913 the permanent population of Rockaway Beach was estimated to be 12,000. Access by automobile required driving to Nassau County and entering the peninsula at the easternmost end until the Cross Bay and Joseph P. Addabbo Memorial Bridges opened in 1923 providing access from the mainland of Queens County over Jamaica Bay. After the city announced plans to build a nine-mile boardwalk in 1925 the Rockaways experienced a real estate boom. Beachside bungalows attracted low- and moderate-income families and the Rockaways became known as a seaside resort for working-class families.¹¹ The Marine Parkway Bridge (now Marine Parkway – Gil Hodges Bridge) connecting Brooklyn and the Rockaways opened in 1937, and the IND subway line to the Rockaways was completed in 1956.

As access to the Rockaways improved the peninsula became the home of an increasing number of year-round residents in addition to remaining a popular seaside summer resort. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Queens County Community District 14, which includes the Rockaway Peninsula and Broad Channel, had 106,686 permanent residents. This diverse community included 40% African-American, 37.3% white and 17.7% Hispanic or Latino residents.¹²

Design of Firehouse, Engine Company 268/ Hook & Ladder Company 137

Frank J. Helmle designed the firehouse using elements of two popular early 20th century architectural styles, the Colonial Revival and the Arts & Crafts styles. The Colonial Revival style is characterized by the use of colonial-era design motifs, a combination of elements from Federal and Greek Revival styles; symmetrical red brick façades laid in Flemish bond; stone trim around doorway and window openings; multi-paneled wood doors; multi-pane double-hung wood windows; classical details including

urns, festoons, and broken pediments; and simple cornices. The Colonial Revival style achieved widespread popularity following the reconstruction of several early American buildings at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, and the World's Columbian Exposition, which featured a model of John Hancock's house that served as the Massachusetts Pavilion. The style, which was symbolic of American national pride partly in response to rising immigration, came to be seen as "a tangible expression of our national character."¹³ Although some of the historical revival styles that gained popularity in the late 19th century, including the Colonial Revival, continued to be used after the turn of the century, the 20th century brought several styles that were not based on historical revivals of architecture styles but on new design concepts; these styles include the Arts & Crafts style. The Arts & Crafts movement originated in England in the second half of the 19th century as a reaction to the more elaborate revival styles of the time and the impact of the industrial revolution. Its emphasis was on simplicity of form, modest decoration and an "honest" use of materials. Gustav Stickley, publisher of the *Craftsman Magazine*, promoted similar ideas in this country.

Firehouse, Engine Company 268/ Hook & Ladder Company 137 was designed in the Colonial Revival style with Arts & Crafts elements. Characteristic of the Colonial Revival style are the symmetrical red-brick facade laid in Flemish double-stretcher bond, classical-inspired arched loggia with engaged Corinthian columns and stone lintels, original multi-pane double-hung wood windows, and projecting cornice with classical details such as dentils and scroll consoles. The Arts & Crafts style elements include the simplicity of the overall design, multi-color header bond laid in a diamond brick pattern at projecting brick piers, ceramic shields, and stepped parapet wall.

The most unusual feature of the firehouse is the third floor open loggia. In 1912 Fire Department Commissioner Joseph Johnson decided that some of the new firehouses constructed that year would have roof gardens for physical exercise. Two styles were adopted, one was a "covered garden, 20 feet deep, across the front of the three-story firehouse on a level with the third floor and opening directly into the recreation rooms. The other style provides for an uncovered garden, also on a level with the third floor, but across the rear of the house." Fifteen of the 45 new firehouses that started construction that year had roof gardens: eight in Queens, three in Brooklyn, two in the Bronx, and one each in Manhattan and Staten Island. Twelve of the firehouses had uncovered gardens. The three with covered gardens, which includes this firehouse, are nearly identical and were designed by Frank J. Helmle.¹⁴ The commencement of construction of 45 new firehouses in one year was a large increase over previous years when the average number, before Johnson became commissioner, was less than five. These new firehouses would house the most modern automatic fire-fighting equipment, such as steam fire engines propelled by automobile front-drive tractors and automobile hook and ladder trucks, as the fire department ceased using horses and older types of equipment.¹⁵

Engine Company 268 and Hook & Ladder Company 137

At the time of consolidation, Queens had one city, Long Island City, which was served by a paid fire department, and six towns, which were served by 15 volunteer fire departments. The Rockaway Beach Fire Department was incorporated on June 24, 1889 and included the Atlantic Engine Company No. 1, organized on March 1, 1887 and located at 196 Washington Avenue (later Beach 110th Street) in Rockaway Park. Fire

Engine Company 168 was organized on November 28, 1905 at the same location to replace the volunteer fire company when the paid fire department was extended to the Rockaways. In 1913 the company name was changed to Fire Engine Company 268 when many fire companies throughout the city were renumbered so that no two companies would have the same number. At this time it moved to a new firehouse at its present location, then known as 41-43 Fifth Avenue.¹⁶ Hook & Ladder Company 137, organized that same year, is located in the same building.¹⁷

Hook & Ladder Company 137, as a “surf rescue unit,” responds to calls of boats in distress and bathers at the beach when lifeguards are not on duty. Members of Fire Engine Company 268 and Hook & Ladder Company 137 spent months helping with the clean-up of the World Trade Center site after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. Of the 343 firefighters who died on that day, 18 lived in the Rockaways. Only two months later, on November 12, 2001, members of Fire Engine Company 268 and Hook & Ladder Company 137 were among the first to respond when American Airlines Flight 587 crashed on the peninsula.¹⁸

Frank J. Helmle¹⁹

Architect Frank J. Helmle (1869-1939) was born in Ohio and educated at Cooper Union and the School of Fine Arts of the Brooklyn Institute. In 1890, he entered the office of McKim, Mead & White in Manhattan, but by 1896 he had formed his own firm in Williamsburg with Ephraim Johnson (Johnson & Helmle). This partnership ended in 1901. The following year he was appointed Superintendent of Public Buildings for Brooklyn and formed the firm of Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell with fellow Brooklyn architects Ulrich J. Huberty and William H. Hudswell. The firm lasted until 1906 when Hudswell opened an independent office and the partnership of Helmle & Huberty continued into 1913. Helmle practiced independently after the end of that partnership until he formed the firm of Helmle & Corbett with Harvey Wiley Corbett in 1918. The firm was later known as Helmle, Corbett & Harrison but Helmle retired from the practice of architecture in 1928 soon after Wallace K. Harrison joined the firm.

Helmle and his various partners were responsible for many of Brooklyn’s finest early 20th-century Renaissance-inspired landmarks, including the Brooklyn Central Office, Bureau of Fire Communications (1913, Frank J. Helmle, a New York City Landmark),²⁰ Winthrop Park Shelter Pavilion (1910, Helmle & Huberty, a New York City Landmark), and the Boat House (1904, Helmle & Huberty, a New York City Landmark), Tennis House (1909-10, Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell) and Willink Entrance Comfort Station (1912, Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell) (all located within Prospect Park, a New York City Scenic Landmark). Helmle is also known for several prominent Roman Catholic churches in Brooklyn, including the neo-Spanish Baroque style church of St. Barbara in Bushwick (1907-10, Helmle and Huberty) and Early Christian Revival style church of St. Gregory the Great in Crown Heights (1915-16, Frank J. Helmle, within the Crown Heights North II Historic District).

Description

Three-story brick firehouse with two bays at the first floor and three bays at the second and third floors.

East (primary) facade: Flemish double-stretcher bond multi-color brickwork with multi-color header bond laid in a diamond brick pattern at projecting brick piers; symmetrical arrangement with stone watertable and two large segmental-arched garage door openings with brick lintels for fire trucks at the first floor; pin-mounted letters (“H & L 137” and “268 Engine 268”) above the garage doors; historic plaque (1913) at center of first story; two ceramic fire department shields placed between three square-headed second-story windows that have brick lintels and sills; open loggia with three arched openings having terra-cotta lintels supported by engaged stone columns and latticework railings; continuous molded terra-cotta band between second and third floors; terra-cotta cornice with dentils, egg-and-dart, and scroll consoles; stepped brick parapet with stone coping
Alterations: garage doors and window sash replaced; flag pole, two red lights (“Engine 268” and “Ladder 137”) at either side of the garage doors, three light fixtures above the garage doors, light fixture with exposed conduit above historic plaque, display box at center of first story, pin-mounted numbers (“259”) above display box, two metal brackets at windows, and three light fixtures in ceiling at loggia installed; metal gates with fire department insignia on either side of building at the front lot line removed and replaced at the north with metal gate

North facade: Red-brick return wall with watertable, stone band and cornice; parged brick facade with arched opening at loggia and square-headed window openings with replacement sash; one-story parged brick extension; parged brick chimney

South facade: Red-brick return wall with watertable, stone band and cornice; parged brick facade with arched opening at loggia and square-headed window openings with replacement sash; two light fixtures with exposed conduit and an alarm box at first story; conduit attached to facade; metal stack to roof

West (rear) facade: Parged brick facade with hose drying tower at center rear of the roof; square-headed windows with replacement sash; two satellite dish at roof; one-story rear yard extension

Report prepared by
Cynthia Danza
Research Department

NOTES

¹ This section is taken almost in its entirety from Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Fire House, Hook and Ladder 17 Designation Report* (LP-2046), report prepared by Virginia Kurshan (New York: City of New York, 2000). The information came from the following sources: Donald J. Cannon, “Firefighting,” *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, ed. Kenneth T. Jackson, 2d. ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010); Augustine Costello, *Our Firemen, A History of the New York Fire Departments, Volunteer and Paid* (New York: A.E. Costello, 1887); Kenneth Holcomb Dunshee, *As You Pass By* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1940); LPC, *Engine Company No. 7/Ladder Company No.1 Designation Report* (LP-

1719), report prepared by Charles Savage (NY: City of NY, 1993); LPC, *Engine Company 47 Designation Report* (LP-1962) report prepared by Laura Hansen (NY: City of NY, 1997); LPC, *Fire Engine Company No. 84 and Hook & Ladder Company No. 34 Designation Report* (LP-1863) report prepared by Laura Hansen (NY: City of NY, 1997); LPC, *Fire Engine Company 55 Designation Report* (LP-1987) report prepared by Matthew Postal (NY: City of NY, 1998); LPC, *Fire Engine Company 289, Ladder Company 138 Designation Report* (LP- 2035) report prepared by Matthew Postal (NY: City of NY, 1999); and Lowell M. Limpus, *History of the New York Fire Department* (New York, Dutton, 1940).

² Firemen often served for various reasons in addition to their desire to help their city; participation in fire companies was seen as a starting point for political careers. Seven mayors elected after 1835 had initially served as firefighters.

³ *Report of the Fire Department of the City of New York for the Year 1905* (N.Y.: Martin B. Brown Company, 1906), 227, 310.

⁴ This section is taken in its entirety from LPC, *Fire House, Hook and Ladder 17 Designation Report*. The information comes, in part, from the following sources: LPC, *Fire Engine Company No. 84 and Hook & Ladder Company No. 34 Designation Report*; LPC, *Fire Engine Co. 55 Designation Report*; Robert A.M. Stern, et al, *New York 1900* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983); U.S. Department of the Interior: Heritage, Conservation, and Recreation Services, National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, “New York City Firehouses: National Register Thematic Group” (form prepared by Christopher Gray for the New York City Landmarks Conservancy, 1980); and Rebecca Zurier, *The American Firehouse, An Architectural and Social History* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1982).

⁵ This building, located at 153-57 Mercer Street, within the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District, no longer functions as a firehouse.

⁶ In an attempt to remove the political influence of Tammany Hall on the Fire Department, the Common Council banned the construction of new buildings in the 1860s. It was not until after the professionalization of the fire department that money was again expended on the construction of these desperately-needed civic structures, with their appropriately impressive ornament.

⁷ LeBrun is also credited with the creation of vertical hose-drying towers to accommodate this necessary activity in a space-saving manner.

⁸ The early history in this section is based on Alfred H. Bellot, *History of the Rockaways: From the Year 1685 to 1917* (Far Rockaway, N.Y.: Bellot’s Histories, Inc., 1917).

⁹ New York City Department of City Planning, New York: A City of Neighborhoods (map) at www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/neighbor/neighbor.pdf. South of Roxbury, between Neponsit and Breezy Point, is Jacob Riis Park and Fort Tilden.

¹⁰ Rockaway Park is part of the area that is referred to as Rockaway Beach.

¹¹ Caroline C. Pasion, “Preserving the Beachside Bungalows in Far Rockaway” (Masters Thesis, Columbia University, 2008), 35.

¹² New York City Census Fact Finder for Queens Community Board 14 at the NYC Department of City Planning website. Broad Channel is located in Jamaica Bay.

¹³ William B. Rhoads, “The Colonial Revival and American Nationalism,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (December 1976), 241, cited in the introductory essay to LPC, *Fieldston Historic District Designation Report* (LP-2138) (New York: City of New York, 2006), prepared by Virginia Kurshan, 21.

¹⁴ The other two nearly identical firehouses are Engine Company 285/ Hook & Ladder Company 142 at 103-17 98th Street, Queens and Engine Company 29/ Hook & Ladder Company 48 at 1226 Seneca Avenue in the Bronx.

¹⁵ “Firemen Are To Have Roof Garden Houses,” *New York Times*, December 16, 1912, 5.

¹⁶ The address of the firehouse was later known as 241-243 Beach 116th Street and is now known as 259 Beach 116th Street.

¹⁷ Michael I. Boucher, *Queens Volunteer Fire Department Survey List*; Michael Boucher, *Fire Department New York: Historic of Fire Company Locations; Centennial 1905-2005: Over One Hundred Years of Service* (Far Rockaway: Fire Companies 264, 265, 266, Ladder 121, Battalion 246); *Headquarters Fire Department City of New York* (pamphlet dated March 28, 1928); George F. Mand Library, *Volunteer Fire Department*; Ridgewood Historical Society clipping file for Volunteer Fire Departments of the Rockaways and Broad Channel. (All in the collection of the Queens Library Archives.)

¹⁸ “The Beach House,” Engine Company 268 and Hook & Ladder Company 137 website, www.e268l137.com.

¹⁹ This section is based on LPC, *Bush Tower Designation Report* (LP-1561), report prepared by Betsey Bradley (NY: City of NY, 1988) and LPC, *Crown Heights North Historic District Designation Report* (LP-2204), architects’ appendix prepared by Donald G. Presa (NY: City of NY, 2007).

²⁰ The Bronx Bureau of Fire Communications building that he designed at 1129 East 180th Street (1913-15) is almost identical to this building. These neo-Italian Renaissance style buildings contained the fire alarm telegraph stations for the fire department.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that Firehouse, Engine Company 268/ Hook & Ladder Company 137 has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and culture characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the imposing three-story Firehouse, Engine Company 268/ Hook & Ladder Company 137, in Rockaway Park section of Queens, was constructed in 1912-13 to serve the growing population of the Rockaway Peninsula, which had an increasing number of permanent residents following the completion of a train tunnel under the East River connecting Queens to Manhattan; that Fire Engine Company 168 was organized on November 28, 1905 to replace a volunteer fire company when the paid fire department was extended to the Rockaway Peninsula; that in 1913 the company name was changed to Fire Engine Company 268 when many fire companies throughout the city were renumbered so that no two companies would have the same number; that Hook & Ladder Company 137 was organized that same year; that in 1912 the Fire Department Commissioner decided that 15 of the 45 new firehouses constructed that year would have roof gardens for physical exercise; that three firehouses, including this one, were constructed with covered gardens; that all three are nearly identical and were designed by prominent Brooklyn architect Frank J. Helmle; that the firehouse, designed in the Colonial Revival style with Arts & Crafts elements, combines elements of these two popular early 20th century architectural styles; that characteristic of the Colonial Revival style are the symmetrical red-brick facade laid in Flemish double-stretcher bond, classical-inspired arched loggia, and projecting cornice with classical details; that the Arts & Crafts style elements include the simplicity of the overall design, multi-color header bond laid in a diamond brick pattern at projecting brick piers, ceramic shields, and stepped parapet wall; and that the firehouse continues to serve the Rockaway Park community today.

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 268/ Hook & Ladder Company 137, 259 Beach 116th Street, Queens, and designated Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 16212, Lot 14, as its Landmark Site.

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



Firehouse, Engine Company 268/ Hook & Ladder Company 137

259 Beach 116th Street, Queens

Block 16212, Lot 14

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2013)



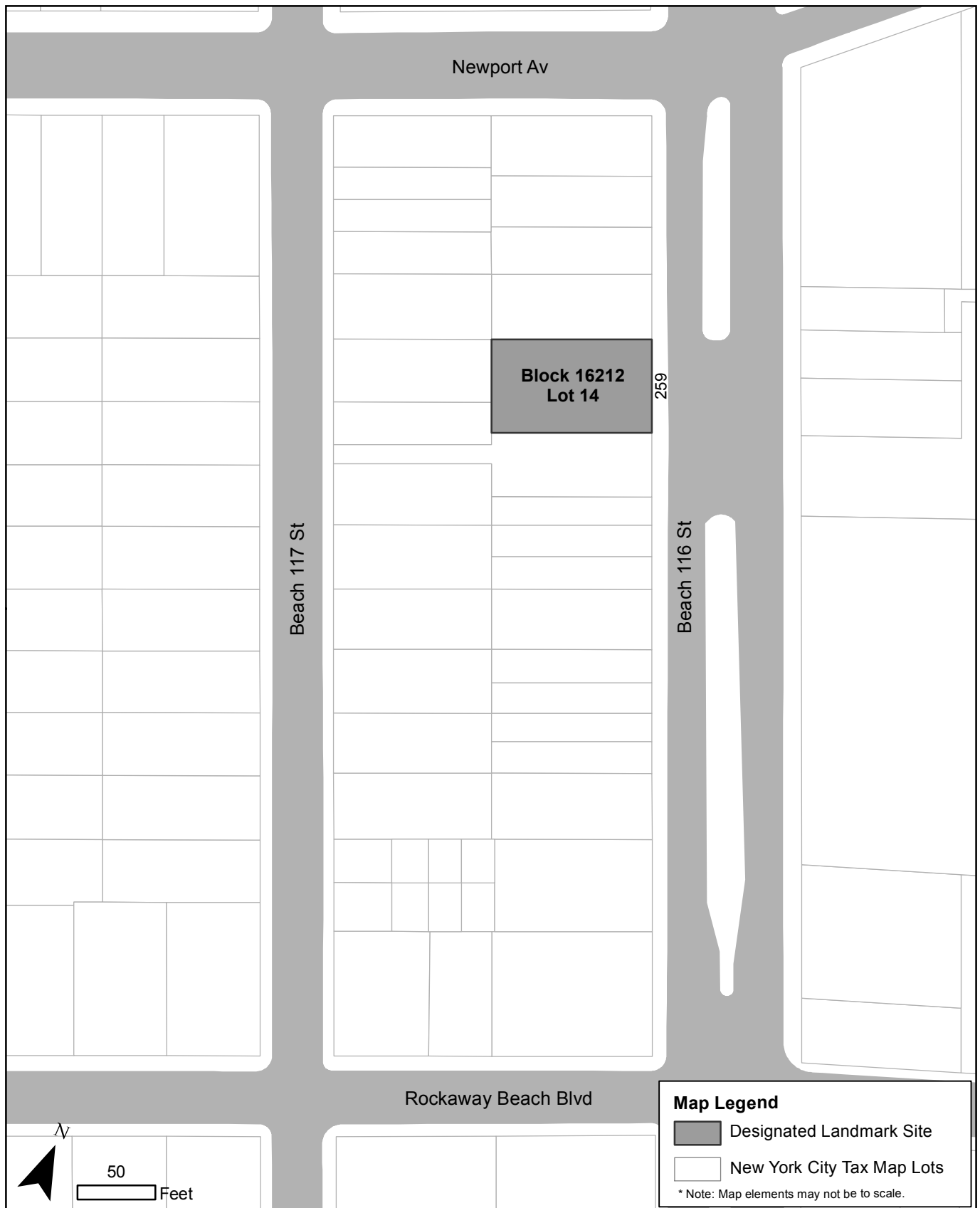
Firehouse, Engine Company 268/ Hook & Ladder Company 137
Fire Department Shield Detail
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2013)



Firehouse, Engine Company 268/ Hook & Ladder Company 137
Undated historic photograph
Source: George F. Mand Library, FDNY Fire Academy



Firehouse, Engine Company 268/ Hook & Ladder Company 137
Undated historic photograph
Source: George F. Mand Library, FDNY Fire Academy



FIREHOUSE, ENGINE COMPANY 268/ HOOK & LADDER COMPANY 137 (LP-2527), 259 Beach 116th Street
 Landmark Site: Borough of Queens, Tax Map Block 16212, Lot 14

Designated: February 12, 2013