



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OLD FIRE HALL

**2038 WEST MALL
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

30 NOVEMBER 2016



INTRODUCTION

The Old Fire Hall comprises the original 1926 building with its hose drying tower, plus additions on the west side and northeast corner of the building, constructed in the 1970s. Redundant as a fire hall, the building is currently used by the faculty in the Departments of Art History, and Visual Art & Theory as office and studio space.

The building was painted bright red in the 1990s, in part to draw attention to its existence (according to Freda Pagani, Campus Architect at the time), part of an initiative to stave off its demolition.

CHRONOLOGY



c. 1926 view of Old Fire Hall (UBC 1.1/2615)

1926

Original building constructed as part of the initial campus building program; the building featured:

- 3 bays for fire-fighting vehicles
- Ancillary equipment rooms
- Upstairs residential accommodation
- Hose drying tower



1971

Additions to the west of the 1926 building for the on-site accommodation of personnel

c. 1970s

Added turret over west gable



c. 1975
Top: (UBC 41.1/1554.1)
Bottom: (UBC 41.1/2341)

c. 1975

Additions at northwest and northeast corners:

- Added communal living space at northeast
- Added circulation to Upper Floor Level
- Trailer addition to the east



c. 1980 (UBC 105.1/242)

c. 1982

Fire fighting operation located to Westbrook Mall

Repurposed space for use by Departments of Art History, Visual Art & Theory



1996 (UBC 106.1/127)



Hose drying tower interior



View from West Mall, with the Klinck Building in the background

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Description

The Old Fire Hall at 2038 West Mall is the small wood-framed building recognizable on the mall because of its unusual traditional detailing in a context of modern buildings, its small tower, and its faded red coloured rough-cast stucco cladding.

Heritage Value

The Old Fire Hall is valued for its campus location, its exterior form and character that reflect its original use as a fire hall, its array of rooms that supported the storage of fire fighting vehicles and accommodation of fire fighters, and its history of re-purposed use since being a fire hall, but primarily for being among the earliest buildings built on campus, opening just one year following the construction of the first academic and administration buildings.

The Old Fire Hall, by virtue of its location on West Mall, is an enduring campus presence since the University's first years at Point Grey. It joined the very earliest cluster of buildings on campus: the Science building (today part of the Chemistry building), the Library, the nine "semi-permanent" buildings (Arts, Agriculture, Applied Science, Administration, the Auditorium, four laboratory/workshop buildings) and the adjacent Power House – all of which were completed just one year earlier. With



these inaugural structures, the Old Fire Hall helps delineate the precinct of the earliest campus.

The Old Fire Hall exterior form and character are important as an example of traditional Public Works design in the early 20th Century, with its imagery and modest level of detailing having roots in the Arts & Crafts movement. The great contrasts of scale and style between the Old Fire Hall's and its surrounding buildings is perhaps the clearest evidence of the evolution of the University in scale and cultural ambitions.

Character-defining Elements

- Proximity to other founding buildings of the campus, including the original portion of the Power House, located to its east
- Prominence on West Mall, among newer larger buildings
- Original portions of the 1926 building
 - Gabled wings north, south and west of the tower element, including their end-of-gable parapet detailing
 - Hose drying tower
 - Expanses of the original rough-cast stucco
 - Original wood windows and associated interior and exterior trim
 - Original exterior wood details, such as knee-bracing, wood fascia and bargeboards
 - Original interior woodwork, including the original wood interior of the hose drying tower
 - High vehicular doors facing West Mall



Intangible Character-defining Elements

- History of learning in rooms re-purposed for studio work
- History of fire-fighting mechanics reflected in form



Top: Main Floor south windows
Middle: Upper Fl. west windows
Bottom: Hallway, Main Floor

Archival images from UBC Archives
Top: 1929 (UBC 1.1/550)
Middle: 1976 (UBC 41.1/1554-1)
Bottom: 1996 (UBC 106.1/127)



Top: Main Floor main space with overhead door
Bottom: Hose drying tower

