

PROPERTY INFORMATION

PROPERTY NAME	Arlington County Fire Station No. 8 (Current) Hall's Hill/High View Park Volunteer Fire Department (Historic)
PROPERTY ADDRESS	4845 Lee Highway Arlington, VA 22207
TAX PARCEL	08001054
USGS QUAD (S)	FALLS CHURCH
COUNTY/INDEPENDENT CITY	Arlington (County)

ADDITIONAL PROPERTY INFORMATION

ARCHITECTURE SETTING	Suburban
OWNERSHIP CATEGORY	Local Government (County)

SITE DESCRIPTION

February 2017: Fire Department No. 8, located on the north side of Lee Highway between North Culpeper and North Columbus streets, is sited in the Hall's Hill commercial district near Cottage Park's subdivision. The irregularly-configured parcel is bounded by residences to its north and northwest and west, and an auto mechanic to its east. Within the lot, the fire station property has a grass lawn, crape myrtles, mature maples, and shrubbery west of the building, and a through-access asphalt drive and parking lot immediately north of the building. Landscaping features around the fire department include a grass lawn in front of the building and east of the building, a wood retaining wall with shrubs, and a series of poured-concrete walkways connecting the building's entrances between the façade and west elevation to the poured-concrete driveway at the fire engines' garage bays. A wood bench, from the fire department's earlier days, is sited east of the front driveway.

November 2019: The only observed change from the February 2017 site description is the small, front-gabled masonry shed that exists west of the building. The roof appears to be covered by replacement composition shingles and features a pair of hollow-core metal doors on the front (north) elevation. Metal, floor-level vents are visible on the south and east elevations.

PROPERTY HISTORY

November 2019: In 1918, residents of Hall's Hill, as High View Park was known at the turn of the twentieth century, established the Hall's Hill Volunteer (Fire Department #8) (Walk Arlington 2014; Maas et. Al 2017: 60; Simon 2018; Jones 2018: 16-17). Fire Station #8 was the County's first African American-manned fire station created during a segregated era when African American communities across the nation created autonomous social, civic, religious, commercial and residential enclaves throughout the nation (ACCB 1994; Simon 2018). The fire department elected its first officers in 1925 with C.H. Chinn as its chief along with volunteer officers Robert Nickerson (President), Samuel Taylor (Vice-President), F.W. Ewell (Secretary) and William E. Lewis (Treasurer) and officially incorporated in 1927. Historic research revealed that in 1927, the fire department had its first location along Lee Avenue before relocating to its current area (ACHPP 2016:21). By 1934, the department moved to its current location on property owned by the Hicks family (Golkin 2015; Simon 2018a). The first HHVFD building located at 2209 N. Culpeper Street was adjacent to the William and Susana Hicks residence on

Lot 26 of the Cottage Park subdivision (Simon 2018a; Jones 2018: 52)). The building was a simple, two-bay, front-gabled structure with a center-ridge, bell-rigged cupola constructed circa 1934 (Maas et al. 2017: 60).

The rudimentary beginnings of the fire station included a team of six who utilized a two-wheel cart outfitted with a 60-gallon chemical tank to navigate the High View Park neighborhood (ACCB 1994; Walk Arlington 2014; Simon 2018). The Halls Hill community procured the equipment for the fire station during its earliest years through fund-raising carnivals, door-to-door canvassing, and subscription support. By 1926, the force acquired a 1917 Mitchell motor-driven fire truck with a mounted 60-gallon chemical tank/extinguisher. Through continued community support, the fire department continued to upgrade its equipment. In 1933, they acquired a County-provided 1929 Diamond-T fire truck, a 1929 600-gallon pumper in the early 1950s. Unfortunately, County-provided equipment was often used, outdated or faulty (Golkin 2015; Simon 2018:8). In addition, County compensation for the department also lagged. Nevertheless, “Fire Station 8 played a significant role in supporting the residents of Halls Hill during the war [World War II (WWII)]. Applications had to be completed to request rations for items like canning sugar. The women of Halls Hill went to the fire station to secure their application forms and then mailed the completed forms to the county government to be processed (Jones 2018: 45-46). After WWII in 1951, eleven years after their Caucasian peers, the County’s first paid African American firefighters were HHHVP volunteer members Alfred Clark and Julian Syphax (Golkin 2015; No author 2018; Simon 2018:5-7; Jones 2018: 52); Clark became the first African American Fire Captain in the County. When the station became County-owned in the early 1960s, it was a combination engine and truck company with a crew of 21 that operated a 100-foot aerial ladder truck. The station remained all African American through the 1960s (ACHPP 2016:21).

The current fire department structure appears to be the third constructed on the northwest corner of Lee Highway/Culpeper Street. The first was the aforementioned front-gabled structure located at 2209 N. Culpeper Street. In 1944, the Hicks family deeded the current parcel to the Trustees of the Arlington County Fire Department Engine No. 8 (Golkin 2015; Simon 2018:4). Planning for a new county-owned fire house in Hall’s Hill started in the early 1960s. The county Board acquired a number of additional parcels of land, contracted architect Richard Parks to design the building, and paid \$134,216 to build the station in August 1962 (Simon 2018:8; Jones 2018: 126). The ground-breaking ceremony for the second Fire Station No. 8 building occurred in 1962. The second and extant building reflected mid-century modern architectural influences and was located east of the previous building at 4545 Lee Highway oriented to face the busy thoroughfare.

Beginning in 1999, Fire Station No. 8 was identified by the Arlington County Manager for potential “relocation, consolidation, replacement or closure” (Golkin 2015). County resistance to this notion despite response times that reflected a need to station improvements ultimately prevailed. In December 2015, the Arlington County Board created an eleven-member Task Force to brainstorm options for a replacement of Fire Station No. 8. By majority vote, the task force favored replacing the station at its current location along Lee Highway; service demand location and population density were the driving factors in this decision. The County Board favored the task force recommendations and in July 2016 voted to build the existing four-bay station at its historic location. In recognition of the station’s history and cultural legacy, in February 2018 the County Manager established the fourteen-member Fire Station No. 8 History and Legacy Working Group. The purpose of the working group was to develop and recommend strategies to recognize, emphasize, and honor the history and legacy of the Hall’s Hill/High View Park Volunteer Fire Department and Fire Station No. 8 to incorporate into the planning and design of a replacement fire station (No author 2018).

“Participants in our process learned Fire Station no. 8’s value as a community resource extended and continues to extend beyond its role as an operational station...We learned how Station No. 8 provided a safe place for African Americans to gather and interact in a segregated society...spawned leaders in the emergency preparedness and response profession (No author 2018).”

“Its (Fire Station No. 8) importance as a historical and cultural touchstone that reminds all residents and visitors how Arlington’s African American community had the courage and conviction to strive for equal rights, progress, and justice (Simon 2018).”

A Centennial Celebration of Halls Hill Fire Station No. 8 by the African American firefighters historical Society and the John M. Langston Citizens Associated occurred in 2018 and 2019, respectively. Design of the replacement station began in the Spring of 2019 with its most recent draft design by Architects Lemay Erickson Willcox revealed at the Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) Meeting #4 on October 16, 2019. Per the October 2019 PFRC meeting presentation, groundbreaking for the new structure is slated for Fall 2020 with a grand opening in the Fall of 2022 (LEWA 2019).

SURVEYOR ASSESSMENT/RECOMMENDATION

November 2019: Fire Station No. 8 is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A on the local level for its historical association with the history of fire stations in Arlington County as well as the African American heritage in the Hall's Hill/High View Park (HHHVP) neighborhood. This site has been historically associated with the social and civic development of the predominately African American HHHVP neighborhood since the early twentieth century, specifically the location of the Hall's Hill Volunteer Fire Department (HHVFD)(non-extant) which operated through the 1960s. It is eligible under Criterion C as embodying the characteristics of an International style firehouse including its one-story height, rectilinear form, minimal ornamentation, and flat roof. The building retains its integrity of location, design, setting, feeling and association. However, the replacement garage doors and windows impact its integrity of materials and workmanship. The firehouse is slated for demolition in 2020 with a replacement firehouse planned for 2022.

[SURVEYOR RECOMMENDATION: NRHP ELIGIBLE](#)

PRIMARY RESOURCE INFORMATION

RESOURCE CATEGORY	Government
RESOURCE TYPE	Fire Station
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	1963 (Local Records)
HISTORIC TIME PERIOD	The New Dominion (1946-1991)
HISTORIC CONTEXT (S)	Architecture/Community Planning, Transportation/Communication, Ethnic Heritage (Black)
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	International
FORM	Rectangular
NUMBER OF STORIES	1.0
CONDITION	Good
THREATS TO RESOURCE	Demolition

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

February 2017: Located on 4845 Lee Highway, Fire Department No. 8 is a compact one-story, eight-bay building with an attached two-bay one-story garage, all rendered in the International Style common to public and local government buildings. Office and garage stand on a concrete foundation with a basement, and the fire department's masonry structure is covered by a 7:1 brick bond on the office section and a running stretcher brick bond on the garage. Both office and garage have a flat roof, with a small raised parapet along the office's south, west, and north roofline, and metal coping along the entire roofline. A flush exterior-end chimney with a concrete cap rises from the west elevation's roofline. Fenestration follows an asymmetrical pattern typical of Modernism with windows and doors retaining their original openings with concrete sills. There are no window openings on the east side, and two of the west elevation's

four windows are enclosed by plywood panels; the remaining two window openings are filled by replacement casement vinyl sash. On the façade, a narrow window band with an enclosed center bay is filled by replacement vinyl sliding casement sash, except for one remaining two-light aluminum hopper window and a projecting window bay east of the primary entrance, now filled by replacement vinyl double-hung sash. The façade's primary entrance, sharing the projecting bay's flat cantilever roofline as a shelter, is filled by a solid single leaf metal door with an asymmetrical single-pane transom over entrance and adjacent ceramic tile mosaic panel. A secondary entrance is on the west elevation, via the basement stairs; this entrance has a low brick wall with a cast metal balustrade and a chain link metal gate. The garage section's two metal pull-down doors are replacement but the frieze panel above the bays with the building's signage dates from 1963. An undated photograph, taken between 1963 and 2008 shows the garage doors open, and the projecting bay windows wrap around to the east, confirming that the garage was constructed after the office section.

Fire Department No. 8's history began with the Hall's Hill Volunteer Fire Department in 1918, which was officially organized in 1925. By 1927, the department, the only African American fire department in Arlington, was incorporated but it would not receive county funding until 1951, ten years after other Arlington fire departments were locally funded. In 1934, the Hall's Hill Volunteer Fire Department left its front-gable brick firehouse on Lee Highway for a new building at 2209 North Culpeper Street, where they remained until 1963.

November 2019: The February 2017 architectural description stands; no major renovations or modifications were observed during this field survey.

EXTERIOR COMPONENTS

COMPONENT	COMPONENT TYPE	MATERIAL	MATERIAL TREATMENT
CHIMNEYS	Exterior End	Brick	American/Common Bond
ROOF	Flat	Asphalt	--
WINDOWS	Double-hung	Vinyl	--
STRUCTURAL SYSTEM/EXTERIOR TREATMENT	Wood Frame	Brick	Stretcher Bond
FOUNDATION	Solid/Continuous	Concrete	--
PORCH	Overhang/Awning	Aluminum	Not Visible

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