

845 SARGENT AVENUE – FIRE HALL NO. 5

Alexander R. & William N. Melville, 1910



This 1913-built stone and brick fire hall is one of more than a dozen built by the City of Winnipeg based on a set of standard plans developed in 1904. It is a tangible illustration of the maturity of the West End of Winnipeg, its extensive commercial and residential development and the need for civic services, especially fire and emergency response. It was a source of neighbourhood pride and a local landmark, as all pre-World War I fire halls became in their respective areas. The building was also reflective of the growth of civic services beyond downtown and the City's answer to the call for modern civic facilities.

The solid brick hall at the northwest corner of Sargent Avenue and Burnell Street was originally known as No. 10, its front (south) two-storey façade including four, large arched equipment doors topped by delicate brick drip moulding, a personnel entrance at the east end and a second storey with large square window openings, a single oval window, a gable end with Palladian-

style windows near the peak. The rear included a one-storey stable attached to the main building. A tall hose drying tower is located in the northeast corner. Alterations to the building have been extensive. The original window units have been replaced, newer garage-type doors have replaced the original elements and the stable area was demolished in 1982 to make way for a large addition used as personal quarters for personnel.

The original interior featured equipment storage and horse stalls on the ground floor, firefighters' bedrooms and washrooms and a large sitting room on the second floor and recreational space and lockers in the attic. The building still exhibits original tin ceilings and tile walls in the equipment storage area on the ground floor, the tower is still used to dry hoses, original wood accenting is found in rooms and the hallway on the second floor and the original pole continues to give quick access from the second floor.

Scottish born and trained brothers A.R. and W.N. Melville were responsible for the 1904 standard plans and for overseeing the construction of this hall. They were an influential partnership that began in the City around 1900 and lasted until just before World War I. They were responsible for the design of 10 fire halls and many fine local buildings.

This building continues to function as an active fire hall.

Elements of the building that would require approval if alterations were planned are:

Exterior:

- Multi-storey building facing south with main façade fronting Sargent Avenue on the northwest corner of Burnell Street;
- Boxy, rectangular, structure with a low rusticated limestone base and common clay brick superstructure;
- Front (south) façade with four large arched equipment doors all topped by brick drip moulding and stone keystones, personnel entrance at east end topped by brick drip moulding and a stone keystone at a stone sign with the words "FIRE STATION NO. 5", a round bricked in opening with stone keystones at the four compass points, a front facing gable with a set of three square headed windows and a prominent hip roof; and
- Hose drying tower in the northeast corner with projecting brick corners, square headed windows with stone lug sills and heads and brick drip moulding with stone keystones, modest brick belt course, and an upper portion with pairs of arched windows with brick drip moulding and keystones on each side and

corbelled brick leading to the heavy overhanging cornice and crenellated brick and stone parapet.

Interior:

- Volume of the ground floor equipment space, ornamental tin ceiling tile wall cladding and fireman's pole; and
- Second floor main hallway with wood baseboards and ornamental tin ceiling and metal and wood staircase to the attic.