

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Engine Company 19

other names \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 2813 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE  not for publication

city or town Washington, D.C.  vicinity

state District of Columbia code DC county \_\_\_\_\_ code 001 zip code 20001

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- Determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Engine Company 19  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- Private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1            |                 | buildings  |
|              |                 | sites      |
|              |                 | structures |
|              |                 | objects    |
| 1            |                 | Total      |

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Firehouses in Washington, D.C.

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/Firehouse

GOVERNMENT/Firehouse

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/  
Academic Eclectic

Foundation Brick  
walls Stuccoed Brick  
  
roof Asphalt  
other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Engine Company 19

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

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## Description Summary:

Located in the Randle Heights neighborhood east of the Anacostia River in Washington, D.C., Engine Company 19 is one of the most picturesque and best loved of Washington's firehouses. Constructed in 1910, it is designed in an eclectic, principally French provincial revival style with an asymmetrically placed hose tower and belfry and a steeply pitched gambrel roof with broad and overhanging eaves. Large, arched apparatus doors are framed by stone rubble stone which also accents the hexagonal tower. It was designed by the short-lived Washington architecture firm of Averill and Adams and is an excellent example of its type.

## General Description:

### Exterior:

Engine Company 19 is located at 2813 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE mid-block between 28<sup>th</sup> Street and 28<sup>th</sup> Place on the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue in Randle Heights. It is a 1-1/2-story, two-bay stucco-clad brick firehouse designed in a French provincial aesthetic. The firehouse is characterized by its low profile, all-encompassing steeply pitched gambrel roof, and its Mediterranean-style corner hose tower and belfry. The building's irregular silhouette due to the corner tower is atypical of firehouse construction in D.C. prior to World War I and is a characteristic of only one other firehouse in the city from this period.<sup>1</sup> The building, whose main block measures forty-six feet wide by sixty-four feet deep, consists of the main rectangular block with a wing at the rear side. The building's walls, originally exposed brick, have been covered with a stucco finish. The roof, including the main gambrel and its shed-roofed dormers is sheathed in slate shingles. The belfry in the hose tower is covered with a domed roof.

The north (front) elevation is divided into two parts consisting of the two-bay main block and the corner tower. The main block features two apparatus doors set deeply within large arched openings framed by rubble stone voussoirs. A narrow Medieval-type battlement window (originally casement) is located between the large arched openings. The original overhead wood doors have been replaced with metal ones. Pedestrian entries are located in the center and right side walls of the door recesses.

Above the first floor and apparatus doors rises the steep gambrel roof featuring wide overhanging eaves with exposed end rafters and a shed dormer on-center. The dormer, with three windows flanked by two end panels, similarly features exposed rafter ends. The gambrel roof extends above and behind the dormer.

<sup>1</sup> The other asymmetrically massed pre-World War I firehouse is the National Register-listed Engine Company 17, located at 1235 Monroe Street, NE.

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The corner hose tower is hexagonal in plan and generally Spanish Mediterranean in appearance. The stucco-clad brick walls have rustic stone quoining on the first floor level of the tower's edges. The tower rises above the roofline with a belfry at the upper level formed of six, round-arched openings separated by piers and capped by a hexagonal dome.

The east side elevation has a small hipped roof shed projecting off of it towards the front and a larger hipped roof wing at the rear. Between the two projecting wings are two 9/9 wood windows. Two shed roof dormers at the attic level feature exposed rafters and 12-light wood casement windows. The west side elevation has an asymmetrical collection of window and door openings on the first story, including three single, 9/9 double-hung windows, above which are two shed-roofed dormers cut into the gambrel. A steeply pitched gable dormer is located towards the front of the building with half-timbering in the dormer wall and multi-light casements.

The north end wall has a tall brick chimney stack towards the west side and four, 9/9 double-hung windows across the façade, including one that is narrower than the others. Three shed-roof dormers with multi-pane casements are located above the windows on the first story.

### Interior:

The interior of Engine Company 19 consists of one large open space in the main block and a series of rooms in the rear wing. The open-plan main block includes room for the hose tower in the corner, two fire engines in the apparatus bays, and a straight-flight stair at the rear of the main block. The rear wing includes a day room, an office, mechanical closets, and kitchen. The second floor or loft level consisted of a large dormitory, officers' bedrooms, a studio and restrooms.

In 1985, the interior of the building was completely gutted and floors were inserted in the hose tower to accommodate new bathrooms at the first and second floors.

### **Integrity**

Despite having been gutted in 1985, the exterior remains intact with no major addition and few alterations, save for the windows and apparatus doors which have been replaced. The building retains its character-defining arched apparatus doors, its distinctive and encompassing roof and corner tower. Engine Company 19 retains its integrity of location, setting, workmanship, materials, design, feeling, and association.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**Area of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Community Planning and Development

**Period of Significance**

1910

**Significant Dates**

1910

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Averill & Adams

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

**Previous documentation on files (NPS):**

- Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- Designated a National Historic Landmark
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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## Summary Statement of Significance:

The context for firehouses is described in the National Register Multiple Property Listing: *Firehouses in Washington, D.C.: 1806-1945*. This thematic document divides the approximately 150-year history of firehouses in Washington, D.C. into four periods, distinguished by the organization of firefighting operations and technology, by architectural style and designer. Engine Company 19, constructed in 1910, is an exemplar of the “Eclectic Period” (1897-1916), an era of individualized designs, produced by a variety of private firms as a “City Beautiful” movement reaction to the more standardized Victorian models.

The firehouse has been a visible landmark of Randle Heights since the rise of that neighborhood east of the Anacostia River during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The firehouse illustrates an innovative plan in that it incorporated a combination observation and hose tower. Engine Company 19 is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C with Architecture and Community Planning and Development as the Areas of Significance.

## Resource History and Historic Context:

Engine Company 19 was constructed in 1910 in the Randle Heights subdivision east of the Anacostia River. In the hopes of attracting buyers to his new Randle Heights subdivision east of the Anacostia River, Colonel Arthur E. Randle donated the land upon which to build a firehouse and successfully lobbied Congress to appropriate the funds for its construction.

Named for its brainchild, Arthur Randle, the Randle Heights subdivision was one of several Randle-built subdivisions east of the Anacostia River. A native of Mississippi, Arthur Randle came to Washington in 1885 and quickly acquired land east of the Anacostia River which he then proceeded to plat into residential subdivisions. The first of these, Congress Heights, was platted in 1890 and made accessible to downtown by the Capital Railway line—a railroad built by Randle specifically to provide transit to residents of his new subdivision. In addition to transportation, Randle provided other infrastructure improvements such as streets and electricity, and established churches, police protection, and a post office. In 1902, Randle subdivided the Randle Park addition to Congress Heights and later platted Randle Heights.<sup>2</sup>

In the first years of the establishment of Randle Heights, Arthur Randle sought fire protection for his new subdivision and its residents. In 1909, due to Randle’s influence, Congress appropriated \$26,000.00

<sup>2</sup> Matthew B. Gilmore and Michael R. Harrison, “A Catalog of Suburban Subdivisions of the District of Columbia, 1854-1902,” *Washington History Magazine*, Volume 14, Number 2, Fall/Winter 2002, p. 51.

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for construction of the fire house and in 1910, the building was completed.<sup>3</sup> Unlike his Congress Heights development, the Randle Heights subdivision was slow to develop. Seventeen years after the construction of the firehouse, only half a dozen lots had been sold and built upon. It was not until the New Deal programs of the Roosevelt Administration that the area began to experience substantial development. Today, the area is a densely developed neighborhood that is distinguished by its two most prominent landmarks: Engine Company 19 and Colonel Arthur Randle's Colonial Revival-style mansion across the street.

Engine Company 19 was constructed for the use of the District of Columbia's professional firefighting force, and over the years the personnel and equipment headquartered there have fought many fires and effected numerous rescues. In an era of strict building codes and comprehensive, efficient and well-equipped fire fighting, it is easy to forget the era in which fires once destroyed whole urban neighborhoods. Although suburban buildings had the advantage of typically standing detached, the buildings were often of wood frame construction and those posed a threat to safety, and for that reason were sorely desired by early developers. Engine Company 19 continues to serve as a tribute to the District of Columbia's professional fire fighting force.

Engine Company 19's prominent tower was likely intended for the dual purpose of drying hoses and for observation of the surrounding area. By 1910, the city's fire alarm system of call boxes had generally achieved a level of sophistication that rendered these observation towers obsolete. The Crystal System invented in 1864 consisted of twenty-five alarm boxes or "call boxes" which transmitted signals to Fire Alarm Headquarters which then transmitted the number of the call box to the fire stations, as well as activating the bells in church steeples.<sup>4</sup> However, in the case of Engine Company 19, the observation tower probably continued to serve as such for a while. The call box system had not been extended throughout the suburban areas of the District, and the sparsely developed area and lower building heights in the neighborhood made an observation tower more effective than downtown, where a single block of buildings between an observer and the fire was likely to obscure the view.

The primary use of the tower, however, remained that of a hose tower, where wet, cotton hoses were hung to dry after use. Although hose towers had been incorporated into D.C. fire houses for years, Engine Company 19 is, along with Engine Company 17, one of the oldest whereby the hose tower is expressed in the building's exterior design.

<sup>3</sup> Randle had earlier secured the establishment of Engine Company 25 (1902) in Congress Heights by donating a parcel of land for its construction. Similarly, it is understood that Archibald McLachen, builder of the Ontario Apartments in Lanier Heights, contributed to the erection of Engine Company 21/Truck Company 9 (1908) on Lanier Place, NW.

<sup>4</sup> Fire Fighters' Association. One Hundred Years of Glory: A History of the District of Columbia Fire Department, 1871-1971. Washington, D.C.: Mt. Vernon Publishing Company, Inc., 1971.

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Averill and Adams Architects:

Engine Company 19 was designed by the short-lived Washington firm of [Frank L.] Averill and [Percy C.] Adams. Responsible for a number of apartments, commercial and industrial commissions, Averill and Adams was one of several private firms engaged to create unique firehouse designs to succeed the standard, red-brick Victorian model under the supervision of the new Office of the Municipal Architect (1909). These new firehouses were generally built in emerging neighborhoods, thereby permitting a certain freedom of design primarily in terms of layout and massing.

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## Major Bibliographical References:

Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Washington, DC. Philadelphia: GW Baist, (Vol. 3) 1896, 1903, 1919, 1925, 1931, 1937, 1945, 1954, 1960, 1968, (Vol. 4) 1927, 1936, 1943, 1959.

Berk, Sally L. "The History of Washington, DC's Pre-World War II Firehouses," DC Historic Preservation Division, June 1992.

Biographical Vertical Files, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.

Dennee, Timothy. Engine Company 19, Historic Preservation Review Board Staff Report, Case No. 09-03, July 23, 2009.

Withey, Henry R. and Elsie Rathburn. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc., 1970.

Engine Company 19  
Name of Property

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 8,863 square feet

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally Berk, Architectural Historian; Kim Williams (edited, 2009), Architectural Historian

Organization The Capitol Fire Museum date October 2009

street & number 2214 Wyoming Avenue, NW telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Washington, D.C. state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 20008

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

- X A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- X A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

- X Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name District of Columbia Fire Department

street & number 1923 Vermont Avenue, NW telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Washington, D.C. state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 20003

**Paperwork Reduction Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et. seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## Verbal Boundary Description:

Engine Company 19 at 2813 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE occupies Lot 800 of Square 5582 in the District of Columbia.

## Boundary Justification:

Engine Company 19 has stood on this lot since its construction in 1910.

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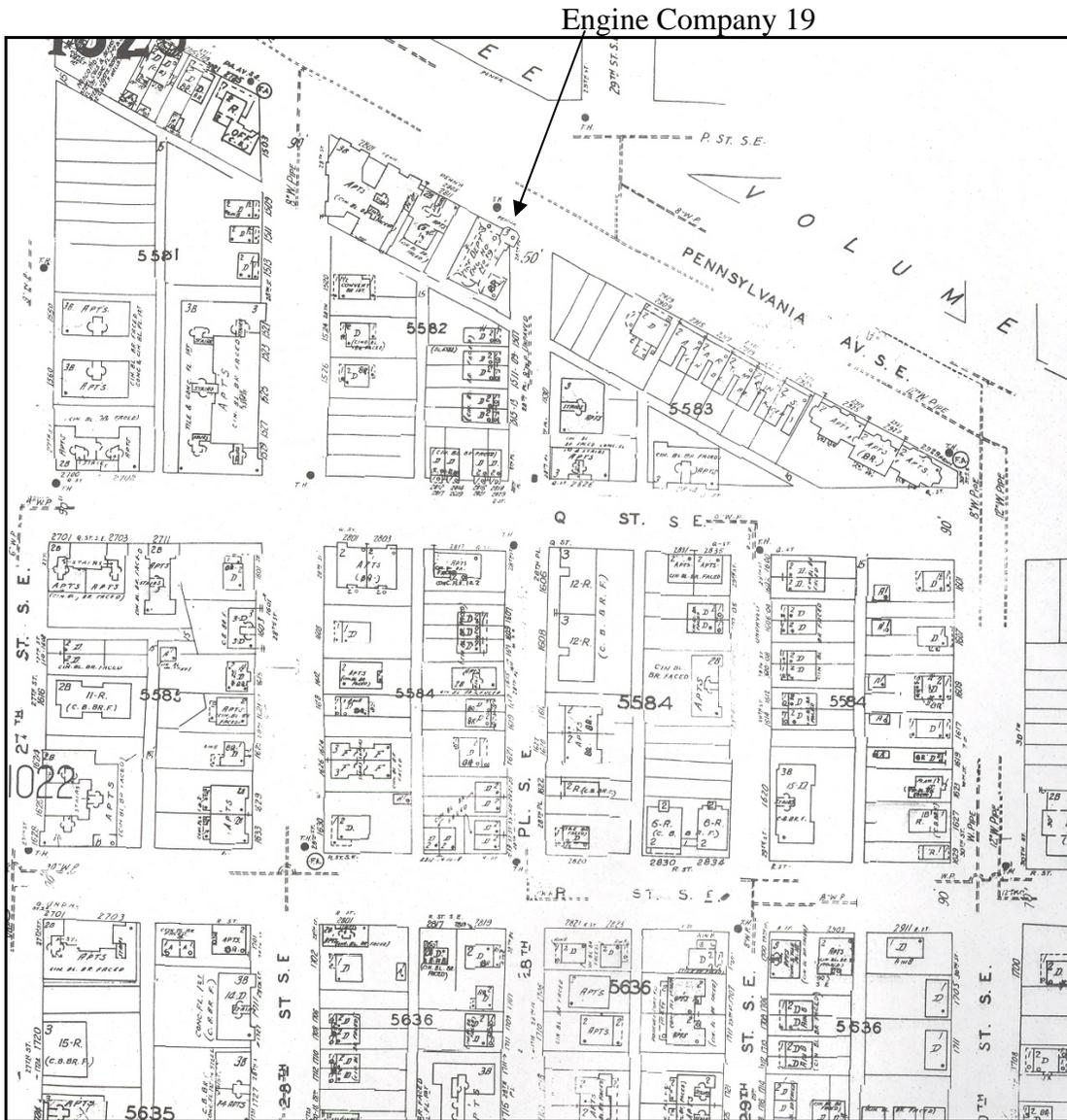
Engine Company 19

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MAP



Engine Company 19  
2813 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE  
(From Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1991)



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## PHOTOGRAPH LIST

The following is common to all photos:

Engine Company 19  
2813 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C.  
Kim Williams, photographer  
March 2010  
DC HPO

View looking south showing north elevation  
1/6

View looking southeast showing north elevation  
2/6

View looking southeast showing corner hose tower  
3/6

View looking northwest showing corner hose tower  
4/6

View looking west showing east elevation  
5/6

View looking north showing west elevation  
6/6