

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 20 1985

date entered OCT 17 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Fire Engine House No. 9

and or common

2. Location

street & number 1810-1812 Keene Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Houston

N/A vicinity of

state Texas

code 048

county Harris

code 201

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Howard Charles Clark

street & number 2300 Bolsover

city, town Houston

N/A vicinity of

state Texas 77005

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Harris County Courthouse

street & number 1001 Preston

city, town Houston

state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Sites Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date August 1985

federal state county local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin

state Texas

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Fire Engine House No. 9, erected in 1899, is a two-story brick structure which retains most of its original architectural features such as double entrance doors, intact metal cornice, decorative brick parapet, window and door hardware, and interior moldings. It was designed by the prominent Houston architect William A. McMillen, and is, except for his house at 510 Gray, the only surviving example of his work. Although many of these small fire houses were built in Houston in the 19th century (including others by McMillen), only two remain. Fire House No. 9 appears to be in poor condition, but it is structurally sound and is without major alterations or additions. Situated on the north side of Buffalo Bayou near downtown, this building stands between two vacant lots near a stable residential area (to the west) and an improving commercial district (to the east and south).

Fire Engine House No. 9 is a two-story building constructed of loadbearing brick walls now painted beige. The soft clay-colored brick was made locally and was originally left unpainted. A flat roof steps back from the principal facade which faces west. At the roofline a double row of decorative brickwork outlines the side elevations, while a handsome, black metal cornice stretches across the front under a centrally located brick parapet. This parapet defines the central bay of the facade, which projects slightly.

In the upper floor a triple window is emphasized by three round-arched, cast-stone hoods over fan-shaped insets above the 1/1 double-sash windows. This window treatment is Richardsonian Romanesque in spirit. Directly above this set of windows, etched in plaster, is "18 ERECTED 99." Each of two side bays contains a single window like those of the central bay.

On the ground floor below the triple window, a centrally located entrance still has its original wooden doors which swung back for the wide hose wagon. Over this aperture cast stonework matches that of the upper floor, but is squared off. Likewise, two windows flank the central bay. These are elongated with a multipaned transom over the double sash. In one of the few alterations, the window to the north has been converted to a doorway. The original wooden-frame windows have been removed for safe keeping and will be replaced when the building is restored. Now obscured, "FIRE ENGINE HOUSE NO. 9" was once etched in the recessed plasterwork above the doors. Other small details that remain on the exterior of the building are the iron Texas stars implanted for reinforcement as well as decoration, original doorknobs and backplates, original electric connectors, and half a horseshoe mounted on the exterior reveal on both sides of the main entrance.

On the north elevation two segmentally arched windows occur at each end of the upper story. A second-floor exit door once led onto an exterior staircase, now removed. Another window at mid-level once lighted the interior stair landing behind. A first-floor window is located beneath the doorway. A first-floor exit door is intact near the front of the building.

The rear of the building has been most altered. The central, wide, double door is flanked by two windows; the one to the north having been bricked in. Above, a line of triple windows is flanked by two side windows. The centermost window was lengthened. All of these alterations could, however, easily be reversed.

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On the south elevation, three windows up and down are segmentally arched like all others on the secondary elevations. From the upper story on this side one has a clean and spectacular view of downtown Houston.

One large space on the first floor of the interior has not been changed, except for the addition of a small office partition in the southwest corner which does not rise to the full height of the room. Four support posts define the space. A non-supporting concrete slab is cracked, as is the plaster covering the brick walls. The staircase has been reversed and enclosed. To the front on each side, openings for fire poles are visible from the ground floor. The original wooden ceiling is intact. On the second floor a large central dormitory has been partitioned off at the front, where its original L shape can still be seen. The partition is an easily removed wallboard structure. Along the south wall a bathroom, a kitchen, and another room--probably the chief's quarters and office--are lined up back to front. The interior staircase lies along the north wall. The floors are of hardwood and the exterior walls are plastered. The interior partitions, kitchen and chief's quarters, are of beaded board. The ceiling is of wood. The window frames are rounded and in some cases have been removed for safe keeping. They are all in sound condition and will be replaced during restoration.

No outbuildings now stand on the property, which is located in the Fifth Ward of Houston, north of Buffalo Bayou. The neighborhood has always been of mixed use. When constructed, Fire Engine House No. 9 stood among residential buildings with commercial property located on what is now the extension of Main Street to the rear. Many of the houses have been destroyed or demolished in the immediate vicinity, although a stable neighborhood remains nearby. Downtown Houston can be easily seen from this property. The stables, drying racks, etc. have long since disappeared, but an overgrown but visible brick drive still exists on the north side of the building.

Constructed in 1899, the building has received minor alterations through the years, including the reversal of an interior staircase and removal of the exterior stair. Although some windows have been altered, the building basically remains intact, with a remarkable number of architecturally significant details. The fire house is currently vacant and in fair condition. Restoration will require removal of vandal-supplied paint, restoration of altered windows and doors, and replacement of the original windows and frames which are being stored until such a project begins.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) firefighting
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates erected 1899 **Builder/Architect** William A. McMillen

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Houston's Fire Engine House No. 9 was erected in 1899 to serve the rapidly expanding Fifth Ward. Five firemen, a horsedrawn hose wagon, and a steam pumper were housed here until around 1908. After that time the building was used to store a Hayes Aerial Truck. The Fire Department has not used the building since the 1920s; rather, it has been occupied by a mattress company and a roofer, who made no major alterations. The fire company of Station No. 9 was an outgrowth of the old volunteer group founded in 1881 as Curtin No. 9, said to have been one of the best units of the early Houston Fire Department. Fire Engine House No. 9 is both architecturally and historically significant. Many fine features remain on the building which was designed by William A. McMillen, a well-known Houston architect. The structure is a good example of firehouses dating from this period in Houston's history. It's historical associations with the beginnings of the professional fire department here, and its importance in the development of the Fifth Ward, are both noteworthy.

With the completion of Houston's waterworks system in 1879 came the formal organization of new volunteer fire units established to man innovative equipment such as hose wagons with pumps and steamers. Curtin No. 9 was named in Honor of Henry M. Curtin, whose membership in the volunteer fire department dated back to the 1860s. He was secretary and treasurer of the department and served as first and second assistants under several chiefs. Curtin No. 9 was first organized in the Fourth Ward with "an apparatus" consisting of a force pump on a home-made pine cart with 3/4-inch hose. The company moved after a few years to the Fifth Ward, and was considered one of the best units of the volunteer department. Fire Engine House No. 9 was the first permanent home for this hose company, after the fire department became a paid element of the city.

After the great fire of 1894 at St. Joseph's Hospital, alderman Si Packard introduced a resolution to the City Council to create a paid, professional fire department. Under Mayor John T. Browne, this proposal became a reality in 1895. Soon afterwards plans for the building of fire houses throughout the city began. Most of these, except the large central station downtown, were two-story brick buildings designed by different architects but with a similar program formula: a centrally located double door, front and back, with interior space for one or two engines; quarters and offices were above.

In 1899 several such stations were completed under Mayor Sam Brasher, including Fire Engine House No. 9. Architect William A. McMillen was commissioned to design the structure. McMillen (c. 1836-1905), a native Canadian, had come to Houston in 1894 to practice with Guy S. Boyce. Few professional architects were in Houston at that time and many, like Boyce, left after a short while. McMillen, however, stayed and built a busy practice. In September of 1899 the Houston Post, in an article on recently completed buildings, listed the work of three Houston firms: Olle Lorehn, George Dickey, and William McMillen. The last-mentioned designed both residences and commercial structures.

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including three houses in 1899 for Dr. Monroe J. Lessing and Horace Booth (both on Crawford) and for Dr. E. A. Holland (on Main). In 1900 McMillen's second fire house (no. 10) was erected at 205 Chartres. No longer standing, this building was very similar to Fire Engine House No. 9.

In 1903 McMillen bought a piece of property from John Henry Kirby, which was located at 510 Gray just across the street from the Kirby Mansion. This house still stands, and is the only known example of McMillen's work to survive, except for Fire House No. 9. From his correspondence with Kirby, it appears that the two men were good friends. McMillen's last large work was the Odd Fellows Hall (demolished); he died of a heart attack at about age 69, in 1905, and is buried in Glenwood Cemetery, Houston. McMillen's obituary said: "He was a successful architect, and many business blocks and residences of the city are evidences of his skill." (Houston Chronicle, September 16, 1905).

In 1902, J.W. Miller was Captain of Station No. 9 and Henry Donnelly was Lieutenant when the estimated value of the house and lot was \$5,000.00. A "fifth size" Rotary LaFrance Steamer and a hose wagon were the major part of No. 9's holdings, which also included two horses and 1,600 feet of hose. There were 119 water hydrants in the Fifth Ward, evidence of the large number of structures and neighborhoods that were serviced by this small fire station. By 1903, with an overload of work, the Fire Chief recommended that an addition to No. 9 be built; this plan was never carried out.

By 1903, the Fifth Ward had a new fire house called "New No. 9," and the old No. 9 (the property nominated herein) was used to house a large Hayes Aerial Truck with its 75-ft. extension. After 1909 the old No. 9 was not staffed on a continuing basis, and mainly became a storage facility for the Fire Department.

The Department became motorized in 1914, which made the old houses and equipment obsolete. By 1925 the building had been taken over by the Texas Mattress Co., and was probably used for both production and storage. In the early 1940s a roofing company occupied the building until the current owner purchased it and the surrounding lots in 1983.

Today, Fire Engine House No. 9 stands amid vacant lots, an historical landmark in a section of Houston that has been devastated by great fires more than once. Most of the 19th-century and early-20th century buildings in the neighborhoods have burned, including the houses that once stood on the same block with the fire station. In the context of greater Houston, this building is one of only two 19th-century fire houses still standing. The other, No. 7, was also built in 1899. It is larger and perhaps less representative of the first early structures built to aid firefighting in the city.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Houston Chronicle, September 16, 1905, p. 5, "Mortuary."

Houston Daily Post, September 1, 1899, "A Big Year"; September 16, 1905, "William A. McMillen Well-Known Architect of Houston Dies in Brownson." (see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Settegast, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	2	7	2	6	7	0	3	2	9	6	0	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots FOUR (4), FIVE (5) and SIX (6), in Block THIRTY-EIGHT (38), of A. C. ALLEN ADDITION, N.S.B.B., an addition in Harris County, Texas, according to the map or plat thereof recorded in Volume "2", Page 518-A, of the Deed Records of Harris County, Texas.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barrie Scardino (with John C. Ferguson, THC)

organization Preservation Services

date May 31, 1985

street & number 2230 Rice Boulevard

telephone (713) 528-1521

city or town Houston

state Texas

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Curtis J. Jernell

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 3 Sept. 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in  National Register

date 10-17-85

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Green, Charles D. Fire Fighters of Houston, 1838-1915. Houston: Houston Fire Department (publisher), 1915.

Houston City Directory, various years from 1895.

Houston Fire Department, 1838-1971. Houston: Houston Fire Department (publisher), 1971.

"Mayor's Report, City of Houston," 1902, 1903, 1904, 1907. Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Houston.

85003238

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Fire Station House No. 9
Harris County
TEXAS

SEP 20 1985

Working No. _____
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/3/87
Date Due: 10/17/85 - 11/4/85
Action: ACCEPT 1077-85
 RETURN
 REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

Entered in the
National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance *(in one paragraph)*

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



ERECTED 77

45

NORTE
#1

TOM

Rock
N
Roll

BEAT

Fire Engine House No. 9
1810-1812 Keene Street
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo by H.C. Clark, May 1985, neg. with Texas
Historical Commission, Austin

Front (west) elevation
camera facing east

photo 1 of 4



Fire Engine House No. 9
1810-1812 Keene Street
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo by H. C. Clark, May 1985, neg. with Texas
Historical Commission, Austin.

South elevation
camera facing north

photo 2 of 4



Fire Engine House No. 9
1810-1812 Keene Street
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo by H.C. Clark, May 1985, neg. with Texas
Historical Commission, Austin

North elevation
camera facing south

photo 3 of 4

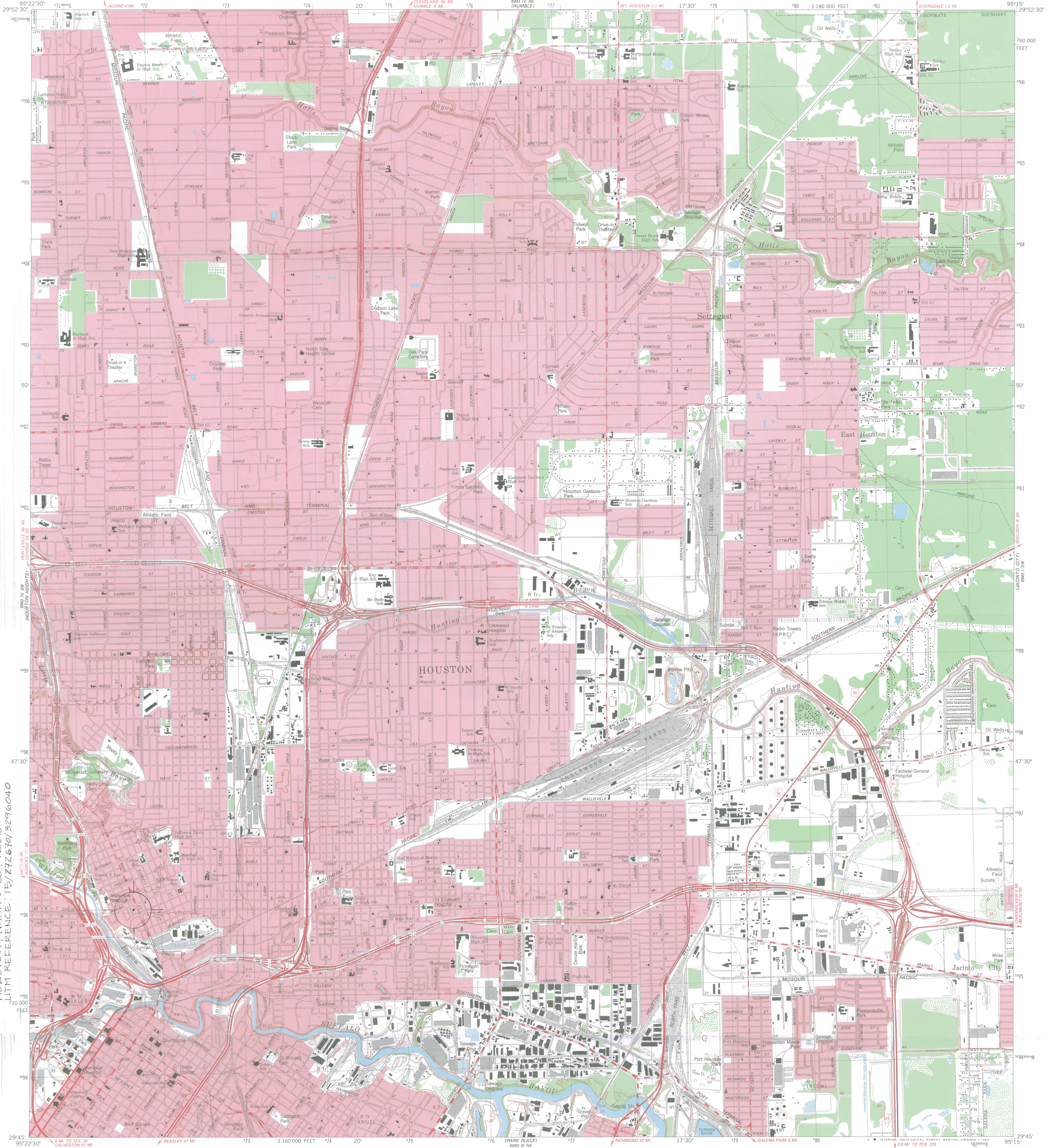


Fire Engine House No. 9
1810-1812 Keene Street
Houston, Harris County, Texas

Photo by H.C. Clark, May 1985, neg. with Texas
Historical Commission, Austin

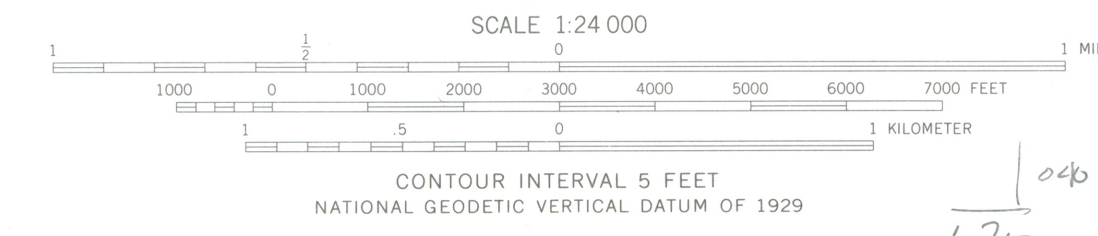
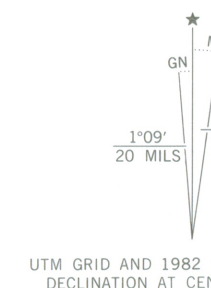
Rear (east) elevation
camera facing west

photo 4 of 4



FIRE ENGINE HOUSE NO. 9
1810-1812 KEENE STREET
HOUSTON, HARRIS CO., TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 15/272670/32916040

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1976. Field checked 1976. Map edited 1982
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Texas
coordinate system, south central zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 20 meters south and
22 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
A portion of this map lies within a subsidence area
Contouring based on 1973 adjustment of vertical control



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

2995-431

SETTEGAST, TEX.
N2945-W9515/7.5
1982
DMA 6943 IV SE-SERIES Y882