

# 2009 Michael G. Meyers Design Competition

## Fire Station No.1

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Institute of  
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Houston Chapter

### Notes from Fire Fighter Tony Livesay



Fire Fighter Tony Livesay is a lifetime member of the fraternity of Firefighters. The fire station and firefighting have always been a part of Tony's life. Tony's father was a firefighter, and Tony grew up around the Fire Station. To this day his fondest memories are of the big red truck, and the 3 giant bay doors.

#### HISTORY OF THE FIRE FIGHTING FRATERNITY

We can go back as far as the Roman empire to the stories of buckets passed from hand to hand as the first urban fires were fought in the ghettos of ancient Rome. Then the fraternity becomes a reality with the history of the Maltese fire fighters. See the links in the website for more information on the History of Fire Fighting.

The history of the fire department as exists in the USA today, shares it's origin with one of the country's famous fathers. Benjamin Franklin developed the first fire man's helmet, the shape of which influences the helmet worn by fire fighters today.

#### HISTORY OF FIREFIGHTING IN HOUSTON

It is fitting that the historic site of Allen's Landing is where we have chosen to locate the new Fire Station No.1. The Allen brothers, who were the founders of Houston, are also the founders of the first Houston Fire department, back then they called it the fire protection league.

The original Fire station No.1 was located not too far from our proposed site. The Aquarium Restaurant about half a mile away is where Fire station No.1 used to be. Fire station No.1 closed in 2001 and downtown Houston remained with out a fire station until 2008. Fire station No.8 opened in 2008 on the south side of down town near Bagby and Joseph. This is a great fire station to visit, with it's state of the art equipment.

#### AT THE FIRE HOUSE

This fire house is served by four crews. For 24 hours at a time, the fire house is a home away from home. In between the job of actually fighting fires and serving the community, duties include taking care of the fire trucks and the equipment, stocking and organizing supplies, paper work like keeping the daily log, cleaning the fire station and taking care of the grounds. Then of course there is the grocery shopping, cooking and eating the main meal.

#### FIRE STATION AS COMMUNITY CENTER.

Stop by to ask for directions, drop in and get your blood pressure checked, hold a scout troop meeting, get married, or just chat with your friendly neighborhood fire man. As part of the public service network, the fire station is open to community. You may notice the bright yellow sign @ the entry to all fire stations, they read Safe Harbor, and in the most dire of situations the fire station is a safe place to leave young infants no questions asked.

#### FIRE STATION AS A SYMBOL

As you might tell the fire station fulfills many functions and means different things to different people. For our client Fire Fighter Tony Livesay, it holds fond memories from childhood and as an adult, it is a home away from home, safe harbor in times of trouble, a symbol of great pride and a beacon of the community.

## **SOME NOTES ON THE NEW FIRE STATION**

Sited on the Bayou the location of this fire station is ideal. With easy access to water in times of flooding, boats can get quickly to where they are needed, where sometimes fire trucks are stranded by the rising waters.

In Houston the threat of water can be just as or even more dangerous than that of fire.

On the northern side of down town this fire station will be an important part of fighting fires in tall buildings.

## **SOME NOTES ON THE design challenges**

### **SLEEPING UNIT**

For 24 hours 3 times a week the fire station is the home of the fire fighter. Part of the design of the fire station includes a place to sleep and a place to put your personal items. More often than not these are shared areas like dormitories and locker rooms. Today these rooms must accommodate both sexes efficiently.

This challenge is to design a sleeping unit that gives the individual some privacy for sleeping as well as storing personal items. Remember this unit might be shared amongst the different shifts, so think about how it might be used by a number of people.

### **FIRE POLE Alternative**

When you have a fire station that is more than one story, you have to find a way to get the fire fighters down to their trucks as quickly as possible. Fire stations are famous for their poles but the reality is that they can be quite dangerous for the fire fighters and have been the reason for knee and hip injuries over the years. ( think slippery poles in humid weather. Landing on hard concrete from over 20'-0" in the air)

This challenge is to come up with an alternative to get fire fighters down quickly and safely to their trucks.

### **FIRE STATION ID**

Have you ever noticed how the number of the firestation is a very prominent part of the building. In the fire fighting community, fire fighters know and identify each other by the number of their station. Our fire fighters will be known as the Number Ones.

Design your sign for Fire Station No.1 as it is integrated into the architecture of your building.

If you have any questions for our client "Fireman Tony" please e-mail them to [Nicolas@kirksey.com](mailto:Nicolas@kirksey.com) and we will be happy to pass them on. Look for the answers on our website.