

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 Fire Station Number 4
other names/site number Merrimon Avenue Fire Station

2. Location

street & number 300 Merrimon Avenue not for publication N/A
city or town Asheville vicinity N/A
state North Carolina code NC county Buncombe code 021 zip code 28801

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Jeffrey Crow SHPO 2/28/00
Signature of certifying official 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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
I, hereby certify that this property is:		
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____		

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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)		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1		buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district			sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site			structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure			objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	1		Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Government

Subcategory: Fire Station

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Government

Subcategory: Government Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls brick
roof _____
other _____

Narrative Description

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

See continuation sheets, pp. 5-7.

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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)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X 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.)

- a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
b removed from its original location.
c a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development
Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1927-1950

Significant Dates

ca. 1927

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Ellington, Douglas D.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

See continuation sheets, pp. 8-16.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (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
X Other
Name of repository:
Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, N.C.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	359180	3941480	3	17		
2	17			4	17		

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

See continuation sheet, p. 18.

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

See continuation sheet, p. 18.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Daniel J. Vivian
organization _____ date 11 August 1999
street & number 824 Woodrow Street telephone (803) 252-5005
city or town Columbia state South Carolina zip code 29205

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

Photographs

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Asheville Fire Department (attn.: Randy Bryant), City of Asheville
street & number P.O. Box 7148 telephone (828) 259-5636
city or town Asheville state North Carolina zip code 28802

Paperwork Reduction Act 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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Section 7: Narrative Description

Asheville Fire Department Station Number 4 is a two-story, flat-roof building located at 300 Merrimon Avenue in Asheville, North Carolina. The station, designed by Douglas D. Ellington and erected circa 1927, is built upon a modified square plan and has a poured concrete foundation. Exterior walls are constructed of multi-colored brick. Rose, tan, and deep brown tones predominate, creating a rich tapestry-like appearance. The building occupies a one-acre lot that slopes steeply away from the street. In front are two small sections of yard planted with grass and small trees; a driveway on each side of the building provides access to a paved concrete parking lot in the rear. The surrounding landscape includes small commercial buildings and large turn-of-the-century residential dwellings occupied by professional offices; Merrimon Avenue is a busy thoroughfare that links downtown Asheville and the north side of the city. The building has undergone no significant alterations since its construction and retains its historical appearance and integrity.

The main (east) facade, which fronts Merrimon Avenue, is an Art Deco-influenced variation of the central block with wings form that was common in early twentieth-century commercial building designs. This rectilinear, three-part composition features a slightly recessed central section with two subordinate flanking units. A pair of interlocking rounded brick arches span the base of the central section. Each archway is sealed by a double folding wooden door. A small balcony with a sculpted concrete base and a wrought iron railing projects from the arches' spandrel, providing a focal point to the facade. Set into the brickwork above the balcony door is the feather motif that was a trademark of architect Douglas D. Ellington. A pair of metal-frame casement windows, each with sixteen square panes below a four-pane transom, flank the balcony. A single window of the same type is featured on each wing of the facade at the second story level. The brickwork is laid in a running bond pattern. A decorative course at the roofline is composed of alternating rows of soldiers and stack bond sections above a running soldier course.

The north facade exhibits an irregular fenestration pattern. The second story has a total of five windows. Set into the wall at the eastern end of the facade is a single casement window with sixteen square panes below a four-pane transom. Further to the right, or west, and slightly to the left of the center of the facade is a group of three evenly-spaced windows of the same style. Further right is another window in which is mounted an air conditioning unit. At the first story level are three horizontally-oriented rectangular windows. Two are occupied by air conditioning units, while the one nearest the eastern end of the facade retains its original eight-pane configuration.

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Fenestration on the south facade is also unbalanced. At the rear of the building is a projecting bay with three sixteen-pane casement windows at the first story level. Directly above are three rectangular openings that provide light and airflow to an enclosed second-story porch. A narrow, vertically-elongated hexagonal window is set into the wall on the east side of the porch.

Immediately to the right, on the main portion of the south facade, is an entrance at ground-level that affords access to an interior stairwell. Here, a single metal door is set into the wall beneath a copper overhang. Above and arranged in a triangular pattern is a sixteen-pane casement window and a pair of flanking six-pane casement windows. Further to the right, at the east end of the facade, is a pair of sixteen-pane casement windows below a four-pane transom. At the second story level is a single window of the same style and two narrow, eight-pane casement windows.

The rear (west) facade features two horizontal rows of uniformly spaced casement windows. Each window on the upper row has sixteen square panes below a four-pane transom. All of the lower row windows have sixteen square panes and no transom. At ground level, a single door affords access to the basement, to the left of which are two eight-pane casement windows.

Adjoining the southwest corner of the building is a five-story tower with an open-shaft staircase. Historically, the tower served two purposes. First, firemen hung hoses inside the tower to dry after use. Second, the tower served as the primary training facility for the Asheville fire department for most of the twentieth century. A variety of training exercises were conducted at the tower. A fire escape was originally affixed to its north side but has since been removed. Several iron rings, used for securing netting and ropes, are still evident on the surface of the parking lot near the base of the tower, where they are bolted into the concrete. The tower rises three stories above the roofline of the main building.

The arrangement of interior space reflects the building's historical role as a fire station. Essential fire fighting equipment was located on the ground floor, which is dominated by a centrally located engine room measuring approximately forty-five by twenty-seven feet. Principal access to the engine room is provided by the two large bay doors on the main (east) facade. Fire hoses and other equipment were stored in a long, narrow room along the northern end of the building measuring fifty by twelve feet. On the south side of the building is an enclosed office that was once occupied by the fire company chief, the stairwell, a bathroom, and, at the southwest corner, a work area that originally had unpartitioned access to the engine room. Interior walls throughout the first floor are built of tan-colored glazed brick laid in a running bond pattern. In keeping with the utilitarian functions of all the first floor rooms, no significant decorative details are present, although the two unusual, cast-iron six-segment radiators mounted vertically on opposing walls beside the bay doors are notable.

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The second floor provided residential space for the firemen assigned to the station. The largest room, measuring twenty-four by sixteen feet and situated along the west exterior wall, was used as a dormitory. A door at the south end of this room provides access to an enclosed six by seventeen-foot porch, the floor of which is covered with copper sheathing. Adjacent to the dormitory and situated roughly at the center of the second floor is a twenty-eight by twelve-foot room where two rows of storage lockers were originally located. On opposing ends of the locker room are a bathroom and a shower and wash room. Evident in these facilities are original finishing materials, including black and white ceramic floor tiles arranged in a checkerboard pattern, polished granite toilet partitions, and walls covered to waist level with pale yellow tile. In the southeast corner of the second floor is a bedroom with a private bath that was once occupied by the captain of the fire company. Immediately adjacent along the east exterior wall is a recreation room with a large hearth and fireplace. Displayed above the mantel is the feather motif found in many of Douglas Ellington's designs. A door opposite the fireplace provides access to the small balcony above the rounded arches on the main facade. Adjoining the recreation room in the northeast corner of the building are a dining room and a kitchen, which includes an original porcelain sink and a floor-to-ceiling cabinet with a hardwood countertop and two six-pane glass doors.

Two rooms are located in the basement of the building, which is accessed by a single door on the rear facade. One room is used for storage, while the other is occupied by a boiler that supplies heat to the radiators in the building. The original boiler was a coal fired unit. Later, an oil furnace was installed, but it was replaced sometime in the late 1960s or early 1970s by the current boiler system, which uses natural gas.

Although the original floorplans remain largely intact, municipal authorities made limited modifications after the fire department discontinued use of the building for emergency response operations in the mid-1970s. On the first floor, a wall was built in the hose storage room, creating two rooms of unequal size. At the same time, doors were installed in each of the two passageways in the wall between the hose room and the engine room. Another wall was built to enclose the open work area adjoining the engine room at the southwest corner of the building. On the second floor, construction of a wall divided the dormitory in half, and dropped acoustic tile ceilings were installed in both of the resulting rooms. Despite these changes, the station retains its historical appearance and integrity, and no significant alterations have been made to the exterior since the construction of the building more than seventy years ago.

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Section 8: Statement of Significance

Summary

Asheville Fire Department Fire Station Number 4 is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, for its significance as an excellent example of an early twentieth-century suburban fire station and as the work of architect Douglas D. Ellington, and under Criterion A, for its role in community planning and development. Erected circa 1927, Station Number 4 is a two-story, Art Deco-influenced brick structure that stands at 300 Merrimon Avenue. It was built as part of a larger effort to provide basic municipal services to growing residential neighborhoods on the north side of the city. Ellington, the designer of the building, worked extensively in Asheville during the building boom of the 1920s and was responsible for its most notable examples of Art Deco architecture. Used by the Asheville Fire Department for emergency response services from the time of its construction until the mid-1970s, Station Number 4 is today occupied by the offices of the department's Arson Task Force. Its current surroundings include small-scale commercial and institutional buildings, residential neighborhoods, and large turn-of-the-century domestic structures occupied by professional offices. The building has undergone no significant alterations since its construction and retains its historical appearance and character.

Historical Background and Community Planning and Development Context

Fire Station Number 4 was constructed circa 1927, shortly after city authorities embarked on the "Program of Progress," an ambitious five-year municipal building campaign based largely on the proposals set forth in the 1922 *Asheville City Plan*. Written by nationally-recognized urban planning authority John Nolen, the *Asheville City Plan* recommended that city officials take steps to improve public facilities, regulate patterns of urban development, and prepare for the anticipated growth of the city. The resulting Program of Progress, developed with strong input from the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, outlined ninety-four major objectives. More than half were achieved by the time the Great Depression brought a halt to all public and private building projects in the city in 1930.¹

Nolen's 1922 *Asheville City Plan* and the Program of Progress were a direct response to the unprecedented growth Asheville and the surrounding area had experienced in the preceding decades. After the Western North Carolina Railroad reached Asheville in 1880, industrial and commercial development rapidly transformed the previously isolated community into a popular health and pleasure resort and a center for timbering operations in the mountains. The population, which numbered 2,616 in 1880, grew to 18,762 by 1910 and 28,504 by 1920. The pace of development reached its peak in the following decade, when a booming real estate

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market and widespread commercial prosperity brought a massive influx of capital investments and population to the city. The changing built environment was among the most conspicuous manifestations of Asheville's nascent prosperity. By 1930 the downtown district included luxury resort hotels, stately public buildings, and towering skyscrapers—more than sixty-five new buildings in all—and the population had climbed to more than 50,000.²

The skyrocketing population created high demand for housing, giving rise to extensive residential development throughout the city. Several neighborhoods arose in the area immediately north of downtown Asheville, within territory annexed by the city in 1905.³ The oldest of these, Montford, was established by the Asheville Loan, Construction, and Improvement Company in 1889 and later developed by lumber merchant George Willis Pack. Favored by many businessmen, professionals, and other well-to-do citizens, Montford continued to grow into the late 1920s.⁴ Roughly a mile to the east, the hill traversed by East Chestnut Street emerged in the 1890s as another fashionable location for the grand homes of some of Asheville's wealthiest citizens.⁵ About 1905, pharmaceutical tycoon E.W. Grove began planning for a residential development on portions of his considerable landholdings at the base of Sunset Mountain, and the sale of lots in the area that soon became known as Grove Park began in 1908. The opening of the Grove Park Inn, Grove's luxury resort hotel, in the summer of 1913 boosted the prestige of this already desirable neighborhood, and property sales and construction of new homes continued at a brisk pace until the mid-1920s.⁶ As these several neighborhoods grew and became firmly established, pockets of small-scale residential development arose in surrounding areas.

With development came increased demand for basic municipal services. Fire protection figured among the primary needs of the burgeoning residential neighborhoods north of downtown. The origins of Asheville's fire department dated to 1882, when city officials had established a volunteer company equipped with a hand-drawn fire cart and its headquarters in the courthouse on Pack Square. By 1891, fifty men were serving as volunteer firefighters and the department had acquired four horses, two horse-drawn hook-and-ladder carts, a hose cart, and 3,500 feet of hose. Over the next several decades, the department experienced almost continual change as it strived to keep pace with the growth of the city. In 1911 the department markedly increased its firefighting capabilities with the purchase of its first motorized fire engine. After World War I, as the population of the city increased dramatically and the building boom began, the department undertook a major expansion. Two new substations augmented the protection provided by the central station. The Bartlett Street station served neighborhoods southwest of the downtown area and Asheville's emerging industrial district along the French Broad River. The West Asheville station moved into a newly constructed Flemish-style brick structure at 421 Haywood Road in

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1922 and provided service to all of West Asheville, which had been annexed by the city in 1917. In 1926 the central station moved into larger, more modern facilities on the first floor of the new City Market building, located on the south side of the recently-expanded Pack Square. During the same period, city officials raised professional standards within the department by hiring a staff of paid, full-time firemen to replace the existing volunteer engine companies in 1924.⁷

Fire Station Number 4, designed to serve the entire north side of the city, was built circa 1927 and entered service immediately upon completion. One engine company and a hook-and-ladder company were stationed at the building, which was equipped with state-of-the-art facilities. Connected to the city-wide alarm system, Station Number 4 responded to emergency calls twenty-four hours a day, providing the surrounding area with an increased level of fire protection. It was the primary response station for the northern portion of the city until an additional substation was built on East Larchmont Road in the 1950s. Firefighters from Station Number 4 also responded to large fires in other parts of the city when necessary.⁸

In addition to providing emergency response services to the immediate area, Station Number 4 served as the primary training facility for the Asheville fire department for most of the twentieth century. New firefighters received basic training and experienced firemen practiced their skills in a variety of training exercises held at the tower in the rear of the station. A fire escape on the north face allowed firefighters to simulate, for example, rescues of persons trapped in the upper stories of a high-rise apartment or office building. For some exercises, ropes and netting were set up around the base of the tower. In the early 1970s, training exercises were discontinued at Station Number 4 and moved to the new Buncombe County Training Center, which had been built north of the city on Old Leicester Highway by the Buncombe County Firefighters Association several years earlier.⁹

The fire department stopped using Station Number 4 for emergency response operations about 1974. After nearly five decades of continual service, many of the facilities in the building had begun to show signs of age. Moreover, the fact that the main doors were not wide enough to accommodate modern fire engines precluded continued use of the station as an emergency response facility. The building was subsequently used for storage and for the offices of other municipal departments for several years before being reoccupied by the fire department in 1982. At present, the offices of the department's Arson Task Force are located on the second floor and the remainder of the building is used for storage.¹⁰

A considerable portion of the building's charm stems from the many pieces of historical firefighting equipment presently stored in it. The most significant of these is a fire engine

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manufactured by the American-La France Company that was acquired by the Asheville Fire Department in 1922. The engine, which was used into the 1960s, has been carefully maintained and remains operational today.¹¹ Also noteworthy are parts of the alarm system made by the Gamewell Fire Alarm Company that was used by the department in the early twentieth century. While operational, this system consisted of a main unit that was located at the central station and wired to a network of roughly 150 call boxes placed throughout the city.¹² Substations such as Station Number 4 received alarm calls directly from the central station.

Today, Station Number 4 provides an important reminder of the expansion of municipal services and facilities that resulted from the Program of Progress in the 1920s. In particular, the station played a key role in the development, expansion, and professionalization of the fire department that occurred in the post-World War I era. The other fire stations erected in the early twentieth century now serve a variety of purposes. The Bartlett Street station has been destroyed; the former West Asheville station is extant but is currently occupied by retail businesses. The central station, which is located in the lower level of what is now commonly known as the "Municipal Building," is still used by the fire department. Of all these buildings, Station Number 4 has survived with an exceptional level of integrity. Virtually unaltered, it retains its character defining features and historical appearance. As one of the most significant and enduring landmarks on Merrimon Avenue, the station provides a tangible link to the major period of residential development in North Asheville.

Architectural Context

The overall plan and general features of Station Number 4 are typical of early twentieth-century suburban fire stations. In the period between the turn of the century and the Great Depression, fire station architecture evolved rapidly as a result of several factors. Foremost among these were changing patterns of urban growth in small and medium-sized cities across the nation that compelled municipal fire departments to build stations specifically designed to serve residential neighborhoods. Whereas a single large fire station located in the central downtown district had once provided adequate fire protection for many such communities, the growth of residential suburbs, facilitated by the development of streetcar networks and the rise of automotive transportation, quickly created a need for small auxiliary stations in outlying locations. As a result, fire departments began building small stations, typically manned by an engine company and a hook and ladder company, to serve growing suburban neighborhoods.¹³

As the landscape of urban America was reordered by the rise of the suburb, advances in firefighting equipment and changes in administrative policy altered the form and structure of fire station architecture. The widespread adoption of heavier firefighting equipment, especially the

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motorized fire engine, dramatically increased the structural requirements of fire stations during the early twentieth century. At the same time, technological advances provided firemen with an expanded array of firefighting equipment, which in turn required architects to incorporate additional storage facilities into fire station designs. In addition, the professionalization of firefighting had important architectural repercussions. As municipal governments replaced volunteer fire companies by hiring full-time firemen to provide around-the-clock fire protection, it became necessary for stations to include comfortable sleeping and living quarters as well as a heavy-duty garage for engines and equipment. In all, the early twentieth century witnessed sweeping changes in firefighting practice and policy.¹⁴

The architectural consequences of these convergent trends were manifest in a genre of fire stations designed with two overriding considerations in mind. First, the suburban fire station had to be of an appropriate scale and aesthetic character for its surroundings. In designing stations suited for residential neighborhoods, architects drew inspiration from the modest houses of middle-class citizens and the basic form of the American bungalow. Stations patterned on residential structures were typically one or two stories in height, set back from the street, and in many cases exhibited a porch and other conspicuously domestic features. Second, suburban fire stations had to accommodate the full scope of activities and functions expected of them. As characterized by architectural historian Rebecca Zurier, fire stations combined “aspects of a garage, a barracks, and a home” and served “public and private, institutional and domestic, [and] ceremonial and functional” roles all at the same time.¹⁵

Given the strict spatial, functional, and structural requirements of firehouses, it was hardly surprising that many architects came to regard the design of such buildings as a relatively straightforward, almost standardized process. “On the Designing of Fire Houses,” an article that appeared in the June 1927 issue of *Architectural Forum*, began by declaring: “Through departmental standardization, the designing of the fire house is now a very simple matter, admitting of little variation.” Suburban fire stations varied widely in style and ornamentation, but the majority were designed to accommodate a “standard fire-fighting unit . . . [consisting] of two pieces of apparatus, an engine and a hook-and-ladder truck, each with its own company.”¹⁶

The full range of features commonly found in suburban fire stations are evident in the overall plan and general appearance of Station Number 4. Substantial construction and such exterior details as the wide double arched doors identify it as an institutional building, but its modest scale and restrained ornamentation allowed it to fit harmoniously within the surrounding landscape of residential neighborhoods that existed at the time of its construction. By the late 1920s, Merrimon Avenue was lined mainly by substantial multi-story residential houses built in

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the Shingle, Craftsman, and other English-influenced styles. On the interior, the dual functional roles served by the station were evident in the arrangement of rooms and the order of interior space. All essential firefighting operations took place on the first floor. Here, the central feature was the engine room, which provided space for two motorized engines and other equipment. Adjacent to the engine room were a hose storage room, a large work area, and the office of the captain of the engine company assigned to the station. The second floor provided residential accommodations for the firemen. These included a dormitory, a large recreation room, a kitchen and dining room, and bathroom and shower facilities.

In addition to its significance as an example of a suburban firehouse, Station Number 4 is noteworthy for its association with its designer, Douglas D. Ellington, who was among the most successful architects to work in Asheville during the building boom of the 1920s. Born June 26, 1886, in Clayton, North Carolina, Ellington enjoyed a charmed career. He studied at Philadelphia's Drexel Institute, the University of Pennsylvania, and the prestigious Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. There, in 1913, he became the first American to earn the Prix de Rougevin, the highest decorative arts honor in Europe. Following his return to the United States, Ellington taught architecture at Drexel Institute, Columbia University, and the Carnegie School of Technology before entering private practice. Ellington arrived in Asheville in the mid-1920s, where he found a thriving real estate market and city officials engaged in an ambitious municipal building campaign. Talented architects were in high demand, and Ellington had no difficulty obtaining building commissions. His most significant works of the period included the First Baptist Church, the City Building, the S&W Cafeteria building, and the Asheville High School.¹⁷

As was the case with many buildings that Ellington designed, Station Number 4 drew considerable attention upon its completion. Drawings, floorplans, and photographs appeared in *American Architect* and *Architectural Forum*, the leading professional journals of the day.¹⁸ Although principally a utilitarian structure, the building exhibits a variety of subtle decorative details that reflect Ellington's distinctive interpretation of the Art Deco style. Chief among these is the feather motif—an Ellington trademark—set into the brickwork above the balcony door on the main facade and also displayed on the projecting chimney breast above the fireplace in the recreation room. Ellington used variations of this motif in many of his designs, including the City Building and his Chunn's Cove residence.¹⁹ The palette of colors employed in the design of Station Number 4 is also typical of Ellington's work. The predominance of rose, rust, and muted red tones evident in the masonry is reminiscent of the First Baptist Church and the City Building.²⁰

For all of the attention Station Number 4 garnered when new, it is significant today as one of

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several Art Deco buildings erected in Asheville during the real estate and construction boom of the 1920s. Although Ellington received greater acclaim for his larger, more ambitious Art Deco designs—the City Building and the S&W Cafeteria in particular—Station Number 4 is notable for its synthesis of institutional form and Art Deco ornamentation. It is, moreover, a rare example of a fire station designed in the Art Deco style. Few other documented examples exist in North Carolina, and none are located in the western part of the state. Station Number 4 therefore constitutes an important part of Asheville’s built environment and is significant as an example of a suburban fire station, for its association with Ellington, and for its Art Deco styling.

Endnotes

1. Report of the Program of Progress Committee, 4 Oct. 1923; “Desirable Locations for Parks and Playgrounds to Serve the City Suggested,” both in newspaper file collection, vol. 64, file 62, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, N.C.; John Nolen, *Asheville City Plan* (Asheville: n.p., 1922); John Dewey Topping, “Asheville Builds a New City,” *American City* 35, no. 3 (Sept. 1926), pp. 376-378. For an overview of Nolen’s work in Asheville, see Kevan D. Frazier, “Outsiders in the Land of Sky: City Planning and the Transformation of Asheville, North Carolina, 1921-1929,” *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1998), pp. 299-316.
2. Bureau of the Census, *Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880)* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1993), p. 278; Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, vol. III, *Population* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 272; Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920*, vol. II, *Population* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), p. 1354; Ronald D. Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), pp. 101-104; Swaim, “An Architectural History of Asheville and Buncombe County,” pp. 77-78, 93. On the development of the downtown district in the 1920s, see David R. Black, ed., *Historic Architectural Resources of Downtown Asheville, North Carolina* (Asheville: City of Asheville, 1979), pp. 12-15.
3. Douglas Swaim, “An Architectural History of Asheville and Buncombe County,” in *Cabins and Castles: The History and Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina*, ed. Douglas Swaim (Asheville: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1981), p. 79. The 1905 annexation increased the total area within the corporate limits of Asheville to 5.6 square miles. See Gallatin Roberts, “A Brief History of Asheville,” in *Dedication of the City Building, Asheville, NC* (Asheville: Jarrett’s Press, [1928]), p. 9.

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4. Michael T. Southern, ed., *Asheville's Historic Montford District* ([Asheville]: Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County, 1985), pp. 5-6; Swaim, "An Architectural History of Asheville and Buncombe County," pp. 83-84, 88.
5. Swaim, "An Architectural History of Asheville and Buncombe County," pp. 80, 84.
6. Swaim, "An Architectural History of Asheville and Buncombe County," pp. 87-88; Bruce E. Johnson, "Built Without an Architect: Architectural Inspirations for the Grove Park Inn," in *May We All Remember Well: A Journal of the History and Cultures of Western North Carolina*, ed. Robert S. Brunk (Asheville: Robert S. Brunk Auction Services, 1997), vol. I, pp. 226-227; H.L. Parker, *Revised Map of E.W. Grove Park* (N.p.: n.p., 1913), Pack Memorial Library.
7. "Fire Sub-Station is Now Organized," clipping dated 27 Mar. 1919; "First Fire Dept. Organized in 1884" and "May Organize Paid Fire Department," clippings dated 28 Jan 1920; F.A. Sondley, "Veteran Tells Fire History of Asheville," manuscript (photocopy); and Warren Nye, "Asheville's Fire Department: Fifty Years of Progress," clipping dated 2 Apr. 1974, all in newspaper file collection, vol. 55, file 50, Pack Memorial Library; W.B. Frady, "Veteran Recalls Happy and Exciting Times when City had Volunteer Fire Department," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (Asheville, N.C.), 26 Mar. 1950; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Asheville, North Carolina (New York: Sanborn Map Company), 1891, 1925. On the fire department's facilities in the City Market building, see "New Auditorium and Office Building to be Erected on the Present City Hall Site," clipping dated 13 Oct. 1923; "Citizens of City Will Participate in Party at Municipal Home," clipping dated 7 Mar. 1926; "Gay Throng Fills Municipal Halls to Celebrate Opening," clipping dated 9 Mar. 1926; and Mitch Holmes, "City's Municipal Building Rich in History," clipping dated 3 May 1983, all in newspaper file collection, vol. 10, file 18, Pack Memorial Library.
8. Thomas Brooks, interview by author, Asheville, N.C., 11 June 1999; Ronald Hicks, interview by author, Asheville, N.C., 11 June 1999; "North End Fire Station Will Get 1936 Engine," clipping cited as *Asheville Times*, 5 Sept. 1958, in newspaper file collection, vol. 44, file 50, Pack Memorial Library. Thomas Brooks, Senior Captain of Special Operations with the Asheville Fire Department, has his office in Fire Station Number 4. Ronald Hicks, a firefighter and senior maintenance technician with the department, has been involved in the upkeep of Station Number 4 for more than twenty-five years.
9. Thomas Brooks, interview by author, 11 June 1999; Ronald Hicks, interview by author, 11 June 1999.

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10. Thomas Brooks, interview by author, 11 June 1999; Ronald Hicks, interview by author, 11 June 1999.
11. Thomas Brooks, interview by author, 11 June 1999; Ronald Hicks, interview by author, 11 June 1999; "Fire Engine Number 2 Marks 40 Years of Service to City of Asheville," clipping dated 22 May 1962, in newspaper file collection, vol. 55, file 50, Pack Memorial Library.
12. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Asheville, North Carolina (New York: Sanborn Map Company), 1935.
13. Rebecca Zurier, *The American Firehouse: An Architectural and Social History* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1982), p. 138.
14. Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, pp. 13-14.
15. Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, p. 13.
16. *Architectural Forum* 46, no. 6 (June 1927), p. 586.
17. "Douglas Ellington," clipping dated 29 Jul. 1949 and "Ellington, Architect and Artist, Dies Here," clipping dated 28 Aug. 1960, both in newspaper files, Pack Memorial Library; Clayton W. Griffith, "Douglas D. Ellington: Art Deco in Asheville, 1925-1931" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1993), pp. 4-5; Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 412-416. See also Ellington's summary of his credentials in Douglas D. Ellington to the Buncombe County commissioners, 18 Jan. 1927, Edgar M. Lyda papers, Ramsey Library, University of North Carolina at Asheville, Asheville, N.C.
18. *Architectural Forum* 46, no. 6 (June 1927), p. 589; *American Architect* (20 June 1928), pp. 848-851.
19. Douglas Ellington House, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Section 7; Asheville City Hall, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Section 7, both in Western Office of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Asheville, North Carolina.
20. On the First Baptist Church and the City Building, see Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture*, pp. 412-414.

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Section 10: Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is tax parcel 5583

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses all of the property historically associated with Asheville Fire Department Station Number 4, built circa 1927.

Photographs

Photographer: Daniel J. Vivian, Columbia, South Carolina.

Date of Photographs: 11 June 1999

Original negatives stored at the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Western Office, Asheville, North Carolina.

1. Main facade.
2. View from southeast, showing main and south facades.
3. Detail of balcony on main facade.
4. Detail of entrance on south facade.
5. Detail of enclosed porch on south facade.
6. Windows on south facade.
7. Drill tower, interior view.
8. Engine room.
9. Interior stairwell.
10. Second floor recreation room showing detail of fireplace.

