

DENVER FIRE STATION 14: SERVING THE COMMUNITY IN RESIDENTIAL TUDOR STYLE FOR OVER 80 YEARS

How would you design a stylish firehouse while keeping in mind the function and needs of the building?

Built in 1937, this two-story firehouse was a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. The station cost approximately \$23,000; \$10,500 from the WPA and \$12,500 from the City and County of Denver. The building has been and is currently a Denver Firehouse serving the Montclair neighborhood.

Structure

The firehouse is faced with red brick with a side gable roof. There is a Tudor arched central entry door with a terra cotta panel over the door with the date and “DFD No. 14” in relief. Outdoor decorative brickwork in a herringbone pattern is around the three tall narrow windows of the second story. It displays decorative brick lintels over windows and doors and a gabled dormer with Tudor style half-timber details and brick corbelling above the arched entrance. This Tudor architecture blends into the neighborhood of the time, reflecting the popular English influence in architectural styles in Denver during the 1930s. It is an excellent example of the WPA residential style buildings (Denver Fire Station 14 Denver Landmark Application).

The original tall vertical bi-fold bay doors, where Engine 14 leaves from and returns to, were replaced in 2013 with large overhead doors with a narrow band of windows across the center. The door openings are topped by elaborate rough stone work. Terrazzo tile makes up the bay floor. The pole for firefighters to slide down from the dormitory to the bay is still in use. The original wooden lockers are still inside the station.

Architect

The building’s architect, Charles Francis Pillsbury, was born in Denver in 1896. He worked as an architectural draftsman before becoming an architect in ca. 1926. Pillsbury was one of a group of architects responsible for the State Capitol Annex building at 1375 Sherman. The Capitol Annex is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. He also worked with G. Meredith Musick and Earl C. Morris on the design of the Denver Police Station at 1245 Champa Street. The former police building currently holds the Commons on Champa, Denver’s unique gathering place for entrepreneurs. Active into the 1950s, Pillsbury died in 1979. He was also the architect of several elementary schools and several other firehouses including the Art Deco style Fire Station #11 at West 2nd Avenue in the Baker Historic District (Noel and Hansen).

Neighborhood

The original community became the incorporated town of Montclair in 1888. In 1893, the crash of the silver market and the ensuing Panic of 1893 brought all development to a halt. Baron von Richthofen began promoting the town as a health retreat, calling it the “Carlsbad of Colorado.” However, due to his sudden death from appendicitis in 1898, it never materialized (Noel and Wharton, 2016).

In 1902, the City and County of Denver began to incorporate the town of Montclair. The town objected strongly to its inclusion, but Montclair was annexed in 1903. Then mayor, Robert W. Speer, eased the transition by beautifying and extending Richthofen's system of parkways and boulevards from the central city into the suburb, planting many trees, and erecting fountains and monuments. In 1907, the Montclair Improvement Association was formed to push the City of Denver into providing city upgrades.

In 1975, residents and the Denver City Council voted to make the central heart of Montclair an historic district. Montclair was one of the first neighborhoods to seek landmark designation, and the district was the fifth city-designated landmark district.

References

Denver Fire Station 14 Denver Landmark Application.

Noel, T. and Hansen, W. (1999). *The Montclair Neighborhood*. Denver: Historic Denver, Inc.

Noel, T. and Wharton, N. (2016). *Denver Landmarks and Historic Districts*. University Press of Colorado.