

State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code 5S3

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 7 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Long Beach Fire Station No. 9

P1. Other Identifier: 3917 Long Beach Blvd

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted

*a. County Los Angeles and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad _____ Date _____ T ____; R ____; ____ of ____ of Sec ____; ____ B.M.

c. Address 3917 Long Beach Blvd City Long Beach Zip 90807

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone __, __ mE/ __ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, decimal degrees, etc., as appropriate)

APN: 7139-013-900

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The property is occupied by Fire Station No. 9, which was constructed in 1938. The building is one-and-a-half stories in height and generally rectangular in plan. It has a predominately gabled and hipped roof clad in asphalt shingles with a flat roof on the south elevation clad in rolled asphalt. The roof perimeter has shallow eaves with barge boards on the street-facing (east and west) gable ends. The north- and south-facing gable ends are articulated by parapets and at the center of the north portion of the roof is the three-story hose tower. The exterior is mostly covered in cement plaster.

(See continuation sheet)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) (HP14) Government building



*P4. Resources Present: ☒ Building
☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐
Element of District ☐ Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #) View looking west, taken 10/07/2019

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and

Source: ☒ Historic ☐ Prehistoric
☐ Both

1938; City of Long Beach, Public Works Department

*P7. Owner and Address:

City of Long Beach

411 W. Ocean Boulevard

Long Beach, CA 90802

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)

Audrey von Ahrens

GPA Consulting

617 S. Olive Street, Suite 910

Los Angeles, CA 90014

*P9. Date Recorded: 10/07/2019

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)

Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

GPA Consulting, "Historical Resources Evaluation Report for 3917 Long Beach Boulevard, Long Beach, California," September 2019

*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☐ Location Map ☒ Continuation Sheet ☒ Building, Structure, and Object Record

☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record

☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (List): _____

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Long Beach Fire Station No. 9 *NRHP Status Code 5S3

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B1. Historic Name: Long Beach Fire Station No. 9

B2. Common Name: Long Beach Fire Station No. 9

B3. Original Use: Fire Station B4. Present Use: Vacant

*B5. Architectural Style: Tudor Revival

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Fire station constructed 1938; window replacements, application of stucco cladding, and roof replacement completed at unknown date.

*B7. Moved? ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features: None

B9a. Architect: W. Horace Austin

b. Builder: WPA

*B10. Significance: Theme Institutional Development and the Work Progress Administration Area Long Beach
Period of Significance 1938 Property Type Government building, fire station Applicable Criteria A (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The building was evaluated for potential listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and California Register of Historical Resources, as well as for designation as a Long Beach Historic Landmark.

(See continuation sheet)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) None

*B12. References:

See report for full bibliography.

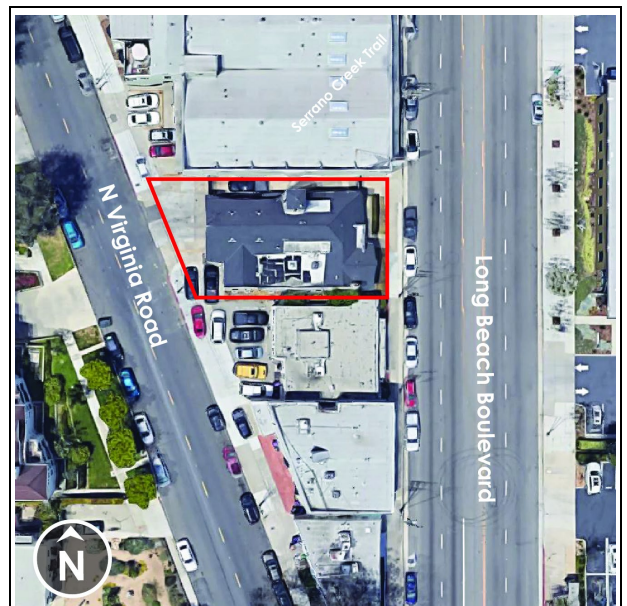
B13. Remarks:

None

*B14. Evaluator: Audrey von Ahrens

*Date of Evaluation: October 2019

(This space reserved for official comments.)



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P3a. Description (cont.)

The east elevation facing Long Beach Boulevard abuts the sidewalk and is asymmetrically arranged. It is generally divided into three bays. The south bay consists of a projecting front-facing gable with the center and north bays slightly set back from the main entrance porch. The center bay is articulated by a flat roof with a crenelated parapet that projects above the hipped roof plane of the north bay. The main entrance is located in the center bay and is accessed by three concrete steps that lead to the concrete porch, which extends the length of the north bay. The center bay is clad in cement plaster scored to imitate ashlar cut stone. The main entrance door is wood paneled with a single-light in the upper panel and is obscured by a non-original metal security door. Centered above the main entrance is a cast plaster coat of arms that reads "SEMPER PARATUS" and "LBFD." A narrow, single-light, steel sash casement window is located just north of the door.

A secondary entrance is situated on the north-facing wall of the south bay. This entrance consists of a wood paneled door with three-over-three divided lights with cathedral glass in the upper panel. Fenestration on the two outer bays is evenly spaced. Each bay has two non-original metal casement windows set within original openings behind non-original metal security bars. A long, narrow, louvered vent is centered beneath the gable peak. The gable has a slight overhang and the end features decorative half-timbering.

The north elevation is set back from the adjacent building and overlooks a narrow side yard paved in concrete. When originally constructed, this elevation was visible from Long Beach Boulevard. The most prominent feature on this elevation is the hose tower. Located near the center, the square tower has a hipped roof. Decorative half-timbers frame the top of the tower. Narrow, louvered wood vents are centered on each elevation of the tower. On the ground floor of the north elevation are multiple side entrances. The westernmost is the kitchen entrance. It is accessed by two concrete steps and consists of a wood paneled door with three divided lights in the upper panel. A metal security door was added at an unknown date. A wood framed transom has been infilled with a wood board and air conditioning unit. A metal door opens to the original vault room. At the base of the tower, a non-original wood paneled door with metal louvered vent is within an original opening. West of the tower is a rectangular projection with shed roof. The north and south exterior walls of the storage room have wood plank doors. At the far west end of the elevation is another opening with non-original wood and louvered metal door providing access to the apparatus room. Fenestration consists of non-original, single-light metal sash windows within original wood frames. A flat dormer projects from the roof plane east of the tower. Although the location and volume of the dormer is original, it was recently reconstructed with all new materials. Three sliding metal sash windows are evenly spaced across the dormer where the original windows would have been. West of the tower, fenestration consist of six, evenly spaced clerestory windows. Non-original metal sashes are within original wood casings.

The west elevation overlooks Virginia Road and is set back from a scored concrete driveway. The elevation is asymmetrically arranged. Two large garage doors are centered beneath the projecting front-facing gable bay on the north. Non-original metal roll-up doors are within the original openings flanked by pilasters clad in scored cement plaster. The gable end has decorative half timbering with a corbelled overhang at the attic level. Beneath the peak, the metal flag pole terminates at a decorative wood sill flanked by narrow, louvered metal attic vents. South of the projecting gable, the elevation is set back. Originally, two window openings were evenly spaced. However, the northernmost opening has been infilled with stucco.

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The south elevation overlooks the adjacent property and has a shallow setback. It is the least visible of the four elevations. At the far east end is a chimney. Two prominent gables articulated by decorative cement plaster quoins and stepped parapets flank the elevation. Centered within each gable are narrow attic vents. Fenestration is evenly spaced. The windows were all recently replaced, and openings appear to be resized. A flat dormer projects from the roof plane. Originally, the dormer consisted of five evenly spaced window openings. The three center windows have been replaced with vinyl windows but retain the original wood casings. The outermost window openings have each altered with a roof access door (west) and smaller window opening (east).

B10. Significance (cont.)

National Register of Historic Places

Criterion A

To be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A, a property must have a direct association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The contexts considered in this evaluation were Civic and Governmental Infrastructure and the WPA. Although the two contexts are closely related, the property is evaluated below within each context individually.

The first context considered under Criterion A was Civic and Governmental Infrastructure. The property was constructed in 1938 as the second Fire Station No. 9. The first had been demolished as a result of the 1933 Long Beach earthquake. The new Fire Station No. 9 was constructed in the Los Cerritos and Bixby Knolls neighborhoods at a time when the City had a lack of permanent fire stations as a result of the 1933 earthquake, but limited funding to address these deficiencies during the Great Depression. However, according to *National Register Bulletin #15*, "mere association with historic events or trends is not enough, in and of itself, to qualify under Criterion A: the property's specific association must be considered important as well." Although Fire Station No. 9 was the first fire to be constructed after the earthquake, this association is best evaluated in the context of the WPA. To be eligible under Criterion A within the context of Civic and Government Infrastructure, the fire station would need to be particularly important in fire station history, such as the first fire station constructed in Long Beach. No information was found indicating that Fire Station No. 9 played a significant role in the history of the Fire Department. Therefore, the property does not appear to be significant under Criterion A within the context of Civic and Government Infrastructure.

The second context considered under Criterion A was the WPA. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, Long Beach fire stations had been constructed using revenue generated by the City. However, with almost half of the city's fire stations demolished in the aftermath of the 1933 Long Beach earthquake and lack of city coffers during the Great Depression, the City of Long Beach appealed to the federal government for help. Relief was found in the WPA, which supported the development of civic, recreational, and educational facilities. According to information available today, two fire stations were constructed by the WPA program in Long Beach. These were the subject property, Fire Station No. 9, and Fire Station No. 7, completed in 1940 at 2295 Elm Avenue. Though extant and still in use, Fire Station No. 7 has been substantially altered from its 1940 appearance. The property appears to be significant under Criterion A in the area of Institutional Development as it represents the partnership between the City and WPA created to rebuild and add public services after the 1933 earthquake.

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Criterion B

To be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion B, a property must be associated with lives of persons significant in our past. Fire Station No. 9 was constructed by the WPA for the City of Long Beach Fire Department. Since its construction, the building has remained under public ownership as Fire Station No. 9. Many individuals worked at the property since its construction in 1938; however, collaborative efforts like these are typically best evaluated under Criterion A. Therefore, the property does not appear to be significant under Criterion B.

Criterion C

To be eligible for listing under Criterion C, a property must embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. Fire Station No. 9 was evaluated as an example of the Tudor Revival style designed by prolific Long Beach architect, W. Horace Austin.

Fire Station No. 9 possesses most of the basic features associated with the Tudor Revival style, including its predominately stuccoed exterior; steeply pitched, multi-gabled roofs and dormers; decorative half-timbering; decorative quoin detailing; stepped and castellated parapets; wood paneled and planked doors, one of which retains leaded cathedral glass; and tall, narrow vents beneath the gable peaks. However, the building is lacking in the qualities that are associated with finer examples of the Tudor Revival style, such as slate roof shingles, and brick or stone detailing. Finer examples of the Tudor Revival style also typically retain casement windows with diamond panes and wood paneled doors. The majority of the building's steel sash windows have been replaced with at least one opening enclosed and multiple openings resized. Furthermore, the exterior has been re-stuccoed and the original wood roof shingles have been replaced with asphalt.

Fire Station No. 9 does not fully embody the distinguishing features of the Tudor Revival style and is not an important example in this context. Furthermore, the building followed an established trend in fire station design as a typical example of a Bungalow Station and was not an important or pioneering example of its type. Thus, the property does not appear to be significant under these aspects of Criterion C.

William Horace Austin Jr. (1881–1942) is noted as the architect on the original drawings. Austin was born in Kansas in 1881. He moved to Long Beach with his family in 1895 and began working in the building trades. He was educated in architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and returned to Long Beach to establish his career, eventually becoming one of the city's most prolific commercial and institutional architects.

While Austin is considered a master architect in Long Beach, *National Register Bulletin #15* states, "The property must express a particular phase in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his or her work, or a particular idea or theme in his or her craft." During the Great Depression, Austin sought work through the WPA, as was typical for many architects across the country at the time. Three known WPA projects were completed by Austin, including the subject building (Long Beach Fire Station No. 9), Santa Ana City Hall (former), and Long Beach Airport Terminal Building. Austin had a prolific career and had already fully developed into a well-known architect by the time he designed Fire Station No. 9, which was constructed toward the end of his career. Thus, it would not be considered a particularly important phase in the

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development of his career, an important aspect of his career, or a particular idea in his or her craft. Therefore, the property does not appear to be significant under this aspect of Criterion C.

The last aspect of Criterion C, the possession of high artistic values, refers to a building's articulation of a particular concept of design so fully that it expresses an aesthetic ideal. A building eligible under this aspect of Criterion C would need to possess ornamentation and detail to lend high artistic value. While Fire Station No. 9 does possess some of these architectural features, it does not rise to the level of significance to be considered eligible under this aspect of Criterion C. Nor does it represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction, which generally applies to historic districts. The property is primarily surrounded by low-rise commercial buildings constructed between the late 1940s and 1990s.

In conclusion, the property does not appear to be significant under Criterion C.

Criterion D

Criterion D was not considered in this report, as it generally applies to archeological resources. There also is no reason to believe that the property has yielded or will yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or nation.

Integrity

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, properties must retain their physical integrity from the period in which they gained significance. In the case of architecturally significant properties, the period of significance is normally the date of construction. For historically significant properties, the length of the historic associations usually measures the period of significance. As the property appears significant under Criteria A, as an important example of a WPA fire station in Long Beach, the period of significance is the date of construction, 1938.

The building has not been moved; therefore, it retains integrity of location. No additions have been made to the building. Therefore, the original form remains intact. The building generally retains its original floorplan. However, two interior spaces have been substantially altered. These include the first-floor dormitory and upper floor radio room. No other alterations appear to have been made the building's form, plan, space, or structure. Although some original doors and almost all original windows have been replaced, the building retains its original primary and secondary entrance doors on the west elevation and almost all original openings. The building retains the overall integrity of design.

The immediate setting of the building has been altered. Thus, the integrity of setting has been diminished. The broad setting has also noticeably changed. Therefore, the overall integrity of setting is only moderately intact. The building materials have been altered over time. Major alterations include the replacement of the original wood shingle roof with composition shingles, re-stuccoing of the exterior, replacement of all but one original window, and reconfiguration of the window openings on the south elevation. Due to these major alterations on the exterior, the integrity of materials is only moderately intact. The techniques used in the construction of the building have been diminished as original materials have been removed and/or replaced, such as original multi-light steel sash windows. Therefore, the building only retains a moderate level of integrity of workmanship.

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The building conveys integrity of feeling as a Tudor Revival style fire station, constructed in the late 1930s. Physical characteristics that convey its historic qualities include its single-family residential scale, overall massing with asymmetry, and its Tudor Revival style architectural details, such as half-timbering and other wood details combined with cement plaster exterior finishes. Therefore, this aspect of integrity is retained. The property retains sufficient combined integrity of setting, location, design, workmanship, materials, and feeling to convey integrity of association.

Fire Station No. 9 appears to be significant under National Register Criteria A. However, it may not retain sufficient integrity to be eligible for listing on the National Register as a result of the diminished integrity of setting, workmanship, and materials.

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register criteria for eligibility mirror those of the National Register. Therefore, Fire Station No. 9 may not be eligible for listing in the California Register for the same reasons outlined above.

Long Beach Cultural Heritage Ordinance

The City of Long Beach criteria vary slightly from the National and California Register criteria, but generally mirror the aspects of significance evaluated under the National Register criteria at the local level of significance. Thus, Fire Station No. 9 appears to be significant under local Criterion A for the same reasons outlined under the National Register evaluation above. Although some aspects of integrity have been diminished to the degree the property may not be eligible for the National or State registers, the property does retain sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for listing as a Historic Landmark. Aspects of integrity that have been diminished include setting, workmanship and materials. Furthermore, the integrity of Fire Station No. 9 is comparable to, and arguably more intact than the integrity of Station No. 12, which is listed as a Historic Landmark.

Conclusion

The property appears to be eligible for designation as a Historic Landmark. 3917 Long Beach Boulevard appears to be significant under Criterion A in the area of Institutional Development as an example of a WPA project which specifically addressed a lack of permanent fire stations in Long Beach after the 1933 earthquake. The recommended Status Code is 5S3, appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation.