

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

*City of Bainbridge Island
Department of Planning
and Community Development*

To: City of Bainbridge Island Historic Preservation Commission

From: Heather Beckmann, Associate Planner

Proposal: Inclusion of the Fort Ward firehouse in the Bainbridge Island Register of Historic Places

File No: HPR17895

Date: July 7, 2011

Applicant: Arthur & Suzane Bartel
1957 Hilltop Drive NE
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Request: The applicant requests inclusion of the Fort Ward firehouse (currently a single family residence for the Bartel's) property in the Local Register of Historic Places.

Location: The single family residence is located at 1957 Hilltop Drive NE, in the Fort Ward Parade Grounds.

Environmental Review: A decision regarding inclusion in the Historic Preservation Program is a non-project action that is not subject to State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) environmental review as provided in Washington Administrative Code (WAC 197-11-800.19).

Recommendation:

Inclusion of the Fort Ward firehouse (currently a single family residence for the Bartel's) property in the Bainbridge Island Register of Historic Places.

Background: In the late 1800's, Congress authorized the construction of nine military bases in the state of Washington, including the Fort Ward military base on Bainbridge Island. The Fort Ward firehouse was one of twenty buildings located on base. Blueprints indicate that it was built to reflect the style of all

military firehouses built around the Puget Sound during the early 1900's. According to the documentation supplied from the applicant, the firehouse was completed on March 23, 1912. The firehouse has been altered over the years with the addition of east and west wings and the replacement of the garage doors for windows as it was transformed into a single family residence. However, the residence is still reminiscent of its historic use as a firehouse, largely due to the intact watch tower.

Staff Analysis

I. Findings of Fact

A. Site Characteristics

1. **Tax Assessor Information:**
 - a. Tax Lot Number: 4147-001-006-0008
 - b. Owner of record: Arthur & Suzane Bartel
 - c. Lot size: .34 acres
2. **Site Development:** Single Family Residence.
3. **Access:** Hilltop Drive NE
4. **Public Services and Utilities:** City of Bainbridge Island Water and Sewer.
5. **Zoning / Comprehensive Plan Designation:** R-2
6. **Surrounding Zoning / Comprehensive Plan Designation:** OSR-2
7. **Property use:** Single Family Residence.

B. History

The historic register nomination application was submitted on May 5, 2011. The application for inclusion into the historic register will be considered by the Bainbridge Island Historic Preservation Commission on August 4, 2011; a Notice of Public Meeting was duly published on July 22, 2011.

C. Public Comment

No public comments were received during the public comment period.

D. Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies

1. **Historic Preservation – Goals 1 and 2:** Archeological, cultural and historic structures or places are an important community asset, are a part of Bainbridge Island's character, and should be identified, evaluated and preserved. Historic structures or places are an important feature of community design and should be preserved and enhanced.

E. Land Use Code Analysis

1. BIMC Section 18.76.040; Criteria for Designating Properties for Listing on the Register.

- a. Any building may be designated for listing on the local register if it is significantly associated with the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or cultural heritage of the community; it has physical integrity; it is at least 50 years old; or of lesser age but has exceptional importance. and it qualifies as at least one of the following:

The Fort Ward firehouse meets these initial criteria as it is significantly associated with the architecture of the community, it has physical integrity, it is at least 50 years old and it qualifies for one of the following criteria (explained in detail below).

- i. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state, or local history;

Applicant: The applicant indicated on the historic property register nomination application that the property met this criterion.

Staff Analysis: The firehouse is associated with events that have had a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state and local history. Fort Ward, originally known as Beans Point, is one of several U.S. Army Coastal Artillery Corps installations built to defend Puget Sound from enemy warships. Established in 1890, its primary objective was to protect the nearby Bremerton Naval Shipyard.

Construction for the Fort Ward firehouse was completed on March 23, 1912. It appears that the blueprint for the station were identical to the ones used for all military stations built around the Puget Sound during the early 1900's. For example, a firehouse at Fort Casey is identical to the one located at Fort Ward.

According to *The Story of the Little Fort at Bean Point*, written by Ivan Lee, the firehouse was located at the Fort's "population center" and where men were available for firefighting support.

In the 1920s, Fort Ward was placed on inactive status, but a small number of men were still stationed there. In 1928, the fort was essentially left abandoned. The fort remained abandoned for several years, until during the depression in 1935, it served as a state-operated fresh air camp for inner city children from Seattle.

In 1938, the U.S. Navy took over Fort Ward from the Army, confiscating several surrounding properties and evicting their owners. The U.S. Navy found the fort to be attractive after tests had shown that it was an outstanding location to eavesdrop on radio communications transmitted from the Far East, chiefly Japan. Bainbridge Island had one of six netted naval sites from August 1939 to March 1953.

The U.S. Army abandoned all operations in 1958. Fort Ward Estates or Virdell Corporation purchased much of the property when the military decommissioned the Fort. Fenton (Red) Jacobsen bought the Firehouse in 1959 and renovated the building into his family's home. The Jacobsen family resided here until 1999, when the property was purchased by Caroline Flohr. The present owners, Arthur and Suzane Bartel, purchased the property from Caroline Flohr in July 2003.

Of the twenty buildings from the days when Fort Ward was a functioning military fort, the firehouse is one of the few remaining permanent buildings.

- ii. Embodies the distinctive architectural characteristics of a type, period, style, or method of design or construction, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;

Applicant: The applicant indicated on the historic property register nomination application that the property met this criterion.

Staff Analysis: The firehouse does embody the distinctive architectural characteristics of a type, period, style or method of design or construction as even though modified, the blueprints for the original firehouse were used for all military firehouses built around the Puget Sound during the early 1900's.

The building has been altered through the years, yet it still embodies the architectural characteristics of the original firehouse. Alterations include the addition of shed roof wings on the east and west side of the building. Early pictures of the firehouse show a single gable roof structure without the shed roof wings. It is believed that the military added the wings because when Fenton Jacobsen purchased the property (1950's), the wings were attached.

The gable roof is believed to have historically and presently been made of slate. The watch tower follows the blueprint plans. The garage doors have been changed out over the years. Specifically, the wooden fire doors were changed out to roll-up garage doors on the south side of the building, the east side door was replaced with a large glass window and the west side door remains in place.

- iii. Is an outstanding work of a designer, builder or architect who has made a substantial contribution to the art.

This criteria is not applicable.

- iv. Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the city's cultural, special, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, or architectural history;

Applicant: The applicant indicated on the historic property register nomination application that the property met this criterion.

Staff: Staff finds that the firehouse reflects special elements of the city's cultural and economic history because of the firehouse's place in the history of Fort Ward and specifically, its use by the United States military during World War I and II (see criteria i above for more detail).

- v. Is associated with the lives of persons significant in national, state, or local history;

Applicant: The applicant indicated on the historic property register nomination application that the property met this criterion.

Staff: Staff finds that this criteria is not applicable. The applicant's indicated that the first individual owner after the military decommissioned the fort was Fenton D "Red" Jacobsen. He was a logger and a professional scavenger. He is not distinctly known for his significance in national, state or local history.

- vi. Has yielded or may be likely to yield important archaeological information related to history or prehistory;

Applicant: The applicant indicated on the historic property register nomination application that the property met this criterion

Staff: Staff finds that this criteria is not applicable.

- vii. Is a building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the only surviving structure significantly associated with an historic person or event;

This criteria is not applicable.

- viii. Is a birthplace or grave of an historical figure of outstanding importance;

This criteria is not applicable.

- ix. Is a cemetery which derives its primary significance from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events, or cultural patterns;

This criteria is not applicable.

- x. Is a reconstructed building that has been executed in an historically accurate manner on the original site;

This criteria is not applicable.

- xi. Is a creative and unique example of folk architecture and design created by persons not formally trained in the architectural or design professions, and which does not fit into formal architectural or historical categories;

This criteria is not applicable.

- xii. Is listed on the National Register or the State Register.

Staff: The property is listed on the United States Department of the Interior National Register of Historic Places. Fort Ward Historic District was posted on the National Register of Historic Places on January 12, 1978. The areas of significance were military and architecture. The periods of significance noted were 1875-1899 and 1900-1924. This firehouse is identified as "Building 14" and was found to be a "contributing resource" that was constructed in 1912.

II. Conclusions

The Fort Ward Firehouse is significantly associated with the architecture of the community, it has physical integrity, it is at least 50 years old and meets the first, second and fourth criteria;

Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state, or local history; and

Embodies the distinctive architectural characteristics of a type, period, style, or method of design or construction, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; and

Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the city's cultural, special, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, or architectural history.

This application for nomination is consistent with the Historic Preservation Program standards contained in BIMC Chapter 18.76. Appropriate notice of public meeting was published. The application is properly before the Commission.

III. Appeal Procedures

This decision by the Director may be appealed to the Hearing Examiner in accordance with the procedures set forth in BIMC Chapter 2.16.