



Historic Preservation Commission Public Hearing Agenda

Meeting Time: 7:30 PM

Meeting Called to Order

Statement of Adequate Notice

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided under “The Open Public Meeting Act of New Jersey” by advertisement published in the Home News Tribune, on the City of South Amboy website, and by posting on the information board at City Hall.

Roll Call (Holly to call all members):

Holly Hughes, Joseph Szaro, Jerry Pizzillo, James Cleary, Michael Reilly, Robert Paulukiewicz, and Dedrah Parisen

Swear in two new board members:

Robert Paulukiewicz and Dedrah Parisen

Brief Overview of Hearing Process

- Introduce Item for discussion
- Ask person(s) who submitted the application to present the case for appropriateness of the proposed designation
- Open it up to public testimony/questions
- Open it up to Commissioner questions
- Close hearing with a vote to close
- Commissioners will then discuss (public and submission team will still be able listen, but they will no longer be able to speak)
- After Commissioners discussion, a vote will take place and be recorded
- The formal findings/report will be sent to the Mayor and City Council, including our recommendations

Item for Discussion:

This building is the Independence Fire Company Firehouse, located at 127 N. Broadway Block 47; Lot 4. An Arts and Crafts style Firehouse building built in 1924. The application is to propose the designation of the building as an Individual Landmark.

Introduction of Applicant:

Mary Szaro, President of the Historical Society of South Amboy

Open to the Public

Commissioner Questions

Close Hearing/Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Vote (Chair to call on each commissioner for their vote)

End of Meeting

Please be advised that while City Hall is closed to the public, the Planning/Zoning Board will be conducting regularly scheduled meetings by remote access in accordance with the requirements set forth by the Governor of the State of New Jersey.

To participate in this meeting by computer, tablet, or smartphone, click on the following meeting link, or go to <https://www.gotomeet.me/CityOfSouthAmboy> and enter the Access Code:

Historic Preservation Commission
Tuesday, February 2, 2021
7:30 PM

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3311](tel:+18722403311)

Access Code: 426-575-773

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***Application for Landmark Designation to
The Historic Preservation Commission of South Amboy***

Independence Fire Company Firehouse, South Amboy

In accordance with the Historic Preservation Ordinance of the City of South Amboy¹, your consideration is requested for this application for landmark designation for the Independence Fire Company Firehouse, 127 N Broadway, South Amboy, NJ with inclusion in the Local Register of Historic Places based on its historic significance and public recognition of historical value.

An application has also been submitted to the State Register of Historic Places, although actual nomination to, a finding of eligibility for or listing on the National or State Register of Historic Places is not necessary for the provisions of this article to take effect once a property has been designated as significant by the Commission². The information provided to the State Register of Historic Places will be included in this application to demonstrate that all elements of the required criteria have been met and to establish that this building is worthy of designation based on a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, the lives of persons significant in our past, .. and is of particular historic significance to the City of South Amboy by reflecting or exemplifying the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the community³.

Detailed information will be provided to prove the criteria has been met for both the National Register Criteria (from the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966⁴) as well as the Historic Preservation Ordinance of the City of South Amboy, based on the following elements:

- The structure has retained as integrity either in original workmanship, materials, design, setting or association
- The structure is fifty (50) or more years old
- The structure has historical importance based on
 - heritage or cultural characteristic of the community
 - associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history
 - associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community, and may have yielded or may be likely to yield information on recorded history

¹ South Amboy, New Jersey, Municipal Code §11-2017.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ NHPA; Public Law 89-665; 54 U.S.C. 300101 *et seq.*

The proposal and application to designate this property is submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission by the Historical Society of South Amboy as an organization with a recognized interest in historic preservation⁵ and will include one or more photographs, the tax lot and block number of the property as designated on the Official Tax Map of the City and a physical description and statement of significance and proposed utilization of the site⁶

Prepared by: Mary Szaro
President, The Historical Society of South Amboy
141N Broadway
South Amboy, NJ 08879
Email: mdszaro@gmail.com
Home Phone: 732-727-3375
Date Prepared: February 28, 2020

Of note, examples of buildings include administration buildings, church, city or town hall, courthouse, firehouse, garage, hotel, house, library, office building, post office, school, social hall, store, train station, etc.⁷.

The following information has also been provided to the NJ State Register of Historic Places as part of the application for consideration for this property:

The purpose of this application is to seek public recognition of historic value under eligibility that the property is at least 50 years old and possesses “integrity” from the period during which it earned its significance, with a high degree of retention of features which convey a strong sense of its historic qualities.

In accordance with the National Register Criteria (from the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended), this documents the quality of significance of the property to show it meets the following:

- Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of the past
- Association with the lives of persons significant in the past
- Yielding information important in history

The following elements are included for your review as requested:

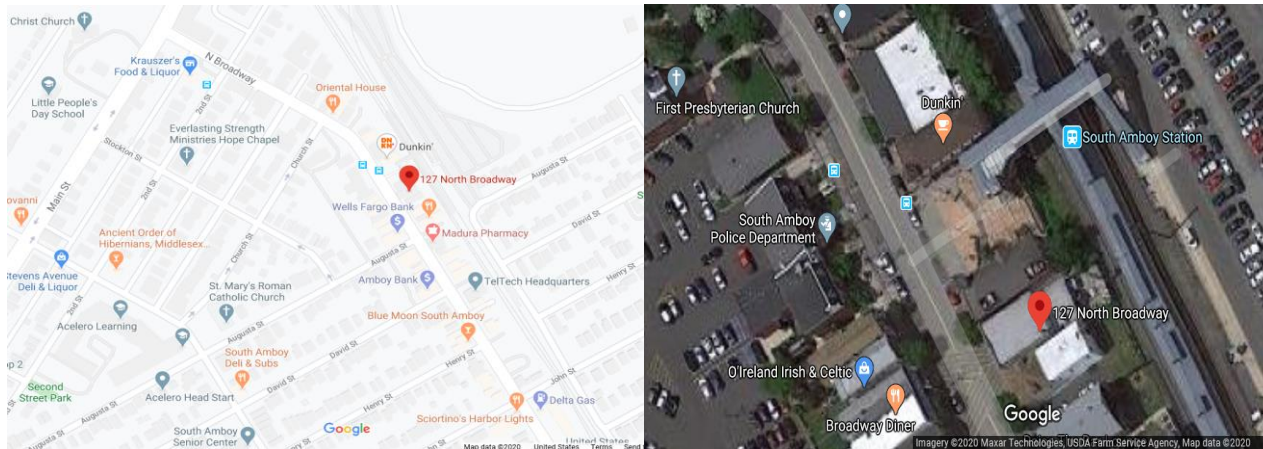
1. The Preliminary Application Questionnaire
2. A map showing the precise location of the property
3. Current photographs of the resource (interior and exterior)
4. Historical information that:
 - a. Identifies the National Register Criteria that the property meets and the area of significance that corresponds to each criteria
 - b. Sketches the arguments that support each area of significance to be later demonstrated
 - c. The historical association of the property (owners and occupants, how they have shaped the property)
 - d. Descriptive information to address any integrity issues not covered in provided photos

⁵ Ibid.

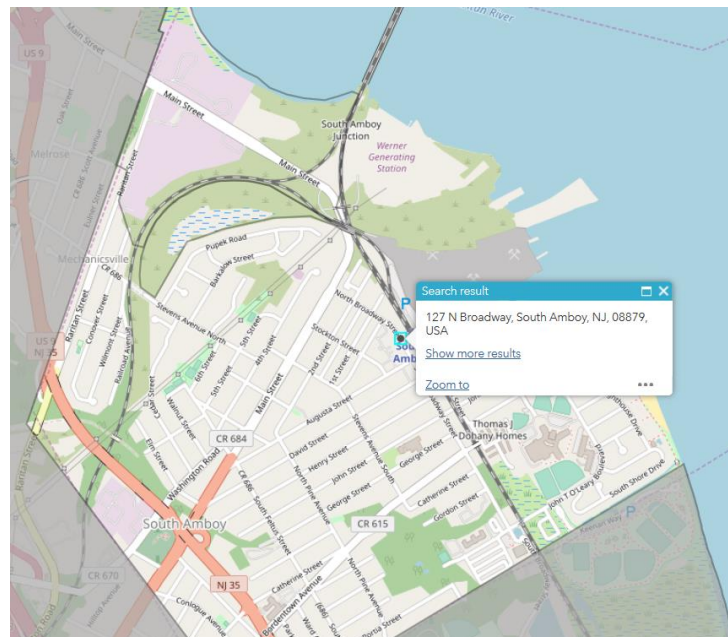
⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

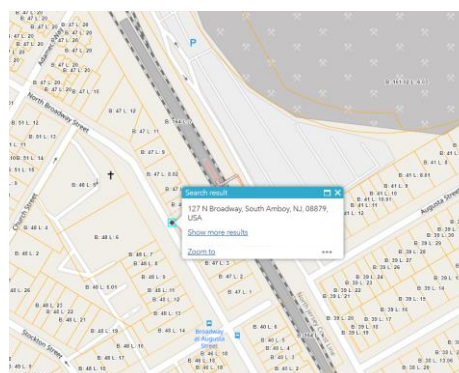
A map showing the precise location of the property (google maps, taken 2/18/2020)



The tax lot and block number of the property as designated on the Official Tax Map of the City



(<http://cse.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d13a4a3263f64fba9d90ada3cee9767b>: accessed 28Feb2020)



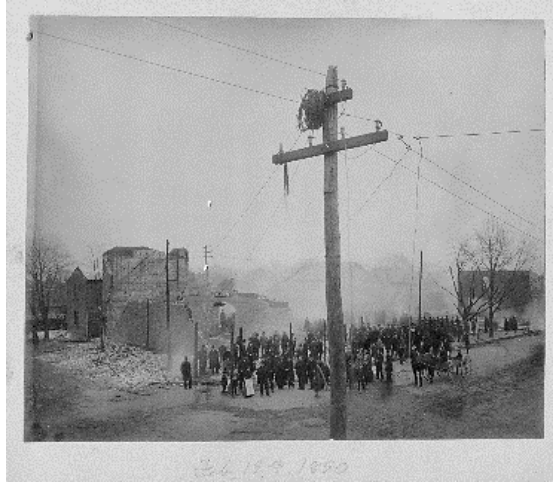
Current photographs of the resource, interior and exterior (taken by applicant)



Historical information/Timeline:

Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of the past

February 19, 1890 Devastating fire in South Amboy



Prior to the fire in 1890, the Borough of South Amboy had a volunteer fire company known as the "Goodwill Company," organized and supported almost solely by a local gentleman named Joseph Capner. The only apparatus of the time available to fight fires was small pump that was wheeled in the manner of a wheel barrow and operated by two men at the handles of the pump. As a huge fire raged in the early morning hours of February 19, 1890, this early and unsophisticated method was no match for the powerful flames that would ultimately burn down an entire section of Broadway known as the "Howell Block" and cause excessive financial damage to businesses and residents. Thankfully, there was no loss of life, but by noon that day all that was left were the smoldering ruins seen in the photo. It became clear that a fire company was desperately needed.

May 31, 1890 Creation of Independence as the first formal fire company in South Amboy.

Historic marker pending for Independence Engine and Hose Company #1

At approximately 8:00 p.m. on Memorial Day, May 31, 1890, following a meeting by a group of men gathered just below the railroad tracks on lower Augusta St. at the Rippowan Hotel, the formation of the first Fire Company in South Amboy was announced and named the Independence Engine & Hose Co. #1.

Earlier that year on February 19th, a devastating fire destroyed the buildings of the Howell Block on Broadway between David and Henry Street. Also prompted by the fire, on June 2, 1890 a second group met and the Enterprise Hook & Ladder Company was permanently organized with both companies sharing this space until 1993 with the construction of a new firehouse on lower George Street for Enterprise.

At a joint meeting held on December 8, 1890 between Enterprise and Independence, John Dykes was unanimously elected to become the first Fire Chief of the South Amboy Fire Department, with the first firemen's parade held in this city on August 17, 1891.

In 1924, with the original building showing significant signs of age and decline, plans for a new firehouse were in motion. In June the work of removing the old firehouse was finished and by August the new firehouse was rapidly nearing completion, pushed by the contractor John J. Ryan to accommodate the new Mac apparatus expected to be received in the coming weeks.

Association with the lives of persons significant in the past

Perhaps the most significant person in the past who was associated with the Independence Firehouse is Governor Harold Giles Hoffman, who was born in South Amboy, NJ in 1896.

Hoffman held the office of City Treasurer of South Amboy from 1920-1925, served in the State House of Assembly in 1923 and 1924, and as Mayor of South Amboy in 1925 and 1926.

He served as Governor of New Jersey from January 15, 1935, to January 18, 1938, during the time of the Lindbergh kidnapping trial, and he interviewed the condemned kidnapper Bruno Hauptmann at the death house in Trenton, NJ.

A veteran serving in both WWI and WWII, he was discharged in 1946 with the rank of colonel.

Hoffman died in New York City June 4, 1954 and was buried in Christ Church Cemetery, South Amboy, N.J. His local obituary records his service as a volunteer fireman with the Independence Engine and Hose Company, with members marching in the funeral procession.



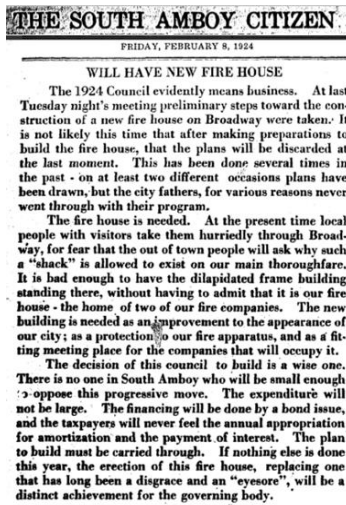
There are countless more distinguished local residents who have served this city in political roles, as veterans and heroes of multiple wars who have belonged to this firehouse over the years. Additionally, there are many legacy members currently volunteering with grandfathers and great-grandfathers who have helped make this firehouse the historic treasure it is, where generations of family memories have been made and shared for almost one hundred years.

Sketches the arguments that support each area of significance to be later demonstrated

On behalf of the Historical Society of South Amboy, consideration of historic designation is requested for the Independence Firehouse, 127 N Broadway, South Amboy, NJ. This building has held notable significance to the residence of this small town for almost one hundred years now. It sits across the street from the City Hall/Police Station and a few doors down from the entrance of the local railroad station. As a central landmark, located on the City's major thoroughfare of Broadway, it is perhaps one of the oldest standing continuous use structures in South Amboy, with numerous residents and visitors passing by daily. Sadly, many historic relics and building are gone or have been lost to time which is why this property is critical in a city rich in history with the only historically designated structure listed to date being the Great Beds Lighthouse. The designation of this property is long overdue and absolutely merited.

The original firehouse, a frame building, with the earliest found reference on the Sanborn map of 1901 on Broadway, served as the fire house to the first formally established fire company in the City of South Amboy. Independence shared this building with Enterprise Hook & Ladder Company, the second fire company formed in 1890, until 1993 when a new building was built to accommodate a new snorkel firetruck.

The original structure deteriorated over the years and by 1924 the city would finally build a new firehouse on the original site following demolition of the old building. The new brick building still proudly stands and displays an emblem capturing the completion date of 1924 on the front façade.

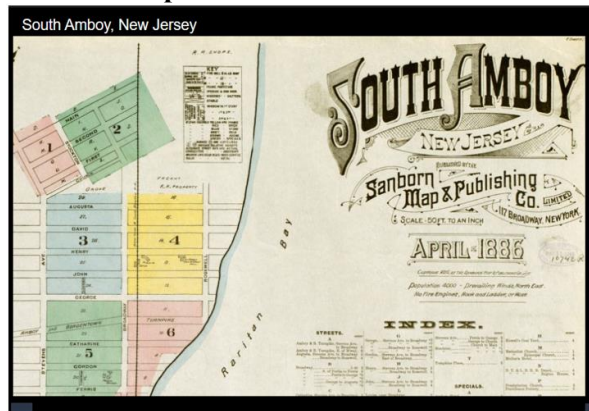


The historical association of the property has been consistent with the city (previously the Borough) as owners, and the fire company/companies as the only occupants who have shaped the property since inception. As volunteers, they have courageously fought fires and celebrated local and family events from this beloved firehouse for generations. It is still very much a family gathering place for many of the current volunteer firemen today who pass on the tradition to their families. Plaques on the wall remember the names of past captains and chiefs dating back to the early part of the 20th century.

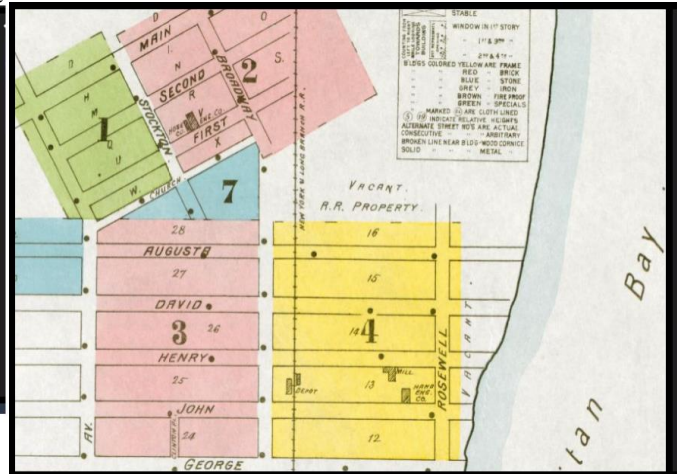
An interesting record of the Independence Company is that three members of one family have served as Fire Chiefs. In 1926 Michael J. Leonard headed the South Amboy Fire Department and later so did two of his sons, Francis and William.

(No apparent structural or integrity issues observed at this time other than normal wear & tears of age)

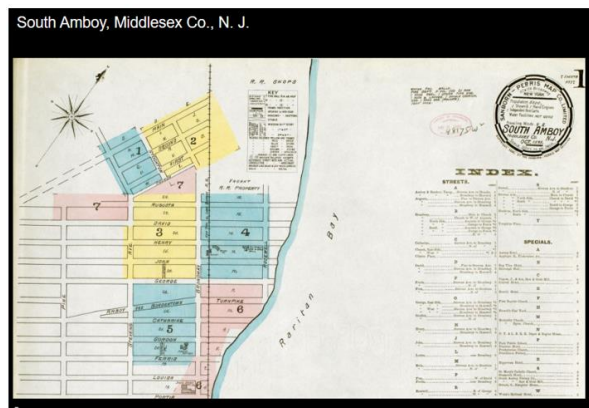
Sanborn Map 1886 - No firehouse on Broadway.



"Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps," South Amboy, Middlesex, NJ, April 1886. (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., Limited, 1886), index, digital images, Princeton University Library (<https://maps.princeton.edu/catalog/princeton-k643b329t> : accessed 28 February 2020).



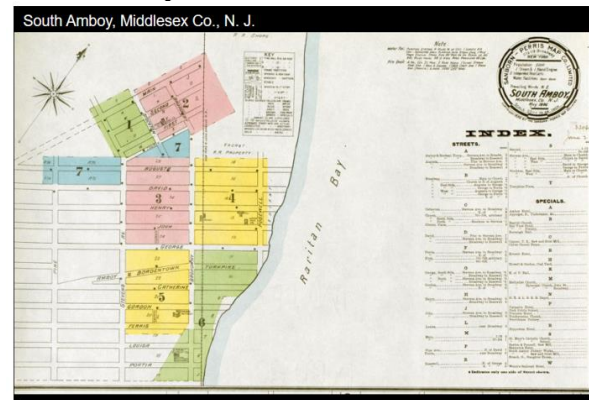
Sanborn Map 1891 - No firehouse on Broadway.



"Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps," South Amboy, Middlesex, NJ, April 1891. (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., Limited, 1891), index, digital images, Princeton University Library (<https://maps.princeton.edu/catalog/princeton-k643b329t> : accessed 28 February 2020).



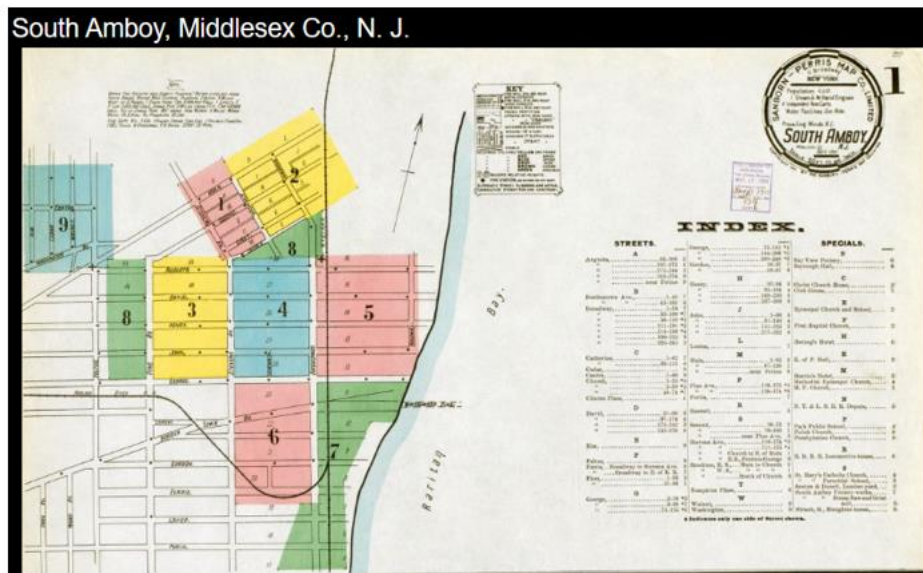
Sanborn Map 1896 - No firehouse on Broadway



"Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps," South Amboy, Middlesex, NJ, April 1896. (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., Limited, 1896), index, digital images, Princeton University Library (<https://maps.princeton.edu/catalog/princeton-k643b329t> : accessed 28 February 2020).



Sanborn Map - 1901 Chemical Engine & Hose Company - Broadway



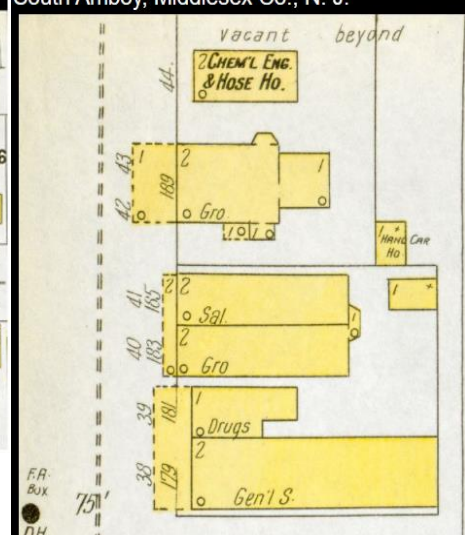
"*Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*," South Amboy, Middlesex, NJ, April 1910. (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., Limited, 1901), index, digital images, Princeton University Library (<https://maps.princeton.edu/catalog/princeton-k643b329t> : accessed 28 February 2020).

South Amboy, Middlesex Co., N. J.

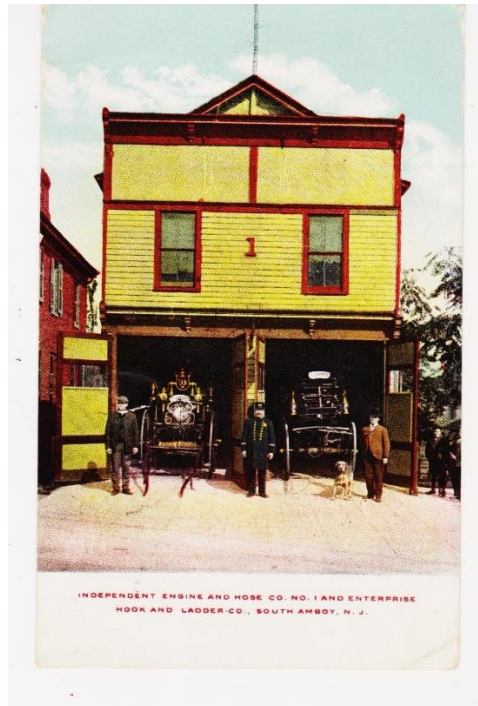


"*Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*," South Amboy, Middlesex, NJ, April 1910. (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., Limited, 1901), Sheet 5, digital images, Princeton University Library (<https://maps.princeton.edu/catalog/princeton-k643b329t>: accessed 28 February 2020).

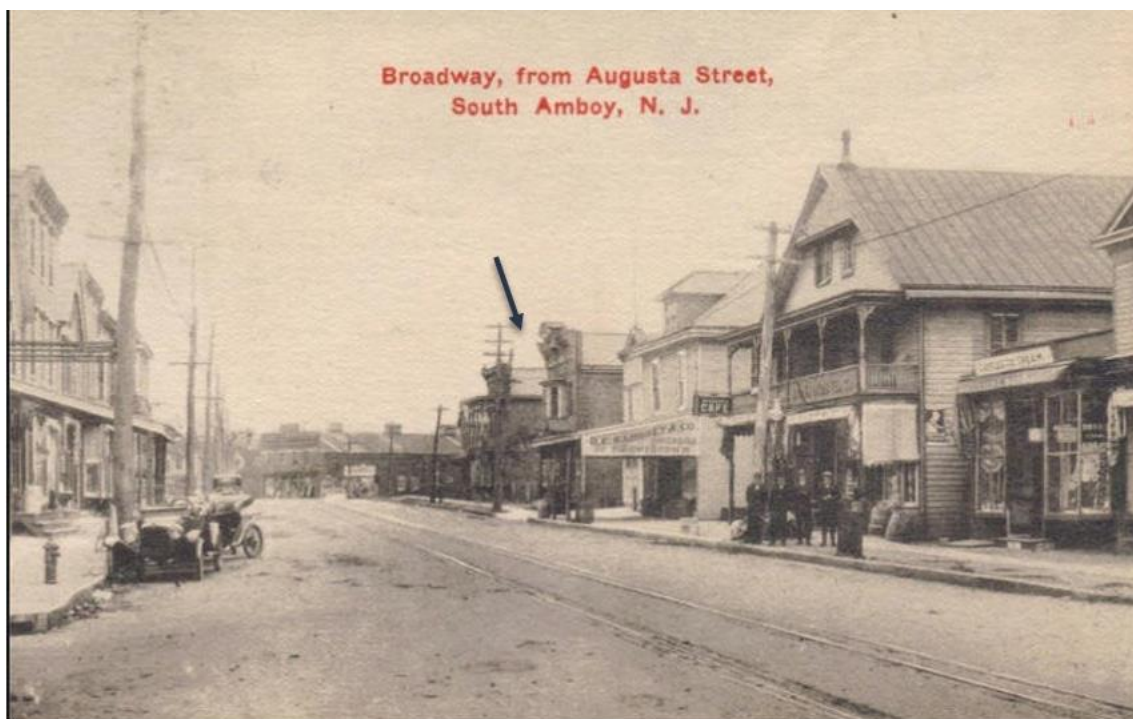
South Amboy, Middlesex Co., N. J.



Historic photos (dates unknown)



Historic photos (dates unknown)



Way, Way Back When



This is an old picture of North Broadway in South Amboy, believed to be taken back in the 1920's. Notice the Independence Fire Company on the left? (Photo submitted)

Application 1
Independence Fire Company Firehouse
127 N. Broadway
Block 47, Lot 4

Description of Item

An Arts and Crafts style Firehouse building built in 1924. Application is to propose the designation of the building as an Individual Landmark.

Decision from Commissioners

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the Independence Fire Company Firehouse has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of South Amboy.

The Commission further finds:

- that among its important qualities, the Independence Fire Company Firehouse has served as a continuously operated Firehouse since 1924;
- that it is the city's earliest surviving Firehouse;
- that it is an early and important reminder of the development along Broadway in the early 20th century;
- that notable figures, including the Governor of New Jersey, Harold G Hoffman, volunteered for Independence Fire Company Firehouse;
- that the building was altered to accommodate modern, larger firefighting equipment;
- and that Independence Fire Company Firehouse remains mostly intact since 1924 with small modifications.