

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name FIRE BARN 5  
other names/site number Fire Station 5

### 2. Location

street & number 533 St. Charles Road  not for publication  
city, town Elgin  vicinity  
state Illinois code IL county Kane code 089 zip code 60120

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		sites
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		structures
			objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register none

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

William C. Wheeler, SHPO Signature of certifying official 6-21-91 Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/Fire Station

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/fire Station

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick

wood

roof asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheets.

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Fire Barn 5

Fire Barn 5 is an example of the Classical Revival style of architecture. The rectangular-shaped building is sited on a pie-shaped piece of property with the narrow end of the building facing the juncture of two streets, Arlington and St. Charles. The barn is constructed of blonde brick with contrasting red brick belt courses at window lintel lines, and quoins. It has double-hung windows. The roof is hipped with an extended overhang and has dormers on three sides. The bell tower is a domed cupola.

The most prominent facade is the south entrance facade due to the juncture of the streets. The lower level consists of a large overhead apparatus door and a window on the east side. (A smaller hinged original door and a personnel door were replaced to accommodate the larger equipment now in use.) The two stories are separated by a cast iron I beam with medallions. The upper story of the structure has a projecting three-sided bay window with leaded glass in the upper sash of the center window. It is flanked by a double hung window on either side.

The bay projects up into the attic space of the third floor, forming a dormer. With panels on each side of the bay, a symmetrical look is achieved. The dormer window has a diamond tracery pattern which is reflected in other dormer windows throughout the building.

The east (side) facade has a symmetrical Classical Revival look. From this perspective the cupola is most noticeable; however, the predominant feature is that of the central semi-circular window. This feature is composed of a semi-circular window opening with brick fluted pilasters. The pilasters support a decorative frieze which includes an inscription and acanthus leaves. A stone cornice is above this frieze. The window is stained glass. Under the window are three recessed brick panels. On either side of the semi-circular window there are two windows evenly spaced. The near-perfect symmetry is offset by a chimney to the south and a corresponding dormer to the north. Also a half-sized window immediately to the north and a door on the north end differ from the two windows on the south. There is a double window directly above the window feature and a dormer directly above it.

The cupola sits on a square base. It is constructed of wooden arches with railings. The cupola is octagonal shaped and has a faceted domed roof.

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The west (side) facade is similar to the east side, but it has a two-story bay as its central feature. The bilateral symmetry of the west facade is nearly perfect with a half window just north of the bay being shorter than the rest. The outer edges of the bay have an interlaced brick pattern exposing the ends of the brick. The first story of the bay consists of recessed brick panels which are not quite the height of the windows on the lower level. Just above the central recessed brick panel is a stone panel with "FIRE DEPT" in raised lettering. The main window on the bay is juxtaposed between the first and second story. This window is a fanlight with a double hung window below it. Above the fanlight is a brick arch with an unusual narrow extended keystone which terminates at the overhang. On either side of the bay there are two windows evenly spaced.

Atop the bay is a large Palladian dormer with a finial above the arched window. The diamond tracery is carried on through these windows as well as the other dormer to the north and south of the Palladian window dormer.

The north (rear) facade first story consists of smaller windows that have arched brick hoods over them with extended keystones. There is a haymow opening on the second floor that is flanked by two massive brackets that serve as supports for a projecting door into the attic. This door breaks the cornice and soffit line and extends up beyond the roof. The keystone of the lintel is missing. A hoist projects out above this opening. Another semicircular arch and cornice is above this door and is similar to the dormer on the west facade.

Currently there is a non-conforming 1989 addition to the north side of the building that houses an ambulance. The wooden garage addition is attached to the main structure by a former door opening. This structure will be removed when the Fire Department of the City of Elgin vacates the property, tentatively in 1991.

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When you enter through the main apparatus bay, you are in a large room that is about four-fifths the length of the entire structure. The walls are lath and plaster; the wood trim is painted oak. In 1926 due to the deterioration of the tin ceiling, the rusting tin ceiling was removed and replaced by lath and plaster. Throughout the the first floor of the building is pine flooring. This floor appears much like it would have when it was built, although it has been replaced a few times. The rear of the first floor is now a kitchen area and is blocked off by a wooden panelled wall. The kitchen has a dropped ceiling and linoleum tiled floor. A door on the north wall connects the temporary passageway to the garage structure. The kitchen area, as well as part of the apparatus bay, was originally stalls in the tack room. About halfway down the east wall is the semi-circular window. You can notice the gold and purple colors of the glass from this vantage point. The brass fire pole is south of the window. There are radiators used for heat on this floor, as well as a set of several pipes on the west wall. There is an oak staircase on the west wall, which leads to the second floor living quarters, and a door to the basement next to it. At one time the entire ceiling was tin, but this has since been removed.

The basement is as long as the entire structure. It has a stone foundation, a finished concrete floor, and one wood wall which runs parallel to the length of the building. This wall is only about half as long as the building and was probably used to separate the coal storage area from the rest of the basement. A small lavatory has also been added at this level. If you look toward the ceiling at the south end of the building, you see steel beams added to support the first motorized fire truck.

The second story houses the living quarters. At the southern end of this story is the "Captain's office." The overall length of this room is about ten feet. The room to the north, which adjoins through a centrally located door, is the dormitory which is fifteen feet long. There is a hole in the floor for the brass pole.

The next adjoining room is the "locker room." It is connected by an opening that at one time contained pocket doors. The south wall also sports a built-in bookcase with glass doors. The west wall is now enclosed (probably during the 1930's.) There is a door that connects to the staircase. The north wall has wooden lockers original to the building and two doorways, one of which leads to a restroom and another to the "loft room."

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The loft room has tongue-and-groove horizontal boards on the south and east walls. The outside walls have been finished with dry wall. The north wall has a door which was used as a hayloft opening. There is a door on the east wall which leads to a small storage room, was used for grain storage.

The third story is unfinished except for the floor. There are exposed beams for the walls and ceiling. There is an entrance to the cupola.

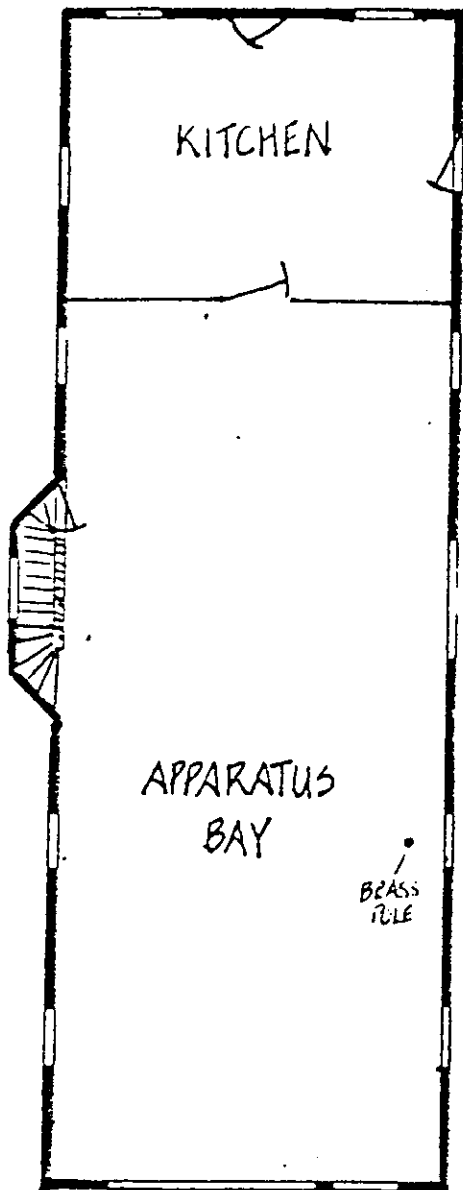
The inside of the cupola contains signatures of some of the turn-of-the-century firefighters from Elgin.

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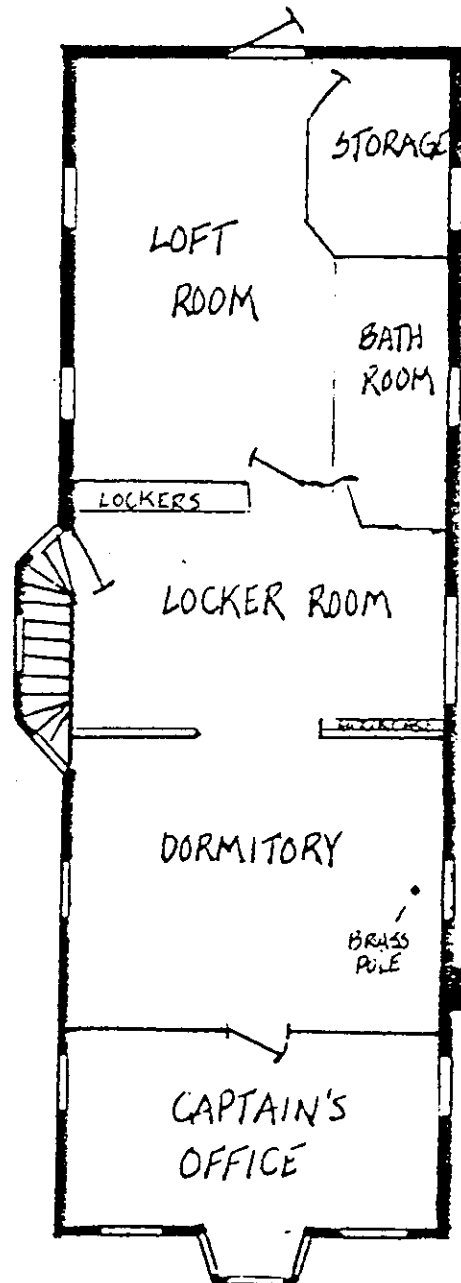
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Fire Barn 5



GROUND FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

FIRE BARN 5  
ELGIN, IL

Scale 1"=10'

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Government  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1903 - 1933  
1939 - 1941  
1903 - architecture

Significant Dates

1903  
1941  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hoag, Smith  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.



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Fire Barn 5 meets Criterion A for listing on the National Register of historic places. It is significant locally because of its association with the history of the government of the City of Elgin. Fire Barn 5 was built to accommodate a perceived future need for fire protection on the southeast side of town. The City of Elgin expanded its boundaries and, as it expanded, the need for greater fire protection was of utmost importance. It is also significant in Criterion C because of the architecture of the structure. Fire Barn 5 is a structure that is representative of turn-of-the-century fire barns. Fire Barn 5 was the most elaborate and expensive of all the fire barns built in Elgin during this era. The periods of significance for Fire Barn 5 are 1903 to 1933 and 1939 to 1941. The latter date was arbitrarily set at the fifty year mark. The period between 1933 and 1939 marks a period when the structure was closed as a municipal cost-cutting measure.

In the late 1830's Elgin was settled by two brothers, James T. and Hezekiah Gifford. They chose the site for their town along the Fox River which they believed would be an excellent mill site. In conjunction with another settler, Joseph Kimball, a dam was built on the Fox River. James Gifford built a flour mill on the east bank while Kimball built a sawmill on the west bank.

These early settlers had a great deal of foresight and saw that Chicago would someday be a most important Western city. They chose Elgin as a logical place to settle between Chicago and the mining town of Galena. By the 1840's stores, churches, mills, inns and homes began to build up in the immediate area. An important phase in Elgin's development was the plotting of a road from Elgin to Chicago and then from Elgin to Belvidere. This led the way to more settlers and commerce.

By 1850 the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad was running, and Elgin's census totalled 2,359 inhabitants.

Elgin was incorporated in 1854. At that time the residents voted for a tax to support schools. Elgin's first municipal building was built in 1859. This was the first City Hall, which contained a courtroom, meeting rooms and a basement calaboose. Elgin became the main dairy supplier for Chicago during the '50's. By 1860 the population of Elgin had risen to 2,797.

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During the 1860's Elgin experienced a major growth in industry. The National Watch Factory, the Gail Borden Condensing Company, the creameries and the Elgin Board of Trade were all major employers for the influx of new people. Elgin was becoming a factory town.

City services began in the late 1860's with the formation of a Fire Department. The cost of insurance was the major impetus for the department as well as building codes. A new courthouse was built in 1869. Over the next twenty years the growth in population from 5,431 in 1870 to 17,723 in 1890 closely paralleled growths in City services. Public utilities included The Elgin Gas Light Company established 1870, Sanitation Department, 1873, telephones, 1881, and electricity in 1883.

The most important City service, as it relates to the Fire Department, was the city's waterworks which allowed for ample water and pressure to fight fires.

Elgin experienced the Depression of the 1890's, as much of the rest of the country did. However, the 1900's brought on prosperity. Wages increased and building once again boomed. This prosperity is reflected in the architecture of Fire Barn 5 built in 1903.

The Fire Department history closely parallels the growth of Elgin's population.

In July of 1865 the business district of Elgin consisted of many closely spaced wooden buildings. These buildings housed everything from blacksmiths to lawyers, and when they were constructed, no consideration was given to fire protection.

Early in the morning of July 15, 1865, a fire broke out in the very heart of the business district, and due to the fact that there was no Fire Department, the fire consumed nearly two full blocks. There was no wind, and a heavy rain extinguished the fire before it could spread any further.

The City Council wanted to prevent another disaster and began to organize and equip a fire company almost immediately after the fire. A hand pump fire engine was ordered from Cowing & Co., cost was \$700. Hose was purchased from Joseph Kennedy & Co., for \$541.95. George W. Renwick was appointed Fire Chief, and he was instructed to organize a fire company.

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When the fire apparatus arrived, it didn't meet the expectations of the City Council and was returned in April of 1866.

By October of 1866 the City Council began their second attempt at forming a fire department. An ordinance was created providing for the organization of a Hook & Ladder Company. A hand-drawn Hook & Ladder truck was purchased from a local wagon maker named J. T. de Remer for the sum of \$400. Other needed equipment including rubber buckets, pike poles, axes, ladders, lanterns, torches, and speaking trumpets were purchased. Finally, on the night of September 16, 1867, a volunteer company called the Elgin Hook & Ladder Co., was formed, and officers were elected by the men.

The first fire station was finished in February of 1868. This building cost \$325 and served as a place for storage of all fire equipment as well as a meeting place for the Hook & Ladder Company. The station was equipped with a tower and bell which was used to sound the alarm when a fire broke out. This building has since been demolished.

The Fire Company quickly became nothing but a social club, so the City Council appointed M. B. Baldwin Fire Chief and instructed him to organize the Hook & Ladder Company into a functional firefighting unit. The new Fire Chief got right to work. New officers were elected, regular meetings were held, regular drills were held and lack of attendance was not tolerated. The company was quickly whipped into shape.

The first test of the Elgin Hook & Ladder Co. came on July 10, 1868. A fire broke out in a home on Ann Street at 2:00 a.m. The alarm was sounded at 2:15 a.m., but the Truck Co. could do nothing but protect surrounding property. The house was a total loss.

On July 8, 1868, Mayor Joseph Teft addressed the City Council on the subject of purchasing a steam fire engine. The Mayor had consulted several insurance agents and surmised that the citizens of Elgin could collectively save about \$5,200 per year in insurance premiums if the city had a good steam fire engine and an efficient Fire Department. The City Council appointed a committee to look into the matter. On April 24, 1869, the proposal from H. C. Silsby was accepted, and Elgin purchased a Silsby third class steam fire engine and two hose reels with hose for \$8,475.

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The James T. Gifford Engine Co. was formed to man the hand-drawn steam engine and the Ed Joslyn Hose Co. was formed to man the hand drawn hose reels. The addition of these two companies to the ladder company formed the core of a volunteer fire department which would protect the city into the 1890's.

Through the years as the city grew and as new ideas in firefighting were developed, other volunteer companies were formed. The George S. Bowen Extinguisher Co. had a hand-drawn truck which had two racks of Babcock chemical fire extinguishers. The men from the company would carry the extinguishers on their backs into a fire and attempt to extinguish the fire with the soda/acid charge. The Excelsior Hose Co. was established when a pump was attached to the water wheel of a mill in the manufacturing district. The T. M. Avery Extinguisher Co. was formed by the employees of the Elgin National Watch Co. when the Watch Co. purchased a Chemical Engine for use in their factory as well as the surrounding area.

Water supply was always a problem. When the steamer was purchased, water came from two sources. The first was the river, but the river wasn't always full and it could only be used in areas nearby. The other source of water came from a series of large cisterns which were constructed at numerous intersections throughout town. The cistern system was not totally dependable, however, because each tank could only hold about 30,000 gallons of water. This situation was helped somewhat in 1875 when pipe was laid from the pump at Excelsior Mills to several important retail and manufacturing areas, and hydrants were installed. In 1877 the Illinois Condensing Co. attached their pump to the rudimentary system and further expanded the network of pipe.

The Mutual Hose Co. was formed in 1880 to protect Elgin's growing west side. This was the first and only volunteer company on the west side of Elgin. The formation of the west side hose company coincided with the installation of a fire pump at Richard's Mill and the laying of several hundred feet of pipe and the placement of hydrants.

In 1882 the city purchased a team of horses which were to be used by city crews within the fire limits as well as for hauling the heavy fire engine to fires. Prior to this, teams were obtained from nearby stables when the

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alarm of fire was sounded. The city team quickly came to be as much of a delay as renting horses because the horses were often far away working when needed.

In 1883 the city purchased a 3 Champion Chemical Engine which required a team to pull it. In 1885 a large tiller hook & ladder truck was purchased, and it, too, required a team. In 1886 a large four-wheeled hose reel was purchased and required one horse.

By 1887 the city owned the required horses to pull all of its apparatus. Now that the city had horses they needed someone to care for them as well as someone competent to handle them while making the dangerous run to fires in front of hundreds of pounds of fire apparatus. The beginning of the end for the volunteers came when drivers were hired as full-timers.

With the hiring of drivers came the disbanding of all the volunteer companies and the organization of the department. The newly organized department consisted of six companies, the Hook & Ladder Co. #1, the James T. Gifford Engine Co. #1, Chemical Co. #1, and Hose Co. #1, #2, and #3.

At the time of the reorganization there were three city-owned fire stations. One had housed the volunteer company on the west side. The second was the original Truck House. The third was the station which was built to house the steam engine just after it arrived. All three stations were too small and had no facilities to house the firemen who were now required to stay with their apparatus around the clock.

The city constructed two new buildings which then housed the whole department. Station 1 was constructed on the site of the old truck house. It opened January 19, 1889. Station 2, was constructed on the west side on Chicago Street, one-half block from State Street. It was opened on October 2, 3 1891. When Station 2 opened, the department was again reorganized. The companies were Hook & Ladder #1, Chemical Co. #1, Hose Co. #1, and Hose Co. #2.

Two other projects which led to the full-time department were begun in 1888. These were the waterworks and the Gamewell Fire Alarm system. The waterworks, which is still in use today, provided the adequate water supply needed to fight large fires and the Gamewell provided a reliable system for notification of the fire department.

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During the late 1880's and early 1890's pipemen and officers were slowly added to the companies, and the "callmen" or volunteers were phased out. The last callman quit in 1893, and the Elgin Fire Department has been full-time ever since.

As the city grew, the need for fire protection also grew. Fire Barns 3 and 4 were constructed in 1896. They were constructed at the same time and were mirror images of each other. Fire Barn 3 was at Duncan and Dundee Avenues. Fire Barn 4 was at Van and Dubois. Both barns were built in anticipation of city growth in their direction. Both fire barns were equipped with horse-drawn apparatus.

The last station to be equipped with horse-drawn apparatus was Fire Barn 5. This fire barn is located at the intersection of Arlington and St. Charles. The lot was purchased from Thomas S. Wallin for the sum of \$800. At the same time, Mr. Wallin deeded the triangular lot to the south to the city with the condition that "...it shall be kept as open ground with the privilege of a driveway for the Fire Department only. No building or erection of any kind to be put thereon, or property stored or deposited there, but to be devoted to trees and grass and be maintained and controlled by the Fire Department as ornamental grounds connected with their building on Lot 5."<sup>1</sup>

The fire barn was designed by a local architect names Smith Hoag. It was by far the most attractive and elaborate fire barn to be constructed in Elgin for horse-drawn apparatus.

Contractors included Jacob Lind, mason, \$2,350; Seiger & Son, iron & carpentry, \$1,385; Wright & Foster, carpentry, \$1,993; James Scanlan, plumber, \$325; Hawthorn Hardware Co., steam heat, \$371; S. Hoag, plan, \$299. Total cost for the building was \$6,262. Total cost for both fire barns 3 and 4 together, only six years before, was \$7,737.

The fire barn was manned by Captain William Seyfarth, H. Mumme, driver, George Brown and Daniel O'Leary, pipemen. The apparatus was an 1896 all steel hose wagon built by the Fire Extinguisher Manufacturing Co. of Chicago.

Fire Barn 5 was located at Arlington and St. Charles because the city had grown much in that direction and fire protection in the new southeast wards

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was needed. Originally the fire barn was almost isolated, but the neighborhoods quickly grew out to and then past the station.

In 1905 a cement foundation and basin for a fountain were presented by Mr. T. S. Wallin. In warm weather fish were kept in the basin located in front of the south entrance to Fire Barn 5 in what is now a city park. During the winter months the fish were placed in the Lord's Park lagoon. The basin is now used as a flower bed.

Much of the Fire Department history revolved around the acquisition of new and motorized firefighting apparatus and equipment. On May 12, 1913, a Reo auto was put in service to replace the Chief's horse and buggy at a cost of \$1,000.

By 1913, in an annual report for the Fire Department, the Chief states that the exercising wagons need to be replaced. These wagons were used for exercising horses on a daily basis as well as hauling manure, dirt, supplies, etc. Occasionally these wagons would be used as hose wagons when a station's fire apparatus needed repairs. The horses, as well, were a topic of concern. Several of the department's horses were getting old or were sick. The Chief was having to travel great distances to find suitable animals and, when he found them, they were expensive. Maintenance of the animals was expensive. This was the first time documented that the Chief was calling for the replacement of hose wagons and horses with motorized apparatus.

The following year the Fire Chief again expressed his concern about the aging horses owned by the department. The Chief estimated that it took \$300 a year to maintain a pair of horses and only \$50 a year to maintain a motorized apparatus. The Chief stated that the horse-drawn apparatus was aging and would need to be replaced soon. He recommended the purchase of motorized apparatus and said that his auto was "a great advantage over a horse in getting to fires."<sup>2</sup>

In 1915 the first auto accident involving a Fire Department vehicle occurred. Chief Haible was responding to a fire alarm and collided with another auto. Both autos were badly damaged. The Chief was thrown from his auto. Not being seriously injured, he got into another car and went to the fire scene.

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By 1916 the Fire Chief's request for motorized apparatus was finally answered. Three motorized fire apparatus were put into service. Hose bodies and equipment were taken off the wagons and sent to Jacob Press & Sons, of Chicago, and placed on 1 ton Packard truck chassis. The cost was \$5,357.50 for the first two vehicles and \$3,072.50 for the third. There were no pumps on these apparatus. They carried a 40 gallon soda acid tank which was used for small fires, and the companies used hydrant pressure on their larger fires. Combination Company #1 was put into service February 29, 1916. Company #2 went into service April 26, 1916, and Company #5 went into service October 3, 1916. It was at this time that the horses were removed from Fire Barn 5.

To upgrade the efficiency of the firefighters, private telephone lines between stations were installed in 1919. This cut down the delay in contacting other stations caused by going through the central telephone office. These dedicated lines remained in use into the 1960's.

On October 9, 1920, the Fire Department put its Nash Quad in service at Station #3. This vehicle had all-wheel drive and all-wheel steering. The hose body and other fire equipment was added by Peter Pirsch & Sons of Kenosha, Wisconsin. This vehicle was purchased because of its ability to operate over the road leading to station #3, which was often too muddy to carry any other type of vehicle.

Elgin firefighters had their biggest test to date on May 28, 1920, when a tornado ripped through the Fox River Valley doing major damage to the City of Elgin. Power and telephone lines were down for many days. Firefighters were involved with emergency operations for days at a time, and initially many firefighters' families feared that the men might have been injured or perished because the firefighters were not at the stations and were unable to contact their families. Damage to the Fire Department buildings was limited to Stations #1 and #3 with only broken windows, downed chimneys and roof damage being reported.

On May 1, 1921, a reorganization of manpower occurred. A two platoon system was instituted. Four men were added to the department strength, and firefighters now worked a 24-hour shift with a 24-hour off shift. Manning the apparatus was three men on #1 and #2 hose companies and hook and ladder companies and two men on #3, #4, and #5 companies.



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On July 1, 1922, the Duty hook and ladder truck was put in service. The chassis was constructed by the ill-fated Duty Motor Company of Elgin. This chassis was the only one completed before the company folded. The fire equipment was added by Peter Pirsch & Sons of Kenosha, Wisconsin. It was with this addition that all of the horsedrawn equipment was phased out by the department.

In 1925 the city purchased its first pumper since the 1869 Silsby. This apparatus was a Reo chassis with a 300 gpm Hale pump. This pumper was purchased because the city water system was able to produce adequate volume but inadequate pressure in many parts of the city. The pumper once again became an integral part of firefighting in Elgin. By 1927 a 1927 American LaFrance triple combination 1000 gpm pumper was put in service. This was the first piece of motorized equipment which was built specifically as a fire apparatus for the Elgin Fire Department.

On January 18, 1928, the Elgin Fire Department experienced its first casualty of a firefighter in the line of duty. Emil Barth, a firefighter with less than one year on the job, fell off the tailboard of the 1927 LaFrance as it was backing to a hydrant during a fire. The engine backed over Barth and, as the rear tires rolled into a ditch, it crushed his chest. Barth died a few hours later at the hospital.

In 1928 the Fire Department began its formal care of injured people by taking possession of a medical device called an inhalator. This instrument delivers 100% oxygen under positive pressure into a patient's lungs via a face mask. Inhalators were eventually placed on all EFD engines. Inhalators undoubtedly prevented the deaths of several people from drowning and respiratory illnesses as well as those persons being overcome by various gases and fumes. Presently, a similar device is used on all EFD paramedic ambulances.

During that same year, the EFD took possession of another American LaFrance 1000 gpm pumper. This engine served in the EFD fleet until 1959 when it was traded in on a new engine. (This engine was donated back to the firefighters of Elgin and the apparatus was disassembled and restored as closely as possible to its original condition.)

In 1933 as a cost saving measure Fire Station 5 was closed and the men moved to Station 1. While it wasn't being used as a fire station, it was used for

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several odd purposes, the most notable of which was as a studio for noted artist Trygve Rovelstad.

By 1934, with the purchase of Elgin's first true aerial ladder truck, all of Elgin's fire companies were equipped with pumpers. This apparatus was called a Junior Aerial because it had a 65 foot aerial ladder (considered small by standards). It also had a 600 gpm pump and a 100 gallon booster tank. It wasn't until 1939 that the Elgin Fire Department purchased its first apparatus with a cab that was entirely enclosed. This same year Fire Barn 5, now referred to as Station 5, was reopened.

Fire Barn 5 is very typical of turn-of-the-century Fire Barn architecture. A Fire Station of the era had to meet a few requirements: it was both a garage and stable as well as a home for firefighters. It had to provide privacy, even though it was a public building. It had to look important without being pompous.

When Smith Hoag designed Fire Barn 5, he took into account the public's change of attitude toward firemen. Much as public opinion was changing across the country, Elginites no longer thought of firemen as a drunken bunch of rowdies, as they had when firemen were all volunteers. Now firemen had become professionals and heroes to many. Fire Barn 5 reflected this new professionalism. Elgin's Fire Barn 5 exemplified "the Golden Age"<sup>3</sup> of fire station design.

The front of Fire Barn 5 reflects a "commercial storefront style"<sup>4</sup> common in almost all city Fire Barns. Windows on the right and what was a small personnel door to the left flanked the main apparatus door. The second floor consists of windows allowing light into the upper floor.

The requirements for the fire barn left a lot of room for flexibility for exterior design. Smith Hoag, like so many architects of the time, chose to experiment with the popular, Classical Revival style with a bay window, fancy brickwork and window shapes and tracery.

The simple interior plan and finishes are very representative of early turn-of-the-century Fire Barns. The horses had been brought inside. The Stable was at the rear of the ground floor; the apparatus was at the front. The ceiling was high enough to house the quick-hitch harness, a device used to speed up harnessing the horses. A call area was sectioned off near the

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National Park Service

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Section number 8 Page 12 Fire Barn 5

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apparatus to answer the alarm bells for the Gamewell system. The brass sliding pole had become standard equipment for all Fire Stations by this time.

The basement was laid out in such a way as to allow for the hanging of hoses from the rafters to allow for drying.

Fire Barns at this time allowed for forage rooms and feed bins on the second floor at the rear of the building. Hay was stored in the third floor loft. The rear of the building was equipped with a loading door for the hay.

The other considerations were for the firemen. The Captain had a room of his own, separate from the driver and pipemen. This room also housed his desk. The dormitory room was connected to the first floor by the brass pole. A locker room area was also part of the over-all plan, as was a large bathroom. Furnishing was plain but comfortable.

Fire Barn 5 was the last building to be commissioned to house both firemen and horses. It is a well-designed building for the Fire Department. Its design was so good that the building was able to be adapted to modern use. Fire Barn 5, now called Fire Station 5, is to be retired from commission at some time during 1991, 88 years after it was first built.

There were only five structures used as fire barns by the City of Elgin. Fire Barn 1 has been demolished. Fire Barn 2, located on North Street in downtown Elgin, has been converted to office space and nearly all of its architectural integrity has been either covered or removed. Fire Barn 3, located at Dundee and Duncan Avenues, is currently under rehabilitation. The interior of this structure has been gutted for future use as a residence. The exterior of the structure has undergone many changes, such as glass blocks for the windows. Fire Barn 4, located at Van and Dubois Streets has undergone major rehabilitation and is now a residence. The exterior of this structure has been altered somewhat.

Fire Barn 5 is the best example of turn-of-the century civic architecture for fire department use in Elgin. Nearly all of the structural integrity remains intact. The structure is still being used, so it has been maintained and not allowed to deteriorate over time. Considerable time and money was spent to update the interior of the structure when it was reopened in 1939.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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### ENDNOTES

1. City of Elgin, Proceedings of the City Council, 1900.
2. City of Elgin, Proceedings of the City Council, 1914.
3. Zurier, Rebecca, The American Firehouse, Abbeville Press, Inc. New York, 1982.
- 4/ ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14 Fire Barn 5

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alft, E.C., Elgin: An American History, Crossroads Communications, Elgin 1984.

Zurier, Rebecca, The American Firehouse, Abbeville Press, Inc. New York, 1982.

City of Elgin, Proceedings of the City Council, 1866 to 1940.

City of Elgin, City Records, 1867 to 1882.

City of Elgin, Fire Department Log Books, 1900 to 1941.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 

1	6
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3	9	4	9	1	0
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4	6	5	3	1	7	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Fire Barn 5 is located on Lot 5, block 2, Wallin's addition to Elgin.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lots that has been historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Brigid J. Trimble  
 organization Friends of Fire Barn 5  
 street & number 500 Arlington ave  
 city or town Elgin

date 4-5-91  
 telephone 708-697-7887  
 state IL zip code 60120



# United States Department of the Interior

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
P.O. BOX 37127  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

RECEIVED  
SEP - 3 1991

IN REPLY REFER TO:

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. For further information call 202/343-9542.

INFORMATION SERVICES  
RESERVATION

AUG 16 1991

WEEKLY LIST OF LISTED PROPERTIES: 8/05/91 THROUGH 8/10/91

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Certification Date, Reference Number, NHL Status, Multiple Name

- ARIZONA, MARICOPA COUNTY, Mesa Woman's Club, 200 N. Macdonald, Mesa, 8/05/91, 91000995
- ARIZONA, YAVAPAI COUNTY, Childs--Irving Hydroelectric Facilities, From E. bank of Verde R. NE to Stehr Lake and along Fossil Cr., Coconino/Tonto NF, Camp Verde vicinity, 8/09/91, 91001023
- CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, Bingham, Samuel, House, 6427 La Plateada, Rancho Santa Fe, 8/05/91, 91000942 (Lillian Rice Designed Buildings in Rancho Santa Fe MPS)
- CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, Carmichael, Norman and Florence B., House, 6855 La Valle Plateada, Rancho Santa Fe, 8/05/91, 91000941 (Lillian Rice Designed Buildings in Rancho Santa Fe MPS)
- CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, Christiency, George A. C., House, 17078 El Mirador, Rancho Santa Fe, 8/05/91, 91000943 (Lillian Rice Designed Buildings in Rancho Santa Fe MPS)
- CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, Clotfelter, Reginald M. and Constance, Row House, 6112 Paseo Delicias, Rancho Santa Fe, 8/05/91, 91000939 (Lillian Rice Designed Buildings in Rancho Santa Fe MPS)
- CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, Rancho Santa Fe Land and Improvement Company Office, 16915 Avenida de Acacias, Rancho Santa Fe, 8/05/91, 91000940 (Lillian Rice Designed Buildings in Rancho Santa Fe MPS)
- CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, Rice, Lillian Jenette, House, 16780 La Gracia, Rancho Santa Fe, 8/05/91, 91000946 (Lillian Rice Designed Buildings in Rancho Santa Fe MPS)
- CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, Shaffer, Charles A., House, 5610 La Crescenta, Rancho Santa Fe, 8/05/91, 91000944 (Lillian Rice Designed Buildings in Rancho Santa Fe MPS)
- CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, Terwilliger, Claude and Florence, House, 5880 San Elijo, Rancho Santa Fe, 8/05/91, 91000945 (Lillian Rice Designed Buildings in Rancho Santa Fe MPS)
- CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, Verlaque, Theophile, House, 645 Main St., Ramona, 8/07/91, 91000548
- CALIFORNIA, SAN MATEO COUNTY, Hofmann, Arthur and Mona, House, 1048 La Cuesta Rd., Hillsborough, 8/05/91, 91000926
- CALIFORNIA, TULARE COUNTY, Pogue Hotel, 32792 Sierra Dr. (CA 198), Lemoncove, 8/05/91, 91000927
- CONNECTICUT, NEW HAVEN COUNTY, Dudleytown Historic District, Roughly, Clapboard Hill Rd. from Tanner Marsh Rd. to Murray Ln., East River Rd. SE to Trailwood Dr., and Duck Hole Rd., Guilford, 8/09/91, 91000951
- CONNECTICUT, NEW HAVEN COUNTY, Quaker Farms Historic District, 467--511 Quaker Farms Rd., Oxford, 8/09/91, 91000993
- CONNECTICUT, WINDHAM COUNTY, Central Village Historic District, Roughly, School, Main and Water Sts., and Putnam Rd. N to Plainfield High School, Plainfield, 8/09/91, 91000949
- FLORIDA, LAKE COUNTY, Woman's Club of Eustis, 227 N. Center St., Eustis, 8/05/91, 91001006
- FLORIDA, SANTA ROSA COUNTY, Bethune Blackwater Schooner, Address Restricted, Milton vicinity, 8/08/91, 91000948
- IDAHO, ELMORE COUNTY, Mountain Home High School, 550 E. Jackson, Mountain Home, 8/08/91, 91000988 (Public School Buildings in Idaho MPS)
- IDAHO, OWYHEE COUNTY, Noble Horse Barn, Reynolds Cr. 12 mi. SW of Murphy, Murphy vicinity, 8/07/91, 91000989
- IDAHO, TWIN FALLS COUNTY, Cedar Draw School, 4300 N. Rd. between 1900 and 2000 E., Buhl vicinity, 8/08/91, 91000986 (Public School Buildings in Idaho MPS)
- IDAHO, TWIN FALLS COUNTY, Hollister School, 2464 Salmon Ave., Hollister, 8/08/91, 91000984 (Public School Buildings in Idaho MPS)
- IDAHO, TWIN FALLS COUNTY, Pleasant Valley School, 3501 E. 3100 N., Kimberly vicinity, 8/08/91, 91000985 (Public School Buildings in Idaho MPS)
- IDAHO, TWIN FALLS COUNTY, Pleasant View School, 2500 E. 3600 N., Twin Falls vicinity, 8/08/91, 91000987 (Public School Buildings in Idaho MPS)
- ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Gross Point Village Hall, 609 Ridge Rd., Wilmette, 8/05/91, 91001001
- ILLINOIS, KANE COUNTY, Fire Barn 3, 533 St. Charles Rd., Elgin, 8/05/91, 91001002
- ILLINOIS, LA SALLE COUNTY, Fletcher, Ruffin Drew, House, 609 E. Broadway St., Streator, 8/05/91, 91001000
- LOUISIANA, CADDO PARISH, Wile House, 626 Wilder Pl., Shreveport, 8/05/91, 91001007
- LOUISIANA, JEFFERSON DAVIS PARISH, Derouen House, 214 W. Plaquemine, Jennings, 8/05/91, 91001021
- LOUISIANA, OUACHITA PARISH, Rawls Cabin, 223 Charlie Rawls Rd., West Monroe vicinity, 8/09/91, 91001047
- LOUISIANA, ST. LANDRY PARISH, Moulton House, 261 N. Liberty St., Opelousas, 8/09/91, 91001045
- LOUISIANA, WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH, Aillet House, 845 N. Jefferson Ave., Port Allen, 8/09/91, 91001046 (Louisiana's French Creole Architecture MPS)
- MICHIGAN, HOUGHTON COUNTY, Michels, John J., House, 1121 E. Houghton Ave., Houghton, 8/05/91, 91001018
- MICHIGAN, PRESQUE ISLE COUNTY, Radka--Bradley House, 176 W. Michigan Ave., Rogers City, 8/05/91, 91001019
- MICHIGAN, WAYNE COUNTY, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church Complex, 13770 Gratiot Ave., Detroit, 8/05/91, 91001020
- MINNESOTA, HENNEPIN COUNTY, Crane Island Historic District, Crane Island in Lake Minnetonka, Minnetrista, 8/05/91, 91001005
- MISSISSIPPI, TISHOMINGO COUNTY, Church of Our Savior, E. Eastport St. between Main and Fulton Sts., Iuka, 8/09/91, 91000929 (Iuka MPS)

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

K-H-21

200839

1. Name of Site:

Common Fire Station  
Historic

2.. Location:

Street and Number Township Section  
Arlington Ave. & St. Charles St.  
City or Town Zip Code Range 1/4 Section  
Elgin  
County  
Kane

3. Classification:

Category (check one) Integrity (check one)  
( ) District (x) Building (X) Altered <sup>stables removed</sup> (x) Unaltered  
( ) Site ( ) Structure ( ) Moved (x) Original Site

4. Ownership:

( ) Private (x) Occupied  
(x) Public ( ) Unoccupied  
( ) Preservation work in progress

Access to Public

( ) Yes (x) Restricted ( ) Unrestricted ( ) No

Present Use (check one or more)

( ) Agricultural ( ) Industrial ( ) Religious  
( ) Commercial ( ) Military ( ) Scientific  
( ) Educational ( ) Museum ( ) Transportation  
( ) Entertainment ( ) Park ( ) Other (specify)  
(x) Government ( ) Private Residence

5. Ownership of Property:

Owner's Name Phone Number  
Street and Number  
City or Town  
State County Zip Code

6. Description:

Brick  
(x) Excellent ( ) Good ( ) Fair ( ) Deteriorated ( ) Ruins ( ) Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation underway? ( ) Yes ( ) No

GOVERNMENT



7. Historical Themes : (check one or more of the following)

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Site         | (Pre-Columbian)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Site         | (Post-Columbian to 1673) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French Influence           | (1673-1780)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Frontier          | (1780-1818)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Early             | (1818-1850)              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois Middle | (1850-1900)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Late              | (1900-present)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Famous People              | (give names & dates)     |

8. Specific Date: 1890's

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (historic)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (pre-historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Military                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication             | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture    |  |

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates) Use additional sheets if necessary. Old fire house

9. Form prepared by:

Name and Title: T.H. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

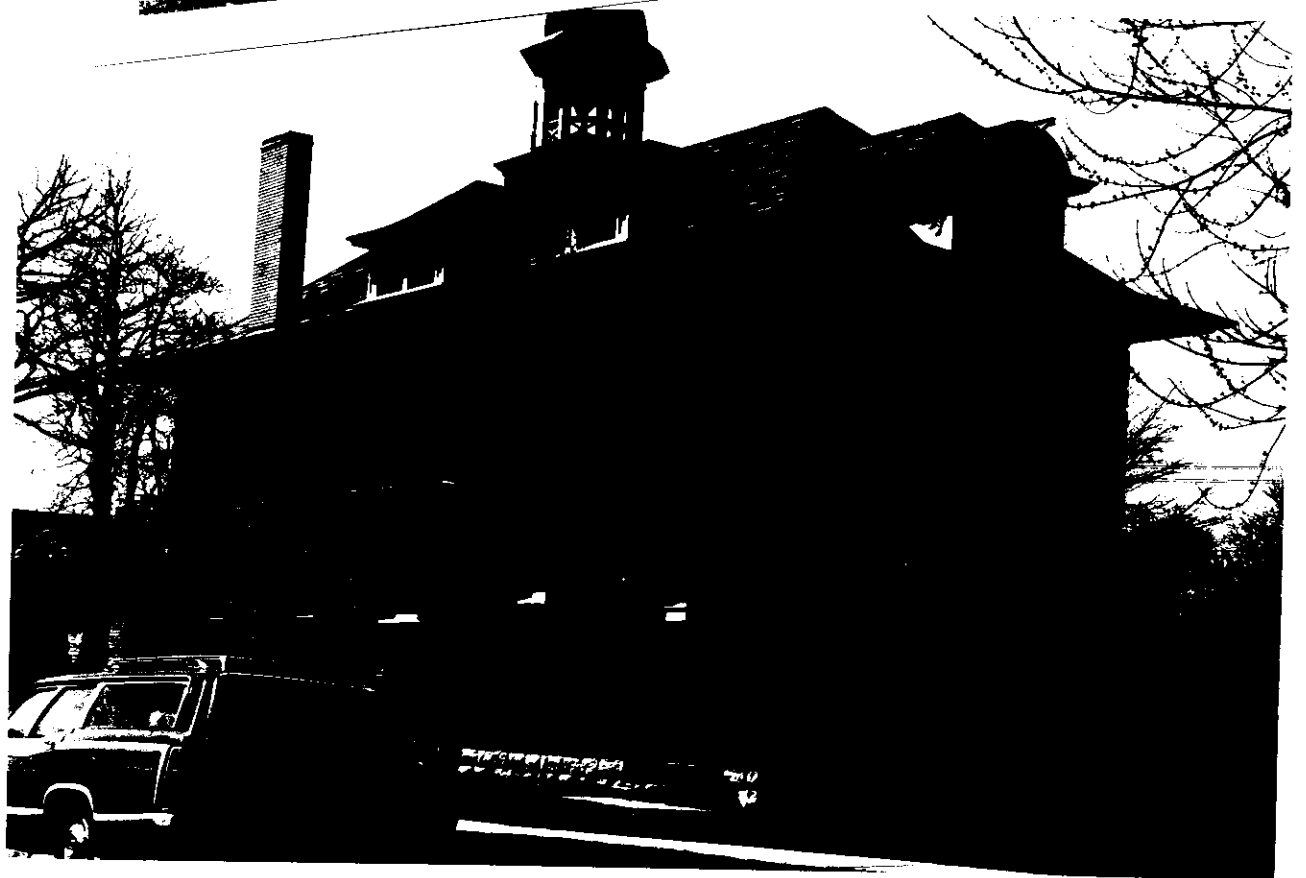
Street and number: \_\_\_\_\_

City or Town: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for references for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.



Fire Barn 5

533 St. Charles Rd., Elgin, Illinois

200839



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