

Peekskill (NY) Fire Department Replaces Five Stations with Single Central Firehouse

BY ALAN M. PETRILLO

The Peekskill (NY) Fire Department was covering the city of Peekskill with 26 paid firefighters and 130 volunteer firefighters operating out of five stations that housed six fire companies.

Of the five stations, the newest was 50 years old, two were from the 19th century, and one was a metal pole building. All the stations were deficient in a number of ways, and some had operational and firefighter health and safety issues. The city decided the solution to its firehouse problems was centralization of all six fire companies into a single station.

MORE THAN A STATION

John Pappas, Peekskill's former chief, says that with the decline in volunteerism, the city felt that consolidation would benefit all the fire companies. "We also wanted areas where we could do training in the firehouse," Pappas says, "and we needed office spaces and plenty of storage space. The company chiefs never had offices in their stations, and many of them stored equipment in containers outside."

The biggest challenge for the department was getting the land for a new fire station. Pappas says, adding, "It took several years to get a leaseholder in a shopping center to move from the location where we wanted to build. And, we worked with four city administrations before the new station was completed." Pappas notes that the department interviewed several architects and chose Mitchell Associates Architects to design and build the new station.

Bob Mitchell, principal at Mitchell Associates Architects, says the location of the new central fire station on the corner of Main and Broad Streets is one of the most prominent locations in the city. "The city council was clear that the new

fire station headquarters would become the gateway to the city and serve as a clear sign of the city's confidence in its future," Mitchell says. "It also determined that the building would serve as the city's primary location for public meetings and would include a fire museum highlighting the 200 plus years of service to the community and house the department's restored 19th century fire apparatus."

The station Mitchell designed is a 30,000-square-foot, two-story facility that features a fire museum lobby and eight single-deep back-in apparatus bays on the ground floor, an exercise room/gym, and a public meeting/training room that is dividable down the center that will seat 182 persons at tables or 300-plus auditorium style on the second floor.

FIREFIGHTER AREAS

On the first floor, along the back of the apparatus bays, are two firematic storage rooms, a decon laundry, gross decon room, hose washer and drying room, mechanic's shop, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) compressor and fill station room, SCBA cleaning room, janitor's closet, water sprinkler supply room, electrical supply room, and clean location for an icemaker. Mitchell says that down the center of the apparatus bays are emergency medical services (EMS) storage, firematic storage, a radio room, and a hot zone bathroom. Hand-washing sinks are located at each door coming out of the apparatus bays, and all penetrations between the apparatus bays and the living side of the building are sealed gas tight, he adds.



2 A partial view of the apparatus bays from the station's mezzanine. 3 The lobby/fire museum area where the department's antique pumper is displayed.

Mitchell points out that across the back of the living area are five double dorm rooms and one single dorm room, along with a storm coverage dorm room that holds six bunk beds. Three bath/shower rooms and one bathroom are adjacent to the dorm rooms. Nearby are a career firefighter day room and a volunteer firefighter day room

with a kitchen in between the two containing a commercial stove, center island, cabinetry, and two refrigerators (one for career and one for volunteer firefighters).

Pappas points out that the department wanted training aids built into the new station, and Mitchell Associates obliged. "We have a bailout window on the mezzanine



1 Mitchell Associates Architects designed this two-story, eight-bay station for the Peekskill (NY) Fire Department. (Photos courtesy of Mitchell Associates Architects.)



4 The Peekskill kitchen contains a commercial stove, center island, cabinetry, work spaces, and two refrigerators



5 Training aids in the Peekskill station include a bailout window on the mezzanine.

where we also do SCBA and confined space training, a sprinkler training area with different sprinklers on the wall that can be set off to flow water and shut down, and a dedicated SCBA room," Pappas says. "And, there are all the other spaces that we needed, like the space for the hose washer and dryer, the decon room, the washer and dryer room for our turnout gear, and a lot of storage space that we never had before."

To the left of the lobby/fire museum, Mitchell placed the administrative area of

the station, comprising the chief's office, an EMS office, a captain/lieutenant's office, a work production area, a bathroom, two offices with library style computers, a conference room, and a mailbox area. Cost of the new station was \$12,114,000.

BUILDING FEATURES

Mitchell notes that the city has many older stone buildings in its boundaries and wanted to echo the look and feel of those buildings on the new fire station. "The city

and fire department wanted the new station to look timeless, so we got stone from a Pennsylvania quarry, a dense sandstone, and detailed it in the manner of past rusticated stone at the base of the building and blended in brick above it."

The two-story side of the building has a mansard parapet, he adds, with heavy-duty asphalt shingles and standing seam copper along the top and bottom edges. The rest of the roof is flat and rubber-coated, and all mechanicals on the roof are out of view

because of the mansard. Windows are double-hung, double-glazed windows, Mitchell says, "of high-quality and low E, argon-filled one-over-one, and also one-over-one with a fixed transom." **ENR**

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