



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

Old firehouse still provides community service

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Image: Firehouse at 115 North Patrick Street, 1940s. Photo, Alexandria Library Special Collections.

In 1896, the Hydraulion Fire Company broke ground on North Patrick Street for a new engine house. Located on the east side of North Patrick Street between King and Cameron streets, the two-story brick fire station was completed the following year. It had a hose tower in the rear, a large meeting room on the second floor, and sleeping quarters. The front featured two rounded arch entrances on the first floor with a smaller but also arched pedestrian entrance between them. On the second floor, double windows were topped with rounded windows and brickwork continuing the arch look.

Hydraulion moved into its new station, known as Engine House No. 3, in 1897 but in 1903, the company dissolved. That year, the newly-formed Reliance Fire Company organized and took over the firehouse at 115 North Patrick St., which would then be known as No. 5. As firefighting equipment was modernized, fire stations had to be remodeled to accommodate motorized vehicles, and the arched entrances at No. 5 were replaced with rectangular doors.

In the 1940s, around the time this photograph was taken, the fire chief wanted to update the No. 5 station, and in 1946, the company moved into a new firehouse at 1210 Cameron Street. The former station at 115 North Patrick was remodeled into a courthouse, with designs by architect Milton L. Grigg. The bays on the first floor were replaced with windows and a doorway enhanced by a pediment and quoins. Once the extensive renovation was complete, the building became home to the newly-established Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

The former firehouse was later used as a community mental health facility, and most recently was renovated to provide housing and services for homeless people with mental illness.



“Out of the Attic” is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as “Marking Time” and explored Alexandria’s history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into “Out of the Attic” and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.



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These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by Amy Bertsch, former Public Information Officer, and Lance Mallamo, Director, on behalf of the Office of Historic Alexandria.