National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter “N/A” for “not applicable.” For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property
   Historic name   Fire Station No. 7
   Other names/site number   KRHI # 177-2600
   Name of related Multiple Property Listing   NA

2. Location
   Street & number   1215 SW Oakley Avenue
   City or town   Topeka
   State   Kansas
   Code   KS
   County   Shawnee
   Code   SN
   Zip code   66604

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
   I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
   ___ national ___ statewide X ___ local
   Applicable National Register Criteria: X__ A  ___ B  ___ C  ___ D

   Signature of certifying official/Title   Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO   Date

   Kansas State Historical Society
   State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

   In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

   Signature of commenting official   Date

   Title   State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification
   I hereby certify that this property is:
   _____ entered in the National Register  _____ determined eligible for the National Register
   _____ determined not eligible for the National Register  _____ removed from the National Register
   _____ other (explain:)

   Signature of the Keeper   Date of Action
### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**
( Checklist as many boxes as apply. )

- [ ] private
- [X] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

**Category of Property**
( Checklist only one box. )

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

**Number of Resources within Property**
( Do not include previously listed resources in the count. )

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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

NA

### 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. )

**LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:**

- Spanish Colonial Revival

**Materials**
( Enter categories from instructions. )

- foundation: CONCRETE
- walls: CONCRETE CERAMIC TILE;
- Limestone, BRICK
- roof: TERRA COTTA
- other: ___________________________________________
Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources, if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary -
Fire Station No. 7 is located at 1215 SW Oakley Avenue within an historically low-density residential area of central Topeka. Designed by W. E. Glover of the Topeka architectural firm, Cuthbert and Suehrk in 1935, this 1 ½ story structure was designed to service the newly expanding areas of western Topeka, including the newly developed Westboro neighborhood located one block to the south. The Spanish Revival style mirrors one of the architectural styles designated by covenant within the Westboro neighborhood, located 1 block to the south. This covenant was placed onto each lot within the Westboro Neighborhood commensurate with its platting and development in 1926.

The building’s footprint measures approximately 72’ x 55’ and faces east onto SW Oakley Avenue. Its exterior features were designed around a rectangular and parallel floor plan with the habitable portions of the firehouse at the south of the fire engine bay. The bay is the largest single room within the station and dominates the northern 2/3rds of the structure. The Station is a poured concrete structure with concrete walls, floors, and ceilings with a tan brick veneer. The walls were constructed above a concrete block foundation with a partial basement under the west 1/3rd of the structure. The most significant exterior feature is the turret placed between the station’s main entrance and the fire engine bay door, both located on the east face of the building. This turret extends eastward beyond the entrance, and the engine bay doors.

The building is in excellent condition. Its windows and engine-bay door were replaced, most recently in the early 1980s. A drop ceiling was also installed in several of the station’s living spaces to cover the ductwork from the central air conditioning. The building retains its historic integrity and character-defining features.

Elaboration

Building Description

Fire Station No. 7 is an example of an early 20th Century "bungalow-type" fire station. As such, it features two separate interior areas, one dedicated to the fire engines and associated apparatus, and the other dedicated to housing the firefighters. Each face of the building contains distinguishing characteristics of its Spanish Eclectic Revival architectural style, with the east, or front-facing façade featuring the majority of these characteristics. Its roof features a gabled portion above the fire engine bay that extends from and equally pitched hipped roof that dominates the majority of the building. The roof is capped with a flat area measuring approximately 25’ x 16’ at the height of the ridgeline. This cap extends to all four slopes of the hipped roof. Two dormers are also present and extend from the north and south slopes of the roof. Both dormers contain a small wood double-wide steel casement window divided into eight panes, and both are also original to the station. The windows within each dormer are original to the station and are composed of steel. At the southeast corner of the roof is a gabled roof joint that extends over the entrance to the fire station. All features visible to the exterior also appear to be original to the building’s construction with the exception of the ground-level windows. All ground-level windows were replaced during the 1980s, and all are consistent in their style and materials, which are wood with aluminum cladding.

East Façade – The east façade is segregated into three distinct portions – bays, turret, and entrance. The largest portion are the dual engine bay doors. Each door is framed in cut limestone with a shallow arch across the top. There are sconce lights placed between and on either side of the bay doors. Based on detailed drawings of these sconces in the architect’s blueprints, these sconces appear to be the original fixtures dating to the building’s construction. Centered between the engine bay doors within gable-end is a decorative window. This window features stained glass panels, and is in the shape of a quatrefoil, containing four separate curves in a symmetrical pattern. This window is surrounded by a cut limestone
frame and is covered with four vertical steel bars that are attached to the exterior brick wall above and below the window. The gabled roof extends only a short distance (12’) from the face of the wall, creating an overhanging eave, which features exposed 6” x 6” x 12” horizontal rafter tails, each partially notched within the fascia board.

Along the northeast corner of the façade, extending approximately 3’ north is a buttress, measuring about 8’ in height and is capped with a cut limestone block.

The most detailed portion of the east façade is the turret, which is a traditional, yet slightly modified octagon. The interior half of the turret roof, and its subsequent eaves and exterior walls are consolidated into only 3 portions. This half of the turret roofline lies within an interior area of the overall station roof, and is not visible from the ground level. At the base of the turret is a row of soldier-laid brick. Each exterior turret-wall features a single-window above a cut limestone sill. Each window is approximately 36” wide x 40” tall with a single row of soldier brick spanning across the top. These windows are replacement, one-over-one, with a bottom tilt-out function for the lower pane. A band of glazed terracotta tile is at the top of each exterior wall creating a patterned frieze. This band is placed immediately below the eave and extends down the wall for a total of 24”. The design inlaid within the tile emphasizes the building’s Spanish Revival architecture.

The main entrance to the Station is located to the south of the turret and is recessed under a shallow portico. The entire doorframe is surrounded by terracotta glazed tiles, matching the color and patterns used on the turret. Two additional sconces are placed adjacent to these tiles at either side of the doorway. The door within the doorframe is constructed of oak and features 8 recessed panels in its design. This door is original to the station but is covered by an aluminum-frame storm door that was added in the 1980s, presumably with the installation of the replacement windows throughout the station.

**North Façade** – The north façade is much simpler in character, featuring fewer details relative to the building’s Spanish Revival architecture. The buttress on the east façade effectively shields the majority of the north side from street view. The north elevation is a continuous face of brick with 4 windows and one doorway. The doorway is roughly 10 feet from the east façade and provides a point of access to the fire engine bay. The door is original to the building, and is constructed of paneled oak, with one 12” x 12” eye-level window. A transom window is placed above the door, which is also original to the building. The central portion of the north façade contains two windows, each measuring approximately 24” x 40”, while the remaining western portion contains a pair of windows, each measuring a narrower 18” x 40”. All window openings on the north façade feature a cut limestone sill, topped with a row of soldier-laid brick. All windows duplicate the materials and function of the east façade turret windows. Spacing between the doorway and the two larger-sized windows is equidistant, measuring a separation of approximately 10’. The remaining two narrower windows are placed together with a separation of approximately 12” and are placed about 10’ from the western wall. The roof features an overhanging eave roughly 24” in-depth, with exposed rafter tails, which are decorative cut wooden brackets, spaced approximately 24” apart. All surfaces within the soffit are painted a dark brown, complementary to the color of window and door trim throughout the station.

Two features are present within the north slope of the roof. A small dormer is located directly above the first ground-level window from the east. This dormer contains a small wood double-wide casement window divided into eight panes. The window appears to be original. This dormer is clad in overlapping terra cotta tile and shares the same roofing materials as the remainder of the building. Located on the roof just below the ridgeline is a chimney that clad in the same tan brick and is topped with terracotta roofing tiles.

**West Façade** - The west (rear) elevation is similar to the north in its minimal architectural detailing. The elevation is divided into five bays, in which the fourth and fifth bays project out from the wall. The rear doorway is located approximately 12’ from the north wall and features a fixed-cantilevered awning extending 30” from the wall approximately 2’ above the door. The awning is wood and also features the same terracotta clay tile on the roof. One window is placed on either side of this doorway. The northern window is located 6’ from the northern wall and 4’ north of the door. The second window is located 46” south of the door. Each window consists of a cut limestone windowsill and is topped with a row of soldier bricks. Both windows are approximately 36” wide x 40” in height and are single pane, non-functional. Below each window at ground-
level is a poured concrete window well allowing light into the station basement. Each window well extends approximately 24" from the wall x 5' in length.

The southern 1/3rd of the building projects 3' 8" from the wall. This extension accommodates the firehouse dormitory and living quarters, while the shorter portion of the building accommodates the engine bays and firefighter locker room. Two windows and two window wells are also located within this extended portion, all the same as the other windows on this elevation. All of these features are centered within the expanse of the west wall, measuring roughly 4' 5" from the station's south wall. The station's hose tower is most visible at the ground level from the west face of the building. The hose tower rises from the ridgeline of the hipped roof above the southwest corner of the interior engine bay. This tower is constructed of three primary exterior finishes. The base measures 7' 1" wide, x 3' in height, and is constructed of tan brick. Placed within this base is a stained-glass window, complete with a cut limestone windowsill, measuring approximately 2' 6" in height x 12" wide. Above this base is an equally sized portion that is clad in glazed tile, matching the decorative Spanish Revival motif used within the turret. Above this tile is the tower’s hipped roof, clad in the same terra cotta tile employed elsewhere on the station.

South Facade – This face of the building features three separate portions, each housing a separate room within the interior. The western portion of the south wall is built under the station’s hipped roof, while the eastern portion features a gabled roofline and the turret. A single dormer extends from the hipped portion of the roof, matching the size, materials, and design of the dormer facing north in every detail. The wall below the hipped roof contains five windows, each a replacement window that appears to be one-over-one double-hung. The lower pane tilts out at the bottom, while the upper pane is fixed in place. The four windows to the west are each approximately 36" wide x 40" in height, while the 5th window is narrower, measuring roughly 18" x 40". There are also two window wells, with one below the first and third windows. These window wells match the dimensions of other wells. The overhanging eave below the hipped roof is narrower than the other eaves.

This portion beneath the gabled roof-end is slightly shorter in length than the adjacent western portion. There are three windows within this portion, the smallest placed near the top of the wall immediately below the apex of the gable-end. This window measures only approximately 2’ 6” in height and 12” wide. There is a metal miniature balconette, which is a decorative feature, constructed of wrought iron bars mimicking the appearance of a flower box. The bars are embedded into the wall around the base of the window, measuring roughly 20” wide, x 10” tall x 10” deep.

There are two lower-level windows. The western-most window measures approximately 36” wide x 40” in height and is the same as the other fixed/tilt windows. The eastern-most window is the largest within the fire station. This window measures nearly 7’ across x roughly 6’ in height. The replacement windows within this opening are the same one-over-one, lower-pane tilt windows.

Interior

The interior floorplan of Fire Station No. 7 has remained unchanged since its original construction in 1935. All of the interior finishes remain unchanged – unless otherwise noted – featuring original concrete walls, cement tiles, concrete ceiling, and terrazzo floors and baseboards. Also, all windows and doors feature original wood trim and framing, unless otherwise noted. Drop-ceilings have been added to the office and living room during the 1990s to conceal conduit and electrical wiring necessary for the installation of air conditioning and fluorescent lighting. Doors and associated hardware, such as hinges and door handles, and several light fixtures and globes throughout the stations, all appear to be original. The floorplan is laid out with all the habitable rooms for the firefighters to the south of the engine bay.

Office - The office is located within the turret in the building’s southeast corner. Within this office are all communications equipment for station operations and a Murphy bed. The Murphy bed is located on the room’s west wall, immediately south of the entrance. A doorway to the fire engine bay is placed along the north wall. Interior walls are painted cement throughout. The floor is original terrazzo, complete with an 8” terrazzo baseboard. The ceiling is an acoustical foam-board drop-ceiling that is placed approximately 6" below the original concrete ceiling.
Living Room - The living room is the primary public entrance to the Station. This doorway faces east and is positioned in the southeast corner of the room. The walls, floor, and ceiling treatments in this room are identical to the office described above. All interior surfaces of the windows are constructed of wood, complete with a wooden windowsill. The west wall of the living room features a recessed, built-in wooden bookshelf extending on the south wall. This fireplace is framed with decorative concrete tile, with a matching tile hearth and tile mantel. All components of this fireplace are original to the building’s construction. There are two doors, one to the hall and the other to the engine bay.

Hallway - Extending west from the living room is a hallway from which there is access to the kitchen, bathroom, the dormitory, and the 2nd level staircase. All finishes within the hallway are original, consisting of a terrazzo floor, structural tiles, and cement finished walls. The ceiling within the hallway also remains the original cement finish.

Kitchen - From the hallway, immediately west of the living room is the kitchen. The kitchen is accessed by a wooden framed opening, which and has never had a functional door. This room is in its original configuration and retains all original finishes of terrazzo flooring, cement tiles on all walls below the height of the window, concrete finish above the tile, and on the ceiling. The cabinetry and counters within the kitchen have been altered with contemporary replacements.

Dormitory - At the west end of the hallway is the dormitory. The south wall is non-descript, containing two doors and a recessed station alarm bell. The doors are located side-by-side in the northeastern corner of the room, while the alarm bell is placed in the center of the wall. One door provides access to the locker room, restroom and shower, and the rear station entrance. The other doorway leads to the engine bay. The dormitory is the 2nd largest room within the station, behind the engine bay.

Locker room – Accessed directly to the north of the dormitory is the station locker room. Opposite the dorm entrance is the rear entrance to the station. The lockers are positioned to create a narrow hallway. The terrazzo floor throughout the locker room is two-toned, with the darker areas and floorboard immediately next to the walls and lockers.

Shower/Restroom – Located to the north of the locker room is an additional restroom and shower. This restroom is equipped with three toilets and three sinks, along with a single shower stall. All of these fixtures date to the 1980s, and are not original to the building, this is the larger of the two bathrooms within the station.

Engine Bay – The engine bay is the largest room within the building. All doors retain their original wood framing, doors, and hardware. Walls are approximately 13 feet in height and are finished with cement tile. The tile is divided into two separate tones, with a darker gold-toned tile rising approximately 5’ from the floor, with the remainder of the wall is covered by a lighter tan. From the engine bay, doors are located on the south wall to the main office, the living room, and the dormitory, and the west wall to the hose tower, the locker room, and a drying room/storage closet. The east wall is dominated by two large doorways for the fire engines, while the south wall contains three windows.

Second Level – The station’s second level is an unfinished storage space that has never been occupied as a habitable room within the fire station. The roof joists are exposed, as is all of the electrical and HVAC conduits that service the ground level. The flooring material of the 2nd level is arranged in two distinct areas, each corresponding to the elevations of the gabled roof. The larger, central portion of the floor runs through the center of the station, aligning over the 1st-level engine bay. This area provides 2nd-level access to the hose tower. The second area of flooring has a linoleum covering, providing some degree of a “finished” appearance to the surrounding floor space. However, no parts of the 2nd level have historically been used for purposes other than storage, nor were floor plans for the second level provided within the original blueprints for the fire station.

Basement – The basement of Firehouse No. 6 is an unfinished, partial basement located below the west 1/3rd of the building. This area is directly below the station’s dormitory, locker room, and showers, and does not extend eastward below the engine bay or living room. This lower level consists of three separate rooms: a workroom, the station’s boiler room, and a “fuel” room with a coal chute near the base of the north exterior wall. The boiler room and fuel room are each provided with one window located along the west wall, while the workroom is built with two windows each along the south
and west walls. The basement is constructed of concrete block walls and a concrete floor and ceiling. There are below-grade windows two each, along the south, east, and west exterior walls.

**Alterations**

Fire Station No. 7 has been in continuous use since its original construction in 1935. Since this time, few changes have been made to the building to modernize and replace outdated features, or to modernize the facility. These changes include the addition of central air conditioning in the 1990s, the replacement of kitchen cabinetry and countertops, the replacement of the original windows in the 1980s, and the replacement of bathroom fixtures. Complete records of these changes are maintained at the City of Topeka Fire Department Headquarters, the Office of Facilities Management, and the City Engineer’s Office.

**Integrity**

The building remains in excellent condition and retains significant historic integrity. With the exception of the windows and the engine bay doors, the building completely retains its original exterior and interior appearance. No structural changes have occurred that would have resulted in an altered floor plan, and no external additions to the original building footprint have been made. Within the interior, the only changes made to the building are updates to the kitchen and bathrooms, and the placement of a drop-tile ceiling in the living room, and office.
8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria**
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- **X** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- **A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- **B** Removed from its original location.
- **C** A birthplace or grave.
- **D** A cemetery.
- **E** A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- **F** A commemorative property.
- **G** Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

**ARCHITECTURE**

**SOCIAL HISTORY**

**Period of Significance**

1935-1940

**Significant Dates**

1935

**Significant Person**
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Cuthbert & Suehrk

Bowers Construction
**Period of Significance (justification) 1926-1940**

Fire Station No. 7 is significant relative to an era in Topeka’s history commensurate with the development of five Topeka’s fire stations, most notably dating between the time frame of 1926 and 1940. This timeframe encompasses a bond that was authorized by Topeka’s voters in 1926, specifically for the improvement of the City’s firefighting capabilities, and the construction of new fire stations to accommodate the expansion and development of Topeka’s western suburbs. This timeframe encompasses the era of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), through which additional funds were added to this bond for construction of four total fire stations in the City of Topeka. This era in Topeka’s history ended in 1940, commensurate with the beginning of WWII, and after the final funds from the 1926 bond were spent. Therefore, the period of significance begins in 1935 with the construction of the fire station and ends in 1940 at the conclusion of the funding period.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

**Summary**

Fire Station No. 7 is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion ‘C’ for its architectural integrity, and Criterion ‘A’ for the building’s association with the geographical growth and development of the City of Topeka. The Station is an example of a mid-20th-century fire station in the Spanish Revival style of architecture. Designed by the renowned Kansas architect W. B. Glover of the architectural firm Cuthbert & Suehrk, Station No. 7 embodies the functionality of the early-to-mid-20th-Century bungalow fire station, while incorporating Spanish Revival influences in its appearance and choice of exterior materials.

This station was constructed in 1935 through the Works Progress Administration program of the Great Depression era. The surrounding land was annexed into the City of Topeka the previous decade, enabling a westward expansion of population within Topeka’s city limits. This station was partially enabled through a public bond approved by voters in 1926, specifically intended to provide fire services to these newly annexed areas.

**Elaboration**

*Historical Fire Service in Topeka*

The City of Topeka functioned without a dedicated fire service from its founding in 1854 until February of 1870. The first recorded fire was during the winter of 1854-1855 when flames from a small fire ignited the thatched roof of the cabin occupied by the City’s founders. Being the only occupied “home” within the City at that time, City founder Fry W. Giles declared the City to be in “ruins.”

After this first fire, no other fires were recorded during the City’s first decade. This absence removed the impetus to establish a system with which to fight fires. This lack of need, however, changed on April 24th, 1867. On that date, an earthquake was recorded that centered near the City of Manhattan, Kansas. Tremors from this quake were reported as far east as Carthage, Ohio. This earthquake caused damage to much of the City, including the start of several fires to both homes and businesses.

Two years later, in 1869, fires destroyed two prominent buildings, the S. D. McDonald Building, and the Ritchie Block. The loss of these prominent buildings convinced the citizenry and City leaders that the time had come to purchase firefighting machinery, and to begin the assembly of a system for firefighting at the municipal level. In 1870, the Topeka City Council authorized and funded the acquisition of a steam pump and fire wagon, which arrived on February 5th. These items were purchased before the appointment of any official personnel to operate the equipment. Realizing this omission, City officials soon appointed Tobias Billings as the engineer of the steamer, and T. J. Anderson as his assistant. These two firefighters

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1 Ripley, John W., Fire Service in Topeka, the Early Years, Shawnee County Historical Society Bulletin No. 63, 1986, p. 3
then comprised the Topeka Fire Department, which, in addition to the steam pump and fire wagon, depended on volunteers in the close vicinity at fires.\textsuperscript{3}

In October of that same year, two volunteer companies were organized, and all equipment was stationed in a converted blacksmith shop in the 500 Block of SE Quincy Street.\textsuperscript{4} The companies were known as Steamer Company No. 1, Hose Companies Nos. 1 and 2, and “Safety” Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 (a new ladder truck had arrived in October from the factory). Collectively, these companies numbered a total of 65 members, one of whom was a paid firefighter on regular duty, and was a City policeman when not on duty.\textsuperscript{5}

The converted blacksmith’s shop served as the City’s sole fire station until 1874, when Fire Station No. 1 was constructed across the Kansas River in North Topeka. Fire Station No. 1 was located at the southeast corner of N Kansas Avenue and N Gordon Street, originally platted in the Town of Eugene. Eugene was annexed into the City of Topeka in 1867.

The construction of Fire Station No. 1 marked the beginning of municipal firefighting in Topeka. Within the subsequent 15 years, four additional fire stations were constructed. Fire Station No. 2 was constructed in 1878 in the rear portion of the new City Hall, located at SE 7th Street & S. Kansas Avenue. The construction of Fire Station No. 3 followed in 1882 in the 300 Block of NE Quincy Street, followed by Station No. 4 in the 700 Block of SW Clay Street (1887), and Station No. 5 in the 600 Block of SE Lake Street (1890). The construction of each of these fire stations in Topeka was a direct result of the growth of the City and the resulting demand by businesses and residents for reduced response times.

Beginning in 1920, the City began an active campaign to annex areas that would assist in “straightening” Topeka’s irregular boundaries and street alignments.\textsuperscript{6} In 1921, five boundary extensions were proposed by Topeka’s Planning Board along the city’s northern, eastern, and western edges.\textsuperscript{7} One of these areas was adjacent to and east of the area currently occupied by Fire Station No. 7. The annexation of the land for Station No. 7 was achieved in 1924, followed by the substantially more land to the west and south in 1926 and 1927. These annexations enabled suburban development within these areas, resulting in a population increase of 28\% for the City of Topeka from 50,022 in 1920, to 64,120 in 1930.

In 1926, physical improvements and the establishment of new fire stations took on a new life. Through a special election held on November 2nd of that year, Topeka’s voters authorized a bond of $250,000, to be used for the enhancement and expansion of fire protection services throughout the City.

Topeka’s population suffered a steep decline in its growth during the 1930s. According to the US Census, Topeka’s population in 1920 was 50,022, while in 1930, this number had risen to 64,120. This is a growth rate over the decade of 28.2\%. Topeka’s population in 1940, however, had grown to 67,883, reflecting the growth of only 5.9\%, which could be seen along the City’s southern and western periphery.

The need for additional fire coverage in these areas had been expected as evidenced by the passage of the municipal bond in 1926. The Great Depression had slowed the pace of growth, but to compensate for this economic downturn, the Federal Government created the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935 to help cities and communities across the nation maintain and build new infrastructure and keep Americans working. Coupled with the municipal bond approved by Topeka voters in 1926, the WPA was responsible for the construction of three new fire stations in Topeka, all built in the year 1935. These fire stations were: No. 5, moved from its location in East Topeka to the intersection of S. Topeka Ave and SW 17th St.; No. 6, located at 1419 NE Seward Avenue in the Oakland neighborhood; and No. 7, located near the southwest corner of SW 12th Street and SW Oakley Street. Fire Station No. 7 also received a new fire engine, which was the only such piece of firefighting apparatus purchased with WPA funding.

**Fire House Designs**

The first quarter of the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century also coincided with the nationwide transition from the traditional horse-drawn pump-wagon method of firefighting to the emerging technology of the motorized fire truck. Topeka purchased its first motorized fire engine in 1912, which was housed at the Fire Department Headquarters at Fire Station No. 2. The transition to motorized equipment meant that stations could now be built to consolidate the housing of engine, hose, and ladder

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\textsuperscript{3} Ripley, John W., Fire Service in Topeka, the Early Years, Shawnee County Historical Society Bulletin No. 63, 1986, p. 7

\textsuperscript{4} National Register Nomination for Fire Station No. 2” (Topeka, Ks. Kansas State Historical Society, 2002) Sec. 8, p 7

\textsuperscript{5} Ripley, John W., Fire Service in Topeka, the Early Years, Shawnee County Historical Society Bulletin No. 63, 1986, p. 7

\textsuperscript{6} The Topeka State Journal “Planning Board Would Add Territory to City Straightening Boundary,” (15 June 1921) p. 1

\textsuperscript{7} Ruth Keenoy, Survey Report, Collins Park, Topeka, Kansas 2017
companies that had previously been all-volunteer, and scattered in several locations. Furthermore, stations no longer needed to be designed to accommodate a stable for the horse.

One of the premier references to the evolution of fire stations built within the United States is Rebecca Zurier’s *The American Firehouse, an Architectural and Social History*. Zurier notes a fundamental shift in the design of the American firehouse during the age of the transition from the horse and steam pump and wagon to the internal combustion engine. The new fire station was modeled in the same approach as the “bungalow,” where all company living quarters were placed on the ground level. This change in design was in part to the wholesale adoption of the internal combustion fire engine, and also to a wealth of changes in firefighting apparatus, firefighting procedures, firefighter scheduling changes, and changes in city planning.

As long as fire stations required horses to haul their firefighting apparatus, the traditional firehouse of the 19th and early 20th Centuries were essentially modified barns. The accommodation of the horse as a necessary component of firefighting and required the firehouse to contain haylofts, feed rooms, stalls, hanging harnesses, and high-ceilinged rooms to accommodate the horses. The inclusion of these necessary accommodations for horses within the traditional firehouse resulted in various health concerns for firefighters, chief among them was a condition referred to as the “ammoniacal vapors,” which was a reference to the unsanitary smells attributable to the horses on the main level. The removal of horses and their accommodations afforded both a cleaner environment for the firefighters and also the ability to place the living spaces of the firefighters closer to the fire engines.

This “cleaner environment” manifested itself through several different means. These means can be categorized under the categories of building materials, firehouse floor plan, and the physical location of the firehouse itself.

In terms of building materials, the transition from the horse and pump wagon to the combustion engine fire truck coincided with the nationwide focus on the sanitation and cleanliness of fire stations. This focus enabled the adoption of poured concrete as a favored structural material for new public and municipal buildings. The local architectural firm of Cuthbert, Suehrk & Glover maintained these national trends in the design for Fire Station No. 7, utilizing poured concrete as its’ predominant and principal building material. The use of this material also enabled Fire Station No. 7 to replace wood floors with terrazzo, and window sills and walls with concrete structural tile. These hard, non-porous surfaces greatly facilitated the overall sanitation and cleanliness of the firehouse.

The second area of transformation for the American firehouse was the overall floorplan and design. Without the horse and stable, no longer was there a need for multiple levels to separate those spaces occupied by both humans and horses. All facilities necessary for the firefighters could be placed on the ground floor within easy access to the fire engine. This rearrangement of the floor plan eliminated the necessity for inclusion of the iconic, but dangerous “fire pole” that enabled quick access from the living quarters above to the fire wagon and horses below. Firefighters, themselves, welcomed the removal of the pole, primarily because of the injuries frequently incurred in its use. Night alarms that brought firefighters out of deep sleep were the primary cause, as awakening men often suffered hernias, broken ankles, and deep muscle sprains.

The rearrangement of the firehouse floorplan also brought with it the introduction of a kitchen for the in-house use of firefighters. Bungalow stations constructed at this time included a kitchen at the rear of the building. In older buildings, the now unnecessary stalls could be removed, leaving room for a cooking and eating area. Upon the advent of the multiple-shift scheduling of firefighters, one member of the firehouse was appointed as the shift “cook,” while other firefighters adopted the job of cleaning and washing dishes.

Perhaps the most notable alteration to firehouse design was that fire stations could subsequently be placed further within residential neighborhoods. This change in the placement of fire stations relative to their surroundings subsequently meant that the firehouse would need to reflect a more residential style of architecture to “blend in” with the developing suburbs of American cities. Firemen’s journals described “bungalow firehouses” as any one-story fire station designed to look like a

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10 IBID, p. 160
house. In fact, some of the first bungalow stations were designed by city architects to appease irate residents of exclusive neighborhoods who did not want an ugly, institutional building on their block.  

Architectural Fire Station No. 7

Station No. 7 was designed by Topeka architect Walter Earl Glover of the local architectural firm Cuthbert & Suehrk. This station was explicitly designed to “blend in” with the Spanish Revival styling of a nearby shopping center, located less than one block south. This shopping center was designed and built to be an integral part of the Westboro Subdivision. When initially developed in 1926, the Spanish Revival was identified by covenant as one of seven acceptable styles of architectural design for home construction. Glover was born on May 29, 1889, in Terre Haute, Indiana. After graduating from university, he worked for the Santa Fe Railroad from 1915 to 1918. During World War I Glover was with the architectural department of the U.S. Navy and was stationed in Washington, D. C., from April to December of 1918. In 1919 he moved to Topeka. After joining the firm of Cuthbert & Suehrk, he participated in the designs of several notable Topeka buildings, including the 1928 Gem Building at 508 W. 10th Street and the 1951 Garlinghouse Building at 820 South Quincy Street, the Charles M. Sheldon Community House, the original Security Benefit Life Insurance Co. at 700 SW Harrison Street, the Stormont Hospital, and the Valley Park School. Glover was also integral in the designs of Topeka Fire Stations No. 1, 5, and 6.

Spanish Revival architecture was common in the United States during the early decades of the 20th Century, earning its peak in popularity during the 1920s and 1930s when Period Homes were in vogue in residential architecture. Homes designed in Spanish Revival came to reflect places of relaxation and a resort-style lifestyle. As such, this style was heralded as an elite form of architecture, symbolic of the society’s elite and upper class.

Characteristics typical of the Spanish Revival architectural style include an asymmetrical design, a low-pitched gable and/or a hipped roof, half-round arched doorways, a tile or terracotta roof, ornate inlaid tile and ironwork, and adobe brick exterior walls. Fire Station No. 7 is a classic example of this style by virtue of its original terracotta hipped and shallow-gabled roof, half-circle arched doorway, uniform yellow brick exterior walls that resemble the color of a painted adobe, inlaid tile detailing, and the central turret located on the building’s east façade.

Summary –

Fire Station No. 7 is an excellent and enduring example of an early-period bungalow firehouse, constructed during a period where the traditional accommodations for horse and pump wagon in the firehouse were transitioned to the cleaner and more functional internal combustion fire engine. The changes to firefighting technology, and particularly the resulting accommodations for firefighters through the design of their fire stations was coincident with a general transformation in the image of the firefighter from a dirty volunteer to a brave public servant and hero. This elevation in public status meant that additional resources were afforded to the design and construction of new firehouses, resulting in significantly cleaner and better accommodations for the firefighters. Fire Station No. 7 is constructed in the Spanish Revival style of architecture, specifically tailored to be a bungalow fire station. The combination of form and function has resulted in a station that has remained intact and true to its original style and purpose. This building retains all of its architectural details and features that date from its original construction. As such, it is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion ‘C’ for its architectural influences, and Criterion ‘A’ for its association with the growth and development of Topeka. Designed by the architect Walter Glover, this station is an excellent example of his work, reflecting a significant period of his career as an architect in Topeka and the surrounding region. Together with the construction of Fire Stations No.’s 5 and 6, also in 1935, these stations served as the foundation of a renewed emphasis on the provision of fire services for the City of Topeka, thus enabling its continued growth and development through the beginning of WWII.

13 Ibid, p. 159
9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)


*Motor Fire Apparatus, Fire and Water Engineering*, Volume 51, 1912


*Topeka Capital Journal*, September 21, 1952

*Topeka Daily Capital*, Nov. 28, 1954


*Topeka Daily State Journal*, Nov. 12, 1927

*Topeka Daily Capital*, Nov. 4, 1926

*The Power Wagon, Fire Department Motors, No. 88*, Chicago, IL, 1912

Fire Station No. 7

Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas

County and State

10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 0.32

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.
(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**
Datum if other than WGS84: __________
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)
The legal description for Fire Station No 7 in Topeka is PARKE PLACE ADDITION, BLOCK 12, BEG 150 S NE COR BLK 12 TH S 100 W 141.83 N 100 E 141.83 TO POB SECTION 35 TOWNSHIP 11 RANGE 15

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)
The boundary encompasses the entire original site acquired by the City of Topeka to build Fire Station No. 7 in 1934.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title  Timothy Paris
organization  City of Topeka Planning & Development Department
date  November 21, 2019
street & number  620 SE Madison St
telephone  785-368-3728
city or town  Topeka
state  Ks
zip code  66607
e-mail  tparis@topeka.org

Property Owner: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name  City of Topeka
street & number  215 SE 7th St.
telephone

city or town  Topeka
state  Kansas
zip code  66604

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Additional Documentation
Fire Station No 7
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

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Figure 1
Fire Station No 7
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 2
Figure 3
Fire Station No 7
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 4
Fire Station No 7
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 5
Fire Station No 7
Shawnee County, Kansas
Name of Property County and State

Figure 6
Fire Station No 7
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 7
Fire Station No 7
Shawnee County, Kansas

Name of Property
County and State

Figure 8
Fire Station No 7
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 9
Figure 11
Fire Station No 7
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Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 12
Fire Station No 7
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Shawnee County, Kansas
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Figure 13

Figure 14
Fire Station No 7
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 15

Figure 16
Fire Station No 7
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

Figure 17
**Name of Property:** Fire Station No 7  
**City or Vicinity:** Topeka  
**County:** Shawnee  
**State:** KS  
**Photographer:** Tim Paris  
**Date Photographed:** Summer 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include a description of view indicating the direction of camera:

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Fire Station No 7
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State
Fire Station No 7
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State
Name of Property: Fire Station No 7
County and State: Shawnee County, Kansas

Photo 6

Photo 7
Fire Station No 7
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State
Fire Station No 7
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Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 10

Photo 11
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Photo 14

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Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 20

Photo 21
Fire Station No 7
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

Photo 22

Photo 23
Fire Station No 7
Shawnee County, Kansas
Name of Property
County and State

Photo 24

Photo 25
Fire Station No 7  
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas  
County and State

Photo 26

Photo 27
Fire Station No 7
1215 SW Oakley Ave
Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas
Fire Station No 7
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Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas