

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 Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6  
other names/site number DHR File No. 128-51

### 2. Location

street & number 1015 Jamison Avenue S E N/A not for publication  
city, town Roanoke N/A vicinity  
state Virginia code VA county Roanoke (city) code 770 zip code 24011

### 3. Classification

Owner/Type of Property <input type="checkbox"/> private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local <input type="checkbox"/> public-State <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	Category of Property <input type="checkbox"/> district s) <input type="checkbox"/> site <input type="checkbox"/> structure <input type="checkbox"/> object object	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> altar
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
		<u>0</u> 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 N/A

### 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 38 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Wayne C. Miller Dec 10, 1990  
Signature of certifying official Date

Director, VA Dept. of Historic Resources  
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:)

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: Firehouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social: Civic

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19 & 20 Century

Revivals: Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Composition

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**SUMMARY DESCRIPTION**

Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6 is located at 1015 Jamison Avenue, S.E., in Roanoke, Virginia. The early-twentieth-century building is a two-story, three bay, hipped-roof firehouse built to resemble an early twentieth-century Foursquare dwelling embellished with Classical Revival details. Constructed in 1911 when the city was changing from horse-drawn equipment to motorized vehicles, Firehouse No. 6 was one of the first fire stations to house an automobile fire steamer. The firehouse contains original features associated with its colorful civic purpose such as firepoles, broad double doors, and lockers. At the present time the firehouse functions as a meeting place for the League of Older Americans' Southeast Diner's Club and the Southeast Action Forum.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

Situated on approximately one acre of flat land, Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6 faces north. A few trees stand around the house, which is surrounded by a chain-link fence. The building is flanked on the east and west by single-family dwellings. The main (north) facade faces a street and the south elevation overlooks a church parking lot. the firehouse was constructed in 1911 to fit inconspicuously into a residential area.

The structure is set on a concrete foundation which measures about eighteen inches from the ground to the first floor level. This foundation supports a three-bay, two-story masonry structure measuring thirty feet by forty-four feet. In form, it is an American Foursquare. The building material is brick and is laid in American bond with five courses of stretchers laid between single courses of headers. Each brick measures seven and one-half inches by three and one-half inches. The mortar joints are two-thirds of an inch thick. The walls are twelve inches thick. A beltcourse is created from a vertical row of stretchers laid between the first and second stories of the building. The roof is clad in composition shingle.

Connected to the southeast corner of the firehouse is a two-story hose-drying compartment. It is approximately twenty-five feet in height. The compartment is designed to look like an exterior chimney stack. On the west elevation of the compartment is a board-and-batten door and on the

**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)  
Social History

Period of Significance

1911-1940

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Miller, Homer M.

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

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6 was constructed to supply Roanoke City with more adequate fire protection. The firehouse was built in 1911 for the growing Belmont neighborhood in southeastern Roanoke in response to locally established standards for the location of fire stations: the optimum distance that an engine company should travel to reach a fire in a residential area is between one and one and a half miles. The building remains significant today because it was designed to be compatible with the residential architecture of the suburban Belmont neighborhood and because it is one of the two surviving firehouses in Roanoke that first received motorized fire-fighting vehicles.

**JUSTIFICATION OF CRITERIA**

Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6 is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. It is eligible because of its association with the history of the introduction of motorized vehicles for fire protection in the early twentieth-century. It is also significant because it was designed to conform with the residential architecture of an early twentieth-century suburb.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6 is located in the southeast section of Roanoke in the Belmont neighborhood. "The Belmont neighborhood was founded in 1888 by the Belmont Holding Company when the company purchased 600 acres of the Tayloe estate in order to provide homes for employees of the railroad." Belmont was built as a suburb, one of many suburbs in the United States which dates from the turn of the century.

See continuation sheet

**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:

Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources  
221 Governor St., Richmond, VA 23219

**10. Geographical Data**

Acres of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 17 595160 4125080  
 Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Laura Betsy Guilliams  
 organization Center for Historic Preservation date January 1990  
 street & number Mary Washington College telephone 703-899-4037  
 city or town Fredericksburg state Virginia zip code 22401

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

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east elevation is an air vent. This structure is original to the firehouse.

The firehouse has six-over-six, double-hung-sash windows on the first story. On the west elevation, the northernmost window is bricked in. These window bays are topped by keystones and jack arches. The original six-over-six double-hung-sash windows of the second story were replaced with single-pane double-hung sashes after the original sashes were destroyed by vandalism in the 1980s. These windows are surmounted only by jack arches.

The doorways that define the central bays of the first story on the facade and south elevation are secured with pairs of board-and-batten doors. In the upper half of each door is a sixteen-pane window. The bottom half of each door has cross battens. Each door is about five feet in width and ten feet in height--large enough for fire equipment to clear. A three-foot-wide doorway is located west of the double doors on the facade. A single-pane window is in the upper half of the door. Above the door is a six-pane transom. All doorways of the building are surmounted by keystones and jackarches.

The basement of the firehouse was used as a coal room by the firemen. It is now empty. It can be reached through the door on the hose-drying compartment. A spiral cast-iron staircase leads to the first room in the basement. Another doorway opens into a larger room. A concrete partition wall bisects the basement story. The basement ceiling is made of reinforced concrete.

The plan of the first story of the firehouse is unpartitioned. The floor is made of poured concrete covered in linoleum. The brick of the perimeter walls are exposed. At the southwest corner is located a sink and toilet placed within a paneled partition about eight feet in height. Cast-iron radiators are located at the northeast and the southwest corners.

A major architectural feature of the room is the pressed metal ceiling. At the cornice line is a design of Greek key underneath a plain entablature. The ceiling is pressed in a design of coffers. Arranged in

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

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two rows on the ceiling are the circular pressed tin panels from which the original light fixtures hung. The original fixtures have been removed and replaced with fluorescent lights wired to the circular panels.

One original bronze firepole is located near the northwest corner of the room. Another is located at the southeast corner. A wooden single-run open-string staircase leads to the second floor. The wooden newel posts are square with one panel on each side. The balustrade has a plain wooden handrail.

On the second story, a hall is located at the top of the stairs. The kitchen is situated on the northwest side, a bedroom is on the east side, and a bathroom is at the south end. All of the walls of these second-story rooms are plastered. A wooden screen door leads into the kitchen from the hall. The wooden door leading to the firemen's old bedroom from the kitchen has six horizontal panels. Against the west wall of the old bedroom are the five original wooden closets or "lockers" that the firemen used to store their belongings. The closets are interconnected and each door has five horizontal panels. This old bedroom is the only room which has a wooden baseboard and cornice.

Another wooden door with six panels leads to the bathroom. The bathroom is at the south end of the second story. The bathroom, kitchen, and hall have dadoes which reach above the lower half of the windows. This room has wooden partitions about eight feet in height separating the toilets and showers. The wooden door leading from the bathroom to the hall has six horizontal panels. The firehouse also has a small attic.

The site has no outbuildings. The firehouse is set within a residential neighborhood known as Belmont. Presently, Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6 is used as a meeting place for the Southeast Action Forum and the League of Older Americans Southeast Diner's Club.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

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Many Americans at this time were influenced by the City Beautiful Movement that started at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. The movement encouraged communities to become more organized and attractive. Moreover, the early-twentieth-century popularity of the automobile as well as the development of streetcar lines, meant that people no longer had to live in the immediate vicinity of their work place.

During the late nineteenth century the development of Roanoke produced a need for improved fire services.

In 1885. . .the town of Roanoke had received from the legislature a charter making it a city, the population had increased to over 5,000, the city limits were extended, a Hustings court established, public schools opened, banks and loan companies doing business, the general offices of the Norfolk and Western [railroad] located, here, and the Roanoke Machine Works busy building five hundred freight cars for the New York New Haven and Hartford Railroad, giving employment to a thousand men, gas lights on the streets, fire companies organized.<sup>2</sup>

Fire companies were established to provide an important municipal service for the growing population.

Beginning in 1888 land companies were organized and did thriving business. The order of the day was to buy a lot and sell it before night at a profit, values soared, even far above the real value, but speculation in real estate was rife, Roanoke was on a 'boom,' it was not uncommon for a building lot to change ownership two or three times in a single day.<sup>3</sup>

One of these companies that bought land in 1888 was the Belmont Land Company.<sup>4</sup>

In the early 1900s, Roanoke was still a new city. The city directories of 1900 and 1911 show significant increase in Roanoke's population. On Jamison Avenue, where Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6 was built in 1911, the number of residences increased from twenty-three in 1900 to eighty-three in 1911.

By 1904 the building permits showed a marked increase over previous records, and from that date the upbuilding of the city and the erection of comfortable homes (owned in most instances by the occupants), have progressed on a scale which has not only elicited favorable comment from visitors, but has been viewed with surprise and gratification by the citizens themselves. Values are now permanent, and, the financial

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

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condition of the city and the stability of institutions are a guaranty that investments in Roanoke property are safe, and a satisfactory income assured.

To secure these neighborhoods of "comfortable homes," the city provided them with, among other services, fire protection. This service included:

six fire stations, three of which are equipped with automobile hose wagons, with chemical apparatus. There are three engine companies, which are horse-drawn. The discipline maintained is excellent and frequent fire drills are required in order to keep the department in a high state of efficiency.<sup>6</sup>

Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6 was built for this community in response to the local standards developed for the siting of fire stations. "The optimum distance that an engine company should travel for fighting in residential areas in 1-1 1/2 miles."

As a result of the population growth in the southeast section of Roanoke, the town council met August 8, 1910, and made "A resolution to purchase two lots for a fire station in the southeast section of the city [which] was read, considered, and passed by unanimous vote."<sup>8</sup> The deed for this property was purchased September 2, 1910, by the city of Roanoke from the Fidelity Realty Corporation "for and in consideration of the sum of ten hundred and fifty dollars (1050.00) cash in hand paid."<sup>9</sup>

By 1911 the plans for building the firehouse were underway. Three firehouses were to be built in Roanoke at the same time. On February 4, 1911, the Roanoke Times reported that

All three of the stations will be built according to the same design which has been made by H. M. Miller, the architect. The buildings are to be thirty feet by thirty-four feet and will be constructed of red Salem brick and trimmed with Gray Bedford limestone. The stations will be two stories high. The roof will be of slate. The first floor will be constructed for the storage of the automobile apparatus. The second floor will be devoted to sleeping rooms for the use of members of the department.<sup>10</sup>

On September 5, 1911, all three of these fire stations were put into service. "Southeast Roanoke was now placed in the front ranks of Virginia for fire protection."<sup>11</sup> Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6 had two shifts of men working--an "A" shift and a "B" shift, each with five men. Each shift worked twenty-four hours on-duty and twenty-four hours off-duty year round with no holidays. The men got one holiday per year after July 1, 1961. By March 1971 the fire station was organized with three shifts of men "A", "B", and "C."<sup>12</sup> Each shift had five men.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

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The firehouse was one of the first in Roanoke to receive motorized vehicles. In 1911 "the city purchased its first automobile Fire Steamer which was placed in the Fire Station at Belmont. The picturesque fire horses were on the way out."<sup>13</sup> The motorized fire steamers and hose wagons could get to the scene of a fire more quickly and efficiently than the horses.

Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6 served the Belmont neighborhood for about sixty-eight years. A new building was erected and occupied on January 2, 1979 to replace this firehouse because of the increase in size of the fire equipment. Firehouse No. 6 is now used as a meeting place for the Southeast Action Forum and the Southeast Diner's League of Older Americans.

Of the three firehouses built in 1911 only two remain standing. Architect H. M. Miller designed Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6 to fit inconspicuously into this residential area. The intentions of Roanoke City to provide adequate fire protection for residential areas are portrayed in Roanoke City Firehouse No. 6.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

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ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership: Belmont. (Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership, 1981), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>I. M. Warren, Story of Roanoke. (Roanoke: Work Progress Administration, 1940), p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>5</sup>George S. Jack and E. B. Jacobs, A History of Roanoke County and a History of Roanoke City. Unpublished manuscript, 1912, p. 96.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>7</sup>Fire Stations: A Long-Range Development Plan. (Roanoke Department of City Planning and Roanoke City Fire Department, October 1963), p. 16.

<sup>8</sup>Roanoke Common Council Journal #8, 1 September 1908-20, September 1914, p. 3190.

<sup>9</sup>Roanoke City Deed Book 226, p. 34.

<sup>10</sup>"Fire Stations to be Ornamented," Roanoke Times, 4 February 1911, p. e.

<sup>11</sup>Raymond Barnes, A History of Roanoke. (Radford: Commonwealth Press, 1968), p. 488.

<sup>12</sup>Interview with Mr. Maurice Wiseman, retired Fire Captain, 20 October 1989.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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- Fire Stations: A Long-Range Development Plan. Roanoke, Virginia: Department of City Planning and City Fire Department, October, 1963.
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- Roanoke Common Council Journal 8, 1 September 1908-20 September 1914.
- Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership; Belmont. Roanoke, Virginia: Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership, 1981.
- Roanoke Scrapbook, located in the Virginia Room at Roanoke City Library, dated 30 November 1936 and 9 December 1963.
- Saul, Edith. Interview, 18 November 1989.
- Walsh's Roanoke, Virginia; City Directory for 1900. Charleston, South Carolina: Walsh Directory Company, 1900.
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- Warner, Sam Bass. Streetcar Suburbs. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962.
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- Wiseman, Maurice, retired Fire Captain. Interview, 20 October 1989.
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

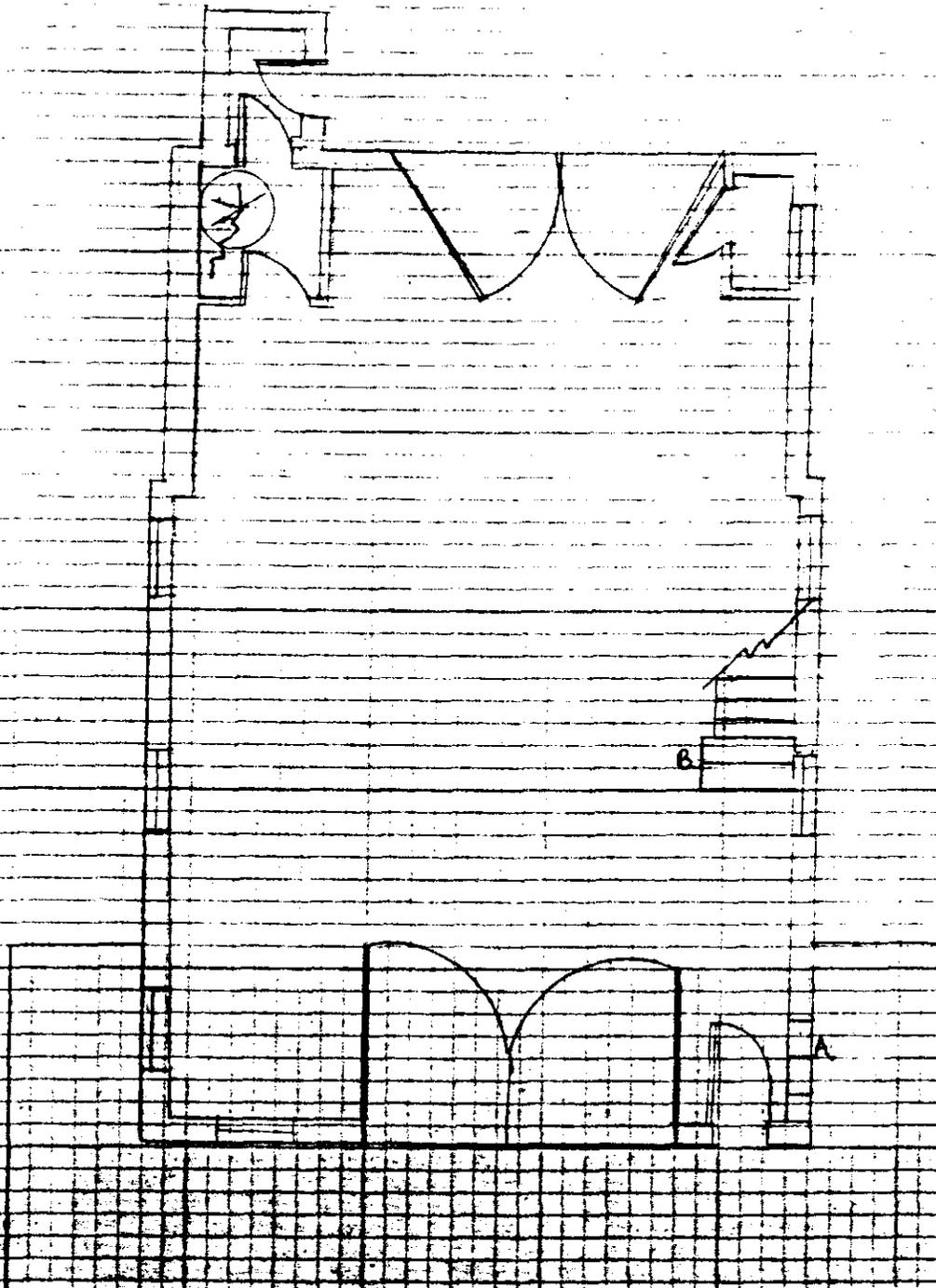
Beginning at a point 80' west of the southwest corner of the intersection of Jamison Avenue and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, proceed west 80' along the south curbline of Jamison Avenue, thence south 130' along the western property line of 1015 Jamison Avenue, thence east 80' along the rear property line, thence north along the eastern property line to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

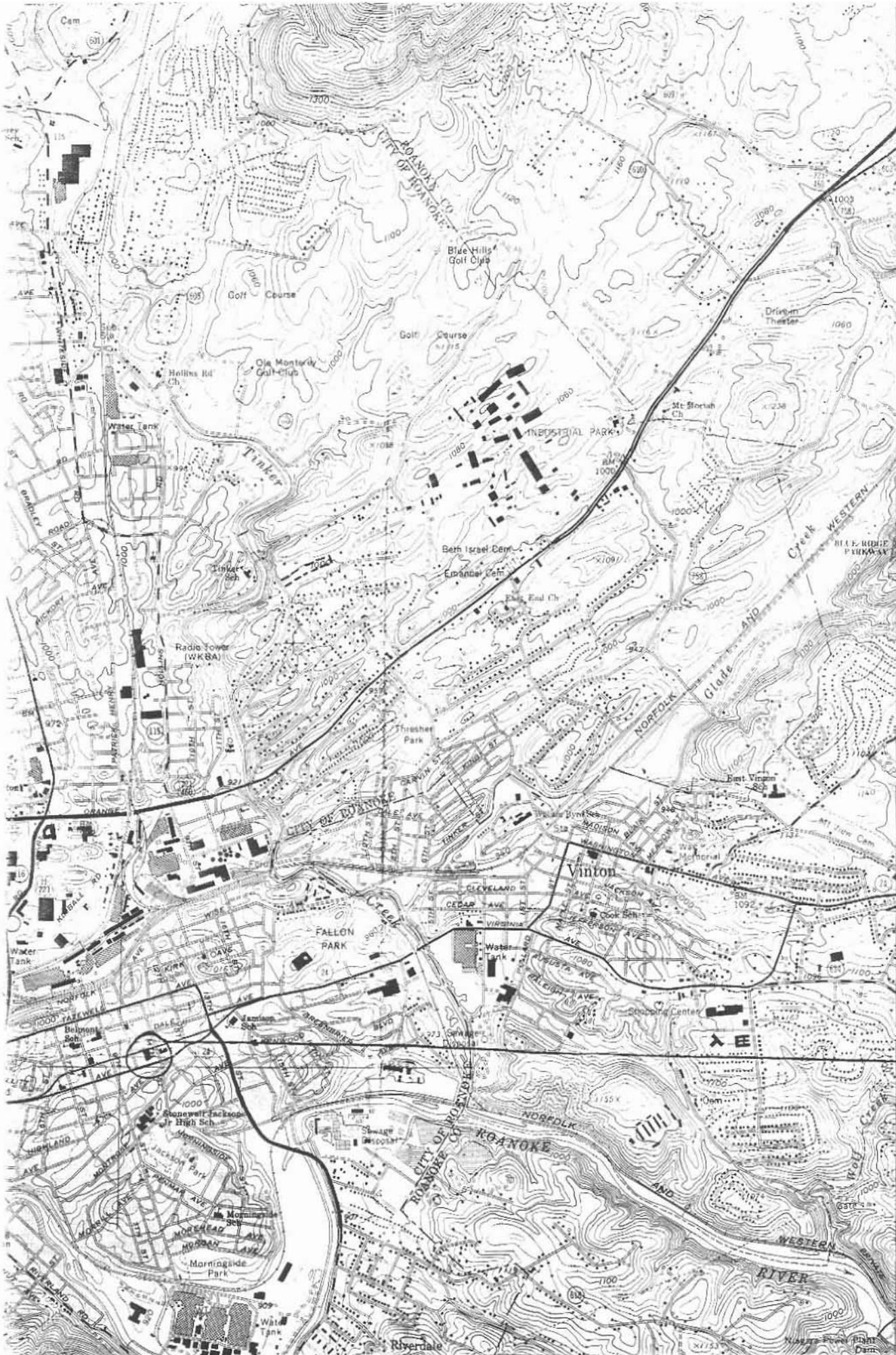
The boundary includes the parcel of land purchased by the City of Roanoke in 1910 for the purpose of establishing a municipal fire station.

↓  
NORTH

OCTOBER 26, 1989  
FIREHOUSE NO. 6  
S.E. ROANOKE



A enclosed window  
B concrete steps



VILLAMONT 8 40  
 4130  
 (STEWARTSVILLE) 5058 IV SE  
 4129  
 4128  
 17°30"  
 4127  
 4126  
 STEWARTSVILLE 5 MI  
 1 1/2 MI TO VA 122

Roanoke City Firehouse  
 No. 6 128-51

UTM REFERENCE  
 17/595160/412508

4124000m N