

Main Street Fire Station

148 Main Street
Kingston , NH



Main Street Fire Station built in 1948

Photo by Walt Roy

At Risk Historical Building Documentation

Prepared for the
Kingston Heritage Commission

Main Street Fire Station

At Risk Building Report

Report Coordinator

Bob Bean

Contributing

Walt Roy – Photographer

Special Thanks to

Gordon Bake

Mark Furlong

Published 2023

Kingston, NH

Main Street Fire Station

At Risk Building Report

Table of Contents

Topic

1. Introduction and Reasons to Consider Building “At Risk”
2. History
3. The Building, Floor Plans
4. Pictures of the Building

Introduction

And Reasons to Consider the Building “At Risk”

The Main Street Fire Station has been a part of the Kingston Plains for as long as most of us can remember. However, it was originally constructed in 1948 and expanded in 1969. As a result it was only 35 years old in 1983, when the 1983 Cultural Survey of Kingston was conducted. That report only included buildings more than 50 years old. As a result the Fire Station was not included in that report. When it was determined to replace it in 2020 and demolish the original Main Street Station, the need to document and photograph the old building was important, as very little documentation existed.

The town's old and historic buildings don't always last forever. And once they are gone future generations can only learn about them from pictures and documents that have been left behind. There was only a small window of opportunity to photograph and document this building before it was torn down. As a result there were many things we should have measured, and recorded that didn't get done, and thus did not make the report. For that I apologize.

Gathering the information on this report has been an interesting project. As part of that effort I conducted two oral interviews, one was with Gordon Bakie, a long time resident and past Fire Chief. The other was with Mark Furlong, the chair of the committee that developed the plans for the new Fire Station. Each provided a great deal of information, some of which has made it to this report. The entire interviews are in the data disk attached to this report. In addition, I believe the variety of photographs will tell the story. For the printed report we selected a small representative sample. There are many more also on the data disk. Thanks to Walt Roy for his consistent efforts to document this (and other) building with his talented photographs.

History of the Main Street Fire Station

When Kingston first formed a Fire Department in 1883, there was little equipment, and it was probably stored at the homes of the Firemen.

But by 1894 the first hand pumper was bought, and in 1895 the Building behind the Town Hall (The First Fire Station) was built to accommodate it. That pumper is still owned by the town. In the 1950s and 1960s the old First Fire Station was used as a hall for dance studios and other town events. In the 1970s it became the first building of the new Kingston Museum,

In 1925 a Graham Dodge fire truck was bought, but it required more space than the old Fire Station could handle. So the truck was housed at Clark's Garage on a lease basis. Some of the firemen worked at the garage and it seemed to be convenient.

In 1928 the old Town Hall burned to the ground, and the new pumper truck was used to fight that fire.

Also in 1928 the town bought an old truck from Walter Modlick and converted it to a Brush Truck for remote fires.

Over the following years many fire trucks were bought. Some were kept at Clarks, some at the old fire station, some in the basement of the new Town Hall, and some in the South Kingston Station. By the late 1930s a new station was needed.

The war years put a hold on many of those concerns. But right after the war, Kingston started to get back to normal.

The location of the old Plains school house on the corner of Main and Rockrimmon was chosen as a new site for a Fire Station. It fronted on 148 Main Street.

The old school house was sold, and moved to Brentwood in 1948. Gordon Bakie remembers seeing it on the trailer as it left town.¹ Recent efforts to document its' location have been unsuccessful. Gordon believed it to be one of the two buildings next to the new Brentwood Fire Station. But discussions with the building's owners could not confirm that.

In 1947, a building committee was selected for this new Fire Station, with a budget of \$6500. In 1948 they added another \$3500, and then again in 1949 they needed \$3655 to complete the build. But they weren't done because they needed another \$1350 for a heating system. That amount was reduced in 1950 to \$1,165. So total appropriations for the building were \$14,820.²

On the first of January, (in 1949) the Kingston Fire Department moved into the new firehouse.

A 6x6 WWII type truck was purchased at Portsmouth and converted into a 2000 gallon tanker by the Boston Steel Mfg. Co.

¹ From oral interview with Gordon Bakie 4/6/2023.

² From Kingston Town reports for 1947, 48, 49 & 50.

The Model A brush truck was scrapped and the old Graham Dodge truck was relocated to South Kingston.³

In 1967, the town voted to build the addition to the Fire Station that fronted on Rockrimmon Road.

In 1973, the offices of the town Police were located in the second floor of the new addition. By 1982, it was obvious that the station was too small for both fire and police. That year a motion to build a new police station was voted on, but it failed.

In 1985 an article passed to spend \$500 on an engineering study to build a Police Safety complex adjacent to the fire station. They also put \$15,000 into the capital Reserve fund for the new Police Station. In 1986 the vote to put \$10,000 into the Capital Reserve was not passed.

It took until 1994 before the present Police Station was finally built, and the Police moved out of the Fire Station.

By 2018, the Fire Station building was felt to be too small, and it was believed to be inadequate to support the current and future operations anticipated.⁴

Further key drivers included:

- It lacked ADA compliance
- It would be Cost prohibitive to renovate or add an addition to the building
- Plans at that time were to operate out of a central station.
- Apparatus bays were very small
- There were very limited storage spaces
- Gear was stored on the apparatus floor
- The (old) building lacked proper decontamination areas
- There were limited showers for responders after a fire or other incident
- The water source was inadequate to fill trucks
- There were no sleeping quarters
- There was poor bay lighting
- There was no ability to store equipment inside the building

In 2018 a warrant article to build a new station at 24 Main Street / Wadleigh Point Road was defeated.

³ Kingston Fire Association Open House brochure, June 1959

⁴ From presentation titled "Proposed Kingston Fire Station" from the Kingston Fire Station Building Committee and SMP Achitecture and Bauen Corporation, 2019.

In 2019 a new proposal to expand the footprint of the land at the existing Fire Station and build a new building was approved, and construction began.

By 2022, the new station was complete, and the old building emptied.



Arial shot from Google Earth, taken 4/2023.

Demolition began and in a short time the Main Street Fire Station was no more.

For 74 years the Main Street Fire Station served as the emergency hub of the town. The building Serviced Fire, Rescue, and Police during that time.

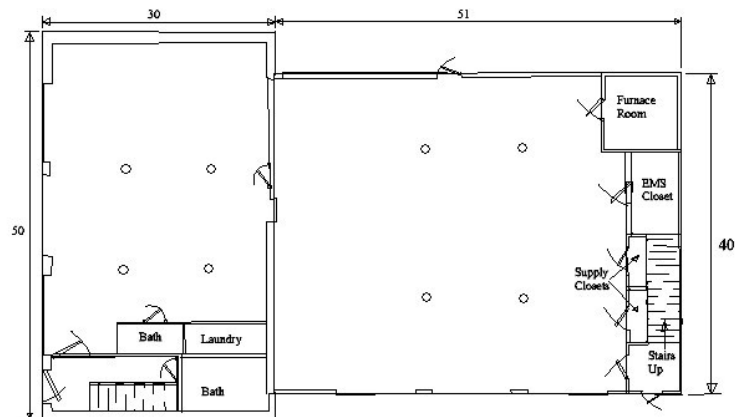
List of Fire Chiefs that Served in the Building:

George B. Stevens –	1924-1949
William G. Simes	1950-1955
Robert F. Nichols	1956-1957
Alfred L. Moore	1957-1967
William H. Friend	1968-1973
Gordon J. Bakie	1982-1983
William J. Pellerin Jr.	1983-1983
Donald W. Briggs Sr.	1983-1986
William A. Timmons Jr.	1987-1992
Norman R. Hurley	1992-2005
N. William Seaman	2005-2019
Graham Pellerin	2019-

Building Plans

Kingston Fire Station
Main Street
Ground Floor

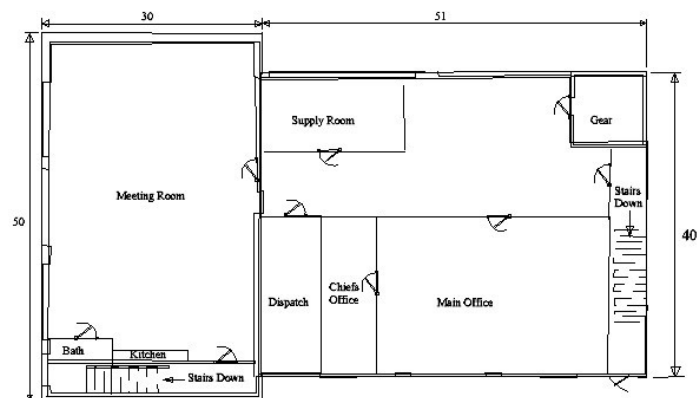
Note: Dimensions approximate
Drawn: 6/2023



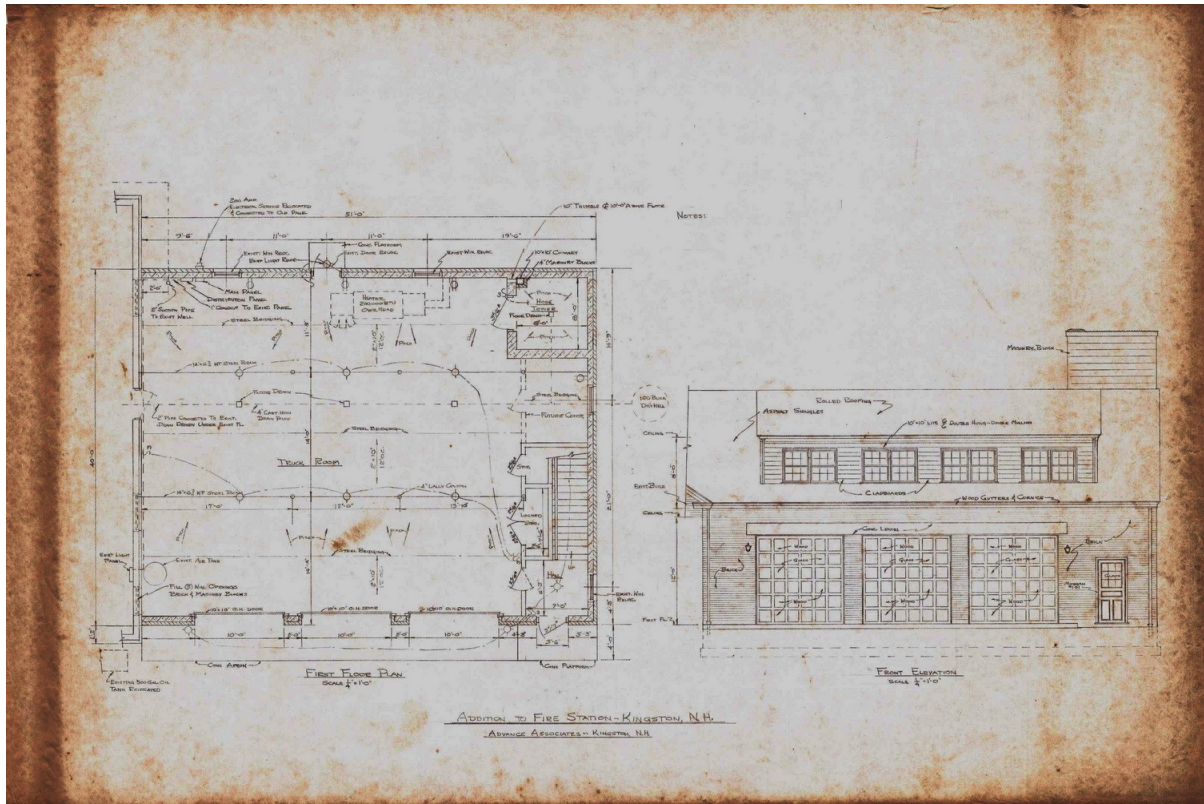
Kingston Fire Station
Main Street

Second Floor

Note: Dimensions approximate
Drawn: 6/2023



1967 Addition Plans



Pictures

Last Crew at the old Fire Station



- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1- Jason Fellows | 9- Kelly O'Brien Muldoon |
| 2- Bill Milburn | 10- Graham Perllerin |
| 3- Nat McDonald | 11- Steve Turner |
| 4- Jason McKean | 12- John Merrill |
| 5- Corey McGlaughlin | 13- Doug Butland |
| 6- Bob Esty | 14- Pat Casey |
| 7- Bill Perllerin | 15- Mike Mallen |
| 8- Brian Gallant | 16- Kent Walker |

Photo taken by Walt Roy, 11/2021 before demolition began.

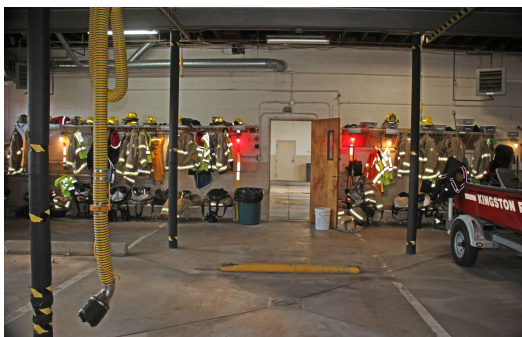
Main Street Fire Station Photo Gallery



Original Fire Station
Front Main Street view of the old Fire Station
Photo by: Walt Roy



Side View
Side View of the newer wing on the Fire Station
Photo by: Walt Roy



Front Bays
Street View of the main section of the Fire Station
Photo by: Walt Roy



Newer wing
View out the doors of the newer wing
Photo by: Walt Roy

Main Street Fire Station Photo Gallery



Main Office
View looking into the main office on the second floor
Photo by: Walt Roy



Upstairs Hall
Looking down the hallway on the second floor
Photo by: Walt Roy



Main Upstairs Hall
View of the main meeting room on the second floor
Photo by: Walt Roy



Begin Demolition
Demolition begins on the front section.
Photo by: Walt Roy

Main Street Fire Station Photo Gallery



Front Demo Done
View of the newer wing about to be demolished
Photo by: Walt Roy



Demo Cleanup
Demolition needs to be cleaned up
Photo by: Walt Roy



Demo Done
Both sections of the Fire Station demolished
Photo by: Walt Roy



New Fire Station
Note concrete header from old station
Photo by: Bob Bean