

The Firehouse Story

The rapid growth of Fairhaven during the years 1889-1892, prompted a flurry of construction financed by a few developers anxious to profit from the expectation that the town would prosper economically as a deep water port and railroad terminus. These developers, anxious to protect their investments, provided money for fire-fighting equipment that could be used in case of disaster.



The original Fairhaven station and later Bellingham Fire Department Station No 2 was located on Donovan Avenue.

Photo: Center for Pacific Northwest Resources

In 1927, a new facility for Station #2, designed in the Spanish Mission style by local architect, F. Stanley Piper, was constructed at 1314 Harris Avenue for \$15,000 on property sold to the City by Cyrus Gates for \$1.00.

The station housed a crew of six firefighters plus equipment. As fire equipment became larger and more sophisticated, the double doors of the original structure were replaced by a single overhead door. This station served the community for over seventy years.

When a new station was built at 1590 Harris Avenue, this structure was surplus in 2002 by the Bellingham City Council, placed on the Local Historic Register and offered for sale for adaptive reuse.



Purchased in 2002 by Matt Christman, it was remodeled by Mike Smith, architect with the Zervas Group, and McConnell Construction. In 2006, the Old Fairhaven Fire Station opened as the Firehouse Performing Arts Center along with an adjacent cafe and offices



The Center was purchased by Teresa Dalton in 2018.

Renamed the FireHouse Arts and Events Center, it is dedicated to connecting the community with the Arts and includes the FireHouse Cafe.



The FireHouse includes a neighborhood pocket park which was landscaped at the back of the building and features a magnificent oriental plane tree planted by firefighters, Roger Iverson and John Kunnap during the early 1980s.

That lot had once been used to dump gravel, which made for a "rocky" start when the sapling was first planted. Looking at the large tree today, that seems very hard to imagine.

When the fire station became a community performing arts center, the city gave the building protective landmark status which also applies to the tree.



Fairhaven's Hidden Historic Map

Behind a wall at the Fire House Performing Arts Center there is a large map of early Bellingham. The map was created sometime after the 1927 opening of Fire Station #2 and updated until the early 1960s.



Today, the Firehouse is home to many performing arts and health activities including T'ai Chi, yoga, ballet, modern dance, adult and young adult dance workshops and

camps. It hosts numerous musical and plays and once a month hosts an Open Mic program.

When it is safe for our return, we will once again enjoy the beauty and historical significance of the Firehouse Arts and Event Center.

Thank you all again for your generous support of this amazing venue integral to the story of Fairhaven, Bellingham, Whatcom County and surrounding areas.

Peace.

Linda