

# Auckland Council District Plan (North Shore Section)

## Proposed Plan Change 38

### Proposed New Item

#### Appendix 11A: Schedule of Buildings, Objects and Places of Heritage Significance



**Name:** Takapuna Fire Station

**Address:** 41-43 Killarney Street, Takapuna

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ID: 550	Category: B	Use:	DP Map: 26
Material 1:	Condition:	Cultural Heritage:	
Material 2:	Integrity:	Streetscape:	

Construction Dates

From: 1952 (original building on site, 1959 (main fire station building) To: 1972  
(fire training building)

Alteration Dates:

Legal Description: Lot 4 DP 168938

Zoning: Residential 2B

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**Architect/Designer/Contractor:**

Walker Hillary and Swan architects (1959 building)

Mark-Brown Fairhead and Sang (1972 fire training building)

**Architectural Style:**

Post War modern

**Reference Source:**

Shaw Peter A History of New Zealand Architecture, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition  
As footnoted below

**NZHPT Listing:**

Not registered by NZHPT.

**Significant Elements:**

The original 1952 fire station on the site is the small one-storeyed brick building on the western boundary. The 60ft x 24ft building was built as a temporary station to serve as headquarters for the North Shore, and utilised equipment from the old HQ in Devonport.

The main 1959 fire station building is two storied, with rectangular floor plate and flat roof. The eastern portion contains offices and various other accommodations and facilities and is constructed around an open courtyard. To the west, double height engine bays are covered with a raised low gabled roof with glazing and this is joined to a single storied structure with a hose drying and training tower at the rear.

The new design was described in the North Shore Advertiser in 1955;

*"The proposed station will have three bays for six machines with a watchroom and small battery room adjoining, hoses stores, station store, smoke chamber, breathing-apparatus room, hose drying and training tower, with hose repair room and store nearby; accommodation for 12 single men, with a locker room, toilets, laundry facilities and boiler room and drying room; large district store with store officer's room, general office for public, offices for secretary, fire chief and deputy-chief, large board room and writing room for single men.*

*A large recreation room for the whole board area for both single and married men and including volunteer firemen is shown, with a combination dining room and kitchen for the use of single men and for supper entertainment in the recreation room.*

*The writing room will enable a fireman to write or entertain a guest away from his quarters. The smoke chamber layout has been planned to take the usual training run with obstructions and yet gives viewing vision and quick access or egress and air clearing for safety measures. The 12 single rooms all face north. There is no difficulty with floor levels as all firemen have a good, easy, quick access to the appliances.*

*Visitors will be able to approach the building by the main entrance and go to the recreation room without any upset to the station. The layout of the building is such that the particular function of each block is distinct and separate and in no way does it interfere with the working of any part. Additional space can be added<sup>1</sup>".*

The station building is constructed of concrete and fairfaced brick with the reinforced concrete structural frame clearly exposed at first floor level.

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<sup>1</sup> North Shore Advertiser 20/12/55

On the eastern side of site adjoining the Killarney reserve is the fire training building constructed to the design of architects Mark-Brown Fairhead and Sang in 1972.

**Extent of Listing:**

Entire exterior of 1952, 1959 fire stations and 1972 fire training building.  
Excludes existing double galvanized garage.

**History:**

On 18 March 1948, the North Shore Fire Board was constituted under the Fire Brigades Act. From 1 April, the Board assumed responsibility for fire protection of the four boroughs of Birkenhead, Devonport, Northcote and Takapuna. One of the first actions of the Board was the purchase of a site in Killarney Street for fire headquarters and accommodation.<sup>2</sup>

On 17 April 1952, the Takapuna Fire Brigade relocated from its old station in The Strand to a more modern, well-equipped station on the newly acquired site in Killarney Street. The new 60ft x 24ft temporary station was to serve as headquarters for the North Shore utilising equipment from the old HQ in Devonport. Freed of the congestion that the previous station had encountered, around Hall's Corner, the new building now had quick and easy access to Birkenhead, Northcote and Devonport.<sup>3</sup>

At this stage, the plans for the proposed main station had not been drawn up and it was anticipated that it would be some four or five years before it was completed. The six and a half acre site had 20 sections on which homes for the firemen and the station officer were to be erected as well as a planned recreational area.<sup>4</sup>

By September 1957, the North Shore Fire Board had instructed its architects, Walker, Hillary and Swan, to proceed with the plans and specifications for its £100,000 headquarters station and to call for tenders as soon as possible. The main aim of the Board, at that stage, was to have the new station completed prior to the opening of the harbour bridge in order to cope with the anticipated commercial, industrial and residential development.<sup>5</sup>

Various firms involved in the construction of the Fire Station included: Contractors, Neil Dougan Ltd., specialists in commercial and home building; Bricklaying contractors, Bayes and Vuksich; Terrazzo contractors, North Shore Tile & Terrazzo Company, and solid plastering throughout by A.C. Thomson and Son Ltd.<sup>6</sup>

With its completion in August 1959, the North Shore Fire Centre was seen as a big step forward in the long term plan to consolidate training and control facilities in the one building and to provide a permanent home for the Fire Board. Considered to be one of the finest buildings on the North Shore, it was hoped that the new centre, with its modern fire-fighting features, would serve the area for at least 40 years. Of particular note was the 65ft earthquake resistant tower which was essentially built for

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<sup>2</sup> North Shore City Council Archives, R/Room - Takapuna Jubilee, 1913 – 1973: 112.

<sup>3</sup> *North Shore Times*, 9/1/1952:1; *New Zealand Herald*, 18/4/1952:8

<sup>4</sup> *North Shore Times*, 9/1/1952:1.

<sup>5</sup> *Building Progress*, September, 1957: 67.

<sup>6</sup> *North Shore Advertiser*, 26/8/1959:6.

training and practice but was also designed, through a vertical division, to be used for the drying of hoses.<sup>7</sup>

The building was officially opened on 29 August, by the Prime Minister, Walter Nash who, at the conclusion of his address, "...pressed a button which rang the fire alarm in the new station [and]...seconds later, to the high whine of the sirens, the engines tore out, their dazzling scarlet and brass making a most impressive sight".<sup>8</sup> It was not until October, however, that the new station was fully operational. In the interim, machines had remained in the old station until the complicated switchboard equipment had been transferred across.<sup>9</sup>

In 2003 plans to re-organise fire coverage on the North Shore, based on a predictive model as to where future fires might occur, included a proposal to relocate the Takapuna Station to a new site in Wairau Road.<sup>10</sup> As of July 2010, it was reported that while building was due to start on the site, at the corner of Currys Lane and Wairau Road, the station would not be moving from its current location for another 5 years. Because of the protracted plans to relocate, urgent maintenance had been deferred and the station was falling into disrepair<sup>11</sup> although, in 2005-6, around \$50,000 had been spent on refurbishing toilets and showerblocks and some painting.<sup>12</sup>

Other buildings designed by the architectural firm of Walker, Hillary and Swan, around the same time as the Takapuna Station, include: Central Fire Station, Rotorua (1956); NAC Terminal, Victoria Street (1957) and the New Zealand Forest Products Administration Block in Penrose (1958). Lewis Walker and Hillary also designed fire stations for Parnell and Waiuku, while G. Hillary and Co. designed the Otara Fire Station for the Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board.<sup>13</sup>

### **Statement of Significance**

While not of particular architectural significance, the original 1952 fire station has important historic and cultural associations in Takapuna.

The main fire station also has important historic associations, and is a good example of post war architecture in the area.

#### *Architecture:*

The station is a good example of Post War modern architecture with its flat roof and large glazed areas at first floor level. It follows the 'form follows function' dictum of this period where the separate functions of the station are clearly articulated and designed as separate but connected entities. The architects, Walker Hillary and Swan designed a number of other fire stations in Auckland and elsewhere.

#### *History:*

This station is significant because it consolidated fire protection for Birkenhead, Northcote and Devonport and was built before the bridge was opened in anticipation of an increased demand for firefighting services. In addition to its function as a

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<sup>7</sup> *North Shore Advertiser*, 26/8/1959:6. For a full description of the building see *NSA* 20/12/1955:14 and 26/8/1959:6.

<sup>8</sup> *North Shore Times*, 2/9/1959:1.

<sup>9</sup> *North Shore Advertiser*, 14/10/1959:4.

<sup>10</sup> *North Shore Times Advertiser*, 28/8/2003:1-2.

<sup>11</sup> *North Shore Times*, 13/7/2010: 3.

<sup>12</sup> *North Shore Times*, 24/1/2006:5.

<sup>13</sup> University of Auckland, School of Architecture, Sheppard Files: H649r and S972d.

station it also contained residential accommodation and offices for the North Shore Fire Board and is also a training centre.

The fire station is important in representing themes in the historic development of Takapuna including Government , Community Organizations and Facilities.

*Context:*

The station is located in the Takapuna residential area and surrounded by Killarney Park and is a local landmark.