

Worcester Telegram & Gazette
Sunday March 13, 2016 and Monday, March 14, 2016

Then & Now: Do you know where this is?



Posted Mar. 13, 2016 at 6:00 AM
Updated Mar 13, 2016 at 7:09 AM

This picture was taken five years after the demise of the area's largest employer, as the public debated the merits of shuttering the building.

In its heyday, this building played a key role in protecting a city neighborhood that rose to prominence through manufacturing, but has since declined as the nearby steel foundries closed one by one, even before it was staffed by full-time employees.

Designed by J.W. Patston and C.H. Lincoln, and built in 1891-92 by O. C. Ward for just over \$7,100, the 2½-story brick Romanesque-style building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

In front, the building has a single garage bay flanked by narrow windows on the first level, and five windows on the second level (the two outer ones matching the lower ones in size), and a Palladian window in a third-level gable projecting from the hipped roof. Decorative trim consists mostly of rockface sandstone, and there is a small carved sandstone cap at the gable's peak.

Innovative features abounded, including a direct link to the city's sewer system, which allowed horse manure to be hosed into pipes that led into the system.

Preservation Worcester listed the building on its first list of Most Endangered Properties, and it is the only one of the original eight properties still at risk. It made the list again in 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2013, as well as its Most Endangered Historical Properties in 2013.

It took 18 years from the time of this photograph to close this building, which has continued to deteriorate significantly as it has remained vacant. The property changed hands in 2013, with an expectation of renovations to come.

- *Sandy Meindersma*

Then & Now: 15 Blackstone River Road, the former Quinsigamond Village Firehouse



T&G Staff/Paul Kapteyn

Posted Mar. 14, 2016 at 6:00 AM

The Quinsigamond Village Firehouse in Worcester has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1980.

It was later known as the Millbury Street Fire Station and had an address of 837 Millbury St., until that section of Millbury Street was renamed Blackstone River Road. Millbury Street was reconfigured for the expansion of Route 146, which cut the street in two.

The firehouse served the village for nearly a century before it was shuttered in 1994, when the McKeon Road Fire Station opened.

The building remains a testament to the vibrant community that Quinsigamond Village was. Many of the buildings that gave the industrial village purpose have been demolished.

The firehouse is currently for sale, listed at \$169,000, by Capstone Realty Trust. Charbel Najem, Capstone Realty's trustee, purchased the station for \$100,000 in July 2013. At the time, Mr. Najem said that he planned to renovate the building for his real estate companies' offices.

Since then, Mr. Najem has made no physical renovations to the property. But he said that he has completed applications with the city's historical commission, conducted engineering studies, and obtained building permits.

He also said that there are grants available from the city, state and federal government that will aid in the building's refurbishment, provided that renovations maintain the building's original character.

The increased sales price reflects Mr. Najem's time and expense invested to conduct the studies and obtain permits.

Although Mr. Najem's corporate offices have located to Park Avenue, the old Millbury Street Fire Station still holds a soft spot for him.

"I would still like to be the developer that renovates it," he said.

- *Sandy Meindersma*