

SAVED BUILDING

Fire Station No. 6
1702 Washington Avenue

In 1903, a new fire station was built on Washington Avenue for the Houston Fire Department's Company No. 6. As the city grew from 9 to 16 square miles in area, the company, formerly a volunteer unit, had outgrown its facility near downtown. The new station was designed in the Italinat-style with brick walls, 27 windows, hot and cold running water, an indoor bathroom and enough space for the automated equipment then being developed. For almost three decades the firefighters at No. 6 answered every alarm with speed, courage and skill. By 1931, however, the building at 1702 Washington was deemed inadequate and was vacated as an active station. Over the next 70 years, the aging structure became privately owned and was used as a storage and auction facility.

In 2005, Tom Hair, president of Axiom, a Houston communications agency with clients worldwide, purchased the vacant building for his company's headquarters and began a lengthy, meticulous restoration. The architect for the project was Cliff Carlin of Carlin/White Associates and general contractors were Roger Caddell and his son, Jason Caddell, of 12-15 Corp. The original bricks were from Cedar Bayou in the Baytown area. Hair was able to reclaim enough Cedar Bayou bricks to construct an annex to match the appearance of the original building. Almost 60% of the original pine flooring was saved while reclaimed pine was used for the remainder. The structure's mahogany-framed windows were rebuilt using custom millwork to craft frames that matched the originals portrayed in old photographs of the station. The interior paint colors and wood trim were chosen to reflect the structure's heritage while the two original fire poles, one for the captain and the other for the rest of the firefighters, were restored to their shining and sliding glory. The high ceilings, open space and abundant natural light complement the historic elements in creating an inviting environment in which to work.

Axiom occupied their new quarters in February 2012. Upon completion of the restoration, Tom Hair explained that he wanted to do something that would allow residents in 100 years to say, "That's a great building." By capturing the spirit and character of historic Fire Station No. 6 while creating a 21st century purpose for the landmark, this great building will survive. In doing so, it will provide our city with the ultimate example of how historic preservation not only saves the built environment but also preserves our community heritage for future generations.