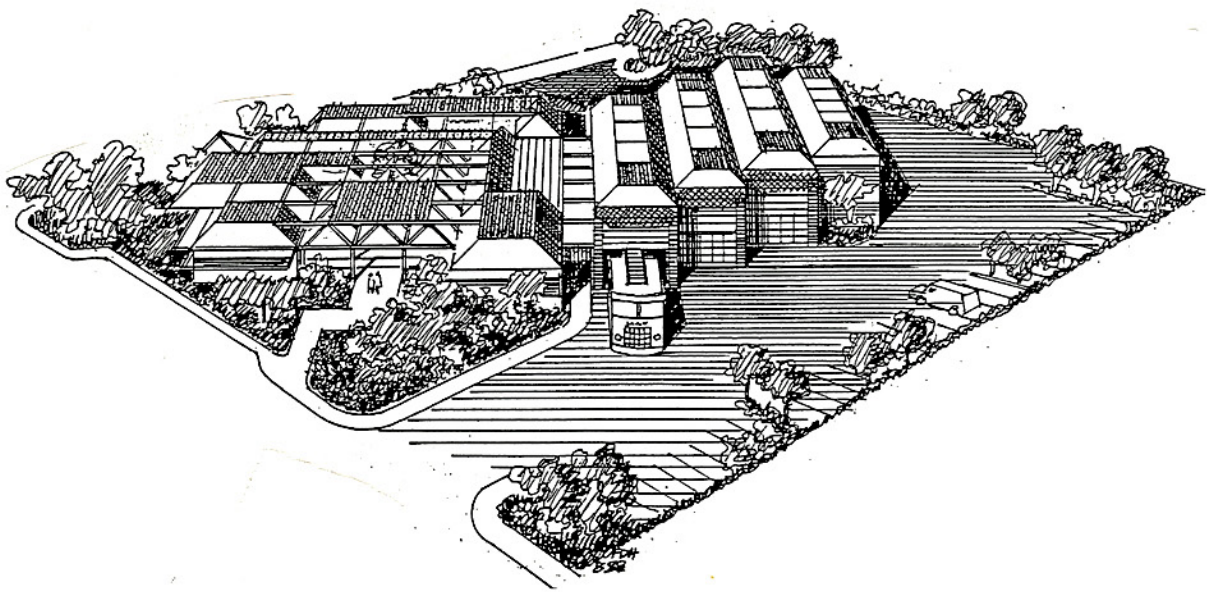
Hansen Designs Fire Station



Hansen Associates Architects and Planners of Tiburon, California, has been awarded the contract to design a new station for the Tiburon Fire District due to the firm's experience with municipal architecture, especially firehouses. Responsible for both architectural and interior design, the firm was selected to respond to the many technical needs of the project.

The new station is located in downtown Tiburon. Designed by Gary and Fani Hansen, it is composed of three bay apparatus rooms, an administration section, and the living quarters for the firefighters.

The site, a corner lot, permits the development of drive-through apparatus bays which are located well back from the curb line to provide adequate space for holding company drills. To ease the access to and from the public street, the apparatus bays are located at an angle to the public right of way. To preserve the small-scale building character in downtown Tiburon, the architects located the apparatus room and parking facilities for the firefighters and the volunteers at the rear of the site, screened from the road.

The one-story building is organized with respect to the operational relationships and an interior courtyard. All areas have quick, free access to the central apparatus room. The main goal for the design of the station was to develop a balance between institutional quality of the environment and the family atmosphere of the firehouse.

To achieve this, great care has been given to the relationship between the different functional areas. Meetings were held with the entire Tiburon Fire Protection District's staff for input. In order to facilitate the process, the architects presented a magnetic display of the various functional spaces in scale, based on the facility program. The floor plan was jointly developed with the firefighters. The layout respects the purpose and needs of the fire station while minimizing response time.

The administration is located near the public area. The public has access to it and the large meeting room but is isolated from the other areas. There is a complete separation between the administrative offices and firefighters' living quarters. A study and small conference room are located away from the living and eating areas. Sleeping quarters are away from the activity area but close to the apparatus room. The open kitchen, dining and lounge areas lend themselves to multipurpose use and are residential in character. Space for physical training with exercise equipment is provided near the apparatus rooms in a well-lighted and ventilated area.

The poor load bearing characteristics of the site soils suggested the need for light weight structures while the long-term interest in facilitating economical changes to the interior partition layout warrants a long span roof framing system. The architects used the appropriate technology to address the peculiarities of the site by proposing a lightweight steel spaceframe.

The module size design uses two basic components, chords and nodes, to achieve utility and aesthetics. The space frame modules distribute load stresses throughout the system and allow the courtyard to be left open. The open-air structure gives the possibility of being covered at a later date if desired.

The openness of the system allows for design feasibility of room dividers, placement of lighting fixtures and free access to mechanical duct work. Skylights bring natural light into the building's central areas. Building materials have been chosen for low maintenance. Exterior walls are concrete masonry, rough in texture. The structure is exposed steel with lightweight metal roof, characteristics of the area.

The forms of the building create an interactive place for work with inviting quality, retaining the character of the surrounding environment and integrating harmoniously within the Tiburon community. □