

Program Summary:

A new civic landmark in downtown Gretna, this fire station prioritizes public utility and emergency response for the nation's oldest volunteer fire company.

Program Statement:

Conceived as a forward-looking civic anchor, this fire station establishes a dynamic interface between public engagement and professional emergency response. Located at a gateway to downtown Gretna, the building is designed with intentional layering: welcoming public spaces up front, administrative and private areas beyond, and a highly functional apparatus bay at the rear.

More than a municipal facility, the building provides essential infrastructure for emergency coordination and community resilience. The project site was determined based on its central location within the city limits. It functions as a polling station, committee meeting space, and disaster response hub—an adaptable, civic-minded program that reflects the mission of the department it houses.

The architecture is both contextually sensitive and strategically assertive. A concrete wall, raised breezeway and landscaping create layers that buffer the building from a high-traffic corridor, ensuring privacy and reducing noise. The apparatus bay's rear positioning resolves a long-standing circulation conflict, eliminating disruptions to Lafayette Street while optimizing response times.

A-235.01

Building Area: (sf)
22,715 SF

Cost per Square Foot:
\$293 / SF

Construction Cost
\$6,663,657

Date of Completion:
October 2023

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Positioned at the threshold of downtown Gretna, the new fire station stands as a modern civic marker along historic Lafayette Street.

Its massing, scale, and materiality were carefully considered to reflect the rhythm of surrounding residential and single-story commercial buildings, reinforcing its connection to the neighborhood.

The result is a structure that introduces a distinct sense of place while integrating naturally into the existing urban fabric.

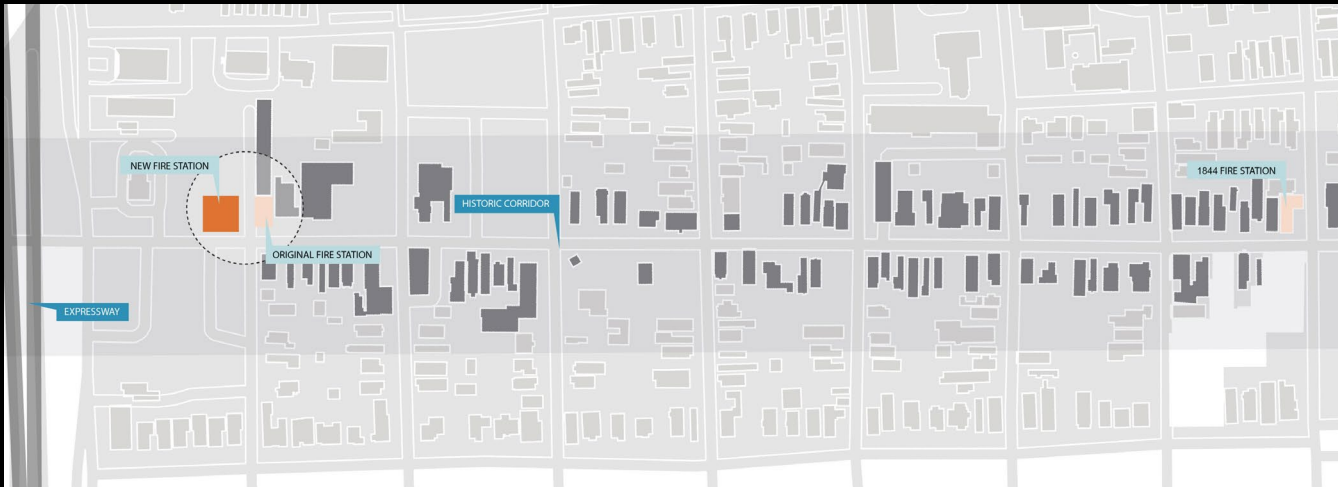


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Site Legacy & Architectural
Integration: Site Transformation &
Architectural Dialogue

What was once a vacant lot is now an active civic anchor that strengthens the architectural continuity of Lafayette Street. The new fire station complements the adjacent 1950s station and bookends the corridor with the original 1844 firehouse, creating a visual and symbolic dialogue across generations.

This modern civic building honors a legacy of service while projecting Gretna's commitment to resilience and community into the future.

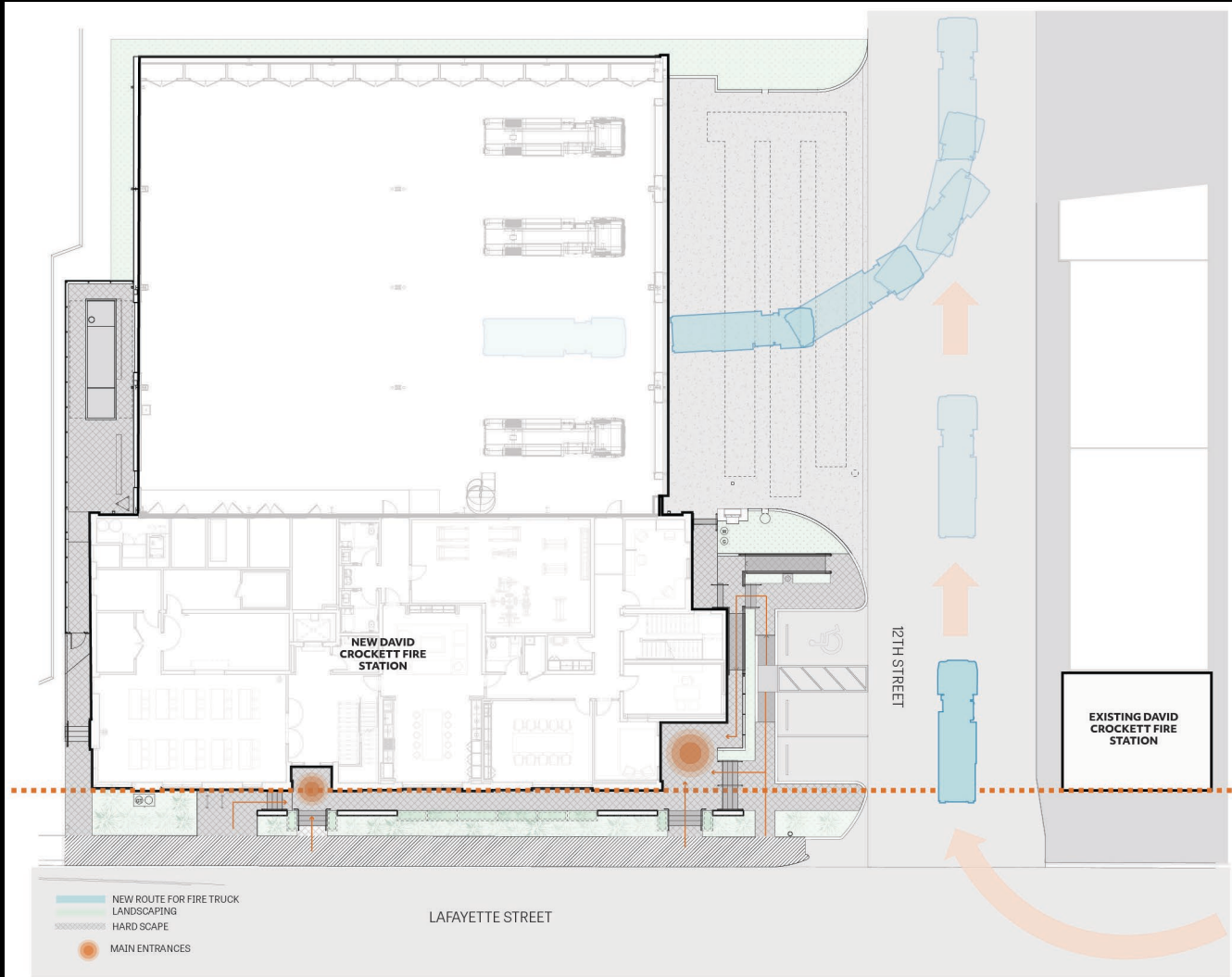


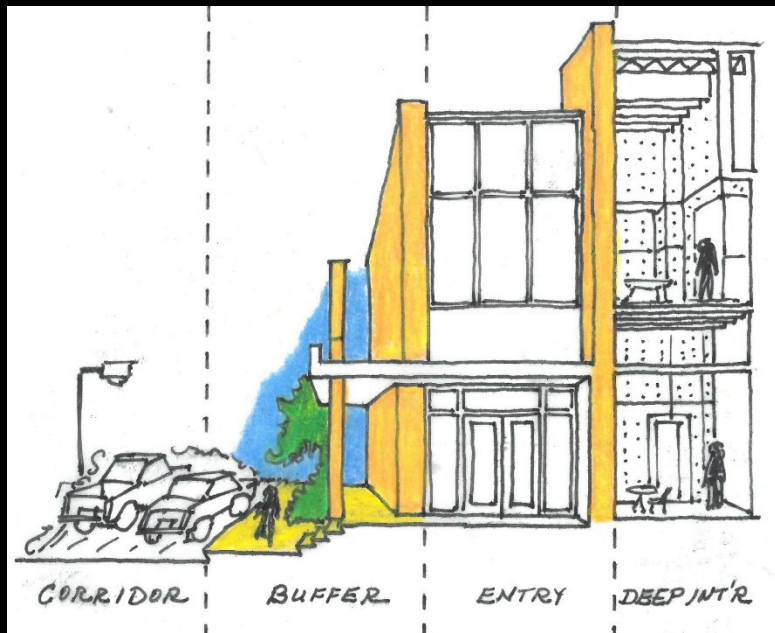
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Apparatus Bay Strategy: Reducing Impact, Enhancing Function

To improve both safety and efficiency, the apparatus bay was intentionally positioned at the rear of the site—resolving a longstanding conflict on Lafayette Street, where fire trucks once disrupted two-way traffic during emergency calls.

By utilizing a shared driveway, the design allows trucks to maneuver cleanly and discreetly, minimizing interruptions to both vehicular and pedestrian flow while enhancing response times.





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Addressing Street Proximity with Architectural Buffers

A cast-in-place concrete wall and extended roof overhang form a protective buffer between the fire station and busy Lafayette Street, shaping a clear and welcoming threshold.

This design move not only softens the building's edge but creates a sheltered pedestrian path leading to the community room.

Scaled to the individual, the façade elements reduce street noise and reinforce the station's walkable, civic presence.

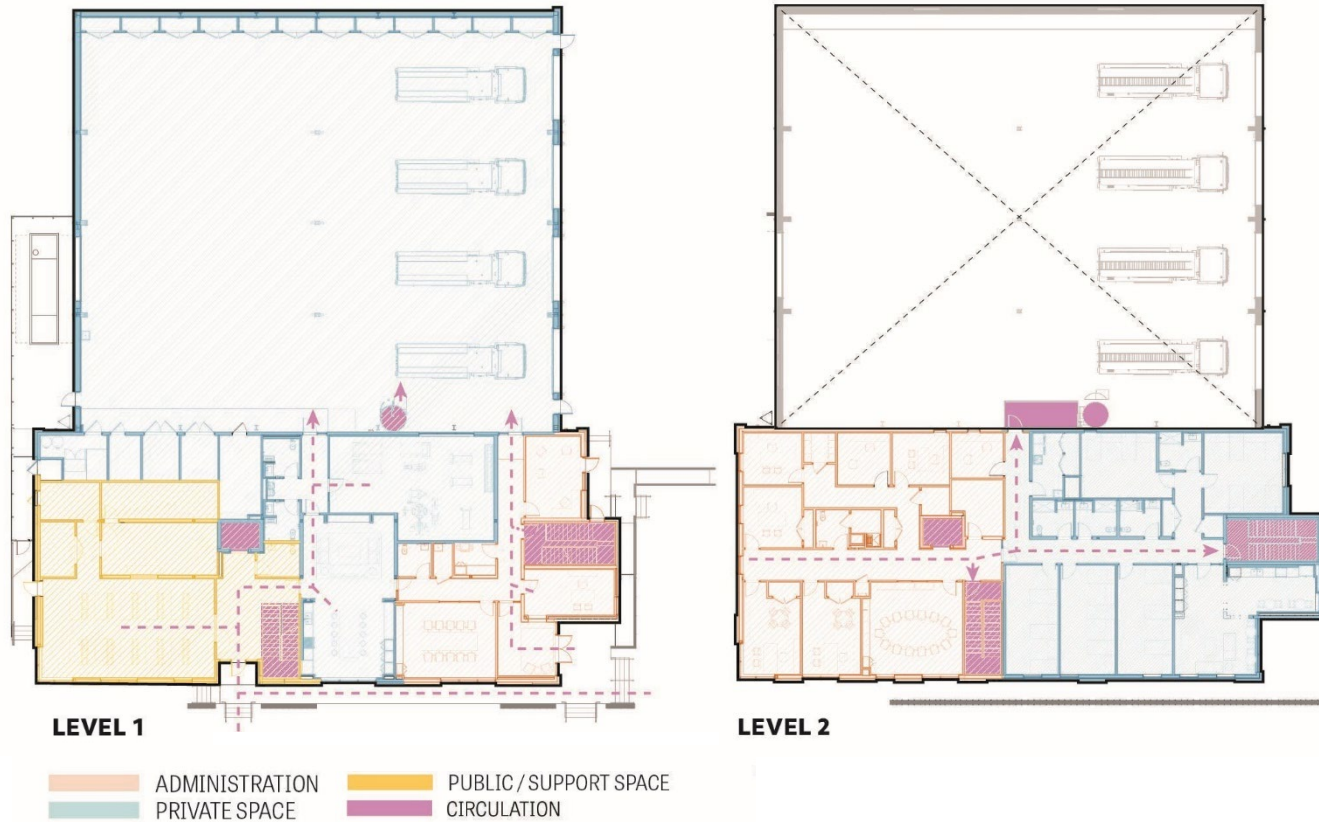


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Programming & Public Interface: Strategic Layering of Space Use

The building is organized with intentional layering to balance public access and operational efficiency. Community-facing spaces—like the lobby and meeting room—are placed near the front, while a separate, clearly marked side entrance leads to the community room via a sheltered walkway from the parking area.

Administrative zones are tucked deeper within, providing separation from the public. Closest to the apparatus bay, the dormitories and living quarters are strategically placed to support swift, uninterrupted emergency response.





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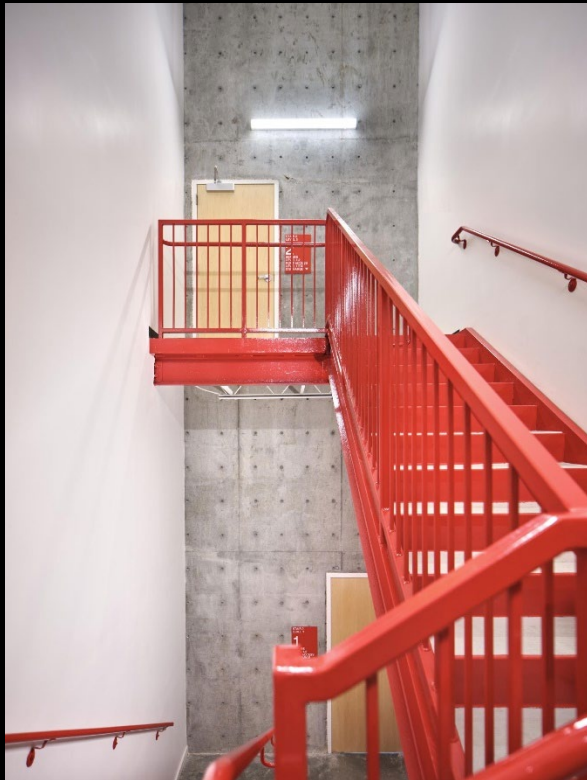
Emergency Response Functionality:
Optimized for Rapid Response

The station's layout was shaped through close collaboration with fire department leadership, ensuring that every decision supported rapid and efficient emergency response.

Clear sightlines, multiple egress points, and intuitive circulation paths were prioritized to minimize delay and maximize safety during high-pressure situations.

Just as critical was the input from end users—firefighters themselves—whose insights informed the placement and design of dormitories, kitchens, and shared spaces.

Three distinct kitchens, including a commercial-grade facility, allow the station to scale its operations in times of crisis, reinforcing its role as a reliable and resilient hub.





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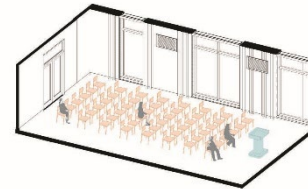
Community-Centered Flexibility:
More Than a Fire Station

The fire station is designed to function as a vital civic resource.

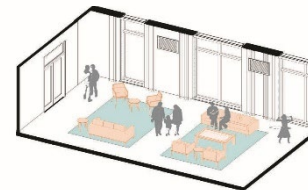
It serves as a voting precinct, a venue for committee meetings, and a government response center during emergencies.

Clear, well-lit circulation paths lead community members to shared spaces, reinforcing a sense of openness and public trust.

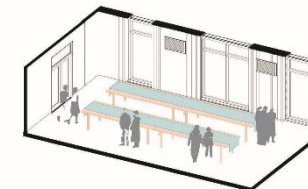
Behind the scenes, infrastructure and flexible programming allow the station to scale quickly—supporting parish officials, first responders, and residents in times of need.



ASSEMBLY



FAMILY GATHERING



POT LUCK



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A Continuation of Engagement and Legacy

The design and functionality are intended to appeal to young recruits, providing a modern and attractive environment that showcases the profession in a positive light and encouraging interest in joining the firefighting community.

The fire station's education program actively engages with elementary schools, offering tours to introduce students to potential careers in firefighting.



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Design for Community

The building maintains a welcoming presence, reinforcing public trust, civic engagement, and community integration.

