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West Seattle's new Fire Station 37: Sneak-peek tour

August 24, 2010 at 4:55 pm | In [Sunrise Heights, West Seattle news](#) | [20 Comments](#)



If you often drive through the Sunrise Heights/Gatewood areas, you've seen the [Seattle Fire Department's](#) new [Fire Station 37](#) taking shape [over the past year](#) at 35th/Holden ([map](#)) - and now, it's about a month away from completion. After watching its progress day by day, we asked for a sneak-peek inside - and got the chance on Monday afternoon. Our guides: Project manager [Teresa Rodriguez](#), architect [Brad Miller](#) from [Miller Hayashi Architects](#), and construction-team leader [Elliott Blom](#) from [Kirtley-Cole Associates](#):

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Among the sights at the [levy-funded](#) project site: A deck with a view of Mount Rainier!



But that space isn't just a deck - it's got something you might not expect to find at a fire station - read on for that, and the rest of the tour (*UPDATED 11:14 PM WITH PHOTO OF SCULPTURE THAT ARRIVED TODAY*):

The deck - last stop on our tour, which we slightly curtailed after reports of the Monday afternoon power outage started coming in right after we got up there - holds part of what's the station's future "[green roof](#)":



The green roof is part of what's expected to get the new Station 37 a [LEED Silver](#) certification, the project team says. (The station also has an old-fashioned "hose tower," more energy-efficient than mechanically drying the hoses.) As part of the deck's "green" space, there'll be a kitchen garden for the firefighters. And the garden won't be far from the new kitchen itself:



While the kitchen and rec room are upstairs, the sleeping quarters are downstairs. Rodriguez said that for every new fire station built with Fire Levy money, the teams were given the choice of whether they wanted to "sleep up or down" - and the Station 37 team chose "down." There are small one-person sleeping rooms downstairs, rather than a group bunk area. Plus, the ranking officer's suite:



But let's get back out into the area where you'll find the firefighting equipment, once the station's occupied:



New fire stations all have uniform apparatus-bay sizes, we were told - 67 feet long, 20 feet wide. But then there are the touches like this one's use of natural light - both from the skylights above, the rollup doors, and also the lower windows along 35th:



That also, Miller explained, will allow people walking by to see into the station, as will the windows on the entrance side along SW Holden, in a so-called "jewel box" effect. Another big difference between old stations and new stations - cleaning equipment separating the "dirty" - as in, just got back from the scene - area and "clean" - as in, sleeping and eating - areas ("old stations pre-dated the awareness of contaminants," Miller explained):



That's a sink in an area where firefighters will be able to clean off themselves and their gear - a shower is nearby too, as is an industrial-strength "washer extractor" to wash gear, separate from the "residential laundry" elsewhere in the station - before leaving the apparatus bays. Inside those bays is also where they will wash off the trucks:



That drain will go into the sewer system, ending the old-school ways of washing the truck right out front, with the water going into the storm drains and on into Puget Sound. Another environmental touch - attachments like these, to vent exhaust:



One more data point: This is the first fire station that Miller-Hayashi has designed ([see their renderings and models here](#)). The date for its dedication has not been set yet, according to Rodriguez. In the meantime, the old Station 37 a few blocks north remains in service, as the city proceeds with plans to sell it ([here's our story from last month](#)). But there's a little reminder of the station at the new one - look back up at that photo of the project-team trio - the cedar paneling they're standing in front of is in the rec room, and it's deliberately meant as an echo of the cedar inside the historic station that'll soon see its last call.

ADDED 11:16 PM: Thanks to Michael Oxman for sharing this photo of the Station 37 sculpture that arrived today (wasn't mentioned during our tour a day earlier but as we noted, we had to bolt for breaking news, or else maybe we'd have found out):



We reported here three years ago that Northwest artist Pete Beeman had been commissioned for the project - but had never been able to wrangle an advance look at what he'd decided to create.

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It certainly was time for a new Station 37! I remember visiting my uncle at the old station back in the 60's and I thought it was old then.

Comment by marty — August 24, 10 5:15 pm #

Well, now this is certainly a project that I don't mind my great-grandchildren paying off with their taxes!!!

Comment by Baba — August 24, 10 5:21 pm #

thanks for the preview !
who is the general contractor ?

Comment by sam — August 24, 10 5:39 pm #

Great story and pictures. Thanks WSB !

Comment by Kevin — August 24, 10 6:01 pm #

Sam - Kirtley-Cole. I just added that to the story - I had written down Eliot Blom's name incorrectly and was awaiting a note back on the proper spelling before adding that detail,

which is there now 😊 - TR

Comment by WSB — August 24, 10 6:26 pm #

"That drain will go into the sewer system, ending the old-school ways of washing the truck right out front, with the water going into the storm drains and on into Puget Sound. " Am I confused? I thought our sewer and our storm water were combined...hence all the talk about the CSO pump stations.

Comment by Kb — August 24, 10 6:38 pm #

Its taking shape fast,cant wait to see the final touches.Glad they finally put that ugly property to great use.

Comment by Alki Resident — August 24, 10 7:10 pm #

Even though I don't care for this style of architecture at all, I am so happy these firemen and women have a great new facility to better suit their needs. They deserve it all!!

Comment by Silly Goose — August 24, 10 7:48 pm #

Thanks again, WSB!

Comment by MMB — August 24, 10 8:50 pm #

Kb-

I pasted a link below to the city's GIS sewer line map for the fire station. You can see both sanitary sewers (usually center of the street) and separate storm sewers (usually about 8 or 10 feet away from the sanitary) adjacent to the station. Some parts of the city only have combined sewers (just the sanitary) while storm sewers are being added over time to keep relatively clean rainwater out of the sewage plants.

Even if a building is built where there is no separate storm sewer in the street a separate storm line is often installed in the building so that when a storm sewer line is installed years later they can be hooked up. In the interim both sanitary and storm lines are connected to the same pipe in the street. If you want to see really old hand drawn sewer cards click on the links in the link below.

<http://web1.seattle.gov/dpd/sidesewercardsv2/SSViewer.aspx?addr=7700,,35TH,AVE,SW>

Comment by ScottA — August 24, 10 9:01 pm #

Based on Pete Beeman's other sculptures, perhaps this one will move as well? If anyone gets to Portland, he did one of my favorites there on Burnside -

<http://media.lonelyplanet.com/lpimg/28494/28494-166/preview.jpg>

Comment by Donn — August 25, 10 12:28 am #

I sent him a note asking if maybe he can talk about the sculpture now that it's installed. Will also ask the project manager if by any chance he is here in town for the installation! Going to hop over for a firsthand look tomorrow, too. I can't think offhand of any other spot along 35th that has publicly prominent artwork - till The Totem Pole! - TR

Comment by WSB — August 25, 10 12:51 am #

ScottA,
Thanks. That explains it.
Kb

Comment by Kb — August 25, 10 6:36 am #

kb: the sanitary and storm sewers only combine during heavy rain events, hence CSO - combined sewer overflow.

Comment by mar3c — August 25, 10 6:51 am #

Very nice and taxes well spent! Does anyone know what will become of the old station? It would be a shame to see it torn down and replaced with some ugly multi unit building. Perhaps it will be classified as a "historic landmark" or something along those lines. It is a very interesting and eye appealing and I would hate to see it vanish into history as other West Seattle memories have.

Comment by JW — August 25, 10 7:24 am #

Loved the story-thank you! Fun to take a tour when I will never be able to. Yes please tell us what will happen to the beautiful old station-I love that building.

Comment by gatewoodmom — August 25, 10 8:56 am #

Okay... I'm obviously no artist nor do I have an eye for it. With that said, does anyone else think that this sculpture looks like a giant toothbrush?

Comment by sun*e — August 25, 10 9:01 am #

The story about the process for selling the old Station 37 is linked toward the bottom of this story (before the added photo of the sculpture).

Comment by WSB — August 25, 10 9:02 am #

mar3c, that's not quite right.

In areas of the city served by combined sewer, the sanitary and storm sewer lines are always connected. Most of the time all of the flow goes to the West Point treatment plant, where it is treated and discharged to the Sound. During heavy rain events, the volume of stormwater overwhelms the system and some of the flow is discharged without treatment directly into a nearby waterbody. That direct discharge of untreated stormwater and sewage is called a Combined Sewer Overflow or CSO.

King County has a decent illustration of the difference between combined and separated sewers [here](#), and here's a [map](#) of CSO locations.

Comment by owen — August 25, 10 9:07 am #

I was the station captain of Station 37 until 2000 and know the current station captain and can say they are chomping at the bit to get into their new station. It is a shame that they were not able to make the station a "drive-thru" (eliminates the need for the fire company to back into the station, blocking traffic) but it sure will address the many needs for this fire company. Can't wait to tour the station once opened.

Comment by patrick pavey — August 25, 10 12:54 pm #