

The KENDALL HOTEL




Saving Engine 7




*B*uilt in 1894, the Kendall Hotel was once an infamous Victorian firehouse, home to Engine Company 7. After its closing in 1993, the building fell into disrepair and was in danger of demolition until the Forsythe-Fandetti family uncovered this diamond in the rough.

In 1999, local artist, Charlotte Forsythe, and her developer husband, Gerald Fandetti, purchased the building, which they transformed into Kendall Square's first boutique hotel. The Kendall opened its doors to visitors and guests in 2002, and remains Cambridge's only historic boutique hotel.

This is the story of a Cambridge landmark's remarkable rebirth.



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In 1894-95, the Engine 7 firehouse was erected to serve a rapidly growing industrial area of Cambridge known as Kendall Square. The Queen Anne-style building was designed by Boston architects R.J. Fitzgerald and S.D. Mitchell. Whereas earlier firehouses were typically housed in the same buildings as police stations and other municipal offices, late 19th-century firehouses like this one were innovative, single-purpose buildings. They were designed to accommodate stables with a permanent team of horses, coal bunkers to fuel the new steam pumpers, maintenance facilities, and dormitories for the firemen.



Engine Company 7 served Kendall Square for nearly a century. The firehouse saw many advancements over the years, yet its firefighters were a motley crew who considered themselves the “black sheep” of the Cambridge Fire Department. When Engine 7 closed its doors in 1993, the building fell into neglect.

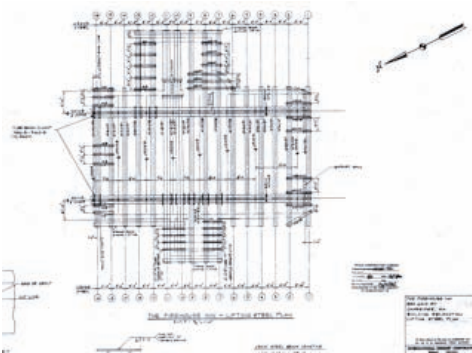


Meanwhile, Kendall Square was becoming the site of a major cultural shift: the technological revolution of the 1990s. As late 20th-century biotech office buildings began to crowd the streets, the Engine 7 firehouse was one of the area’s only remaining 19th-century structures. Despite its historical significance, the building was at risk for demolition.



*I*n 1999 Forsythe and Fandetti came across the deserted Engine 7 following their successful renovation of the Mary Prentiss Inn, also in Cambridge. An abandoned nursing home when they purchased it, Forsythe and Fandetti turned the Mary Prentiss into a lovely, historic inn serving visitors to Harvard Square and beyond. Seeing the Engine 7's potential as well, the couple drafted a proposal for turning the building into a boutique hotel, submitted it to the City of Cambridge, and were awarded the sale of the property.

The renovation project began in 2000 and lasted two years. It was a major undertaking that included a complex move that brought the existing three-story firehouse closer to the street and the construction of a new seven-story tower attached to the original building. Forsythe and Fandetti strove to maintain the building's feel and authenticity while updating the facilities to 21st-century standards.





Rendall Square is populated by a predominance of five- and ten-story modern office buildings, many of which are on the cutting edge of architectural design. Forsythe and Fandetti knew that maintaining the architectural authenticity of this classically 19th century structure would be key to its success as a boutique hotel, and envisioned it as an historical oasis amid our increasingly high-tech world.



Special care went into the restoration of the building's cupolas, both of which were part of the firehouse's original architecture. The smaller cupola had been used to vent the building's roof while the larger one was once used to house the fire hoses as they dried. Both had fallen into ruin over the years. Fandetti designed and built an exact replica of the smaller cupola. The larger one was rebuilt and installed by Fandetti's brother, Jack Fandetti, who owns and operates his own construction company. The installation of the larger historical element drew quite a crowd in the midst of this thoroughly modern community.

The original Victorian firehouse is now home to The Black Sheep, the hotel's restaurant, and is full of firehouse memorabilia. Eleven of the hotel's guest rooms are also located here in what was once the firemen's dormitory. The newly constructed seven-story tower houses meeting space and additional guest rooms.



The Kendall Hotel captures a sense of stepping back in time to historic Cambridge while offering all the modern conveniences. Forsythe herself designed and selected the furnishings for each of the guest rooms, meeting rooms, and other public spaces in the hotel.






With no detail overlooked, Charlotte Forsythe thoughtfully appointed each guest room with antique furnishings, inspired by the Victorian décor of 1893, setting a tone of comfort and luxury. The uniquely appointed rooms are decorated with such special touches as original works of art, fine fabrics, and luxurious quilts and sheets.

Over the years, Forsythe carefully selected and commissioned artists to create original pieces of art, which are displayed throughout the hotel.



The hotel's restaurant was named "The Black Sheep" in honor of the Engine 7 firefighters who once called the Kendall home. As an element of the streetscape, the hotel adds variety and relief to its surroundings, reminding passersby of the scale and feel of the 19th century.



*I*n 2007, the Kendall expanded once more, with the addition of a brand new seven-story tower including eight deluxe guest rooms; four one-bedroom suites featuring kitchens, fireplaces, and Jacuzzi tubs; and a rooftop retreat that includes an atrium and stunning views of the Boston skyline.

*B*ridging the gap between Kendall Square's Victorian past and its high-tech present and future, the Kendall provides a unique alternative for visitors seeking a more personal city hotel experience.









The
KENDALL
HOTEL

at The Engine 7 Fire House

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