

Seattle Fireboat Duwamish

The Seattle Fireboat Duwamish served the City of Seattle for 75 years, from 1909 to 1985. The M/V Duwamish was a fixture on the Seattle waterfront at Station 5 (between Coleman dock and Ivar's restaurant) for ¾ of a century. The M/V Duwamish was retired in 1985 and at this time it was moved to the Hiram Chittenden Locks on the Lake Union ship canal where it sat until 1994 when it was purchased by the Shipping and Railway Heritage Trust. The Fireboat now resides at the Historic Ships Wharf at South Lake Union. The M/V Duwamish is where it belongs, back on the Seattle Waterfront, only in a different environment.

The Historic Ships Wharf is the perfect home for the Fireboat Duwamish since the boat is now classified as a National Historic Landmark, as well as a City of Seattle Landmark. The Historic Ships Wharf is home to the one of the largest collections of historic vessels in the United States. Each is significant and they include the Tugboat Author Foss (1889), The M/V Lotus (1909), The Lightship Swiftsure (1904), the S/S Virginia V, and the Fireboat Duwamish (1909)

The Fireboat Duwamish is significant because the M/V Duwamish is associated with an important aspect of the maritime economic heritage of Seattle. The M/V Duwamish was designed, built, and operated during an historical period when large wooden warehouses, wharfs, and docks, loaded with high value cargo, sprawled along Seattle's waterfront.

The Fireboat Duwamish is an excellent example of a typical fireboat. Built and operated exclusively for use in Seattle, the Fireboat Duwamish is representative of most early 20th century fireboats which could be found in any major American port city throughout the United States. Tugboats that were modified for fireboat use and employed as auxiliary fireboats may still exist, but the Duwamish is one of the last examples of a "true" fireboat from this time. The M/V Duwamish is the second oldest surviving fireboat, built specifically as a firefighting vessel in the U.S. Other fireboats that are known to exist in major American cities date to the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s.

The 1909 Fireboat Duwamish, possessing a high degree of integrity, is of national significance because it is the best preserved, largely unchanged example of the historic American fireboat.

The 1909 Motor Vessel Fireboat
Duwamish

A City of Seattle Landmark and a National Historic Landmark

