

Fitzsimons General Hospital, Building 230
(Fitzsimons General Hospital, Quartermaster
Filling Station and Gasoline Storage Building)
East Side of North Page Street
Aurora
Adams County
Colorado

HABS No. CO-172-A

HABS
COLO
1-AUR,
2A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Intermountain Support Office - Denver
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FITZSIMONS GENERAL HOSPITAL, BUILDING 230
(FITZSIMONS GENERAL HOSPITAL, QUARTERMASTER FILLING
STATION AND GASOLINE STORAGE BUILDING)
HABS NO. CO-172-A

HABS
COLO
1-AUR,
2A-

Location: Building 230 (T-230), Quartermaster Filling Station & Gasoline Storage Building, is located within the service and warehouse area of the Fitzsimons General Hospital complex in Aurora, Colorado. Situated to the northwest of the center of the facility, the building faces west and was built on the east side of North Page Street. The building is owned by the U. S. Government and is vacant. Building 230 is located on the Site Sketch Map on page 8.

Date of Construction: 1923

Significance: Building 230 derives its significance from its association with and support of the military and medical missions of Fitzsimons General Hospital. Architecturally complete and virtually unaltered since its 1935 remodeling, Building 230 retains distinctive features of style and identity, craftsmanship, materials, and setting. Building 230 reflects, in its gable-end, stepped parapet design, the unifying design theme used throughout the post. The property has been determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C, as a representation of early gas station architecture.

Project Information: Field work for Historic American Buildings Survey documentation of Building 230 at the Fitzsimons General Hospital, Aurora, Colorado was accomplished on March 24, 1993 at the direction of the Omaha District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Gulf Engineers and Consultants, Inc. of Baton Rouge, Louisiana was the prime contractor, Joe C. Freeman, AIA, Architect of Austin, Texas was the principal architectural investigator, and Bill Doty of Colorado Springs, Colorado was the photographer. Work was accomplished under contract No. DACW45-92-D-0011, Delivery Order No. 0005. Mr. Bobby Roberts of the Directorate of Engineering & Housing was the on-site coordinator of the work at Fitzsimons.

Documentation of this structure was to mitigate the effects of its impending demolition. The structure is to be demolished in order to remove leaking gasoline and oil storage tanks underneath and adjacent to the structure.

Date: 1993.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The historical and architectural contexts of Building 230 are associated with the military/medical mission of the Fitzsimons General Hospital as they developed and evolved in the 1920s and 1930s. The Cultural Resources Study, Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, completed in 1991 by Front Range Research Associates, Inc., identifies three specific contexts with which Building 230 may be associated. The contexts are: Redesignation and Further Development of the Hospital, 1920-1929; The Search for Permanence, 1930-1938; and Improvement and Expansion: 1935-1938. All of the contexts represent significant periods of historical importance in the life of the post. Building 230's Statement of Significance puts the building in a supporting role to the post's primary medical mission and stresses its architectural significance, particularly as a significant building type. Building 230 was a vital facility that served to fuel the vehicles of the post. As a self-sufficient entity, the post had many such supporting activities.

PHYSICAL HISTORY

Built in June 1923, and remodeled in December 1935, Building 230 was originally built as an oil storehouse. Its conversion to a filling station expanded the 10' x 15' structure to encompass a 19'-10" square enclosure with a 16'- wide projecting canopy. Although no specific architect or contractor has been determined to have designed or built the structure, the use of the signature stepped parapet detail ties the architecture to the well-considered thematic design that remains the dominant architectural feature of the post. The origin of the stepped parapet design itself is unknown although it appears on buildings built prior to 1923. The Cultural Resources Study, Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, completed in 1991 by Front Range Research Associates, Inc., identifies the Constructing Quartermaster as W. J. Cameron and Denver architect T. Robert Wieger as Chief Engineer in 1918, when the stepped parapet first appeared. No comprehensive architectural drawings have been located for Building 230 although an architectural floor plan and combined cross section and elevation are on file at the Office of the Post Engineer. Additionally, some maintenance drawings are retained in that office's transparency files. No drawings, however, show the conversion of the original structure in 1935.

The building has been unaltered since the 1935 renovation with the exception of the addition of expanded metal window and door security screens, the removal of gas pumps, the painting of the exterior stucco finish, and the recent installation of aluminum storm doors.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

If the role of Building 230 in the history of Fitzsimons General Hospital is significant, the architectural integrity of the structure, its building type, and its clarity of design are expressions of that significance. As a planned military installation, the Fitzsimons General Hospital exhibits, in its buildings, characteristics of architectural standardization, repetition, and regionally influenced stylistic precepts. Additionally, the installation reflects, in its architecture, the vagaries of military funding and cyclical changes in mission.

Building 230 mirrors the common architectural style of the post, particularly through the stepped parapet gable detail. As a repeated architectural theme used at gable end walls, this detail is simple and easily recognizable. It is, along with the pervasive use of stucco, the architectural stylistic feature that has associated the architecture at Fitzsimons with the Mission Revival style. A closer look at the stepped parapet detail and the proportion and massing of the buildings on the post, however, indicates that the Mission Revival style was greatly tempered with regional influences and simplified by the military planners. Although distinctive and successful as a unifying architectural detail, the stepped parapet is more associated stylistically with the transitional period that occurred from around the turn of the century until the 1930s. In that eclectic period, distinctions between styles were not always clear.

As a building type, the Quartermaster Filling Station and Oil Storage Building is typical of 1920s and 1930s filling stations. Filling stations were a uniquely 20th century building type that expressed their functions clearly. The configuration of the filling or service station has remained largely unchanged over the years. Filling stations have been influenced stylistically by the prevailing architectural style of the period and by the regional or local architectural context. As carriers of changing architectural styles as well as graphic corporate advertising, filling stations retained their functional arrangements while responding to both regional and revivalist influences. In a number of cases, as in

the case of Building 230, the stations responded to their architectural contexts, both stylistically and in the use of materials.

CONDITION

Building 230 is in sound structural condition with minor, yet active, deterioration to the exterior fabric. The stucco skin of the building has begun to crack and separate from its substrate. Exterior paintwork in poor condition and downspouts are damaged, particularly at their turn-outs. Most original building fabric and fixtures are intact and the building retains most of its integrity.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Built on concrete perimeter footing walls, the load-bearing masonry structure is clad in a dense, cement stucco about 3/4" thick. The load-bearing walls support wooden ceiling joists, tie-joists, and roof rafters. The rafters and main joists are 2" x 6"s spaced at 24" while the ceiling joists, located above the office, are 2" x 4"s at 16" o.c. The roof is decked solid above the rafters. While the drawings and other references have referred to a substrate of clay tile, a soft red brick set in a high-cement mortar was noted at the site. The main body of the one-story structure is 19'-10" square (outside dimensions).

The canopy, which extends out from the building just over 14', covers an 11'-10" wide drive-through. The canopy is supported with two square columns located on a concrete island. The columns are 2'-6" square, stucco-clad, brick masonry supports. The canopy's columns support built-up wooden beams that are stucco-clad and extend back to the main enclosure. The beams support wooden roof trusses made up of 2" x 6" rafters and joists and 1" x 6" ties and braces at 2'-0" on centers.

The 6-in-12 pitched gable roof is clad in asbestos composition shingles laid up in a diamond pattern. The ridge is covered with asbestos composition barrel tile. The roof is flashed at gable end parapets with metal flashing set under the stucco. A copper roof vent has been painted black and is set at the ridge over the main enclosure. Gutters at the eaves are painted metal and are formed in an ogee profile. Downspouts and 2" x 3" fluted metal with ornamental supports.

Exterior doors are wood panel doors with divided lights. With the exception of one oversized wood door which is painted, all of the doors are naturally finished. Original hardware, most of which is in place, consists of solid brass mortise-type locking devices. Expanded metal security screens have been added over the glazed portions of the doors. Aluminum storm doors have been added over all exterior doors. Windows are industrial-type metal units with operable awning sash. The window frames and sash are painted black for the most part and have had expanded metal security screens welded to their frames.

Exterior decorative features include stepped parapets at the gable end walls. The parapets are capped with a hard, dark brown brick coping. The same hard, dark brown brick is used to surround doors and windows and in detailed panels in the gable end walls. The bricks project about 1/2" beyond the face of the stucco.

The interior of the filling station is composed of an office, a store room and 2 restrooms. The office fronts on the canopy and the store room extends across the rear of the structure. One restroom is accessed through the office while the other has access through an exterior door on the north side of the building. An attic extends over both the main body of the building and over the canopy extension.

The interior finishes of the enclosure are simple and utilitarian. The office floor is 8" square red quarry tile while the remaining floors are of painted concrete. The walls are of painted plaster except for a brick tile, running-bond wainscot in the office. The ceilings are of painted plaster.

Although access was restricted at the time of this study and restroom fixtures could not be observed, a single pipe, cast iron radiator and associated steam piping were observed in the office. Lighting on the interior was provided by contemporary suspended fluorescent fixtures. Lighting under the canopy was provided by two incandescent fixtures: soffit mounted bare bulbs in explosion-proof covers. Other equipment-related items include a manhole cover on the south side of the building marked: "Clarks Foundry, Denver, Colo." and metal plates covering the mounting locations of the now removed gasoline pumps.

Building 230 is located on the east side of a north-south street (North Page Street) and the canopy and front of the building face west. A large, triangular shaped island surrounded by a concrete curb is located in the street beyond the canopy. A tall fir tree and a mature

cottonwood tree are located in the island. An historic photograph taken after the 1935 renovation of the structure shows a Mission Revival styled concrete wall at the south end of the island. The wall has been damaged and remains only as a curb-high projection. To the rear of the structure, a row of large fir trees runs parallel to the north-south road. The area to the north of the structure is open and grassed. Immediately to the south of the structure are chain-link dog kennels.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Architectural Drawings:

The Office of the Post Engineer retains one sheet of drawings which show a floor plan and section/elevation of Building 230. The drawing is undated and is not attributed to an architect. The Office of the Post Engineer also has two transparencies which show a floor plan and architectural notes associated with a painting project.

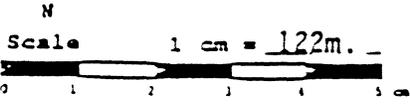
Early Views:

The Directorate of Engineering and Housing provided a photographic print of Building 230 showing the view of the building from the south. The picture, which is undated, was taken after the 1935 renovation, probably around 1940. No photographer is listed.

Sources:

Simmons, R. Laurie, Cultural Resource Study, Fitzsimons Army Medical Center. Denver, Colorado: Front Range Research Associates, Inc., 1991.

True X Mag. _____
declination _____



— Survey Area Boundary

