

HABS No. CO-172-Q

Fitzsimons General Hospital, W.A.C. Barracks
(Fitzsimons General Hospital, Building No. 131)
(Fitzsimons General Hospital, Army Community Service Bldg.)
Northeast corner of W. Pennington Ave. and N. Hickey Street
Aurora
Adams County
Colorado

HABS
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1-AUR,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FITZSIMONS GENERAL HOSPITAL, W.A.C. BARRACKS
(FITZSIMONS GENERAL HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 131)
(FITZSIMONS GENERAL HOSPITAL, ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE BLDG.)

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For information on the history of Fitzsimons General Hospital, see HABS No. CO-172. For information on other structures at the Hospital, see HABS No. CO-172-A through CO-172-CI. Similar structures include HABS Nos. CO-172-R and CO-172-S.

Location: Fitzsimons General Hospital, W.A.C. Barracks
(Fitzsimons General Hospital, Building No. 131)
(Fitzsimons General Hospital, Army Community Service Bldg.)
Northeast corner of W. Pennington Ave. and N. Hickey Street
Aurora
Adams County
Colorado

Significance: This building is one of three (along with CO-172-R and CO-172-S) which were constructed in 1944 as part of the expansion of Fitzsimons during World War II. The buildings served as barracks for the Womens' Army Corps (W.A.C.), which was created in 1942. W.A.C. members were volunteers who performed various noncombat functions. By the end of the war, over half of the students at enlisted technicians schools such as the one at Fitzsimons were W.A.C.s. W.A.C. buildings differed somewhat in design from the standard men's barracks constructed during World War II, with features designed for the convenience of women. The three buildings retain a high degree of integrity.

Description: This two-story, concrete and brick, west-facing, rectangular building rests on a concrete foundation and measures 5,516 square feet. Its walls are stuccoed. The front, gable roof is covered with metal roofing. Fenestration consists of six-over-six double-hung windows with brick sills. The western gable end has three evenly spaced windows at the second story level and a louvered vent at the apex. The west elevation also has a centered entrance and an off-center double door entrance. Both of these doors are composed of metal. The east elevation has entrances, composed of metal, on the first and second story. The first story has concrete steps with an iron railing. The second story has metal fire stairs.

Building 132 (HABS No. CO-172-R) located at North Hickey

Street, north of Building 131 and Building 133 (HABS No. CO-172-S) located on North Hickey Street, north of Building 132 have the same features as Building 131.

History: These buildings were constructed in 1944, as part of the expansion of Fitzsimons during World War II. The buildings were originally utilized as W.A.C. barracks. Plans for W.A.C. facilities were established in April 1943 and directed that standards for W.A.C. should be higher than those for the housing of male personnel. Features included in buildings constructed for the women included toilet partitions and doors, subdivided showers, window curtains, laundry tubs and ironing boards, and stairs rather than ladders to second stories. Some W.A.C. facilities had two dayrooms, one for dates and one for relaxing.

The Women's Army Corps originated in 1942 as the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps. In 1943, the W.A.C. became a full-fledged component of the Army. The members performed a variety of volunteer duties, relieving the manpower shortage in the Armed Services. During its peak of strength in World War II, the W.A.C. had approximately 100,000 members. The W.A.C. was dissolved in 1978, when women were fully integrated into the regular Army.

The buildings have had minor alterations to them since its construction. The interiors of the barracks were remodeled in 1947. In 1961, dressers and vanities were removed from Buildings 131 and 133. Exterior doors were replaced with modern doors in 1957. The metal fire escapes were replaced in 1975. Currently Building 131 is the Army Community Service building, Building 132 is the Welcome center, and Building 133 is the Housing Division building.

Sources: Cultural Resources Study: Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, Final Submittal, 15 August 1991, prepared by Front Range Research Associates, Inc., Denver

"Real Property Record-Buildings and Structures"
(June 10, 1946)

Project Information: These buildings will be demolished to clear the site for two Military Construction, Army (MCA) projects. The first MCA project is the Central Energy Plant, which is needed to support the second MCA project, the New Hospital project.

Historian: Greenhorne & O'Mara, Inc.
Greenbelt, Maryland 20770
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