

HABS No. CO-172-Y

Fitzsimons General Hospital, Greenhouse
(Fitzsimons General Hospital, Building No. 140)
West Pennington Avenue, East of Building No. 139
Aurora
Adams County
Colorado

HABS
COLO
1-AUR,
2Y-

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, GREENHOUSE
(Fitzsimons General Hospital, Building No. 140)

HABS
COLO
1-AUR
2Y-

HABS No. CO-172-Y

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.

Location: Fitzsimons General Hospital, Greenhouse
(Fitzsimons General Hospital, Building No. 140)
West Pennington Avenue, east of Building 139
Aurora
Adams County
Colorado

Significance: The greenhouse is a significant and rather unusual component of Fitzsimons General Hospital. The building is associated with Colonel Paul Hutton, who served as commander of the post from 1923 to 1929. Colonel Hutton took an active interest in the greenhouse, overseeing its operations and encouraging gardeners to grow a variety of exotic plants. During Hutton's command the greenhouse was expanded a number of times and its activities became integral to the post. The greenhouse, which today continues to grow plants and flowers for the hospital offices, wards, and grounds, is a rare property type on military posts, as it is no longer considered an essential facility by the military. Although the metal and glass greenhouse structures have been remodeled, the greenhouse retains its original function, location, orientation, and gable roofs. The greenhouse office appears to be virtually unaltered.

Description: The structures identified as Building 140 include five greenhouses and an attached greenhouse office. These buildings comprise 9,305 square feet. The greenhouses are one-story, metal frame and glass, rectangular buildings resting on concrete foundations.

The greenhouse office is a one-story, concrete, south-facing, two-bay, square building that also rests on a concrete foundation. Its walls are stuccoed. The front-gable roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters is covered with asphalt shingles. Fenestration consists of

fixed ten-pane windows and fixed, horizontal three-pane windows. The entrance to the greenhouse office is located on the south facade. The entrance is composed of central, paneled, and glazed double doors.

History:

The original greenhouse (Building 854) was completed on June 30, 1923, just prior to the arrival of Colonel Paul Hutton. The greenhouse was established to provide a nurturing atmosphere for landscaping plants, to provide flowers and plants for hospital wards and offices, and to grow certain fruits for the dietary needs of patients. Colonel Hutton encouraged the gardeners to grow tropical fruits and plants from distant locations, such as South and Central America, the West Indies, and Hawaii. Among the exotic plants which were housed in the building during the 1920s were an avocado tree, banana trees, lemon, papaya, orange, persimmon, pomegranate, fig, and lime trees. When the trees matured and bore fruit, the produce was distributed to the hospital wards. "Bath-robe paths" were walked by patients, who found the unusual scenery refreshing.

During the mid-1920s, the Construction Service of the Quartermaster Corps received an infusion of funds which were used to modernize and improve existing facilities. Landscaping of installations was given much attention during this period, and garden clubs sprang up at many posts.

The greenhouse complex has had minor alterations to it since its construction. The greenhouses were expanded a number of times during Colonel Hutton's command at the post. The greenhouses that exist today are not the original greenhouses, although they remain in the same configuration. The greenhouse office remains intact and in its original state. Currently the greenhouse complex retains its original function and much of the greenhouse work today is provided by Red Cross volunteers.

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: The greenhouse complex 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
Documentation prepared January 1995.