

FORT RILEY, CARPENTER COURT APARTMENTS, BUILDING NO. 439
(Fort Riley, Carpenter Court Apartments, Building No. 304)
439 Carpenter Avenue
Fort Riley
Geary County
Kansas

HABS No. KS-78-F

HABS

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MIDWEST SUPPORT OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, NE 68102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FORT RILEY
CARPENTER COURT APARTMENTS
BUILDING NO. 439
(Building No. 304)

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Location: 439 Carpenter Avenue, in the Main Post Historic District, Fort Riley, Kansas.

Original Cost: \$33,983.94.

Total Square Footage: 10,791 square feet overall, including Sun Porch and Basement.

Significance: Fort Riley received many new buildings and facilities during the Army building program initiated in 1927. Completed in August 1928, building 439 (formerly 304) was part of the first phase of construction, comprising what is known as Upper Carpenter. Building 439 (formerly 304) meets the seven National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) criteria for location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling and association. As a member of the 1927-1940 thematic group within the Main Post Historic District, it contributes to an understanding of the twentieth century historical development of the installation. The group is made up of permanent buildings constructed at Fort Riley during the Army building program of that period. It was built around open courts or facing open greens, as seen on the Key to Photographs Drawing, page 2. The buildings were built in an area that had previously been the site of the Hospital Training School which was razed in the late 1910s and early 1920s. This type of layout exemplifies the type of planning which was growing in popularity at the time.

Fort Riley was established by the United States Army in 1853 under the command of Colonel Thomas T. Fauntleroy. Originated to supplement Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and extend the U.S. Military presence further west, Fort Riley has had two additional major phases of development.

The second phase, from 1886-1955 followed General Philip Sheridan's recommendation to establish the headquarters for the U.S. Cavalry at Fort Riley. This led to the creation of the Cavalry and Light Artillery Schools, which standardized training, practice, and tactics. World War I led to Fort Riley's selection as the site for the 14th National Army Cantonment and its designation as a division-level training camp. Between World War I and II, Fort Riley's training mission continued and it was during this time that many new quarters for officers, like the Carpenter Court Apartments, were constructed.

The third phase of development came between 1955-present, and saw the First Infantry Division adopt Fort Riley as its headquarters. "The Big Red One" headquarters remained at Fort Riley until 1996, when it relocated back to Germany as a part of the

Base Realignment and Closure Program. Fort Riley remains active as a training facility and as a major base for the First Division.

Description: Building 439 is a red brick Colonial Revival Style, two-and-one-half story, over-under style, four-plex with a full basement as illustrated in Drawings A1.1 and A1.2 on pages 9 and 10. The original drawings and specifications for the Upper Carpenter buildings are no longer in existence. The architectural plans referenced depict the similar, yet larger Lower Carpenter buildings with the longer 100'-0" length. This building was built in the first phase of construction for the Carpenter Court Apartments, and is one of the buildings located in what is typically referred to as Upper Carpenter. The Overall building size is 96'-0" length by 29'-0" width, with additional sun porches centered at each end, both 8'-0" in length by 16'-4" width.

The foundation is comprised of concrete, tile and common bond (six stretcher rows to one header row brick walls). Composition shingles replace the original slate tile roof, and the roof has side-gables with six, hipped dormers, a low-hipped metal-clad roof over side wings, and an enclosed eave soffit with returns at the gable ends.

There are four entrances located in pairs across the courtyard or front side of the buildings. Each porch serves two units, and is divided by a partial brick wall with wrought iron decoration above, brick corner piers and concrete bases with concrete capitals. Wood entablature, quarter-turn concrete steps, and metal railings are additional features of the porch design. The original wood balustrade at the top of the porch has been removed, possibly at the same time that the shingle roof replaced the slate tile roof in 1962. The street side porches are of a platform style with straight concrete steps, and metal railings. See Drawing A2.1, page 11 for building elevations.

For decoration, six-paneled wood doors with four-light transoms were added, in addition to flat brick arches, a six-over-six light, a single and paired four-over-four light, and paired three-over-three lights. When these units were built, the courtyard side was designed to be the main entrance to the buildings, and thereby received more decorative treatment than the street side entries. With the continued development and popularity of the automobile, the less adorned street side of the buildings became the functional main entry. The wood, double-hung sash windows have stretcher flat arches and concrete sills. There is a round arched window in each gable end.

The interior is comprised of four apartments, with a central shared laundry room and two separate storage rooms in the full basement. One storage room per side contains a full bathroom that may have been originally designed for hired staff. There is one central interior brick chimney that services all units.

Floors on the upper levels are wood joists with ¾" thick oak plank flooring, with ceramic mosaic tile in setting bed in the bathrooms. Basement floors are concrete. Walls and ceilings are plaster and wood lath, sun porches have some exposed brick. Utilities include all electric lights with surface mounted conduit, gas fired furnaces and gas cooking ranges.

The attic, or dormer level, has one finished bedroom with a full bathroom, and was originally designed for the hired staff working for the occupants living in the units below. The apartments are in an over-under configuration with a central, winder stairwell from basement to dormer level. The first floor has two single level apartments, the second floor has two apartments which have a main level plus access to the dormer level.

Street side doors lead to the central winder stairwell that goes down to the basement or up to the second floor apartment. The stairwell in the Upper Carpenter buildings has a 32" inside width dimension. The first floor apartments contain a kitchen, dining room, living room, bathroom, study, master bedroom, second bedroom, and sun porch. The second floor apartments have the same layout on the main level, with the exception that the study is replaced by a small bedroom, and that is only differentiated by the addition of a closet, otherwise the location and size are the same. The kitchen has received the most significant modernization with the addition of new cabinets, new appliances, and sheet vinyl flooring. It was during the first kitchen modernization that the corridor side door was filled in to increase functional work area. The main level bathrooms were altered to add a tub with a shower. Supporting spaces include an entry with closet, and a corridor with linen closet

History: Architectural floor plans were developed by the Office of the Quartermaster General, Standardized Plan No. 625-801/805. Fort Riley received many new buildings and facilities during the Army building program initiated in 1927. The goal of this program was to replace dilapidated temporary World War I structures with permanent structures for a peacetime army. Besides many support facilities, Fort Riley received several single-family duplex and four-family apartment houses built of brick or limestone around the edges of the old cavalry and artillery posts and at Marshall Army Airfield. Standard plans designed by the Quartermaster General's Office in Washington D.C. would be modified depending on the regional style. At Fort Riley, most of the residential structures built during this period are in the Colonial Revival Style.

Sources: The primary historical documentation and recordation of the Carpenter Court Apartments was collected from the Cultural Resources Management Plan-Fort Riley, Kansas, Section 4-Cultural Context; Mariani and Associates Report, dated 1986, Real Property Records, and Architectural Drawings and Specifications. All recordation, to date, includes photo-documentation. This report is the first known to photo-document the original drawings, and it must be noted that there are no known original drawings of the Upper Carpenter units, Plan No. 625-801/805. The recordation conforms to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior.

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