

ALLEN PARK VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 6
(Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital, Director's Quarters)
Southfield Expressway & Outer Drive
Allen Park
Wayne County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-427-B

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ALLEN PARK VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL BUILDING 6 (Director's Quarters)

HABS No. MI-427-B

Location: Southfield Expressway and Outer Drive
Allen Park, Wayne County, Michigan

Present Owner: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20420

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: Building 6, the Director's Quarters, was constructed in 1939 in the Georgian Revival style. It fits in with both the overall style of the hospital complex and with residential architecture trends of the 1930s. Originally, the Director's Quarters was to be built on the opposite side of the campus along a road leading eastward from Building 7. It is unknown why the site selection was altered. The building retains its stylistic details, such as its symmetrical form, large sash windows, the quarter-arch attic windows flanking the brick chimney, side gable roof with cornice returns, and the dentil course below the cornice.

The building's presence on the campus reflects the importance of the role of the Director of the hospital, the only staff member to have a single family residence on the complex. The presence of this building, as well as the Nurses' Quarters, Attendants' Quarters, and Duplex Staff Quarters (Buildings 7, 8, and 14, respectively) indicates the need for round-the-clock, on-site staff at the hospital. Most recently, the building was used to house offices.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Date of Erection:** 1939.
- B. Architect:** Anonymous Veterans Administration Construction Division staff architect.
- C. Owners, Occupants, and Uses:** The building is part of a Veterans Hospital complex constructed for and owned by the United States Government from 1939 to the present. Building 6 initially served as the residence of the hospital director since construction. More recently, it housed offices.
- D. Original Plans and Construction:** The original drawings (showing all four elevations, wall sections, and basement, first floor, second floor, and attic plans) are dated January 14, 1939. The Veterans Administrations' Administrator, Assistant Administrator, Director of Construction, and Chief of the Technical Division signed the drawings. Except for a minor interior alteration, the building retains its original appearance.
- E. Alterations and Additions:** The pantry on the first floor was converted into a bathroom in the 1970s. The kitchen was also modified.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement:**
- 1. Architectural Character:** Building 6, the Director's Quarters, is a 2½-story residential structure. Its Georgian Revival style complements the other original 1939 buildings in the complex, including Building 1, Building 7, and Building 8.
 - 2. Condition of Fabric:** The building is in good condition; it is physically sound and is largely unaltered from its original appearance.
- B. Description of Exterior:**
- 1. Overall Dimensions:** The overall dimensions of the building measure 36'-0" x 31'-0". The irregular plan building is two stories, with a basement and attic. The structure is three bays long, two bays wide at its west end, and three bays wide at its east end.
 - 2. Foundations:** The foundation is poured concrete with brick veneer. Daylight windows spaced along the building's rear wall provide light and ventilation for the basement.

3. **Walls:** The walls are five-course, common bond, red brick.
4. **Structural System, Framing:** The building is a brick masonry structure. The roof and floor are wood-frame.
5. **Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads:** A small vestibule projects outward from the center bay of the main façade. A short flight of concrete steps leads up to the vestibule's entrance, which is slightly elevated. A wood-frame side porch on a brick foundation, which is original to the building, runs across the first story on the west facade. It features wood siding and paired, screened windows above recessed wood panels. There are two screen doors, one located near the southwest corner, and one directly opposite near the northwest corner. The porch has a shed roof. A small rear stoop is located near the northeast corner of the building at the rear entrance. It has a shed roof and wood lattice sides.
6. **Chimneys:** There is one semi-enclosed end chimney centered on the structure's west facade, which projects several feet above the roof peak. The chimney is red brick and features a limestone cap.
7. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and Doors:** The building has three doorways; one centered in the front vestibule, one near the northeast corner at the rear of the residence, and one in the west wall leading out onto the side porch. The front entrance has a simple classically styled surround featuring Doric pilasters supporting an entablature and triangular pediment. The door is a six-panel wood door under a four-pane transom. The rear entry door has a single light over a wood panel. The entry from the screened porch is a French door with fifteen panes of glass.
 - b. **Windows and Shutters:** The building displays a variety of double-hung wood sash windows, mainly eight-over-twelve-light sashes in the first story and eight-over-eight-light sashes in the second story, with a few four-over-four-light sashes present in each story. A quarter-round fixed window flanks each side of the chimney in the attic. Fixed wood louvered shutters are present on the west, south, and east facades. The first story windows on the main facade feature brick jack arches. All windows have limestone sills.

8. Roof:

- a. **Shape, Covering:** The roof has end gables and a cross gable at the rear forming an L-shape. The roof is sheathed in treated terra cotta tiles manufactured to imitate slate shingles.
- b. **Cornice, Eaves:** A simple corbelled red brick cornice with dentils runs below the roof's eaves around all sides of the building. The gable ends feature wood cornice returns.
- c. **Dormers, Cupolas, Towers:** There are no dormers, cupolas, or towers present.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. **Basement:** The basement was inaccessible due to an unsound staircase and locked exterior doors. Original plans for the building indicate that it contained a large open area with a pump room under the side porch and a maid's room and bathroom at the northeast corner.
 - b. **First Floor:** The building has a center hall plan with a living room located in the western half of the house and a dining room and kitchen located in the eastern half of the house. The hallway is entered from the exterior through a vestibule. A breakfast room is located at the end of the hallway. The original pantry, located between the breakfast room and the kitchen, was converted into a bathroom in the 1970s. The kitchen was also modified at this time, with the cabinets and fixtures replaced. A screened porch is located off of the living room with access into the house, and a rear entry into the kitchen provides a third point of entry.
 - c. **Second Floor:** The second floor has four bedrooms, two on either side of the central hall, and two bathrooms. One bathroom is located at the top of the stairs. The second bathroom is located off of the main bedroom. A trap door in the hallway ceiling provided access to the attic.
 - d. **Attic:** The attic was inaccessible due to a sealed access panel.
2. **Stairways:** The open string stair rises in a straight run to the second floor. The wood balusters are square with two per step. The wood hand rail ends in a volute. The entire stair is painted white, except for the hand rail which has been varnished.

3. **Flooring:** The floors throughout the residence are covered with tan carpet over wood flooring, except in the kitchen and downstairs bath where the carpet covers linoleum, and in the upstairs bath at the head of the stairs, which has carpet over ½" ceramic tiles. The same carpet is used as a runner on the stairs.
4. **Wall and Ceiling Finish:** The walls throughout the residence are of plaster. The living room, dining room, kitchen, downstairs bath, breakfast room, and the two bedrooms on the eastern side of the hall have been wallpapered. The remaining two bedrooms and the upstairs and downstairs halls have been painted. The southwest bedroom is painted pink; the other bedroom and halls are white.

The upstairs bathrooms have 6" tan tile running halfway up the wall all the way around the room. Six inches from the top of the tile is a ½" border of burnt orange tile. The same tile and border is found in the tub surround, where the tile runs up the wall and stops one foot from the ceiling. The upper portion of the walls throughout both bathrooms has been wallpapered.

5. **Openings:**

- a. **Doorways and Doors:** The doors throughout the residence are of wood construction within wood frames. All of the doors have six panels, with the exception of the rear entry, the entry from the screened porch, and the doorway between the vestibule and the hall. The rear entry door has a single light over a wood panel. The entry from the screened porch is a French door with fifteen panes of glass. The door leading from the vestibule into the hallway is the same style as the door from the screened porch, except this one features transoms on either side of the doorway.
 - b. **Windows:** The interior windows all have large wood sills and are surrounded by 6" wood molding. All of the woodwork, such as the window surrounds, is painted white.
6. **Decorative Features and Trim:** Wood baseboards and crown moldings are found in all of the rooms. The baseboard is 8" tall and is painted white in every room. The 3" crown molding is also painted white in all of the rooms.

In the living room is a wood, Colonial Revival-style fireplace mantel. There are two inset panels on the mantel's entablature, and an additional inset panel on each of the pilasters that flank the fireplace. Molding is used to form a decorative panel on the entablature and to surround the firebox. The entire fireplace is painted white. In the kitchen, the cabinet doors and drawers all have a single inset panel and are stained a dark

cherry color. The upstairs bathroom cabinets are wood and are painted white. The downstairs bathroom has a laminate unit.

7. Mechanical Equipment:

- a. Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation:** The heating system is steam-powered and is original to the building. Radiators are located in every room of the residence, with the exception of the kitchen and screened porch. The majority of these units have metal radiator covers with metal grillwork and a wood shelf across the top. All of the radiator covers are painted white. Modern window-mounted air conditioning units have been placed in some rooms.
- b. Lighting:** No original light fixtures remain in the building. The current incandescent and fluorescent fixtures date from the 1970s and 1980s.
- c. Plumbing and Fixtures:** All plumbing fixtures have been replaced with the exception of the bathtubs in the upstairs bathrooms. These are original to the residence.

D. Site:

- 1. General Setting and Orientation:** This building is located on the southeast corner of the Allen Park VA hospital complex. It faces south, and overlooks a tree-lined drive. It is the easternmost building in a row of three residential structures. These buildings are widely spaced apart and all original to the complex.
- 2. Historic Landscape Design:** Building 6 is located at the end of a paved drive, which terminates in a circle. The grassy circle has a central tree planted in it. This drive is lined with mature ornamental trees.
- 3. Outbuildings:** Occupants of this residence had use of the staff garage, Building T-38 (HABS No. MI-427-R).

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This complex was recorded by URS Corporation, Gaithersburg, Maryland, on behalf of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, from January to March of 2002. Architectural Historians Amy Barnes, Anne Brockett, and Caleb Christopher completed the fieldwork for this project in

January 2002. The photographer was Andrew Bagnat and the Historian was E. Madeleine Scheerer. The project was reviewed by Fred Holycross and Mark R. Edwards.

As stipulated in the deed in which Henry and Clara Ford donated the land on which the Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital is located, when the property ceases to be used as a veterans hospital, the land is to revert in ownership to the Ford family heirs. Since inpatient and outpatient veteran medical service is now provided at the John D. Dingell Veterans Administration Hospital in Detroit, which opened in 1996, and the Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital ceased all operations in 2002, the land is to be turned over to the Ford Motor Land Development Corporation (FMLDC) in compliance with the original deed. A Congressional appropriation of \$14 million, to be disbursed to the FMLDC over a seven-year period beginning in 2002, was designated for the demolition of the Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital complex.

PART IV. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Collections:

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Architectural Drawings Collection. Allen Park Medical Center. John D. Dingell Medical Center Collection. Detroit, Michigan.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Architectural Drawings Collection. Allen Park Medical Center. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Collection. Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Information and Media Section Collection. Allen Park Medical Center. John D. Dingell Medical Center Audio Visual Collection. Detroit, Michigan.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Office of Facilities Management Collection. Allen Park Medical Center. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Collection. Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Photograph Collection. Allen Park Medical Center. John D. Dingell Medical Center Audio Visual Collection. Detroit, Michigan.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Photograph Collection. Allen Park Medical Center. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Collection. Washington, D.C.

B. References:

Ching, Francis D. K. *Building Construction Illustrated*, 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997.

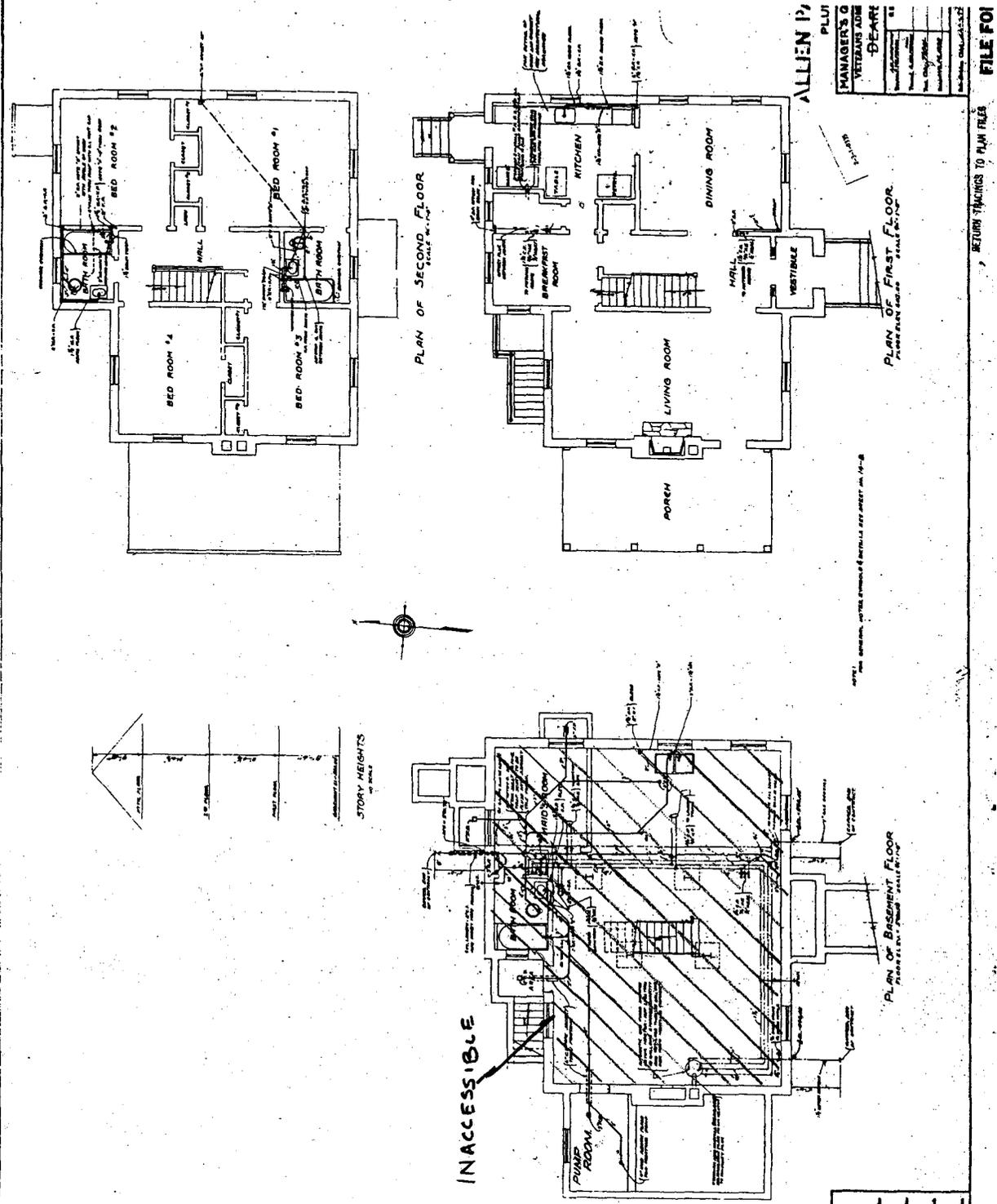
Hoke, John Ray, Jr. *Architectural Graphic Standards*, 9th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.

Mollenhoff, Gjore J. and Karen R. Tupek. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form for Allen Park Veterans Administration Medical Center," U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C., 1980.

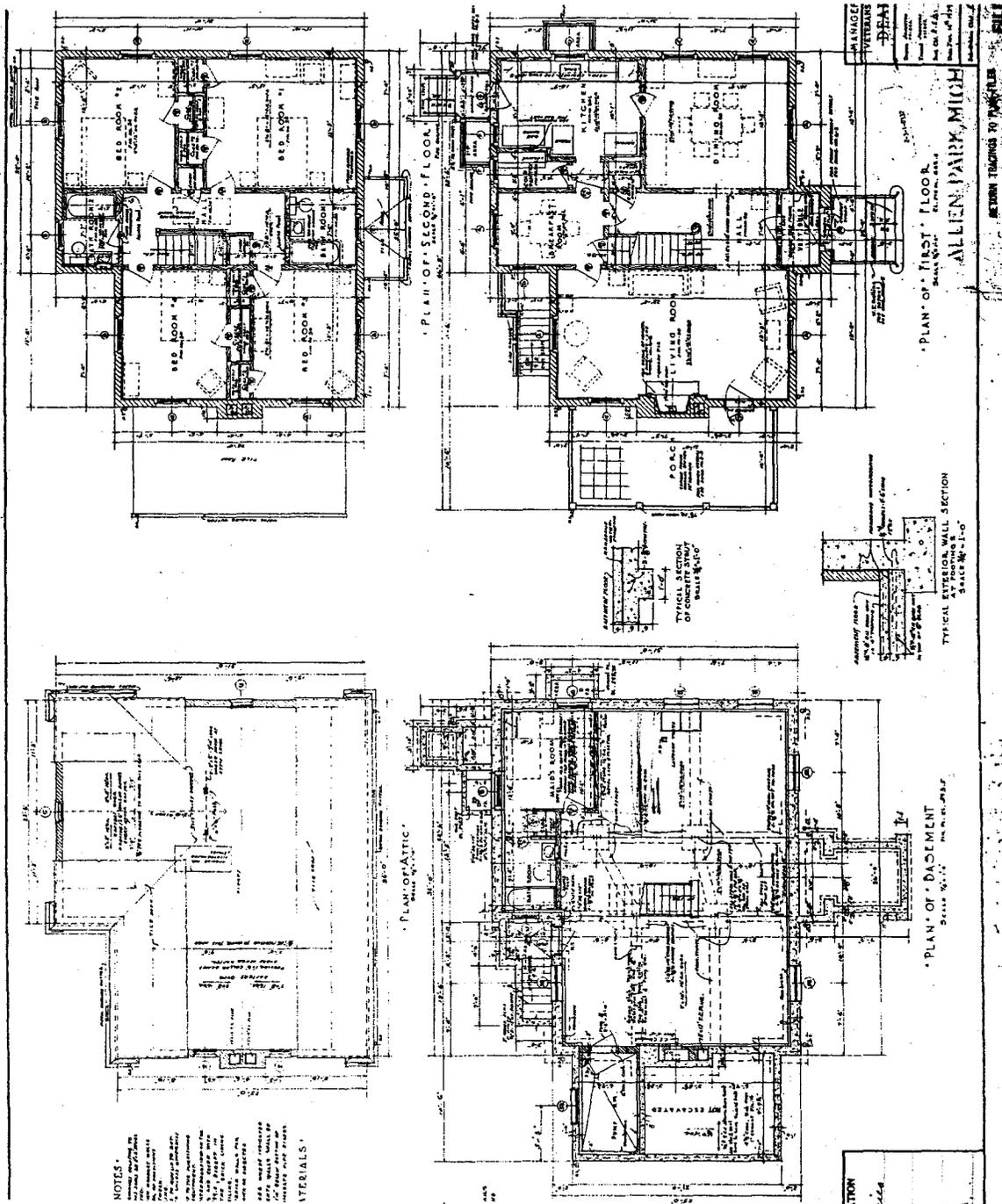
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Reduced Copy of Current Plan, February 2002

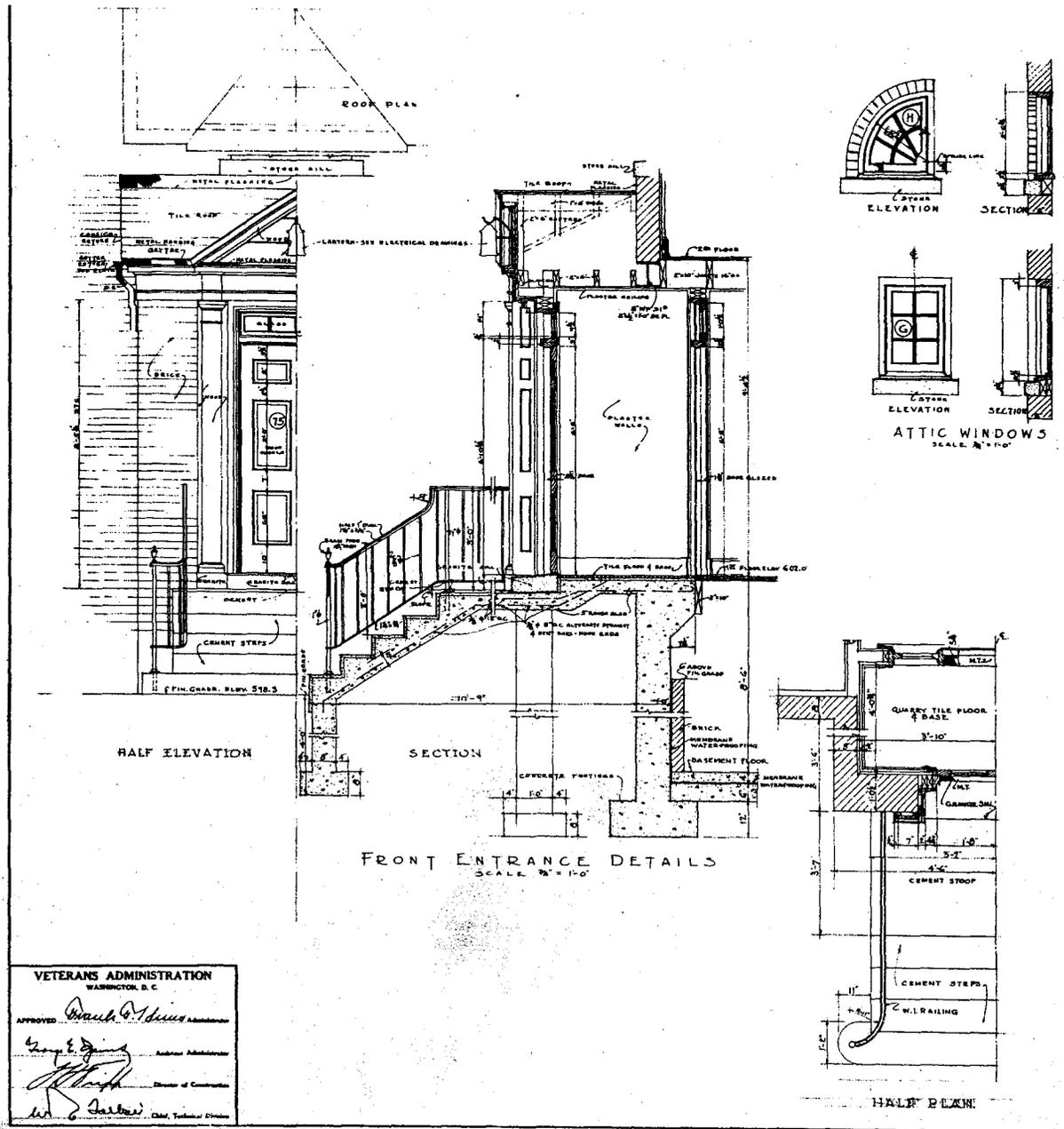


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Reduced Copy of Historic Plan, dated January 14, 1939
 On file at the John D. Dingell Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Detroit,
 Michigan



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 Michigan



VETERANS ADMINISTRATION
 WASHINGTON, D. C.

APPROVED: *Paul H. Jones*
 Assistant Administrator

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 Director of Construction

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 Chief Technical Officer