

ALLEN PARK VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 7
(Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital, Day Care Treatment Center
Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital, Nurses' Quarters)
Southfield Expressway & Outer Drive
Allen Park
Wayne County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-427-C

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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 7**

(Nurses' Quarters/Day Care Treatment Center)

HABS No. MI-427-C

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 7 was constructed as the Nurses' Quarters and was one of the first buildings completed at the complex. The building exhibits characteristic features of the Georgian Revival style, which reflects the construction at the Allen Park facility and of VA hospitals nationwide. The interior and exterior symmetry, side gable form, pediment with dentils, pedimented entrance, and sash and dormer windows are all reflections of the Georgian Revival style that was common for VA hospitals.

Completed in 1939, Building 7 was one of the first buildings completed at the hospital. Its early date of construction attests to the importance of having nursing staff on hand immediately at the opening of the hospital. It also shows the need to have the staff in close proximity to the hospital and, presumably, available at all hours of the day or night. The design provided the nursing staff with living areas on the first floor and small bedrooms on the second floor.

In the 1970s, the building was being used as the Day Care Treatment Center. This facility treated patients for substance abuse on an outpatient basis. This change in use demonstrates the shift in the needs of veterans and the hospital's ability to adapt its facilities to meet those needs.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Date of Erection:** 1939.
- B. Architect:** Anonymous Veterans Administration Construction Division staff architect.
- C. Original and Subsequent Owners, Occupants, 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 7 originally served as the nurses' quarters and was later converted into an outpatient drug treatment center.
- D. Original Plans and Construction:** The original drawings (showing all wall sections, and basement, first floor, second floor, and attic plans) are dated April 15, 1937. The Veteran's Administrations' Administrator, Assistant Administrator, Director of Construction, and Chief of the Technical Division signed the drawings. This building originally had two full-width two-story porches at its east and west ends. These were pedimented and supported by four Doric columns.
- E. Alterations and Additions:** The end porches were enclosed with brick to provide additional stairwells for the building. The first floor was reconfigured, at an unknown date, to become an outpatient day care. The interior room configuration was changed during a 1970's conversion of the building from residential to clinical use. An elevator was added and many interior partition walls were reconfigured during a third renovation in 1982.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- 1. Architectural Character:** Building 7, the Day Care Treatment Center, was formerly the Nurses' Quarters, and is a 2½-story structure. Its Georgian Revival style complements the other original 1939 buildings in the complex, including Building 1, Building 6, and Building 8.
- 2. Condition of Fabric:** The building is in a deteriorated condition due to neglect and deterioration.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. **Overall Dimensions:** The overall dimensions of the building measure 138'-1" x 39'-0". The rectangular plan building is two stories, with a basement. The structure is thirteen bays long and three bays wide.
2. **Foundations:** The foundation is poured concrete.
3. **Walls:** The walls are faced with four-course common bond red brick and feature brick quoins at the corners.
4. **Structural System, Framing:** The building is a poured concrete structure. The roof is wood framed.
5. **Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads:** A projecting portico is centered across three bays in the middle of the main, or north, façade. A short flight of granite steps leads to the portico, which is slightly elevated. The portico floor is limestone. A concrete handicapped accessible ramp with tubular metal railings was added onto the east side of the portico. Four Doric columns are located across the front, while two Doric pilasters are engaged at the rear. These support a simple entablature and triangular pediment. The cornice of the entablature and the raking cornice of the pediment are decorated with dentils.
6. **Chimneys:** There are two interior brick chimneys, one at each end of the building. Each is centered to, and projects above, the hip roof's ridgeline.
7. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and Doors:** The building has four doorways; one at the center of each façade. The front entrance has a simple classically styled surround featuring Doric pilasters supporting an entablature and triangular pediment. A four-pane transom surmounts the front door. The door surround for the rear double metal doors is pedimented with dentil within the pediment and on the entablature. The metal doors on the east and west facades are fire doors with no decorative surrounds. All of the building's doors are now metal with a single, narrow, vertical rectangular window.
 - b. **Windows and Shutters:** All the windows in this building, except the decorative windows in the building's two pediments, are six-over-six, double-hung wood sash. There are no shutters. With the exception of the windows under the front portico, and present in the roof dormers and pediments, all feature brick jack arches. Those under the front portico have limestone jack arches with a central keystone. All windows except those in the dormers and pediments have limestone sills. The windows in the dormers have no decorative trim.

The window opening in the front pediment is semi-circular with a wood frame. The glazing is currently missing. The window in the rear pediment is a fixed semi-circular wood sash with radiating muntins and keystones at the top, bottom, and each side. The enclosed end porches each feature three evenly spaced, twelve-over-twelve double-hung, wood sash windows in their second story; the easternmost window in the south porch has its top half blocked by wood infill.

8. Roof:

- a. **Shape, Covering:** The building is sheltered by a hip roof with projecting gables over the porches and front and rear entrances. The roof is sheathed in treated terra cotta tiles manufactured to imitate slate shingles.
- b. **Cornice, Eaves:** A wood cornice surrounds the building on all sides; it features cyma recta and cyma reversa moldings. A wide frieze and dentil course adorn the roofline of the porches.
- c. **Dormers, Cupolas, Towers:** There are eight hip roof dormers present; two centered to each side of the front and rear gables. The dormer roofs and sides are covered with treated terra cotta tiles manufactured to imitate slate shingles.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. **Basement:** The basement was inaccessible due to locked doors.
- b. **First Floor:** The main entry is on the north façade and leads to a waiting room. The rear entry to the building is on the south elevation and leads to the stair hall. When the first floor was reconfigured, at an unknown date, to become an outpatient day care center, it possessed a social room (the current waiting area), project rooms, lounges, and a sewing room. The interior, however, was again entirely reconfigured in the 1970s.

Twenty-four rooms on the first floor open off of a central corridor, which runs from east to west through the building. All of the interior partitions, with the exception of the hallway walls, were constructed during the 1970s interior renovations. These rooms were used as offices and meeting rooms, many with connecting doors. A large records room and staff office is located to the east of the waiting room. Two restrooms are located on this floor, one on either side of the hallway near the waiting

room. Two stair halls are located on either end of the building in the former porches and provide access to the second level.

- c. **Second Floor:** The second floor was not accessed due to avian infestation and extensive amounts of avian guano. This level originally contained quarters for nurses. Plans from ca. 1960 indicate that the second story was being used as quarters for both male and female staff. Nine bedrooms, a toilet room, and bathroom were located at either end of the building. The center provided access to the staircase and a social room.

Plans dating from 1982 show many of the partition walls reconfigured to create larger spaces for group therapy, the dietary program office, a patient day room, and other offices.

- d. **Attic:** The attic was inaccessible due to hazardous conditions.
2. **Stairways:** The main open string stair has a straight run to the second floor. The two open string end stairs each have two quarter turns in their rise to the second floor. The wood balusters are square with two per step. The wood newel posts are square with pyramidal caps. All of the stairways are painted a blue-grey, except for the handrail, which has been varnished. The steps are of dark brown terrazzo with a metal edge on the front of each step.
 3. **Flooring:** The floors throughout the building are covered with tan linoleum. The integral baseboards and thresholds are of terrazzo with dark brown, black, orange, and pink stone chips. The connection between the floor and the baseboard is coved to prevent dust build-up in the corners.
 4. **Wall and Ceiling Finish:** The walls throughout the building are of plaster, which has been painted white. The hallway has terrazzo baseboards with a curved connection between the floor and the walls. The other rooms have coved vinyl baseboards. The drop ceiling has rectangular acoustic tiles within a suspended metal frame.
5. **Openings:**
- a. **Doorways and Doors:** The doors in the building are hollow core wood laminate doors set in metal frames. The doors at the front and rear entry and at all of the staircases are steel fire doors within metal frames.

b. **Windows:** All of the interior windows have large wood sills and are surrounded by 6" wood moldings. All of the woodwork, such as the window surrounds, is painted white.

6. **Decorative Features and Trim:** There are no decorative features or trim.

7. **Mechanical Equipment:**

- a. **Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation:** The original steam heating system has been replaced with a centralized forced air system. The ductwork for the new system is located along the exterior walls and has been boxed in. Vents are located in each room.
- b. **Lighting:** No original light fixtures remain in the building. Florescent lighting fixtures have been installed within the drop ceiling.
- c. **Plumbing and Fixtures:** The restrooms have standard porcelain toilets and sinks.
- d. **Elevators:** An elevator is located on the western side of the waiting room. This piece of equipment was installed during the 1982 renovations.

D. **Site:**

- 1. **General Setting and Orientation:** This building is located at the north end of the Allen Park complex. It faces north and overlooks Employee Parking Areas A and F.
- 2. **Historic Landscape Design:** Mature ornamental coniferous and deciduous shrubs surround the building.
- 3. **Outbuildings:** None.

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 Baugnet 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:

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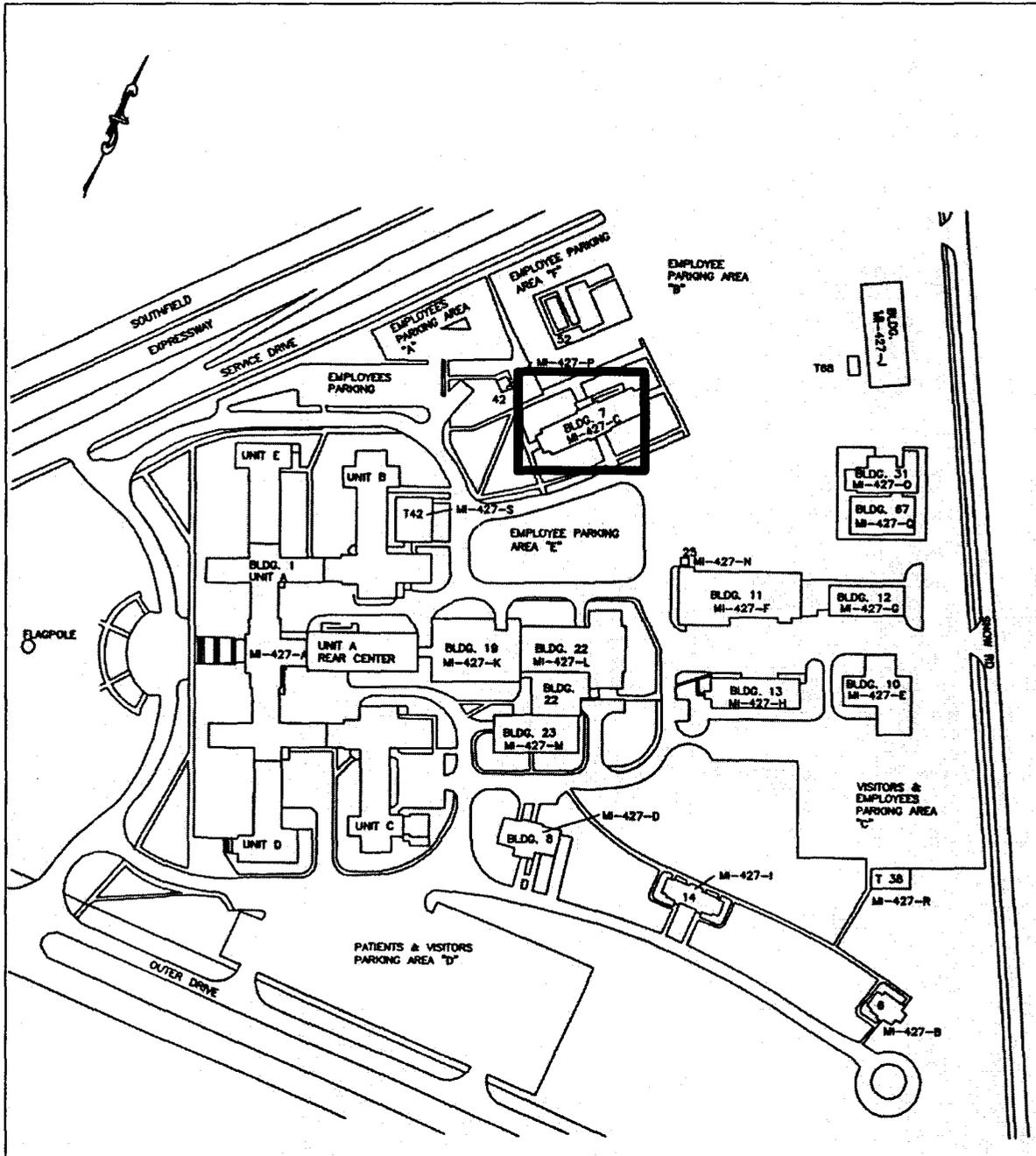
Hoke, John Ray, Jr. *Architectural Graphic Standards*, 9th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994.

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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.

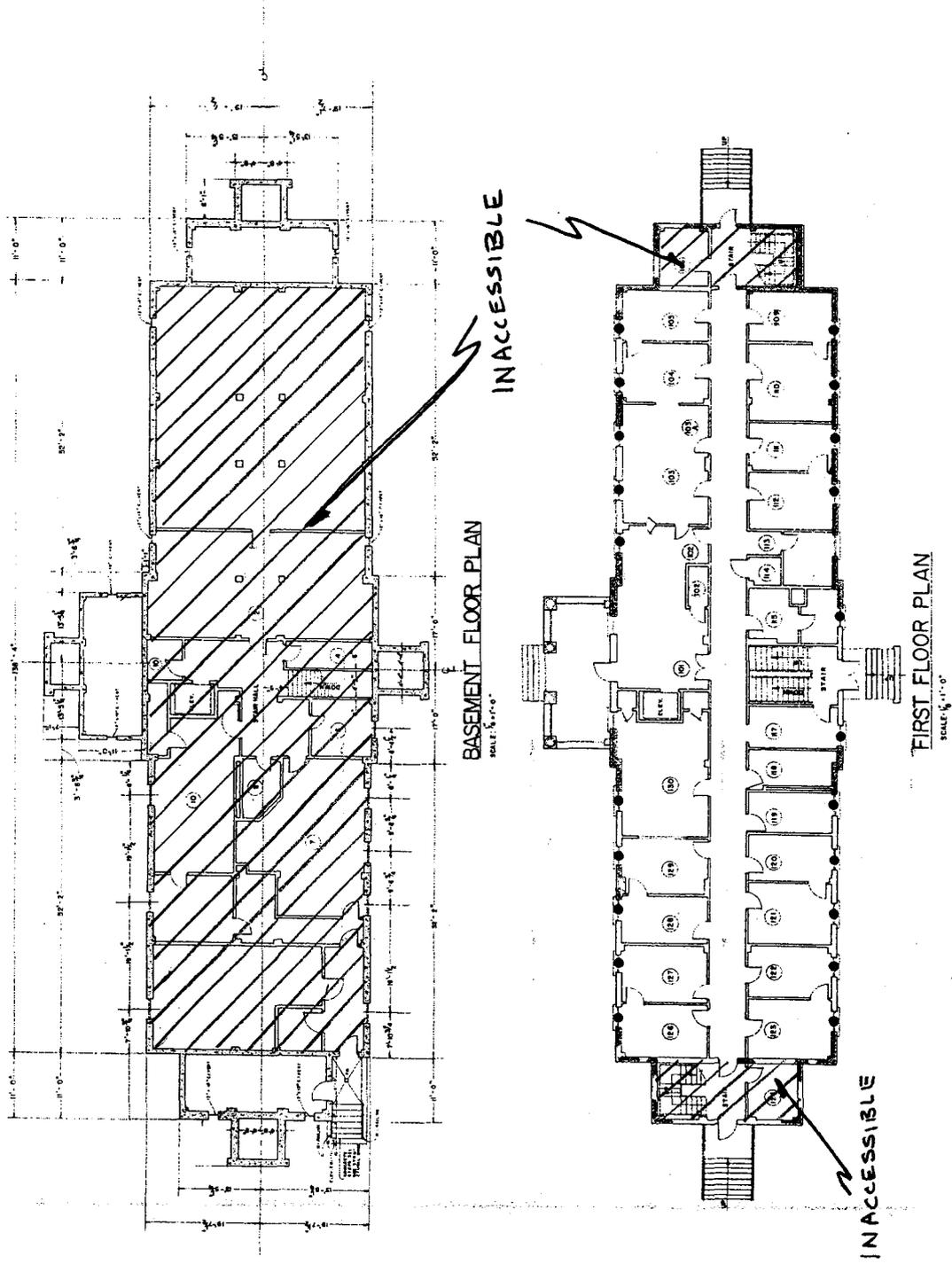
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Site Plan



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Reduced Copy of Current Plan, February 2002



BLDG. 7 BSMT 8 1ST. FLR.	DAY CARE TREATMENT CENTER
PROJECT: BLDG. 7 ARCHITECT: CALDWELL ENGINEER: CALDWELL	BUILDING NO. 7 ALLEN PARK MICH.

ALLEN PARK VETERANS
ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL
BUILDING 7
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Reduced Copy of Historic Plan, dated April 15, 1939
On file at the John D. Dingell Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Detroit,
Michigan

