

ALLEN PARK VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 13
(Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital, Laundry-Engineering Shops)
Southfield Expressway & Outer Drive
Allen Park
Wayne County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-427-H

HABS
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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 13
(Laundry Building/Engineering Shops)**

HABS No. MI-427-H

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 13, completed in 1939, initially served as the hospital's laundry facility. By 1949, the laundry needs for the hospital, which had expanded significantly in the period 1945-47 with the addition of the B and C wings, exceeded the capacity of Building 13. Building 11 was constructed as the new Laundry building and Building 13 became the Engineering Shops.

The building exhibits characteristic Georgian Revival influences, typical of the Allen Park facility and of VA hospitals nationwide. The interior and exterior symmetry, side gable form, and sash windows are all reflections of the Georgian Revival style that was common for VA hospitals.

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 13 originally served as the laundry building and was later converted into the engineering shop.
- D. Original Plans and Construction:** The original drawings (showing all wall sections, and basement, first floor, second floor, and attic plans) are dated March 25, 1939. The Veterans Administrations' Administrator, Assistant Administrator, Director of Construction, and Chief of the Technical Division signed the drawings. Except for minor interior alterations, the building retains its original appearance.
- E. Alterations and Additions:** New interior partition walls were erected and an addition was constructed to provide storage.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement:**
- 1. Architectural Character:** Building 13, the Engineering Shops, is a 1½-story building. Its Georgian Revival style complements the other original 1939 buildings in the complex, including Building 1, Building 6, and Building 7.
 - 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 116'-0" x 42'-0". The structure is eighteen bays long and four bays wide.
 - 2. Foundations:** The foundation is poured concrete.

3. **Walls:** The walls are constructed of common bond red brick, and feature tall, plain concrete trim around all four sides at the bottom.
4. **Structural System, Framing:** The building is a brick masonry structure. The roof is wood framed and supported by seven steel scissor trusses.
5. **Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads:** There is a concrete loading dock located along the west half of the north wall.
6. **Chimneys:** There are four metal ventilation units visible above the roofline. Two are centered on the roof's ridgeline; one located approximately one-third of the way along the roof's length, the other two-thirds of the way along. The third ventilation unit is located near the southwest corner of the roof near the edge on its south side. The fourth ventilation unit, which is much smaller than the others, sits almost in a direct line behind the third unit, but is located on the ridgeline.
7. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and Doors:** There are five entrances to the building, the first located in the west wall of the west addition, the second, third, and fourth located in the west half of the building's north wall. The first entrance contains a plain metal door. The second and fourth entrances contain a pair of metal doors, each with a narrow, vertical rectangular window. The third entrance also has one pair of metal doors like those in the second and fourth entrances, plus an additional single metal door to the right. The second, third and fourth entrances lead into the building from the loading dock, but they do not display the usual metal overhead doors associated with that function. The fifth entrance is located in the basement level near the northeast corner of the east wall, and contains doors identical to those found in the second and fourth entrances.
 - b. **Windows and Shutters:** There are twenty-three wood-frame, industrial-style, six-over-six awning windows in the building, arranged either singly or in pairs. The east wall contains four symmetrically arranged single windows. The west wall at one time had three symmetrically arranged single windows, but the center window has been closed with brick infill, probably at the time the west addition was built. The south wall has four pairs of windows evenly spaced along its west half, and had five single windows distributed along its east half; the first and third of these single windows have been sealed with brick infill and had ventilation systems introduced. The north wall of the structure has three pairs of windows interspersed with the three large entrances from the loading dock. Two of the loading dock entrances, one at either

end, feature ten-light windows above the doors, the center loading dock entrance has a fourteen-light window above the door. All the windows in this building have limestone sills.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, Covering:** Building 13 has an end gable roof with a moderate pitch. The roof is sheathed in treated terra cotta tiles manufactured to imitate slate shingles.
- b. Cornice, Eaves:** A simple wood cornice with boxed returns runs along the length of the building under the eaves on the north and south sides.
- c. Dormers, Cupolas, Towers:** There are no dormers, cupolas, or towers present.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor Plans:** The building is a one-story, open plan structure with a locker room, restroom, storage area, and offices located on the eastern end of the building. A paint shop is located on the southwestern end of the building and has its own entrance. Added partition walls divide the original open plan space into three smaller workspaces. The building is entered through doors on the north façade.
- 2. Stairways:** There are two stairways up to storage bays above the workspace. They are both open string steel stairs with tubular steel railings and checkered plate steel treads.
- 3. Flooring:** The flooring is unfinished concrete.
- 4. Wall and Ceiling Finish:** The interior is unfinished, exposing the brick masonry structure of the building as well as the mechanical, electrical, and ventilation systems. The interior walls that form the locker room, restroom, and office spaces are drywall. The wall between the paint shop and the rest of the building is exposed brick masonry. The walls of the storage room are drywall and plywood. The partitions in the main workspace are a combination of drywall over wood studs, and plywood attached to chain link fencing. The offices are painted blue, the paint shop and two of the work spaces are painted a green-gray color, the main workspace is painted a light yellow, and the hallways and locker room are painted white. The storage area was left unfinished. The wooden roof trusses and roof deck are visible from the interior of the building.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and Doors:** The doors are of steel construction set within steel frames. The exterior doors have a single window in the upper portion of the door.
- b. Windows:** The window frames are of wood and have a large sill and 1” molding. The glass is opaque.

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

7. Mechanical Equipment:

- a. Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation:** The original and current heating system is steam. Radiators are located throughout the building and have been left uncovered. Cooling is provided by large electric industrial cooling units located on platforms set between the trusses.
- b. Lighting:** The majority of the building is lit by florescent fixtures suspended from the trusses. Eight steel pendant light fixtures suspended from the trusses light the paint shop.
- c. Plumbing:** The building has a standard porcelain toilet and sink.

8. Shop Equipment: The building work spaces have wood cabinets with wood or laminate work surfaces. The cabinets have either been painted yellow or white or left unfinished. The cabinets appear to have been salvaged from laboratory spaces during modifications. A spray paint booth and fume hood is located in the paint shop. The locker room has approximately twenty-five steel lockers along the walls with a wood bench in between the rows.

D. Site:

- 1. General Setting and Orientation:** The Engineering Shops are located in the east-central portion of the complex, just to the west of Building 10, the Boiler House. It faces north towards Building 11, the Administration/ Laundry Building. To its southeast is Visitors and Employee Parking Area “C.”
- 2. Historic Landscape Design:** None.
- 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.

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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.

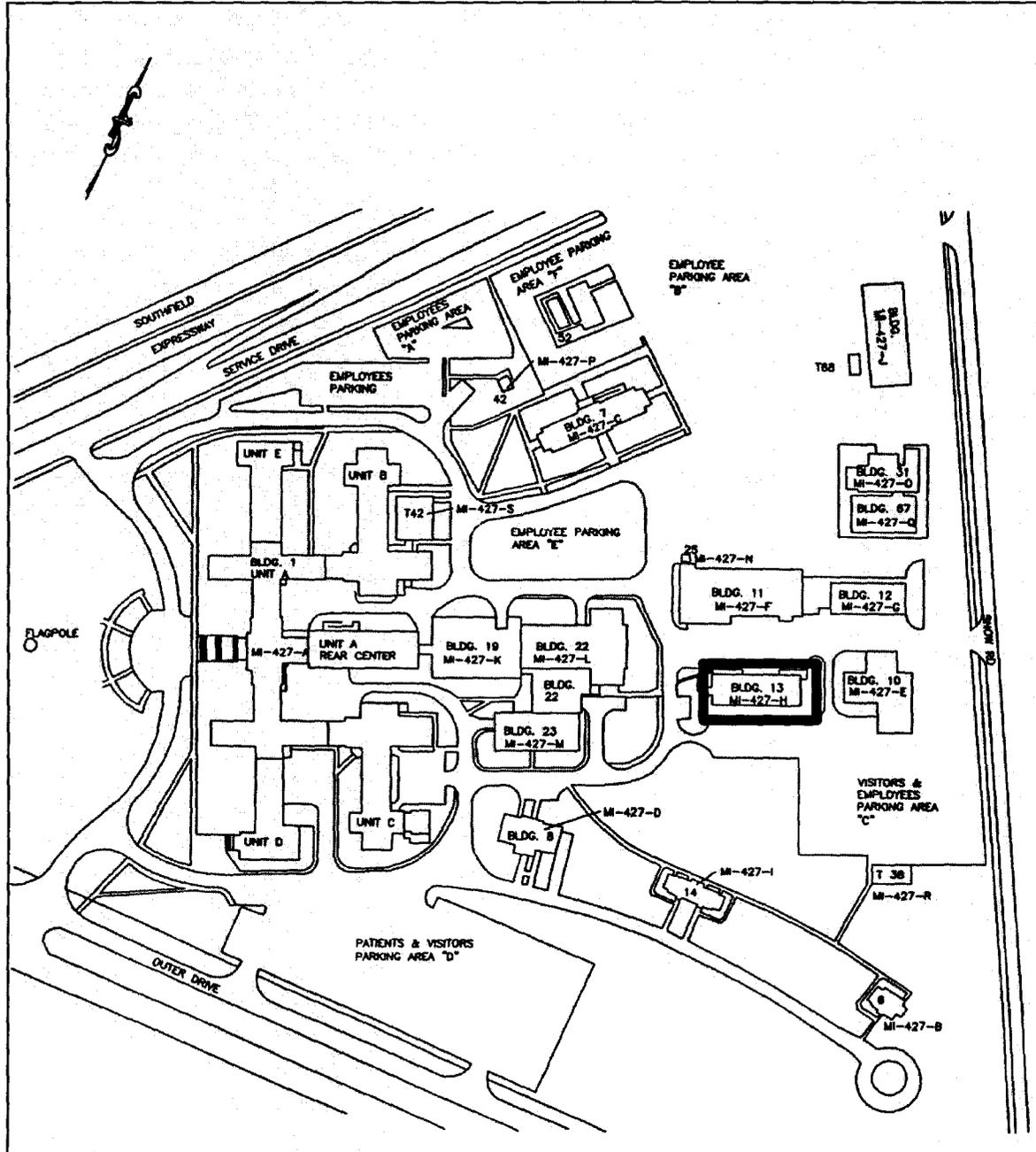
Hoke, John Ray, Jr. *Architectural Graphic Standards*, 9th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994.

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.

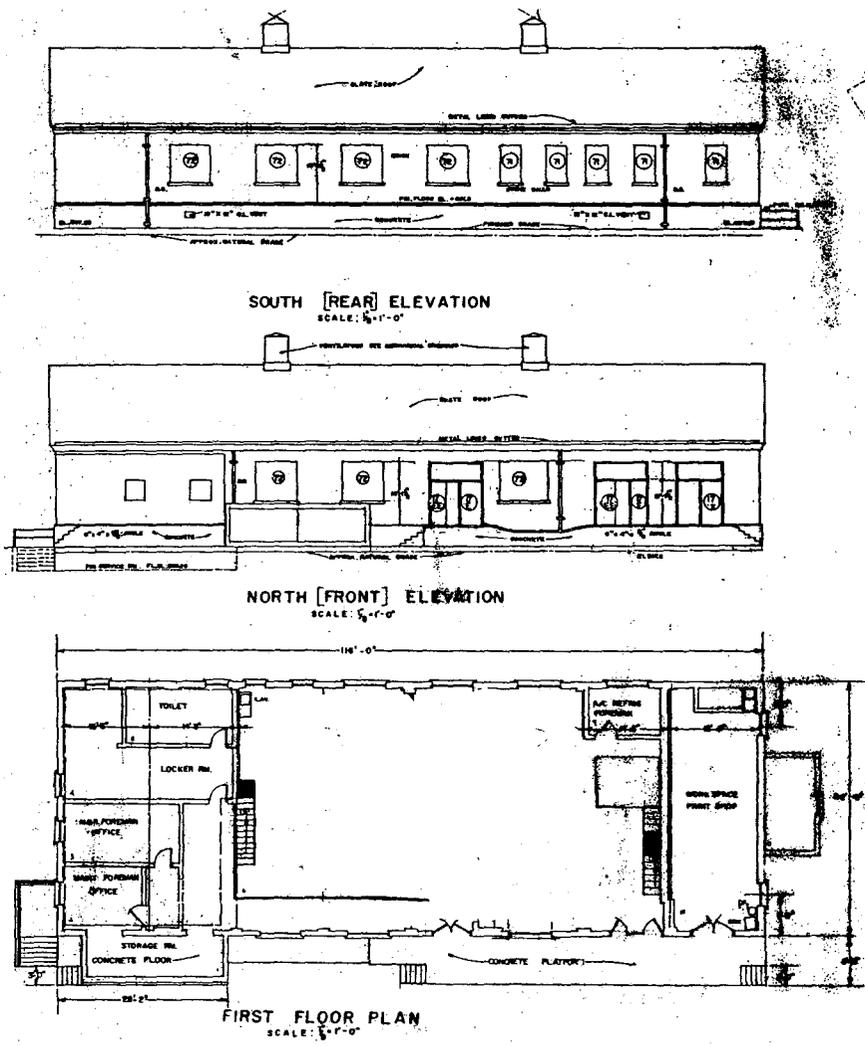
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Site Plan



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Reduced Copy of Current Plan, February 2002



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Reduced Copy of Historic Plan, dated March 25, 1939. On file at the John D. Dingell
 Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Detroit, Michigan

