

ALLEN PARK VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 14
(Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital, Duplex Staff Quarters)
Southfield Expressway & Outer Drive
Allen Park
Wayne County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-427-1

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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 14
(Duplex Staff Quarters)**

HABS No. MI-427-I

- 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 14 was constructed in 1939 as the Duplex Staff Quarters. Two high-ranking hospital administrators and/or physicians and their families lived in this duplex, which has identical floor plans for each of the two residential units.
- Like the other original buildings on the hospital complex, Building 14 exhibits characteristic Georgian Revival features. The symmetry, side gable form, pedimented entrances, and sash windows are all reflective of the Georgian Revival style that was common among VA hospitals nationwide.
- The presence of this building, as well as the Nurses' Quarters, Attendants' Quarters, and Director's Quarters (Buildings 7, 8, and 6, respectively) indicates the need for round-the-clock, on-site staff at the hospital. It also demonstrates a hierarchy among staff at the Allen Park hospital as only three individual families were given on-site housing (in Buildings 6 and 14).

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 14 has continually served as a residence for senior or visiting hospital staff since its construction.
- 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.
- E. Alterations and Additions:** There have been no alterations or additions.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- 1. Architectural Character:** Building 14 is a 2½-story duplex structure. The two sides of the duplex mirror each other exactly. 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 unaltered from its original appearance.

B. Description of Exterior:

- 1. Overall Dimensions:** The overall dimensions of the building measure 66'-0" x 29'-0". The rectangular plan building is two stories, with a basement and attic. The structure is six bays long and two bays wide.
- 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 common bond red brick.

4. **Structural System, Framing:** The building is a brick masonry structure. The roof and floor are wood-framed.
5. **Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads:** On the western half of the duplex, a small, projecting vestibule is centered on the first story in the second bay of the three bay main façade. A short flight of limestone steps accesses the vestibule, which is slightly elevated. A wood-frame, enclosed, shed roof sun porch is located along the first story of the west wall. The porch features three pairs of screened windows along its west side, as well as a door and a single pair of screened windows in its north and south ends. A small shed roof porch with lattice sides is located at the rear entrance of the house, centered on the first floor under the second bay. The eastern half of the duplex is a mirror image of the western half.
6. **Chimneys:** A red brick semi-enclosed chimney is present on the west side of the duplex. It is centered on the wall, and extends several feet above the roofline. It is capped with limestone. An identical chimney is located on the east side of the duplex.
7. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and Doors:** Each duplex has three doorways; one centered under the front portico, one centered at the rear of the residence, and a third entrance to provide access to the sun porch. The front entrance of the vestibule has a simple classically styled surround featuring Doric pilasters supporting an entablature and a triangular pediment. Just below the entablature is a row of small divided lights.
 - b. **Windows and Shutters:** All of the windows in the duplex are wood-frame double-hung sash, with six-over-six, eight-over-eight or eight-over-twelve lights. Drawing on classical tradition, the taller windows are located in the first story of the public facades with the shorter windows located on the second story. Small, narrow openings in the gable to either side of the chimneys, as well as in the projecting rear gables, contain wood louvers to help ventilate the attic. Louvered wood shutters are present on the west, south, and east facades.
8. **Roof:**
 - a. **Shape, Covering:** The roof features end-gables with a projecting double gable centered at the rear. The roof is sheathed in treated terra cotta tiles manufactured to imitate slate shingles.

b. **Cornice, Eaves:** A corbelled brick cornice with dentils surrounds the building on all sides below the eaves.

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 mechanical rooms under the side porches, with a maid's room and bathroom in each unit along the party wall.

b. **First Floor:** Each residence has a center hall plan with a living room located on one side of the hall, and a dining room and kitchen located on the other side. A rear entry is located at the end of the hallway. The kitchen in both units was modified in the 1970s. In both kitchens the cabinets and fixtures were replaced. A screened porch is located off of the living room.

c. **Second Floor:** The second floor has three bedrooms, with two on one side of the central hall and the third across the hall. Each unit has one bathroom located at the top of the stairs. A trap door in the hallway ceiling provides access to the attic.

d. **Attic:** The attic was inaccessible due to sealed access panels.

2. **Stairways:** The open-string stair has one landing where the staircase doubles back on itself on its way to the second floor. The wooden balusters are a square shape with two per step. The wooden handrail ends in a volute. The entire stair is painted white, except for the handrail, which has been varnished.

3. **Flooring:** The floors throughout the residences are covered with tan carpet over wood flooring, except in the bathrooms where the carpet was laid over linoleum. The same carpeting is used as a runner on the stairs. The kitchen floor in both units is covered with linoleum.

4. **Wall and Ceiling Finish:** The walls throughout both residences are of plaster. The dining room and kitchen in both units have been wallpapered. The downstairs hall and living room in both units are painted white. The three bedrooms and the upstairs hall in both units are painted white.

The bathrooms have 6" tan tile running halfway up the wall all the way around the room. Six inches from the top 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 1' 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 duplex are of wood construction in a wood frame. All of the doors have six panels, with the exception of the rear entrances, the entrances from the screened porch, and the doorways 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 of the same type, and features sidelights on either side of the doorway.
- b. **Windows:** All interior windows 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 cornices are found in all of the rooms. The baseboard is 8" tall and is painted white in every room. The 3" cornice is also painted white in all of the rooms.

Each living room has 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. A wood window seat is located in the largest bedroom beneath the front window and between the closets. The woodwork is painted white in both buildings. In the kitchens, the cabinet doors and drawers all have a single inset panel and are stained a dark cherry color. The bathroom cabinets are laminate units installed in the 1970s or 1980s.

7. Mechanical Equipment:

- a. **Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation:** The building was always heated with steam. 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 top access lid. 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: All plumbing fixtures have been replaced.

D. Site:

- 1. General Setting and Orientation:** This building is located on the south side of the Allen Park complex. It faces south, and is in the center of a row of three residential structures all original to the complex, widely spaced apart, along a tree-lined drive.
- 2. Historic Landscape Design:** Building 14 is located along 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.

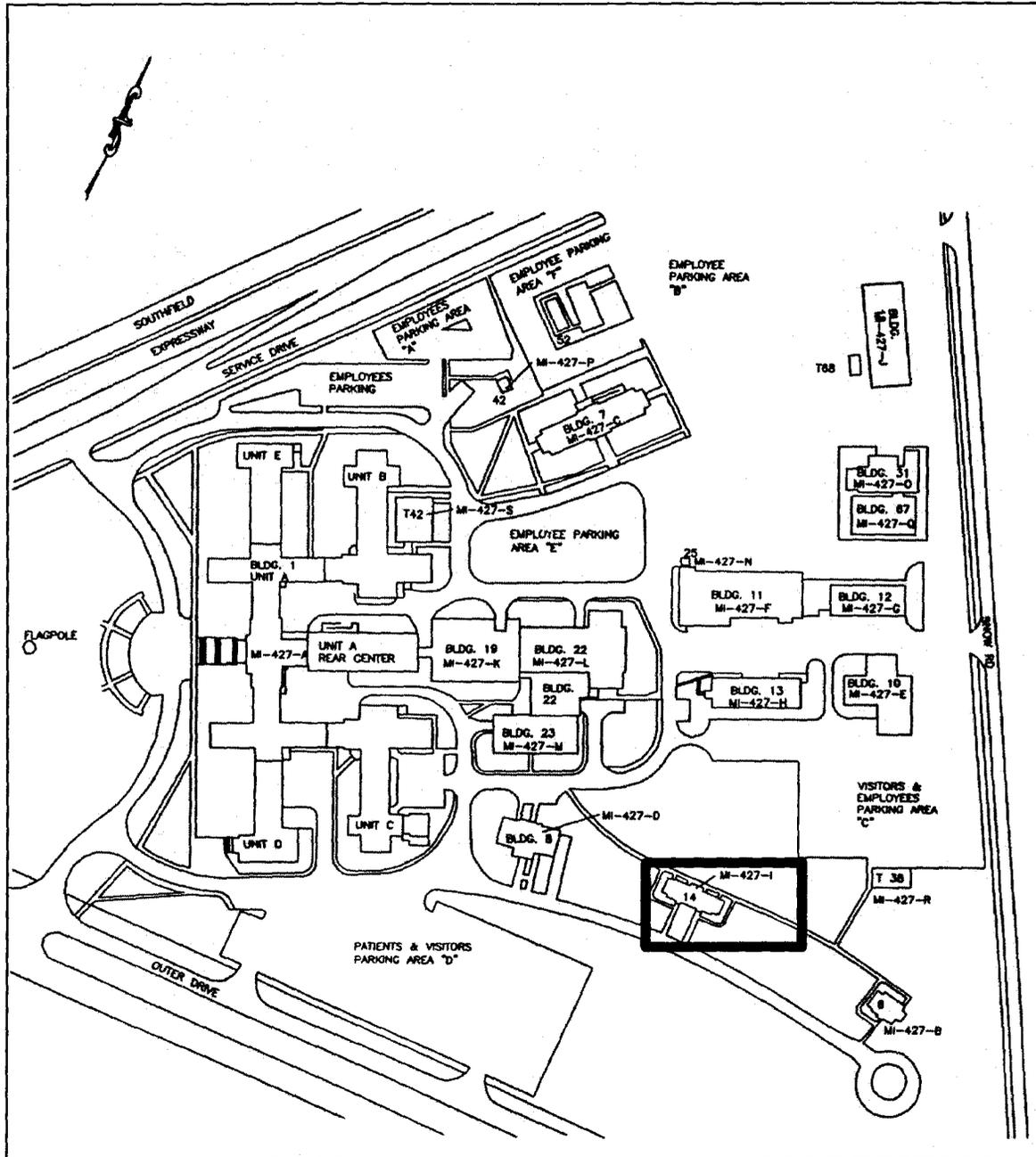
Hoke, John Ray, Jr. *Architectural Graphic Standards*, 9th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994.

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.

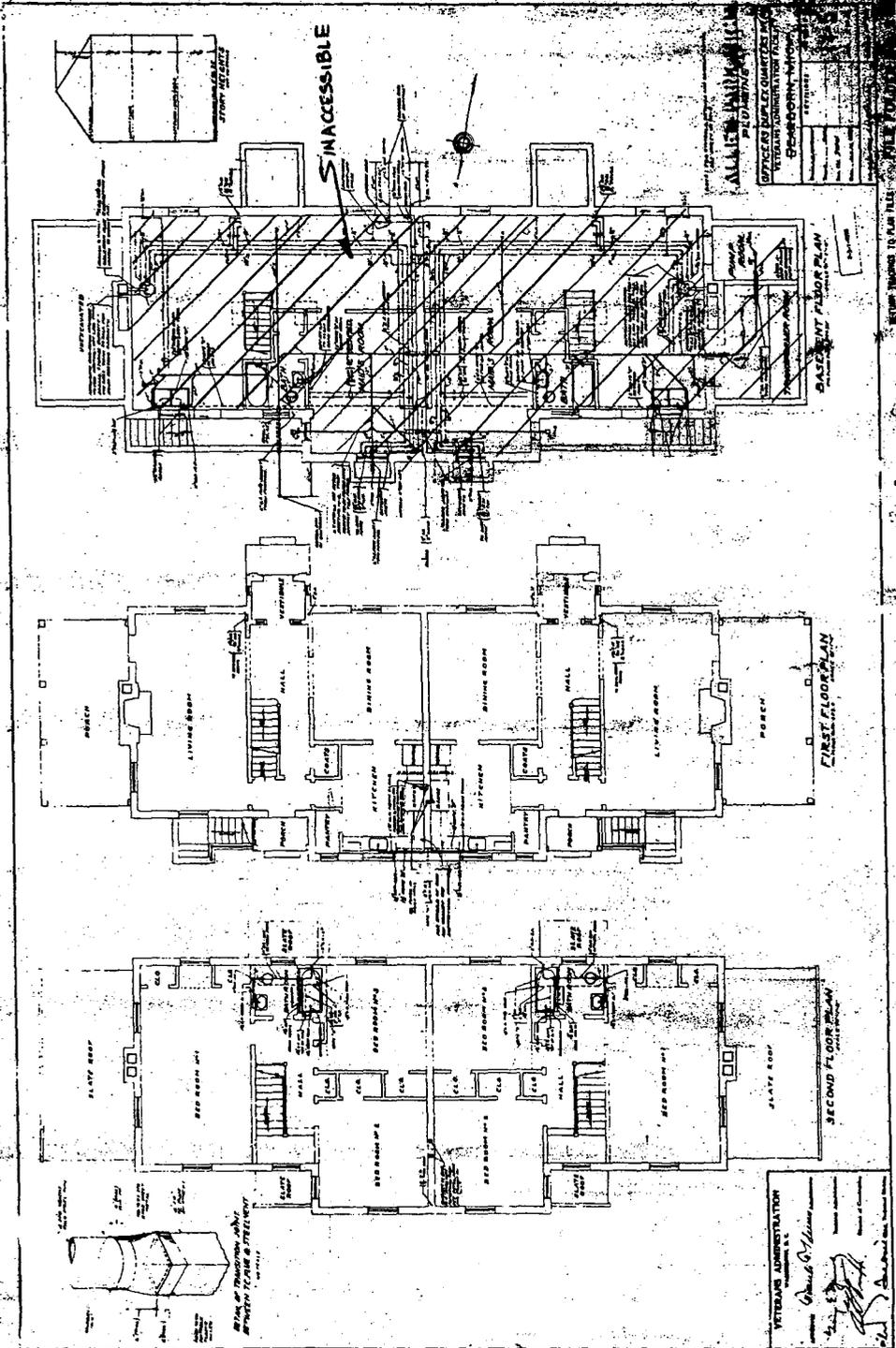
ALLEN PARK VETERANS
ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL
BUILDING 14
(Duplex Staff Quarters)
HABS No. MI-427-I
(Page 8)

Site Plan



ALLEN PARK VETERANS
 ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL
 BUILDING 14
 (Duplex Staff Quarters)
 HABS No. MI-427-I
 (Page 9)

Reduced Copy of Current Plan, February 2002



ALLEN PARK VETERANS
 ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL
 BUILDING 14
 (Duplex Staff Quarters)
 HABS No. MI-427-I
 (Page 11)

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

ALLEN PARK, MICH.

OFFICES DUPLEX QUARTERS
 VETERANS ADMINISTRATION FACILITY
 HABS FOR MI-MICH.

14-2

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