

ALLEN PARK VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 18
(Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital, Warehouse)
Southfield Expressway & Outer Drive
Allen Park
Wayne County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-427-J

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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 18
(Warehouse)**

HABS No. MI-427-J

- 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 18, built in 1944, is an open warehouse for the storage of hospital supplies. The building is located adjacent to a former rail line and also has loading docks for truck access. It is representative of the type of low-cost, mass-produced industrial buildings that have continued to grow in popularity since World War II.
- The presence of Building 18 demonstrates how active the Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital became during the World War II era and the need at that time for additional storage facilities to support the increase in hospital patients and services.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Date of Erection:** 1944.
- 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 18 has continually served as a warehouse since its construction.
- D. Original Plans and Construction:** The original drawings (showing an elevation, wall sections, and first floor plan) are dated February 8, 1944. The Veterans Administrations' Administrator, Assistant Administrator, Director of Construction, and Chief of the Technical Division signed the drawings. Except for a minor alteration, the building retains its original appearance.
- E. Alterations and Additions:** The building has had a rear addition constructed to increase the storage capabilities of the building.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- 1. Architectural Character:** Building 18, which serves as a warehouse, is a one-story partially pre-fabricated metal structure. It is representative of warehouse architecture of the World War II era with its metal frame and roof truss and sheet metal walls and roof.
- 2. Condition of Fabric:** The building is in good condition; it is physically sound and has not been significantly altered from its original appearance.

B. Description of Exterior:

- 1. Overall Dimensions:** The overall dimensions of the building measure 140'-8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 56'-3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". The rectangular plan building is one story. The structure is seven bays long and three bays wide.
- 2. Foundations:** The foundation is a poured concrete slab.

3. **Walls:** The walls are covered with standing-seam metal sheets. The addition is sheathed with corrugated metal sheets.
4. **Structural System, Framing:** The building is a prefabricated steel frame structure. The curved roof is steel framed and supported by six steel camelback trusses.
5. **Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads:** A concrete loading dock is located along the eastern two-thirds of the south wall. The concrete base is elevated several feet above the ground, and is accessed by a short flight of concrete steps. A flat metal roof supported by three slender metal columns shelters the dock.
6. **Chimneys:** There are two large metal ventilation units, which are slightly offset to the highest point of the curved roof, one to the west and one to the east.
7. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and Doors:** The warehouse has three entrances; a main entrance, a rear entrance, and a cargo entrance. The main entrance is slightly off-center in the south wall, and has a simple metal door. The rear entrance is located in the center of the north wall of the warehouse addition, and contains a sliding metal-panel door. The cargo entrance is just to the west of the main entrance and features a corrugated metal roll-up door.
 - b. **Windows and Shutters:** All of the warehouse windows are metal-frame multi-pane industrial awnings. A set of four windows is located near the west end of the south wall, and an additional set of four is located near the east end of the south wall. Six sets of four windows run down the west and east sides of the original warehouse building; those on the west reach the full height of the wall, those on the east extend only half way down from the eaves. There are no windows at the rear. All of the windows were covered in 1947 with locked metal grates for security.
8. **Roof:**
 - a. **Shape, Covering:** The curved roof is sheathed in sheets of corrugated metal.
 - b. **Cornice, Eaves:** There is no cornice or eave decoration.
 - c. **Dormers, Cupolas, Towers:** There are no dormers, cupolas, or towers present.

C. Description of Interior:

1. **Floor Plans:** The building is an open plan structure with a locker room, restroom, vault and office located within the first bay on the northern end of the building. An addition on the northern façade increased the length of the building by one bay. The original exterior wall and roll-up door serve as the interior partition between the original structure and the addition.
2. **Stairways:** There are no stairways.
3. **Flooring:** The floor is unfinished concrete.
4. **Wall and Ceiling Finish:** The interior is unfinished, exposing the steel frame structure and camelback trusses of the building as well as the mechanical, electrical, and ventilation systems. The walls are corrugated metal with windows. The arched corrugated metal roofing is visible from the interior of the building.
5. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and Doors:** All doorways, including standard entry and loading dock doors, are of steel within steel frames.
 - b. **Windows:** The window frames are of steel and have no decorative features. The glass is opaque. The large expanse of glass along the east and west walls allows for the maximum amount of natural sunlight possible to enter the building.
6. **Decorative Features and Trim:** There are no decorative features or trim.
7. **Mechanical Equipment:**
 - a. **Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation:** Large electric industrial heating and cooling units are located on platforms set between the roof trusses.
 - b. **Lighting:** The building is currently lit by fifty-two fluorescent fixtures hung in four rows running north to south through the building.
 - c. **Plumbing and Fixtures:** The bathroom, located in the southeast corner of the building, contains an original porcelain sink and toilet.

- 8. Other Features:** Two rows of industrial wood and steel shelving run north to south through the building.

D. Site:

- 1. General Setting and Orientation:** This structure is located at the northeast corner of the complex, just to the west of Snow Road.
- 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 Bagnet 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.

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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.

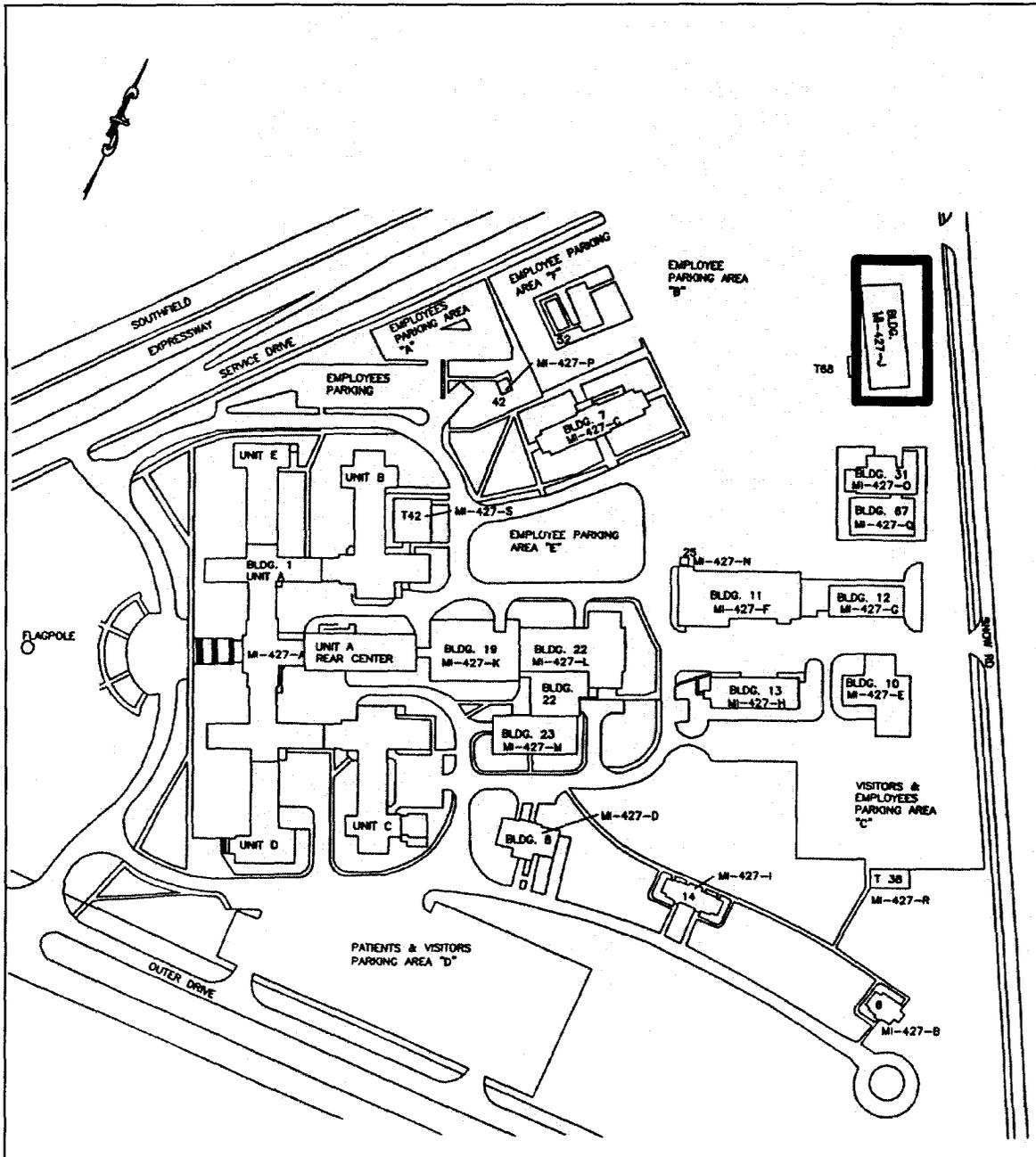
Hoke, John Ray, Jr. *Architectural Graphic Standards*, 9th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994.

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.

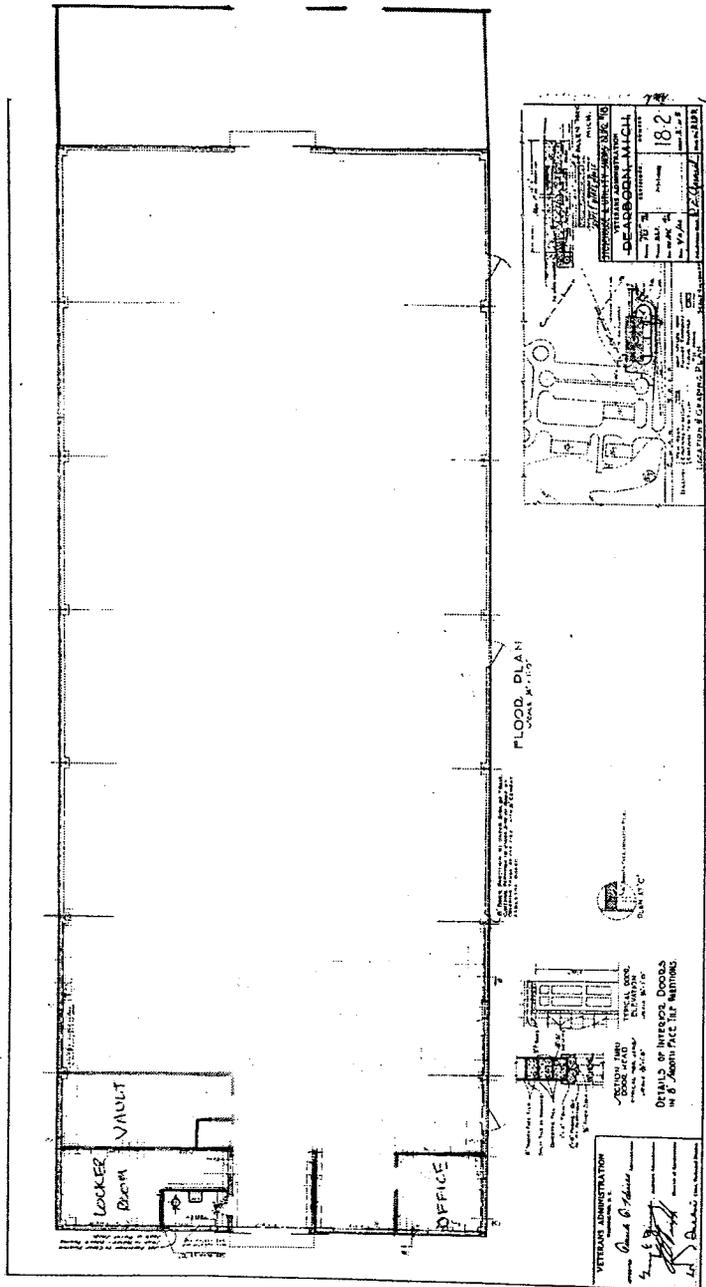
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Site Plan



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Reduced Copy of Current Plan, February 2002



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Reduced Copy of Historic Plan, dated February 8, 1944. On file at the John D. Dingell
 Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Detroit, Michigan

