

ALLEN PARK VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 22
(Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital, Auditorium, Canteen & Retail)
Southfield Expressway & Outer Drive
Allen Park
Wayne County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-427-L

HABS
MI-427-L

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 22
(Auditorium/Canteen/Retail)**

HABS No. MI-427-L

- 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 22 was built in 1947 as an auditorium for the hospital. Its elaborate interior decorations were removed when the space was refinished in the 1980s. It currently has several large murals decorating the walls. Also added in the 1980s was a cafeteria or canteen, and shop for hospital staff and visitors.
- Building 22 represents the objective of the Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital to meet not only the medical needs of its patients, but their social ones as well. Because it had no permanent seating, the auditorium could be used as a large room for activities and social events. The stage at one end allowed for the presentation of plays and recitals. A movie screen could be rolled down for showing movies to patients and on-campus staff.
- The building continues the use of Georgian Revival details found throughout the campus in its brick façade with a limestone veneer base, regularly spaced sash windows, quoins, and cornice.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Date of Erection:** 1947.
- 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 22 has continually served as an auditorium and canteen since its construction. The building has been altered to allow for additional uses.
- D. Original Plans and Construction:** The original drawings (showing all four elevations, wall sections, and first floor, second floor, and third floor plans) are dated October 27, 1945. The Veterans Administrations' Administrator, Assistant Administrator, Director of Construction, and Chief of the Technical Division signed the drawings. The exterior of the building retains its original form and appearance, though the interior has been altered.
- E. Alterations and Additions:** The first floor canteen was expanded in order to increase the room's occupancy. The auditorium has been divided with a portion of the seating area, which never had built-in seats, retained as open space. The remaining auditorium space has been converted into a classroom/conference room with movable partitions that allow the area to be divided into a maximum of six spaces. The original interior woodwork has been removed.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- 1. Architectural Character:** Building 22 was constructed in 1947 and houses the auditorium, canteen, and retail areas. It is a 3½-story structure with a fly loft above the auditorium's stage. The building features a simplified version of the Georgian Revival style that was employed in the design of the original 1939 buildings in the complex.
- 2. Condition of Fabric:** The building is in good condition; it is physically sound, but it has been altered from its original appearance.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. **Overall Dimensions:** The overall dimensions of the building measure 115'-0" x 106'-0". The T-shaped building is three stories in height. The structure is nine bays long and six bays wide.
2. **Foundations:** The raised foundation is constructed of poured concrete with coursed dressed ashlar limestone veneer on the building's south, east, and north sides, and red common bond brick veneer on the western two-thirds of the south and west sides. A limestone water table tops the foundation where the limestone veneer is present. The raised foundation is quite tall, enclosing a large first story.
3. **Walls:** The walls are clad with five-course, common bond, red brick and have limestone quoins at the corners
4. **Structural System, Framing:** The building is a steel structure. The roof has a steel frame and is supported by eight steel Pratt trusses. The floors are poured concrete slabs.
5. **Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads:** There is a small iron balcony present near the southeast corner of the south wall of the 2½-story projection that forms the crossbar of the "T." It is supported by four knee braces and features a simple metal balustrade.
6. **Chimneys:** There are no chimneys present.
7. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and Doors:** The building has six doorways, all of which feature double or single metal doors with single vertical lights. The door that is located on the south façade of the crossbar is a metal door that opens into a metal-frame-and-plexiglass vestibule.
 - b. **Windows and Shutters:** Because this building was constructed as an auditorium, it has few windows along the second and third floors. Windows exist in the crossbar portion of the "T" and at the west end only. Originally, windows lined the first floor on the north and south facades. These have been covered over on the south by the construction of the canteen addition and have been infilled with an imitation stone material on the north.

The remaining windows in this building are six-over-six double-hung metal sashes. Two small one-story projections, one near each end of the east wall, have large,

louvered, metal ventilation panels. There are no shutters. All of the windows in the limestone foundation walls have massive limestone lintels. All of the windows, including those in the limestone foundation walls, feature limestone sills.

8. Roof:

- a. **Shape, Covering:** The roof is flat with a gravel/asphalt surface.
- b. **Cornice, Eaves:** A simple limestone cornice surrounds the building on all sides; a red brick parapet wall topped with a limestone cap projects several feet above the cornice, except at the east end of the building, where the red brick fly loft with a limestone cornice extends several feet above the parapet wall.
- c. **Dormers, Cupolas, Towers:** There are no dormers, cupolas, or towers present.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. **First Floor:** The first floor is an open plan canteen, or cafeteria, with a food service area located in the southwest corner of the space and a retail area in the northeast corner of the room. The food service area contains a kitchen, food service line, dishwashing room, storage, office, and restroom. The walk-in refrigerator and freezer have been removed. The retail area has an adjacent storage space and two offices. A stairway and exterior entrance are located in the southeast corner of the floor. A second stairway and two elevators are located in the northwest corner. A covered passage connects the elevator lobby to Building 23. A mechanical room located in the northeast corner was inaccessible due to locked doors.
- b. **Second Floor:** The second floor contains the auditorium and associated facilities. The space was extensively modified in the 1960s and 1970s to create a multipurpose space. It was again refinished in the 1980s. The raised stage is located along the east wall and has a fly loft above. The rear portion of the seating area was converted into classroom/conference room spaces with movable partitions to allow the area to be divided into a maximum of six spaces. The classroom/conference room east wall can also be moved back to increase the seating in the auditorium when necessary. Side passages were built to the north and south of the main space and lead down a ramp from the restroom, elevator lobby, and Building 19 to the backstage and rehabilitation areas. In the northeast corner of the floor is the backstage area with two dressing rooms and a restroom. On the other side of the stage in the southeast corner is the

rehabilitation workshop and storage room. The stairway and two elevators from the first floor are located at the elevator lobby on the west side of the second floor. Two additional staircases are located on either side of the stage adjacent to the backstage and rehabilitation areas.

- c. **Third Floor:** The third floor contains a mechanical room in the former projection room space above the elevator lobby and is accessed by the staircase on the western wall. The rest of the space is open to the room below creating a double-height space and fly loft for the theatre.
2. **Stairways:** The stairways are open with metal steps covered with checkered plate steel treads. The balusters and newels are metal and the handrail is wood.
3. **Flooring:** The flooring on the first level is composed of 12" tan vinyl tiles except for the kitchen area where the floor is covered with tan and light brown ceramic tile ranging in size from ¼" to 1" and laid in a random pattern. Drains are located in various places in the floor. The floor on the second level is covered with 12" tan vinyl tiles. The flooring on the stage and in the backstage and rehabilitation areas feature random width wood boards which have been varnished. The third floor has with 12" tan vinyl tile flooring.
4. **Wall and Ceiling Finish:** The walls on the first floor are of plaster, painted white with blue-grey coved vinyl baseboards. The kitchen walls are covered with 6" tan ceramic tile with an 8" tan ceramic tile baseboard. The exterior entry vestibule has plexiglass walls in a metal frame. The drop ceiling has acoustic tiles. The second floor walls are of plaster with dark brown, coved vinyl baseboards. The rehabilitation area has unfinished brick and 10" structural clay tile walls with an acoustic tile drop ceiling. The walls on the third floor are of plaster, painted white with dark brown coved vinyl baseboards. The drop ceiling here has rectangular-shaped acoustic tiles.
5. **Openings:**

 - a. **Doorways and Doors:** The doors on all floors are wood laminate within steel frames. All of the doors leading to the stairwells and the exterior are steel fire doors with a rectangular wire glass window set within steel frames. The first floor exterior entry has plexiglass doors within metal frames.
 - b. **Windows:** There are no windows in the portions of the first floor that could be accessed. The second floor has windows in the western stairwell and in the backstage and rehabilitation areas. The windows are six-over-six double-hung metal sashes with clear glass panes, wood sills, and 3" wood molding. The woodwork is painted

white. The third floor has a window in the stairwell only. The window has clear glass, a wood sill, and 3" wood molding.

6. **Decorative Features and Trim:** The second floor has three murals painted by James McBride, a patient at the hospital. One mural is located on the western wall of the classroom/conference room space, facing the elevator lobby. The other two murals are located on either side of the auditorium area. They are all large paintings of outdoor scenes.
7. **Mechanical Equipment:**
 - a. **Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation:** The original heating and ventilation system has been replaced with a centralized forced air system. The duct work for the new system is located above the drop ceiling on the first, second, and third floors. Vents are located in each room.
 - b. **Lighting:** No original light fixtures remain in the building. Fluorescent light fixtures have been installed within the drop ceiling on the first, second, and third floors. Lighting rigs are located above the stage but do not contain lights.
 - a. **Plumbing and Fixtures:** The restrooms have standard porcelain toilets and sinks. The first floor kitchen has stainless steel sinks and plumbing fixtures, including gooseneck faucets and sprayers.
8. **Other Features:** On the first floor, the kitchen area contains ranges, ovens, a tray line, sinks, industrial dishwasher, and tables. These are all constructed of stainless steel with cast iron elements. The laminate seating in the canteen area is bolted to the floors and is divided by 4' tall laminate partitions with a foot of blue glass at the top. The covered passage to Building 23 contains metal lockers. The second floor classroom/conference room spaces have laminate built-in cabinets. The cabinet doors have single panels with no visible hardware. The dressing rooms have wood dressing tables painted white running along the walls with mirrors above. In the rehabilitation storage room, the cabinets are of unfinished plywood and have no doors or drawers, while in the workshop, the unfinished wood tables have drawers and open shelving along the wall.

D. Site:

1. **General Setting and Orientation:** This building is located near the center of the Allen Park complex, and adjoins Building 19 to the west and Building 23 to the south. The building adjoins Employee Parking Area "E" to its north.

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.

ALLEN PARK VETERANS
ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL
BUILDING 22
(Auditorium/Canteen/Retail)
HABS No. MI-427-L
(Page 8)

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.

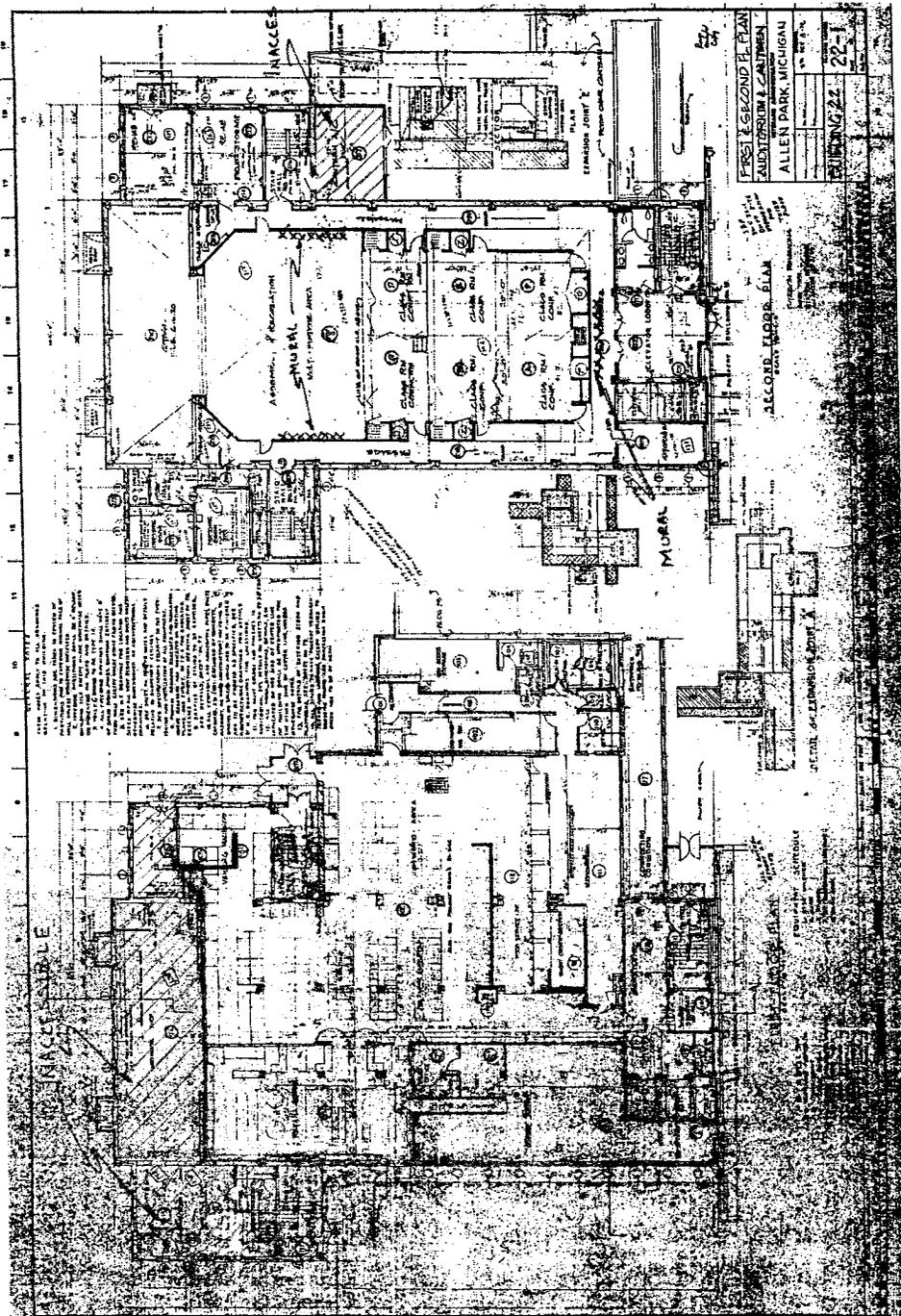
Hoke, John Ray, Jr. *Architectural Graphic Standards*, 9th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994.

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.

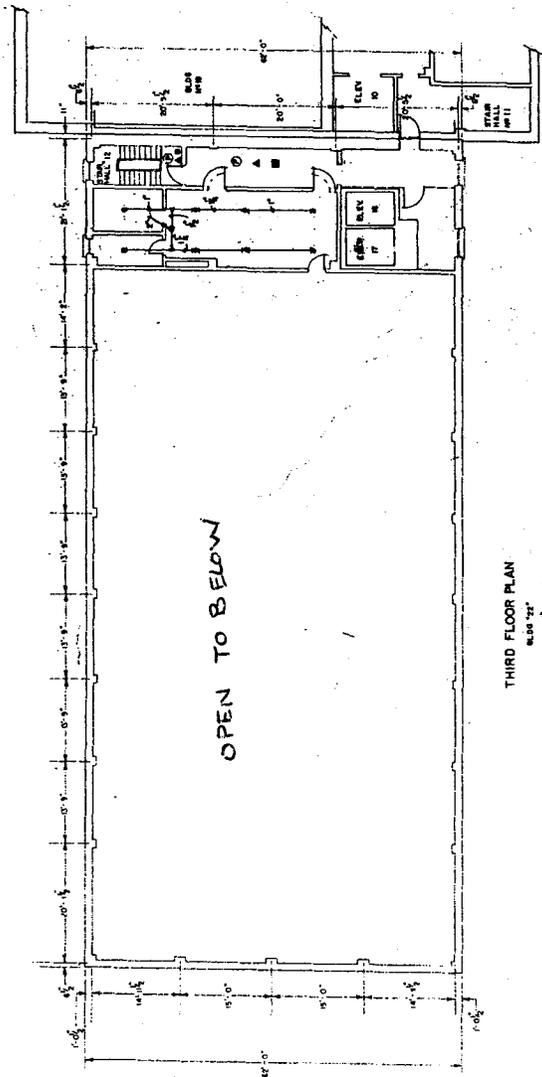
ALLEN PARK VETERANS
ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL
BUILDING 22
(Auditorium/Canteen/Retail)
HABS No. MI-427-L
(Page 10)

Reduced Copy of Current Plan, February 2002



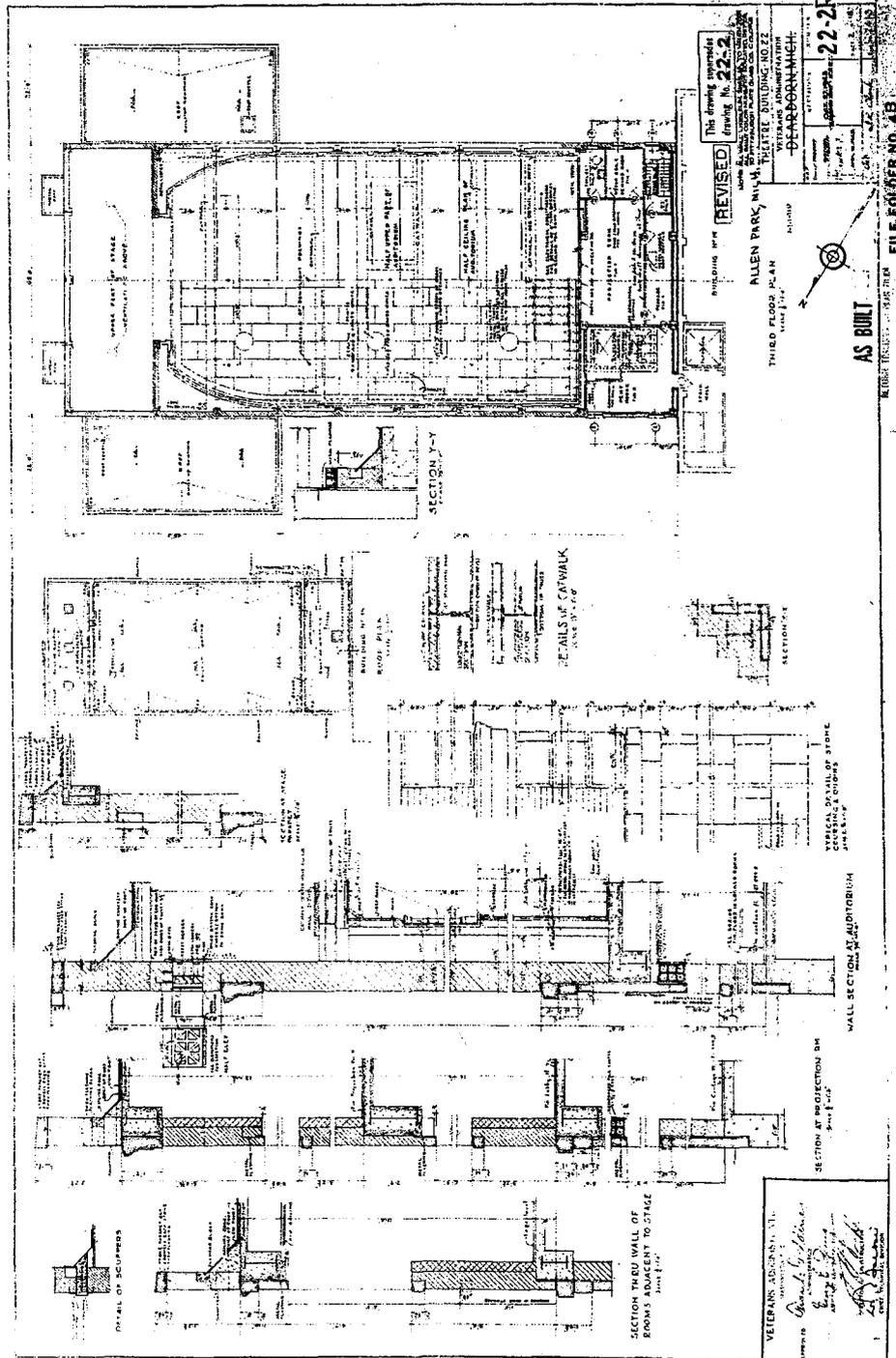
ALLEN PARK VETERANS
ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL
BUILDING 22
(Auditorium/Canteen/Retail)
HABS No. MI-427-L
(Page 11)

Reduced Copy of Current Plan, February 2002



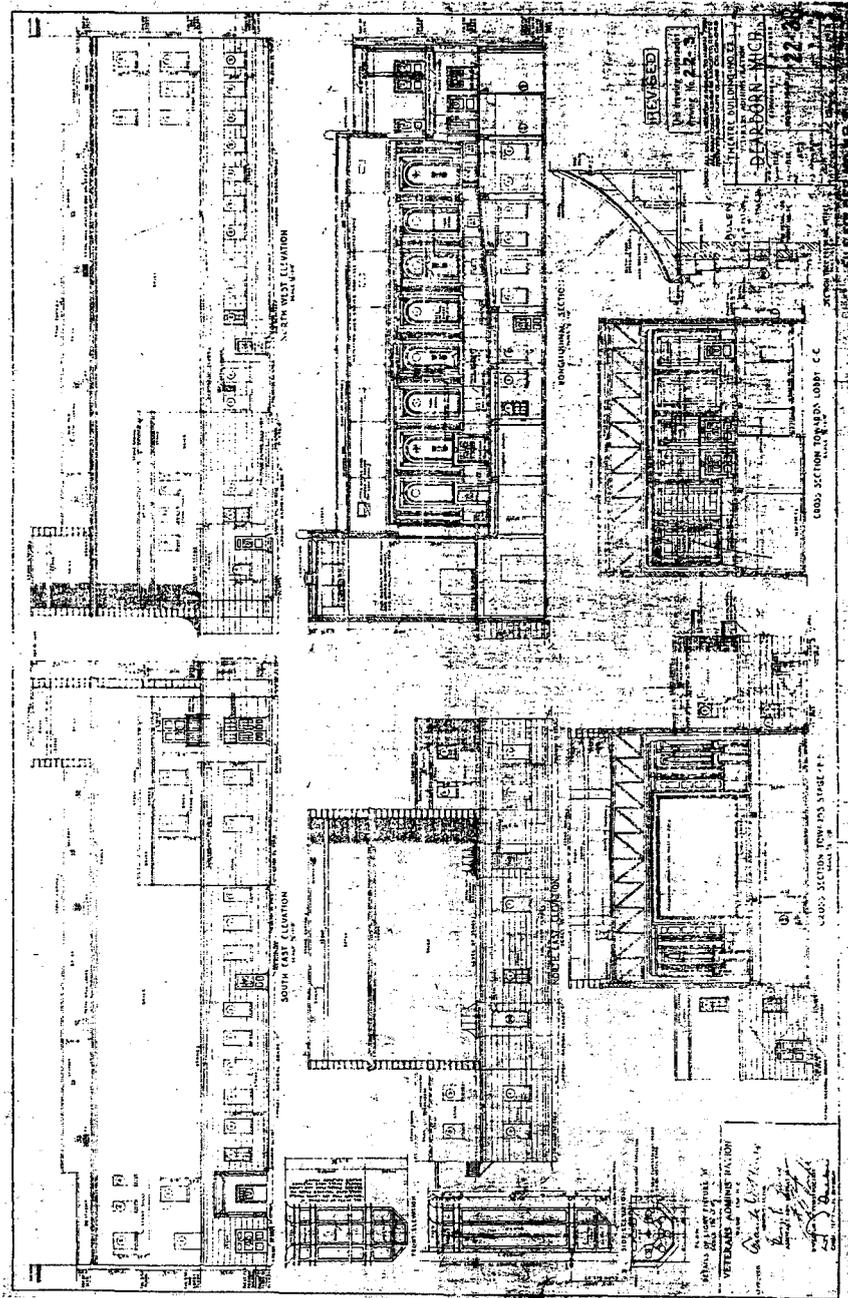
ALLEN PARK VETERANS
 ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL
 BUILDING 22
 (Auditorium/Canteen/Retail)
 HABS No. MI-427-L
 (Page 12)

Reduced Copy of Historic Plan, dated April 21, 1945. On file at the John D. Dingell
 Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Detroit, Michigan



ALLEN PARK VETERANS
ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL
BUILDING 22
(Auditorium/Canteen/Retail)
HABS No. MI-427-L
(Page 13)

Reduced Copy of Historic Plan, dated April 21, 1945. On file at the John D. Dingell
Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Detroit, Michigan



ALLEN PARK VETERANS
 ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL
 BUILDING 22
 (Auditorium/Canteen/Retail)
 HABS No. MI-427-L
 (Page 14)

Reduced Copy of Historic Plan, dated April 21, 1945. On file at the John D. Dingell
 Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Detroit, Michigan

