

ALLEN PARK VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 23  
(Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital, Employee Locker Rooms)  
Southfield Expressway & Outer Drive  
Allen Park  
Wayne County  
Michigan

HABS No. MI-427-M

HABS  
MI-427-M

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 23  
(Occupational Therapy Shops/Employee Locker Rooms)**

**HABS No. MI-427-M**

- 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 23, originally the Occupational Therapy Shops, was constructed in 1945. It was converted at an unknown date to locker facilities for hospital staff. The abundance of lockers in this building shows the large number of hospital nurses, doctors, administrative personnel, therapists, researchers, attendants, and other staff employed by the VA to operate the Allen Park hospital.

While more industrial in appearance with its large windows and flat roof, the building generally continues the use of Georgian Revival details found throughout the campus. It has a brick façade with a limestone veneer base, regularly spaced sash windows, quoins, and cornice.

## **PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

- A. Date of Erection:** 1945.
- 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 23 originally served as the Occupational Therapy Shops and was later converted to employee locker rooms.
- D. Original Plans and Construction:** The original drawings (showing the first floor) are dated April 21, 1945. The Veterans Administrations' Administrator, Assistant Administrator, Director of Construction, and Acting 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 interior room configuration was changed during the building's conversion from the occupational therapy shops to employee locker rooms in the 1960s.

## **PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

### **A. General Statement:**

- 1. Architectural Character:** Building 23 is a 1½-story red brick utilitarian structure. The building has had one interior alteration which added an exterior door and altered the interior floor plan
- 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 this rectangular building measure 112'-0" x 56'-6". The structure is seven bays long and three bays wide. The long sides of the building are oriented towards the north and south. The structure adjoins Building 22 at the center of its north wall.

2. **Foundations:** The foundation consists of a poured concrete slab.
3. **Walls:** The walls are constructed of common bond red brick, with a concrete beltcourse encircling the building at the bottom of the upper half-story. The walls are capped with concrete coping.
4. **Structural System, Framing:** The building is a brick masonry structure. The roof and floor are poured concrete slabs.
5. **Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads:** There are no porches, stoops, balconies, or bulkheads.
6. **Chimneys:** There are no chimneys present.
7. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and Doors:** There are two exterior entrances to the building. The first is located in the center of the south façade, and serves as the main entrance. The second is located near the northwest corner of the west wall. The first entryway features a pair of metal doors with a narrow, rectangular single-pane window in each door. The second entryway contains a pair of wood doors with two panels each below nine lights.
  - b. **Windows and Shutters:** All of the windows are paired within metal frames and contain three lights across and five lights down. The top six lights and the bottom six lights appear to swing outward to form an awning. They are typical of institutional windows of this period and are original.
8. **Roof:**
  - a. **Shape, Covering:** The roof has a flat roof of unknown material.
  - 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 contains a central spine containing the employee lounge. The spine originally contained six storage spaces for the occupational therapy shops located to

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either side. To the east is the men's locker room with a restroom and shower located along the north wall. The women's locker room is to the west with a toilet and shower located along the north wall. The locker rooms were originally shop spaces with restroom facilities. The main entrance to the building is through a vestibule on the south façade. This entrance was added during the 1960s conversion. From the vestibule there is access to both of the locker rooms and the lounge. A second exterior entrance is located in the northwest corner of the women's locker room. The building has an entrance into the hospital through a covered passage from Building 22 on the north façade.

2. **Stairways:** There are no stairways in the building.
3. **Flooring:** The flooring throughout the building is 12" tan vinyl tiles in the lounge, vestibule, and covered passage. The floors in the locker rooms and restrooms are covered with different shades of blue-green ceramic tile ranging in size from ¼" to 1" and laid in a random pattern.
4. **Wall and Ceiling Finish:** The walls in the lounge, vestibule, and locker rooms are of plaster and have been painted a blue-green color. The restroom walls are covered with 6" light blue tile. The covered passage has plaster walls which have been painted white. The lounge, vestibule, locker room and covered passage have coved teal vinyl baseboards. The restrooms have 8" light blue tile baseboards. The metal roof trusses and roof deck are visible from the interior of the locker rooms and restrooms. The remaining spaces have drop ceilings with acoustic tiles.
5. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and Doors:** The interior doors are wood with wood veneer within steel frames. The doors leading to the covered passageway and the exterior are steel fire doors with a rectangular wire glass window set within steel frames.
  - b. **Windows:** The window frames in the locker rooms are of metal with opaque glass and have no sills or decorative trim. The windows in the covered passage are louvered in metal frames with clear glass. There are no sills or decorative window trim.
6. **Decorative Features and Trim:** There are no decorative features or trim.

## 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 in the lounge and covered passage. Large electric industrial heating and cooling units are located on platforms set between the trusses in the locker rooms.
  - b. **Lighting:** The lounge and covered passage have fluorescent light fixtures installed within the drop ceiling. The locker rooms are currently lit by fluorescent fixtures hung from the roof trusses and running north to south through the building.
  - c. **Plumbing:** The restrooms have standard porcelain toilets and sinks. The fixtures are stainless steel.
8. **Other Features:** The locker rooms each have eight rows of steel lockers which run east to west through the building. Between each row of lockers is a row of varnished wood benches. Steel lockers are also located in the covered passage along the east wall.

## D. Site:

1. **General Setting and Orientation:** The Occupational Therapy Shops/Employee Locker Rooms building is located in the south-central portion of the complex, and is attached to the south side of Building 22. This structure overlooks a drive and Building 8 to its south.
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.

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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.

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**B. References:**

Ching, Francis D. K. *Building Construction Illustrated*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997.

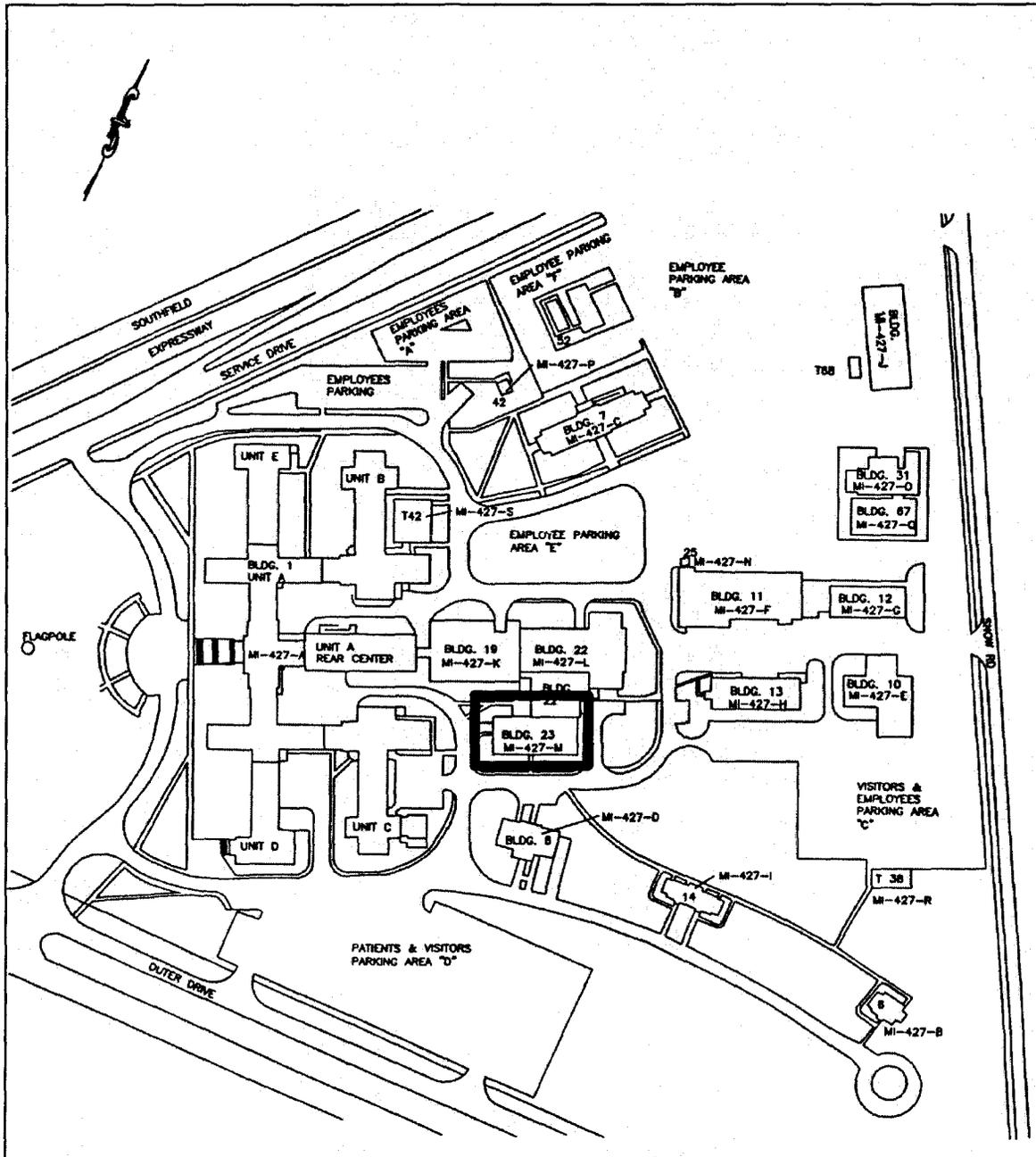
Hoke, John Ray, Jr. *Architectural Graphic Standards*, 9th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994.

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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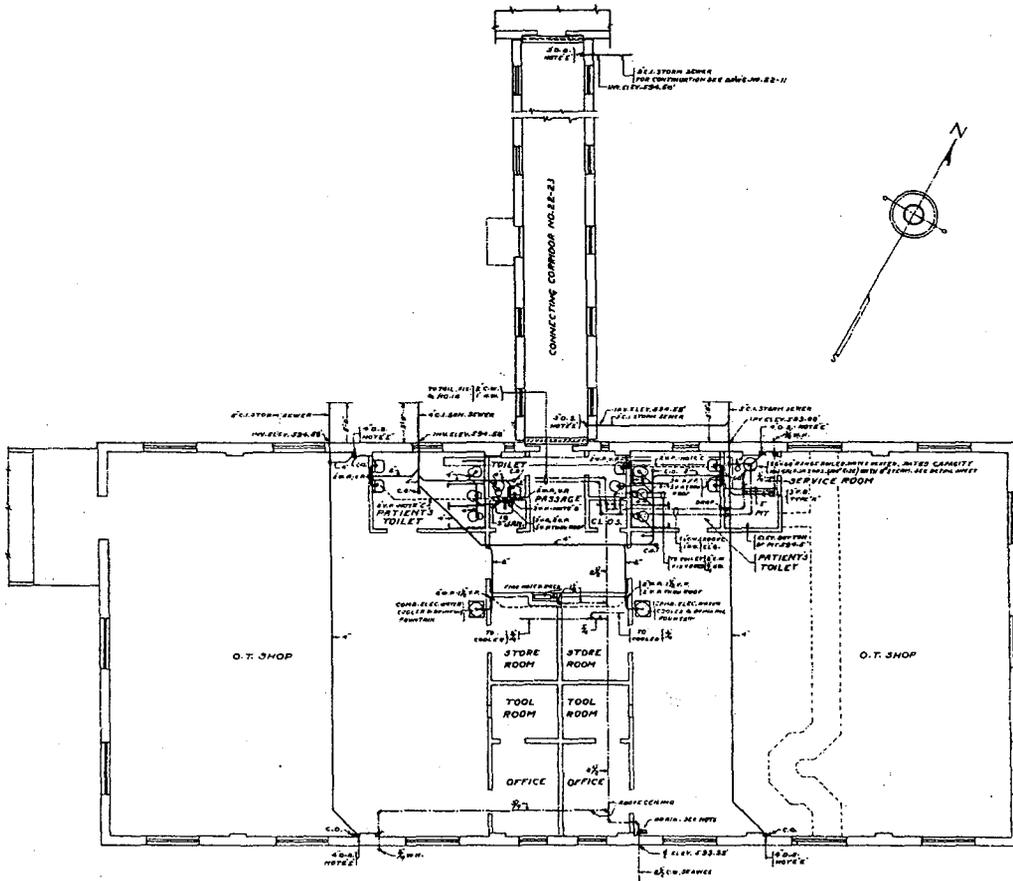
Site Plan





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



FLOOR PLAN  
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"  
 FLOOR ELEV. 589.5'