

ALLEN PARK VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 31  
(Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital, Animal Research)  
Southfield Expressway & Outer Drive  
Allen Park  
Wayne County  
Michigan

HABS No. MI-427-O

HABS  
MI-427-O

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 31  
(Animal Research Building)**

**HABS No. MI-427-O**

- 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 31, the Animal Research Building, was constructed in 1959. Its presence reflects the growing trend in medicine towards biological research, most notably through the use of animals. Despite its much later date of construction, Building 31 continues the general appearance of the other buildings at the Allen Park facility through its brick façade and limestone cornice. However, the building is constructed of modern materials, including concrete block, with metal framed windows of various sizes.

## **PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

- A. Date of Erection:** 1959.
- B. Architect:** Smith, Hinchman & Grylls Associates, Inc. The firm was based in Detroit, Michigan.
- 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 31 continually served as an animal research laboratory since its construction.
- D. Original Plans and Construction:** The original drawing (showing details and the first floor) is dated May 9, 1958. The architecture firm's Director of Design Services signed the drawing. The building's original appearance has been altered due the construction of two additions.
- E. Alterations and Additions:** The building has had front and side additions constructed to increase the amount of space available for animal pens. The building connects to Building 67, constructed ca. 1975, via a hallway on the south side.

## **PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

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

- 1. Architectural Character:** Building 31, constructed in 1959, is a one-story red brick institutional structure with two additions. It now connects to Building 67 on the south side.
- 2. Condition of Fabric:** The building is in good condition; it is physically sound.

### **B. Description of Exterior:**

- 1. Overall Dimensions:** The overall dimensions of the building measure 95'-0" x 57'-0". The irregular plan building is one story tall. The original building was L-shaped. A single story addition was constructed at the center of the north façade and a second addition was constructed onto the west elevation.
- 2. Foundations:** The foundation is poured concrete.

3. **Walls:** The walls have a veneer of red brick in a running bond.
4. **Structural System, Framing:** The building is a load-bearing concrete block structure. The roof and floor are poured concrete.
5. **Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads:** There are no porches, stoops, balconies, or bulkheads present.
6. **Chimneys:** There is one large and one small ventilation unit near the southwest corner of the roof.
7. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and Doors:** The building has two exterior doorways. The main entrance is located in the center of the north addition, and features double metal doors with a slender, rectangular, vertical single-pane window in each door. The second entrance is located near the west end of the north wall of the original section of the building. It features double metal doors with a large, rectangular, vertical single-pane window in each and a single pane transom.
  - b. **Windows and Shutters:** Two small, almost square single-pane fixed windows are located in the west façade, four are located on the south façade, and two are located to either side of the connecting passage to Building 67. Large metal frame, fixed pane windows line the east façade. These have decorative two-color unpatterned mosaic panels above and below the window.
8. **Roof:**
  - a. **Shape, Covering:** The roof is flat with a gravel and asphalt coating.
  - b. **Cornice, Eaves:** There is no cornice or eaves.
  - c. **Dormers, Cupolas, Towers:** There are no dormers, cupolas, or towers present.

### C. Description of Interior:

1. **Floor Plans:** This one-story building has a T-shaped plan with the building entry along the north-south axis, and rooms off of the east-west central corridor. The main entry is on the north façade into the north-south hallway. Animal pen rooms are located on either side of the hallway. Fourteen spaces and a restroom are located off of the east-

west corridor. These spaces include laboratories, equipment rooms, a walk-in refrigerator, a kitchen, offices, an exam room, an operating suite, and a combination necropsy and feed room. Safety equipment has been installed in the hallway. A third animal pen room addition was constructed on the north façade of the building.

2. **Stairways:** There are no stairways in the building.
3. **Flooring:** The flooring throughout the building is 12" green-grey vinyl tile. The animal pen room in the southern corner of the building has two drains in the floor.
4. **Wall and Ceiling Finish:** The interior walls are concrete masonry units which have been painted white. In the animal pen rooms, exam room, necropsy/feed room, and operating suite the walls have been covered with 12" x 24" glazed tiles. The tiles are white in all of the rooms except the operating suite where the tiles are a green-grey color. The tile completely covers the walls in the animal pen rooms. In other rooms, the tile stops 24" from the ceiling and the wall space has been painted white. The building has coved green-grey vinyl baseboards throughout, except in rooms with tiled walls where the baseboards are coved green-grey tiles. The drop ceiling in the majority of the rooms and in the hallway has rectangular acoustic tiles within a suspended metal frame. The animal pen rooms, exam room, necropsy/feed room, and operating suite have gypsum board ceilings which are painted white.
5. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and Doors:** The doors in the building are of wood laminate set in metal frames. The entry doors are steel fire doors with small windows in the upper portion. The doors to the animal pen rooms and operating suite have wire glass windows within the upper portion of the door.
  - b. **Windows:** The interior window frames are metal. There are no sills or interior window trim. The window in the animal pen room in the southern corner of the building has a ventilation tube.
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 is a centralized forced air system. The duct work for the system is located

above the drop ceilings. In rooms without drop ceilings, the vents are located in the finished ceiling. Multiple vents are located in each room.

**b. Lighting:** The building is lit by fluorescent light fixtures installed within the drop ceiling or attached to the finished gypsum ceiling.

**c. Plumbing and Fixtures:** The restroom has a standard porcelain toilet and sink. In the laboratory areas the sinks are stainless steel with gooseneck faucets. The operating suite has a deep stainless steel sink with gooseneck faucets.

**8. Laboratory Equipment:** The building contains laboratory work spaces complete with stainless steel cabinets and treated plastic laminate or stainless steel work surfaces. The cabinets in some rooms have been painted white. The majority of the upper cabinet doors have glass panels which are either opaque or translucent. The lower cabinet doors and drawers have solid steel panels. Some rooms have open steel shelving. Fume hoods and/or large pieces of equipment such as incubators, centrifuges, and refrigerators are still located in many of the rooms. The operating suite contains an operating table and surgical lamps.

#### **D. Site:**

**1. General Setting and Orientation:** This building is located in the northeast-central portion of the Allen Park complex, and adjoins Building 67 to the south. It faces north, and is just 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 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.
- 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997.

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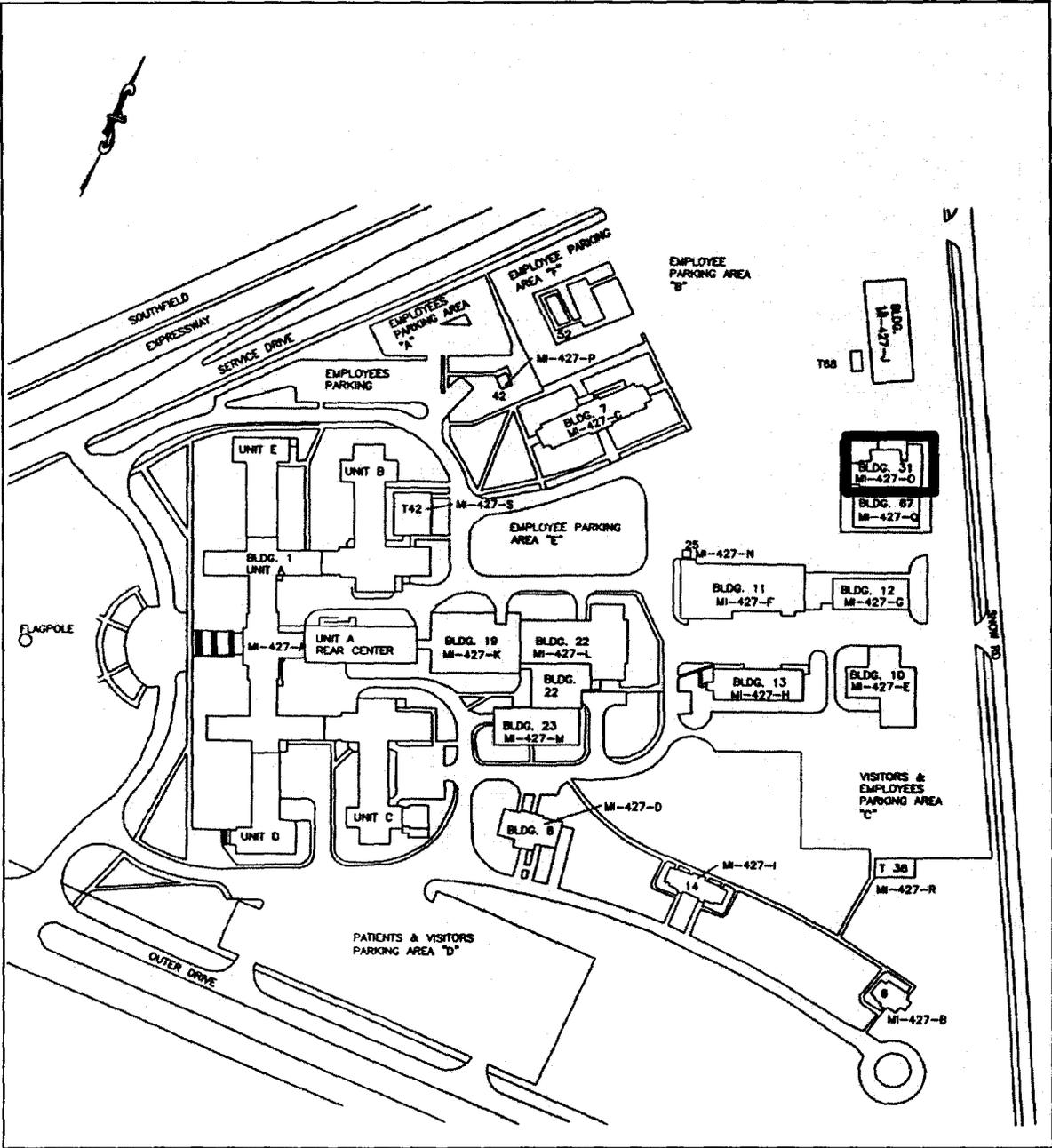
Hoke, John Ray, Jr. *Architectural Graphic Standards*, 9th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994.

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





ALLEN PARK VETERANS  
 ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL  
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Reduced Copy of Historic Plan, dated May 9, 1958. On file at the John D. Dingell  
 Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Detroit, Michigan

