

ALLEN PARK VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 42
(Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital, Switchgear House)
Southfield Expressway & Outer Drive
Allen Park
Wayne County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-427-P

HABS

MI-427-P

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 42
(Switchgear House)**

HABS No. MI-427-P

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 42 originally housed the switch equipment for transmitting power throughout the Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital. It is currently empty.

Despite its diminutive size, the building continues the choice of construction materials and details found throughout the campus in its brick façade, belt course, and cornice.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Date of Erection:** 1949.
- 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 42 has continually housed the switch equipment for transmitting power throughout the Allen Park Veterans Administration Hospital since its construction.
- D. Original Plans and Construction:** See attached plans.
- E. Alterations and Additions:** No alterations or additions have occurred to the building; however, the switch equipment has been removed.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- 1. Architectural Character:** Building 42 is a one story industrial structure. Its materials complement the original 1939 buildings in the complex.
- 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 approximately 8'-0" x 8'-0". The square building is one story in height.
- 2. Foundations:** The foundation consists of poured concrete. It is slightly elevated above ground level.
- 3. Walls:** The walls are constructed of common bond red brick, and feature a belt course of brick soldiers all around the building at the bottom of its parapet. The walls are capped with concrete that mimics the use of limestone cornice of other buildings on the complex.

4. **Structural System, Framing:** The building is a brick masonry structure. The roof is wood framed. The floor is poured concrete.
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 is a single entrance in the center of the east wall. Within this doorway is a single wood door featuring nine lights above a single wood panel. A three-pane transom surmounts the door.
 - b. **Windows and Shutters:** There is a single wood-frame four-over-two awning window in the east wall.
8. **Roof:**
 - a. **Shape, Covering:** The roof has a flat, built up roof.
 - 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 has one room with no partitions.
2. **Stairways:** There are no stairways in the building.
3. **Flooring:** The floor is unfinished concrete.
4. **Wall and Ceiling Finish:** The interior is unfinished, exposing the brick masonry structure of the building. The wood rafters and roof deck are visible from the interior of the building.
5. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and Doors:** The doors are wood within a wood frame.

b. Windows: The window has a wood frame and no decorative interior trim or window sill. The window frame is painted white.

6. Decorative Features and Trim: There are no decorative features or trim.

7. Mechanical Equipment:

a. Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation: There is no heating, air conditioning, or ventilation system within the building.

b. Lighting: The building is lit by a steel pendant light fixture suspended from the ceiling.

c. Plumbing: There is no plumbing system within the building.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and Orientation: The Switchgear House is located near the north end of the complex, northwest of Building 7. To its northeast are several parking areas and the Southfield Expressway.

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:

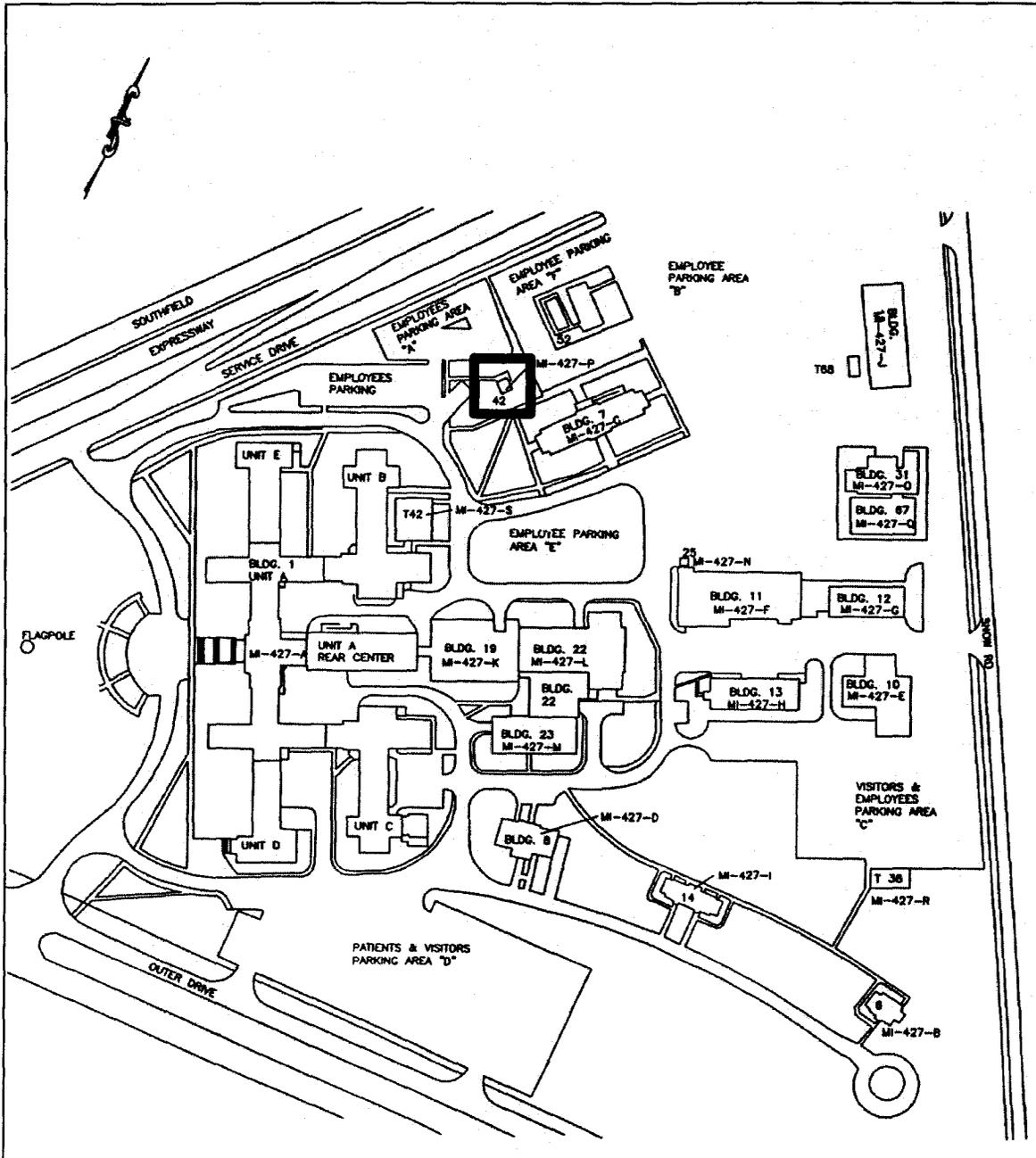
- Ching, Francis D. K. *Building Construction Illustrated*, 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997.
- Hoke, John Ray, Jr. *Architectural Graphic Standards*, 9th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.

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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.

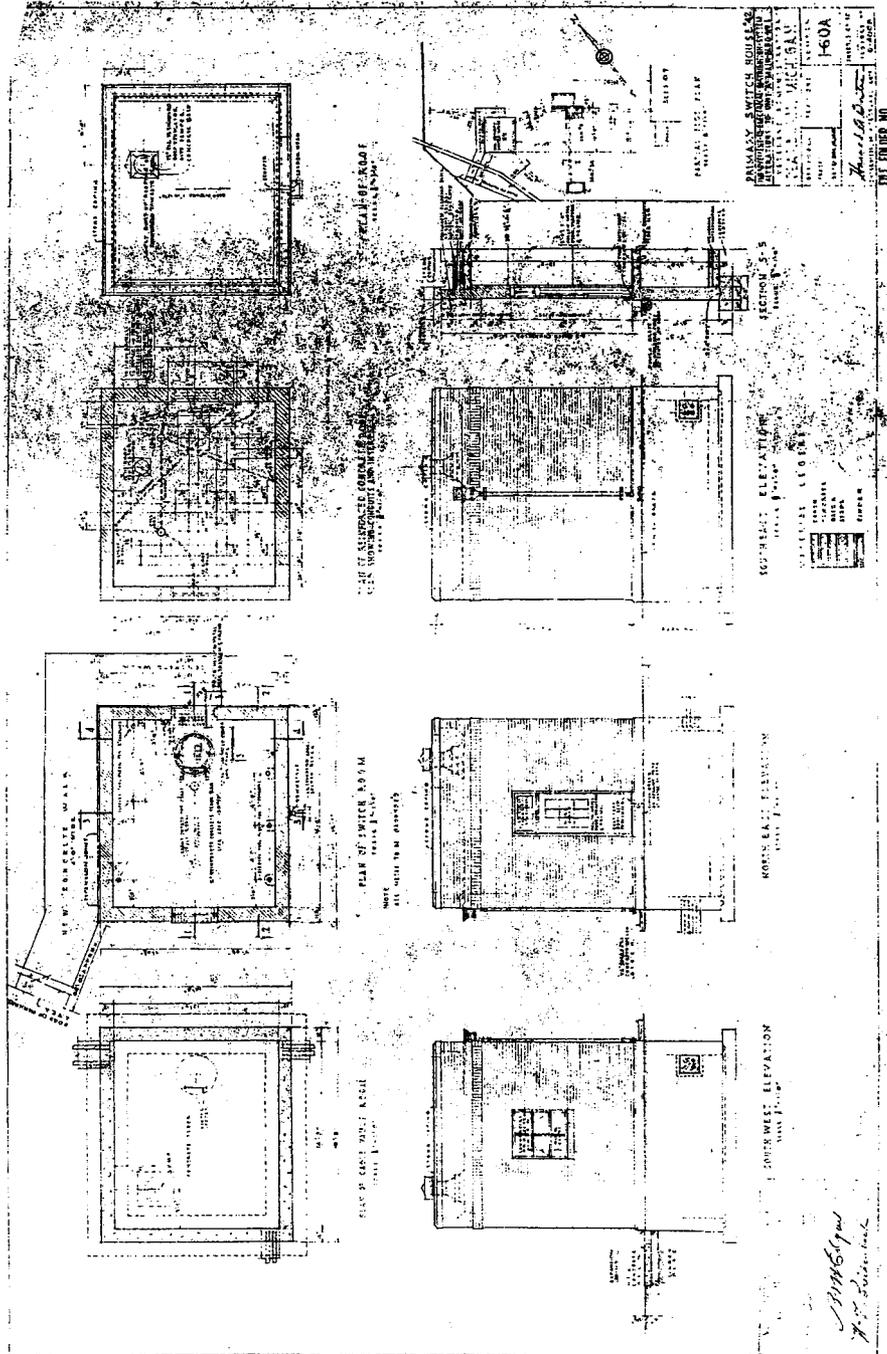
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Site Plan



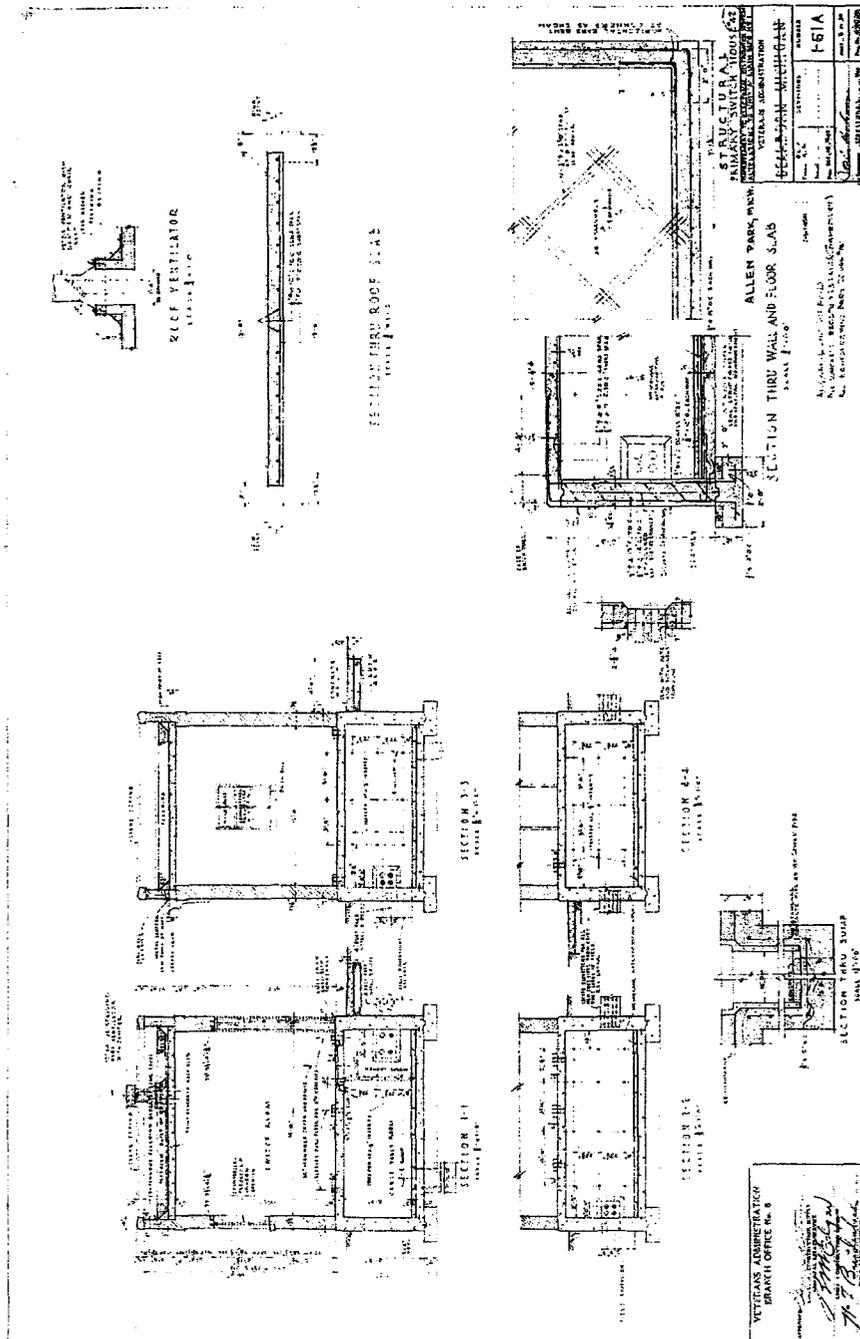
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Reduced Copy of Current Plan, February 2002



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 ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL
 BUILDING 42
 (Switchgear House)
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Reduced Copy of Historic Plan, dated December 15, 1948. On file at the John D. Dingell
 Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Detroit, Michigan



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