

MALLINCKRODT CHEMICAL WORKS, Building No. 708  
(~~Mallinckrodt Iron~~)  
Destrehan Street between Hall and Wharf Street  
St. Louis, Missouri

HABS No. MO-1929-P

HABS  
MO  
96-SALU,  
134P-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Great Plains Support Office  
1709 Jackson Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68102-2571

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MALLINCKRODT CHEMICAL WORKS, BUILDING 708  
(~~Mallinckrodt Inc.~~)

HABS  
1110  
96-SALU,  
134 P-

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**Location:** Destrehan Street, between Hall and Wharf streets, attached to Building 706, Mallinckrodt and Second streets, St. Louis, Missouri  
USGS Granite City, Illinois-Missouri Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 744610 E; 4282832 N

**Present Owner:** Mallinckrodt Inc.

**Present Use:** Storage

**Significance:** One of 16 buildings at Mallinckrodt Chemical Works associated with the Manhattan Engineer District/Atomic Energy Commission (MED/AEC) – sponsored program to process uranium for use in the development of atomic weapons, Building 708 was used to package and store the magnesium metal that was mixed with green salt to produce uranium metal in Building 116.

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**PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

**A. Physical History**

1. **Date of erection:** Building 708 was built in 1950.
2. **Architect:** The architect of the building is unknown.
3. **Original and subsequent owners:** Plant 7, of which 708 is a part, was acquired by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission in August 1947 and was returned to Mallinckrodt Chemical Works (MCW) in January 1960.
4. **Builder-contractor:** The contractor is unknown.
5. **Original Plan and construction:** Built in 1950, this rectangular building, measuring 40' x 90', was used to store magnesium.
6. **Alterations and additions:** Several doors and windows on the north and east sides have been infilled. A canopy was added on the southwest side in 1970.

**B. Historical Context**

Plant 7 was built in 1950 as a replacement for the green salt (UF<sub>4</sub>) production area in Plant 4, in order to increase its capacity and quality, and to be closer to the operations in Plants 6 and 6E. Buildings 704-707 were designed by the Wigton-Abbott Corporation, Engineers and Contractors, of Plainfield, New Jersey, for the Atomic Energy Commission through their New York operations office. The complex consisted of the following buildings, of which Buildings 700, 704-707, and 708 remain:

700. Warehouse (Built in 1954)
701. Interim residue plant
703. Anhydrous hydrogen fluoride (HF) vault, and HF tank farm
704. Anhydrous hydrogen fluoride (HF) Recovery
705. Manufacture of uranium dioxide (UO<sub>2</sub>), uranium trioxide (UO<sub>3</sub>), and uranium tetrafluoride (UF<sub>4</sub>)
706. Warehouse for UO<sub>3</sub>, UF<sub>4</sub>
707. Ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) cracking building

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- 708. Magnesium metal storage and packing building
- 709. HF refrigeration equipment and pump house
- 710. NH<sub>3</sub> tank farm
- 711. Storage shed

To produce uranium tetrafluoride or green salt (UF<sub>4</sub>), uranium trioxide (UO<sub>3</sub>), an orange powder, was reduced with hydrogen to yield uranium dioxide (UO<sub>2</sub>), a brown powder, that then reacted with anhydrous hydrogen fluoride (HF) to form green salt. This green salt was then either shipped to the gaseous diffusion plant at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, or transferred to Building 116, where it was mixed with ground magnesium metal in ceramic-lined steel containers at high heat to form uranium metal, called a "derby."

Building 705, the "green salt building," in its original configuration contained four stories, with diamond-plate metal flooring, housing the continuous-process, stirred-bed reactors that produced UF<sub>4</sub>. These reactors, measuring approximately 22' in length and 16" in diameter, oriented horizontally and connected by pipes in a series of three, were located on the east side of the building on the upper floors. UO<sub>2</sub> powder was fed into a small seal hopper and dropped in the top reactor by an interior screw conveyor. The powder was then moved along slowly through the reactors by interior flexible agitators, dropping from one reactor to the next through 3' long expansion joints 10" or 12" in diameter. The reactors were encased in electric resistance furnaces with temperature controls. An electric substation at the north end of the second floor provided power for this process.

Anhydrous hydrogen fluoride gas was metered to the bottom reactor and traveled upward against the UO<sub>2</sub>, leaving the top reactor and traveling to Building 704 for recovery. The end product, green salt, fell into a small seal hopper, where it was fed to a cooling screw conveyor and then to a storage hopper. From there it was blended, sampled, and packaged to go to Building 116 for production into metal. These horizontal tube screw reactors, developed at Mallinckrodt, replaced the old open trays and box furnaces that had been used in Plant 4. Because they were completely enclosed, the workers were protected from dust and radiation, and did not need to wear respirators unless they were opening the equipment for inspection or repair. Continuous

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processing equipment for converting  $UO_3$  to  $UO_2$  was added to Building 705, thereby allowing continuous production of  $UF_4$  in the building.<sup>1</sup>

The first floor of Building 705 contained not only a process area, but also a maintenance shop, two offices for the foreman and assistant foreman, a first-aid room, and toilets. A north stair hall connected these offices to four offices in Building 706 that housed a guard, supplies, and technical and clerical personnel. Building 706 stored both  $UO_3$  and  $UF_4$ . Building 707 was the location of the processing equipment to separate  $NH_3$  (ammonia) into hydrogen ( $H_2$ ) and nitrogen ( $N_2$ ) to yield anhydrous fluoride (HF). Building 708 packaged and stored the magnesium metal used to produce uranium metal.<sup>2</sup>

**PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

**A. General Statement**

1. **Architectural character:** Building 708 is a post-World War II concrete block industrial building.
2. **Condition of fabric:** The fabric is in poor condition.

**B. Description of Exterior**

1. **Overall Dimensions:** Building 708 is rectangular in shape and measures 40' in width x 90' in length. This one-story building has a section to the west that is higher. A corrugated fiberglass shed-roof enclosure has been added to the southwest side, and a steel-framed canopy to the west side.
2. **Foundation:** The foundation is raised concrete.
3. **Walls:** The walls are concrete block.

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<sup>1</sup> Knowlton Caplan, "Top-Flight Health Program Pays Off in Healthier People," *Uranium Division News*, June 1962: 38; Charles D. Harrington and Archie E. Ruehle, *Uranium Production Technology* (New York: Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1959), 218-222; Mallinckrodt Inc., "Columbium-Tantalum Plant Characterization Plan" (St. Louis: Mallinckrodt Inc., 1993), A-2-4; Mont G. Mason, "History and Background Relative to the Radiological Re-Monitoring of Mallinckrodt by the Energy Research and Development Administration" (St. Louis: Mallinckrodt, Inc., 1977), 17-18; personal communications, S. Tuthill, Retired consultant, Technical Committees and Quality Standards, Mallinckrodt Inc. [December 12, 1996] Yeager, Harold, Manager, Destrehan Street Plant, Mallinckrodt Inc. Retired. [December 12, 1996]

<sup>2</sup> Construction drawings MCW Nos. 3614-15 through 3614-18. Mallinckrodt Inc. Engineering Department, 10 March 1950.

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4. **Structural system, framing:** Building 708 uses concrete posts and beams.
5. **Porches and steps:** A concrete loading dock extends to the rear (south), sheltered by a steel-frame canopy. Four concrete steps with pipe railings lead to the loading dock.
6. **Chimneys:** There are no chimneys.
7. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** Building 708 has five exterior doors. On the north side is one single door with a bottom louver, and one single door infilled with concrete block.. On the south side are two metal overhead doors that lead to the loading dock. On the west side is a single metal door.
  - b. **Windows:** Multi-paned fixed and transom industrial windows in metal sashes are located on the north, south, east and west sides. Four of the windows on east side have been infilled with concrete block.
8. **Roof:**
  - a. **Shape, covering:** The building has a flat roof.
  - b. **Cornice, eaves:** The parapet wall is topped with glazed tile coping.
  - c. **Dormers, cupolas, towers:** There are no dormers, cupolas, or towers.

**C. Description of Interior**

1. **Floor plans:** There are two rooms. A former small processing room is on the east side, and a larger room is on the west side.
2. **Stairways:** There are no stairways.
3. **Flooring:** The building has concrete floors.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** The walls are covered with paint. The smaller processing room walls have been finished with plaster.

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5. **Openings:** There are no openings.
6. **Decorative features and trim:** There are no decorative features and trim.
7. **Hardware:** There is no hardware.
8. **Mechanical equipment:**
  - a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** The building was heated with steam heat from Building C in Plant 1.
  - b. **Lighting:** The lighting consists of hanging lamps in green porcelain enamel conical shades.
  - c. **Plumbing:** There are no bathrooms.
9. **Furnishings:** There are no furnishings.

**D. Site**

1. **General setting and orientation:** Plant 7, of which buildings 700, 704, 705, 706, 707, and 708 are a part, is located on the eastern edge of the Mallinckrodt Inc. property, aligned linearly in an east-west direction on the south side of Destrehan Street.
2. **Historic landscape design:** The setting is industrial, and there is no landscaping.

**PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- A. Original Architectural Drawings:** Original drawings for Building 708 are located at Mallinckrodt Inc. Engineering Department, Building 91-2. The earliest architectural drawing, MCW 3615-2, dated August 8, 1950, was a first floor and roof plan.

**B. Bibliography:**

Caplan, Knowlton. "Top-Flight Health Program Pays Off in Healthier People." *Uranium Division News*. June 1962: 36-39.

Construction drawing, MCW No. 3615-2. Mallinckrodt Inc. Engineering Department. 8 August 1950.

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Mason, Mont G. "History and Background Relative to the Radiological Re-monitoring of Mallinckrodt by the Energy Research and Development Administration." St. Louis: Mallinckrodt, Inc., 1977.

Tuthill, Dr. Samuel. Retired consultant, Technical Committees and Quality Standards, Mallinckrodt Inc. [December 12, 1996]. Personal communication.

Yeager, Harold. Manager, Destrehan Street Plant, Mallinckrodt Inc. Retired [December 12, 1996]. Personal communication.

**PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION**

This HABS documentation project was undertaken as mitigative recordation required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The United States Department of Energy Former Sites Restoration Division plans to demolish the buildings.

The documentation was prepared by Alexandra C. Cole, architectural historian at Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), Santa Barbara, California, in February 1997. Large-format photography was done by Bruce Harms of Louis Berger and Associates, Inc., Marion, Iowa, in August/September 1996. Measured floor plans were prepared under the supervision of Michael Poligone of Bechtel National Incorporated (BNI), Oak Ridge, Tennessee, in December 1996.

\*FOR SITE PLANS SEE MO-1929 FIELD NOTES