

HABS No. CO-172-BY

Fitzsimons General Hospital, General Mess and Kitchen
(Fitzsimons General Hospital, Building No. 520)
(Fitzsimons General Hospital, Commissary Bldg.)

Southwest corner of East McAfee Ave. and South 12th Street
Aurora
Adams County
Colorado

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FITZSIMONS GENERAL HOSPITAL, GENERAL MESS AND KITCHEN
(FITZSIMONS GENERAL HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 520)
(FITZSIMONS GENERAL HOSPITAL, COMMISSARY BLDG.)

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For information on the history of Fitzsimons General Hospital, see HABS No. CO-172. For information on other structures at the Hospital, see HABS No. CO-172-A through CO-172-CI.

Location: Fitzsimons General Hospital, General Mess and Kitchen
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Significance: This building is significant as one of the first structures built at Fitzsimons Hospital (then General Hospital No. 21) in 1918. The building was designed as a general mess hall and kitchen, based upon a standard plan that was adapted to the needs of the post. The building's T-shaped plan was one of the typical designs for such facilities, which separated eating and food preparation areas. The building's stucco and hollow tile walls reflect the series of World War I buildings that were designed to be fireproof. At the same time, the building is representative of the early design of buildings at Fitzsimons, as reflected in the gabled roofs with overhanging eaves, bands of multi-light windows, stuccoed walls, and concrete foundation. The building maintains integrity of scale, plan, materials, and craftsmanship.

Description: This one-and-a-half-story, east-facing, 13-bay, T-shaped building sits on a concrete foundation and occupies 22,063 square feet. It has hollow tile walls covered with stucco and dropped siding. The side-gable roof has overhanging eaves and exposed rafter ends. The lower level, which projects out beyond the line of the roofline, has evenly spaced, six-over-six light windows and an enclosed, gabled entry porch on the west side. A metal, shed-roofed carport/loading area exists on the southern end.

The building is classified as a temporary building and is located within the perimeter zone of the proposed site for the new hospital building.

History: Building 520, historically known as Building 705, was designed as the General Mess and Kitchen according to Quartermaster Corps/Construction Division Plan I-106, Drawing 6272-220. Building 520 was part of the first group of buildings constructed on the post in 1918. Designed to accommodate 1,000 diners, the main dining hall was 72' x 131' and had maple flooring. Included in the building were a grocery, scullery, office, kitchen, vegetable room, vegetable storage, milk storage, refrigerators, meat room, diet kitchen, dietician's office, flour storage room, bread storage room, a bakery, proof room, coal bins, mess hall, washing room, and cloak room. Historic photographs indicate that the dining hall was a large open room with wood post supports and was lighted by first story windows and the bands of windows of the gabled superstructure.

The Army believed that the cooking and messing facilities of a post were vital and their designs were given the "closest" attention. One long wing of the building served as the dining hall; the other wing held the storage and food preparation areas. Fitzsimons adopted the "cafeteria" style of messing, and patients were served hot meals from steam tables by waitresses. In 1924, the Commanding Officer reported that "the entire mess hall is believed to be the most attractive in the Army."

Presently, the building is used as a Commissary.

Sources: Cultural Resources Study: Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, Final Submittal, 15 August 1991, prepared by Front Range Research Associates, Inc., Denver

"Real Property Record-Buildings and Structures"
(June 10, 1946)

Project

Information: This building will be demolished to clear the site for two Military Construction, Army (MCA) projects. The first MCA project is the Central Energy Plant, which is needed to support the second MCA project, the New Hospital project.

Historian: Greenhorne & O'Mara, Inc.
Greenbelt, Maryland 20770
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