

HABS No. CO-172-BZ

Fitzsimons General Hospital, Theater
(Fitzsimons General Hospital, Building No. 521)

Northwest corner of East McAfee Avenue and South Page St.
Aurora
Adams County
Colorado

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FITZSIMONS GENERAL HOSPITAL, THEATER
(FITZSIMONS GENERAL HOSPITAL, BUILDING NO. 521)

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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, Theater
(Fitzsimons General Hospital, Building No. 521)
Northwest corner of East McAfee Avenue and South Page St.
Aurora
Adams County
Colorado
- Significance:** This building has continuously served as the post theater since its construction in 1943. The building is associated with the expansion in the post during World War II and the effort of the hospital to improve patient morale during convalescence. The building's design is significant, with the auditorium having been specifically outfitted with facilities accessible to patients. The building also reflects the influence of the Art Moderne style. The smooth stuccoed walls and elevations of the building link it to the earlier facilities on the post. The building retains a high degree of integrity.
- Description:** This brick, east-facing, rectangular building rests on a concrete foundation, has a low-pitch gable roof, and occupies 19,394 square feet. The walls are faced with stucco. The building is composed of three segments. Projecting from the front of the main, two-story section is a one-story, flat-roofed entrance bay with four pairs of glass doors, upon which is situated an aluminum marquee reading "theater." Also atop the entrance bay is a smaller superstructure with a flat roof. The rear (west) elevation features a three-story block and has an entrance featuring metal doors. The north and south walls lack windows, but feature full-height, evenly spaced, engaged piers. The interior walls of the auditorium have original murals depicting scenes from Colorado history.
- History:** Building 521 (originally No. 325) was constructed as a

theater by the Army Corps of Engineers, under the direction of Colonel Carl H. Jabelonsky, and has operated continuously since its completion. It opened in 1943 in a dedication ceremony attended by actress Dorothy Lamour. The building was designed with hospital patients in mind and had extra large seats with side spacing between rows, thereby serving the needs of recuperating veterans. Some of the seats were equipped with modern hearing aides. A large open space in the middle of the auditorium was designed to accommodate wheel chairs. The theater had a full-size screen, orchestra pit, large stage, lighting and prop equipment, and dressing rooms. Murals painted by Philip Henselman are painted on the auditorium interior.

In 1944, the foyer was enlarged and a ticket booth added. Additions were made in 1947.

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
Documentation prepared January 1995.