

ST. ELIZABETHS HOSPITAL, ALLISON A  
(Building No. 25)  
518-542 Redwood Drive, Southeast  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS DC-349-AN  
*HABS DC-349-AN*

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

ADDENDUM TO:  
ST. ELIZABETHS HOSPITAL, ALLISON A  
(Building No. 25)  
2700 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Southeast / 518-542 Redwood  
Drive, Southeast  
Washington  
District of Columbia

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

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## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### ST. ELIZABETHS HOSPITAL, ALLISON A (BUILDING 25)

ADDENDUM TO  
HABS No. DC-349-AN

**Location:** 518–542 Redwood Drive, Southeast, Washington, District of Columbia, on the West Campus of St. Elizabeths Hospital (2700 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Southeast)

The building is located at latitude: 38.854102, longitude: -76.997138. This point was obtained on February 10, 2017, using Google Earth (WGS84). There are no restrictions on its release to the public.

**Present Owner:** General Services Administration, United States Government

**Present Use:** Vacant (rehabilitation of St. Elizabeths West Campus in progress)

**Significance:** Allison A (Building 25) is significant for its association with the care of Civil War and other military veterans and the treatment of mental illness at the St. Elizabeths Campus. St. Elizabeths Hospital was established in 1852 as a curative treatment center for the mentally ill of Washington, D.C., and the United States Army and Navy through the efforts of Dorothea Lynde Dix, a national crusader for the ethical and humane treatment of the mentally ill. Following the Civil War, St. Elizabeths was expanded to accommodate the needs of aging and mentally challenged Civil War veterans. Constructed in 1899, Allison A was part of a group of four pavilions/cottages constructed around a small courtyard and connected by deep porches. It reflects the divergence from the original Kirkbride plan for housing patients within a single building segregated by ailment, to the creation of small free-standing cottages intended to promote a healthier environment and facilitate the orderly separation of patient groups. Allison A combined with Allison C, D, and B as the last of five clusters built between 1878 and 1899 to house an aging population of white male Civil War veterans.

Allison A is also significant for its architectural design. Allison A is a three-story, brick structure with basement. When constructed, the Italianate structure had a corbelled brick cornice, slate hip roof with central vent hood, and multi-light double-hung windows with concrete sills and brick relieving arches. Three-story, wood-framed, porches with wood guardrails and brick foundation piers were attached to the north and south facade. Doorways were centered on the north facade at each floor level to provide access to the north porch with the main entrance being an arched opening with transom and sidelights. The Allison group forms a quadrant with a center courtyard, with Allison B on the west, Allison C on the east, Allison A is on the north, and Allison D, the largest of the building group, on the south. The buildings are connected with wood porches. Allison A was the entrance building for the complex, thus the building affronted the street and housed office and reception rooms for visitors and staff.

Because of the restricted mobility and chronic health problems of the patients assigned to the Allison buildings, the porches were designed to provide a readily accessible and suitable outdoor environment. There was an equal amount of porch space as interior dormitory space and beds could be rolled onto the porches through the wide doorways.

The Allison building complex was located near the perimeter of the St. Elizabeths West Campus grounds and was connected to the Relief and Home buildings.

The Allison group (Buildings 23, 24, 25, and 26) was the last cottage complex constructed under William Godding, who became superintendent of St. Elizabeths in 1877. At the beginning of his tenure, Godding adopted a different approach toward developing new buildings on campus than had previously been followed. Starting in 1878 the ward buildings were constructed as detached “cottages” and clustered into small groups. Each building group was designed and designated for a specific patient type. The cottage type of architecture consisted of an open patient dormitory with attached attendants’ quarters and allowed for the orderly separation of patients in the healthy and serene family atmosphere of the ward units, without the constraints or limitations of a large single building.

**Historians:** Tim Penich, Mike Ford, Deborah Slaton, and Kenneth Itle, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.

## **PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

### **A. Physical History**

1. Date of erection: 1899<sup>1</sup>
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses: St. Elizabeths Hospital (then the Government Hospital for the Insane) was placed under the control of the Department of the Interior by an act of Congress on March 3, 1855. The hospital remained under the control of the Department of the Interior until 1940, when St. Elizabeths was transferred to the Federal Security Agency. The Federal Security Agency was a new government agency that oversaw federal activities in the fields of health, education, and social insurance. In 1953, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was created. At that time several of the functions of the Federal Security Agency, including control of St. Elizabeths Hospital, were transferred to the new department.<sup>2</sup> In 1968, St. Elizabeths was transferred to the National Institute of Mental Health, an agency within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The Institute sought to demonstrate how a large mental hospital could be converted into a smaller, more modern facility for training, service, and research.<sup>3</sup> In 1979, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare became the Department of Health and Human Services with the creation of the Department of Education. The Department of Health and Human Services retained control of the St. Elizabeths Hospital West Campus until

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<sup>1</sup> *Historic Resources Management Plan*, 63-64; *1898 Annual Report*, 18; *Investigation of St. Elizabeths Hospital*. The Sixty-ninth Congress, second edition. House of Representatives. Letter from the Comptroller General of the United States, July 1, 1926, 62-64.

<sup>2</sup> *Federal Register*, accessed at <http://www.federalregister.gov/agencies/saint-elizabeth-s-hospital>, January 5, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> *1970 Annual Report*.

2004, when the property was transferred to the General Services Administration.<sup>4</sup> The campus facilities were stabilized and the buildings were mothballed by 2005.<sup>5</sup>

In the original use of the Allison A, an aging population of white male Civil War veterans occupied the building. In 1907, Allison A was the entrance building for the complex, thus the building affronted the street and housed office and reception rooms for visitors and staff. The Blackburn Laboratory was constructed in 1923 on the east campus and pathological research activities were relocated from Allison A.

By 1926, the Allison group was a part of the Detached department which attended to white male patients of the chronic class who required continual treatment and care.<sup>6</sup> From 1968, Allison A housed the offices for the Mental Health Program for the Deaf.

In 1970, patients were vacated from all pre-1900 buildings, including Allison A. Dormitories constructed during the Nichols and Godding era, which constituted half of the west campus buildings, were cleared and patients were relocated to the east campus or lettered buildings.

In 1982, the Mental Health Program for the Deaf offices was relocated to the L Building (Building 64). At this time, Allison A was used as the regional headquarters for the Community Mental Health Center.

Allison A, is currently vacant and has been mothballed. Plans are underway to restore, rehabilitate, renovate, and construct buildings on the west campus for future use.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Not known
5. Original plans and construction: Allison A was constructed as a three-story, brick structure with basement. The Italianate-style structure had a corbelled brick cornice, slate hip roof with central vent hood, and multi-light double-hung windows with concrete sills and brick relieving arches. Three-story, wood-framed, porches with wood guardrails and brick foundation piers were attached to the north and south facade. Doorways were centered on the north facade at each floor level to provide access to the north porch with the main entrance being an arched opening with transom and sidelights.

The typical floorplan seen throughout the building was symmetrical, consisting of a central hall with three rooms on either side. Main entry was from the north into an entrance vestibule. The first floor was comprised of offices with a decorative cast iron stair located on the west side of the center of the plan. The first floor interior featured a brick and steel arched ceiling with plaster finish. The upper floors were reserved for physician apartments. Wood flooring, plaster walls and ceiling, and five-panel wood doors with multi-light transoms were typical throughout the building.

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<sup>4</sup> *St. Elizabeths West Campus: Cultural Landscape Report*, Heritage Landscapes, Preservation Landscape Architects & Planners, and Robinson & Associates, Inc., prepared for the General Services Administration, April 2009, V.2.

<sup>5</sup> *St. Elizabeths West Campus Preservation, Design, & Development Guidelines*, Oehrlein & Associates Architects and Robinson & Associates, Inc., Architectural and Historical Research, prepared for the General Services Administration, November 10, 2008, 18. A photograph of the building taken in 2005 by FMG Architects shows the building in a stabilized and protected state.

<sup>6</sup> 1945 Public Building Administration survey.

6. Alterations and additions: At an unknown date between 1910 and 1930, the first and second floors of the north porch were enclosed with the addition of groups of wood double-hung and casement windows set between the original wood columns. The south porch at the third floor may have been enclosed as part of the original construction; alternately, the third floor south porch may have been enclosed during the same time period in the early part of the twentieth century.

In 1941, various repairs and minor alterations were made to the building. A new entrance door with concrete stair and steel pipe handrails was added on the west facade. The new opening had a brick relieving arch and was created to provide direct access to the main stair vestibule. In the same year, the second and third floor lavatories were renovated.<sup>7</sup>

Electrical rewiring and plumbing alterations were completed by 1962. Plumbing upgrades were documented through 1964 construction documents. Improvements to Allison A were a precursor to campus-wide upgrades to the fire suppression systems, plumbing facilities, heating units, and electrical systems.

From 1968, Allison A housed the offices for the Mental Health Program for the Deaf. Various interior remodeling projects were implemented to accommodate this new use. Partition walls were constructed to convert the first floor into offices.<sup>8</sup>

Following the relocation of the offices of the Mental Health Program for the Deaf in 1982, the building was used as the regional headquarters for the Community Mental Health Center. Some additional interior remodeling was completed to accommodate this new use.

Although not specifically documented in available archival materials, approximate dates of construction have been determined for the following other modifications to the building.

Between 1899 and 1928, a brick chimney was constructed on the east facade of the building. The chimney stack had corbelled brick detailing.

Various alterations were made to the north and south porches. Between 1963 and 1968, a new shed roof was installed above the third floor of the north facade. The roof was supported on wood posts. The wood guardrails were replaced at the same time.

Also between 1963 and 1968, the wood-framed glazed enclosures of the first and second floor of the north porch and the third floor of the south porch were altered. The porches were completely enclosed through the installation of synthetic siding and new, smaller windows. At the third floor porch, most portions of the previous enclosure wall and window framing were retained and used to support the new siding, whereas at the north porch, the earlier enclosure and original porch posts were apparently removed and replaced with new wall framing. The wood-framed stair on the north facade was removed and replaced with a brick staircase with concrete treads. A small wood-framed door hood was installed above the north entrance.

Prior to 1968, the crawlspace under the north porch was infilled with brick installed in a header bond. Alternating brick were left to create a perforated appearance.

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<sup>7</sup> 1941 *Annual Report*.

<sup>8</sup> 1967 construction documents.

## B. Historical context

A context history for the entire St. Elizabeths West Campus (HABS No. DC-349), as well as a narrative for the Allison group (HABS No. DC-349-BW), is being developed under separate cover as part of this HABS documentation project.

In 1852, St. Elizabeths Hospital was established in large part through the efforts of Dorothea Lynde Dix, who led a national crusade for the ethical and humane treatment of the mentally ill. Under the direction of Superintendent Charles Nichols, the hospital endeavored to become a curative treatment center for the mentally ill of Washington, D.C., and the United States Army and Navy.

Following the Civil War, the service of St. Elizabeths was extended to include military veterans. The change in administrative policy altered the demographics of the institution and led to rapid increase in the patient population.

New patient facilities were constructed to accommodate the needs and growing number of aging and mentally challenged Civil War veterans. With the exception of minority patient groups, who remained segregated, early expansion efforts focused on continuing Charles Nichols' Kirkbride plan. The Dawes (Building 7), Garfield (Building 5), and Center Building addition (Building 2) were constructed as ward wings attached to the Center Building complex and exemplified the principles espoused by Superintendent Nichols. Patients were grouped into wards by their perceived mental condition and emphasis was placed on creating a peaceful, healthy, and serene family unit environment in which to rehabilitate.

In 1877, William Godding assumed control of St. Elizabeths Hospital and adopted the principles of his predecessor. Through the moral treatment of patients, it was believed that mental illness could be cured. Godding encouraged the construction of small free-standing cottage buildings to promote a healthy environment and facilitate the orderly separation of growing patient groups. The change in architecture was a shift from institutional to domestic imagery in caring for the chronically ill.

Atkins Hall (Building 31) was the first building constructed using the cottage plan. The detached structures were clustered into small groups, with each building group designed and designated for a specialized patient type. The architecture allowed for the orderly separation of patients and maintained the peaceful family atmosphere of the ward units but without the constraints or limitations of a single large building. As noted in the 1880 *Annual Report*:

Not to go farther into detail from what has been merely outlined, it will be seen how easy it is to extend this plan of detached buildings to the decided advantage of certain classes of the insane. While the main building will remain the hospital proper, . . . the detached buildings can be better adapted in their architectural arrangements to the wants of special classes than the uniform wards of a hospital can be; as, for example, a detached building for our future erection will be a small structure built like a private house with nothing of the air or furnishings of a hospital about it, where a few convalescents waiting till their health is fully established can step out of the hospital while still under its supervision.<sup>9</sup>

At the conclusion of Superintendent Godding's tenure, seventeen free-standing ward buildings had been constructed on the St. Elizabeths Campus in five separate cottage clusters. Along with Atkins Hall, the Relief and Home buildings were constructed in 1878–1883 to house mild-mannered white

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<sup>9</sup> 1880 *Annual Report*.

male patients of the chronic class. Howard Hall, constructed 1887–1892 and demolished in 1960, was a walled and secured complex that housed the criminally ill. The Toner and Oakes buildings, completed between 1891 and 1895 and no longer extant, housed male epileptic patients. The Dix structures— Willow, Linden and Holly (Buildings 8, 28, and 29 respectively)—were occupied in 1898 by female epileptic patients. The Allison group (Buildings 23, 24, 25, and 26), the last cottage complex constructed under Godding, was completed in 1899 to house aging veterans.

Allison A, combined with the Allison B, C, and D (Buildings 26, 24, 23 respectively), was part of a group of four pavilions constructed around a small courtyard and connected by deep porches. The buildings housed the aging population of white male Civil War veterans.

When Alonzo Richardson became superintendent in 1899, St. Elizabeths Hospital was expanding rapidly. The aging population of Civil War veterans and required the services of the federal government hospital. Richardson was skillful in obtaining appropriations from Congress and was responsible for the extensive development of St. Elizabeths Hospital during this period.

Despite major construction efforts initiated by Superintendent Richardson, overcrowding continued to be a problem in the development of the hospital. St. Elizabeths received patients from the United States Army and Navy in increasing numbers following World War I. The Allison group, which housed military veterans, was directly affected by the influx in patient population.

As St. Elizabeths grew under Superintendent Richardson, it was deemed necessary to reorganize the patient population and decentralize the administrative structure to create departments. West campus departments included the Female Service, Howard Hall, Receiving, West Side, and Detached units that each specialized in a particular patient group or function. The restructuring was initiated to improve efficiency and meet the needs of each department of the hospital. By 1926, the Allison group was a part of the Detached department which attended to white male patients of the chronic class who required continual treatment and care. Specifically, Allison B housed juvenile patients on the first floor and those of the chronic and quiet class on the second floor. The operational change had very little effect on the architecture of the structure.

Construction on the west campus continued into the tenure of Superintendent William White era (1903–1937) and was focused on improving infrastructure and existing building stock. Alterations were made to west campus structures so that they could better accommodate changing hospital needs and the increasing patient population.

Following White's tenure, development of the St. Elizabeths West Campus consisted of upgrading and improving existing facilities.

In the 1960s, an extensive effort was made at St. Elizabeths Hospital to modernize mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems in the aging west campus buildings. The effort was initiated by the series of conflagrations that had plagued the campus for the previous two decades. In 1961, a fire in the Larch ward of the East Wing (Building 4) resulted in a patient fatality. Funds were quickly directed by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare toward creating a campus-wide plan to improve fire suppression plans, plumbing facilities, heating units, and electrical systems.

In 1963, an \$865,000 appropriation was made for the installation of sprinkler systems in non-fire-resistant buildings. The suppression unit consisted of surface-mounted sprinklers and was installed in

every room. That same year, a study of the existing plumbing and electrical systems was initiated. The study led to the appropriation of funds for a multi-million dollar facilities modernization project.

In 1968, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare reorganized its management structure and placed St. Elizabeths under the control of the National Institute of Mental Health. The Institute sought to demonstrate how a large mental hospital could be converted into a smaller modern facility for training, service, and research. The change in administrative direction resulted in dramatic alterations to the planning and function of the west campus.

In 1970, patients were vacated from all pre-1900 buildings. Dormitories constructed during the Nichols and Godding eras, which constituted half of the west campus buildings, were cleared and patients were relocated to the east campus or lettered buildings. Built in 1899, Allison B was affected by the change. The mass closure intensified overcrowding on campus but temporarily resolved the urgent need for building maintenance on the aging structures.

By 1977, the National Institute of Mental Health commissioned a master plan for the hospital to outline future growth and determine the fate of the aging west campus structures. The plan called for the minimal renovation of the lettered buildings, the last of the patient dormitories on the west campus, and the temporary reuse of remaining west campus structures as patient support facilities until they could be phased out. In that same year, controversy arose when St. Elizabeths Hospital was denied its long-standing accreditation as a teaching and training school because the condition of campus buildings did not meet safety and structural requirements as outlined by the Life Safety Code.

In 1978, a supplemental appropriation of \$52.2 million was approved for the renovation and modification of the hospital. Improvements and upgrades were made to address fire and safety deficiencies, electrical systems, infrastructure improvements, and issues of accessibility. On the west campus, renovations were focused on providing accessibility ramps and universally accessible lavatories.

The Department of Health and Human Services retained control of the St. Elizabeths Hospital West Campus until 2004 when the property was transferred to the General Services Administration. The campus facilities were stabilized and the buildings were mothballed by 2005. Window and door openings were covered and protected with plywood and access to the campus was secured.

Allison A, along with most of the west campus, is currently vacant and has been mothballed. Plans are underway to restore, rehabilitate, renovate, and construct buildings on the west campus for future use.

## **PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

### **A. General Statement**

1. Architectural character: Allison A is a rectangular three-story building, with the main entrance centered on the north facade. The Italianate-style building is primarily clad in red clay brick masonry. At the north elevation there is wood-framed porch. The first two levels are enclosed and the third level is an open covered porch. At the south elevation there is a two-story open porch with an enclosed porch at the third level. The Allison group buildings form a quadrant with a center courtyard, with Allison B on the west, Allison C on the east, Allison A on the north, and

Allison D, the largest of the building group, on the south. The buildings are connected with two-story wood porches.

Allison A was the entrance building for the complex, thus the building affronted the street and housed office and reception rooms for visitors and staff.

The structure of Allison A consists of interior and exterior load-bearing clay brick masonry walls that support wrought iron beams with brick arch floor systems at the first, second, and third floor levels.

Exterior character-defining features include the exterior brick and stone masonry, brick detailing below the cornice, brick segmental arches at window and door openings; the porches connecting the Allison group buildings; the brick arch over the first floor north entrance door and sidelights; wood-framed multi-light windows; exterior wood multi-panel doors and transoms; slate roofing; standing seam sheet metal south porch roofing, the sheet metal ventilator at ridgeline, sheet metal ridge cresting, built-in gutters and cornice; the wood posts, knee walls, and beadboard ceiling at the third floor south porch; wood posts, railings, tongue-and-groove flooring, beadboard ceiling at the first and second floor south connecting porches; and the brick piers below the porch posts.

Interior character-defining features include plaster finishes at the walls and ceilings, wood millwork (baseboard, door trim, window trim, and picture rail), wood multi-panel interior doors and multi-light transoms, exposed arched structure, and iron stair treads, risers, stringer, newel posts, and balustrade.

2. Condition of fabric: At the time of the field survey for the Historic Structure Reports/Building Preservation Plans project in 2009, Allison A was in fair condition overall. Exterior conditions of note included the following: cracked, open and eroded brick masonry joints, iron staining on and below some of the limestone sills, efflorescence was observed on the south end of the west elevation, at the chimney on the east elevation, and at select locations on the south elevation biological growth largely on the north elevation at the first level, paint failure at steel handrails and the metal cornice, missing window sash, cracked or missing window glazing, failed window coatings, and damaged, displaced, and missing slate. On the interior, distress conditions included plaster damage at the walls and ceilings, including loss of finish surface, impact damage, delamination or isolated loss of plaster, worn and soiled flooring surface, loose and peeling tiles, peeling of paint at wood trim, windows and doors, sport corrosion and coating loss at interior metal elements, failure of coating and spot corrosion on cast iron stair components, extensive paint failure at exposed interior brick walls, signs of biological growth.

## B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: 40'-0" long by 58'-0" wide and 57'-0" tall above grade.
2. Foundations: The foundation construction for Allison A is brick masonry supporting load-bearing brick masonry walls.
3. Walls: The exterior walls of Allison A are constructed with brick laid in a common bond pattern with header courses at every sixth course. The brick units are generally 8-1/4" long. Segmental brick arches with two courses of rowlock masonry are located over window and door openings at the exterior masonry wythes. Wood lintels support the interior masonry wythes.

4. Structural system, framing: Allison A has interior and exterior load-bearing clay brick masonry walls that support wrought iron beams with brick arch floor systems at the first, second, and third floor levels. A chimney located on the east elevation of the building serves the basement level. A second chimney extends up from an interior masonry wall that served a fireplace at the northwest portion of the building on the first floor.

The exterior walls are constructed with brick laid in a common bond pattern with header courses at every sixth course. The brick units are generally 8-1/4" long. Load-bearing walls at the perimeter and interior are approximately 18" thick and continue down to form the brick masonry foundation. The 18" thick walls have continuous vertical chases that extend through to the attic and apparently functioned as part of the original heating system. Lintels located over door openings at interior load-bearing partitions in the basement and upper floor levels include semicircular arches at selected locations as well as of 3" x 12" solid sawn wood members to support the masonry/structure above. At exterior walls, segmental brick arches with two courses of rowlock masonry are located over window and door openings at the exterior masonry wythes. Wood lintels support the interior masonry wythes.

The brick arch floors are supported by wrought iron beams spaced approximately 4' to 6' on center that span east-west between masonry walls. The arches are single-wythe brick rowlock courses and have an amplitude (rise at arch mid-span) of about 5" to 6" between the supports.

The building has a stick-framed hip roof with a sheet metal ventilator for the attic that is centrally located at the ridge. The attic is accessible by a ceiling hatch located at the third floor level near the interior stair. The third floor ceiling joists include 2" x 10" (actual) members spaced at 16" on center that span north to south. The roof has a slope of approximately 29 degrees with 2" x 9-3/4" (actual) rafters spaced at 24" on center. The rafters bear on short 3" x 9" continuous sill members that rest on the exterior masonry walls around the perimeter. In addition, the 4x12 hip members bear on 4-1/2" x 6-1/2" posts that rest on the interior masonry walls. The wood plank roof sheathing (about 1" thick) supports slate shingle roofing. Wood lookouts are located in the masonry wall beneath the wood sill that provide support for the perimeter box gutter. External downspouts are located at building corners, which drain the perimeter box gutter system.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, porticoes, bulkheads: The porches along the north and south elevations of the building are wood-framed structures that are supported by the exterior masonry walls of the main building and brick masonry pier foundations. The porch on the south elevation is an open structure, with the exception of the third floor level, which is enclosed with wood-framed walls and vinyl siding. The stair from the second to third level of the south porch is also enclosed. The porch on the north elevation is enclosed with wood-framed walls and asbestos shingle siding on the first and second levels but open on the third. The first level of the north elevation porch has a centrally located door and concrete stair that serve as a primary entrance for the building. A brick stoop is present at the center of the west elevation.
6. Chimneys: There are two brick chimneys at Allison A. The original chimney is located at the east portion of the roof, while a second chimney is located at the east elevation.
7. Openings
  - a. Doorways and doors: A door is centered on the north elevation. The door, flanked by side-lights, is white painted wood, and has one panel and six lights. A five-panel wood door is present at the center of the south elevation. The doorway is topped by a three-light transom.

A third door leads from the staircase to the exterior. The multi-panel door has two solid panels at its base with a six-light window at the top of the door. A three-light transom sits above the doorway.

- b. Windows and shutters: The windows on the first through third floors are wood frame, six-over-six double-hung wood sash windows. The windows at the basement level are wood awning windows. The exterior windows at the non-original porch enclosure are eight-over-eight double-hung wood windows

#### 8. Roof

- a. Shape, covering: Allison A has a hip roof covered with slate. Over the south porch is a painted standing seam sheet metal shed roof.
- b. Cornice, eaves: At the roofline, there is a galvanized sheet metal cornice, painted red. The perimeter of the roof has a continuous built-in gutter lined with sheet metal; the gutter is integrated with the sheet metal cornice.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: A metal ventilator is present at the center of the ridgeline of the roof.

#### C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Allison A is rectangular in plan. An enclosed porch is present on the north elevation, with another porch on the south that connects to the other buildings that comprise the Allison group. A central hallway bisects the building on the first floor. The enclosed porch at the north consists of two rooms on each side of the central hallway. A series of rooms, four on the east and three on the west, are present on each side of the hall. A stairway is located near the southwest corner of the building. A toilet room is located directly north of the stairway. The second and third floors are similar in plan to the first floor, with a series of rooms on each side of a central hall. At the third floor, the porch on the south side of the building is enclosed. The porch contained three rooms and a stair that leads to the open porch below.
2. Stairways: There are two staircases in Allison A. The main staircase is located near the southwest portion of the building. The stairs, which appear to be original to the building, consist of cast iron treads and risers with an integral iron base, stringer, posts, and balustrade, topped by a wood handrail. A second stair connects the third floor enclosed south porch and the open porch at the second floor. This stair is constructed of wood.
3. Flooring: Finish flooring varies from room to room and sometimes from area to area. Existing floor finishes include carpet tile and vinyl asbestos tile. These materials are applied over original wood flooring.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The typical interior finish materials of Allison A include plaster walls and plaster applied to the brick vault structure at ceilings for the first and second floors. The third floor ceiling is flat plaster on wood lath.

## 5. Openings

- a. Doorways and doors: The building includes historic wood five-panel interior doors with a painted finish over the original stained and varnished finish. Some interior doors include original glazed three-light transoms. There are also non-original stained flat panel wood veneer doors, and some original transoms have been replaced with solid panels.
- b. Windows: As noted above, the windows are typically six-over-six light double-hung windows with a painted finish over previously varnished wood. The exterior windows of the non-original porch enclosure walls are eight-over-eight double-hung white painted wood windows with simple white painted trim

6. Decorative features and trim: Most rooms include original wood baseboard and window and door trim with a painted finish over the original stained and varnished finish.

7. Hardware: Information not available.

## 8. Mechanical Equipment

- a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The centralized coal-fired steam heating system from the Power House fed steam to Allison A through insulated cast iron pipes that are located in a subterranean tunnel that enters the Allison group from the east at basement level of Allison D.

The original indirect heating system is still in place in the basement, although the radiators have been abandoned for some time. Individual radiators were fit within cavities of the interior masonry bearing walls and were encased in rectangular sheet metal housings. Separate vertical air ducts are provided in the hallways and within most rooms. Originally, supply air grilles were provided near the floor, and exhaust air grilles near the ceiling connected to ducts for ventilation into the attic. Throughout Allison A, original grilles at these openings have been removed, and the openings have been closed.

The heating system was retrofitted with direct hot water radiation utilizing cast iron radiators. No air conditioning system was present. As seen in archival photographs, the building was formerly cooled via window air conditioning units.

- b. Lighting: The existing lighting in the building is typically modern additions and not considered historic. Lighting includes surface mounted and suspended florescent lighting fixtures
- c. Plumbing: The plumbing supply and waste system is composed of cast iron pipes and fittings with some additions in polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

## D. Site

1. Historic landscape design: Documentation of the landscape of the west campus of St. Elizabeths Hospital can be found in Historic American Landscape Survey documentation submittal DC-11.

The Allison group form a quadrant with a center courtyard, including Allison B on the west, Allison C on the east, Allison A is on the north, and Allison D, the largest of the building group, on the south. The buildings are connected with two-story wood porches.

There is a paved area directly to the north of Allison A extending to Redwood Drive. A small area of paving extends from the building to the west in front of Allison B. South of Allison A is the central courtyard. The courtyard is an open grassy area. The landscape east of Allison A includes a gently sloping grassy lawn and large trees.

### **PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- A. Architectural drawings: Copies of available architectural drawings are included in the attached Supplemental Material. The archival drawing documentation is in the collection of the General Services Administration.
- B. Early Views: Copies of selected early and historical views of the Allison A are included in the attached Supplemental Material. The original photographs and other archival photographic documentation are in the collection of the General Services Administration, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, College Park, Maryland, or the St. Elizabeths Hospital Health Sciences Library archives on the St. Elizabeths East Campus.
- C. Interviews: No oral history interviews were performed for this documentation project.
- D. Selected Sources:

*Centennial Papers: St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1855–1955.* Winfred Overholser, ed. Washington, D.C.: Centennial Commission, St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1956.

*Condition & Reuse Assessment: St. Elizabeths West Campus (draft).* Oehrlein & Associates Architects. Prepared for the General Services Administration, January 4, 2006.

*The DHS Headquarters Consolidation at St. Elizabeths: Final Master Plan.* Oehrlein & Associates Architects and Robinson & Associates, Inc. Prepared for the General Services Administration. November 10, 2008.

*General Correspondence and Other Records of the Federal Board of St. Elizabeths Hospital.* Records of the Office of the Superintendent, (1855–1967), Record Group 418.

*Historic Preservation Report: St. Elizabeths West Campus,* John Milner Architects. Prepared for the General Services Administration. December 7, 2005.

*Historic Structure Report: Center Building Group (Buildings 1 through 6), St. Elizabeths West Campus, Washington, D.C.* Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. Prepared for the General Services Administration, March 12, 2010.

Library of Congress. Washington, D.C.: Geography & Maps Reading Room. Collection contains various topographical maps for the District of Columbia and St. Elizabeths campus from 1855–1985.

*Maps and Plans of the Government Hospital for the Insane (St. Elizabeths Hospital), 05/27/1839–12/14/1938.* Department of the Interior, St. Elizabeths Hospital (1916–06/30/1940). Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1820–1981. Record Group 418, National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

National Archives and Record Administration. Textual Documents Division. Washington, D.C. Record Group 418, Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital. Entry 20, Records of the Superintendent, Annual Report of the Subordinate Units, 1919–1966.

National Archives and Record Administration. Textual Documents Division. Washington, D.C. Record Group 42, Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, Cartographic and Architectural Drawings Division, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 418, Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, Cartographic and Architectural Drawings Division, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 48, Records of the Secretary of the Interior.

*Photographic Prints of Buildings, Grounds, and People, 1870–1920.* Department of Health, Education and Welfare, St. Elizabeth Hospital (04/11/1953–08/09/1967). Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1820–1981. Record Group 418, National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

*Photographs of Structures at St. Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, D.C., 1968.* Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Public Health Service, Health Services and Mental Health Administration, National Institute of Mental Health, Saint Elizabeths Hospital, Office of the Superintendent (04/01/1968–07/01/1973). Records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1820–1981. Record Group 418, National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

*St. Elizabeths Hospital Historic Resources Management Plan.* Devroux & Purnell Architects-Planners, PC, with Betty Bird, Historian, and Rhodeside & Harwell Inc., Landscape Architects. Prepared for the D.C. Office of Business and Economic Development and the Office of the Assistant City Administrator for Economic Development, Washington, D.C., September 1993.

*St. Elizabeths Hospital Tunnel Inspection Report.* Burgess & Niple, Inc. Prepared for the General Services Administration, Washington, D.C., February 2006. Accessed through the General Services Administration archives.

*St. Elizabeths West Campus: Cultural Landscape Report,* Heritage Landscapes, Preservation Landscape Architects & Planners, and Robinson & Associates, Inc. Prepared for the General Services Administration. April 2009.

*St. Elizabeths West Campus Preservation, Design, & Development Guidelines.* Oehrlein & Associates Architects and Robinson & Associates, Inc., Architectural and Historical Research. Prepared for the General Services Administration. November 10, 2008.

- E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Extensive research on the history of the Allison A has been performed for this and other studies, as documented in the publications and other sources listed above.

#### **PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION**

This historical narrative was prepared by WJE in conjunction with Mills + Schnoering Architects, LLC, who prepared the measured drawings, and Leslie Schwartz Photography, who prepared the photographic documentation. The HABS documentation was completed for the General Services Administration.

APPENDIX: PHOTOGRAPHS AND DRAWINGS

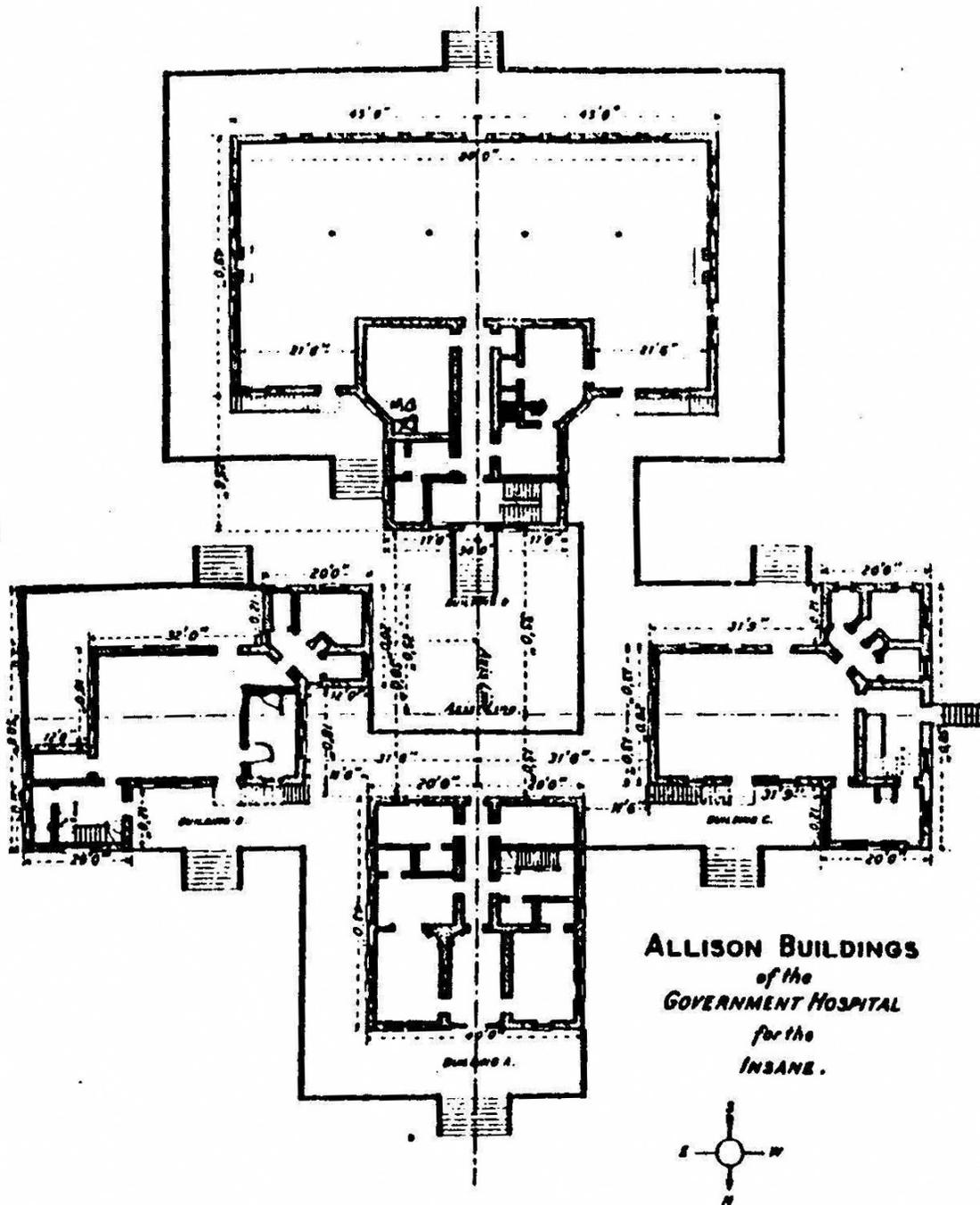


Figure 1. Plan of the proposed Allison group as published in the 1895 Annual Report. The buildings were constructed in 1899 generally following this plan. Source: 1898 Annual Report.



*Figure 2. View of the Allison group under construction, late 1890s. Source: GSA archive, image DC1472SE0P196.*



*Figure 3. View of the Allison group from the north, nearing completion, September 20, 1898. Source: GSA archive, image DC1450SE0P002.*



*Figure 4. View of the Allison group from the northwest shortly after its completion in 1899. Source: GSA archive, image DC1450SE0P003.*



*Figure 5. View of Allison A and Allison C from the northeast, 1945. Note the enclosure of the two-level north porch with wood-framed glazing and the addition of a second chimney along the east elevation. Source: GSA archive, image DC1450SE0P025.*



Figure 6. Aerial view of the Allison group from the east, 1963. This view clearly shows the enclosed third floor south porch of Allison A, as well as the north porch with non-original glazed enclosure of the first and second floors. Source: GSA archive, image DC1472SE0P009.

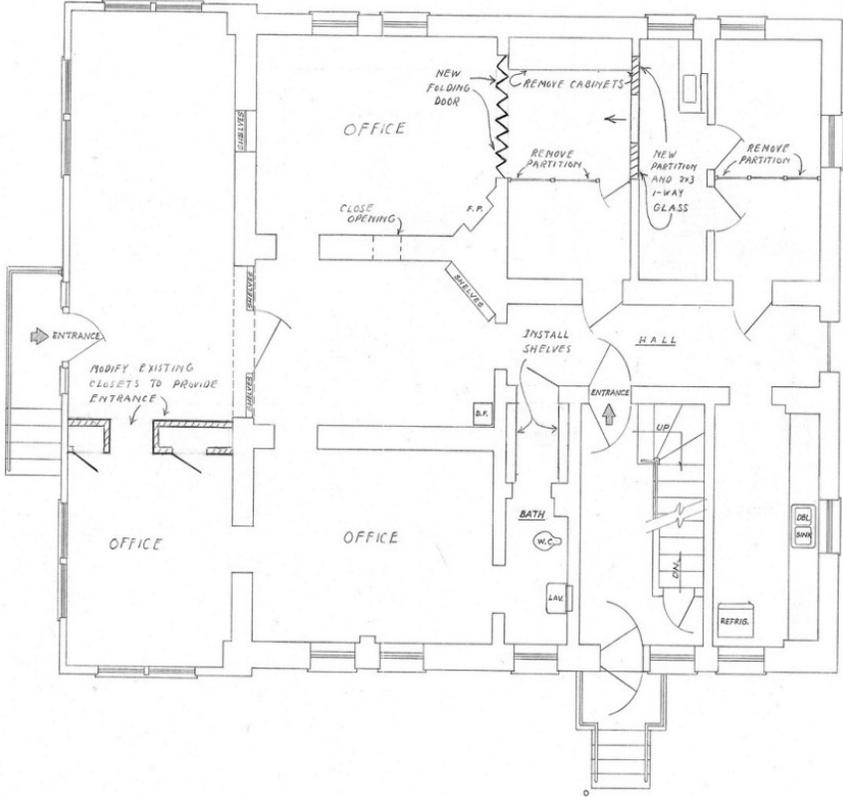


Figure 7. Excerpt from drawing dated 1967 for the renovation of the first floor for office use by the Mental Health Program for the Deaf. North is to the left in this image. Source: GSA archive, image DC1450SE003.

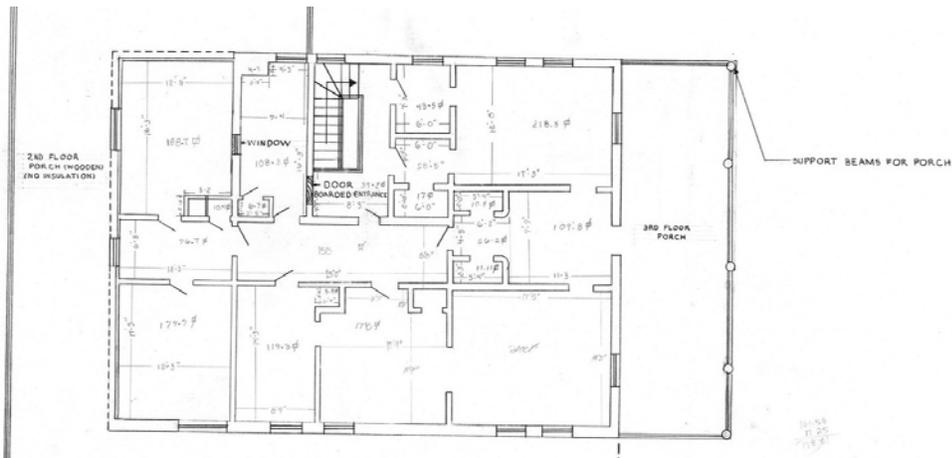


Figure 8. Excerpt from an undated drawing for the renovation of the third floor, circa 1960s–1980s. This drawing postdates various alterations, including changes to the enclosure of the south porch, the addition of a roof to the third floor north porch, and the removal of some third-floor partitions. The only change to the third floor subsequent to this drawing was the addition of an exit staircase from the third floor south porch and the closing up of some doorways that open into the stairwell. North is to the right in this image. Source: GSA archive, image DC1450SE002.



Figure 9. View of Allison A from the northeast, circa 1970s, showing the new enclosure of the north porch on the first two floors and the addition of a roof over the third floor porch. Source: GSA archive, image DC1450SE0P001.

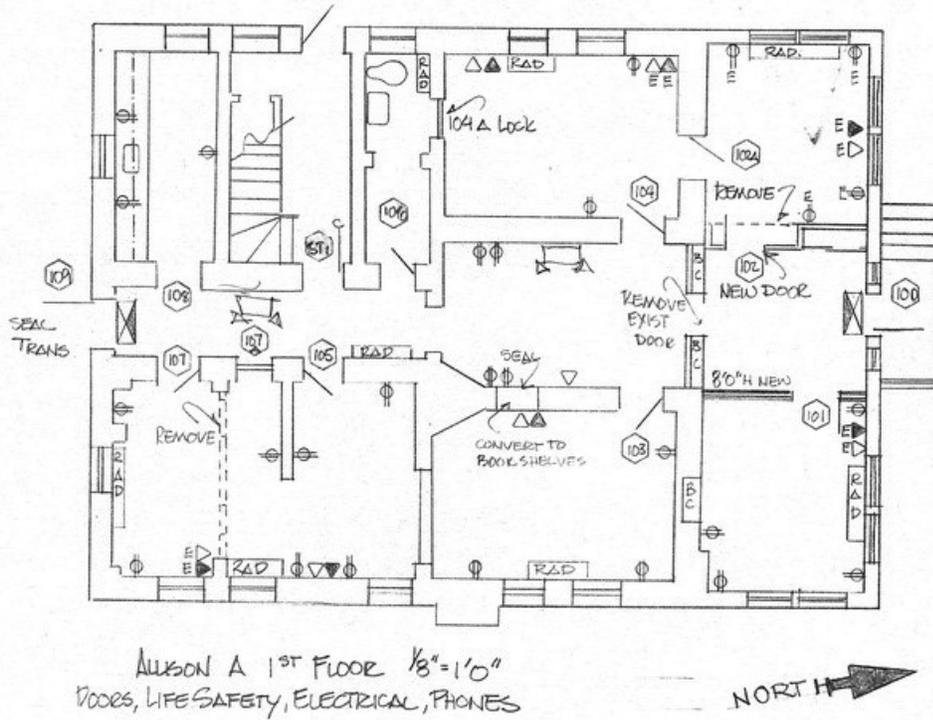


Figure 10. Excerpt from an undated drawing for further remodeling of the first floor offices, possibly circa 1982, when the Mental Health Program for the Deaf left the building and Community Mental Health Center took over the space. North is to the right. Source: GSA archive, image DC1450SE001.



Figure 11. View of Allison A from the northeast, circa 1990s. Window air conditioning units have been added, but the building exterior is otherwise essentially unchanged from the 1970s. Source: GSA archive, image DC1450SE0P023.



*Figure 12. View of the Allison group from the northwest, circa 2003. Source: GSA archive, image DC1450SE0P022.*