

Fort Sheridan Post Hospital
(Building No. 1)
Bradley Loop
Fort Sheridan
Lake County
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1113-1

HABS
ILL,
49-FTSH,
1/1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20243

FORT SHERIDAN, POST HOSPITAL (Building No. 1)
FORT SHERIDAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

HABS
ILL,
49-FTSH,
1/1-

Location: Bradley Loop
Fort Sheridan, Lake County, Illinois. 60037

USGS Highland Park Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 16:433380. 4673860.

Present Owner
and Occupant: United States Army.

Present Use: Post Library.

Significance: The hospital, completed in 1893, was one of the original buildings at Fort Sheridan. It was constructed from standardized plans issued by the Office of the Surgeon General in 1888 and is an excellent example of a military hospital of that period. The basement contains a cistern which is said to be the original water source for the post.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1893.
2. Architect: Office of the Surgeon General.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Army from date of construction to the present.
4. Contractor: Thomas Clark and Sons.
5. Original plan and construction: The building is a two-and-one-half story central block with two single story side wings constructed at right angles to the central block. The central block is covered with a mansard roof and the side wings with hipped roofs. The main entrance is in the long side. Originally a single story veranda covered the facade of the central block and the wings and returned on the sides. The building is constructed of buff-cream brick.
6. Alterations and additions: Three two-story brick wings were constructed between 1905 and 1909. A rear passageway connected the main hospital to the three wings which were constructed from standardized plans from the Office of the Surgeon General. The connecting passageway was removed in 1952, and the wings were designated as Building No. 2. The original hospital remained as Building No. 1.

In 1925 a cell room in the basement was completed. In 1929 iron caging was installed in the prison ward which is also in the basement.

A single story orange-yellow brick entryway was added at the center of the facade.

A second dormer has been added to the original one on the east and west sides.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

From 1919 to 1920 this building served as the main hospital unit for General Hospital No. 28, a base hospital established by the Army medical department for treating sick and wounded soldiers. Over 60,000 patients were treated at the hospital. Temporary buildings were constructed on the parade grounds and other buildings on the post converted to house medical personnel and supplies. The hospital was later named Lovell Hospital after Joseph Lovell, Surgeon General of the Army from 1818 to 1836.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Original architectural drawings: The building was constructed from standardized plans issued by the Office of the Surgeon General. Copies of the plans and elevations can be found in "Additional Approved Plans and Specifications for Post Hospitals and Hospital Steward's Quarters," Appendix to Circular No. 10, War Department, Surgeon General's Office, Dec. 1, 1888. Record Group 92, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.
2. Old views: Mackern, H. G. Fort Sheridan: At Attention and Rest, Chicago, H. G. Mackern, 1897. n.p.

Views of Fort Sheridan, Record Group 92. Audio Visual Archives, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.
Reference no. 92-F-61A-14.

3. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Papers Relating to Fort Sheridan. Office of the Quartermaster General Consolidated Correspondence Files, 1784-1915 and Office of the Quartermaster General Construction Division, Record Group 92. U.S. Army Continental Command, 6th Corps Area Records, Record Group 394, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.

Real Property Records, Directorate of Facilities Engineering,
Fort Sheridan, Illinois.

Prepared by Sally Kress Tompkins
Architectural Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
June 1979

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A brick building formed by a two-and-a-half story central block with single story flanking wings following the standard form for military hospitals at the time of its construction.

A frieze formed by dogtooth courses below the eaves of the wings and segmental brick arches above the windows and doors are the most notable decorative features. The building is compatible in brick color and decorative detail with other buildings in the Fort Sheridan Historic District. It differs mainly in roof style, possessing the only mansard roof in the historic district.

2. Condition of fabric: Generally excellent, some brick deterioration from 1965-67 sandblasting.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The central block is two-and-a-half stories with a full basement. It measures 44'-3" by 42'-6". A single story entryway on the facade measures 11'-9" by 9'-6". Each of the single story wings measures 27' by 77'-9".

There are five bays across the facade of the main block and seven across each wing. At the rear of the building the wings, which are set back from the main block in the front, are flush with the central block for one bay and then are set back. On the rear of the central block half of a projecting bay with three windows ends abruptly with a windowless wall. A fire escape is placed over the remaining wall.

2. Foundations: Limestone rubble. There is a brick watertable.

3. Wall construction, finish and color: Buff-cream brick laid in common bond, five rows of stretchers to one of headers.
4. Structural system: Brick bearing wall. The walls are 21" thick.
5. Porches: An orange-yellow brick entryway on the center of the facade has double glass doors with a large glass transom. Concrete steps with metal railings painted black provide access to the entryway. The hipped roof is covered with standing seam metal.
6. Chimneys: Four exterior end chimneys, two on each side of the central block.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance inside the central entryway has been modified by the installation of glass doors with metal frames and a large rectangular glass transom. On the rear and the east and west sides the entrances have segmental arches formed by three rowlocks and a projecting extrados archivolt of headers. The doors are solid wood. On the east side there is a double door with a five-light transom. The foundation rises very high on this side and the entrance is approached by a flight of concrete steps with metal railing painted black. A single wood door under the steps provides access to the basement.

On the rear of the building the original first floor entrance has been infilled with a pink-red brick. A fire escape provides access to the second and third floor levels of the central block. The second floor entrance appears to have been modified from a window.

The third floor entrance is contained in a dormer. A third door on the rear of the building provides access down a flight of concrete steps into the basement. The wood doors are painted a gray-beige color.
 - b. Windows: Above the windows are segmental brick arches formed by double rowlocks and an extrados archivolt of projecting headers. The windows are one-over-one-light double hung sash, with a third horizontal light over the main sash. The original limestone sills appear to have been covered with concrete. The basement windows are recessed in the foundation and have rock-faced limestone lintels. The basement windows are single sash and on the east wing, which houses the prison ward, they are covered with protective wire grills. All the frames are painted a gray-beige.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The central block has a mansard roof with three shed roof dormers on the front and back and two on the sides. Each of the side wings have low pitched hipped roofs. The roofs are covered with asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice: On the wings a frieze formed by three dogtooth courses and a projecting row of stretchers runs below a plain fascia board. On the central block there is a box cornice and molded fascia boards covered with copper. All the trim is painted a gray-beige.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

In the basement, the space under the west wing is too low to be used. The original wood T-beams have been supplemented by metal supports. The single long room under the east wing, once the prison ward, is now used for office space. The central block has rooms opening off each side of the hallway which parallels the facade. At each end of the hall is a separate room formed by the wider section of the wing close to the central block.

On the first floor a central hall provides access to three rooms, two at the rear and one at the front on the east side. Two corridors, one on each side, lead into the east and west wings which house the main library collection. The circulation desk is located in an alcove at the front of the building on the east side. The staircase is directly behind the alcove. On the second and third floors the rooms on the south, west and north of the building open off a central hall on the east side.

2. Stairways: The staircase is two flights, open string with plain square balusters. The balusters and a large carved rectangular newel post is painted black. The stairs are carpeted.
3. Flooring: The original floors have been covered with asphalt or linoleum tile. The basement has cement floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceilings are painted plaster. Pipes run below the plaster ceilings. On the first and second floors marlite covers the walls from the floor approximately half way up the wall. This easy to clean covering dates from the days when the building was utilized as a hospital.

The walls in the basement are limestone and brick and have been painted yellow.

5. Openings: The prison ward in the east wing of the basement has a barred door and a wood door. The wood door has a semi-circular opening at the top covered with a heavy wire grill and a small hinged door in the bottom through which food and other items could be passed. Another small room in the basement has a heavy wood door with a square opening at the top covered with a wire grill. At the rear a passageway which still connects with the basement of Building No. 2 has been partially boarded up. A section has been left open to allow the pipes to pass through.

The doors on the first, second and third floors are paneled wood. The third floor doors have transoms which have been boarded up.

6. Mechanical equipment: The building was constructed with indoor plumbing and steam heat. The present steam heating system relies on oil rather than on coal as it did earlier. The post was receiving electricity as early as 1890, although the original lighting may have been by gas.

The brick bases of the four chimneys are visible in the basement. The fireplaces have been sealed and covered over. In the basement the cistern, which is thought to have been the original water source for the post, is housed in the wide section of the east wing next to the central block. The cistern has been sealed. The pulley is still in place above it.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The building faces south, situated on a grassy lot overlooking a cement parking lot, beyond which Bartlett Ravine forms the southern boundary of the Fort Sheridan Historic District. It is located on the southernmost of four loops which border a series of ravines that run inland from the lake. The loops extend from the oval avenue that encircles the parade ground on the west to the edge of the bluffs above the lake on the east.
2. Outbuildings: Almost adjacent to the rear of the hospital is a separate structure formed by three wings which were once connected to the main hospital by a wide passageway. The wings are constructed of the same buff-cream brick. To the east is a small brick structure which served as a dead house or morgue. Behind the dead house is a long wooden barrack-like structure used for storage.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) under the auspices of Interagency Archeological Services, Atlanta and funded by the U.S. Department of Army, Fort Sheridan, Illinois. It included a historical and architectural survey of the fort to provide the necessary data for implementation of the Fort Sheridan Historic District. Documentation was obtained on thirty-one buildings. The survey and documentation were accomplished by Sally Kress Tompkins, an architectural historian on the HABS staff, under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS; Kenneth Anderson, Principal Architect; Carolyn Pitts, Principal Historian, and Allen Chambers, architectural historian and editor. The photographs were taken by William Kumpf of Architectural Camera, Chicago.