

MALLINCKRODT CHEMICAL WORKS, Building No. 700

HABS No. MO-1929-K

~~(Mallinckrodt Inc.)~~

Destrehan Street between Hall Street and Wharf Street
St. Louis, Missouri

HABS

MO

96-SALU,

134K-

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 700
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Location: Destrehan Street, between Hall and Wharf streets, Mallinckrodt and Second streets, St. Louis, Missouri

USGS Granite City, Illinois-Missouri Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 744583 E; 4282803 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 700 was a warehouse for Plant 7, a uranium tetrafluoride (UF₄) production facility.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. **Date of erection:** Building 700 was built in 1954.
2. **Architect:** The architect for this building is unknown.
3. **Original and subsequent owners:** Plant 7, of which Building 700 is a part, was acquired by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission in August 1947. It was returned to Mallinckrodt Chemical Works (MCW) in January 1960.
4. **Builder-contractor:** The contractor is unknown.
5. **Original Plan and construction:** Built in 1954, this rectangular building (measuring 82' x 150') housed a carpenter shop, warehouse, a fire truck garage, electrical shop, safety office, equipment repair and record storage area.
6. **Alterations and additions:** Both exterior and interior doors and windows have been infilled. The interior spaces have also been remodeled with the removal of walls.

B. Historical Context

Plant 7 was built in 1950 as a replacement for the green salt (UF₄) 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 704-708 were designed by the Wigton-Abbot 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. HF recovery
705. Manufacture of uranium dioxide (UO₂), uranium trioxide (UO₃), and uranium tetrafluoride (UF₄)
706. Warehouse for UO₃, UF₄
707. Ammonia (NH₃) cracking building

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- 708. Magnesium metal storage and packing building
- 709. HF refrigeration equipment and pump house
- 710. NH₃ tank farm
- 711. Storage shed

To produce uranium tetrafluoride or green salt (UF₄), uranium trioxide (UO₃), an orange powder, was reduced with hydrogen to yield uranium dioxide (UO₂), 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 UF₄. 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. UO₂ 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 upwards against the UO₂, 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.¹

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 hallway 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). The hydrogen was then used to reduce uranium trioxide to uranium dioxide. Building 708 packaged and stored the magnesium metal used to produce uranium metal.²

Building 700 was built in 1954 as a warehouse and offices and was not connected directly to the production of green salt.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. **Architectural character:** Building 700 is a post-World War II concrete block industrial building.
2. **Condition of fabric:** The fabric is in good condition.

B. Description of Exterior

1. **Overall Dimensions:** Building 700 is rectangular in shape and measures 82' in width x 150' in length.
2. **Foundation:** The foundation is concrete.
3. **Walls:** The walls are concrete block.

¹ 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], H. Yeager, Manager, Destrehan Street Plant, Mallinckrodt Inc. Retired. [December 12, 1996].

² 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 700 uses steel I-beams for structural framing, with metal roof trusses.
5. **Porches and steps:** There are no porches or steps.
6. **Chimneys:** There are no chimneys.
7. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** Building 700 has twelve exterior doors. On the north side are one overhead door and one single door infilled with concrete block. On the south side is one single metal door. On the east side are one overhead modern metal door, one single door, and one infilled single door. On the west side are two overhead doors and three single doors infilled with concrete block, and one original overhead door.
 - b. **Windows:** Multi-paned, fixed and transom windows in metal sash are located on the north, south, east, and west sides of the building.
8. **Roof:**
 - a. **Shape, covering:** The building has a flat roof.
 - b. **Cornice, eaves:** The parapet wall is topped with a glazed tile coping.
 - c. **Dormers, cupolas, towers:** There are no dormers, cupolas, or towers.

C. Description of Interior

1. **Floor plans:** There are three rooms: a large storage area to the south; a smaller storage area to the north; and a small storage area in the northeast corner. The interior walls are concrete block.
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 corrugated metal ceilings are painted.

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5. **Openings:** There is a large opening between the two larger storerooms, and a second large opening into the smallest storeroom.
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 existence of a heating system is unknown.
 - b. **Lighting:** The lighting consists of fluorescent ceiling fixtures.
 - 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 700 are located at Mallinckrodt Inc. Engineering Department. They consist of a plot plan, elevations, steel framing plan, foundation, electrical, and heating plans, numbered MCW 3612-1 through 3612-7 and dated June 1954.

B. Bibliography:

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

Construction drawings MCW Nos. 3612-1 through 3612-7, Mallinckrodt Inc. Engineering Department. June 1954.

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Construction drawings MCW Nos. 3614-15 through 3614-18, Mallinckrodt Inc. Engineering Department. 10 March 1950.

Harrington, Charles D., and Archie E. Ruehle. *Uranium Production Technology*. New York: Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1959.

Mallinckrodt Inc. "Columbium-Tantalum Plant Characterization Plan." St. Louis: Mallinckrodt Inc., 1993.

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