

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL, JEFFERSON BARRACKS, DUPLEX
PERSONNEL BUILDING NO. 2
(Veterans Administration Facility, Jefferson Barracks, Building No. 29)
(Veterans Administration Hospital, Jefferson Barracks)
(Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks
Division)
VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division
1 Jefferson Barracks Drive
Saint Louis
Independent City
Missouri

HABS MO-1943-P
MO-1943-P

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL, JEFFERSON BARRACKS,
DUPLEX PERSONNEL BUILDING 2 (BUILDING 29)

HABS No. MO-1943-P

- Location:** Building 29, VA Medical Center, 1 Jefferson Barracks Drive,
St. Louis, Missouri
USGS Quadrangle Oakville, Missouri
UTM Coordinates 16 7258118 E 9966082 N
- Date of Construction:** 1929
- Designer:** Treasury Department Supervising Architects Office
- Contractor:** Unknown
- Present Owner:** Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery
- Present Use:** Vacant
- Significance:** The U.S. Veterans Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, was part of an early 1920s effort to build modern hospitals for U.S. military veterans. Duplex Personnel Building 2 (Building 29) was built in 1929 along with the Medical Officer in Charge Residence (Building 28) and Duplex Personnel Building 1 (Building 27) to provide on-site housing for higher-ranking employees at the hospital. Duplex Personnel Building 2 continued to serve as a government dwelling for high-ranking hospital staff into the 1990s. Vacant for several years, the facility has been acquired by the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery and is scheduled for demolition. The site of the duplex will become part of the national cemetery after demolition.
- Project Information:** This project was sponsored and funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as mitigation for the demolition of buildings at the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, a property that has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places via consensus determination of eligibility between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources State Historic Preservation Office.

Description:

Duplex Personnel Building 2 (Building 29, hereafter Duplex 2) is a one-story wood-frame double house with an asphalt-shingle hipped roof. The facility features replacement double-hung windows and vinyl siding and trim on the exterior. Situated on a hill on the east edge of the medical center campus, the duplex faces an asphalt road and is surrounded by trees and a grass lawn. The building is part of a group of three residential buildings that includes Duplex Personnel Building 1 (Building 27) and the Medical Officer in Charge Residence (Building 28). Duplex 2 is fairly intact and retains many original interior finishes and many aspects of the original floor plan. Duplex 2 is now vacant and in a somewhat deteriorated condition; it is slated for demolition to clear the site for the expansion of the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.

The facade of Duplex 2 faces south and is composed of two gabled bays with a porch bay in between the gables. Each gabled bay has a double window and an arched ventilator located in the gable. The gabled bays also have raking cornices and returns that have been covered over with metal. The central porch is screened in and has two bays that each contain vinyl siding and one aluminum screen door. The rest of the porch is composed of four metal-clad wood posts, and there is metal railing in a Neoclassical design between each of the posts. Concrete steps lead up to the screen doors, but the remainder of the porch foundation is clad in vinyl siding. The central porch shelters two front doors and four double-hung replacement windows positioned on the house's south wall. A wood access ramp has been added to the front of Duplex 2 within the past 25 years and occupies much of the space in front of the west side of the porch.

The west wall of Duplex 2 has a replacement double-hung window, a sunroom with a flat roof, and a smaller shed-roofed back porch that is also glassed in. This back porch has a storm door and shelters a wood door and a single replacement window on the east wall of the house. The east wall of Duplex 2 is largely identical to the west wall.

The north (rear) wall of Duplex 2 is composed of two gabled bays with a projecting shed-roof bay in between, forming a symmetrical composition. The gabled bays each have two small double-hung replacement windows, an arched louvered ventilator, and a metal-clad raking cornice with returns. The center bay has two sets of triple replacement double-hung windows and a metal-clad cornice and gutter.

The interior of the building is divided down the center, with each side containing an apartment; the two plans of the apartment units are mirror images of each other. Each apartment contains a living room with a white-painted wood Neoclassical Revival fireplace mantel, plaster walls, and oak floors. In each apartment, a plaster segmental arch leads north into the dining room space, which in each unit has plaster walls and oak floors. A doorway in the dining room leads to the kitchen in each apartment. The kitchen in the east

apartment has been remodeled within the last forty-five years. The kitchen in the west apartment retains original two-panel doors and door casings, and several wood kitchen cabinets with a slide-out table. Judging from the streamlined design of the chrome-plated kitchen cabinet handles, the cabinetry in the west apartment's kitchen likely dates from ca. 1940-1955.

Each apartment has two bedrooms. The south bedroom in each apartment has oak floors and two symmetrically arranged closets, and the north (back) bedroom in each unit has one closet and a door that opens into a sunroom. The bathrooms in both apartments have been remodeled during the last forty years and do not retain any original features. The basement is fairly plain with concrete walls and floors and appears to have been intended for storage and laundry.

History:

As part of a campaign of additions and improvements to its Jefferson Barracks hospital facility in the late 1920s, the Veterans Bureau added three residential buildings to the hospital campus in 1929: two duplex quarters (Duplex Personnel Buildings 1 and 2 [Building 27 and 29]) and the single-family Medical Officer in Charge Residence, which was built to house the hospital director and family. These three buildings allowed five high-ranking hospital officials and their families to live on site. The hospital was at that time located in a fairly remote portion of St. Louis County that had not been heavily developed aside from the U.S. Army development at Jefferson Barracks. Housing would likely have been difficult to come by in the area. The original 1922-1923 hospital campus had been built with extensive on-campus housing for the hospital's nurses and attendants, so it was logical to add housing for hospital managers and their families.

These three housing buildings were modest one-story facilities grouped close together on a curved drive, surrounded by trees and a grass lawn. The site for the three residential buildings was positioned some distance away from the other hospital buildings for privacy, but the units were also within easy walking distance of the Main Hospital (Building 1). The buildings had a mix of hipped and gabled roofs, front porches with wood posts and railings, and were constructed of brick and originally clad on the exterior in stucco, to match the other hospital buildings. The design of the buildings was fairly plain, reflecting Craftsman, Neoclassical Revival, and Colonial Revival stylistic influences. Exterior ornament was minimal and was mostly concentrated in the front porches of each of the buildings. The original six-over-six double-hung wood windows of the buildings would have heightened the traditional Colonial Revival appearance of the three residential

buildings. The exterior design of all three residential buildings was highly symmetrical and similar to one another.¹

The interior of Duplex 2 originally contained two identical mirror-image apartments, separated by a firewall that split the duplex down the middle. Each unit was the equivalent of a modest two-bedroom house and contained a 22'0" x 14'0" living room with wood floors and a fireplace with a wood Neoclassically styled mantel. The kitchen in both apartments measured 14'10" x 9'8" and each had space for a table, a range, and a small refrigerator. All four bedrooms in the building measured 14'10" x 11'2" and each bedroom had two very small closets. Between the two bedrooms in each apartment was a 10'8" x 6'0" bathroom, each equipped with a toilet, sink, bathtub, medicine cabinet, and linen closet. In both apartments, a small booth-like breakfast nook, with built-in seats and a table, was located next to the kitchen. Full dining rooms were not included in the building's original plan. The building also originally contained a single 27'8" x 9'6" front porch.

The facilities of Duplex 2 were somewhat modest for the time period, compared with many of the three-bedroom single-family houses being built for the middle class in St. Louis and the surrounding area. However, the two apartments in Duplex 2 would have provided much more living space than the small two-room apartments that accommodated the chief nurse and the chief dietician in Nurses' Quarters 1 (Building 3), which had been constructed as part of the original 1922-1923 hospital development.

The small size of the apartments in Duplex 2 was addressed by the VA by adding additional rooms and porches to the units. A 1959 plan of the duplex personnel buildings shows that by then, the breakfast nook in all units had been demolished and replaced with a 12'8" x 14'0" dining room, accessed from the living room by an arched opening. The VA had also added a 15'4" x 11'0" sunroom to each unit, entered via double doors in the rear bedroom. Finally, a 15'4" x 6'0" enclosed back porch was also added to each of the units.²

The interior finishes of Duplex 2, including wood floors and trim, are original and were not updated by the VA. Bathrooms in both apartments were remodeled and now contain fixtures and wall coverings dating to the 1970s or later. The kitchen in the east apartment has been remodeled, and cabinetry in this kitchen appears to date from the late 1960s or later. The west apartment's kitchen, however, retains original wood two-panel wood doors with original wood casings. This kitchen also features wood cabinet doors with curved, eased edges, streamlined style chrome-plated cabinet door handles, and an unusual slide-

¹ U.S. Veterans Bureau, *Duplex Personnel Buildings Nos. 27 & 29, U.S. Veterans Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, Mo.*, 1929, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

² U.S. Veterans Administration, *Duplex Personnel Buildings Nos. 27 & 29, Veterans Administration, Jefferson Barracks, Mo.* 1959, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

out chrome workspace table with a Formica top. The character of these features suggests that this kitchen was remodeled ca. 1940-1955.

All of the original wood-double-hung six-over-six windows in Duplex 2 were replaced in 1982 with one-over-one vinyl windows.³ On a 1990 VA facilities list, Duplex 2 was still listed as duplex quarters.⁴ Vinyl siding was also installed on the exterior of the building at an unknown date in the 1980s or 1990s. The building has been vacant for several years now and is scheduled for demolition in 2010 or 2011 to make way for the expansion of the adjacent Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.

Sources:

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. *Annual Real Property Survey Report, Building Numbers and Locations, Jefferson Barracks VAMC*. 1990. On file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

U.S. Veterans Administration. Construction drawing files for Building 29, 1929-2010. On file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

———. *Duplex Personnel Buildings Nos. 27 & 29. Veterans Administration, Jefferson Barracks, Mo.* 1959. On file at the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

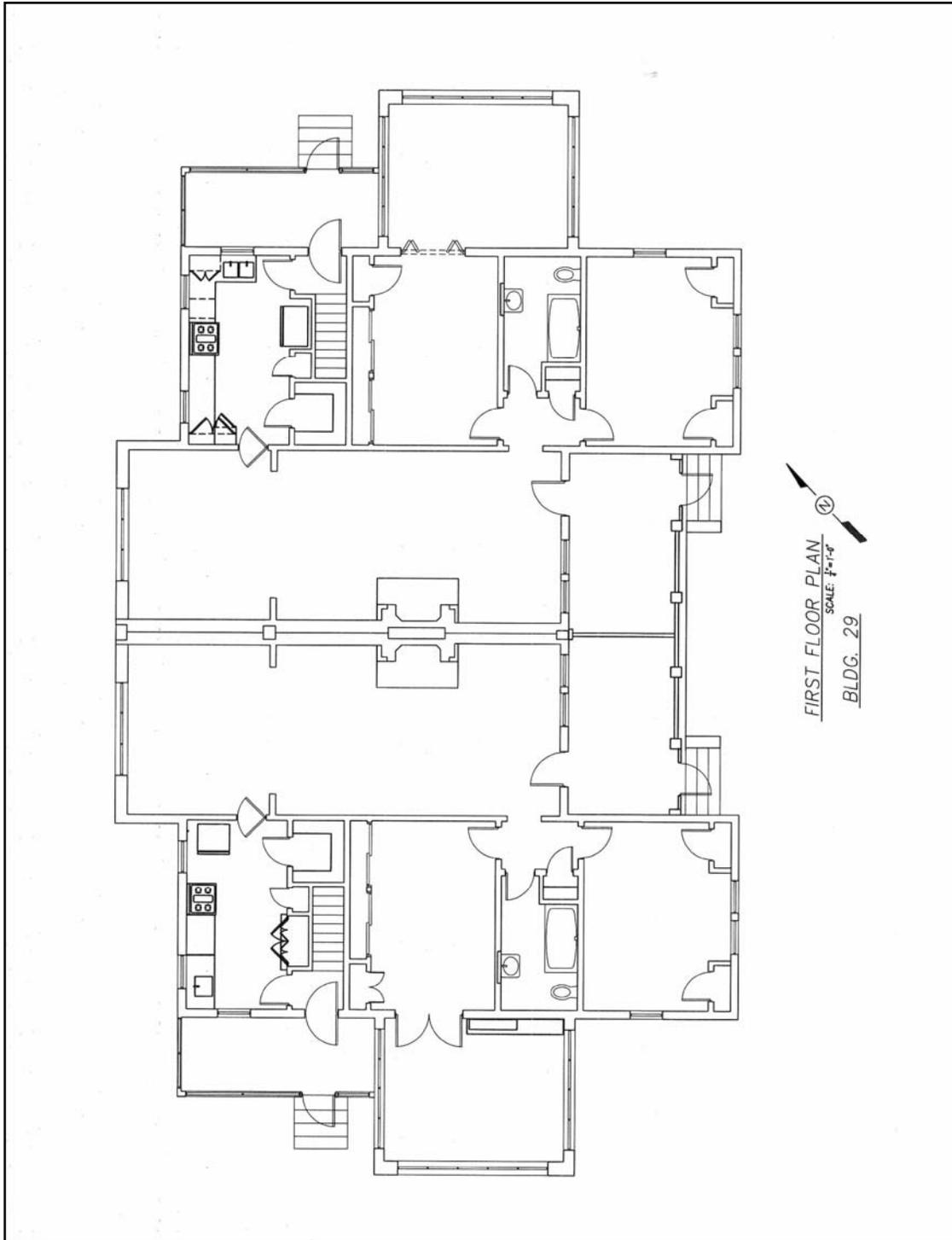
U.S. Veterans Bureau. *Duplex Personnel Buildings Nos. 27 & 29. U.S. Veterans Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, Mo.* 1929. On file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

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³ U.S. Veterans Administration, Construction drawing files for Building 29, 1929-2010, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

⁴ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *Annual Real Property Survey Report, Building Numbers and Locations, Jefferson Barracks VAMC*, 1990, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.



Duplex Personnel Building 2 (Building 29), current floor plan of first floor