

FORT BLISS, WILLIAM BEAUMONT GENERAL HOSPITAL,
GARAGE

HABS No. TX-3339-H

(Building Number 7011)
Eastman Street
El Paso
El Paso County
Texas

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Southwest System Support Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 728
Santa Fe, NM 87504

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

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Location: Eastman Street, Fort Bliss, William Beaumont Army Medical Center, El Paso, El Paso County, Texas. The property is bounded by Fred Wilson Road to the north, Dyer Street to the east, Hayes Avenue to the south, and Alabama Street to the west.

Present Owner: United States Army

Original Use: Twelve Car Garage

Present Use: Garage

Significance: This building is deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A and C as a contributing element to the proposed William Beaumont General Hospital Historic District (WBGHHD). This district encompasses the permanent and semi-permanent buildings constructed in the WBGH area at Fort Bliss between 1921 and 1945. These buildings contribute to the understanding of the hospital's role of providing medical service to thousands of American soldiers and their dependents during periods of both war and peace. The original wards no longer exist; however, the remaining buildings in the proposed WBGHHD depict the administrative, social and recreational environment of the hospital during the period of significance. Even though the period of construction of the buildings within the proposed WBGHHD spans over twenty years, they form a cohesive environment based on architectural styles, construction materials, and geographic proximity. Furthermore, this building meets NRHP criteria in that it possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

A. Physical History:

1. Original Construction Date: 1937
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: United States Army
4. Builders, Contractors and Suppliers: Unknown
5. Original Plans and Construction: The building essentially retains its original 1937 exterior appearance and building footprint. The garage was originally constructed for use by officers.
6. Alterations and Additions: The exterior configuration is one large space, still maintaining the original character of the building. The interior of the twelve car garage originally had six two-car bays, separated by wooden rails which have since been removed. The original sliding bypass garage doors have also been removed, but the horizontal metal tracks are still intact.

B. Historical Context:

William Beaumont General Hospital was one of the U.S. Army's five original general hospitals. It opened at Fort Bliss on July 1, 1921 although the facility was not fully completed until the following year. The hospital originally consisted of forty-eight stuccoed tile buildings with a bed capacity of approximately 414. The staff consisted of six officers, two nurses, and thirty enlisted men. William Beaumont General Hospital's original mission was to provide general medical care to border patrol troops stationed at Fort Bliss. By the 1930s, however, the hospital was serving the entire western portion of the Army's Eighth Corps area, providing health care to soldiers stationed at posts in Arizona, New Mexico, and western Texas.

When Congress authorized a limited peacetime mobilization just prior to the nation's entry into World War II, the Army initiated a major expansion program at William Beaumont General Hospital to increase its ability to handle the medical needs of the greatly expanding Army. During the World War II era, the hospital received new wards, instructional buildings, quarters, storehouses, repair shops, and recreational facilities. This new construction pushed the total number of buildings at the hospital to 174 and the number of available beds to nearly 6,000. During the war, the William Beaumont General

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Hospital trained approximately 16,000 medical technicians, including over a thousand WAC recruits. The hospital also became a specialty center for plastic surgery, ophthalmic surgery, neuropsychiatry, and deep radiation therapy. In the last year of the war alone, some 26,358 patients received medical treatment at the hospital.

William Beaumont General Hospital was one of only ten, of the Army's sixty-three, general hospitals, retained after World War II. Besides providing medical care to returning wounded soldiers during the conflicts in both Korea and Viet Nam, the hospital also provided general medicine and surgical services to veterans and personnel at Fort Bliss and other regional military installations. By the mid-1960s, the needs of the Army began to surpass the capabilities of the hospital. Consequently, the Army constructed a new, modern, twelve story facility to the west of the hospital. The new facility, known as the William Beaumont Army Medical Center, opened in 1972 and became the Southwest's major regional Army medical center.

Building 7011 is a twelve-car garage constructed of stone at the William Beaumont General Hospital in 1937. The original cost for construction was \$1,284.25.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT:

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The garage depicts the Craftsman style of architecture. This style is evident in the building's massing, low-pitched roof with unenclosed eave overhangs, exposed rafter ends, and natural building material. It was constructed of native stone on a concrete slab foundation. The native stone end walls terminate in a gable-shaped parapet. The roof material consists of galvanized corrugated sheet steel.
2. Condition of Fabric: The exterior of the building is in good condition. Its sturdy wall construction and roof have held up over time and weathering. The integrity of the interior space has been compromised by the removal of the wooden dividers and doors, but the wooden trusses remain. Overall, the fabric has been preserved.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: The garage is 119'-8" in length and 21'-0" in width. It has a height of 8'-0" from the finished floor to the bottom of the trusses. The floor area is approximately 2,512 square feet.

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2. Foundations: The foundation is a poured-in-place concrete slab and footings.
 3. Walls: The parapet terminates in square stone posts at its low ends. Gable parapets and posts have thin, square smooth-finished concrete caps.
 4. Structural System: The structure is a stone bearing wall system on reinforced concrete footings. The roof structure is 2x6 trussed rafters.
 5. Porches, Exterior Stairs: None
 6. Chimneys: None
 7. Openings:
 - a. Doors: Pairs of large sliding wood by-pass doors were originally located at each of the six bays. Currently the bays are open.
 - b. Windows: None
 8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, Materials: A low-pitched gable roof with unenclosed eave overhangs and exposed rafter ends covers the garage. The roof material is galvanized corrugated sheet steel attached to wood trusses.
 - b. Dormers, Vents: None
- C. Description of the Interior:
1. Floor Plans: The twelve car garage is a long rectilinear building which is broken up into six bays by 1'-5" square columns. The garage door openings face south.
 2. Stairways: None
 3. Flooring: The floor is an exposed concrete slab.
 4. Wall Finishes: The stone construction is exposed on the interior.
 5. Ceiling Finishes: There is no finished ceiling. Exposed rafters leave the underside of the galvanized corrugated sheet steel revealed.

6. Openings:
 - a. Doors: Same as exterior.
 - b. Windows: None
 7. Decorative Features and Trim: The only decorative features are the exposed structure and materials.
 8. Hardware: Metal by-pass door hardware is still in place.
 9. Mechanical Equipment:
 - a. Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning: None
 - b. Lighting: Two bare incandescent bulbs are attached to the underside of the trusses.
 - c. Plumbing Fixtures: None
 10. Original Furnishings: None
- D. Site:
1. General Setting and Orientation: The garage has been incorporated into the site of the William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, Texas (Figure 1). The front of the building faces south towards the rear of the Officer's Quarters on Eastman Street. A second twelve car garage of the same plan is perpendicular to Building 7011, and a tennis court is behind the garage.
 2. Historic Landscape Design: The historic landscape of William Beaumont General Hospital was renowned for its beautiful array of shade trees, shrubs, lush lawns and flower gardens. Between the grounds inception in 1920-1921 and the gradual reduction of maintained acreage in the 1950s, the landscape was referred to as the "paradise in the desert." Gardner William Reeves was most likely in charge of any planting plan or landscape design that may have governed the layout of the grounds. Today, only scattered residual vegetation and landscape features remain, and most of these have been installed since the period of significance. Currently, the landscape surrounding Building 7011 is composed of paved surfaces, utility fixtures, chain link fencing, and open soil/grass surfaces.

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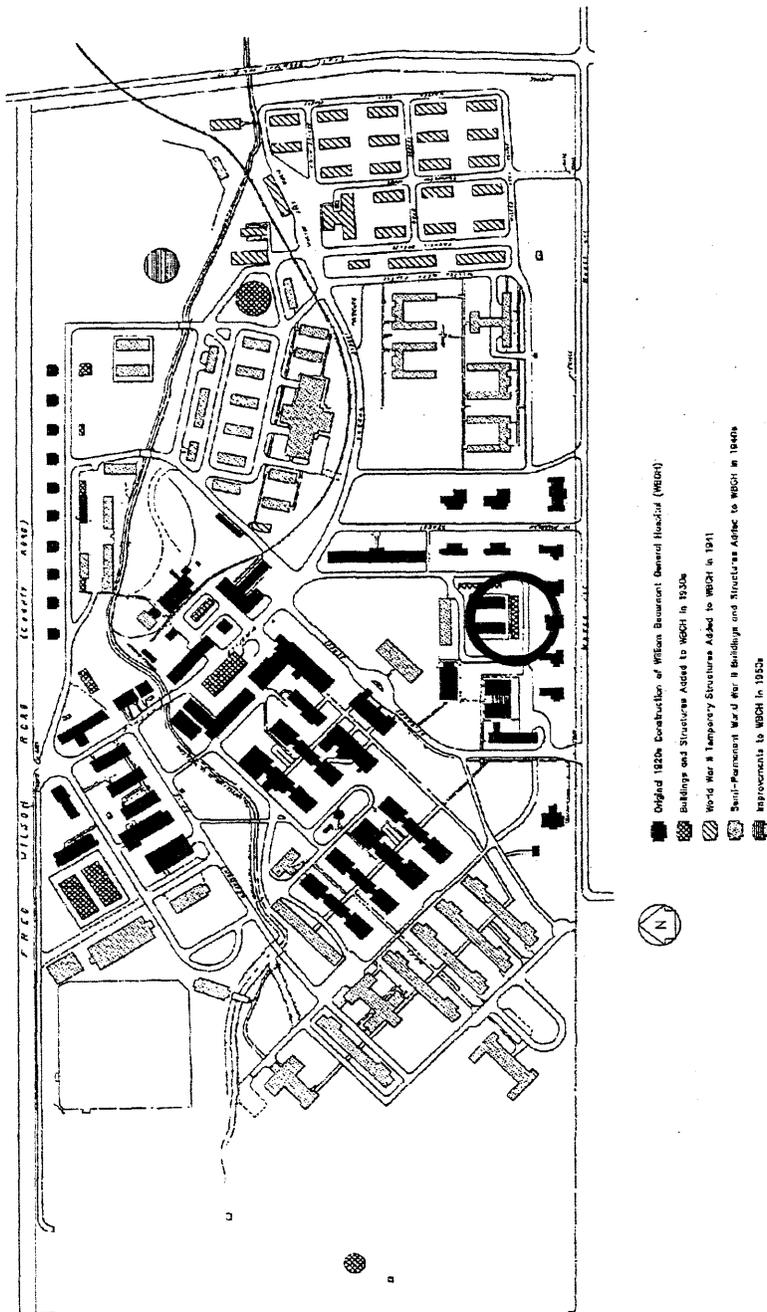


Figure 1: Building Location Map

3. Outbuildings: None

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

- A. Architectural Drawings: No original large format archival drawings were found on file at Fort Bliss, Texas. Only one small scale record of a floor plan and section were found, which was dated May 6, 1940.
- B. Early Views: A collection of historic photographs is housed in the Office of the Directorate of Environment, Historic Preservation Team, Fort Bliss, Texas.
- C. Interviews: None
- D. Bibliography:
- Fort Bliss Real Property Management Office - Office of the Quartermaster General
Records
- Fort Bliss IFSM Data August 1994
- Fort Bliss Facility List
- Map of Post Area - William Beaumont General Hospital, July 1945
- Texas Historic Sites Inventory Form - Texas Historic Commission, July 7, 1989
- E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: None
- F. Supplemental Material: None

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION:

The project was sponsored by the Office of the Directorate of Public Works and Logistics, Fort Bliss, Texas. Documentation was coordinated through Ms. Vicki Hamilton, Architect, Office of the Directorate of Environment, Historic Preservation Team, Fort Bliss, Texas. The project was completed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers Construction Engineering Research Laboratories (USACERL). The project was completed at the USACERL Cultural Resources

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Research Center. Ms. Sheila Ellsworth served as project architect. The project researchers were Mr. Patrick Nowlan, Dr. Susan Enscore, and Ms. Amy Lamb. Mr. Martin Stupich produced the large format photographs included in the report.