

FORT BLISS, WILLIAM BEAUMONT GENERAL HOSPITAL,
OFFICERS' QUARTERS
(BUILDING NUMBER 7024)

HABS No. TX-3339-I

McPharlin 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

FORT BLISS, WILLIAM BEAUMONT GENERAL HOSPITAL,
OFFICERS' QUARTERS
(Building Number 7024)

HABS No. TX-3339-1

- Location: McPharlin 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: Officer's Quarters
- Present Use: Officer's Quarters
- 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: 1923
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 1923 exterior appearance and building footprint. The interior retains its original layout as designed, and most of the building fabric with the exception of the remodeled bathroom.
6. Alterations and Additions: None

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 tile and stucco 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 6000. During the war, the William Beaumont General 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 7024 is an Officers Quarters constructed at the William Beaumont General Hospital in 1923. This hollow tile stuccoed building presently houses personnel from the William Beaumont Army Medical Center. The original cost for construction was \$20,296.25.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT:

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Officer's Quarters is a bungalow in the Craftsman style. This style is evident in the building's massing, articulated brackets at entry, compact floor plan, low-pitched roof with unenclosed eave overhangs, exposed rafter ends, and building materials.
2. Condition of Fabric: The exterior of the building is in good condition. The interior, in spite of many occupants and minor changes, has retained much of its original finish and character.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: The quarters, asymmetrical in plan, sit within a space of 79'-4" in length, and 49'-7" in width. It has a height of 9'-9" from finished floor to ceiling. The floor area is approximately 3,933 square feet.
2. Foundations: The foundation is a concrete pier and beam system with footings.
3. Walls: Exterior walls are stuccoed hollow clay tile.
4. Structural System: The structure is 10" load bearing hollow clay tile on a concrete foundation wall. The roof structure is wood.

5. Porches, Exterior Stairs: Concrete steps with wing walls lead up to the front entrance on the west facade. A concrete side porch, with two-way access, is located on the north facade. A metal pipe railing spans between the wood posts and extends down the steps. Concrete steps are also located at a rear bedroom and to the basement.
6. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys extend past the roof ridge, one from the fireplace in the living room, the other extending from the basement (mechanical ventilation).
7. Openings:
 - a. Doors: The main entrance consists of a pair of wood and glass double doors with a fanlight and exterior screen doors. The main entrance is on the west side of the building under a projecting gable with wood side brackets. A similar door is on the south side, around the corner from the main entrance. Both entrances access the living room. Two separate entrances are on the north facade, one off the kitchen and the other to the original maid's room. These doors are single wood and glass doors with exterior wood screen doors. Another similar door on the east side of the building enters into a bedroom.
 - b. Windows: The windows throughout the house are six-over-six-light double-hung wood windows with cut stone sills. They are complete with exterior metal screen windows.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, Materials: The roof is a series of hip roofs with exposed rafter ends, and a projecting gable entrance portico. It is constructed with 2 x 6 rafters, 1" sheathing, and finished with composition shingles. The original roofing was frenchlaid cement-colored asbestos shingles with red rolled ridges.
 - b. Dormers, Vents: Two louvered shed dormers ventilate the attic.
- C. Description of the Interior:
 1. Floor Plans: The Officer's Quarters is irregular in plan. It is one-story structure with two partial basements. The primary entrance is on the west facade and enters the living room. Originally, the house was designed to provide the maid with an entrance into a separate living space equipped with bedroom and bathroom. This space has been modified to provide direct access to the kitchen.
 2. Stairways: None

3. Flooring: The living room and most bedrooms are carpeted hardwood floors. The dining room and adjacent bedroom have throw rugs on hardwood floors, the bathrooms have 2" ceramic tile, and the kitchen areas have sheet vinyl flooring.
4. Wall Finishes: The interior walls are painted plaster. The bathrooms have parts of the wall finished with ceramic tile.
5. Ceiling Finishes: The ceiling throughout the quarters is painted plaster.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doors: The interior doors are wood panel doors, bedroom doors have a three light hopper as well. The door leading from the bedroom to the sleeping room is a solid wood panel door with six lights. Two pairs of french doors leading from the living room to the dining room have been removed. The fanlights and openings remain.
 - b. Windows: The interior finish on the windows is painted.
7. Decorative Features and Trim: Detailed wood molding, 6" from the ceiling, and a 6"-8" wood base, is present throughout the quarters. Interior detailing above doors (hoppers and fanlights) are significant to the interior character. The living room has a brick fireplace with a flat arch and ornate wood surrounds. The fireplace has a newer brass and glass enclosure and square tile in front. Hardwood floors throughout the house have been covered in some of the rooms.
8. Hardware: The interior wood doors with hoppers maintain their original handles, latches, and bolting hardware. The windows have retained their original latches and lifting devices. The doors on the north side of the building retain their closing hardware.
9. Mechanical Equipment:
 - a. Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning: Vents for the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system are located in the basement and vent through the floor. Also, several swamp coolers (mechanical systems) are located in the bedroom windows on the east side.
 - b. Lighting: Incandescent lighting is used throughout the quarters. The living room has a newer ceiling fan with light fixtures included. Bathrooms have wall mounted brass fixtures with glass jar enclosures. Bedrooms have ceiling mounted incandescent bulbs with glass diffusers.

- c. Plumbing Fixtures: The bathroom, originally part of the maid's quarters, has its original sink, *Sibley* toilet, and stuccoed hollow tile shower stall. The three other bathrooms and the kitchen have been remodeled with new fixtures.
10. Original Furnishings: The quarters has retained its original built-in cabinets in the pantry and the kitchen.
- D. Site:
 1. General Setting and Orientation: The officer's quarters 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 west toward McPharlin Street.
 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 7024 contains a number of landscape features, including shade trees, shrubs, foundation plantings, fencing, and a concrete deck. The majority of these appear to have been installed since the period of significance, and it is unknown whether their current appearance resembles the historic setting.
 3. Outbuildings: None

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

- A. Architectural Drawings: The large format archival architectural drawings were found on file at the Offices of the Directorate of Public Works and Logistics and the Directorate of Environment, Historic Preservation Team, Fort Bliss, Texas. Drawing numbers for the original construction drawings, dated March 1922, are drawing numbers 6289-193 and 6289-191. These drawings include elevations, details, and a floor plan. Repairs and alterations to the quarters were documented, dated March 1949, with the drawing numbers WBGH-214 (1 and 2 of 2), which include plans. The rehabilitation of the transformer vault, cables, and service to quarters was documented and includes plans dated December 1954. A small scale plan of the building was also documented on June 7, 1940.

FORT BLISS, WILLIAM BEAUMONT GENERAL HOSPITAL,
 OFFICERS QUARTERS
 (Building Number 7024)
 HABS No. TX-3339-I
 (Page 7)

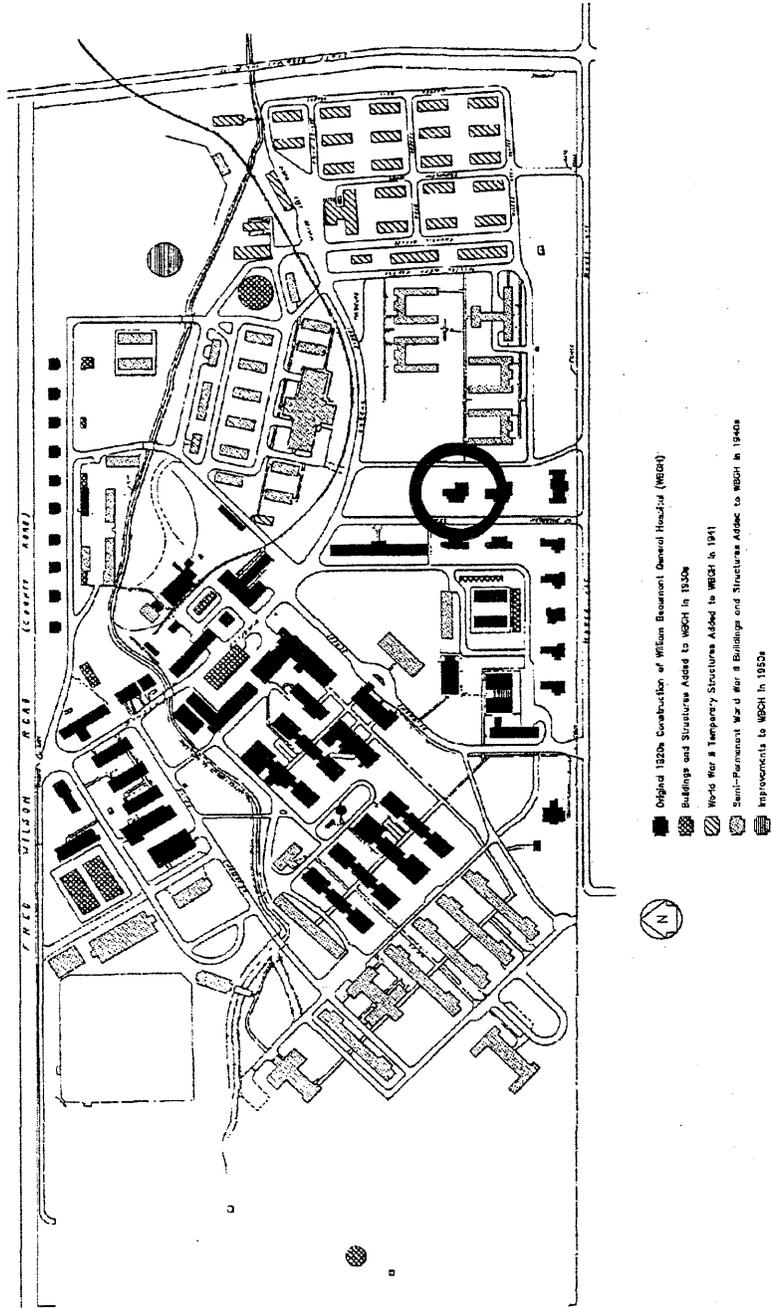


Figure 1: Building Location Map

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