

Fort Sheridan Infantry Drill Hall  
(Building No. 60)  
Southwest corner of Whistler and Ronan Rds.  
Fort Sheridan  
Lake County  
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1113-21

HABS  
ILL,  
49-FTSH,  
1/21-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

FORT SHERIDAN, INFANTRY DRILL HALL (Building No. 60)  
FORT SHERIDAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

HABS  
ILL,  
49-FISH,  
1/21-

Location: At the intersection of Whistler and Ronan Roads  
west of the Fire House (Building No. 79).  
Fort Sheridan, Lake County, Illinois.

USGS Highland Park Quadrangle, Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: 16. 432960. 4673840.

Present Owner  
and Occupant: United States Army.

Present Use: Gymnasium.

Significance: The Infantry Drill Hall is a large edifice with the excellent architectural detailing that characterizes the Holabird and Roche designed buildings at Fort Sheridan. One of the more impressive of the early buildings, it makes a notable addition to the comprehensiveness of the surviving 19th century building stock at Fort Sheridan.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1893.
2. Architect: Holabird and Roche, Chicago.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Army from date of construction to the present.
4. Contractor: Hall, Corse and Jeffrey.
5. Original plan and construction: A large, single-story, rectangular block with a gable roof. The ridge of the roof runs east-west, and the main entrance is in the east gable end. The building is constructed of buff-cream brick. The interior was a large open area with a floor of rolled tanbark and clay.
6. Alterations and additions: At some point the original wrought iron portcullis was removed from the large arched entrance in the east gable end and the area was partially infilled with pink-red brick. A new, smaller door was installed. The original slate roof has been replaced by cement asbestos shingles. In 1946 the building was converted to a sports arena. The interior was partitioned, a hardwood floor installed, and a stage constructed. In the 1950's, locker rooms, handball courts, and a steam room were added. In 1968 deteriorated windows and doors were replaced.

On the west gable end a windowless, orange brick addition has been constructed. The addition has a flat roof with a double metal door on the south side. It houses mechanical equipment.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Original architectural drawings:

Holabird and Root, 300 West Adams St., Chicago, Illinois. 60606. Details of windows, wrought iron portcullis, and lantern; full scale details showing method of slating roof and iron ridge roll; and diagram of steam heating. Drawings are water damaged.

2. Old views:

Mackern, H. G., Fort Sheridan: At Attention and Rest, Chicago, H. G. Mackern, 1897. n.p.

3. Bibliography:

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. 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 large brick building with a wide arched entrance, rounded arched windows, and raked parapets on the gable ends. The building shares the Richardsonian Romanesque character of the other Holabird and Roche designed buildings on the post.
2. Condition of fabric: Generally good. Some deterioration in the wood trim, especially the soffits.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: A large, single-story, rectangular block measuring 107'-5" by 229'.
2. Foundations: Random ashlar limestone.
3. Wall construction, finish, and color: Buff-cream brick laid in common bond with four rows of stretchers to one row of headers. Twelve brick piers on each of the long sides divide the wall into eleven sections. The easternmost section is completely infilled with brick. Each remaining section is infilled with brick half-way up the wall and ends in a projecting window sill formed by two projecting stretcher courses. Above the brick base is a concrete sill and a row of four sliding windows. The area between the windows and the eaves is infilled with glass brick.
4. Structural system: Brick bearing wall. Metal trussed rafter roof.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The original entrance is in the east gable end. The large semi-circular arch above the entrance is formed by twenty rowlocks, the lower three of which are recessed. Part of the opening is now infilled with pink-red brick, and a smaller arched entrance has been constructed. The tympanum of this newer arch has been filled with precast concrete. Two sets of double doors serve as the present main entrance. Each door is paneled wood with nine lights.

On the north long side two double doors have been installed in place of the original windows. The doors are metal with narrow glass panels running the length of the door. There is a similar door on the south side of the building.

The door frames are painted a peach color.

- b. Windows: The windows on the main level on the east and west gable ends are rounded with brick arches formed by four rowlocks. There are six windows on the main level of the east end, two on each side of the original entrance way and two narrow windows which flank the present doorway. On the main level of the west end there were originally ten windows, three of which are now hidden by the addition. The tympanums of the arches have been infilled with brick and glass brick and sliding glass windows installed in the openings.

On the upper level in both the east and west gable ends a triple grouping is formed by a central arched window flanked by two smaller arched windows. The arches are formed by eight rowlocks, the lower two of which are recessed. On the west end the central, larger window is six-over-eight light double hung sash. The two flanking windows are two-over-two light double hung sash. On the east end the windows have been infilled with glass brick.

The windows on the north and south sides between the brick piers have been modified. Above the brick sill four sliding glass windows have been installed. The remaining opening up to the eaves has been infilled with glass brick.

The window frames throughout are painted a peach color. The sills are poured concrete.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The gable roof is covered with cement asbestos shingles. There are raked parapets with terra cotta coping on the gable ends.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Overhanging eaves have wooden soffits painted a peach color.

7. Other features: A plaque on the north side reads:  
Originally constructed as Infantry Drill Hall 1893

C. Description of Interior:

The interior has been remodeled to serve as a gymnasium. Locker rooms, handball courts and exercise areas are located at the short ends of the building. The central area is one large open room. The gymnasium floors are hardwood with a concrete floor at the sides. The walls are brick. The metal trusses are visible in the roof.

- D. Site: The building is located at the corner of Whistler and Ronan Roads. Two company kitchens (Buildings No. 104 and 105) are located to the north across Whistler Road, and the Fire Station is located to the east across Ronan Road.

Prepared by Sally Kress Tompkins  
Architectural Historian  
Historic American  
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June 1979

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.

ADDENDUM TO  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013