

Historic Property Survey

Grand Island Veterans Home

Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska

Prepared By: Historic Resources Group, Inc.

Prepared For: Building Division, Nebraska Department of Administrative Service

April 2016



History of State Veterans Homes

The United States has a long history of caring for the men and women of the armed forces serving the country. That care has evolved over time and continues to morph to address the resulting care required from different types of warfare. However, it was after the Civil War the United States realized for the first significant time a large number of indigent or disabled veterans that needed care after their service to the country. The Federal government organized homes for disabled Union soldiers, but the total number of soldiers needing care was too great to be accommodated by the central government. As a result, states established their own facilities to care for their soldiers; many of whom were injured during active military service. The first state home for veterans was built in Rock Hill, Connecticut in 1864. Federal homes were created by President Lincoln during the Civil War, when he passed a law establishing national soldiers and sailors homes. These were renamed the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in 1873, and they were the first government institution designed for honorably discharged soldiers. Only Union Army soldiers were eligible for admittance to these homes. The first federal home opened in 1866 in Augusta, Maine, and was a sprawling hilltop campus; setting the tone for many Veterans Administration facilities across the country and that remain today.

Although the needs of veterans after the Civil War were the greatest in the history of the country up to that time, the United States had long before cared for their veterans. Laws date as early as the early 1600s when settlers in the Plymouth Colony were at war with the Pequot Indians. The Colony passed a law requiring that all disabled soldiers would be supported by the Colony. This was not unusual with other settlements adopting similar requirements or caring for their wounded soldiers as a moral obligation. As the country more formally organized, the 1776 Continental Congress provided pensions to disabled soldiers from the Revolutionary War. This was also repeated by many of the early states by providing medical care to their veterans. By 1811, the federal government authorized domiciliary and medical facility for veterans, and soon after expanded that care to include the families (widows and dependents) of soldiers. In the period after the Civil War with the increased number of veterans from both the Union and Confederacy, veterans' services expanded to include full medical treatment and not just treatment for injuries or conditions received during active service. At this time the state veterans' homes were caring for veterans from the Civil War, Indian Wars, Spanish-American War, and Mexican Border skirmishes.

On August 7 of 1888 the federal government passed enabling legislation to provide federal aid in the amount of \$100 per year to supplement the care at state veterans' homes and to help ease the states' financial burden. Veterans care required significant changes after World War I.

With technological advancements such as the automobile, airplane, and heavy military vehicles, this war became known as the first mechanized war. Soldiers suffered from the effects of mustard gas, severe chemicals, and fumes whose side effects required more specialized care than ever seen before. Issues like long term respiratory and mental health problems became increasingly apparent and the requirement to serve these medical issues had to adjust to accommodate the specialized care needed. In 1917 Congress adopted an updated system of veterans' benefits which included disability compensation, insurance, and vocational rehabilitation for the disabled. These services were organized under three different federal agencies administering their benefits, and they included the Veterans Bureau, the Bureau of Pensions of the Interior Department, and the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.

Because of the need after World War I, Congress consolidated federal veterans programs in 1921 by combining all World War I veterans programs under the umbrella of the Veterans Bureau. This also resulted in an aggressive building campaign to constructing hospitals for World War I Veterans. Benefits to veterans were expanded to include disabilities that were not service related in 1924, and by 1928 women, National Guard veterans and militia veterans were allowed admission to National Homes.

The variety of veterans' organizations receiving federal funding and recognition was vast. President Herbert Hoover recognized the need for consolidation, and created the Veterans Administration in 1930. Veterans Bureau, Veterans Homes and Pension Bureaus joined under the VA to create one federal administration to address the needs affecting war veterans. The VA enhanced the state programs to add care levels and increase federal funding for the purpose of constructing state homes. This act also identified three levels of care at state homes including nursing home care, domiciliary, and adult day care.

Vast changes were required after World War II because of the huge increase in the veteran population. In 1944 Congress passed the GI bill. The Veterans Administration web page states, "It is said the GI Bill had more impact on the American way of life than any law since the Homestead Act of 1862." The passage of the GI Bill made the VA second only to the War and Navy Departments in size, and modernizing again became critical.

The Homestead Act encouraged western settlement by providing 160 acres of land with minimal requirements including a filing fee, five years of continuous occupations, and improvements to the land. However, one provision in the GI Bill was the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program which insured loans for veterans to build homes for their families after returning from the service in World War II. Today, this is the only piece of the original GI Bill that is still in effect. Statistics show that from the time World War II ended to 1966, 20% of all single family residences in the United States were financed by the GI Bill. In the time between 1944 and 1993, the VA guaranteed 13.9 million home loans for more than \$433.1 billion.

Other benefits of the GI Bill included an unemployment benefit, providing \$20 per week for up to one year to assist veterans in the transition between active service and post-military employment. This was the first time the government provided an unemployment benefit to veterans and the benefit was criticized based on the assumption that veterans would deliberately stay home for one year. Critics even nicknamed the benefit the “52-20” club. They were proved wrong after the one year expired with only one out of every 19 veterans utilizing the full term of the benefit. Whether because of critics or the growing number of veterans’ facilities, a national advocacy organization was needed. The National Association of State Veterans Homes was founded in 1952 as a national group to organize, advocate, and promote state homes issues at the national level.

The reorganization and modernization of the VA is credited to General Omar Bradley who led the organization for only three years, but in that time increased the number of VA hospitals and recruited highly trained personnel. The Department of Medicine and Surgery was established in 1946 as part of the VA. As a result, recruiting and retaining highly trained and skilled medical personnel became much easier within the federal system, and by the time Bradley left office in 1948, 125 new VA hospitals were built. It was not until 1988 that the VA became a cabinet-level position. President George H. W. Bush stated in 1989, “There is only one place for the Veterans of America, in the Cabinet Room, at the table with the President of the United States of America.” It was then, the VA was renamed the Department of Veterans Affairs. Every state has at least one state veteran’s home and currently there is a great demand and huge backing of funding to continue building modern facilities with approximately 130 homes currently waiting to be built. Nebraska has four homes with the oldest at Grand Island which was originally called the Soldiers and Sailors Home and is now referred to as the Grand Island Veterans Home. The other homes in Nebraska include the Norfolk Veterans Home, the Western Nebraska Veterans Home in Scottsbluff, and the Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home in Bellevue.

The Grand Island Veterans Home was opened in 1887 and was known at that time as the Nebraska Soldiers and Sailors Home. Construction of the first Soldiers and Sailors Home was completed in 1887 and was located in Grand Island.

Grand Island Veterans Home History

Nebraska was admitted to the union in 1867 as the 37th state. At that time there was no organized support for military veterans in the state. Awareness of this issue is credited to Samuel B. Jones who traveled extensively as part of his duties as an assistant general passenger agent for the Union Pacific Railroad. During time spent in Massachusetts in the early 1880s he visited a Soldiers Home. He became a staunch supporter of the idea and upon returning to Nebraska, he began a public information campaign to support Veterans in the state by building

Nebraska's first home for veterans. He partnered with the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), a fraternal organization composed of service veterans from the Civil War. The G.A.R. was founded in Decatur, Illinois immediately following the Civil War in 1866, and gained popularity across the country. Composed primarily of Civil War veterans, the group quickly became one of the first advocacy organizations politicking for veteran's advocacy issues.

The partnership between Jones and the G.A.R. grew and the organization fully backed the idea of a Soldiers Home in Nebraska. Circulars were sent to all county clerks in the state identifying twenty-one Civil War veterans that were relying on county support or assistance. General John Thayer, the Department Commander of the G.A.R. in Nebraska fully backed the project. Having a name like Thayer behind the effort solidified its legitimacy among many politicians and moneyed authorities in the state. Thayer served in the Civil War as a general in the Union Army, and following his service became Governor of Nebraska serving from 1886-1890.

Organized meetings to identify and secure a location for a new soldier's home in Grand Island were held in September of 1884, and were sponsored by the G.A.R. The city of Grand Island fought hard to win the location for the new home. A resolution was introduced during the 1887 legislative session to locate and establish a home in Nebraska, with the Grand Island Board of Trade tasked to locate suitable grounds for construction. The following resolution was adopted:

"WHEREAS, There are many old soldiers in Nebraska who, from wounds or disabilities received while in the union army during the rebellion, are in the county poorhouses of this state; therefore be it

"RESOLVED, That it is the sense of this Senate that a suitable building be erected and grounds provided for the care and comfort of the old soldiers of Nebraska in their declining years;

"RESOLVED, That a committee of five be appointed to confer with a committee of the House on indigent soldiers and marines to take such action as will look to the establishment of a State Soldiers' Home..."

Civil War veterans met and recommended that the actual location of the home be determined by a committee of veterans and legislators. Grand Island was selected as the location of the state's first veteran's home by Legislative Bill 247, passed on March 4, 1887. The Soldiers and Sailors Home was officially established and the bill required a minimum of 640 acres of land along with a smaller parcel to contain buildings to serve those veterans partially able to care for and support themselves. Initially the home was only going to house veterans of the Union Army who were unable to support themselves, but soon added service to veterans from the Confederate Army as well.

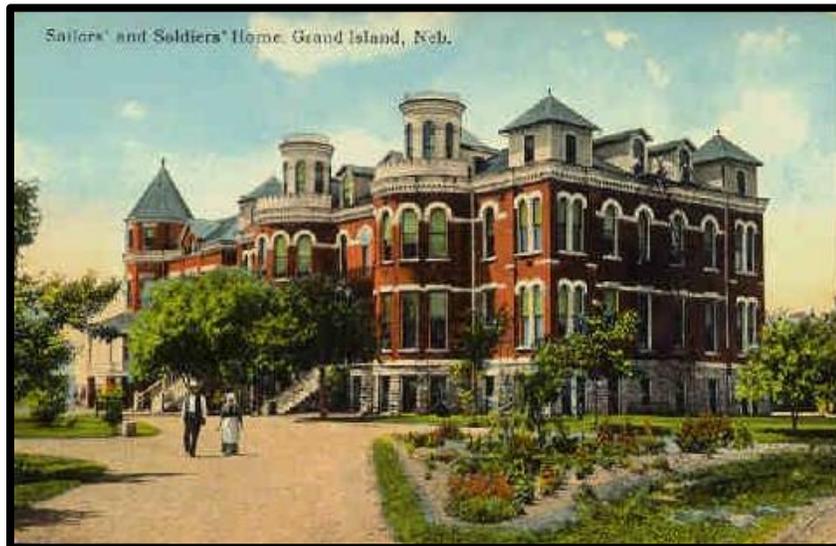
The city of Grand Island worked tirelessly to see the building completed, but were challenged with raising the requisite funds to acquire the 640 acres. However, through donations from location residents, \$25,600 was raised to purchase the section to donate to the state for the location of the home. The State appropriated \$30,000 to construct the building, and in April 1887 the site approximately three miles north of Grand Island was purchased and donated to the state for the site of the Soldiers and Sailors Home.

The cornerstone for the new building was laid on October 20, 1887 by Governor Thayer with a completed building dedication in June of 1888. The original building sat on a slight rise and was an elaborated four story brick Victorian style building. The building was 160 by 90 feet with a stone basement and housed functional spaces such as the dining room, smoking room storage and kitchen in the basement. Headquarters, commandant's consultation room, a library, parlors, and smaller dining rooms were located on the first floor, with the third and fourth floor housing sleeping rooms for the residents. Other buildings constructed as part of this original campaign included a series of smaller cottages for married couples, a power house with laundry, stables, and other small ancillary support buildings. The bulk of the 640 acres was used for farming to support the food stores and income of the home.

Modern services and amenities required to care for veterans living at the Soldiers and Sailors home was a constant issue, and is a recurring theme throughout the history of the institution. In the 1910-1912 Biennial Report of the Board of Public Lands and Buildings to the Governor of the State of Nebraska, the conditions at the Soldiers and Sailors Home became an issue. The report documents the great deal of efforts to remedy what was identified as unsanitary conditions and repairing old buildings on the site, but clearly stated that a great deal remains to be done to bring the home to a modern and clean condition. A multi-story building to serve people with serious health issues was clearly not ideal. The report recommends that either all of the buildings on the site should be one story or appropriate elevators should be installed to allow the residents the ability to reach their living units on the third and fourth floors of the building. At the time the one-story McKinley building was under construction to serve as a new hospital building and was specifically designed to accommodate those needs.

The report identified that one way to serve the community best, was to remove the building because of its condition and the exorbitant cost to modernize and address the much needed safety issues. The walls were badly cracked and fastened together with rods to stabilize them and the plumbing was out of date and in very poor condition requiring total removal. Alternate thoughts were considered such as removing one story of the property and remodeling the entire structure to stabilize it for years of upcoming use. At the time, large portions of the building were unused because access to the space was so difficult for residents with mobility issues. The report documented improvements like new boilers and a new smoke stack were installed and built and that the heating plant is in good condition.

The original building remained standing when the new Administration Building was completed in 1931, but the last of the original wood frame buildings was removed for construction of the World War II Memorial Building authorized by the legislature in 1955 and constructed in 1966. Today the property is known as the Grand Island Veterans Home.



Postcard c. 1900 of the Soldiers and Sailors Home in Grand Island. This image shows the original building constructed in 1888 which is no longer standing. Nebraska genealogy website



Postcard of Nebraska State Soldiers and Sailors Home, c. 1890. From Penny Postcards from Nebraska



Photo of Nebraska's State Sailors and Soldiers Home, c. 1905. Photo from [DHHS.ne.gov/documents/1905](https://dohs.ne.gov/documents/1905)

Grand Island Veterans Home Today

Today the appearance of the Grand Island Veterans Home remains consistent with its historic appearance with the last major additions to the campus taking place in the mid-1960s. Accessed off of West Capital Avenue in Grand Island the campus retains eight major buildings which include McKinley, Administration, World War II Memorial, World War I Memorial, Pershing, Anderson, Burkett, and the Maintenance Building/power plant. The grounds and cemetery are also contributing features to the historic property. There are several other minor buildings associated with support features to the property such as garages and sheds. All of the major buildings and sites present on campus contribute to the historic significance of the property. Also associated with the property is a large open farm field that was historically used to plant food items to both support the members and to raise money to support the home. The agricultural field remains and has never been built upon. The field separates the campus of buildings from the cemetery. The cemetery is also a contributing feature to the property. The main campus buildings are connected by brick corridors providing interior access

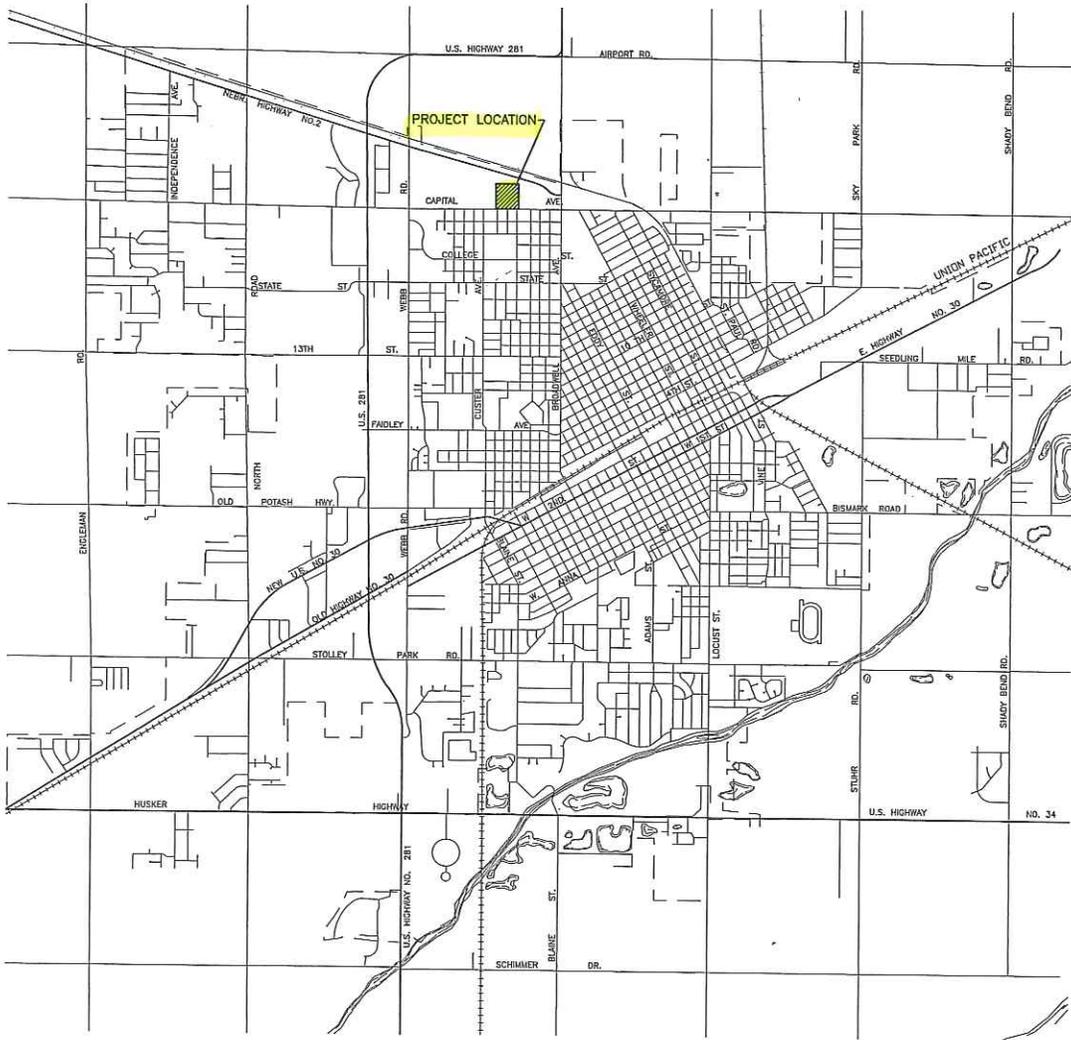
between all the service buildings on the campus. The property is eligible for the National Register under criterion A for its significant association with the development of major state institutions. It is the first state veterans' home in Nebraska, and has continued to serve the community throughout its history from the date of construction of the first building in the 1888 through today. The period of significance of the site begins in 1888 with the completion of the Nebraska Soldiers and Sailors Home and extends through 1966, the terminal date for the 50 year cut-off as established by National Park Service criteria for evaluation. Contributing features to the property include the following:

- McKinley Building
- Administration Building
- World War II Memorial Building
- World War I Memorial Building
- Pershing Building
- Anderson Building
- Burkett/Old Post Office
- Maintenance/Power Plant
- Grounds including plantings, walkways, roadways, water features, and open green spaces
- Cemetery
- Associated agricultural field

A detailed description of each major building on campus follows.

MAPS

Grand Island Veterans Home



GRAND ISLAND VICINITY MAP
NOT TO SCALE

EXISTING SITE

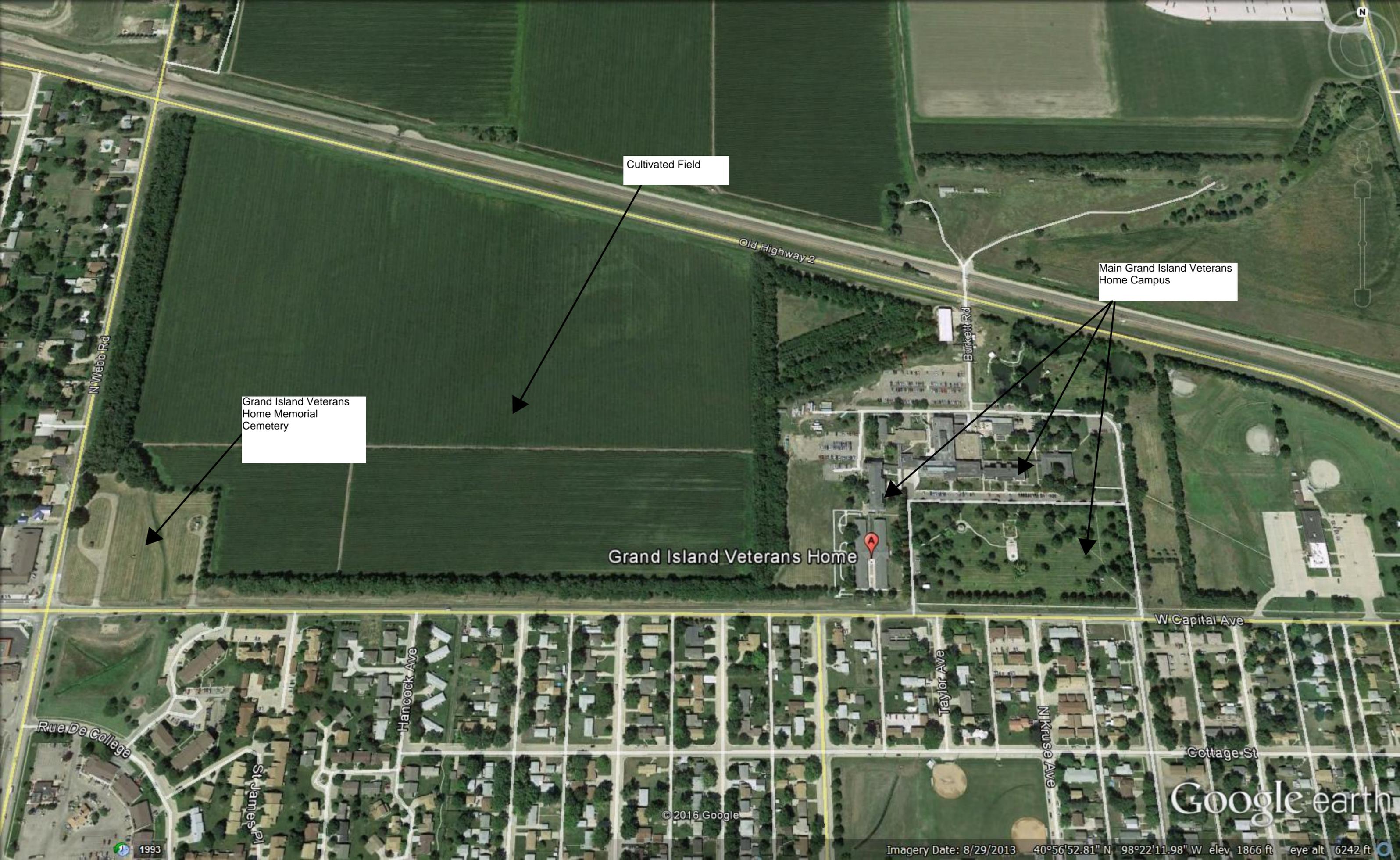


HWY. 2

VETERANS HOME

CAPITAL AVENUE





Cultivated Field

Grand Island Veterans Home Memorial Cemetery

Grand Island Veterans Home

Main Grand Island Veterans Home Campus

N Webb Rd

Old Highway 2

Burkett Rd

W Capital Ave

Taylor Ave

N Kruse Ave

Cottage St

Hancock Ave

St James Pl

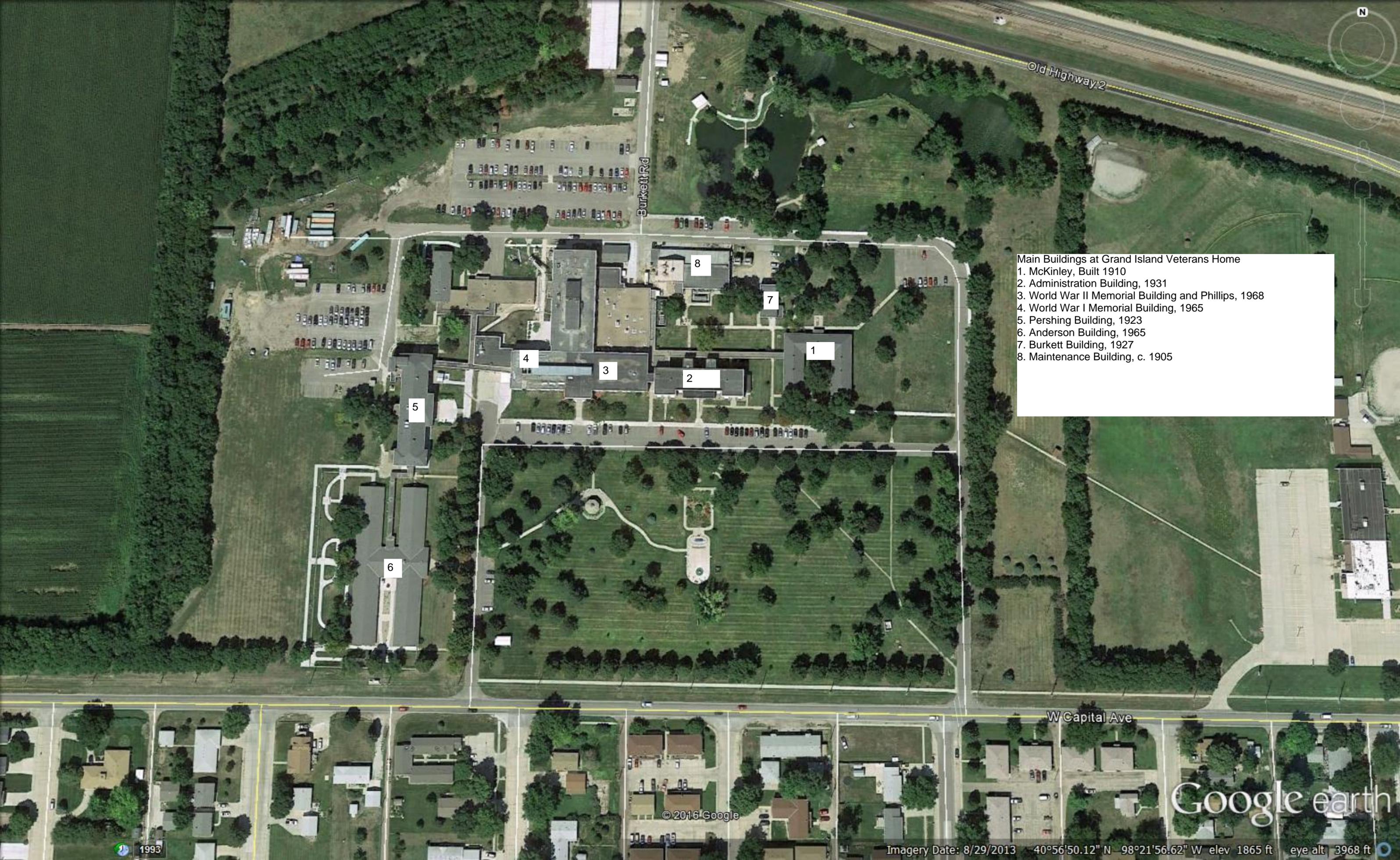
Rue De College

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Google earth

Imagery Date: 8/29/2013 40°56'52.81" N 98°22'11.98" W elev 1866 ft eye alt 6242 ft

1993

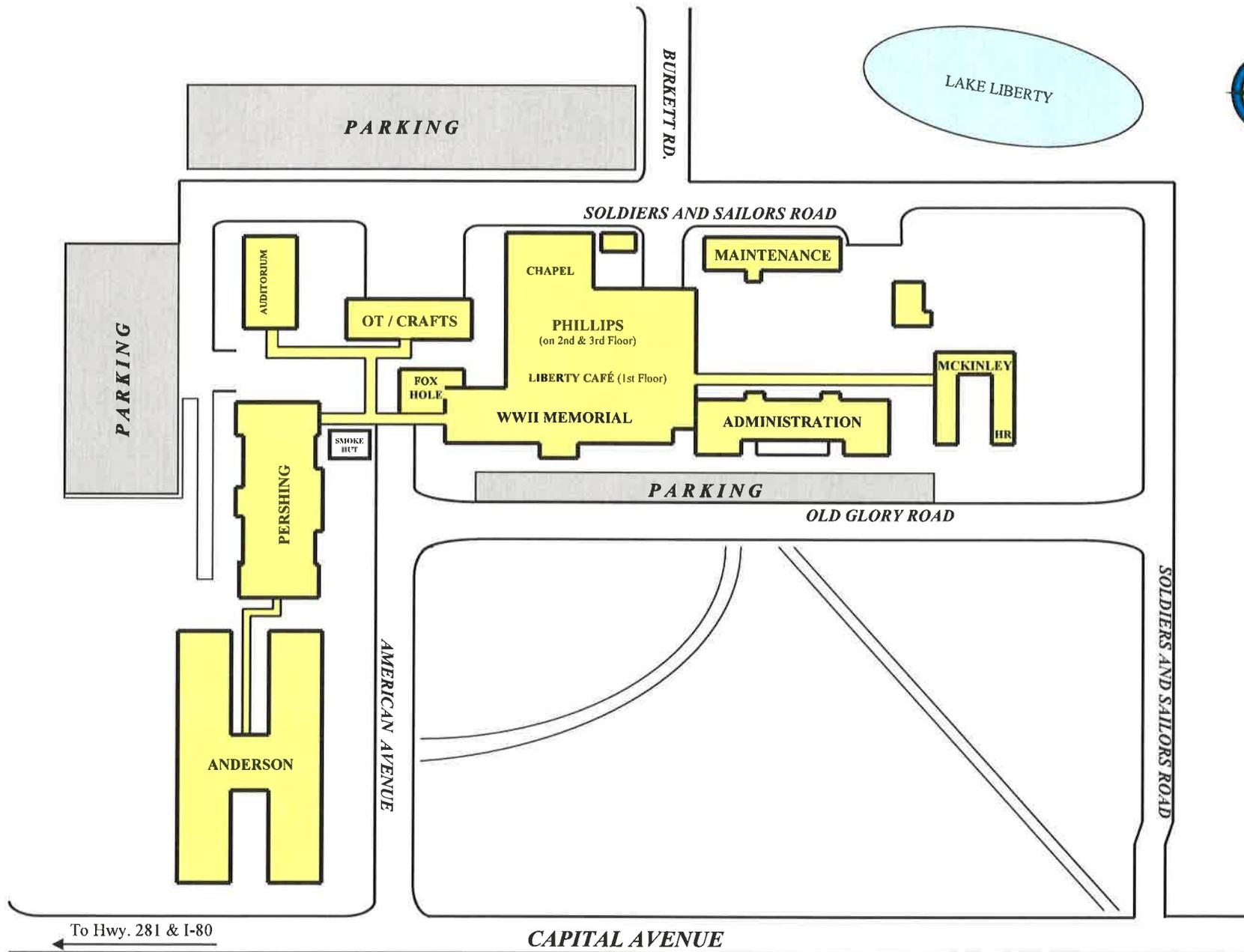


Main Buildings at Grand Island Veterans Home

1. McKinley, Built 1910
2. Administration Building, 1931
3. World War II Memorial Building and Phillips, 1968
4. World War I Memorial Building, 1965
5. Pershing Building, 1923
6. Anderson Building, 1965
7. Burkett Building, 1927
8. Maintenance Building, c. 1905

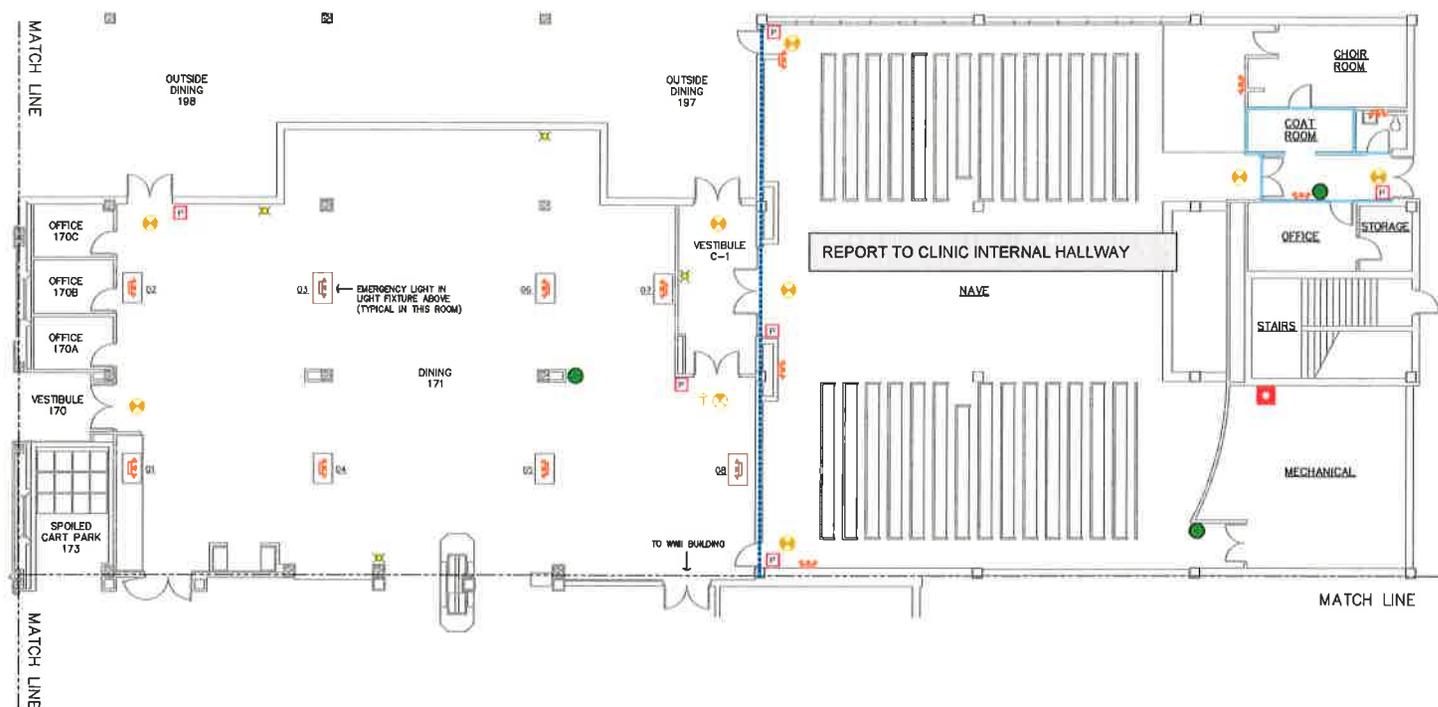
GRAND ISLAND VETERANS HOME

2300 W. Capital Avenue, Grand Island, NE 68803



- | LIFE SAFETY | | UTILITIES CONTROL | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| SMOKE COMPARTMENT | SMOKE COMPARTMENT | FIRE PULL STATION | SPRINKLER VALVE |
| SMOKE WALL | SMOKE RESISTANT | FIRE EXTINGUISHER | ELECTRICAL PANEL |
| 1HR FIREWALL | 1HR FIREWALL | FIRE STROBE LIGHT | |
| 2HR FIREWALL | 2HR FIREWALL | EMERGENCY LIGHT | |
| CHUTE AREA | CHUTE AREA | TORNADO SAFETY AREA | |
| EXIT | EXIT | | |
| 1 HR CEILING | 1 HR CEILING | | |
| HVAC SMOKE OR FIRE DAMPER | HVAC SMOKE OR FIRE DAMPER | | |

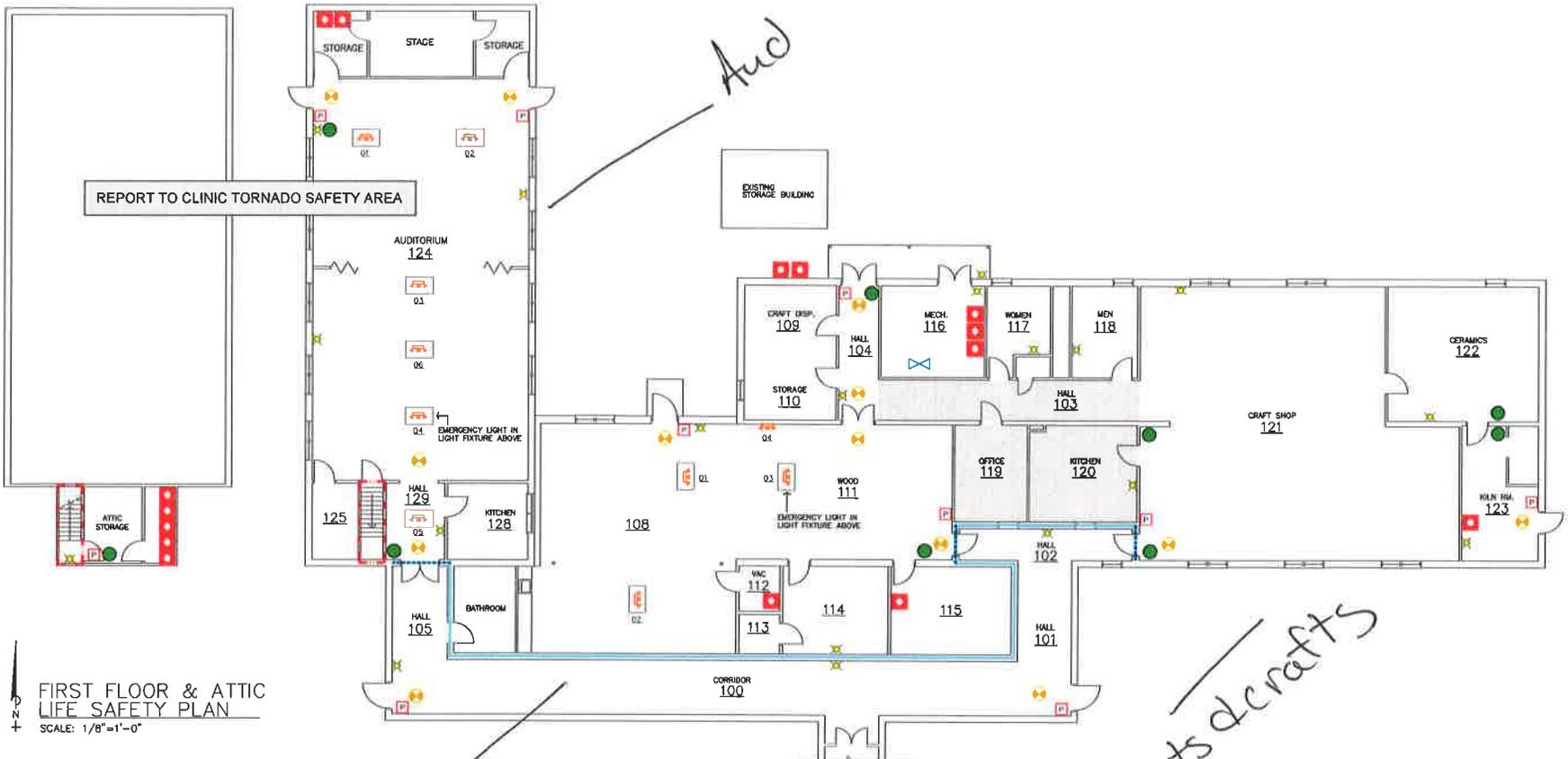
Chapel



FIRST FLOOR
 LIFE SAFETY PLAN
 SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

PHILLIPS ADDITION & CHAPEL
GRAND ISLAND VETERANS HOME
GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

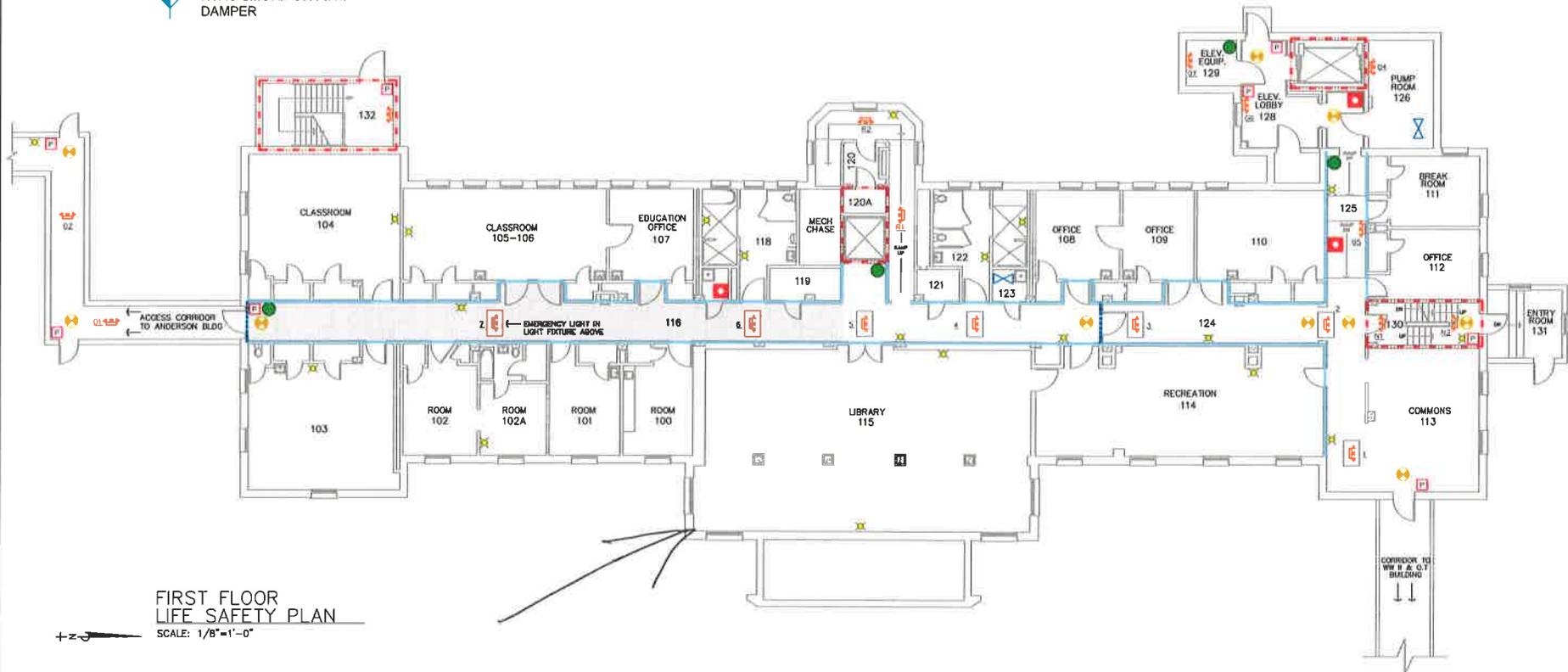
- | LIFE SAFETY | | | UTILITIES CONTROL | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| SMOKE COMPARTMENT | EXIT | FIRE PULL STATION | SPRINKLER VALVE | ELECTRICAL PANEL |
| SMOKE WALL | 1HR CEILING | FIRE EXTINGUISHER | | |
| SMOKE RESISTANT | HVAC SMOKE OR FIRE DAMPER | FIRE STROBE LIGHT | | |
| 1HR FIREWALL | | EMERGENCY LIGHT | | |
| 2HR FIREWALL | | | | |
| CHUTE AREA | | | | |
| TORNADO SAFETY AREA | | | | |



FIRST FLOOR & ATTIC
LIFE SAFETY PLAN
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

**AUDITORIUM & OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY BUILDING
GRAND ISLAND VETERANS HOME
GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA**

- | LIFE SAFETY | | UTILITIES CONTROL | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| SMOKE COMPARTMENT | SMOKE COMPARTMENT | FIRE PULL STATION | SPRINKLER VALVE |
| SMOKE WALL | SMOKE WALL | FIRE EXTINGUISHER | ELECTRICAL PANEL |
| SMOKE RESISTANT | SMOKE RESISTANT | FIRE STROBE LIGHT | |
| 1HR FIREWALL | 1HR FIREWALL | EMERGENCY LIGHT | |
| 2HR FIREWALL | 2HR FIREWALL | TORNADO SAFETY AREA | |
| CHUTE AREA | CHUTE AREA | | |
| EXIT | EXIT | | |
| 1 HR CEILING | 1 HR CEILING | | |
| HVAC SMOKE OR FIRE DAMPER | HVAC SMOKE OR FIRE DAMPER | | |



FIRST FLOOR
LIFE SAFETY PLAN
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

**PERSHING BUILDING
GRAND ISLAND VETERANS HOME
GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA**

PHOTO LOG

Photo Log

Name of Property:	Grand Island Veterans Home
City or Vicinity:	Grand Island
County:	Hall
State:	NE
Name of Photographer:	Melissa Gengler
Date of Photographs:	February 2016
Location of Original Digital Files:	Grand Island, NE

Photo 1: Administration Building – South Façade

Photo 2: Administration Building – South Façade – Close up of decorative terra cotta

Photo 3: Administration Building – South Façade – Close up of roof line

Photo 4: Administration Building – South Façade – Enclosed second and third story verandas

Photo 5: Administration Building – Wheelchair ramp

Photo 8: Administration Building: Patient room

Photo 9: Administration Building – Enclosed veranda

Photo 10: Administration Building – Hallway

Photo 11: WWII Memorial Building – South Façade

Photo 12: WWII Memorial Building – North Façade

Photo 13: WWII Memorial Building – Entryway

Photo 14: WWII Memorial Building – Metal framed sash window

Photo 15: WWII Memorial Building – Hallway

Photo 16: WWII Memorial Building – Stairwell

Photo 17: WWII Memorial Building – Bathroom with shower

Photo 18: WWII Memorial Building – Chapel

Photo 19: WWII Memorial Building – Chapel

Photo 20: WWII Memorial Building – Basement

Photo 20: WWI Memorial Building – Arts & Crafts

Photo 21: WWI Memorial Building – Wood shop

Photo 22: WWI Memorial Building – Auditorium

Photo 23: Pershing Building – West Façade

Photo 24: Pershing Building – North Façade

Photo 25: Pershing Building – Library

Photo 26: Pershing Building – Hallway

Photo 27: Anderson Building – East Façade

Photo 28: Anderson Building – East Façade

Photo 29: McKinley Building – South Façade

Photo 30: McKinley Building – West Façade

Photo 31: McKinley Building – North Façade

Photo 32: McKinley Building – Hallway

Photo 33: Storage Building – West Façade

Photo 34: Storage Building – South Façade

Photo 35: Storage Building – Stairway

Photo 36: Storage Building – Second floor storage

Photo 37: Maintenance Building – East and North Façade

Photo 38: Maintenance Building – North Façade

Photo 39: Maintenance Building – North Façade

Photo 40: Maintenance Building – East Façade

Photo 41: Maintenance Building – Remnants of chimney

Photo 42: Maintenance Building – Boilers

Photo 43: Maintenance Building – HVAC System

Photo 44: Grounds – Gazebo

Photo 45: Grounds – Parade Grounds

Photo 46: Grounds – Driveway

Photo 47: Grounds – Park on the north end of the property

Photo 48: Cemetery – Sign

Photo 49: Cemetery – Sign

Photo 50: Cemetery – Plots

Photo 51: Cemetery – Cemetery register

Administration Building



Date of Construction: 1931

Style: Art Deco

Administrative/Patient Housing

The Administration Building today is mostly vacant, but houses the administrative offices for the Grand Island Veterans Home. It is a three story building completed in 1931 at the cost of \$200,000 to the state of Nebraska and is located on the site of the original Soldiers and Sailors Home building. Originally the building housed married couples and single veterans on the second and third floors, while the first floor was used for the Commandant's apartment and administrative offices. Ramps were eventually installed in the building so wheelchair members could traverse independently to visit other members in the neighboring Pershing Hospital. Fire escapes were also added and the open veranda across the main or south façade was enclosed. The open full-height central veranda has also been enclosed to accommodate an interior use for the space.

The three story building is Art Deco in styling mostly expressed through applied colorful terra cotta detailing. The body of the building has a tripartite configuration with the full height enclosed verandas in the central bay and entrance wings on either side. Fenestration throughout the main south facing façade is paired one over one units except at the enclosed veranda. Fluted terra cotta pilasters divide vertical bays on the building and elaborated swirled blue, gold, red, and green terra cotta details are applied above the entry doors, between window bands and across the entirety of the cornice.



Photo 1: Administration Building – South Façade



Photo 2: Administration Building – South Façade – Close up of decorative terra cotta



Photo 3: Administration Building – South Façade – Close up of roof line



Photo 4: Administration Building – South Façade – Enclosed second and third story verandas

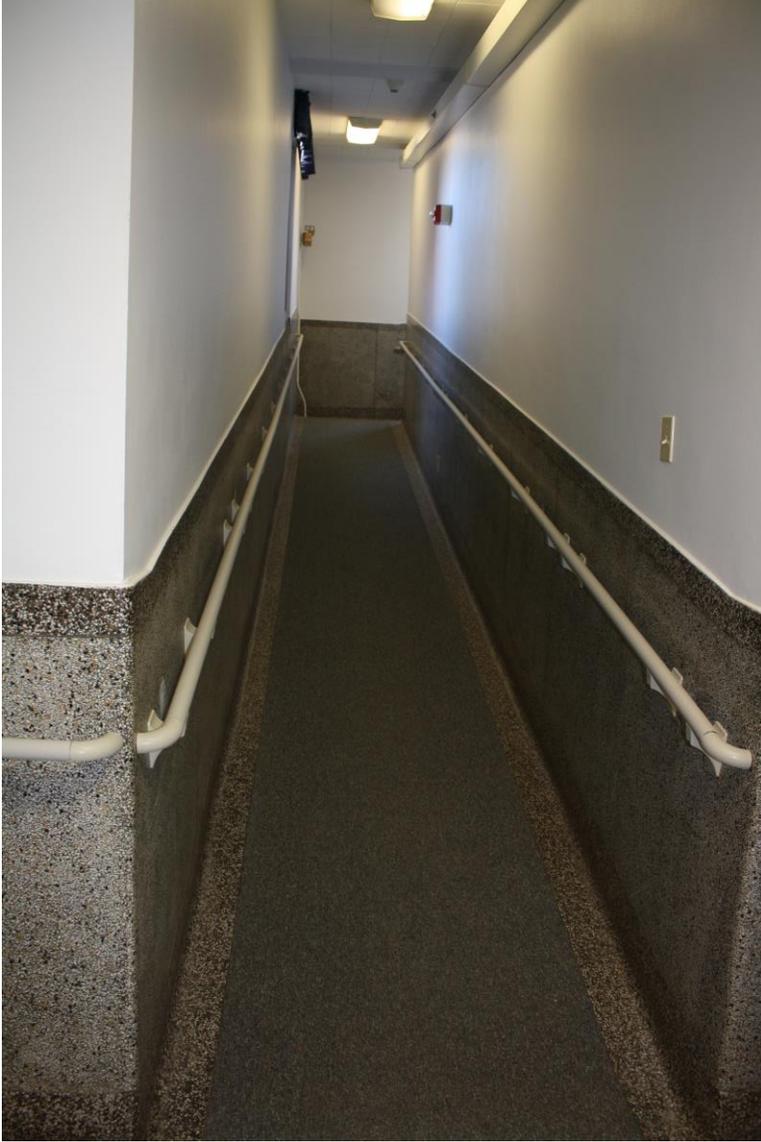


Photo 5: Administration Building – Wheelchair ramp



Photo 8: Administration Building: Patient room



Photo 9: Administration Building – Enclosed veranda



Photo 10: Administration Building – Hallway



Image of Administration Building c. 1955, showing the open verandas, courtesy of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services website.



Image of Administration Building from the central grounds showing some of the formal and historic landscaping. This landscaping plan does not exist today with the exception of some of the larger trees. Date on image is August 1949. Photo courtesy of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services website.

WWII Memorial Building & Phillips Building



Construction Date: 1968

Style: Modern

Patient Housing/Chapel/Auditorium/Arts & Crafts

The World War II Memorial Building was designed by Grand Island architect George E. Clayton and was built to replace the aging Pershing Hospital which was being used as a domiciliary care unit. Construction of the World War II Memorial Building cleared the grounds from the last of the original wood framed buildings associated with the Soldiers and Sailors Home. The building was dedicated on December 7, 1968, an appropriate day in honor of its namesake. Connected to the World War II Memorial Building is the Phillips Building. It was completed in 1973 and provided an addition 100 bed capacity for nursing care. Housed in the Phillips building is the All Faiths Chapel which was dedicated in 1973 as well as the Liberty Café on the first floor which is the primary dining facility for independent dining. Currently the second and third floors house the nursing care facility.

The building is a three story simple modern style with a projecting central bay. The main entrance is recessed under the upper level project and with the wall surface clad in a heavy permastone. The remainder of the building is brick and stucco. Originally built as a modern hospital to replace the services provided at the Pershing Building, the property today houses the Central Commissary, medical clinics and offices including labs, dental service and pharmacy, as well as the post office, barber and beauty shops, the Fox Hole canteen and physical therapy and restorative services.



Photo 11: WWII Memorial Building – South Façade



Photo 12: WWII Memorial Building – North Façade



Photo 13: WWII Memorial Building – Entryway



Photo 14: WWII Memorial Building – Metal framed sash window



Photo 15: WWII Memorial Building – Hallway



Photo 16: WWII Memorial Building – Stairwell



Photo 17: WWII Memorial Building – Bathroom with shower



Photo 18: WWII Memorial Building – Chapel



Photo 19: WWII Memorial Building – Chapel



Photo 20: WWII Memorial Building – Basement

World War I Memorial Building



Construction Date: 1965

Style: No style

Auditorium, Arts & Crafts, Wood Shop

The World War I Memorial Building houses the Occupational Therapy Shop and is immediately adjacent to the World War II Memorial building. The building houses the woodworking and ceramic shops and was completed in 1965. In 1995, the woodshop was expanded to provide more universal access to all mobility levels. A full arts and crafts area provides therapeutic craft opportunities through the arts. Completed craft projects are either kept, given away or sold in the shop.



Photo 20: WWI Memorial Building – Arts & Crafts



Photo 21: WWI Memorial Building – Wood shop



Photo 22: WWI Memorial Building – Auditorium

Pershing Building



Construction Date: 1923

Style: Classical Revival

Patient Housing/Classrooms/Library

The Pershing Building replaced cottages that were associated for more independent living as part of the Soldiers and Sailors Home. Before World War I the cottages were torn down to facilitate construction of a new hospital and nursing care facility to replace the one that was built in 1898. Pershing was completed in 1923 and cost \$200,000. The building is named after General John J. Pershing, and when it was built had a 104 bed capacity which was quickly expanded with a \$40,000 addition in 1928. Today the building houses members requiring assisted living services with a capacity of 48 beds.

The three story brick building has a large projecting full height central portico supported by simple fluted round Doric columns. A shallow hipped roof caps with the building.



Photo 23: Pershing Building – West Façade



Photo 24: Pershing Building – North Façade



Photo 25: Pershing Building – Library



Photo 26: Pershing Building – Hallway

Anderson Building



Construction Date: 1965

Style: Contemporary

Memory Care

The Anderson Building was completed in 1965 and was built as a 44 room domiciliary building to replace Garfield Building, the oldest remaining wood framed building on the grounds. The modern building has an H shaped floor plan and is named formally named the Carl A. Anderson Spanish War Memorial Building. It was the first building constructed after the legislature passed an act allowing the facility to charge members for their care on an ability to pay basis. The building cost \$300,000 to build in 1965 and furnishings were donated by the Carl Anderson Foundation. The building was fully supported with medical care, barber/beauty shop, a library, recreation center, guest lounges snack kitchens and reading rooms. It has a capacity of 87 beds and is currently used for the Special Care Unit treating memory disorders such as Alzheimer's and dementia.

The building is a mid-century modern example with a long low one story profile with project center gable with full-height windows accenting the entrance. Large beams and a wide open lobby greet the visitor upon entry with member rooms along the corridors and the common spaces in the connector bar of the H shaped plan.



Photo 27: Anderson Building – East Façade



Photo 28: Anderson Building – East Façade

McKinley Building



Construction Date: 1910

Style:

Original Use: Domiciliary Care

Current Use: Human Resources Department

The McKinley building was named for President William McKinley and was completed in 1910. The one story brick building has a u-shaped floor plan and was built with a 35 bed capacity for single veterans. The building also housed a library and recreation area for members of the home and is today used for human resource offices and other staff offices.

The brick building has a shallow hipped roof and project full-width porches at the end of each leg of the u-shaped plan. The simple building is relatively unadorned with the exception of the front porches. Deliberately designed to accommodate all services on one level in response to the difficulty for its members of using the original multi-story building.



Photo 29: McKinley Building – South Façade



Photo 30: McKinley Building – West Façade



Photo 31: McKinley Building – North Façade



Photo 32: McKinley Building – Hallway

Burkett Building Post Office/Storage Building



Construction Date: 1927

Style: No style

Original Use: Post Office

Current Use: Storage

Originally, a post office was established for the Soldiers and Sailors Home in 1903. In 1906 the post office became known as the Burkett Post Office to honor U.S. Elmer J. Burkett from Nebraska and in appreciation for his devotion to further veterans' issues. Originally the Burkett Station was a railroad designation located along the Union Pacific line. This building was constructed in 1927 as the Burkett Post Office building at a cost of \$8,000. It was also used for a Canteen and Adjutant 's Quarters. The Burkett Post office was discontinued in June 1930, and today the simple unadorned two-story brick building is used for storage.



Photo 33: Storage Building – West Façade



Photo 34: Storage Building – South Façade



Photo 35: Storage Building - Stairway



Photo 36: Storage Building – Second floor storage

Maintenance Building



Construction Date: c. 1905

Style: Industrial

Original Use: Maintenance

Current Use: Maintenance

The maintenance building continues to house the central power plant for the campus. The building has a one story brick bay connected to stepped façade bay where the systems are housed. Remnants of the brick smoke stacks from the earliest period of the campus remain in place. The one story brick bay has segmental arch brick details with keystones above each window opening. The windows have been reduced in size with new units in stalled.

The stepped false front brick bay has a gabled roof, and industrial steel windows with wire glass. Associated with the maintenance building are two large metal exterior storage tanks linked to the power systems of the campus.



Photo 37: Maintenance Building – East and North Façade



Photo 38: Maintenance Building – North Façade



Photo 39: Maintenance Building – North Façade



Photo 40: Maintenance Building – East Façade



Photo 41: Maintenance Building – Remnants of chimney



Photo 42: Maintenance Building – Boilers



Photo 43: Maintenance Building – HVAC System

Grounds



The grounds at the Grand Island Veterans Home are an open and pleasant space utilized by both staff and members of the Home. The site can be accessed from both the north and south. Burkett Road provides access from Old Highway 2 to the north and Soldiers and Sailors Road and American Avenue provide access from the south off of West Capital Avenue. A large open yard welcomes visitors and staff at the main entrance of the facility. The rectangular shape greenspace located south and east of the main buildings is delineated by West Capital Avenue on the south, Soldiers and Sailors Road on the east, Old Glory Road on the north, and American Avenue on the west. The green space here retains a random planting of deciduous trees throughout, and is divided by two major pathways: one at an angle from southeast to northwest from Capital Avenue to Old Glory Road and one semi-circular between Old Glory Road and American Avenue. A formally planted row of trees was located along Capital Avenue, but has recently been removed as part of a road construction project. A gazebo and central planting area are located within this green space.

On the north side of the campus is another open green space containing a water feature called Lake Liberty that provides fishing and bird shelter throughout the year. The lake is located east of Burkett Road and South of Old Highway 2. Parking is scattered throughout the complex with spaces available along Old Glory Road in front of the Administration, McKinley and World War II buildings and in a lot at the northeast corner of the campus as well as another two surface lots at the northwest and west edges of the campus.

The entirety of the site is surrounded by rows of deciduous trees at the north east and west boundaries. A large plot of farmland between the building campus and the cemetery has been part of the campus since its inception. The farmland is unified with the site by rows of mature trees that border the open field on the east, south, and west edges with Old Highway 2 bordering it to the north.



Photo 44: Grounds – Gazebo



Photo 45: Grounds – Parade Grounds



Photo 46: Grounds – Driveway



Photo 47: Grounds – Park on the north end of the property

Cemetery



Construction Date: c. 1890



The Grand Island Veterans Home cemetery was established with the Soldiers and Sailors Home in the late 1880s. It is located at the far western edge of the complex and is accessed by two separate drives off Capital Avenue. The cemetery serves as the resting place for members of the Home as well as other qualified veterans. The cemetery is accessed by two wrought iron gateways off Capital Avenue, one with the words “Nebraska Veterans” across the top, and the other with the words “Memorial Cemetery” across the top. A long drive ends in a tight circle around a small brick shelter with a flagpole containing the cemetery register through the “Nebraska Veterans” gateway. A second circular drive accesses memorial markers through the “Nebraska Veterans” gate. Deciduous trees border the site at the east and north boundaries, while the south and west boundaries border West Capital Avenue and North Webb Road. Memorial markers are mostly all small, white, and consistent in size as is expected in many military cemeteries. The site is an active burial site for qualified Nebraska veterans.



Photo 48: Cemetery – Sign



Photo 49: Cemetery – Sign



Photo 50: Cemetery – Plots



Photo 51: Cemetery – Cemetery register

