

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**



**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic FORT DES MOINES PROVISIONAL ARMY OFFICER TRAINING SCHOOL

and/or common Fort Des Moines Military Reservation

**2. Location**

street & number Army Post Road \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Des Moines \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district fifth

state Iowa code 019 county Polk code 153

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name multiple (see continuation sheet)

street & number

city, town \_\_\_ vicinity of state

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Facilities Engineer (attention: AFZR-FE) *DEW*

street & number HQ Fort McCoy

city, town Sparta state Wisconsin 54656

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title (none) has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

As developed in 1901-1903, Fort Des Moines covered 640 acres, located in Sections 33 and 34 in Township 78 North, Range 24 West, Polk County, Iowa. Since World War II, the Department of the Army has disposed of the major portion of the original tract. Portions have become a city park and zoo, golf course, and a conservation area. Other parcels were sold to the school district and to various private owners. The part of the fort still in active use by the military serves a number of functions including recruiting and reserve training.

Over the years a number of buildings at Fort Des Moines have been demolished, among them the Officers' Quarters row facing the north side of the parade ground. In addition, since the designation of Fort Des Moines as a National Historic Landmark in 1974, private owners have erected a bank north of the parade grounds and an apartment complex on the eastern half of the parade ground.

Although the integrity of the site has been compromised, it retains sufficient identity to justify continuation of landmark status.

Fort Des Moines is an early twentieth-century complex of brick 2-2½-story military buildings situated around a parade ground. Generally, the structures are unadorned gable-roofed buildings with one-story wooden gallery porches on the front or gable ends of the buildings.

The non-contributing structures are differentiated from contributing buildings by their respective dates of construction. For example, those structures built after 1917 are determined to be non-contributing.

The contributing structures include officers' quarters and the chapel; the riding hall and stables associated with the installation's initial use as a cavalry post; and barracks where black officer candidates were housed during World War I. All of the significant buildings are related visually and stylistically.

Most of the structures surviving at Fort Des Moines are concentrated south of the former parade ground in the area bounded by Chaffee Road, the east-west center line of Section 33, and Butner and Gruber Streets. Important buildings are also located near the northeast and northwest corners of the parade grounds. The general physical condition of the structures is indicated in the description of contributing historic structures below. Numbers are those used to identify the buildings on the accompanying base map. A complete listing of the contributing and non-contributing structures, and of the owners, is included in Appendices A and B, and Item #4, respectively.

Officers Quarters (Buildings 7, 14-15): original, 1901-03 era; fair condition; brick construction with slate roofs; 2½ stories with gabled roofs; wooden porches at front entrances; rectangular sash windows. Owned by Still College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery.

Bachelor Officers Quarters (Building 46): original, 1901-03 era; good condition; brick construction on stone foundation, slate roof; 2-story rectangle with gabled roof; projecting 3-bay pavilion at center front; rectangular windows. Serves as a recruiting station. Is the property of the District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha, Nebraska.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Black History

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**Specific dates** 1917                      **Builder/Architect** not identified

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The creation of the Provisional Army Officer Training School at Fort Des Moines marked both the U.S. Army's first recognition of its responsibility to train black officers and the establishment of a military tradition among blacks. George H. Woodson predicted the national historical significance of the post in 1917 when he wrote:

In the years to come when the chronicler of history starts out again to mark the milepost along the world's highway of civil and religious freedom, . . . he will point to Fort Des Moines, in A.D. 1917, and tell how more than a thousand young Colored men fitted themselves in three short months under Colonel Charles C. Ballou to meet the responsibility of twenty years of ordinary training and went forth as officers of the Colored fighting force of the United States of America to help save liberty of all the people of the world.

Fort Des Moines is the third installation of that name. The first, established in 1833 near the present site of Montrose, was a frontier post intended to protect settlers from raiding Indians. It was abandoned in 1837. The second Fort Des Moines was erected in 1843 at the junction of the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers, on what was then the western edge of white settlement. Three years later, it too was abandoned, when the Indians under its control were moved to Kansas. The town which had grown up near the post continued to be known as Fort Des Moines. The word "fort" was dropped with the adoption of the city charter in 1857.

The present Fort Des Moines, situated about five miles south of the center of the city of Des Moines, was established as a cavalry post and dedicated on November 13, 1903. Congress had appropriated \$219,000 for development of the installation after local citizens subscribed \$40,000 toward purchase of the 640-acre site. The fort gained wide attention in June 1909, when it hosted the "Great Tournament". Infantry, cavalry, artillery, and other units from seven posts competed for medals and corps area honors. President Taft reviewed the troops at the final parade of the five-day event and presented the awards.

When the United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917, the two black infantry units and the two black cavalry units were filled quickly. The government was left with a large group of black men who wanted to join the army and serve their country. Many people feared arming black men, expecting retaliation for past mistreatment. The War Department yielded to the demand that black men not be denied the right to fight, and allowed them to enlist.

This action was followed by further pressures for the Army to qualify black officers to lead their compatriots. Strong support for the training of black officers came

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 203.8

Quadrangle name SE/4 Des Moines; SW/4 Des Moines 7.5'

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

**UMT References**

A	<u>15</u> <u>13</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>10</u> <u>10</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>17</u> <u>2</u> <u>18</u> <u>10</u>	B	<u>15</u> <u>13</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>2</u> <u>15</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>17</u> <u>2</u> <u>18</u> <u>10</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>15</u> <u>13</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>2</u> <u>15</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>16</u> <u>8</u> <u>10</u> <u>10</u>	D	<u>15</u> <u>13</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>15</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>16</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>10</u>
E	<u>15</u> <u>13</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>15</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>16</u> <u>6</u> <u>13</u> <u>10</u>	F	<u>15</u> <u>13</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>10</u> <u>10</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>16</u> <u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>10</u>
G	<u>15</u> <u>13</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>10</u> <u>10</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>16</u> <u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>10</u>	H			

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marcia M. Greenlee, Historical Projects Director  
(updated by Nancy Witherell, Historian, and Suzanne Evans, Archival Technician)

organization The Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation December 1973  
(National Park Service, Rocky Mt. Region Office-August 1984)

street & number 1420 N Street, N.W., Suite 101 telephone (303-234-2560)  
Washington, DC 20005

city or town (Denver, CO 80225) state \_\_\_\_\_

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

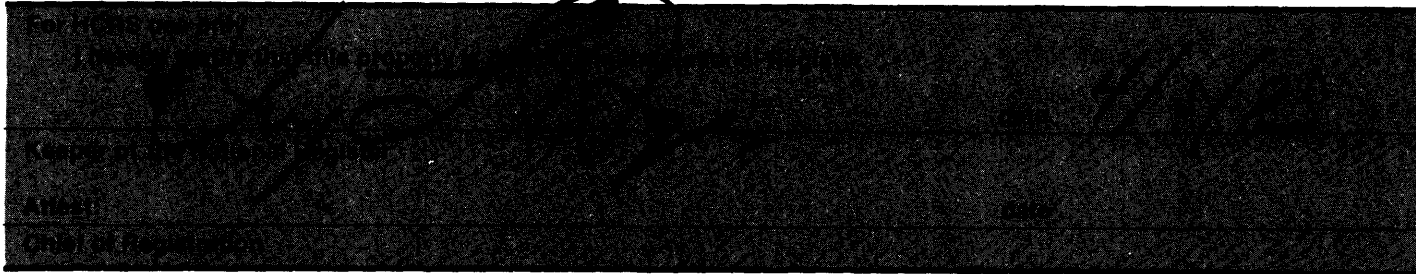
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

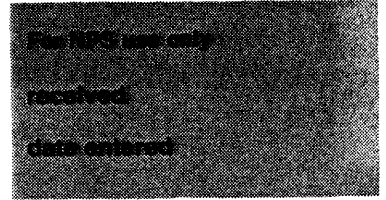
State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_



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Continuation sheet

OWNERS

Item number #4

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Louis D. Erbstein  
Supervisory Staff Administrative Assistant  
HQ, 103d Corps Support Command  
225 E. Army Post Road  
Fort Des Moines, IA 50315

U.S. Department of the Navy  
Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center  
Building 47  
Dickman Avenue  
Fort Des Moines, IA 50315

U.S. Army Reserve  
225 E. Army Post Road  
Des Moines, IA 50315

District Engineer  
Omaha Corps of Engineers  
Attention: MRORE-MD Mr. Bourne  
6014 U.S. Post Office and Court House  
Omaha, NE 68102

General Services Administration  
Motor Pool #87  
Chaffee Road  
Fort Des Moines, IA 50315

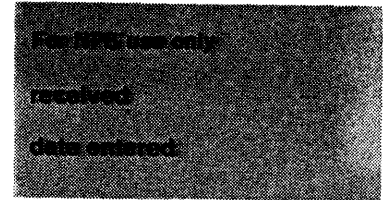
Commander, U.S. Air Force  
Civil Air Patrol, Iowa Wing  
Attention: IALO room 529  
Federal Building  
210 Walnut Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309

Still College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery  
3200 Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50312

City of Des Moines  
East 1st Street and Locust Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50309

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Iowa Department of Human Services  
Hoover State Office Building, 5th floor  
Des Moines, IA 50319

Iowa Realty Company, Inc.  
3521 Beaver Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 30310

Merit Fund VII Ltd., Partners  
3521 Beaver Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 30310

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Riding Hall (Building 47): original, 1901-03 era; good condition; brick construction with slate roof; 2-story rectangle with shaped gable roof, clerestory windows, and projecting gable at center front; owned and operated by the Department of the Navy, serves as Naval and Marine Reserve Training Center.

Chapel (Building 49): original, 1901-03 era; restored interior and exterior; brick construction with slate roof; raised basement; one-story rectangle with gabled roof; enclosed porch with gabled roof at center front; simple buttresses at corners and on side elevations; triple windows with simple gothic detail set in segmentally-arched surrounds; interior has stenciled walls and a rose window at the east end.

Barracks (Buildings 55-56, 58, 59-60, 61-62, 63-64, 65-66): original, 1901-03 era; fair condition; row of U-shaped double buildings; brick construction with slate roofs; 2½ stories with gabled roofs; simple one-story wooden porches across ends of "U"-shaped buildings (at rear); segmental arches in brick above rectangular sash windows.

Stables (Buildings 68-70, 71-73, 81-83): original, 1901-03 era; fair to deteriorated condition; brick construction with slate roofs; one-story rectangles; clerestories set into gabled roofs; segmental arches in brick above rectangular sash windows. Associated structures (Buildings 69, 72, 75): original; fair condition; brick construction with slate roofs; small, one-story rectangles with gabled roofs; rectangular sash windows. Used as offices for various military groups.

Stables (Buildings 86, 87): original, 1901-03 era; fair condition; brick construction; one-story rectangles, gabled roofs. Building 87 originally used to house polo ponies, now serves as storage space; Building 86 leased to Iowa State Patrol.

Warehouses and Shops (Buildings 122, 123, 126, 127, 135, 137, 138): original, 1901-03 era; fair to deteriorated condition; brick construction on stone foundations, slate roofs; one-story rectangles with gabled roofs; rectangular sash windows.

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from such groups as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Central Committee of Negro College Men. Black leaders such as W.E.B. DuBois urged all blacks to unite in the push for a training camp for black officers. The successful result of this campaign was announced in a news release from Washington, D.C., on May 19, 1917:

FORT DES MOINES NOW MADE TRAINING CAMP FOR NEGROES  
A training camp for Negro officers will be established at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, where 1,200 candidates for commissions in Negro regiments of the new army will be trained.

On June 17, 1917, one thousand college men, with two hundred noncommissioned officers from the existing black military units, were sworn into the Provisional Army Officer Training School by Colonel Charles C. Ballou. On October 15, 639 men graduated from the course and received their commissions--106 captains, 329 first lieutenants, and 204 second lieutenants. The group of officers was divided and sent to seven different camps. This was an unusual way to train the units of a division, but the Army considered it expedient not to assemble the men until they reached France in June 1918. As the 92d Division, they received eight weeks of intensive training and went into action during a German offensive.

Commanded by the officers from Fort Des Moines, the 92d Division was an important force in the fierce battles in France during September, October, and until November 11, 1918--the Armistice. This gallant division, composed entirely of colored American troops, received a great number of citations and awards for meritorious and distinguished conduct. At least seven of the officers were cited for bravery in action and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. The entire First Battalion of the 367th Infantry was cited for bravery and presented with the Croix de Guerre by the French government.

The newly-commissioned black officers left Fort Des Moines in October 1917. For the next two years it served as a base hospital. In later years the post was the regimental headquarters of the 14th Cavalry. The 3d Battalion of the 80th Field Artillery and units of the quartermaster, signal and medical corps were also stationed there. During World War II, Fort Des Moines served as a training center for the Women's Army Corps. Graduates of that course included Bernice Gaines Hughes, the first black woman to become a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Armed Forces.



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER #9 PAGE 1

Fort Des Moines - Bibliography References:

David, Jam and Crane, Elaine, eds. The Black Soldier From the American Revolution to Vietnam. New York, 1971.

Franklin, John Hope. From Slavery to Freedom. New York, 1967.

McPherson, James M., et al. Blacks in America. New York, 1971.

Scott, Emmett J. Scott's Official History of the American Negro in the World War. Original Publication, 1919; reissued New York, 1969.

Thompson, John L. "History and Views of Colored Officers Training Camp."  
Des Moines, Iowa: The Bystander, 1917.

Works Progress Administration, Federal Writers' Project. Iowa. Original publication, 1938; reissued New York, 1949.

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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the intersection of the east curb of SW 9th Street and the south curb of Army Post Road; thence east along said south curb to its intersection with a line extended due north from the east curb of Brown Street; thence south along said east curb to the southeast curb of an unnamed street branching southwest from Brown Street; thence southwest along said southeast curb to a point on the west curb of an unnamed street parallel to Chaffee Road; thence south along said west curb to a point; thence west along a line extending east from the south curb of Winn Road; thence south along the east curb of Chaffee Road to its intersection with the east-west center line of Section 33; thence west along said center line to its intersection with the east curb of SW 9th Street; thence north along the east curb to the point of the beginning.

The boundaries as described above include only a portion of the original 1901-03 Fort property. This portion constitutes the original parade ground, surrounded by the earliest extant buildings and the original street layout of the Fort. The popularity of the Beaux-Arts style in architecture and planning at the turn of this century is reflected in the street configuration around the parade ground as clearly as it is in the classical-inspired details of the brick buildings.

Only some of the original buildings remain, and a visually intrusive newer apartment complex has been built on a portion of the parade grounds. A portion of the property has also been conveyed to the City of Des Moines for use as a city park. The boundaries include the historic core area of the Fort which retains sufficient identity to interpret the original Fort configuration.

The area of the apartment units has been included within the boundaries primarily because they have not altered the original street layout or circulation within the original Fort design. To a large extent, the overall spatial relationships and visual linkages of the original design are maintained.

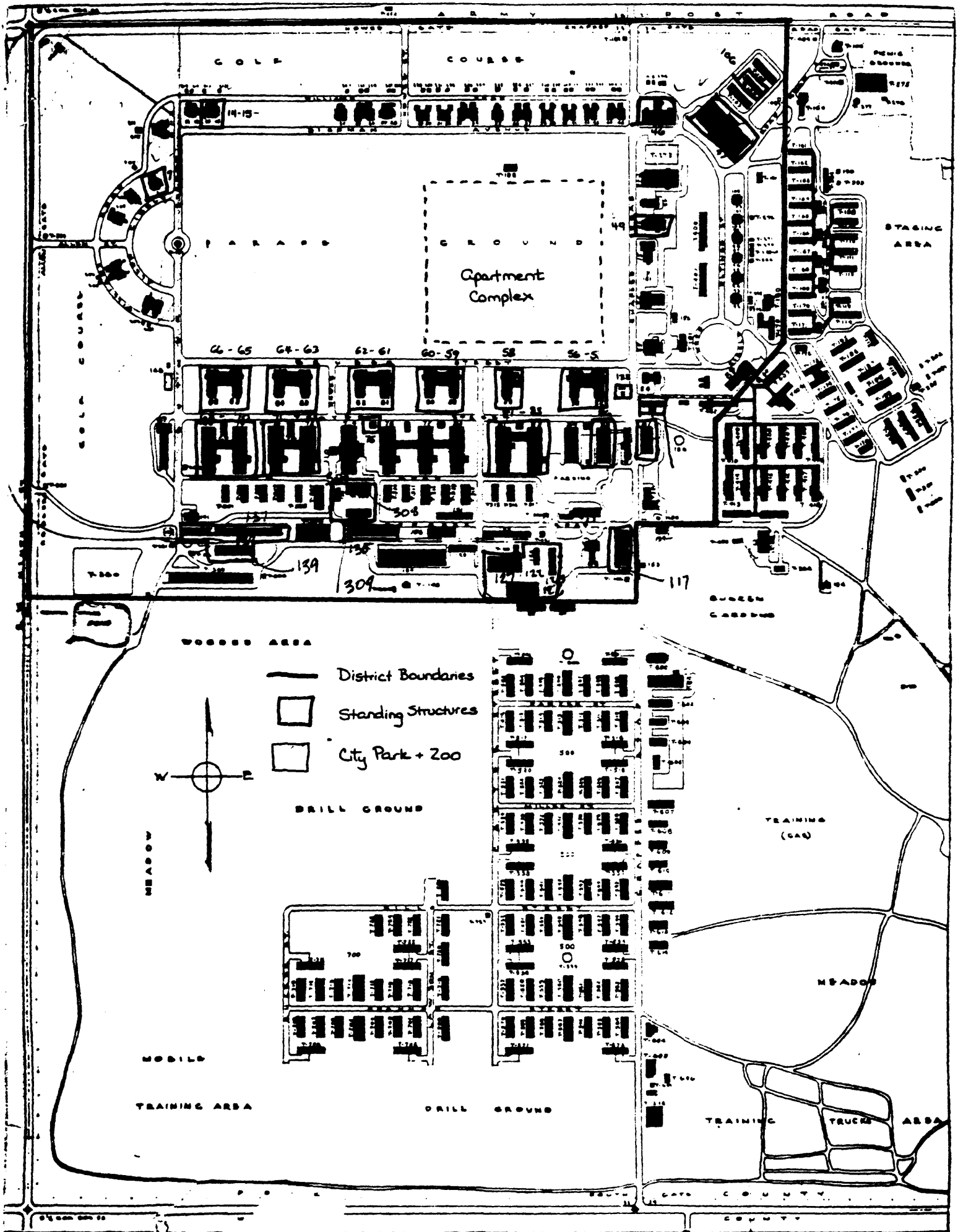
The area of the City Park has been included within the boundaries because of its proximity to and high visibility from the parade ground, and because it retains the formally designed western end of the parade ground. While all but two of the original residences at that end of the parade ground have been demolished, the layout of Allen Street, Allen Circle and Williams Road readily conveys the original design intent of that portion of the Fort grounds. Construction on the City Park is minimal and does not constitute a visual intrusion from or to the west end of the parade ground.

CONTRIBUTING HISTORIC STRUCTURES

<u>Building</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Historic Use</u>	<u>Present Use</u>
7	1902	Officers Quarters	storage, Still College
14	1902	Officers Quarters	storage, Still College
15	1902	Officers Quarters	storage, Still College
46	1902	Bachelor Officers Quarters	recruiting station
47	1902	Riding Hall	U.S. Navy
49	1902	Chapel	Chapel
55	1902	Barracks	vacant
56	1902	Barracks	vacant
58	1902	Barracks	vacant
59	1902	Barracks	vacant
60	1902	Barracks	vacant
61	1902	Barracks	vacant
62	1902	Barracks	vacant
63	1902	Barracks	Military Entrance Processing Station
64	1902	Barracks	Military Entrance Processing Station
65	1902	Barracks	Iowa Dept. of Human Services
66	1902	Barracks	Iowa Dept. of Human Services
68	1902	Stables	vacant
69	1902	Stables	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
70	1902	Stables	vacant
71	1902	Stables	vacant
72	1902	Stables	Iowa Wing, Civil Air Patrol
73	1902	Stables	vacant/CAP uses center portion
75	1902	Stables	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
81	1902	Stables	Army Reserve, storage
83	1902	Stables	Army Reserve, storage
86	1902	Stables	Iowa State Patrol
87	1902	Stables	General Services Administration
122	1902	Warehouse and Shops	vacant
123	1902	Warehouse and Shops	Post Exchange
126	1902	Warehouse and Shops	vacant
127	1902	Warehouse and Shops	vacant
135	1902	Warehouse and Shops	vacant
137	1902	Warehouse and Shops	Engineer Workforce (Maintenance)
138	1902	Warehouse and Shops	Engineer Workforce
149	1902	Electric Switching Station	U.S. Navy, storage
152	1902	Post Guardhouse Stables	storage

NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

<u>Building</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Use</u>
84	1958	Inflammable Materials Storage
106	1942	Storage (originally, Officers Mess)
117	1942	Engineer Workforce (Maintenance)
133	1930's	Inflammable Materials Storage (originally gas heater)
145	1920's	Water Meter Pit (demolished 1981)
146	1920's	Water Pump House
190	1939	Water Tower (demolished 1981)
194	1939	Lift Station (demolished 1983)
307	1942	vacant
308	1942	vacant
309	1942	vacant
gates	1930's	Post Gates, Chaffee Road and Allen Street (original gates demolished at same site)
	1962	Rifle Range (demolished)
	1977	Apartment Complex in parade ground
	1981	Norwest Bank, built 1981, on site of its 1977 building



Incl 6

FORT DES MOINES, IOWA GENERAL SITE MAP 1943