

Wisconsin Historical Society: Muirdale Tuberculosis Sanatorium placed on the State Register of Historic Places

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Contact: Kara O'Keeffe
608-261-9596
kara.okeeffe@wisconsinhistory.org

Wauwatosa, Wis. – The Wisconsin Historical Society placed the Muirdale Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Wauwatosa, Milwaukee County on the State Register of Historic Places on May 18, 2018.

The Muirdale Tuberculosis Sanatorium exemplifies pioneering methods for the treatment of tuberculosis, an extremely deadly communicable disease for which no cure was developed until after World War II. The hospital was constructed in 1915 and closed in 1969. The main hospital building is an example of an innovative, architectural approach to treating tuberculosis.

Specifically, the design of Muirdale was unique for its verticality. Rather than being spread horizontally across a large campus, the primary functions of the sanatorium hospital, including all medical treatments, were conducted in a single, tall building. Cottages (since demolished) housed patients who were either closer to recovery or required a less intense level of treatment, surrounding the main building, which allowed for the hospital to maximize treatment spaces and allowed doctors to work more efficiently.

The Hospital/Administration Building was the principal service building of Muirdale

and stood at the heart of the sanatorium. It held all of Muirdale's administrative offices, research labs, operating rooms, and dining and kitchen facilities, which were critical to the work of the sanatorium's staff and the treatment of its resident patients. It was the first such tuberculosis sanatorium administration and hospital building in Wisconsin to be built over two stories tall and housed the sanatorium's offices, treatment rooms, and dining spaces on a scale large enough to accommodate Muirdale's great number of staff and patients. The proximity of services in a single multi-story building improved efficiency and the care the sanatorium provided.

The State Register is Wisconsin's official list of state properties determined to be significant to Wisconsin's heritage. The State Historic Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society administers both the State Register and National Register in Wisconsin.