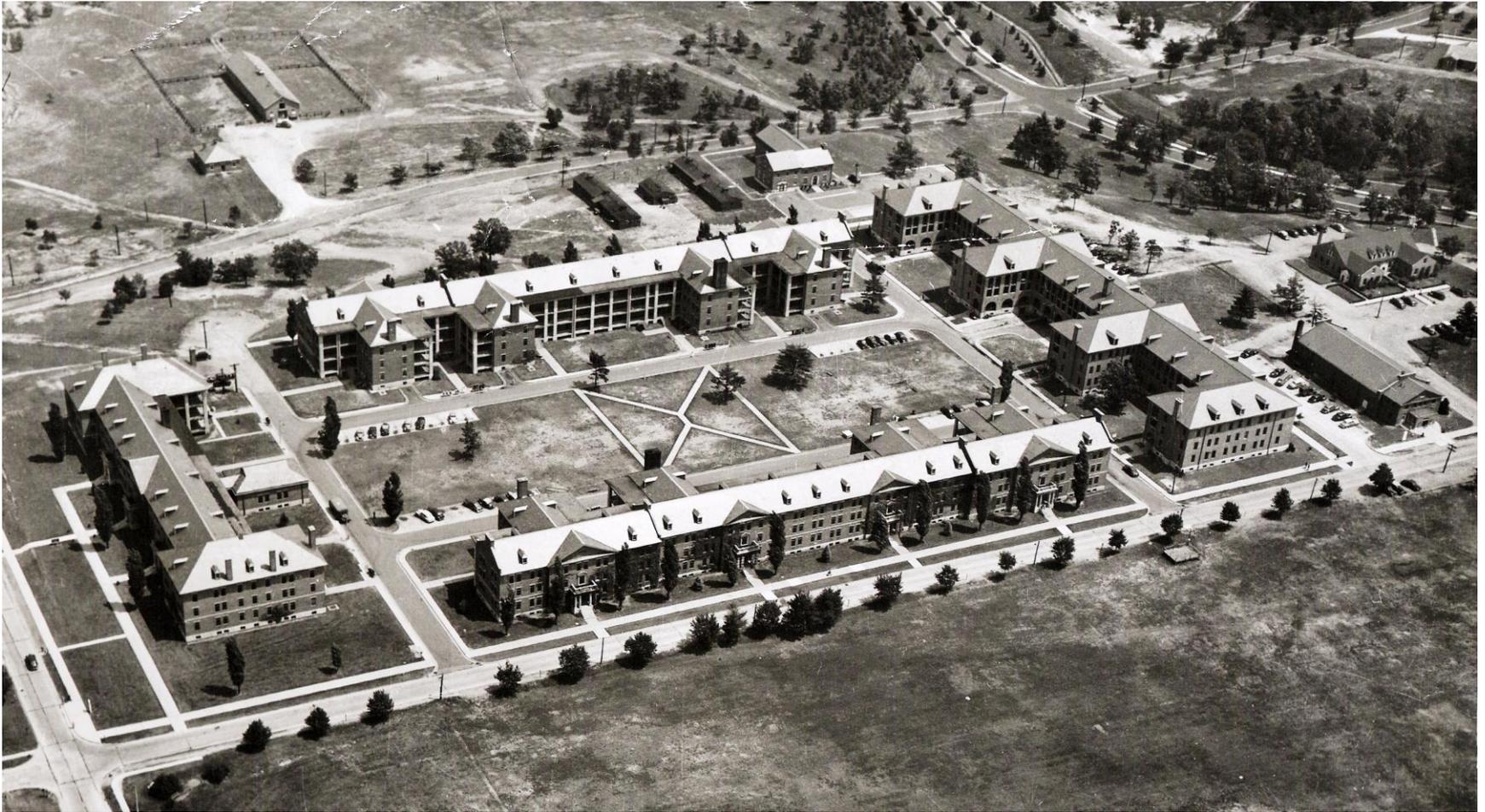


# Public Hearing: Vicksburg Square Rezoning

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November 28, 2018 • Town of Ayer



# Agenda

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- Introduction and Key Points
- Background on Vicksburg Square
  - Property History & Description
  - 2017 Conditions Assessment
  - Devens Zoning By-Laws and Reuse Plan
  - Process for Zoning Relief (Zoning Change)
- Proposed Changes to the Devens By-Laws
- Proposed Changes to the Devens Reuse Plan
- Comments and Questions
- Next Steps and Contact Info

# Introduction and Key Points

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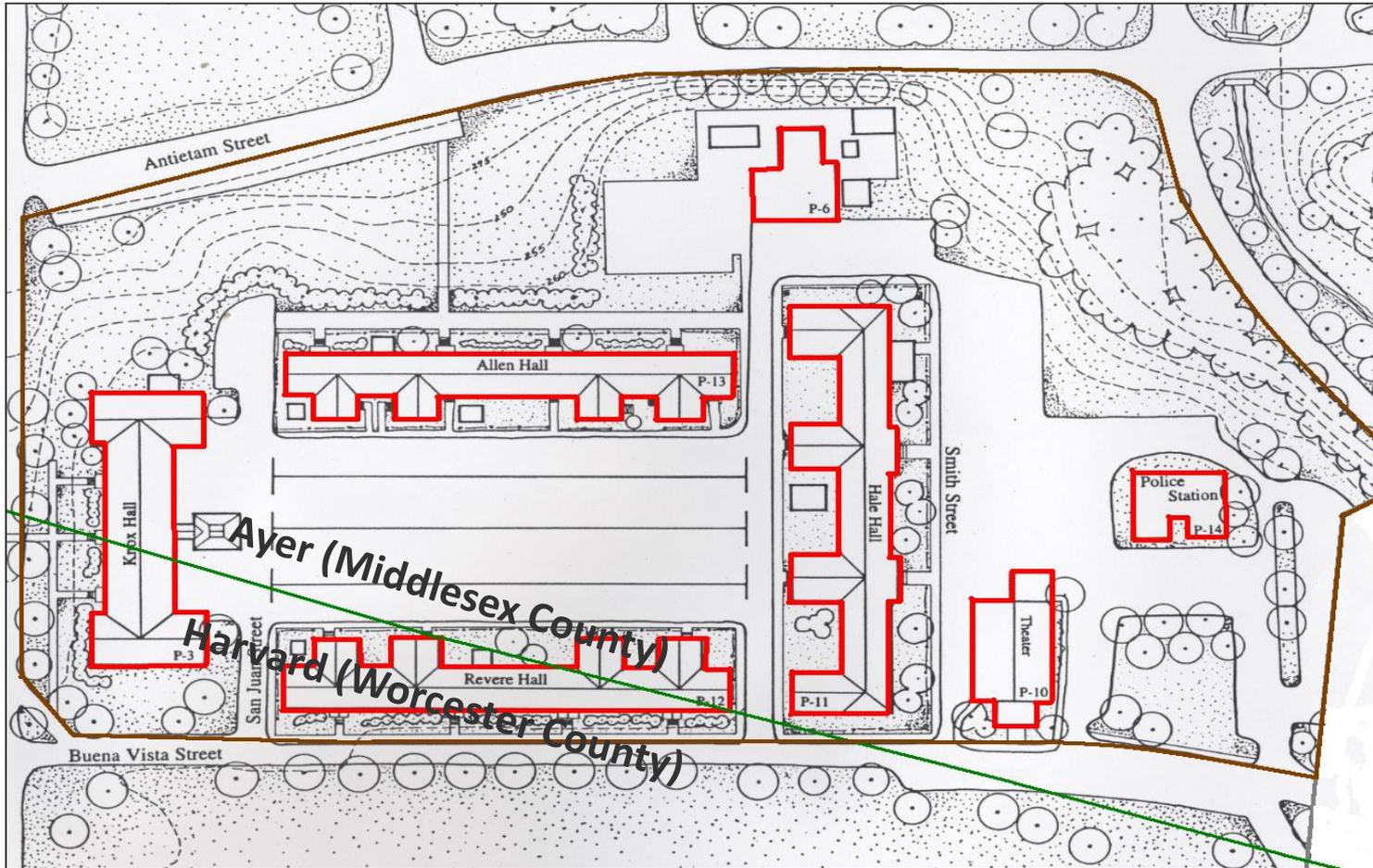
- This is the first of many public hearings and informational meetings
- All materials and information will be made available online at [www.massdevelopment.com/vicksburg](http://www.massdevelopment.com/vicksburg)
- This hearing is required by Chapter 498 of the Acts of 1993; it is not the same as a Planning Board or Zoning Board hearing under MGL Chapter 40A
- Tentative Super Town Meeting date: May 2019
- No developer has been selected at this point; several have expressed some interest
- Public hearings are a required part of the rezoning process; however, we will meet with any group that would like to meet

# Property History and Description

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- 19.6 acres in total
- Approximately 435,000 sf in seven buildings
- Prime location in the middle of Devens opposite Rogers Field
- Straddles Ayer-Harvard border
- Room for approximately 500 parking spaces
- All utilities available in surrounding streets
- National Register Historic District
- Hazardous material issues typical of similar buildings

# Property History and Description



**Note:** Site straddles boundary between Towns of Ayer (Middlesex County) and Harvard (Worcester County)

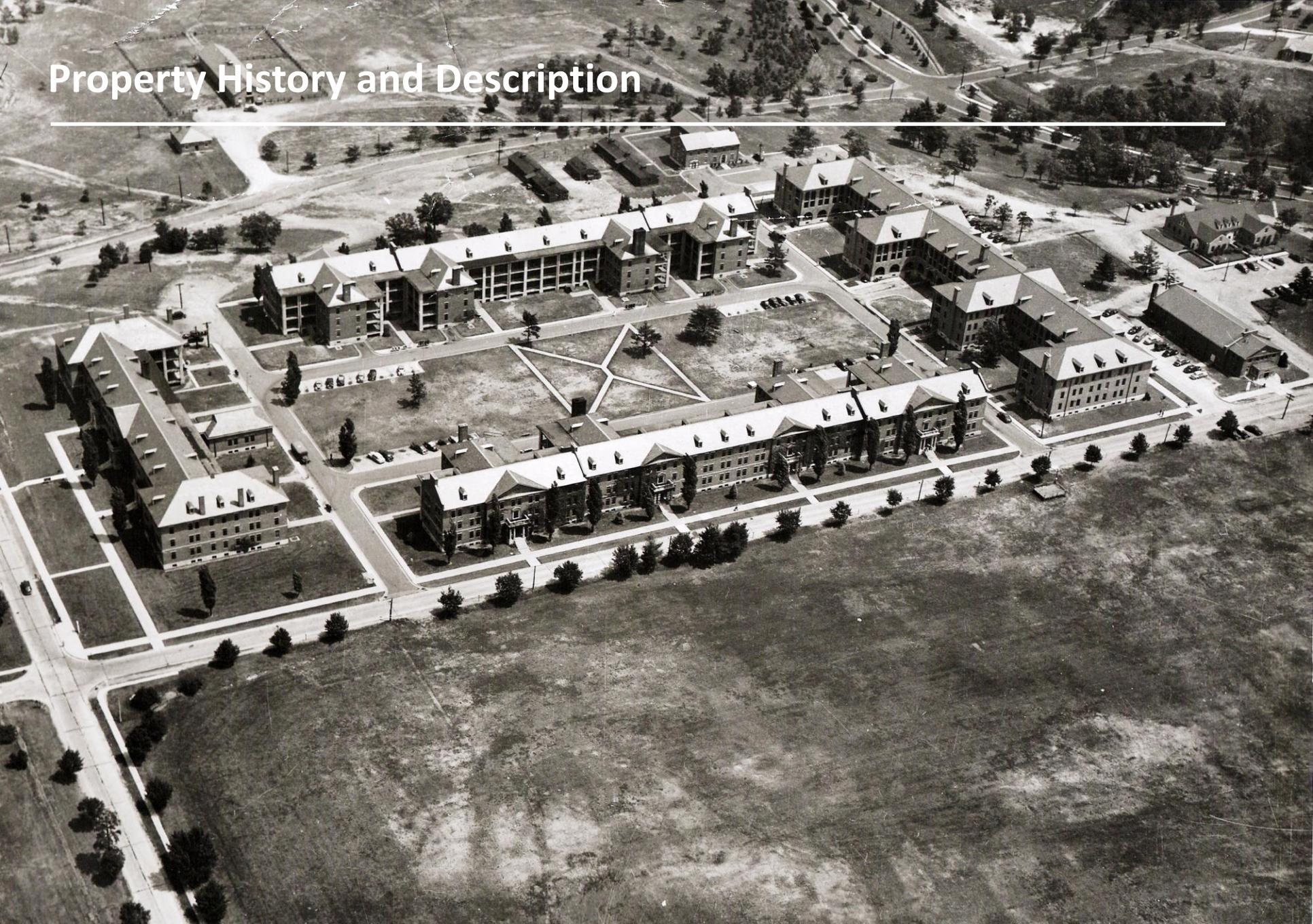
# Property History and Description

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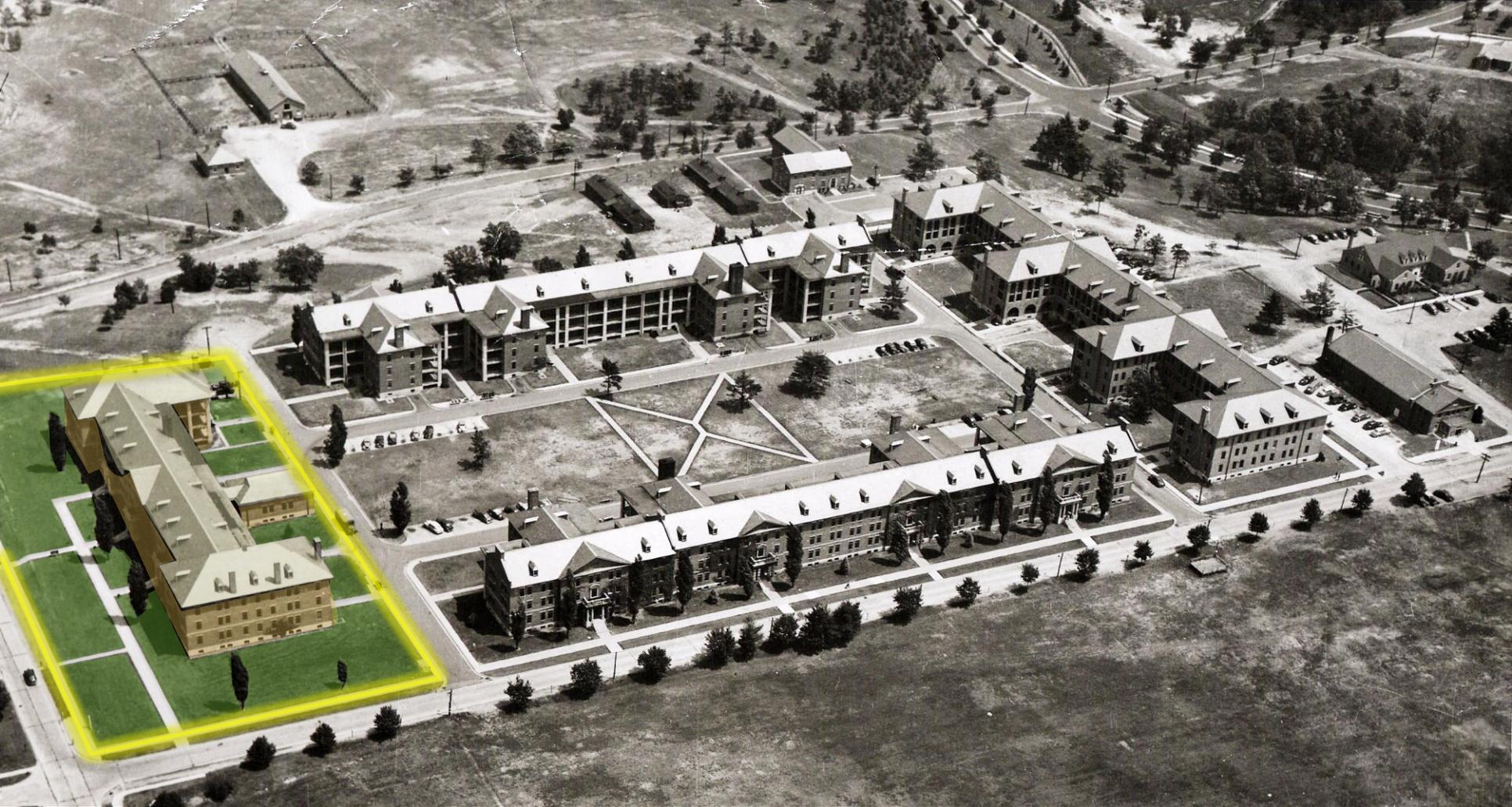
- **1917:** Federal Government leases land for temporary “Camp Devens”
- **1917-1918:** 100,000 troops processed during WWI
- **1919:** War Dept. takes/purchases land for \$15/acre
- **1927:** Funds appropriated for permanent construction
- **1929:** First three Vicksburg Square quad buildings erected
- **1940:** Peacetime draft spurs expansion, reaching peak population of 15,000 soldiers and family members. Final Vicksburg Square building erected.
- **1940-91:** Devens serves as training and demobilization center for WWII, Korean War, Vietnam, and Desert Storm
- **1991:** BRAC recommends closing Fort Devens
- **1993:** Chapter 498 enacted, establishing Devens Regional Enterprise Zone
- **1994:** Ayer, Harvard, and Shirley approve Reuse Plan
- **1996:** MassDevelopment takes title

# Property History and Description

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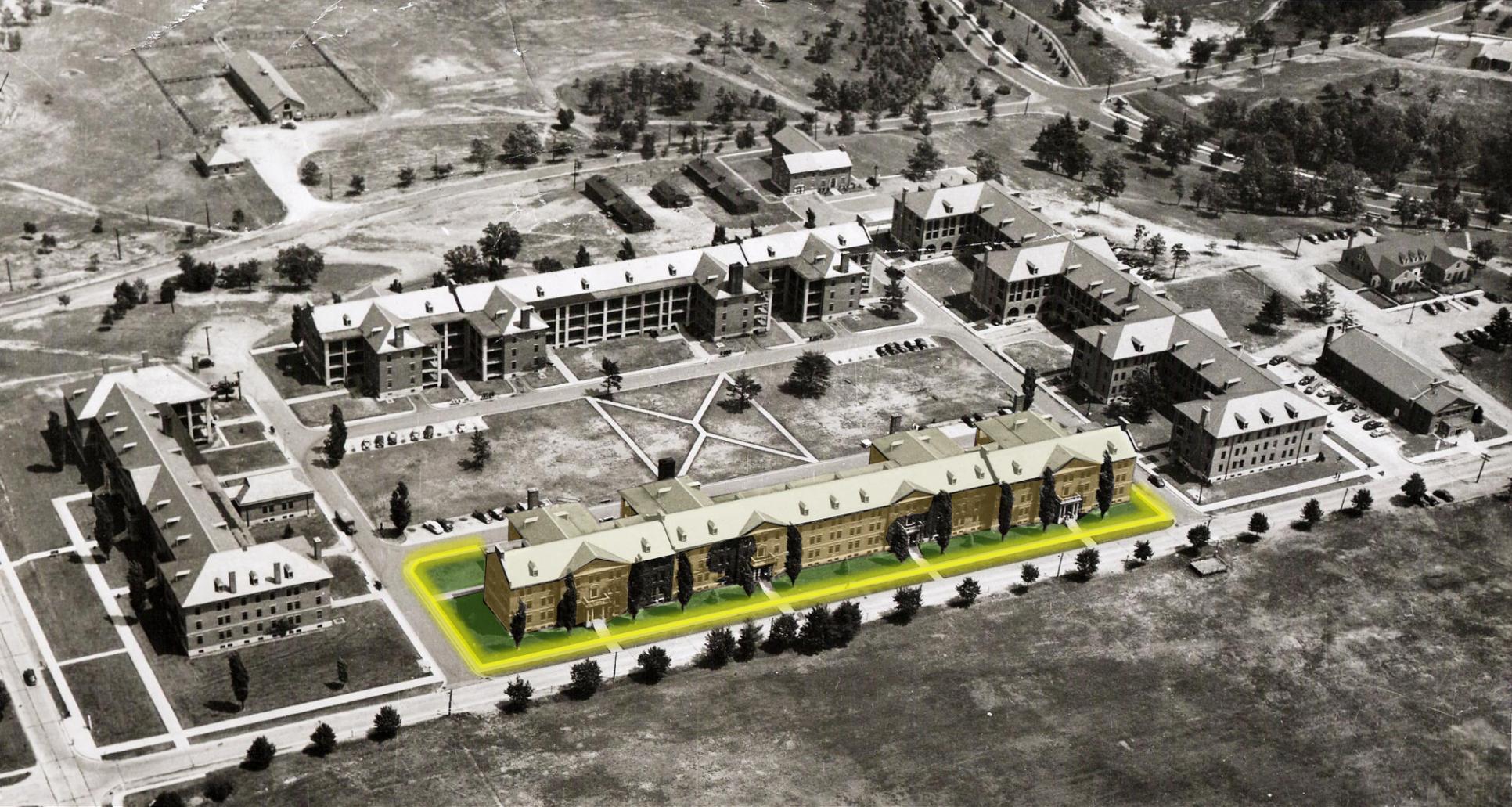


Aerial photo circa WWII



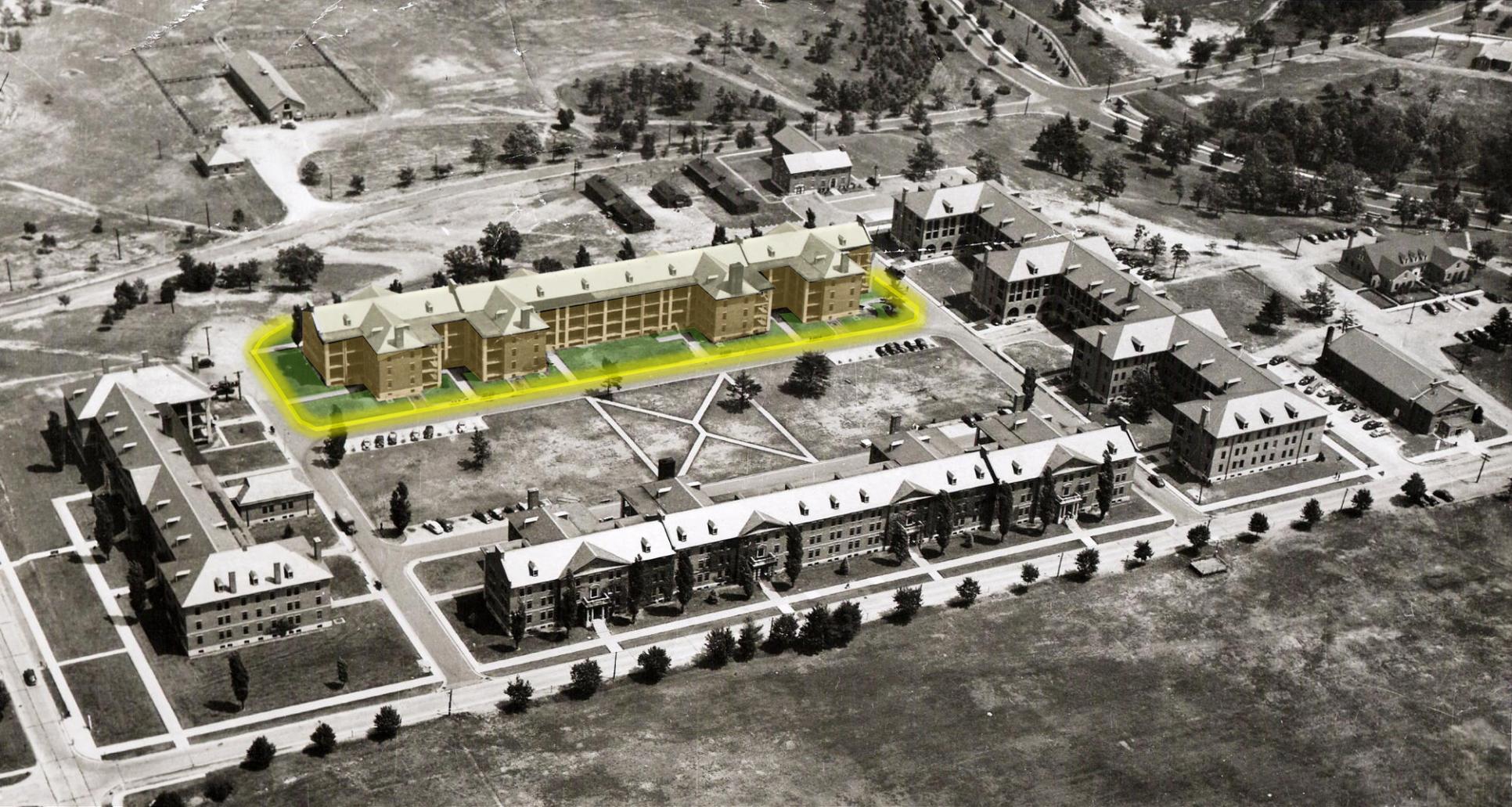
## Knox Hall (1929)

- 71,781 sf on three floors plus a 23,000 sf basement
- 13-bay Georgian Revival structure, three roof gables
- Originally built as Second Cantonment Hospital
- Mothballed in mid-1990s



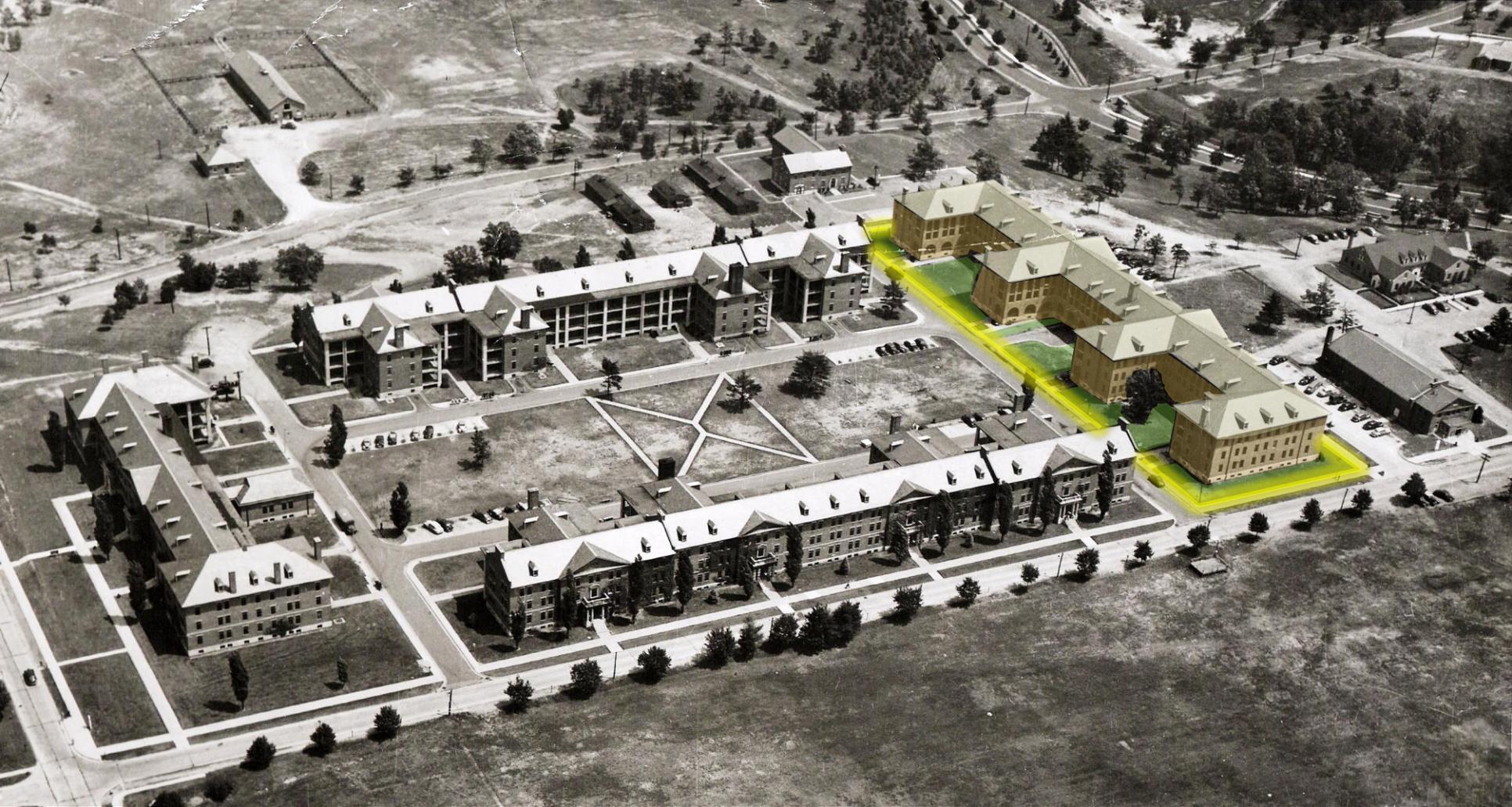
## Revere Hall (1929)

- 111,141 sf on three floors
- 23-bay Georgian Revival structure, four roof gables
- Originally built to house 250 soldiers
- Partially renovated and occupied by MassDevelopment and tenants until 2004/2005



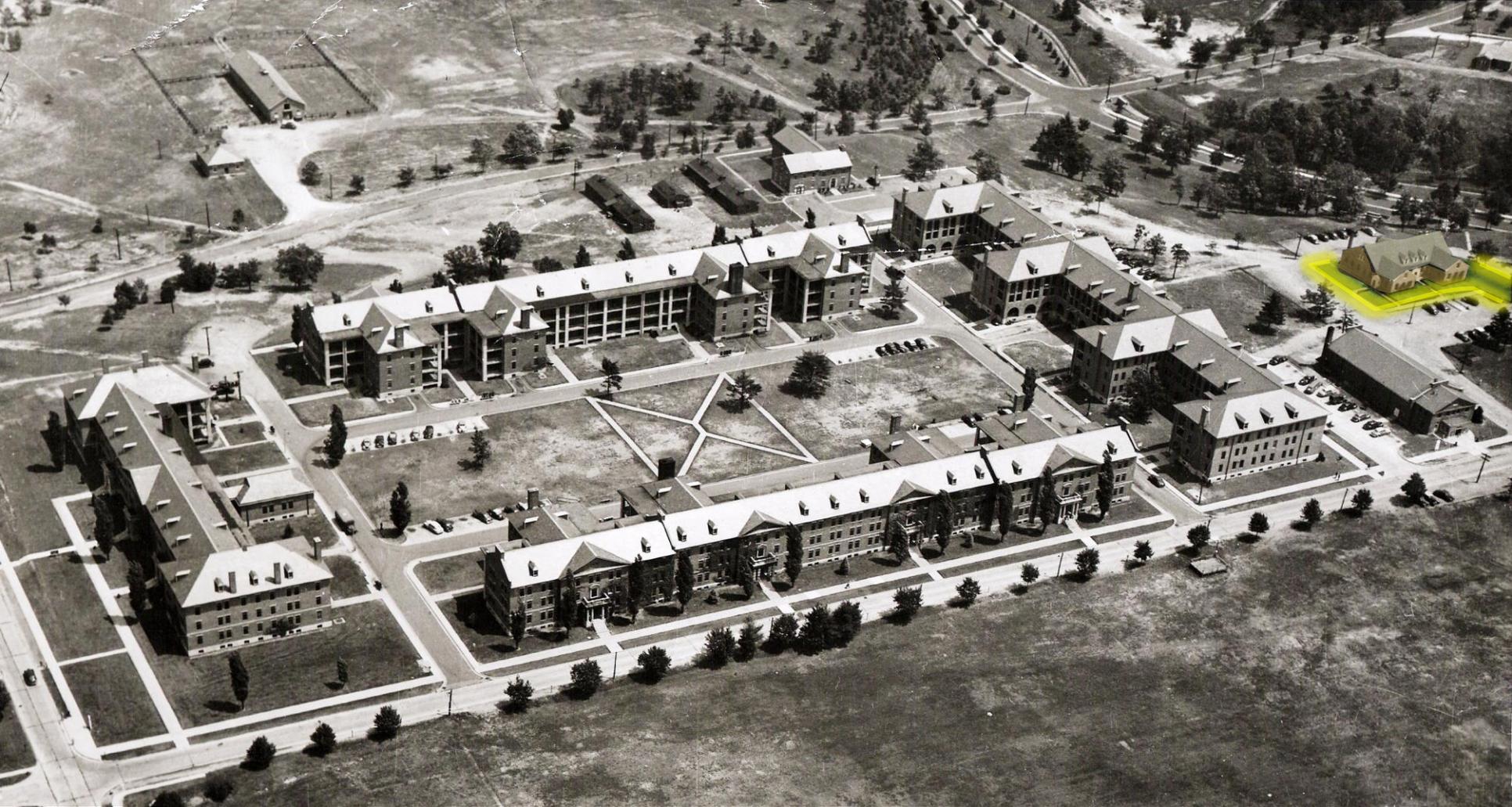
## Allen Hall (1929)

- 113,075 sf on three floors including basement
- 23-bay Georgian Revival structure, four roof gables
- Originally built to house 400 soldiers
- Counter-espionage retrofits bricked up all first-floor windows and limit radio communications and limits ability for radio signals to penetrate walls. Mothballed in mid-1990s.



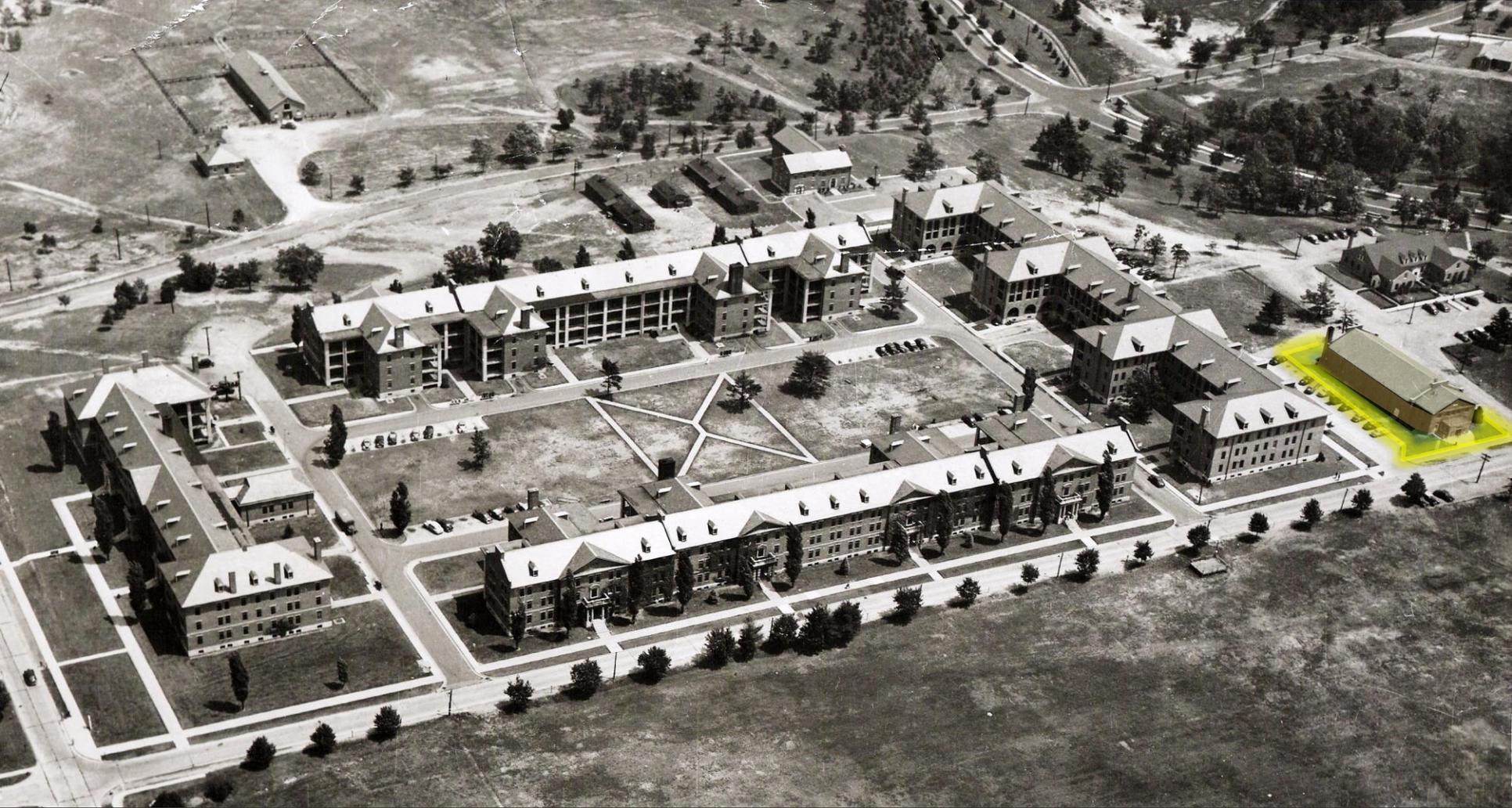
## Hale Hall (1940)

- 112,825 sf on three floors including basement
- 23-bay Georgian Revival structure, four roof gables
- Originally built to house 500 soldiers
- Mothballed in mid-1990s



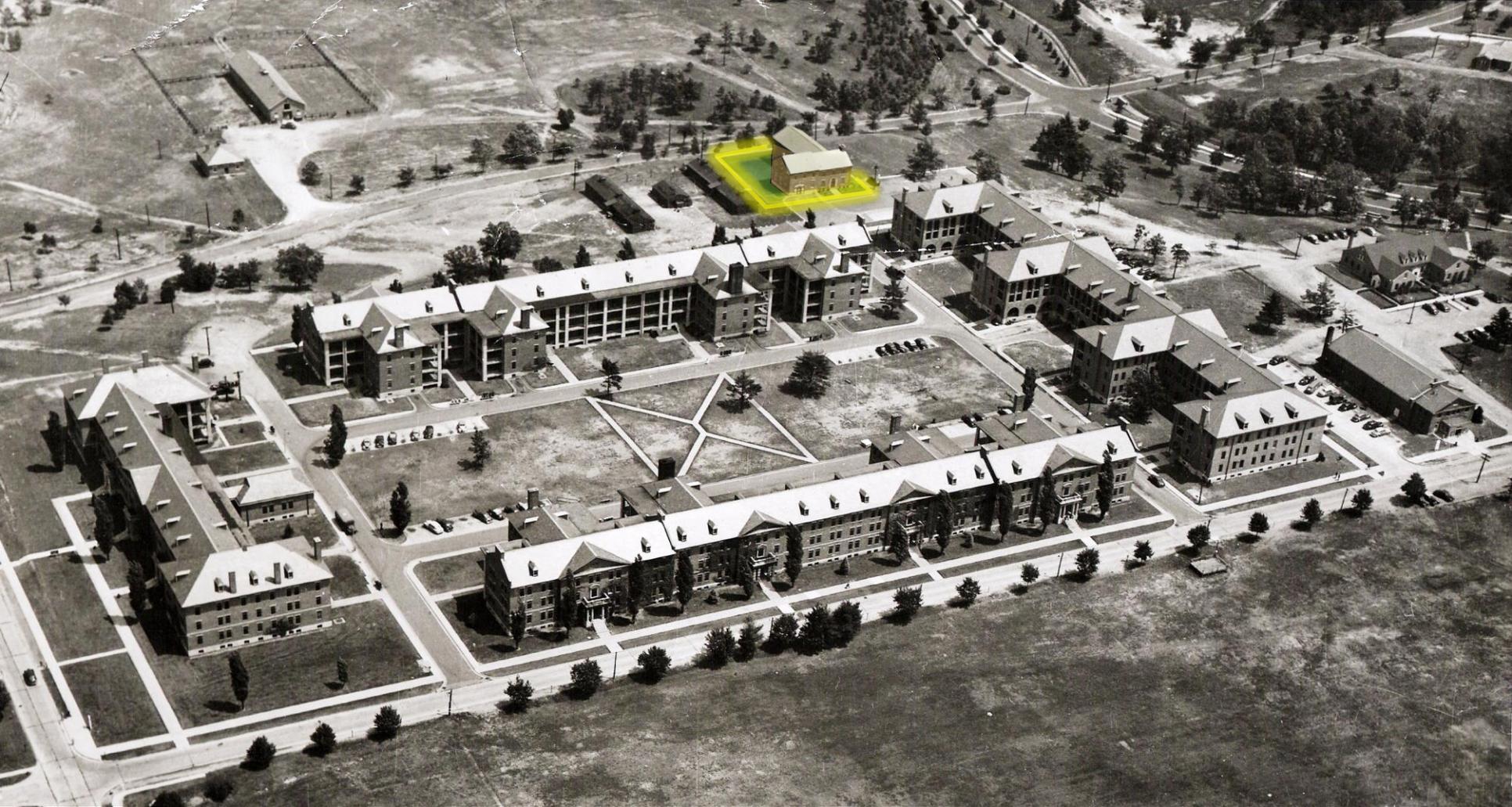
## State Police Building (1918)

- 10,652 sf on two floors
- Originally built as Main Post Exchange
- Only Vicksburg Square building not on National Register
- Currently licensed to State Police pursuant to MOU



## Bataan Corregidor Memorial Hall (1932)

- 6,766 sf on two stories
- Originally built as dramatic theater, converted for motion picture
- Some original fixtures remain
- Unused since mid-1990s



## Former Firehouse (1930)

- 7,863 sf on two floors
- Originally built as firehouse with attached guard house
- Includes fenced dog run
- Mothballed in mid-1990s

# 2017 Conditions Assessment

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## Deteriorating building conditions

- Since MassDevelopment moved out in 2004/2005, Vicksburg has been a target for break-ins. Buildings have been used as “hang-outs” and most of the original copper piping in the buildings has been stolen.
- There has been little to no building maintenance since the buildings were vacated. Utility service has been shut off to the buildings. Heating and ventilation systems have been shut down.
- MDFA actions have been focused on efforts to prevent unlawful entry.



LEFT: KNOX HALL “PARTY ROOM”, 2017

# 2017 Conditions Assessment

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## General Conditions: Roofs

- Asphalt shingle roofs are in various stages of disrepair depending on when last maintenance was performed.
- South facing shingles exposed to more sun and wind are far more deteriorated.
- Membrane roofing has come loose in sections of Revere & Allen.
- All roofing material is gone on flat roof at west end of Allen.



LEFT: ALLEN HALL ROOF  
CONDITIONS, 2017

# 2017 Conditions Assessment

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## General Conditions: Exteriors

- Broken windows/frames scattered around all buildings
- Varying degrees of spalling concrete on all buildings
- Missing, rotted or broken sections of fascia on all buildings
- A/C units still in place



FROM LEFT: ALLEN HALL AND  
KNOX HALL, 2017

# 2017 Conditions Assessment

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## General Conditions: Interiors

- Moderate to severe water damage in all buildings
- Lead paint flaking and peeling in all buildings
- Asbestos floor tiles in all buildings
- Patches of black mold found in all buildings
- Recent air quality readings indicate that use of buildings in their current state would present an unacceptable risk to human health... remediation for lead and mold is necessary before occupying any building



FROM LEFT: HALE HALL  
BASEMENT AND ALLEN HALL  
ATTIC CONDITIONS, 2017

# 2017 Conditions Assessment

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## General Findings: Inspection of Main Buildings

- Hale Hall was in best condition but still showed signs of disuse and exhibited unhealthy air quality.
- Revere Hall, Knox Hall and Allen Hall all show signs of deterioration due to lack of maintenance and damage from break-ins.
- Allen Hall has most extensive and significant deterioration.
- Other than in isolated areas there does not appear to be any severe structural degradation.
- As a result of the study, MassDevelopment made a concentrated effort to improve security by fencing off the entire Vicksburg Square quadrangle, boarding up all first floor windows and doors and installing motion-sensitive video cameras that are monitored 24 hours by a security company. Break ins have decreased significantly.

# Devens By-Laws and Reuse Plan

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- The 1994 Devens By-Laws and Devens Reuse Plan establish Devens zoning
- Zoning is enforced by the Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC)
- The site is located within the Innovation & Technology Center District (ITC)
- **ITC Allowed Uses:** office, business incubator, light industrial, research & development, conference facilities, civic and municipal uses, cultural and exhibit space and academic and institutional uses.
- **ITC Allowed Accessory Uses:** small-scale retail and dormitories
- **ITC Prohibited Uses:** all residential, hotel, retail uses, heavy industrial
- **Housing Cap:** Devens housing limited to 282 units. As of today, 264 units are accounted for (built or committed), leaving 18 units free. Note that a special exception approved at Super Town Meeting in 2016 allows for an additional 120 units of senior housing in the Shirley Village Growth district.

# Devens By-Laws and Reuse Plan

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- **Affordability:** The Reuse Plan states that approximately 25% of the 282 units allowed in Devens shall be set aside for low-income, moderate-income and/or special needs housing. Currently, MDFA is on target to meet this requirement.

## Process for Zoning Relief (Zoning Change)

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- Any proposed changes shall be voted on by the three towns (Ayer, Harvard and Shirley) at a simultaneous **Super Town Meeting** held in the three towns.
- The zoning changes must pass in all three towns by a simple majority.
- No motions to change the zoning on the floor of Super Town Meeting are allowed so that all three towns are voting on the same question(s).
- MassDevelopment and the Towns must hold at least two **public hearings** must be held prior to Super Town Meeting to generate feedback on the proposed question(s).
- These hearings must be noticed in local newspapers for at least 14 days prior to the meetings. Review materials will be available at each town hall.
- Super Town Meeting is scheduled by the three towns and is noticed in a manner similar to how each town's normal town meetings are noticed.
- For more information on the rezoning process, see Section 10 of Chapter 498 of the Acts of 1993 at <http://www.devensec.com/ch498/dec49810.html>.

# Proposed Changes to the Devens By-Laws (Zoning)

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- Eight changes in total, intended to allow for multi-family residential and senior housing in the buildings while continuing to allow for other compatible uses already allowed.
- **Change #1:** Provides for a new zoning district in the By-Laws (15 in total) in addition to the 14 existing districts.
- **Change #2:** Revises the text description of the Innovation Technology Center district to exclude the Vicksburg Square buildings.
- **Change #3:** Describes the location and development goals of the new Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District.

# Proposed Changes to the Devens By-Laws (Zoning)

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- **Change #4a:** Fixes a long-standing inconsistency in the By-Laws. Previously, this section defined multi-family dwellings as having three to eight units per building, while the use table defines multi-family dwellings as having three to six units per building. Here, we have chosen to standardize the definition of multi-family dwellings as three to six units per building.
- **Change #4b:** Creates a new category of multi-family residential use, having in excess of six units per building but only applicable to the Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District.
- **Change #5:** Increases the Devens housing cap by 300 units, only applicable to the Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District.

# Proposed Changes to the Devens By-Laws (Zoning)

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- **Change #6:** Revises the zoning map to reflect the new Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District and the changes to the Innovation Technology Center district.
- **Change #7:** Establishes density and dimensional controls for the new Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District.
- **Change #8:** Establishes allowed, accessory, and prohibited uses for the new Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District.

# Proposed Changes to the Devens Reuse Plan

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- Six changes in total, intended to allow for multi-family residential and senior housing in the buildings while continuing to allow for other compatible uses already allowed.
- **Change #1:** Updates the description of the Innovation and Technology Center to reflect why Vicksburg Square was not developed as a technology incubator and how MassDevelopment has accommodated those uses and users elsewhere on Devens.
- **Change #2:** Revises the zoning map to reflect the new Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District and the changes to the Innovation Technology Center district.
- **Change #3:** Modifies the description of the Innovation and Technology Center district to remove reference to Vicksburg Square.

# Proposed Changes to the Devens Reuse Plan

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- **Change #4:** Updates the Housing and Community Facilities section to reflect 1.) the previously approved zoning change allowing senior residential in the Shirley Village Growth district; 2.) this proposal; and 3.) proposed affordability in the new Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District.
- **Change #5:** Provides a new section describing the new Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District including a list of allowed and accessory uses.
- **Change #6:** Provides a new section describing goals and objectives and example uses for the new Vicksburg Square Redevelopment District.

# Public Hearing: Vicksburg Square Rezoning

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November 27, 2018 • Town of Harvard

## Comments & Questions

## Next Steps and Contact Info

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- Initial Public Hearings (November and December)
  - ~~Harvard – November 27~~
  - Ayer – November 28
  - Devens – December 19
  - Shirley – December 21
- Revisions and Additional Public Hearings (January – March)
- Finalize Warrant and Set Super Town Meeting Date (April)
- Final Outreach and Information Sessions (April – May)
- Super Town Meeting Vote (Late May)

Informational Website: [www.massdevelopment.com/vicksburg](http://www.massdevelopment.com/vicksburg)

Ed Starzec, MassDevelopment

[estarzec@massdevelopment.com](mailto:estarzec@massdevelopment.com) or (617) 330-2035