

MAYWOOD PARK RACETRACK
RACETRACK KITCHEN BUILDING

HABS IL-1244

Maywood Park Racetrack
8600 W. North Avenue
Melrose Park
Cook County
Illinois

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED & INTERPRETIVE DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

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HABS No. IL-1244

- Location: The Racetrack Kitchen Building is situated within the Maywood Park Racetrack, which is located at 8600 W. North Avenue in Melrose Park, Illinois. The property is part of the North Half of the Northwest Quarter of Section 2, Township 39 North, Range 12 East of the Third Principal Meridian in Cook County (Proviso Township). It is bounded by North Avenue on the north; residential subdivisions on the south; First Avenue on the east; commercial development on the west, and is bisected by Fifth Avenue.
- USGS Quadrangle: Proviso.
- Present Owner: Maywood Realty Company LLC.
- Present Use: Vacant.
- Significance: The Racetrack Kitchen Building was originally built ca. 1946 as a stable for the Galt family, which owned the Maywood Racetrack property throughout its history. It is one of only two extant original buildings on the site, which underwent a major decade-long renovation during the 1960s and 1970s that included the construction of a massive new Grandstand/Clubhouse Building and the replacement of all original wood outbuildings with modern concrete structures, including new stables and motel-like dormitories. The Maywood Park Racetrack operated from 1946 to 2015 and served as one of the premier half-mile Standardbred racetracks in the United States for much of its history. It represented an era when harness racing was one of the most popular spectator sports in the nation.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Physical History:
1. Dates of construction: ca. 1948.
 2. Architect: Unknown.
 3. Contractor/Builders: Unknown.

4. Original and subsequent owners: See Maywood Park Racetrack Report.
5. Original plans and construction: The Racetrack Kitchen Building was constructed as a gambrel roofed barn with concrete block lower walls. Its exact appearance is unknown as no historic photos were found showing this building when it served as a barn.
6. Alterations and additions: This building's conversion from a barn to a two-story building with a first floor cafeteria and second floor offices/living quarters involved extensive alterations that have included the installation of upper level aluminum siding and windows, enclosed porches on the east and west elevations, and asphalt shingles on the roof. Interior alterations included the installation of partition walls on the first and second floors, a full bathroom on the second floor, and new floor, wall and ceiling finishes over the years.

B. Historical Context:

The Racetrack Kitchen was originally built as a barn for the Galt family's horses, according to a plaque that was on the building until recent years. Arthur Galt purchased the racetrack property in 1922 and it was owned by his descendants until 2019. The barn was extensively renovated prior to the early 1970s to serve as the Racetrack Kitchen with a cafeteria on the first floor that mainly served the groomsmen who resided in the dormitories during the racing seasons. The cafeteria manager resided on the second floor, which also included a doctor's office and a dentist's office for the groomsmen, who were on the low end of the pay scale. Cafeteria use ended in the 1990s when racetrack earnings were in decline and vending machines were installed on the first floor which was then used as a lounge for groomsmen. The second floor was unoccupied for a number of years prior to Maywood Park's closure in 2015.¹

Historical context for the overall Maywood Park Racetrack is included in the Maywood Park Racetrack Report and features the following contextual essays:

1. Overview of Harness Racing in the U.S. and the Chicago Region.
2. Establishment of Cook County Fairgrounds on the site in 1930s.
3. History of Maywood Park Racetrack: 1946 to 1965.
4. Post-1965 History of Maywood Park Racetrack.
5. Original Owner Arthur T. Galt Sr.
6. Architect Lionel K. Levy.

¹ Information on this building's use was obtained by interviews with Tony Simone, Executive Director, Illinois Harness Horsemen's Association on February 12, 2019 and with Paul Tarleton, former Facility Superintendent of Maywood Park Racetrack on February 21, 2019.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement: The Racetrack Kitchen is a two-story, gambrel-roof edifice with concrete block walls. The gambrel ends of the second floor are sheathed in aluminum siding. The building has three exterior metal doors: two on the first floor and one on the second floor. Fenestration is varied and includes openings infilled with glass block, one-over-one windows, and wood. The first-floor plan is largely comprised of a single open space and kitchen, while the second floor is comprised of several bedrooms and a bathroom. Flooring is quarry tile (first floor) and linoleum (second floor). Partition walls are generally gypsum board or drywall. Most rooms have suspended acoustical tile systems although some second-floor rooms have plaster ceilings.
- B. Description of Exterior:
1. Over-all dimensions: The building has a total length of approximately 74'-0" (east-west), and a total width of 43'-0" (north-south).
 2. Foundations: Poured concrete.
 3. Walls: The first floor has concrete block walls. The gambrel ends of the second floor are sheathed with aluminum siding.
 4. Structural system: Load bearing walls.
 5. Porch: The east and west elevations each have a small enclosed flat-roofed porch sheathed with wood boards.
 6. Stairway: The east elevation has a metal staircase leading to the second-floor door.
 7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The building has three exterior doors: one on the north wall of the west elevation porch; one on the east wall of the east elevation porch; and one on the second floor of the east elevation. All three doors are hollow metal and have a window opening covered with plywood.
 - b. Windows: The east elevation has two second floor window openings that have been covered with wood. The north elevation has five small window openings on the first floor, one of which has an air conditioner while the other four have been infilled with wood; one large glass block window at its west end. The north elevation dormer has a picture window flanked by a one-over-one wood-sash window on either side.

The west elevation has one large glass block window on the first floor; the second floor of this elevation has four windows: one three-over-one window in which the glass panes have been replaced with plywood; and three one-over-one wood-sash windows.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gambrel roof covered with asphalt shingles.
- b. Dormers, ventilators: There are two metal ventilators on the ridgeline of the roof. The north elevation has a shed dormer with three window openings that is sheathed with aluminum and has an asphalt shingled roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The first-floor plan features a single large open space comprising most of the first-floor plan, with a kitchen and full bathroom along its north wall and a built-in freezer along its west wall. The second-floor plan features five primary rooms, a full bathroom, and a short hallway.
2. Stairways: A wood staircase is located near the northwest corner of the building.
3. Flooring: This building primarily features quarry tile flooring (first floor) and linoleum tile flooring (second floor).
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Partition walls are gypsum board or drywall. Walls in the first-floor lounge (former cafeteria) are sheathed in pine. This room features wood posts and ceiling beams. Most rooms have suspended acoustical tile systems although some second-floor rooms have plaster ceilings.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Typical interior doors are hollow metal. All doorways are wood.
6. Hardware: Exterior and interior doors have standard hinges and knobs. Double-hung windows have standard sash locks.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Gas forced air.

b. Lighting: Illumination is mainly provided by fluorescent lighting fixtures that are either affixed to plaster ceilings or incorporated into suspended acoustical tile ceiling systems. Some rooms have ceiling fans with lights.

c. Plumbing:

Both the first and second floors of this building have a full bathroom with a bathtub, toilet and sink. A kitchen sink is located in a second floor room.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Racetrack Kitchen Building is located on the south side (backstretch) of the racetrack, in between the U-shaped dormitory building (Building 6b) and a group of stables (Building 7c).

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings: No architectural drawings were found for this building.

B. Maps: See Maywood Park Racetrack Report.

C. Interviews: See Maywood Park Racetrack Report.

D. Bibliography: See Maywood Park Racetrack Report.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: See Maywood Park Racetrack Report.

F. Sketch Plan: A floor plan of this building is attached to this Outline Report.

G. Supplemental Material: The following materials are attached to this report:

Figure 1: Building Site Location Plan, 2019, drawn by Lucas Howser, MARS.

Figure 2: Sketch floor plans of the Racetrack Kitchen Building.

Figure 3: View of north (left) and west elevations.

Figure 4: View of west elevation.

Figure 5: View of east (left) and north elevations.

Figure 6: View of east elevation.

Figure 7: First floor looking west.

Figure 8: View of first floor kitchen area.

Figure 9: View of first floor looking east.

Figure 10: View of former dentist's office on second floor.

Figure 11: View of second floor living quarters.

Figure 12: View of second floor hallway.

Figure 13: Interior view of second floor door to outside.

PART IV. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH:

- A. Research Strategy: See Maywood Park Racetrack Report.
- B. Actual Research Process: See Maywood Park Racetrack Report.
- C. Archives and Repositories Used: See Maywood Park Racetrack Report.
- D. Project Team: See Maywood Park Racetrack Report.

PART V. PROJECT INFORMATION

This HABS documentation project was undertaken to mitigate the adverse effects of a proposed commercial project by Maywood Realty Company LLC on cultural resources within the 55-acre project area. The terms of the mitigation were agreed upon and executed to ensure compliance with the Illinois State Agency Historic Resources Preservation Act (20 ILCS 3420).

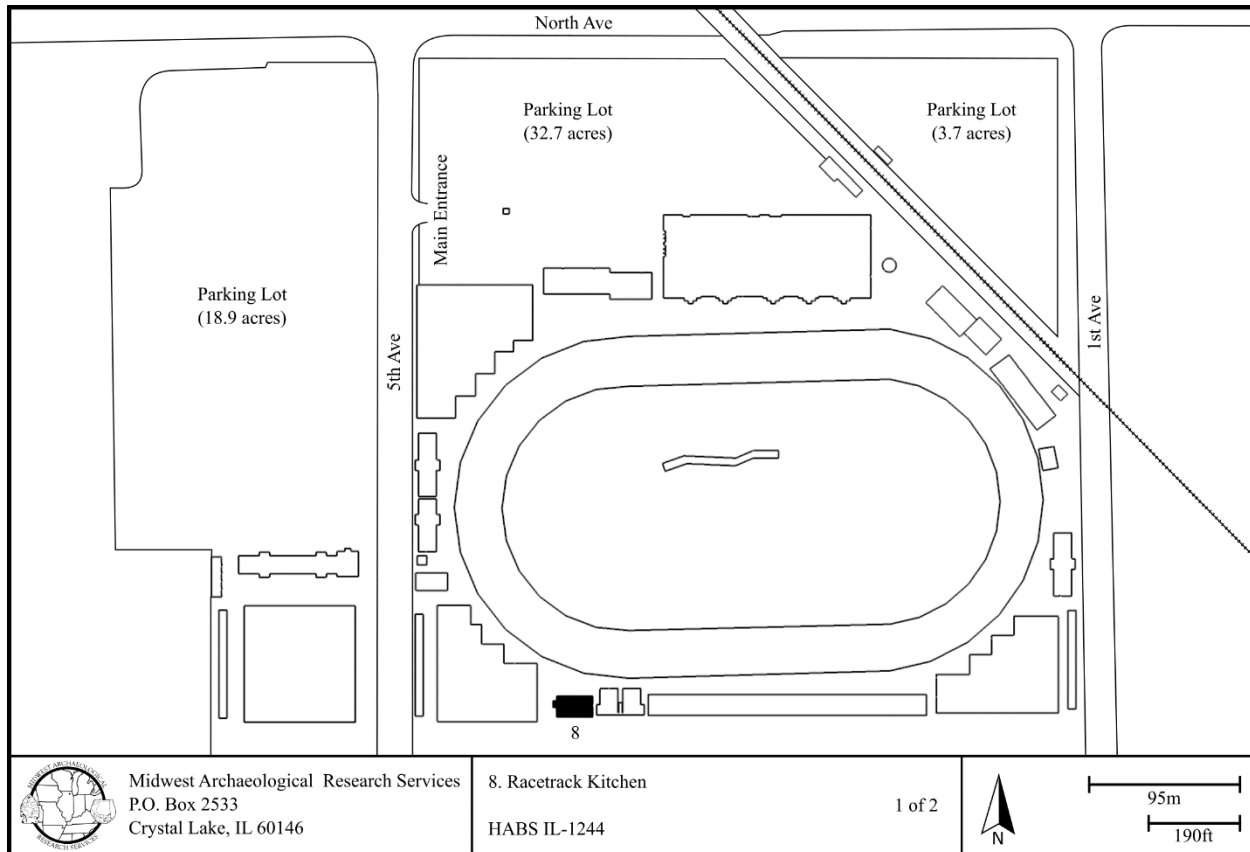


Figure 1: Building Site Location Plan, 2019, drawn by Lucas Howser, MARS.

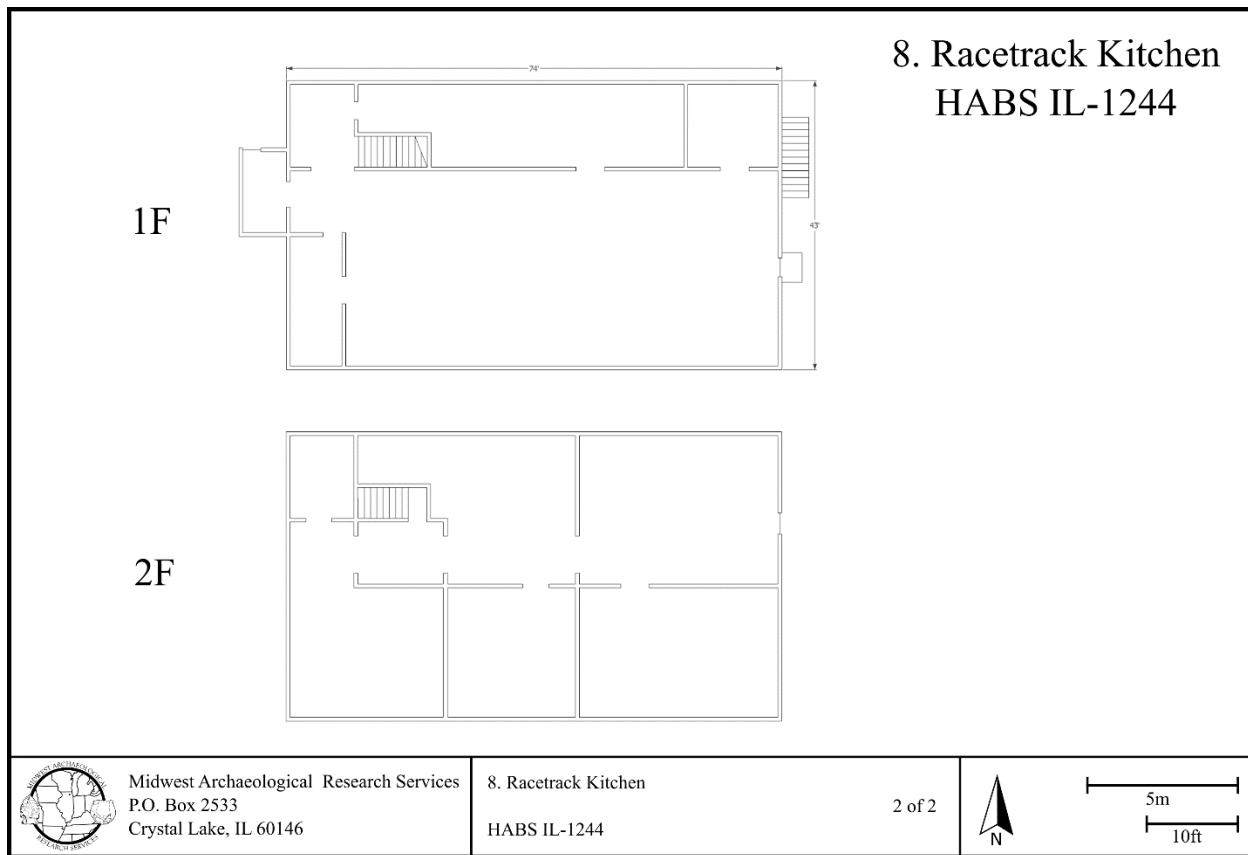


Figure 2: Sketch floor plans of the Racetrack Kitchen Building.



Figure 3: View of north (left) and west elevations.



Figure 4: View of west elevation.



Figure 5: View of east (left) and north elevations.



Figure 6: View of east elevation.



Figure 7: First floor looking west.



Figure 8: View of first floor kitchen area.



Figure 9: View of first floor looking east.



Figure 10: View of former dentist's office on second floor.



Figure 11: View of second floor living quarters.



Figure 12: View of second floor hallway.



Figure 13: Interior view of second floor door to outside.