

# Part of Carson history coming down

By Andrea Stone  
Mountaineer staff

The buildings have stood for nearly 70 years, but seven of them are slated to come down in the coming months.

At its heyday during World War II, the Old Hospital Complex on what was then Camp Carson consisted of 57 buildings capable of handling about 3,000 patients, according to documents from the National Park Service.

Three of the buildings were nominated for the National Register of Historic Places, but demolition has begun on the remaining ones, located east of Carson Middle School.

The buildings, which were built in the 1940s, contain asbestos and lead paint, leading to challenges in their demolition.

"Getting it cleaned up is a lot better because the paint has been flaking off for the last 20 years," said Dave Martin, environmental protection specialist with the Directorate of Public Works. "We're actually cleaning

up a site that's more hazardous than the demolition."

The first building they began work on is asbestos free, but the workers are treating it as though it had asbestos so they can practice their procedures.

Asbestos, which occurs naturally, was often used as a building material, and is safe as long as it's undisturbed. When it's disturbed, fibers can become airborne and cause respiratory problems, Martin said.

To prevent that, air monitors are placed around

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### Demolition

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the demolition site, with several of the monitors located near Iroquois Village, the housing area that borders the demolition site.

Air is sucked through a filter and, at the end of the day, the filters are collected and analyzed under a microscope. If the fiber count is above a certain threshold, the samples are sent to a lab in Denver to be checked for asbestos fibers.

"It's the most stringent sampling there is," said Aaron Ardourel, lead air monitoring specialist for Walsh Environmental.

As demolition proceeds, workers spray water on the building to keep fibers from becoming airborne, and if the wind picks up, work stops. There are two air speed indicators on the site. If the wind blows more than 12 mph for more than 20 minutes, they stop, said Rick Hughes, site safety manager with Ayuda Management Corp.

"We have zero detection," he said. "One (asbestos) fiber, and we shut down."

DPW's Environmental Division also monitors the site to ensure compliance with regulations. Inspectors from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment inspected the site Aug. 8, and will continue to conduct inspections, Martin said. In addition, the Army Corps of Engineers has a contracting officer representative



Photo by Andrea Stone

**Workers tear down a building from the Old Hospital Complex, Aug. 8. The building, the first of seven to be torn down, is the only one that's asbestos free, but it's being treated as though it had asbestos. Keeping the site wet helps keep asbestos fibers from becoming airborne.**

who monitors the contract to make sure they follow the rules.

Workers will be required to wear disposable suits and respirators when they work on asbestos-containing buildings. Regulations from the Office of Safety and Health Administration require them to take those precautions when they work around asbestos for more than 30 days per year.

As the buildings are torn down, the debris will be wrapped in plastic sheeting and sealed before being

hauled to landfill sites, Hughes said.

More housing is planned once the site is cleared, but the presence of lead paint on the exterior of the buildings has created its own difficulties.

Lead, also a naturally occurring substance, can be toxic in larger quantities.

"They're going to build housing in that area, so we don't want that lead to get down in the soil, and then the kids go out and play on the playground or go out and dig in the backyard, and that

paint's still there," Martin said.

Once the rubble is removed, workers from the DPW environmental office will test the soil to make sure it's safe for new housing.

People should avoid the area while work is going on.

"People need to stay away. This is a construction site," Hughes said. "We need to keep them out. If anybody needs anything, we're more than happy to accommodate them, but let's do it safely."