

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION MEDICAL CENTER,
BUILDING 12
Spring Valley Drive
Huntington
Wayne County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-245-B

HABS
WVA
50-HUNT,
IB-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Northeast Field Area
Chesapeake/Allegheny System Support Office
National Park Service
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HABS
WVA
50-HUNT,
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION MEDICAL CENTER, HABS No. WV-245-B
Building 12

Location: Spring Valley Drive, Huntington,
Wayne County, West Virginia.

USGS Catlettesburg quadrangle,
Universal Transverse Mercator
Coordinates: 17.367470.4248480.

Present Owner: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Present Occupant: Same

Present Use: Administration Building.

Significance: The Veterans Administration Medical Center is significant as an example of the expansion policy of the Veterans Administration in the 1930's; as the first Veteran's Hospital in West Virginia; for its association with a prominent West Virginia physician and politician, Henry D. Hatfield; as an example of a significant architectural style of the period, Georgian Colonial Revival; and as an example of the influence of Federal standardized design for projects of the period. Building No.12 is significant as the first addition to the original site, and as a primary example of the standardized design approach of the VA. This is an exact copy of the structure originally designed for Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Construction: 1938 - 1939. Drawings for Building No. 12, "General Medical Building" are dated Oct. 8, 1938.
2. Architect: The drawings for the building contain a number of architect's names and signatures for various phases of the project. Chief of the Technical Division of the U.S. Veterans Bureau at the time was William Talbott. He probably had a hand in the conceptual design of the standard hospital set. The other person identified in the title block is J.C. Bohnert as the "Drawer" and "Tracer". The initials NCH are noted as the section chief.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: General contractor for Building No. 12 was Algernon Blair, Montgomery, Alabama.
5. Original plans and construction: A complete set of original drawings is located at the engineering department on-site in the Huntington Complex. These also include alteration and addition drawings and sketches. The original drawings are dated October 8, 1939. The hospital also maintains a collection of construction photographs and historical views of the complex in the engineering department on site. The collection includes 34 photographs of various views and construction activities on this building as well as additional photographs on other structures and the site. Photographs date from 1939 for most of the construction photographs, and later for additions and general views. There are no credits for the photographs of this building.

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According to the original plans the building has not changed significantly in its plans and general appearance. Photographs taken during construction and at completion show a similar structure to what is extant now. The building was completed on July 5, 1939 at a cost of \$164,557.15.

6. Alterations and additions:

1955. Newspaper articles document that the building was converted from wards to outpatient clinics and administration. C.H. Jimison and Sons, Huntington, WV were the General Contractors.

1975. Hospital reports state that air conditioning was installed.

1976. Hospital reports state electrical work was conducted.

1979. Hospital reports state that the facility was totally renovated in all areas including wards and clinical areas. This included the pharmacy.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character. The building is situated adjacent to Building no. 1. It is an example of Georgian Colonial Revival Style of architecture employed by the Veterans Administration for many of their hospitals, particularly in the eastern region of the country.

2. Condition of fabric: The building in general is in excellent condition. The roof and exterior fabric are all intact.

B. Description of Exterior:

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1. Overall dimensions: The building plan is "T"-shaped with the leg extending to the rear. On the front section it is a long rectangle. The overall length is 139' 0". The over all width of the main body is 39' 0". The rear intersection is 39' 0" X 82' 0". On the front elevation, centered, there is a projecting pavilion of 7' 9". It is 39' 0" wide. This pavilion includes the entrance to the building which includes a raised stoop. The building is two stories tall with a raised basement. The present exterior massing is identical to the original with the exception that there are now additions attached to both ends of the structure.

The front facade is 13 bays wide. The central pavilion is three bays wide.

2. Foundations: The foundations are poured in place concrete.

3. Walls: The exterior materials of the walls, above the basement level, are red brick in a 4 row common bond. There are brick quoins at the corners of plane changes on the main masses. Brick on the basement level is coursed and rusticated. There is a stone water table. Pointing mortar for the bricks is in a contrasting light tan color. The window sills are stone and there are brick jack arches above door and window openings. All of the spandrel panels beneath the windows have been removed to insert grills for air conditioners. The entrance pavilion on the first floor projects and has a brick facade with rusticated brick pilasters. The windows in the pavilion have terra cotta keystones. The entrance door has a Greek Revival surround with fluted square pilasters supporting an entablature. The entablature has dentils in the cornice and a plain frieze.

There are carriage lamps on either side of the door. These are not original, though the original ones were similar in design and scale.

The walls are constructed with terra cotta tile backing and brick veneer.

4. Structural systems, framing: The structural system of

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the building is poured in place concrete floor slabs and columns. The columns are in a grid system roughly 18' X 14' in the front section and 16' X 14' in the rear. The system allows for the corridor width of 7' 0".

Exterior walls are infill construction of terra cotta tile with brick veneer. The roof structure is wood framing.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: In the rear south west corner of each of the first and second floors there was a porch. These were simple flat head openings the full length of each floor filled with screens. They have been closed with brick with window openings the same size as the originals.

The central entrance has a stoop at first floor level that is 4' 6" by 10' 9". It has a wrought iron balustrade. The stairs are the full width of the stoop.

6. Chimneys: There are no chimneys.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors. On the front facade the only door into the building is in the central portico. Originally it was a paneled wood door with an upper multipaned light section. It had sidelights and a multipaned transom. Currently the entire door system has been replaced with an aluminum framed door with sidelights and a transom.

b. Windows and shutters: Original windows were 16-over-16 double hung, wood. From the historic photographs, black and white, they appear to be painted white. Windows in the raised basement, ground floor, were 16-over-8 in the rear and fixed-pane, 16-light in the front. There were no shutters. The openings in the porches at the ends of the wings contained screens. Currently all windows are aluminum double hung one-over-one sash. These were changed ca. 1976.

8. Roofs:

a. Shape, covering: The roof is a hip roof with an

approximate pitch of 9 in 12. The hip from the intersecting "t" continues through the main body roof at the entrance pavilion to form its own hip. There is also a small pedimented gable at the center of the front pavilion above the entrance door and portico. The roofing material originally was slate with copper flashing, etc. There also were metal snowbirds near the edge of the roof. It is now fiberglass shingles with aluminum flashing.

b. Cornice, eaves: The cornice is a built up terra cotta. It is approximately 1-1/2 feet deep.

The gutter system consists of a recessed gutter in the slope of the roof near the cornice line. Exposed scupper boxes and downspouts are located along the facades. In the front they are at the ends, one bay in from the corner. In the south, on the extension, they are equally spaced, dividing the facade into thirds.

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: There are four dormers on the front elevation of the building symmetrically placed on either side of the center three bays. They are gabled and have Doric pilasters at the corners. Originally they contained round headed windows with multiple panes on the upper sash and 6 panes in the lower. Now they contain one-over-one flat headed windows. They were originally sided on the side elevations with slate. This is now roofing shingles.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: The floor plan is generally that of a double loaded corridor. The corridor runs the length of the center of the structure. On the front, the ends of each wing contained large 12-bed wards originally. These have been converted into offices flanking the corridor. The same is true for the porch in the rear sections. The entrance lobby is in the center of the building and the elevator banks are opposite this towards the rear. Stairs are located at the center, adjacent to the lobby, and at the end of the corridor in the rear section.

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The Ground Level contains the pharmacy, dental clinic and file room.

The First Floor contains the main lobby and administration offices.

The Second Floor contains offices.

Refer to the plans for additional information.

2. Stairway. The location and number of stairs in the building have been previously described.

3. Flooring: Original flooring was asbestos tile in the wards and most of the corridors. In the corridors, there was a terrazzo border and base with an asbestos tile infill strip. Today the terrazzo border is extant and the flooring is vinyl tile. In offices and administration spaces there is carpeting with vinyl bases.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Original wall and ceiling finish was painted flat plaster throughout. The extant finishes are plaster and drywall in new additions and renovations. Ceilings throughout are lay in panels. In the corridors the walls have vinyl wall coverings and vinyl handrails/bumper guards.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors. Extant doors are fire rated wood in metal frames. These are similar to the originals. There is no significant architectural trim. The director's suite in the first floor has an aluminum framed door and window system.

b. Windows. Windows are described in the exterior section. There are no significant architectural interior features.

6. Decorative features and trim: There is no extant significant trim and features.

7. Hardware: There is no extant original hardware.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning and ventilation: The original heating system for the building was a central steam boiler plant for the complex which serviced radiators that were recessed under the windows. Air conditioning was added ca. 1959 and ducts, etc. were concealed behind plaster and bulkheads.

b. Lighting: The extant lighting is provided by recessed fixtures in the lay-in ceiling panels.

D. Site:

1. General siting and orientation: The building is located on the highest point of the complex site, adjacent to the Main Building. It is situated along a general east-west axis with the entrance in the north elevation. There is an asphalt driveway that parallels the building and connects it to the rest of the complex. Originally Building 12 was separate from the remainder of the structures in the complex, but additions on the east and west connect it to other buildings. In front of the structure, to the north, the site is level for the width of the drive, then drops off steeply. A new parking structure is being constructed at this location. To the rear, the site drops somewhat less steeply and the utility building is located here. The main building is to the west, connected with a new addition, and the Marshall University Medical Education Building is on the east. This was constructed in 1980.

2. Historical Landscape Design: The walk to the center of the building was the full width of the stairs and was flanked by a grass area. There were low shrubs against the raised basement walls. Currently the driveway extends to a concrete parapet wall opposite and parallel to the building.

3. Outbuildings: There are numerous other structures associated with the site. See the sketch site plans and narrative report on the complex for information.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings: A complete set of original drawings is located at the engineering department on-site in the Huntington Complex. These also include alteration and addition drawings and sketches. The original drawings are dated October 8, 1939.

B. Historic Views: The hospital maintains a collection of construction photographs and historical views of the complex in the engineering department on site. The collection includes 34 photographs of various views and construction activities on this building as well as additional photographs on other structures and the site. A sample from this collection is included. Photographs date from 1939 for most of the construction photographs, and later for additions and general views. There are no credits for the photographs of this building.

As these repositories are Departments of a public agency, the references are considered in the public domain.

C. Interviews: Mr. J. B. Finlay was interviewed on October 3, 1989, on site at the hospital. He is the construction supervisor for the hospital.

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E. Likely source not yet investigated: na

F. Supplemental material: na

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project under question at this time is to add a second and third floor to Building 1A. This connects Buildings 1 and 12. This is in conjunction with a clinical addition on the rear. The front roof of the addition will be slate with dormers and a 9/12 pitch to match the existing buildings. The front facade will be limestone and brick to match. The ambulance entrance on the front of Building 1 will be removed. A new curved walk will serve handicapped access with a new entrance for Building

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1. A five-story parking garage will be constructed opposite Buildings 1 and 12. The majority of the massing will be below grade at the south elevation, the side facing the buildings in question. The top floor will be shielded from the site by a six foot concrete wall.

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