

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL NO. 62,
HOSPITAL WARD
(Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, Building No. 7)
(Lenwood Veterans Hospital)
1 Freedom Way
Augusta
Richmond County
Georgia

HABS No. GA-2424-D

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Service

Southeast Region

U.S. Department of the Interior

100 Alabama Street, SW

Atlanta, Georgia 30303

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U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL NO. 62, Hospital Ward
(Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, Building No. 7)

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Location: 1 Freedom Way, Augusta, Richmond County,
Georgia

USGS Thomson Quadrangle, Universal
Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
17.404331.3703151.

Present Owner: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Present Use: This building formerly served as a hospital
ward. It has been vacant since around 1991.
It is now used as storage.

Significance: Building No. 7 is the only surviving ward
from the hospital's first phase of
construction in the early 1920s. The
federal government acquired the old Lenwood
Hotel property in 1920 and soon began
building a number of additional ancillary
structures and wards to accommodate the new
Veterans Hospital No. 62, including this
building in 1923. Subsequent phases of
construction eventually eliminated most of
the older buildings on the hospital campus.
Consolidation of hospital services under the
roof of one very large structure, completed
in 1991, eliminated the need for Building
No. 7 and other buildings, leaving them
vacant for the past two decades. This
building is also significant as part of an
early boom period in standardized veteran
hospital construction.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1923. An untitled, undated list of buildings and their "year built" dates for up to 1991 is in the files of the Facilities Management for the CNVAMC, and lists 1923 as the construction date for this building.
2. Architects: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The U.S. Veterans Bureau was the original owner. The U.S. Veterans Bureau was absorbed into the new U.S. Veterans Administration in 1930.¹
4. Original and subsequent uses: This was originally used as a hospital ward. It was used as a nursing home care unit for veterans by the 1950s. It was closed around 1991. It now serves as storage.²
5. Contractor, Suppliers: Not known.
6. Original Plans and construction: There are no extant original drawings or photographs of this building available. Upon completion, this building was a single-story structure with a low profile, expansive linear façade and hip roof. The symmetrical façade faced the south and had doubled windows in each of the bays, with a single bay on each end projecting slightly. A single-bay stoop and stairs approached the central entry. The rear and sides of the building had single windows placed symmetrically, with windows doubled in the left and right bays on the rear of the building.

¹ Robinson E. Adkins, Medical Care of Veterans, report prepared by the Veterans Administration Department of Medicine and Surgery (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1967), 143.

² Veterans Administration, "Building No. and Location Plan, Veterans Administration, Augusta, GA, Lenwood Division," drawn prior to 1955. Revisions in 1961, 1964, 1970, 1972. Available from the GA SHPO.; Nickie Wall, personal communication with author, 24 August 2009, and 30 September 2009.

7. Alterations and additions: An 18'x 20' addition to the dining room was completed around 1971-1972. Other additions occurred around 1976, and included a solarium along the southern façade and a large rectangular recreation room projecting from the north façade.

B. Historical Context

The U.S. Veterans Hospital No. 62 was created in 1920 when the federal government purchased the former Lenwood Hotel, which was built in 1913 as a Catholic girls' school. Although the school building is a large complex of three masonry buildings, the veterans hospital quickly expanded south of this complex. New roads, sidewalks, landscaping and ward buildings dotted the sprawling campus by the early 1920s, including Building No. 7 on the south part of the campus.

Created on a different floor plan than the other ward buildings, which had the typical H-design and three stories, Building No. 7 is a single-story ward with two linear hallways stretching in opposite directions from a central administrative and dining area. Whether or not this unique design indicated a specific use for the building is not known, as no original plans exist. By the 1950s, this building served as a nursing home care unit, a use that continued into the 1970s and likely until its closing around 1991, when the hospital's functions were consolidated under the roof of a brand new facility on the grounds. This building is part of the first wave of construction on the hospital grounds, an era of rapid veteran hospital growth across the nation. The resulting "second generation" of veterans hospitals built between the 1920s to the 1940s is an important component in the history of medical care for veterans in the United States.

Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This building is an institutional structure and has no ornamentation or decorative features to distinguish it as a particular architectural type or style. It was originally symmetrical in appearance, and its form follows its function as a hospital ward building.

2. Condition of fabric: While the concrete and masonry structure appears largely intact, the exterior walls appear to be in poor condition due to extensive paint failure on almost all exposed surfaces. The roof appears dated but in good condition however there are some concentrated areas of disrepair where water has been able to enter the building. The interior appears to be in good condition, except for the few areas with water infiltration.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The single-story building is approximately 340" x 30" x 35".
2. Foundation: The foundation is made of poured concrete.
3. Walls: The exterior walls are stucco that has been painted. The paint is failing on most of the exterior wall surfaces, and is flaking and sheeting off in large pieces.
4. Structural Systems, framing: The foundation is made of poured, formed concrete. Exterior walls appear to be concrete posts likely infilled with structural terra cotta block or some other masonry material, and covered in stucco. Interior walls are likely wood frame, and covered with plaster. Interior structural support is evident by the 14" across concrete columns found in the large wardrooms and the dining hall. The hip roof is likely a wood-frame system.
5. Stoops, porticoes: Concrete ramps with iron railings are along the east and west sides of the building.
6. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: What is now the main entry door is a solid steel door in a metal frame located in the central bays of the north façade. The same solid steel doors are located in single-door entries on the east and west sides of the building. An entry on the rear of the building is obscured by overgrowth.

- b. Windows and shutters: Most windows along the north façade and sides are single, six-over-six sash. These windows access the wardrooms. On the south side of the building lies the hallway along the west and east parts of the building. Windows along this façade are doubled, six-over-six sash with a three-pane transom above each window. This configuration offers a generous amount of light into the hallways. All of the windows are wood with wood framing.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is hip shaped, covered in asphalt shingle.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The eaves are boxed.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: This building is a single story construction, composed of two linear wings and a central, rectangular section for administration and group activities such as recreation and dining. There are office and utilitarian rooms, as well as large open rooms, in the central section. An off-center north-to-south hallway in this space identifies the route to the original entry, which has been altered by additions. The two wings are composed of 7' wide hallways along the south side and wardrooms along the north side, with the hallways turning corners at the end to run between a wardroom on the north and south side of the buildings. The wardrooms are generally square in shape and of similar size, with single doors along the south sides, entering the hallway. Wardrooms at each end of the building are rectangular in shape and of a smaller size.
- 2. Stairways: There are no stairways.
- 3. Flooring: The flooring is an asbestos floor tile approximately 12"x 12" in shape. It was likely installed around the 1970s.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls are finished in plaster and paint. The ceilings are approximately 12' high but are somewhat diminished in height because of drop ceilings, which are at least 5" below the true ceiling in the hallways. The drop ceiling in the large dining room is much lower than the original ceiling. In the wardrooms the ceilings remain intact with their plaster finish.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: There are single doors located along the south wall of each ward in the hallway, and along the north wall of the smaller wardrooms on each end of the building. Office and utilitarian spaces in the central part of the building have single doorways opening into the hallways. The doors are steel and are most likely replacements of the originals.
 - b. Windows: Windows in the ward rooms are usually single, six-over-six sash, although the four ward rooms at the ends of the building have doubled windows on the north and south sides. Windows along the long hallways are doubled, six-over-six sash with three-pane transoms above. They are approximately 39"x 76" in height, not including the transom, which is 39"x 23" and located above each window in the hallway. There are 16" wide concrete columns between each set of doubled windows, part of the structural system.
6. Decorative features and trim: Trim around interior windows is approximately 4" wide and set back into the wall, which has a rounded edge to meet the window trim. There are no decorative features.
7. Hardware: Windows feature bronze recessed sash lifts, often two per bottom sash, and brass crescent sash locks, now painted. The wardrooms have metal curtain rods suspended from the ceiling; the curtains can be pulled along the rods to offer privacy for the individual beds.

8. Mechanical Equipment:

- a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The original heating system consisted of radiators in the wardrooms, located behind a metal grate and underneath the large windows. Transoms above the windows in the hallways and the windows themselves likely provided original ventilation. Metal ducts were added near the ceilings in the wardrooms for a forced-air ventilation system at an unknown date. In the long hallways, baseboard heating and air conditioning units were added underneath some of the windows, and appear to date to ca. 1970s.
- b. Lighting: Original lighting in the wards included a wall sconce for each bed. The sconce had a metal plate and arm supporting a rectangular glass shade over two bulbs, with a central fluted adornment reminiscent of the Art Deco era. A metal pull chain controlled the light switch. Fluorescent, rectangular lights have replaced original ceiling fixtures in the wards and hallways.
- c. Plumbing: Some wardrooms were divided by concrete block walls into multi-stall bathrooms. A sink is located in each hallway, and has metal plumbing. The sinks have a high arched faucet that is turned on by a metal pedal extending from the piping toward the floor.

9. Original furnishings: There are no original furnishings.

D. Site:

1. Historic landscape design: This is the southernmost building in the historic campus for the veterans hospital. It was historically reached by a road that looped around its south façade and lead north along both sides of the building. That road has been cut off on the east side, where there is now a grassy area. The original façade was likely on the south side, where there is a traffic circle that had two

perpendicular intersecting pathways amidst grass and shrubs. The circle is still in place but has been partially altered by infringing pavement. The building sits along the slope of a slight hill, with the historic setting of the grassy ballfields to the east, likely woods originally to the south, with a road and multi-storied ward buildings to the northwest and north. Shrubs planted close along almost all sides of the building have not been maintained.

Part III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: There were no original drawings for this building available during the course of this research.
- B. Interviews: Nickie Wall, Project Manager for the Charlie Norwood Veterans Affairs Medical Center interviewed August 24, 2009 on site. Mary Sickman, Facility Management Executive for the CNVAMC, interviewed June 22, 2009 on site.
- C. Bibliography:
1. Primary and Unpublished Sources:

Veterans Administration, "Building No. & Location Plan, Veterans Administration, Augusta, GA, Lenwood Division," drawn prior to 1955. Revisions in 1961, 1964, 1970, 1972. Available from the GA SHPO.
 2. Secondary and Published Sources:

Adkins, Robinson E. Medical Care of Veterans, report prepared by the Veterans Administration Department of Medicine and Surgery. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967. Available from the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: The current staff for facilities management at the CNVAMC has indicated that a former staff member served as an informal historian for the facility but she has since left and her accumulated

materials moved to an unknown location at the CNVAMC.
Current staff has been unable to locate these materials.

- E. Supplemental Materials: Drawings from the 1970s for several renovation and addition projects are in the holdings of the Charlie Norwood Veterans Affairs Medical Center's Facilities department.

Part IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was completed following the execution of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regarding construction of a new Fisher House at the Charlie Norwood Veterans Affairs Medical Center (CNVAMC)-Uptown Division in Augusta, Georgia. The construction of the Fisher House required the removal of the historic quarters on the grounds of the CNVAMC. The historic quarters were among the few buildings that remained from the hospital's earliest years, and were located across from the original buildings used for the hospital, Building Nos. 18, 19 and 20. These buildings were eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Another historic building on campus is Building No. 7, a former ward and nursing home care unit, built in 1923.

The MOA stipulations included documentation of the building types that comprise the quarters area as well as Building No. 7 through preparation of a Historic American Building Survey Level II report, with some modifications. Since the quarters area had only three types of buildings, only those features typical for each type were documented, with discussion of the modifications made to other examples of the type. Photographs are also representative of the typical type. Exterior large format photography of Building Nos. 18, 19, and 20 were also stipulated as well as contextual views of the district.

This documentation was prepared by New South Associates (NSA) under the direction of Principal Investigator Mary Beth Reed, President of NSA. Photography was completed by NSA Graphics Director David Diener, assisted by NSA Historian/Architectural Historian Staci Richey, who also prepared the historical report. Nickie Wall of the CNVAMC assisted Diener and Richey in the field with building access and provided Joe Gambill of Virgo Gambill Architects with copies of original floor plans and

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elevations, which were photographed by Diener. S. Filipovic of Virgo Gambill Architects prepared measured drawings, and Tom Quinn of New South Associates utilized these drawings to create a photo key.