

Minnesota Veterans' Home Complex,
Administration (Building No. 10)
5101 Minnehaha Avenue South
Minneapolis
Hennepin County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-74-H

HABS
MINN,
27-MINAP,
19-H-

PHOTOGRAPHS

DRAWINGS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MINNESOTA VETERANS' HOME COMPLEX,
ADMINISTRATION (BUILDING No. 10) HABS No. MN-74H

Location: 5101 Minnehaha Avenue South, Minneapolis,
Hennepin County, Minnesota

USGS St. Paul West Quadrangle, Universal
Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Zone 15;
483960:4973380; 484140:4972680; 483640:4973140

Present Owner: State of Minnesota
Department of Veterans' Affairs
St. Paul, Minnesota

Present Occupant: Minnesota Veterans' Home

Present Use: Administrative Offices

Significance: The Administration Building No. 10 was erected for the Minnesota Soldiers' Home to serve as accommodations for the offices of the commandant, adjutant and quarter master. In addition, it has store rooms for supplies, residence of the commandant and his family, meeting rooms for the board of trustees, a library and reading room, and assembly room and chapel for religious services and exercises.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1892-93. (Source: The Annual Reports of the Minnesota Soldiers' Home, 1892 and 1893).
2. Architect: W. B. Ounnell
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: State of Minnesota
4. Builder, Contractor, Suppliers: Unknown
5. Original Plans and Construction: Not Available
6. Alterations and Additions: In the 1904 annual report it stated that the electric wiring was in bad condition and had to be replaced. In the 1919-1920 Biennial Report of the Minnesota Soldiers' Home, the building was hooked to the citywater and a fire alarm system and fire escapes were installed. In 1936, a Director's room was added on the first floor while a sleeping porch was added on the second floor.

(Source: Blueprints by H. G. Bowstead, Architect, of Additions to Administration Building, dated October 15, 1936.) The 1948-49 Biennial Report stated that separate toilet facilities for the personnel were provided and that two new rugs were installed on the second floor. In 1949 the inside was completely redecorated and on the outside, the stonework was painted and repaired. In addition, nine new awnings were installed; four were installed on the first floor and five on the second. In 1955 a new roof was completed and several screens were replaced. Also, a new tile floor was started in the Chapel. The information was given in the 1955-56 Biennial Report of Minnesota Soldiers' Home. In a 1970 annual report, it stated that the stairways were rebuilt and improved.

B. Historical Context:

The Minnesota Soldiers' Home had its beginnings in 1886 when the Minnesota Department of the Grand Army of the Republic reported that 30,000 former soldiers were living in the state. They requested that the legislature make adequate provisions for the indigent and disabled. The home was situated in the city limits of Minneapolis, at the confluence of Minnehaha Creek and the Mississippi River. The site which cost \$55,000 was donated to the State by the City of Minneapolis. The land was first owned by Ard and Harriet Godfrey who donated it to the Soldiers' Home. (Source: Warranty Deed dated 8/8/1887, document #46045). On April 12, 1887, the Board of Trustees of the Minnesota Soldiers' Home met for the purpose of organization and established the Home.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Administration Building No. 10 is a three story building with a basement. It is built with pressed brick with brown stone trimmings and slate roofs. In 1956, a new roof was completed which was of asbestos shingle. The windows are all of single panels. The building was heated by steam radiators and lighted with incandescent electric lamps. Inside, the woodwork is oak and with maple for floors.
2. Condition of the Fabric: Administration Building No. 10 seems to be in fair condition. The exterior walls are discolored and need proper cleaning. In the basement, the paint is cracking practically in every room and especially in the hallways. There is a broken window currently boarded up in the northeast part of

the basement which needs repair. Rug remnants are found on the second and third floors which allow some of the original floors to be exposed. The windows of the tower are broken and the floor needs refinishing.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: The Administration Building consists of a basement, first floor, second floor, and third floor. Its combined dimensions are 78' x 38'.
2. Foundations: The structure is supported by a prominent high foundation of red stone.
3. Walls:
 - a. North Elevation: The north facade has three stories. It is a bearing wall of red brick laid in courses with five windows on each of the first two floors and two on the third floor. There are five windows in the basement. Each window is spanned by sandstone trimming. The middle window on the second floor is of stained glass.
 - b. South Elevation: The south facade has three stories. It is a bearing wall of red brick laid in courses with five windows on each of the first two floors and two on the third floor. A wooden dependency is attached which leads to the basement.
 - c. East Elevation: The east facade has an arched entrance. The first two floors of the tower are rounded while the third floor and belfry are squared. An elaborate cornice is located on the third floor steeple.
 - d. West Elevation: The west facade has an arched entrance. There are eight windows on the first floor and ten windows on the second floor. A set of four windows with an arch-shaped cornice above it are located on the third floor.
4. Structural System, Framing: Unknown to author
5. Awnings: None
6. Chimneys: One is located on the north side of the building.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and Doors: The west and east facades have one story arch doorways.
- b. Windows: Mostly wood 1/1 sash windows.

8. Roof: The third floor has a high pitch. The tower on the east facade has a side conical roof.

C. Description of Interior: Not accessible.

1. Floor Plans:

- a. Basement: The building has a basement which measures 78' x 38' in size, with plastered walls and ceiling. On the south end of the building, a dependency leads to the outside. Restrooms are located here. A vault is located on the west side of the building.
 - b. First floor: The arch entrance leads directly into the main hallway. On the right is a rounded room of the tower, then two other offices, and the straight-run stairway. The rest of the rooms are also offices.
 - c. Second floor: The second floor contains a meeting room, kitchen facilities, an employee lounge, three offices, and a bathroom. Fire places are located in the meeting room and the adjacent office room on the north side of the building. On the south end are doors which lead to the fire escape.
 - d. Third floor: The third floor has a bathroom and one room which has stairs leading to the belfry. The main hallway floor is uncovered.
2. Stairways: The main stairway is straight-run which leads to the second and third floor. On the third floor, another set of stairs leads to the belfry. The main stairway is painted brown, but the banisters are maple.
 3. Flooring: The first floor is now carpeted wall-to-wall. The base is left uncovered with the bathrooms tiled. The second floor hall is covered with an old green rug.
 4. Wall and Ceiling Finish: Walls and ceiling are plastered. Most of the walls are painted white. Some rooms are paneled. The basement hallway is painted pink. The kitchen cabinets on the second floor are painted blue and white.

5. Doorways and Doors: Typical doors are 2' x 10" x 7' solid panels.
6. Decorative Features: The mantels on the two fireplaces are solid wood. There is a built-in cabinet in the meeting room. On the south side of the building, there is a large stained glass window showing the Home's monogram. Over the main entrance doors, there is also stained glass work.
7. Hardware: Original knobs were replaced with conventional door knobs. The door knobs on the third floor seemed to be original.
8. Mechanical Equipment:
 - a. Heating: Two fireplaces are located on the second floor. There is a hot water system with radiators on each floor.
 - b. Lighting: Fluorescent ceiling lamps are located on the first and second floors. Hanging electric bulbs are found in two rooms on the third floor.
 - c. Plumbing: Unknown
9. Original Furnishings: The dining room set in the meeting room on the second floor suggests historical interest. The green rug on the second floor hallway also is noteworthy.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and Orientation: The Minnesota Veterans' Home is located on a peninsula bounded by the Mississippi River on the east and Minnehaha Creek on the west in Minneapolis. The southern tip of the property is defined by the confluence of the two waterways. Immediately to the west is Minnehaha Park. Fort Snelling is located about three miles to the south. The main facade of the Administration Building No. 10 faces east and the Mississippi River.
2. Historic Landscape Design: The overall master site plan and landscaping program was developed by H.W.S. Cleveland. In a 1895 annual report of the Minnesota Veterans' Home stated that the circle occupied by the administration building has been thoroughly regraded and covered with rich soil and made into a lawn.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Panorama Views: The earliest views of the administration building are found on two photographs of the east side of the Mississippi River located in the Audio-Visual collection of the Minnesota Historical Society. These were dated 1898 and 1915.
- B. Photographs: Several photographs show general and close-up views of the administration building. They were found in the Audio-Visual collection of the Minnesota Historical Society and in the History collection at the Minneapolis Public Library.
- C. Maps: Sandborn maps were found which began with 1892 and ending in 1941. They showed details of the administration building at different points in time.
- D. Bibliography:
1. Books:

Bezant, Barb and Alan K. Lathrop. Drafting a House History. Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1979.

Bullock, Orin. The Restoration Manual. Norwalk, Connecticut: Silvermine Publishers, 1966.

Murphy, Patricia. The Public Buildings of the State of Minnesota - an Architectural Heritage. St. Paul; Minnesota Historical Society, 1986.
 2. Publications:

History Procedures Manual. Historic American Buildings Survey. Washington: National Parks Service, 1983.
 3. Miscellaneous:

Minneapolis Public Library - History Collection

Minnesota Historical Society Archives and Manuscripts Collection

Minnesota Historical Society Audio-Visual Library-Photograph Collection.

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- E. Original Architectural Drawings: Architectural drawings for the original building were not found.

Prepared by:
Arnel Cortez
University of Minnesota
April, 1988

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was prepared as a class project for Architecture 5143, Historical Building Research and Documentation, a class offered in the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The class project was prepared under the direction of Professor Foster W. Dunwiddie in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Historical data for the Administration Building No. 10 of the Minnesota Veterans' Home was compiled by Arnel Cortez, University of Minnesota, April, 1988.