

NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS,
MARION BRANCH, BUILDING NO. 60
(Medical Treatment Building)
(Administration Offices & Educational Therapy)
1700 East 38th Street
Marion
Grant
Indiana

HABS IN-306-AI
IN-306-AI

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

ADDENDUM TO:
NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS,
MARION BRANCH, BUILDING NO. 60
(Medical Treatment Building)
(Administration Offices & Educational Therapy)
(Barracks No. 7)
1700 East 38th Street
Marion
Grant County
Indiana

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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ADDENDUM TO NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS – MARION BRANCH, BUILDING No. 60 (Administration Building)

HABS No. IN-306-AI

- Location: 1700 East 38th Street, Marion, Grant County, Indiana. Building No. 60 faces west and is directly south of the main hospital and southeast of the main entrance gate on 38th Street.
- The coordinates for Building No. 60 are 40.519918 N, -85.632815 W. These coordinates were obtained in January 2012 and with, it is assumed, NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.
- Present Owner: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Northern Indiana Healthcare System
- Present Use: Vacant, scheduled for demolition
- Significance: Building No. 60 was constructed as an administration building for the Marion Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) during the early 1890s. The NHDVS was a federal institution authorized by Congress in 1865 and charged with caring for Civil War veterans disabled by their military service. Congressman George Steele of the 11th Indiana Congressional District successfully promoted the creation of this Branch in Grant County with the promise of an on-site natural gas well for free heating and lighting. Founded in 1889 as the seventh NHDVS branch, the Marion Branch featured a picturesque campus of winding avenues and red brick Queen Anne buildings with wide porches and ornamental balustrades. By 1930 the NHDVS system had eleven branches and became part of the new Veterans Administration.
- The original buildings at the Marion Branch were designed by the Dayton, Ohio architectural firm of Peters and Burns. Building No. 60 is also attributed to this firm because it features a Queen Anne/Colonial Revival architectural vocabulary consistent with the rest of the complex. Although sometimes identified as Barracks No. 7, this structure is smaller than the other barracks on site and was in use as an administration building at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1909, Building No. 60 was converted from a headquarters building to “hospital uses” (likely convalescent barracks).

In 1921, the Marion Branch became the Marion National Sanitarium, a facility dedicated to the treatment of World War I neuropsychiatric cases, including what was then called shell shock and other mental disorders. The emphasis throughout the NHDVS had been shifting from residential campuses to more sophisticated medical care for veterans. Building No. 60 was renovated at this time. After 1930 the Marion Branch continued to specialize in psychiatric care as part of the Veterans Administration. During the 1930s, Building No. 60 was designated a Clinical Laboratory.¹ Still in use for offices during the 1980s, the building has fallen into disrepair and is slated for demolition.

Historian: Lisa Pfueller Davidson, 2011

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c. 1891
2. Architect: attributed to Peters and Burns, Dayton, Ohio
3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses: Building No. 60 was built as an administration building for the Marion Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (Figure 1). It was converted to hospital/barracks use in 1909, at a cost of \$4,444.² In 1921 the Marion Branch became a National Sanitarium dedicated to neuropsychiatric care and Building No. 60 was renovated and functioned as an administrative support structure for the hospital. In 1934 a dental clinic and X-ray facility were added to the building; during the 1930s Building No. 60 was designated the Clinical Laboratory. Floor plans from c. 1943 indicate that the basement housed file and film storage, educational therapy, dieticians, and chaplains' offices were located on the first floor, and the second floor included nursing education and central sterilizing supply (Figure 2). It is likely that an elevated connecting bridge to the main hospital was built at this time. The building was last used by Rehabilitation Medical Services and the Social Recreation Center (1980s) and now stands vacant, awaiting demolition.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown
5. Original plans and construction: Original drawings have not been located. Field inspection and historic photographs indicate that the original exterior appearance has been altered by the removal of chimneys, porches, and dormers, but the Queen Anne

¹ Typescript, Marion VA Hospital Inventory (29 April 1936), Marion and Grant County File, Marion Public Library.

² NHVS Board of Managers, "Marion Branch Report," *Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1909* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1910), 227.

historic character is intact. The current interior layout features a center hall entrance with double-loaded transverse corridor and still includes original features such as fireplaces, staircases with turned balusters, and French doors.

6. Alterations and additions: Interior renovations for laboratory space during the 1930s included adding subway tile wainscot and some internal walls subdividing larger spaces. The side porches and dormers were removed by the late 1960s. The elevated corridor connecting to the main hospital was built during the 1930s and removed by the early 1980s.

B. Historical Context: See overview historical context HABS No. IN-306 for additional information on the Marion Branch and the NHDVS.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Building No. 60 is a red brick institutional building two-and-a-half stories tall. It has a symmetrical elevation and shallow C-shaped footprint with a center hall entrance leading to a transverse double-loaded corridor. Surviving Queen Anne features include round arch windows, filigreed ornament in the porch pediment, and a corbelled blind arcade belt course, although the overall Victorian appearance is diminished by the loss of side porches, chimneys, and dormers. Building No. 60 is a unique but complimentary structure within the overall Queen Anne/Colonial Revival architectural vocabulary of the Marion Branch.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair. Building No. 60 has walls, ceiling, and floors damaged by water infiltration and the lack of climate control. Roof damage and animal infestation are also evident.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: approximately 125 feet by 50 feet
2. Foundations: The exterior foundation walls have rusticated river stone (a local limestone) approximately three feet high topped by a smoothly dressed limestone water table. The interior foundations are riverstone with brick piers.
3. Walls: The walls are red brick laid in a running bond. There is a blind arcade belt course below the cornice on both the front and rear of the center pavilion.
4. Structural system, framing: Building No. 60 is supported by interior brick piers, exterior stone walls, and wood beams and floor joists. There are also metal I-beams running along the partially finished ends of the basement on brick piers. The wood roof framing is common rafter with a nailed ridge board and supporting trusses.

5. Porches and stoops: Building No. 60 has a one-story hipped roof porch stretching across the projecting center pavilion and two flanking bays. The porch has a wood floor, steps, and balustrade with wood columns. A cross gable sits over the center entrance at the steps and is supported by two curved brackets. The gable is filled with high relief wood filigree and a cartouche with a raised and stylized “7” denoting a building number no longer in use.

The two-story porches located on the side elevations have been removed. These porches sat in the notch created by the projecting rear wings. Concrete and brick stoops with metal pipe railings are now at modified doorways on these side elevations. The rear elevation has a brick and concrete stoop with metal pipe railing and a cantilevered hood over the modified center doorway. It is possible that another one-story porch was located in this area.

6. Chimneys: The original brick chimneys have been removed (prior to 1981) and the openings covered over.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The front doorway at the center pavilion is accessed via the porch and appears to retain original or historic fabric. The rectangular opening has a wide flat limestone lintel and no additional trim. The wood panel door is two-leaf with four divided lights over the lock rails. A large rectangular transom is unevenly divided into 16 square or rectangular lights in a manner consistent with Queen Anne architecture.

The rear center pavilion doorway has been reduced in size to a single wood panel door with six lights above the lock rail. The original limestone lintel is still extant marking the original width of this opening. The side elevation doorways at the former porch locations have also been reduced in size and retain their original limestone lintels. The north side doorway is wood panel with a large sidelight on one side that matches the front door transom. There is an exterior basement doorway accessed via a brick bulkhead with concrete steps. The door is a two-leaf wood panel with glazing above the lock rail.

- b. Windows: The typical first floor window opening is rectangular with a four-over-four light wood sash set directly into the brick wall with a projecting limestone sill and flush limestone lintel. The typical second floor window opening is a round arch with a four-over-four light wood sash with a round arch upper rail. The second floor windows are also set directly into the brick wall with a limestone sill and slightly projecting brick hood. The rear elevation has a large round arch opening over the doorway at the location of the second floor stairwell. This opening has a pair of wood sash windows separated by a flat wood mullion. There are small square window openings at the attic level on the side elevations

with one-over-one wood sash and limestone sills and lintels.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Building No. 60 has a side gable roof over the main block and lower hipped roofs on the two rear wings extending to the east from the corners. There is a shallow cross hip at the front center pavilion. The roof was originally sheathed in slate but now has asphalt composite shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Building No. 60 has a metal box cornice with plain soffits and gable returns on the side elevations of the main block. The side gables also have a small pediment at the peak characteristic of Queen Anne architecture. There is a metal molding just below the eave with a section of red brick in between. The cross hip at the front center pavilion has brackets in the eaves. Gutters are integrated into the eaves and connected to metal downspouts.
- c. Dormers: The center of the front and rear elevations each have a large brick wall dormer with a front pediment. The attic level below the pediment has a set of three rectangular windows sharing a wide limestone lintel. Each pediment has a thin round arch opening filled with louvers. Additional gable front dormers have been removed.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Building No. 60 has a shallow, roughly C-shaped footprint with a main block oriented north/south and two short wings extending from the rear (east) corners. There is a center hall with a double loaded transverse hall on both the first and second floors. The basement also has a transverse hall and a number of finished rooms. The large attic is unfinished.
2. Stairways: Building No. 60 has two wood stairways – one open well stair at the center hall and a dogleg stair near the northeast rear wing. The center hall stair has a ten-and-a-half-inch tread with an eight-inch rise and tapered nosing trim. The railing has elaborate turned balusters and a square column newel post with recessed panels. There is also a plain wood wall-mounted handrail. The northeast stair also has a turned balustrade and fluted square column newel post. This stair has been partially enclosed by a later wall. The open stairs to the basement are utilitarian with plain wood handrails.
3. Flooring: Building No. 60 has white one-and-a-half inch hexagonal tile with gray mosaic tile borders through the most of the halls and in many rooms. This tile probably dates to the c. 1921 hospital laboratory renovations. Other areas have square resilient floor tiles or commercial grade carpet. The attic floor is wood.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceiling are plaster on wood lathe. There are

- acoustic tile drop ceilings covering the plaster in many areas. The halls and many rooms also have a white subway tile or six-inch square tile wainscot, including subway tile in the northwest and southwest corner basement rooms.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and Doors: The typical interior door is wood panel with a mix of horizontal and vertical recesses (from top to bottom – one horizontal, two vertical, three horizontal), or glazing above the three lower horizontal panels. The five-inch wide doorway trim is flat with a projecting tapered edge or bulls-eye corner blocks. There are three sets of two-leaf ten-light French doors at the center hall foyer – one set at the rear before the transverse hall and one set at each side leading to offices. The rear doorway has fixed five-light sidelights and a large decorative fixed transom. The transom is arched with interlacing Gothic arch-type muntins.
 - b. Windows: The interior window trim is flat with a projecting tapered edge and/or bull-eye corner blocks. The typical window sill is three-inches deep with a four-inch tapered skirt. The window sashes have a curved drop on the top rail.
 6. Decorative features and trim: There are surviving fireplace mantels on the first floor in the rooms flanking the center hall. The wood mantels have a neoclassical motif with fluted Doric pilasters, a fluted frieze, and dentils under the projecting top. The hearth and surround have six-inch red quarry tiles.
 7. Hardware: Most of the door hardware is plain silver metal knobs with simple escutcheons and utilitarian hinges.
 8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating and ventilation: Building No. 60 had cast iron radiator heat serviced from a central steam heating plant.
 - b. Lighting: Extant light fixtures are fluorescent lights incorporated into the acoustic tile drop ceilings.
 - c. Plumbing: There were two small water closets located on the first floor and one large bathroom with four toilet stalls and four wall-mounted sinks located on the northeast side of the second floor. This building did not have showers or sinks for its use as a clinical laboratory and offices.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. **Architectural drawings:** Original or early architectural drawings for the Marion Branch buildings have not been located. The PLIARS database preserves many floor plans that

serve as a record of existing conditions and change over time – the earliest of these drawings date to the 1930s. Engineering Services at the Marion VAMC has extensive flat files, but very little early material. Most of these drawings date to the second half of the twentieth century. Relevant drawings for Building No. 60 include:

- Plot Plan, “Veterans Administration Facility, Marion, Ind.,” (8 May 1933), PLIARS database, VACO. Building No. 60 is labeled “Laboratory” on this site plan.
- Floor Plans, “Administration Building No. 60,” Veterans Administration (21 June 1936, revised 29 October 1943), PLIARS database, VACO.

B. **Early Views:** Early views of Building No. 60 include a c. 1900 postcard in the Marion Public Library collection. Building No. 60 is called “Head Quarters.” Another early view appears in the c. 1908 souvenir booklet, with Building No. 60 again called headquarters (See Figure 1).

C. Selected Bibliography:

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National Military Home Indiana. Wabash, IN: Press of the Plain Dealer, c. 1908.

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of selected buildings at the former Marion Branch of the National Home for

Disabled Volunteer Soldiers was undertaken in 2011 by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the Heritage Documentation Programs division of the National Park Service, Richard O'Connor, Chief. The project was sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), Office of Construction and Facilities Management, Kathleen Schamel, Federal Preservation Officer. Project development was coordinated by Catherine Lavoie, Chief, HABS and by Douglas Pulak, Deputy Federal Preservation Officer, DVA. The field work was undertaken and the written histories were produced by Lisa P. Davidson and Virginia B. Price, HABS Historians. The large format photography was undertaken by HABS Photographer Renee Bieretz; an initial photographic survey was completed by HABS Photographer James Rosenthal in 2008. Valuable assistance was provided by James A. Broyles, Project Engineer, Engineering Services, Marion Campus, VA Northern Indiana Health Care System.

PART V. ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1: “Headquarters and Employes [sic.] Thereof,” c. 1908
Note chimneys and dormers with half-timber decoration.
Source: *National Military Home Indiana*, c. 1908, Marion VAMC files

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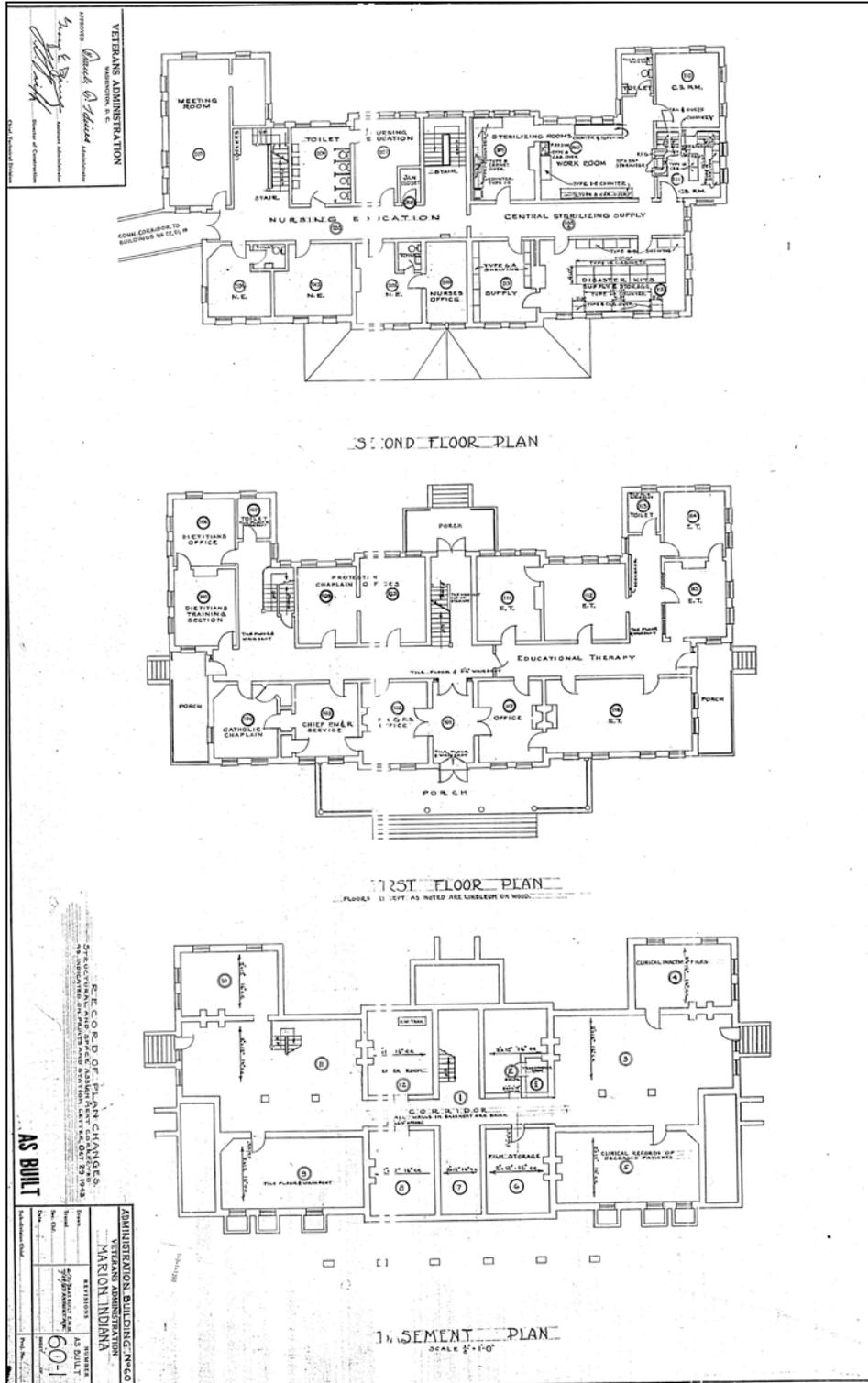


Figure 2: Building No. 60 Floor Plans, c. 1943
 Source: PLIARS database, VACO