

NAVAL HOSPITAL PHILADELPHIA, NURSES' QUARTERS  
(Naval Hospital Philadelphia, Building 3)  
East side of Chief's Court, Naval Hospital Philadelphia  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6206-B

HABS  
PA-6206-B

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
Philadelphia Support Office  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

NAVAL HOSPITAL PHILADELPHIA, NURSES' QUARTERS

(Naval Hospital Philadelphia, Building 3) HABS No. PA-6206-B

Location: East side of Chief's Court, Naval Hospital Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania

USGS Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Quadrangle  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.484780.4417200

Present Owner: United States Department of the Navy

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: Building 3, constructed in 1935 as quarters for Naval Hospital Philadelphia's nursing staff, is part of the original hospital complex built between 1932 and 1935. Incorporating the same Art Deco elements found on the exterior of the other original hospital buildings, Building 3 contributes to a noteworthy complex of Art Deco-style buildings designed by a locally prominent architectural firm in an institutional setting. The building also contributed to Naval Hospital Philadelphia's World War II mission as the center for amputation, orthopedic, and prosthetic services for Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard veterans east of the Rocky Mountains.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. PHYSICAL HISTORY:

1. Date of Erection: Construction of Building 3 occurred in 1935.
2. Architect: The Philadelphia-based architectural firm of Karcher and Smith designed Building 3, as well as all of the original hospital complex, in 1932.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: The United States acquired the land upon which Building 3 was subsequently built on 11 March 1932 from Samuel S. Simon. The Navy has been the custodian of the property since that time.
4. Alterations and Additions: The Navy added a frame and glass block solarium to the roof of Building 3's south wing circa 1960. The only other major alteration to the building was the replacement of the structure's original wooden window sash with one-over-one aluminum-framed windows in the mid-1970s.

### B. HISTORIC CONTEXT

Building 3 functioned as quarters for the Hospital's nursing staff after its completion in 1935. At the time of the Hospital's closing in 1993, the building served as quarters for bachelor enlisted personnel. The building has been unoccupied since the Hospital's closing.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. GENERAL STATEMENT:

1. Architectural Character: Building 3 consists of a four-story, cream-colored brick masonry rectangular block, with three-story wings placed perpendicular to its main north-south orientation, creating an overall I-shaped plan. The building is connected to the main Naval Hospital building, Building 1 (HABS No. PA-6206-A), located slightly northwest of Building 3, by a one-story partially enclosed passageway extending in an L-shape from Building 1's east wing to Building 3's north wing. Building 2, a structure with overall massing and finish similar to Building 3 that previously served as quarters for the base's Corpsmen, stands southwest of Building 1, with a partially enclosed connecting passageway joining the two buildings. Building 2 mirrors Building 3's physical relationship with Building 1. Together, the three buildings reflect the symmetry and vocabulary of the Georgian and Beaux-Arts architectural styles, as evidenced by their central building and their balanced

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dependencies connected by hyphens or arcades. This complex also integrates rich Art Deco embellishments on the buildings' exteriors.

The western elevation of Building 3's main block presents a balanced eight-bay-wide facade composed of vertical bands of buff-colored brick spandrels above upper-story window openings. The interior six bays are spaced closer together and visually form three pairs of bays. Four inset rectangular limestone panels with V-shaped bases ornament the upper portions of the cream-colored brick piers defined by the paired and single vertical buff-colored spandrel bays. The roof line above the outer bays is lower than that topping the three paired bays, and in conjunction with the shorter wings creates an overall stepped parapet effect. The main block's eastern elevation displays one- and two-story extensions, also creating an overall stepped appearance. Limestone copings serve as the cornice. A one-bay-deep, two-story entrance pavilion occupies the central two bays of the main block's western elevation. The north and south wings both display three-bay-wide western elevations and extend four bays to the east. As with the other original buildings erected between 1932 and 1935 that make up the Naval Hospital Philadelphia (HABS No. PA-6206) complex, Building 3's exterior utilizes cream- and buff-colored brickwork, limestone and aluminum trim, vertical design elements, and Art Deco detailing.

2. Condition of Fabric: The overall condition of the building is good.

B. DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR:

1. Overall Dimensions: Building 3 extends approximately 170 feet along its entire western and eastern elevations and 51 feet along its southern and northern elevations. The building stands 48 feet high from grade to its tallest roof section. The main block measures 102 feet wide, and the wings extend an additional 33 feet 10 inches north and south. The main block measures roughly 40 feet in width on its ground level and first stories; the pavilion adds an additional 5 feet 2 inches to the main block's overall depth. The upper two stories of the main block extend 33 feet 4 inches between their western and eastern elevations.
2. Foundations: The foundation consists of poured concrete.
3. Structural Systems/Walls: Brick masonry walls laid in five-to-one common bond compose the exterior walling. Cream-colored brick comprises the principal brick type, and buff-colored spandrels embellished with vertical dog-tooth courses occupy the voids between upper-story windows. A buff-colored brick partial belt course connects the buff-colored brick sills of the paired-bay second-story windows of the

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main block. The same ornamental treatment is used on the three bays of the western and eastern elevations of the two wings, as well as on the central two bays of their northern and southern elevations. Concrete posts and beams provide the structural framework for the building as displayed in the ceiling framing of the building's dining room. Structural clay tile composes the interior, non-bearing walls.

4. Porches: The main block's eastern elevation exhibits two small porches atop the ground-story portion of its extensions. Doors leading from the first-story common room provide access to the two porches.
5. Chimneys: Although not visible from ground level, a small interior chimney pile penetrates the northeast quadrant of the main block's roof.
6. Openings:
  - a. Entries and Doors: The formal entrance is recessed in a two-story pavilion surrounded by a concrete terrace and enclosed by a limestone apron wall occupying the center of the main block's western elevation. Two granite steps lead from a circular drive adjacent to the entrance onto the terrace. An additional granite step leads from the terrace to the entry, which consists of paired, modern, metal-framed glass doors flanked by metal panels with upper sidelights. Cast aluminum spandrels with extruded vertical lines occupy the panels above the entrance, and a dentil limestone cornice crowns the aluminum panels. The windows that penetrate the pavilion's second story have paired four-light wooden casements with two-light fixed transom. Buff-colored brick spandrels with vertical dog-tooth courses and small rectangular insets top the recessed entry's bay. A limestone coping caps the entire pavilion.

Additional pedestrian entrances occupy the central bay of the north wing's western elevation and the north and south ends of the main block's eastern elevation. Each of the three entries contains a metal door with a single square light. The north wing's entrance provides access from the partially enclosed passageway connecting the quarters with Building 1 (HABS No. PA-6206-A).

Three horizontally rolling garage doors occupy the ground-story level of the north wing's eastern elevation. Each contains four horizontal leaves composed of two upper rows of four glass panels and two lower rows of four wood panels.

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- b. **Windows:** The main block and wings each contain symmetrically spaced fenestration. Some smaller window openings have been installed between the principal openings occupying the vertical, spandrel-ornamented bays. The principal windows possess one-over-one aluminum-cased sash that replaced the original six-over-six wooden sash in 1973 and 1974. Smaller windows penetrating the elevations between the vertical bays exhibit two-over-two wooden sash. Wooden two-over-two, horizontally divided sash with fixed, one-light transoms occupy the south wing solarium's southern elevation. The curved western and eastern elevations of the solarium display structural glass block.

7. **Roof:**

- a. **Shape and Covering:** Although the varied levels of the main block and the wings provide an appearance of a parapeted roof, the roof system consists of three flat roofs. The solarium also displays a flat roof, although oblong in shape and displaying broad extended eaves. Asphalt built-up surfaces protect the building's roofs from the elements.
- b. **Cornice:** A limestone coping serves as the cornice.

C. **DESCRIPTION OF INTERIOR:**

1. **Floor Plans:** Entry into the ground-floor level through the pavilion's formal entrance leads into a vestibule. Five-light sidelights frame the vestibule's entry into an open lobby. Stairs to the first-floor living quarters rise along the south side of the lobby, and a closet occupies the north wall adjacent to the vestibule. Corridors extend north and south from the lobby and lead to the building's more utilitarian rooms that line the west side of the corridors. A laundry room and quarters lie to the north of the lobby, while a storage room and cloakroom lie to the south. A dining room occupies the entire ground level of the south wing. A kitchen, pantry, food storage room, and preparation room line the east side of the main block's ground level. Enclosed stair halls provide access to the upper stories in the northeast and southeast corners of the main block. The eastern portion of the north wing contains the garage. The western half of the north wing contains an L-shaped corridor with quarters on the north and an equipment room on the south. The north wing's corridor leads west to the partially enclosed passageway that connects with Building 1 (HABS No. PA-6206-A).

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Building 3's first and second stories contain similar floor plans composed of individual quarters flanking a central I-shaped corridor, with stair halls in the northeastern and southeastern portions of the main block. The main formal stairway from the entry lobby on the ground floor leads to another lobby and main corridor on the first story. Directly east of the lobby and corridor lies an open common room, featuring a fireplace with a Greek Revival mantel ornamented with metopes and triglyphs centered along its north wall. Washrooms with toilets, bathtubs, and showers occupy the southeast quadrant of the north wing and the northeast quadrant of the south wing. At the west end of the first-story corridor in both wings are foyers that enclose small bathrooms and two quarters. These rooms, which provide a degree of privacy not available to most residents of the building, were probably reserved for senior personnel. The second story contains similar accommodations in the west end of the south wing, including adjoining rooms.

The third story also contains quarters flanking a corridor similar to those on the lower floors; however, the corridor only extends the length of the main block. While the stair halls occupy the same position as on the lower floors, the washrooms occupy the northwest and southwest corners of the third-story floor space. A doorway installed sometime after the building's original construction in the south end of the third story's corridor provides access to a one-story addition containing a solarium. Glass block composes its curved west and east walls. The solarium's southern elevation consists of wood-framed windows and a wooden door with a lower panel and three upper horizontal lights.

2. Stairways: The formal stairway leading from the ground level to the first story consists of three open strings of concrete treads with wrought-iron balusters and newels that turn at two landings. The two stair halls feature open-well flights rising through all four stories of the main block. Similar newels and balusters as those on the formal stairways enframe both stair halls' flights.
3. Flooring: The flooring primarily consists of linoleum tile over concrete. A molded terrazzo baseboard ornaments the ground-story lobby. The ground-level kitchen spaces feature glazed-tile floors in addition to glazed-tile walling from floor to ceiling. Glazed tile also covers the washroom and bathroom floors and extends midway up the walls of these spaces.
4. Wall and Ceiling Finish: Painted plaster covers the building's wall surfaces. Modern drop-ceiling panels with integral fluorescent light fixtures have been installed in most rooms. The dining room's ceiling has been removed as a result of hazardous materials remediation.

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5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and Doors: Simple molded surrounds frame doorways and door openings. Doors providing entry into individual quarters and other rooms are generally wooden ones with two panels. Many of the closet doors within the quarters also display a full-length mirror inside the space of two panels. Double-leaf metal doors with small, single, square lights occupy doorways within the corridors and the stair halls. A small room adjacent to the formal stairway's first-story landing displays paired 12-light doors. Paired panel doors with six upper lights occupy a second-story stair hall entrance.
  - b. Windows: One-over-one aluminum sash was installed to replace the original six-over-six wooden sash throughout Building 3 in the mid-1970s. Smaller, two-over-two wooden sash occupy the openings providing light to the bathrooms. Paired four-light casements penetrate the entry pavilion's second story. The solarium has two-over-two horizontal-light sash as well as fixed one-light transoms and structural glass block.
6. Decorative Features and Trim: The principal interior decorative feature and trim in Building 3 consists of the Greek Revival mantel with triglyphs and metopes in the first-story common room. The ground-level formal entrance and the dining room both possess molded terrazzo baseboards. A molded linoleum strip ornaments most other baseboards. Window and door surrounds exhibit simple moldings.
7. Mechanical Equipment: Individual radiators in each room provided heat throughout the building. The radiators were probably topped by the wooden covers scattered throughout the building. Except for fluorescent lighting fixtures installed in the drop ceilings, most individual rooms are devoid of lighting apparatus.

D. SITE:

Building 3 stands approximately 200 feet southeast of the main Naval Hospital building, Building 1 (HABS No. PA-6206-A), on the east side of a circular drive at the north end of Chief's Court. The building faces west toward the circular drive and the east side of Ramp A; the formal entrance and parking area extend northward from Pattison Avenue to the main entrance of the Hospital. Two tennis courts, part of the original 1930s design of the hospital complex, still stand to Building 3's east, on the east side of a secondary road that runs parallel to Building 3's east elevation. Grass lawn, scattered mature trees and shrubs, and other dispersed vegetation predominate throughout the grounds of the hospital complex.

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A one-story partially enclosed passageway or arcade connects the western elevation of Building 3's north wing with Building 1 (HABS No. PA-6206-A). The passageway extends nine bays westward from Building 3's ground-level entrance, or roughly 150 feet, where it turns to the north, forming an ell, and joins with an entrance in the ground level of Building 1's east wing southern elevation. The ell extends northward three bays, or approximately 30 feet. Square, cream-colored brick piers with limestone pier caps define each bay. The passageway possesses a concrete pad and a flat concrete roof. The north and east walls of the passageway have six-light, metal-framed, fixed sash in each of the bays. Rectangular door openings, embellished with brown brick surrounds, ornament the corner bay's southern and western elevations. Brown brick surrounds also mark a doorway in the center bay of the north wall, which provides access to the northern portion of the hospital complex and Building 1's entry.

Building 2, the Corpsmen's Quarters, stands on the opposite side of Ramp A across from Building 3. Although of similar size and finish as Building 3, Building 2 displays some subtle differences. Like Building 3, Building 2 consists of a four-story main block with three-story wings on its northern and southern elevations. However, Building 2's wings extend much deeper to the rear than those of Building 3, to form an overall C-plan. Building 2's formal entrance, composed of a large, one-story limestone surround, is also much less elaborate than Building 3's entrance pavilion. Three garage door entries that formerly penetrated Building 2's ground-level northern elevation have been enclosed with brick, windows, and doors. The ground-level floor plan of Building 2 exhibits an angled corridor leading from its central corridor to its north wing's entrance to the enclosed passageway.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: Bureau of Yards and Docks Nos. 115400 through 115641 (1932). On file at the Naval Hospital Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- B. Cultural Resource Documentation: U.S. Department of the Navy, Northern Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Cultural Resources Survey Form, Building 3, Naval Hospital Philadelphia. Prepared by John Milner Associates, Inc., West Chester, Pennsylvania, 1993.

### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

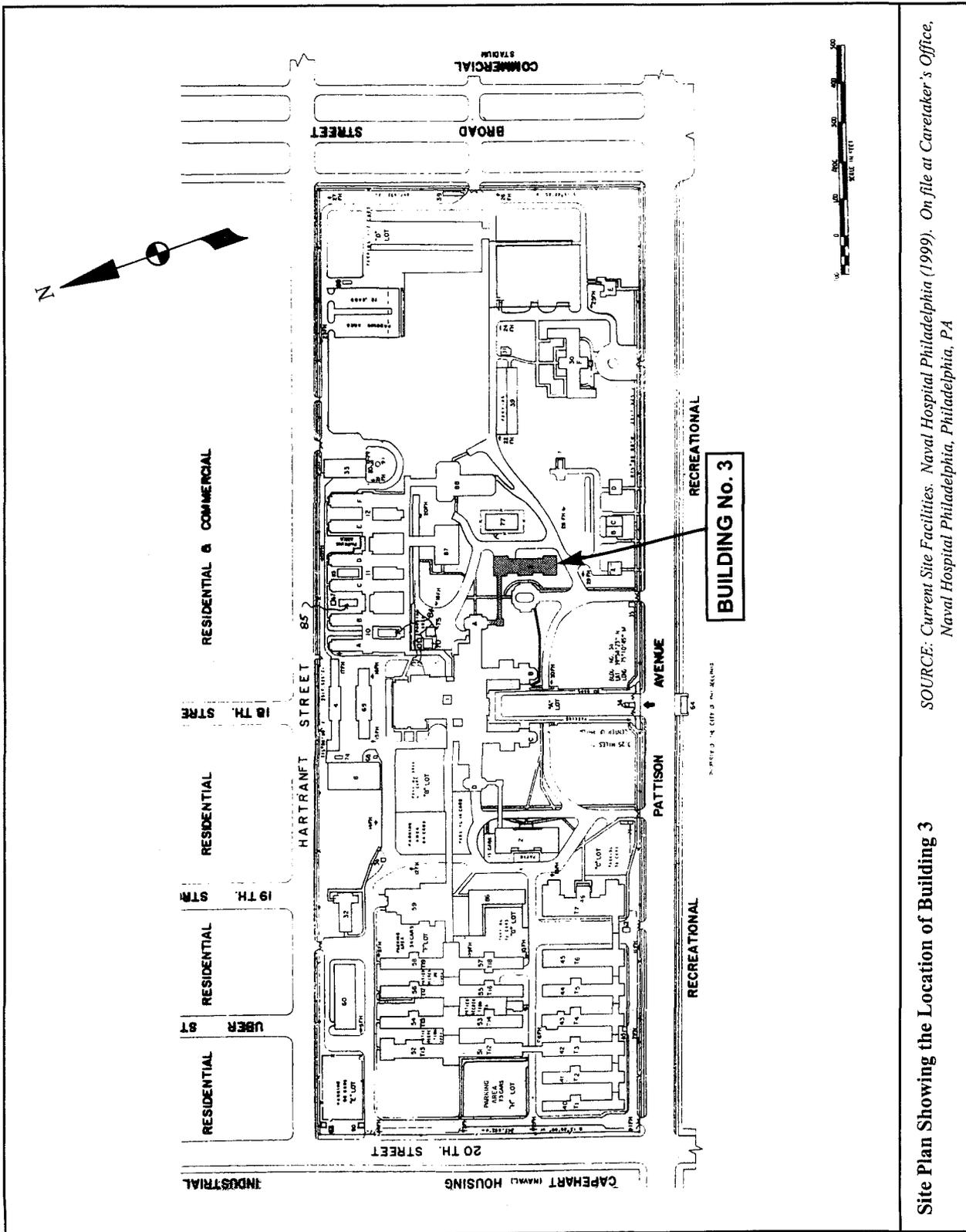
In 1990 the Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended that Naval Hospital Philadelphia be closed. Several earlier studies conducted during the 1970s and 1980s had concluded that construction of a new hospital would be more efficient than fitting modern medical facilities and equipment into the existing building. In 1993 the Navy closed Naval Hospital Philadelphia and

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began studying reuse options for the site, including the disposal of the property. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the Navy's Northern Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NORTHNAVFAC), undertook an architectural and historical study of the Hospital property in order to evaluate its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In consultation with the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office, NORTHNAVFAC determined the Hospital eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district under Criterion A, for its association with naval medical facilities during World War II. Naval Hospital Philadelphia served as the center for all naval patients with residences east of the Rocky Mountains who required amputation, orthopedic, or prosthetic services, and as a treatment center for hearing- and vision-impaired veterans of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. NORTHNAVFAC also determined the original 1930s core of the Hospital as eligible under National Register Criterion C, as an architecturally coherent complex of Art Deco-style buildings. As a result of these findings, the Navy undertook this documentation of Building 3 and eight related buildings within the historic district, as well as the compilation of a historical narrative overview of the facility, prior to the Hospital's final disposition.

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Site Plan Showing the Location of Building 3

SOURCE: Current Site Facilities: Naval Hospital Philadelphia (1999). On file at Caretaker's Office, Naval Hospital Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA