

PORTSMOUTH NAVAL HOSPITAL, MEDICAL WARD C
East corner, intersection of The Circle and
Barton Avenue
Portsmouth
~~Portsmouth County~~
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1287-I

HABS
VA
65-PORTM,
2I-

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PORTSMOUTH NAVAL HOSPITAL,
MEDICAL WARD C

HABS NO. VA-1287-I

HABS
VA
65-PORTM
21-

Location: East corner, intersection of The Circle and Barton Avenue,
Portsmouth, Virginia
UTM: 18.383520.4078440
QUAD: Norfolk South, VA; 1965 (photorevised 1986)

Significance: Medical Ward C, one of three surviving similar buildings built in 1939, is significant as part of a larger complex of temporary hospital buildings constructed at the Portsmouth Naval Hospital during the World War II era.

Description: Medical Ward C is at the southeastern end of a row of three similar buildings located directly behind (southwest of) the 1827 Hospital (HABS No. VA-1287-A). Although in its original massing and layout it was a mirror image of Medical Ward B (HABS No. VA-1287-H), located immediately to the northwest across Barton Avenue, alterations to Medical Ward C in 1943 made the two structures somewhat dissimilar. Medical Wards A (HABS No. VA-1287-G), B, and C are sited parallel to each other, and face southwest onto The Circle.

Medical Ward C, characteristic of the nine medical wards built about the same time at the Portsmouth Naval Hospital, was built as a long, rectangular, one-story, wood frame building on a poured-concrete foundation, with a clipped-gable, asbestos-shingled roof. It had asbestos shingle siding, now painted a pinkish-tan color, and single, six-over-six sash windows. The original building comprised a linear ward wing and a cross-axis formed by an open entrance porch on the northwest side, and a short utility wing on the southeast side, arranged in what was referred to as a "half-H" plan. The two ends of the ward wing originally featured a screened, three-bay porch with a double screen door entry. A ramped service entrance opened from the eastern end of the southeast elevation, and featured a one-bay, shed-roofed porch.

On the interior, the cross-axis produced a roughly symmetrical arrangement of spaces. The central part of the ward wing was unpartitioned, overseen by a central nurse's station just inside the side entrance porch. At both ends of the ward wing, two or three rooms occurred along each side of a central corridor: an office, nurse's room and diet kitchen (serviced via the exterior ramped entry) at the northeast end, and quiet rooms at the southwest end. The utility wing contained toilets, showers, a bath room and a utility closet.

Medical Ward C is the only extant medical ward that has had any significant additions to its original massing: two linear additions, each five bays long by one bay deep, flank the utility cross-wing on the southeast elevation. Medical Ward C also differs from the other remaining medical wards in the subsequent enclosure of its southwest end and northwest side porches, composed of large, eighteen- and twenty-four-light casement windows. The northwest side entrance porch has an access ramp on the east. The northeast end porch, originally screened (as was its counterpart at the southwest end), now has a central, double-door entry flanked by paired, one-over-one sash. There are two separate entrances with concrete steps at the eastern southeast addition, one near the rear porch and a second in the fourth bay to the west on the southeast elevation. The windows retain the original, single, six-over-six sash configuration except at the additions on the southeast elevation where triple, six-over-six sash are employed. Metal security grilles cover the windows at the southwestern end of the building.

Although the interior layout of Medical Ward C was originally primarily open, the 1943 alterations subdivided the building to provide space for two separate activities. The original rooms at each end of the building were demolished at that time. At present, the northwestern portion of the building, including the utility wing, houses Pharmacy Compounding; the remainder of the building is occupied by the Medical Mobilization Planning Office. Of the three remaining medical wards, Medical Ward C best retains the open character of the original ward spaces although additions to the southeast elevation have altered the ward's dual orientation to the northwest and southeast. The interior retains much of its original door and window trim, and the porch its beaded board ceiling.

Concrete walks along the Circle and around Medical Ward C lead to the building's entrances, although it is not known from available site plans whether these retain their original layout. Shrubs flank the front entrance and several ornamental trees occur at the side elevations; pine and magnolia trees also occur along the Circle frontage. A parklike area southeast of Medical Ward C, planted with hardwood trees and traversed by concrete walks, is the former site of Medical Ward D, an "H" plan building which originally completed the symmetrical arrangement of the four medical wards.

History:

Medical Ward C was built in 1939 as part of a group of four temporary structures erected behind the 1827 Hospital to serve World War II-era needs. Five additional medical wards (no longer extant) were built to the same design the following year in the southeast portion of the base. Additional offices were added to the southeast elevation and other interior alterations occurred in 1943.

The medical wards were designed by the Navy Department, Bureau of Yards and Docks, under the direction of A.A. Gustafson. Additions to Medical Ward C were designed by MacKenzie, Ashley and Bogert, architects and engineers of New York City. The builder for neither the original construction nor the subsequent additions and alterations is not known. The property is owned by the United States Department of the Navy with caretaker responsibility assigned to the Commanding Officer, Naval Hospital, Portsmouth.

Sources:

Class 2 Property Record, Public Works Office, Facilities Management, Portsmouth Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, VA.

Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department, "Emergency Hospital Buildings; Ward Location and Existing Grade Plan," October 8, 1939, Shelf file #551-31-200, Bureau of Yards and Docks #134657. U.S. Navy, Civil Engineering Support Office, Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, CA.

Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department, "Emergency Hospital Buildings; Ward Floor Plans," October 20, 1939, Shelf file #551-31-201, Bureau of Yards and Docks #134377. U.S. Navy, Civil Engineering Support Office, Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, CA.

Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department, "Emergency Hospital Buildings; Ward Elevations and Details," October 20, 1939, Shelf file #551-31-202, Bureau of Yards and Docks #134378. U.S. Navy, Civil Engineering Support Office, Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, CA.

"Map of Norfolk Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, Va., Showing Conditions on June 30, 1940," Shelf file #551-3-27, Bureau of Yards and Docks #756058. U.S. Navy, Civil Engineering Support Office, Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, CA.

"Map of Norfolk Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, Va., Showing Conditions on June 30, 1941," Shelf file #551-3-28. U.S. Navy, Civil Engineering Support Office, Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, CA.

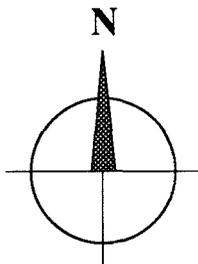
MacKenzie, Ashley and Bogert, Architects and Engineers, "Ward C; Alterations for Personnel and Disbursing Offices; Plans and Details," October 10, 1943, Shelf file #551-31-306, Bureau of Yards and Docks #289812. U.S. Navy, Civil Engineering Support Office, Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, CA.

Land and Community Associates, "Medical Ward C; Floor Plan (as of May 1991)," adapted from "Emergency Hospital Buildings; Ward Floor Plans," October 20, 1939, and "Ward C; Alterations for Personnel and Disbursing Offices; Plans and Details," October 10, 1943 (see above).

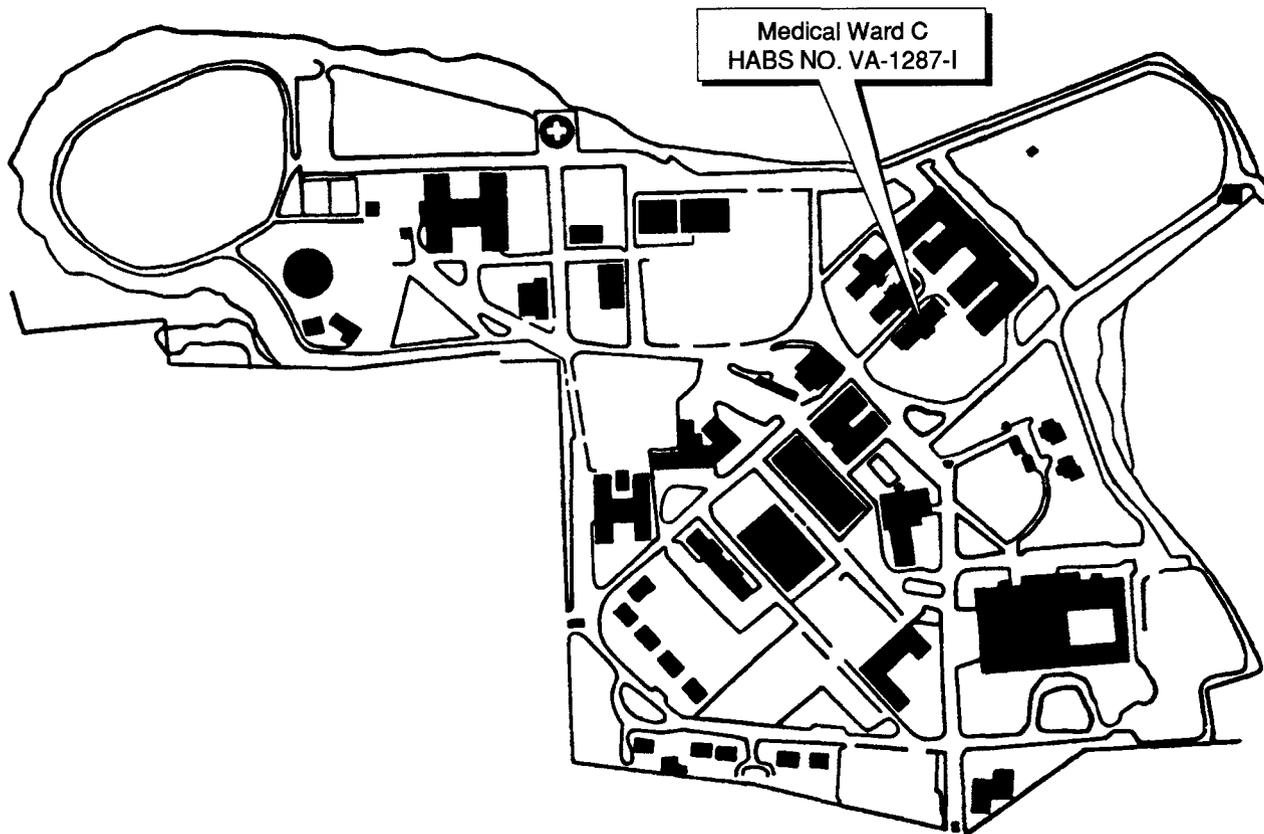
Historians:

M.J. Wuellner, Frederick Schneider, Land and Community Associates, June 1991.

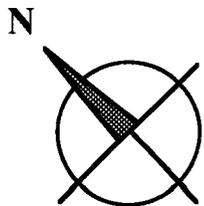
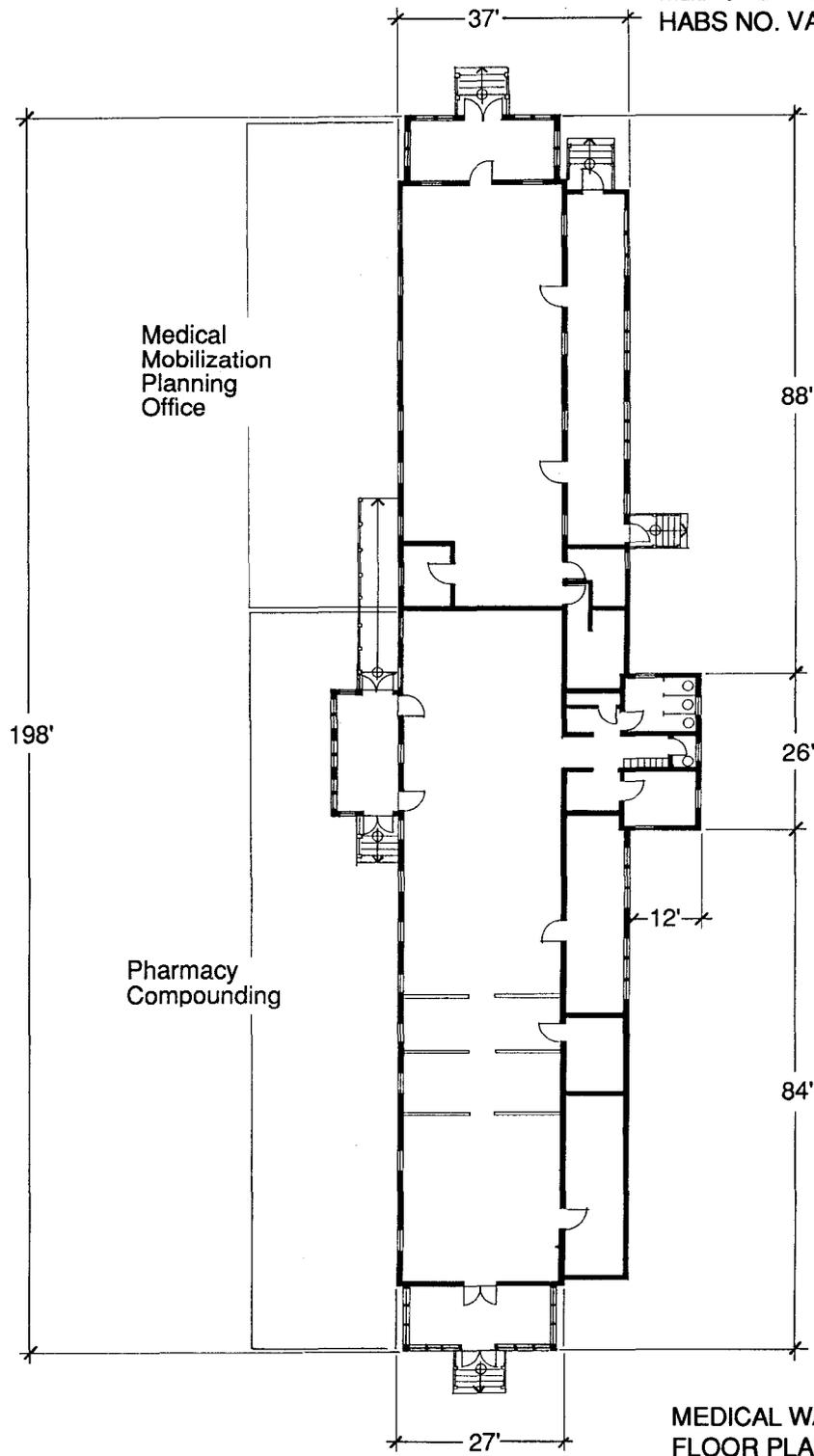
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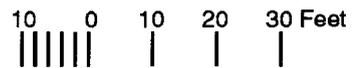
NAVAL HOSPITAL Portsmouth, Virginia



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MEDICAL WARD C
FLOOR PLAN (as of MAY 1991)



Scale: 1" = 30 feet