

VLR-11/16/71 NRHP-4/13/72

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: VIRGINIA	
COUNTY: PORTSMOUTH (in cit.)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
PORTSMOUTH NAVAL HOSPITAL

AND/OR HISTORIC:
NORFOLK NAVAL HOSPITAL

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
From Norfolk-Portsmouth tunnel, right on Washington St., left on Crawford St.

CITY OR TOWN:
Portsmouth (G. William Whitehurst, Congressman, Second District)

STATE Virginia	CODE 51	COUNTY: (in cit.)	CODE 740
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Hospital	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
U. S. Government - Rear Admiral Joseph L. Yon, MC. U.S.N.

STREET AND NUMBER:
Commanding Officer Naval Hospital

CITY OR TOWN: Portsmouth	STATE: Virginia	CODE 51
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Portsmouth	STATE: Virginia	CODE 51
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond	STATE: Virginia	CODE 51
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia

COUNTY: Portsmouth (in cit.)

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)		(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

NAVAL HOSPITAL, Portsmouth

In a letter of 1827 the architect, John Haviland, described the building as follows:

"This building is constructed of granite and Freestone, three stories high on a Basement of twelve feet. Its form is that of a hollow square 172 feet on its principal front, by 192 feet in depth; its entrance facade faces the north-east and Norfolk, and is embellished with a bold Doric Portico of ten columns accessible by twenty steps that stretch ninety-two feet, the whole length of the portico; the whole of this front is finished of chisel-dressed Virginia Freestone; all other external surfaces of this edifice is finished with hammer-dressed granite.

"The center part of the two longitudinal or side elevations recede eight feet, leaving a 40 feet wing at each extreme, the recess thus formed is filled up with a Piazza floor, post, and railing, to each story from which every room has access the windows being finished down to each floor combine the property of doors. Similar piazzas are carried round the interior of the hollow square.

"In the rear front is disposed the baths water-closets and reservoir insulated from the main building but accessible under cover in each story by means of the piazzas.

"The whole of the building is made fire proof with arched ceilings of brickwork with the exception of the two upper floors of the principal front. . .

"The rooms of the whole building are of the most approved dimensions, particular attention has been paid to the very important properties of ventilation, warming, superintendance and classification of the different wards, and the necessary conveniences required at each department. Four fire proof stairways, one at each angle of the plan afford with the assistance of the piazzas private and easy access to each room.

"The culinary department is located in the arched Basement of the front nearest the apartments of the superintendant with the bakery and laundry adjoining. The fuel, store rooms, larder and dairy occupy the rooms formed by the foundation of the portico contiguous to the kitchen, washhouse etc., etc.

"This edifice is calculated to accommodate from three to five hundred beds for sick besides sufficient rooms for the superintendants, doctor, nurses, domestics, and the public offices belonging to them."

The roof was of Welsh slate. Haviland had provided for quarters for the superintendant and for the senior surgeon at the left and right front of the hospital, respectively, but these buildings were never erected. However, there was a house with a wharf in front of it which stood in front of the hospital (near the present tennis courts) until about 1860. It was occupied by the superintendant during the first twelve years.

The building needed extensive repairs and improvements in 1877, and in 1907 work was begun to completely reconstruct the building, leaving only the outer walls. Following are just a few of the criticisms of the old building made by Surgeon-General P. M. Rixey:

"The portico, though dignified in appearance, seriously interferes with the usefulness of the building, as it darkens and renders practically useless a large part of the basement and two upper floors."

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE VIRGINIA	
COUNTY PORTSMOUTH (in cit.)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7.

The piazzas were constructed of wood, and therefore were a fire hazard. The wards "consist of a series of vaults in the form of alcoves, each with a window. Owing to this peculiar arrangement the patient's bed must be in all cases placed in the corner, where there is not sufficient circulation of air. The massive walls. . .are not suitable for a hospital, as the deep embrasures tend to shut out the light and air. . . . In general the wards have the appearance of cells. This is the radical defect of the plan."

The walls were cracked from unequal settling, and the mortar was poor. "The woodwork as originally designed is not of a kind suitable for hospitals. There are a great many projecting cornices and moldings which afford resting places for hospital dust."

In the reconstruction, tons of bricks were removed, and the building was supported with steel girders. Many of the old doors, trim, marble mantel and fireplaces, and inside window-blinds were retained. The shallow dome was added at this time. A structure to the rear, containing the tub rooms, was removed to increase the depth of the foyer and main front. In 1909-10, the new wings were built and further additions were made in 1942-43. In 1960 the 15-story hospital was added to the complex.

There are two monuments on the grounds in front of the hospital. One is a marker erected by Haviland over the grave of Major Saunders, one-time commander of Forts Nelson and Norfolk, who died March 15, 1810. The second is a memorial cannon with inscriptions commemorating Fort Nelson.

8.

architectural firm of Wood, Don and Deming of Washington, D.C. During the remodeling the patients were placed in hospital tents on the grounds. In 1921 the first veterans were admitted for care and in 1960 a modern fifteen story building was added to the complex.

The original portions of the Naval Hospital stand not only as a testament to the nation's early interest in the welfare of its seamen but as a major example of Greek Revival architecture by a leading architect of the period.

2. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian; 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<u>Medicine</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1798 the United States Congress passed an act creating the Marine Hospital Service, the forerunner of the Public Health Service, and set up a Naval Hospital Fund to be filled by taking twenty cents a month from the pay of every seaman, officer and marine. When plans developed for establishing a marine hospital, the state of Virginia in 1801 offered to supply an appropriate site and in 1826 the city of Norfolk was selected. In 1827 the Commissioners of the Naval Hospital--the Secretaries of War, Navy and Treasury--picked eighteen acres at Fort Nelson, a fortification built during the Revolution to protect Norfolk and later purchased by the federal government in 1800, as the site of the future hospital. Sixty-one acres were purchased to add to the property and John Haviland, well-known Philadelphia architect, was commissioned to draw plans for the new building.

Although a similar hospital was begun in Philadelphia at the same time, work on both installations was halted in 1829 due to lack of funds. By July, 1830, however, the north wing of the Portsmouth Naval Hospital was completed and occupied, thus making the hospital "the first permanent structure to be built out of the Hospital Fund." Haviland finished with the project in 1832 although the building was not completely finished until later. As architect he had supervised every aspect of the project although Thomas Tolson supplied the freestone and granite, Isaac Phillips, of Baltimore, the bricks and Mr. Stranton, of Madison, Connecticut, the flagstone. Haviland's scheme for the hospital was apparently so ambitious that its trustees, worried about the expense, sent Charles Bulfinch to make a report on it. He replied that the "location of the hospital appears well calculated for health and to gratify the feelings of hardy seamen for whom it is raised; that the work is well executed and does credit to the science and skill of the architect, John Haviland, Esq..."

The Naval Hospital has had distinguished service serving those in need. In 1855 when Portsmouth lost one-fifth of its population in a dreadful Yellow Fever epidemic, over 500 civilians were treated at the hospital. In April, 1862, the Confederate government surrounded the building with earthworks and renamed it Fort Nelson. The next year it was occupied by Northern troops and re-established as a federal army hospital.

In 1866 the hospital grounds were laid out as a well-landscaped park. Eleven years later the hospital had deteriorated and needed extensive repairs and improvements, and in 1879 steam heat was added to replace the wood stoves. During the Spanish-American War the south wing was put into use, and the entire hospital continued in use through World War I. Between 1907-1909 the hospital was reconstructed and in 1909-1910 the new wings were added, both projects being conducted under the supervision of the

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Holcomb, Richmond C., A Century with Norfolk Naval Hospital, 1830-1930. Portsmouth, Va.: Printcraft Publishing Co., 1930.
 Holladay, Mildred M., "History of Portsmouth," in Emerson, Some Fugitive Items of Portsmouth and Norfolk County History. typescript, 1930's.
 "The Navy and Norfolk, Va.," in Know Norfolk Virginia. Vol. VI, No.2 (August, 1944).
 O'Neal, William B., Architecture in Virginia. New York: Walker & Company, Inc., 1968.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	36 °	50'	55"	76 °	18'	27"			
NE	36 °	50'	55"	76 °	18'	09"			
SE	36 °	50'	45"	76 °	18'	09"			
SW	36 °	50'	45"	76 °	18'	27"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **20 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION, Staff, James W. Moody, Jr., Director

ORGANIZATION: **VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION** DATE: **July 20, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: **Richmond** STATE: **Virginia** CODE: **51**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name NOV 16 1971

James W. Moody, Jr., Director

Title Va. Historic Landmarks Commission

Date NOV 16 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

PORTSMOUTH NAVAL HOSPITAL

Latitude	Longitude
NW36°50'55"	76°18'27"
NE36°50'55"	76°18'09"
SE36°50'45"	76°18'09"
SW36°50'45"	76°18'27"

VS FERRY 5.5 MI. 76°17'30" OCEAN VIEW 6 MI. 2650000 FEET

