

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received SEP 1 1983
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Wahpeton Hospital

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 720-722 Dakota Ave. N/A not for publication

city, town Wahpeton N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state North Dakota code 38 county Richland code 077

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name 720 Dakota, A Limited Partnership

street & number c/o Norman Triebwasser, Suite 416 Black Building

city, town Fargo N/A vicinity of state North Dakota 58102

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Richland County Court House

street & number N/A

city, town Wahpeton state North Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wahpeton National Register survey this property been determined eligible? yes no

date Summer, 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of North Dakota

city, town Bismarck, North Dakota 58505 state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Wahpeton Hospital is a two story masonry brick-faced structure approximately 50 by 100 feet at 720-722 Dakota Avenue in Wahpeton.

Construction on the building was begun in May, 1911.¹ Dr. Timothy O'Brien let the initial \$12,000 contract to Samuel Christenson, a local city contractor, who also may have been the architect.² By the time of the grand opening in October of the same year, cost had climbed to about \$20,000,³ a sum which included completely modern medical equipment and furnishings,³ and the building could accommodate up to twenty patients at one time.⁴

A photograph taken just after the opening in 1911⁵ shows a two story Classical Revival structure with a raised brick basement and red-orange face brick with red grout. Water table and window sills are dressed molded stone. The building has brick quoins composed of four courses of projecting brickwork to each quoin. Two belt courses of brick separate the first from the second story. Double-hung windows are wooden-framed one-over-one to which aluminum storm windows have been added.

The building is topped by a very slightly bell-cast deeply-overhung hipped roof with tongue-and-groove wooden eaves and new metal gutters. The 1911 photograph shows two hip-roofed side dormers on the east and west sides, each composed of a pair of small-paned double-hung windows. Sometime after 1919 when the hospital was converted to apartments, these dormers were joined to form a continuous hip-roofed dormer with an extra pair of windows on each side of the roof (photo # 1 and 2). On the east side, a concrete block chimney anchored to the building with metal bands projects through the dormer eaves. These roof dormers are now covered with brick-patterned rolled asphalt siding.

The chief design feature is a projecting two-story front portico (photo #3) under a fully pedimented gabled roof. The pediment contains a full half-circle fanlight. The portico consists of two engaged plain pilasters and two free-standing wooden columns with Roman Ionic capitals with egg and dart trim supporting a plain wooden frieze. Both stories of the portico have turned balustrades, although the first story had no balustrade in 1911. Some-

¹ "New Hospital Assured." Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (April 27, 1911).

² Ibid.

³ "New Hospital Opened." Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (October 5, 1911).

⁴ "Hospital Well Filled." Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (November 16, 1911).

⁵ Ibid.

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Description, cont.:

time after I. E. Lillegard purchased the building in 1940, a wrought iron porch and stair railing with an inset "L" was installed at the front entry. The original brick piers supporting the free-standing columns on the portico have also been replaced.

These exterior alterations are very minor and the building looks essentially as it did at construction. The only noticeable alteration to the front is some brick infill around the front door, which was either a double door or a door with sidelights originally.

Other minor exterior alterations include a new basement door on the east side, the removal of the original cornice on the one story brick rear porch, and a narrow two-story frame addition with six-over-one windows on the rear (photo # 2). It is covered in brick-patterned rolled asphalt and is slated to be removed.

The interior has virtually no resemblance to the original hospital arrangement. Since 1919, the building has been used as apartments and the years have taken their toll. A few six-panelled doors on the second floor and attic rooms may be original or may date from the 1919 apartment conversion. Interior spaces have suspended ceilings over the original plaster ones. All doors and trim on the first floor are new, and the central hallway appears to have been narrowed. The attic is divided into apartments or rooms with newer plaster walls and ceilings. Only some of the taller molded baseboards on the second floor, turned balusters and decorative newell posts on the stairways remain (photo #4). Most of the original remaining woodwork and stairways have been painted and antiqued. According to the manager, the current laundry room in the basement served originally as the morgue.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) medicine
Specific dates	1911	Builder/Architect	Samuel Christenson, contractor	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Wahpeton Hospital is the oldest remaining hospital building in the Wahpeton, N.D.-Breckenridge, Mn. area. It is associated with Dr. Timothy O'Brien, pioneer Red River Valley physician and surgeon, and his wife, Mary O'Brien, who built it in 1911 as a private enterprise in recognition of the need for a modern area hospital. Architecturally, it is the finest private building in Wahpeton, surpassed in quality and size only by such public buildings as the Leach Public Library, Richland County Court House, and Wahpeton city hall.

The Wahpeton Hospital was the second to operate in the Twin Town area, the first being another private hospital on Pembina Avenue between 4th and 5th streets in Wahpeton in 1886 operated by a Dr. Swaine and his wife.⁶ These were the days of private hospitals and Dr. Swaine's was apparently short-lived.

By 1911, Wahpeton had no hospital and Dr. Timothy O'Brien (1861-1931) recognized the need for a modern hospital for his surgical cases. O'Brien, from Brudevall, Ontario, graduated from the medical school at McGill University in Montreal in 1883, arriving in Wahpeton in 1887 only five years after it became an organized town.⁷ He maintained offices at several stores downtown for almost 25 years while carrying on a general and surgical practice in the surrounding region. O'Brien was an old-fashioned country doctor "known to practically every person in Richland County."⁸ As one of a handful of pioneer doctors, O'Brien became prominent in local medical circles, serving as one of the organizers of the Richland County Medical Association, attaining the office of president by 1931. He was also an active member of the Wahpeton Board of Health at the time he built his own hospital at 720-722 Dakota Ave.⁹ In 1901, Dr. O'Brien married Mary Wilczek (1873-1981), a nurse who had received her education in Little Falls, Minnesota and Rock Island, Illinois.¹⁰

⁶ Richland County Daily News, Centennial Section #16 (february 25, 1975), p. 127.

⁷ A History of Richland County (1977), p. 509.

⁸ "Pioneer Wahpeton Doctor Passes Away..." Richland County Farmer-Globe (November 10, 1931), p. 1.

⁹ Ibid.; John H. Ley, Wahpeton City Directory, 1912-13, p. 1

¹⁰ "Twin Town Centenarian dies..." Daily News (June 2, 1981), p. 1.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Abstract of Title, 720 Dakota Avenue.

Breckenridge Centennial History 1857-1957, One Hundred Years. Breckenridge Centennial Committee. Breckenridge, Mn.: Valley Printing, 1957. (con't)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Wahpeton, Minn.-N. Dak. photorevised. 1970 Quadrangle scale 7.5'

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>4</u>	<u>6</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>1</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

All of lots 4, 5, and 6 and the west 12.3 feet of lot 3 of Block H of Fargo Addition to the Original Townsite of the City of Wahpeton, Richland Co., North Dakota

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Norene A. Roberts, President

organization Historical Research, Inc.

date April 15, 1983

street & number 5535 Richmond Curve

telephone (612) 929-2921

city or town Minneapolis

state Minnesota 55410

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

James E. Sherry

title State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota) date July 25, 1983

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date

9/29/83

for *Melores Byers*
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Significance, cont.:

In an interview in 1975, the then 101 year-old Mrs. O'Brien recalled that the old Wahpeton Hospital was a family affair. Mary O'Brien served as "nurse, cook, anesthetist and all-around helper at the hospital,"¹¹ while her husband served as general practitioner, surgeon, and superintendent. The O'Briens apparently lived in the building.¹² This hospital served as the sole facility in town until 1919 when the couple sold the facility to H. H. Aaker of Fargo, in a transaction that involved Aaker's trade of the Lutheran Bible School property on N. Third Street and cash to the Lutheran Deaconess Hospital group in exchange for the old Wahpeton Hospital owned by the O'Briens.¹³ With the existing physical plant of the Bible School and additional new construction and equipment, the new hospital, also named the "Wahpeton Hospital," opened on July 15, 1920. Funds were raised between 1919 and 1920 by a county-wide citizens aid group in order to establish a facility that would serve all of Richland County. The old hospital closed and Dr. O'Brien and his wife continued their practice from their office and residence at 121 6th Street, three houses north of the Post Office (now razed) until at least 1921. Mrs. O'Brien was a member of the fund-raising committee for the new hospital. Dr. O'Brien ultimately affiliated with St. Francis Hospital in Breckenridge, Minnesota across the river where he remained until his death.¹⁶

Both the new 1920 Wahpeton Hospital, which replaced O'Brien's 1911 building, and the old St. Francis Hospital have been razed. The old Wahpeton Hospital stands as an elegant reminder to the pioneering career of Dr. Timothy O'Brien and the days of private medical facilities.

Architecturally, the red brick and white wooden accents of the old Wahpeton Hospital are a visual focus to the west end of Dakota Avenue, the main business street in the city. Most citizens in town still remember it as the old hospital, despite its being known as the Aaker Apartments from 1920 to 1940, and as the (I.E.) Lillegard Apartments until recent years. The city has

¹¹ "Dr. Timothy O'Brien founded hospital" Daily News, Centennial Section 16 (February 25, 1975), p. 127.

¹² Ley, John H. Wahpeton City Directory, 1912-1913, pp. 47, 81, 85.

¹³ "Lutheran Hospital Trade Deal Closed" Globe-Gazette, May 8, 1919, p.1

¹⁴ Fargo Forum, July 7, 1920, p. 3, col. 6.

¹⁵ Globe-Gazette, May 1, 1919, p. 5; Johnson, p. 47.

¹⁶ "Dr. Timothy O'Brien founded hospital."

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Significance, cont.:

only three other buildings which can match it in Classical Revival design: the Leach Public Library (by Keith and Kurke, architects, 1920s); the city hall (altered substantially in the front facade south entrance); and the Richland County Court House.

The current owners are working closely with the Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of North Dakota on plans to convert the old hospital from 11 to 15 rental units. Their plans include removing the one story rear shed (sketch #1), reinsulation, restoring 3" lap siding to the roof dormers, and creating a lobby on the right inside the front entrance. The structure is also in need of some minor tuckpointing, especially where caulking compound has been poorly applied to some of the brickwork.

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Fargo Forum, July 7, 1920, p. 3 col. 6.

A History of Richland County. The Richland County Historical Society. Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1977.

"Hospital Well Filled." Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (November 16, 1911), p.1.

Interviews:

Anderson, Sally. Daily News, April 6, 1983.

Engstrom, Karen. Director of Medical Records, St. Francis Hospital, Breckenridge, Mn. April 7, 1983.

Hendrickson, Elmer. Wahpeton City Assessor, March 29, April 6, 1983.

Meide, Jerry, April 5, 1983.

Mitzel, Joyce. Personnel Director, St. Francis Nursing Home, April 7, 1983.

Werre, Frances M. April 6, 1983.

Yost, William. Richland County Historical Society, March 28, 1983.

Johnson, L.B. Breckenridge and Wahpeton City Directory, 1921-22. Wahpeton: Johnson, publisher, pp. 47, 78, 95. at Wilkin County Historical Society.

Ley, John H. Wahpeton City Directory, 1912-13. St. Cloud, Mn.: Ley, publisher, pp. 1, 47, 81, 85. at Wilkin County Historical Society, Breckenridge.

"Lutheran Hospital Trade Deal Closed." Wahpeton Globe-Gazette. (May 8, 1919) p. 1.

"New Hospital Assured." Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (April 27, 1911) p. 1.

"New Hospital Opened." Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (October 5, 1911) p. 1.

"Pioneer Wahpeton Doctor Passes Away Suddenly Early Saturday Morning." Richland County Farmer Globe (November 10, 1931) p. 1.

"Public Invited to Hospital Opening." Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (July 1, 1920) p. 1.

Richland County Daily News, Centennial Section 16 (February 25, 1975) p. 123.

"Twin Town Centenarian dies Manday at age 107." Wahpeton-Breckenridge Daily News (June 2, 1981) p. 1.

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Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (May 1, 1919) p. 5; (March 11, 1920) p. 12.

"Wahpeton Hospital Starts \$75,000 Drive." Wahpeton Globe-Gazette (March 4, 1920) p. 1.

Werre, Frances M. "Early Wahpeton History." 25 page typescript. Richland County Historical Society, April, 1975, p. 20.

Wahpeton Hospital
720-722 Dakota Avenue
Wahpeton, North Dakota

SKETCH # 1

↑
North

