

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received APR 2 1985

date entered

MAY 2 1985

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

1. Name

historic Charity Hospital

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 644 West 36th Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Savannah

N/A vicinity of

state Georgia

code

013

county

Chatham

code

051

3. Classification

Category

- district
- building(s)
- structure
- site
- object

Ownership

- public
- private
- both
- Public Acquisition**
- in process
- being considered

Status

- occupied
- unoccupied
- work in progress
- Accessible**
- yes: restricted
- yes: unrestricted
- no

Present Use

- agriculture
- commercial
- educational
- entertainment
- government
- industrial
- military
- museum
- park
- private residence
- religious
- scientific
- transportation
- other: Unoccupied

4. Owner of Property

name Cuyler Community Improvement Association; c/o Ms. Dot Owens

street & number 812 West 36th Street

city, town Savannah

N/A vicinity of

state Georgia 31401

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.

Superior Court

street & number

Chatham County Courthouse

city, town

Savannah

state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date

federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" 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

Charity Hospital is a brick, Georgian Revival style building. Its central portion contains a three-story pavilion facing West 36th Street. The main (south) facade of this pavilion contains a portico which supports a porch on each floor. East of the central pavilion is a projecting wing. Wood and concrete are used for decorative elements. The south entrance includes an elaborate entranceway with a fanlight transom and a six-paneled wooden door. The east wing, originally designed to be a clinic, served as patient rooms and features a central hall that is connected to the central pavilion. In the central pavilion were the intern rooms, administrative offices, pharmacy, and wards on the first floor; private rooms, kitchen, laboratory, and wards on the second floor; and the operating area on the third floor. All floors were accessible by stairways and elevators. The interior is plainly finished and shows evidence of remodeling. There are a few shade trees between the hospital and the street and no outbuildings. The hospital is surrounded by cottages and rowhouses dating from the 1880s to the 1920s, all within the Cuyler community. While changes to the building have been minimal, a 1982 fire destroyed the roof over the central pavilion, exposed the third floor, and damaged the second floor flooring. Some windows and doors have also been lost.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900– | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates 1931 **Builder/Architect** Cletus W. Bergen, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Charity Hospital is significant in architecture and social-humanitarian history.

Charity Hospital is significant in architecture as a good example of the use of the Georgian Revival style for a hospital or public building. Elements of the style include the use of brick with contrasting trim, the main doorway, and the portico. Overall, the hospital reflects a functional building having been built to be a hospital. It is also significant as a 1926 design of trained architect Cletus W. Bergen of Levey, Clarke, and Bergen of Savannah. The hospital is significant in social-humanitarian history because it was established to care for the black citizens of Savannah. Opened in 1931, it reflects the segregation of Southern society, including health services. It represented a joint effort of black and white citizens to provide first-quality health care for the black community. It was the product of community fund-raising drives and the culmination of years of efforts to provide adequate health facilities for Savannah's black citizens. It also included a nurse training program. These areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register Criteria A, B, and C.

Historical Narrative

The history of Charity Hospital began in 1893. In that year, Cornelius and Alice McKanes, two West Indian physicians, established McKane School for Nurses in their home in Savannah. It was the first school for nurses in southeast Georgia. The McKane Hospital for Women and Children began in 1896 on land donated at the corner of 36th and Florence. Savannahian Anna Hutto donated an old house for the hospital and it was moved to the site and added onto during that year. This building would serve as a hospital until 1931. The McKanes left the hospital in the late 1890s. The black medical staff in 1897 contained some Georgia born doctors as well as the first Black City physician for Savannah. In 1901 the organization was rechartered as the Charity Hospital and Training School for Nurses. At this time men were admitted to the hospital for the first time. The board of trustees from the 1890s–1920s included six black ministers, newspaper editors and Savannah State professors.

During this period, hospital facilities for blacks in Savannah were woefully inadequate. There were only two hospitals to serve the black community, since the rest of the hospitals in the community did not admit blacks. Charity Hospital was very overcrowded and was described as "literally a tinderbox with a fire risk for those who occupied it, it is appalling to consider."

(Continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Potterfield, Ty. "Charity Hospital." Historic Property Information Form, March 30, 1984. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, GA. This was based on a promotional brochure, news stories, and interviews. (See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 1 acre

Quadrangle name Savannah, Georgia- S.C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property corresponds to the current legal boundaries of the property. This land approximates that which has been associated with the hospital since the 1890s. It is marked on the enclosed Tax Map 66, Block 41, Parcel 14.

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

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| N/A | | | |

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|-------|------|--------|------|

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian
Historic Preservation Section

organization Georgia Department of Natural Resources date 3/7/85

street & number 270 Washington St., SW telephone 404/656-2840

city or town Atlanta state Georgia 30334

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

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 3/15/85

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date

5/2/85

Alonzo Byer
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Significance

Item number 8

Page 3

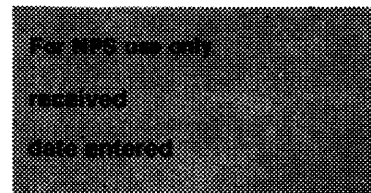
publicity campaign attempted to develop sympathy for the deplorable conditions at the then standing Charity Hospital. There was much discussion for the desperate need for a new hospital building. To a lesser extent, the campaign played upon the fears of the white population. They were told that a black population which did not receive proper hospital care could rapidly spread contagious diseases throughout the community. The fund raising drive was a tremendous success. Sixty-thousand, four hundred and thirty one dollars (\$60,431) was raised locally. Most of the money came from whites in Savannah, but over \$10,000 came from the black community. The Savannah Morning News described the fund raising drive as "a story of sacrifice and determination on the part of blacks and watchful care on the part of the whites."

Construction resumed on the building in September of 1930 under the direction of Olaf Otto, a new white contractor. The building opened on April 15, 1931, with 36 beds, but minus the west wing. The publicly owned hospital was considered to be a completely modern facility when constructed. It was run by a black superintendent had black doctors and black nurses. The hospital had a white consulting staff at this time and a white executive board that included attorneys, a Rabbi, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, the Clerk of the Superior Court and several businessmen, and handled the financial matters of the hospital. The day-to-day operations of the hospital were supervised by a black board of trustees who were businessmen, insurance executives, a realtor and librarian.

In 1937, the Nurse Training Program which had been in operation since 1893 closed. This was due to stricter standards established at this time for nurses training schools. In 1954, a Black American Legion Post provided money for the establishment of a Psychiatric Ward in the hospital. In 1957, a fire burned the roof off the central pavilion and seriously damaged the first floor. The roof was quickly repaired but put the hospital in financial difficulties. In 1960, the white executive board was abolished and complete control was placed with the board of trustees. The hospital continued to have difficulties. In 1964, it was sold to become a private nursing home and was operated as such under the name William A. Harris Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home into the 1970s until it closed. In 1982, a second fire devastated the roof. While the building has been vacant for a number of years, plans are underway by the owners, the Cuyler Community Improvement Association, to turn the hospital building into a community center. It will be used by the Cuyler Community which surrounds the hospital.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



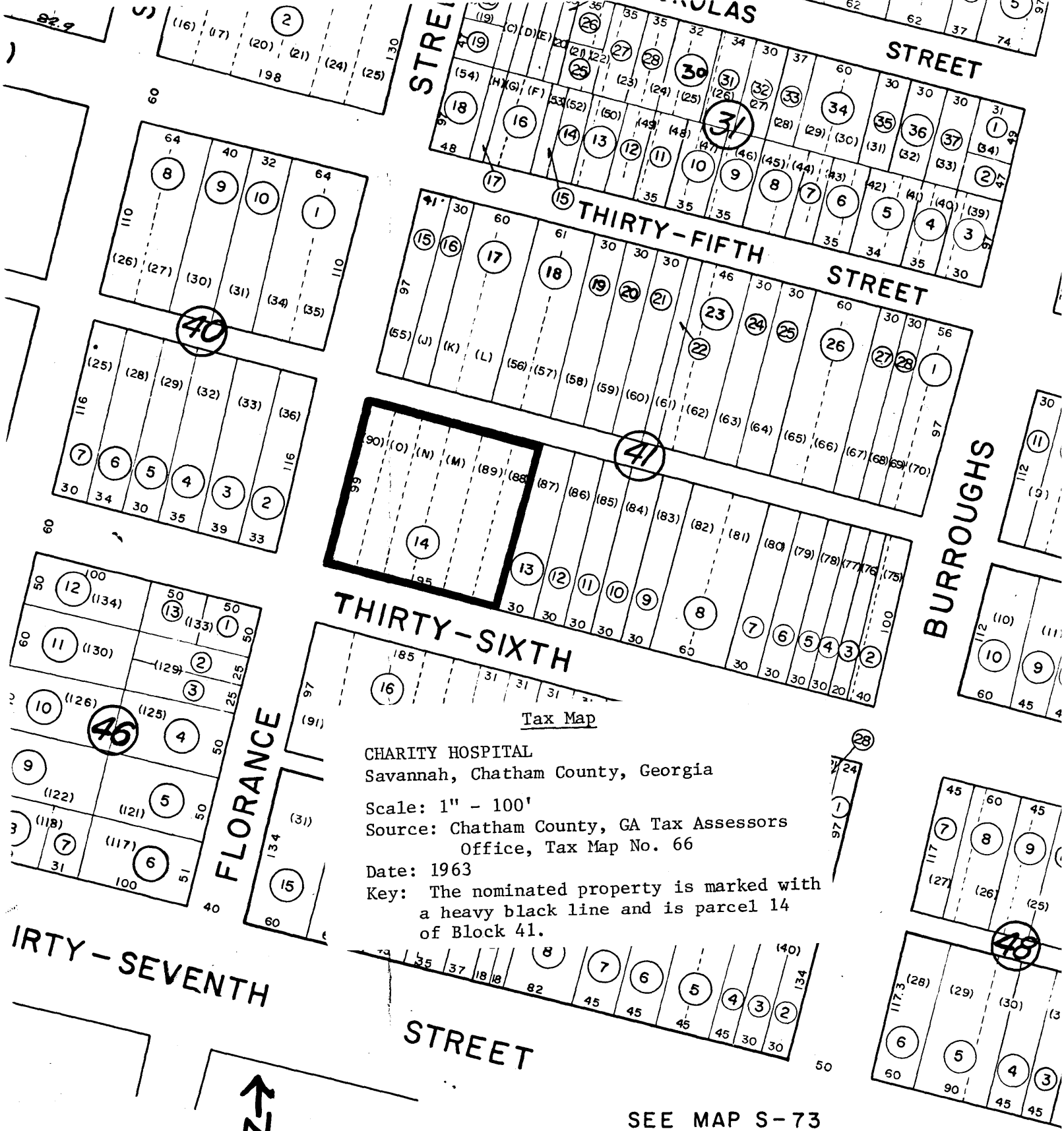
Continuation sheet Major Bibliographical References **Item number** 9

Page 2

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Savannah Hospitals, 1940." The Journal of the Medical Association of Georgia
XXIX (March, 1940): 162-169.

Bergen, Cletus W. File in "Architects and Builders in Georgia" files, Historic
Preservation Section.



THIRTY-SIXTH STREET

Tax Map

CHARITY HOSPITAL
 Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia
 Scale: 1" - 100'
 Source: Chatham County, GA Tax Assessors
 Office, Tax Map No. 66
 Date: 1963
 Key: The nominated property is marked with
 a heavy black line and is parcel 14
 of Block 41.

SEE MAP S-73

LEGEND

- Plan Block No. **6**
- Plan Lot No. (6)
- Plan Lot Line - - - - -
- Waterway ~~~~~
- District Line - - - - -
- Map Parcel No. **3**
- Property Line - - - - -
- Church ☩
- School ☩
- Improvements ○

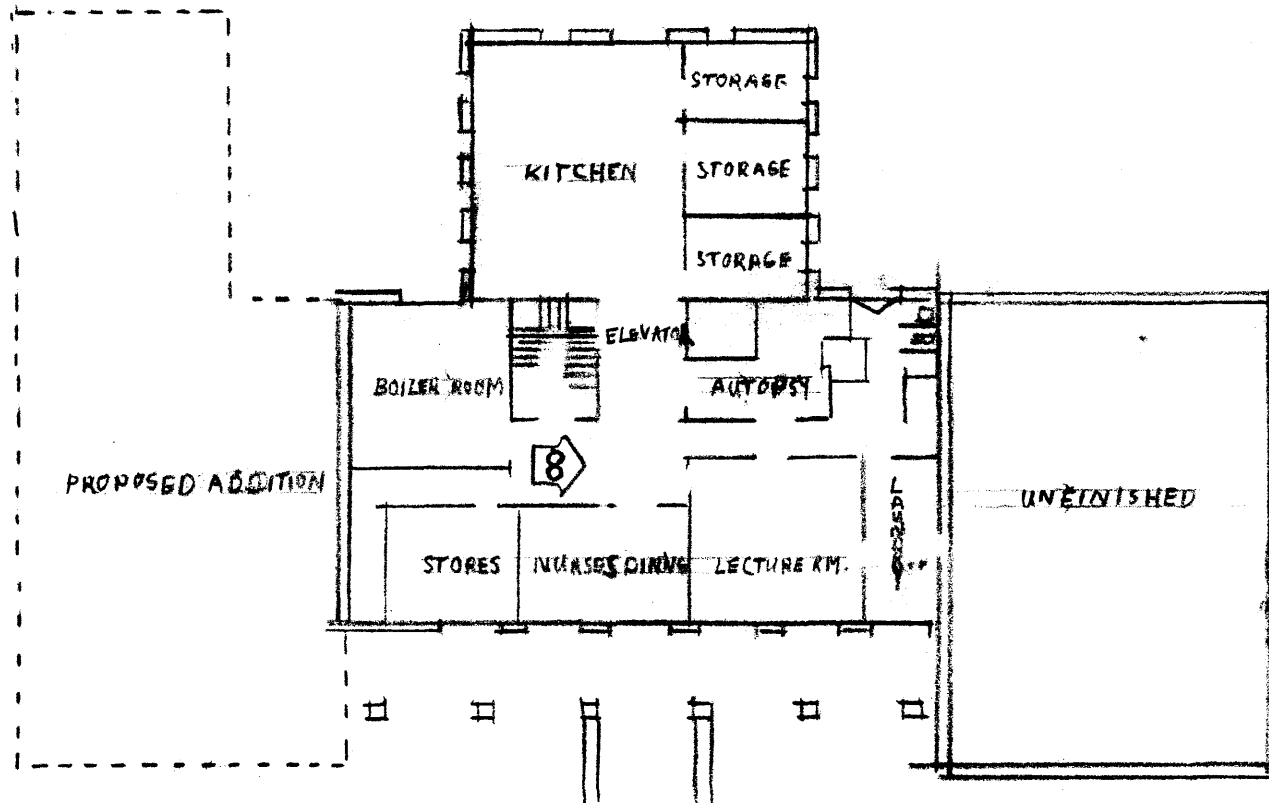
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only
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Floor Plan

CHARITY HOSPITAL
Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia

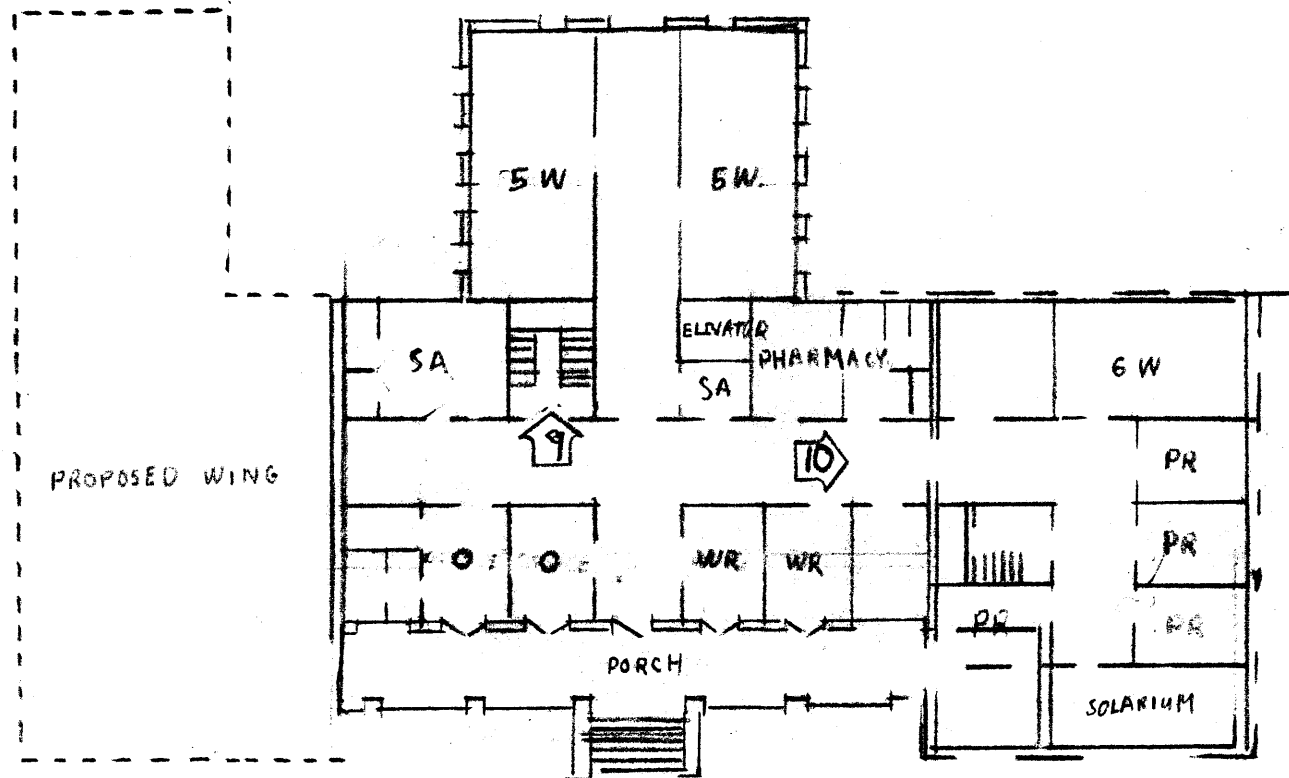
Scale: not to scale
Source: Drawn by Ty Potterfield
Date: 1983
Key: Ground Floor



Floor Plan

CHARITY HOSPITAL
Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia

Scale: not to scale
Source: Drawn by Ty Potterfield
Date: 1983
Key: First Floor



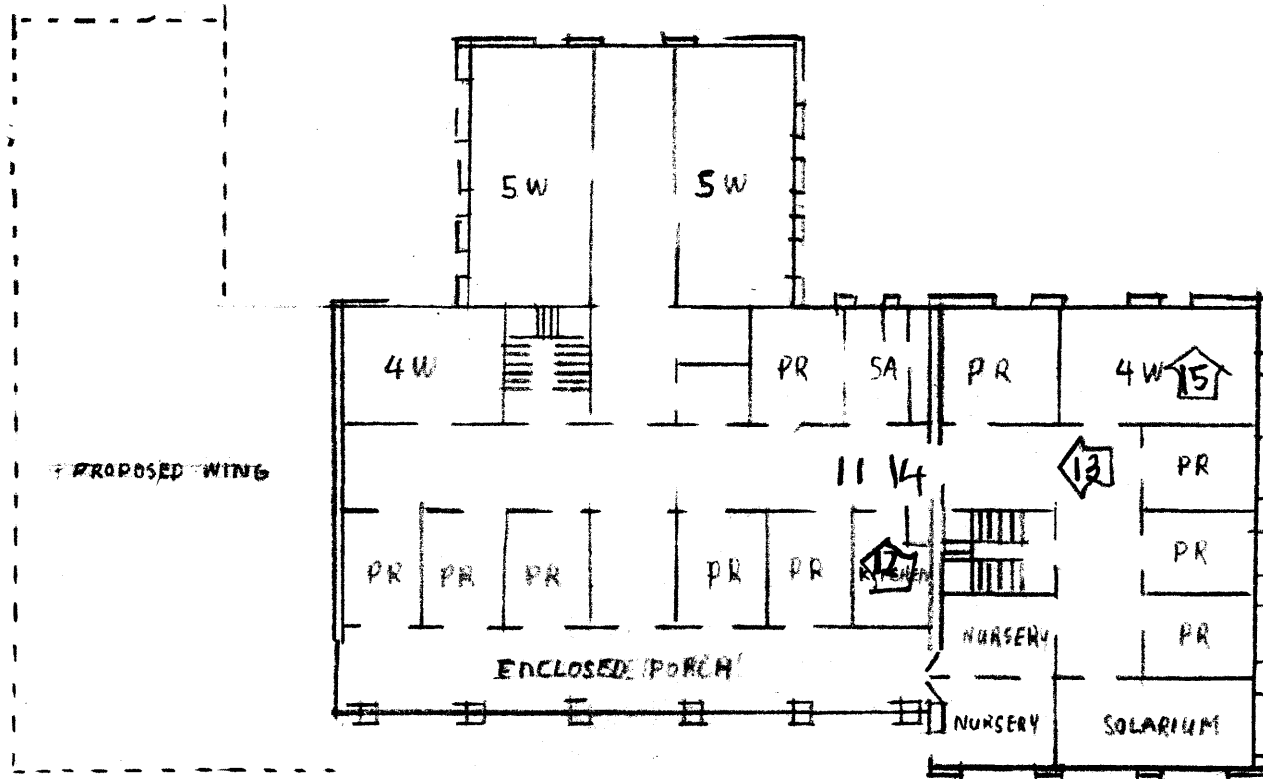
PR PRIVATE ROOM
SA STAFF AREA
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Floor Plan

CHARITY HOSPITAL
Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia

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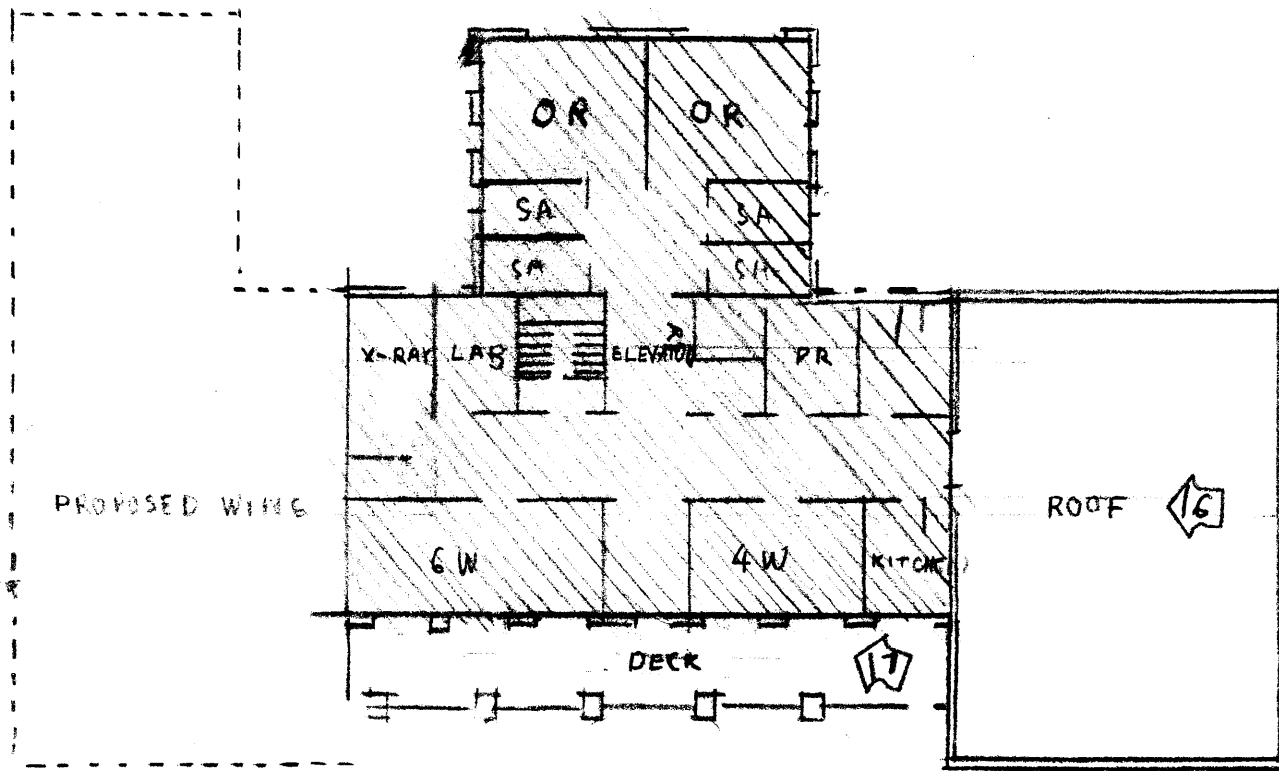


PR PRIVATE ROOM
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SA STAFF AREA

Floor Plan

CHARITY HOSPITAL
Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia

Scale: not to scale
Source: Drawn by Ty Potterfield
Date: 1983
Key: Third Floor



OR OPERATING ROOM
SA STAFF AREA
PR PRIVATE ROOM
W WARD

HEAVILY DAMAGED
AREA

