

PH# 365661

# DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	AUG 23 1976
DATE ENTERED	MAR 8 1977

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC Bethesda Naval Hospital Tower Block  
AND/OR COMMON Building #1, National Naval Medical Center

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
8901 Wisconsin Avenue

CITY, TOWN  
Bethesda

STATE  
Maryland

CODE  
24

VICINITY OF  
Eighth

COUNTY  
Montgomery

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Eighth

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CODE  
031

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Medical

### 4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)  
Department of the Navy, Bureau of Medicine & Surgery

STREET & NUMBER  
23rd and E Streets, N.W.

CITY, TOWN  
Washington

STATE  
D.C.

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Montgomery County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER  
Washington and Jefferson Streets

CITY, TOWN  
Rockville

STATE  
Maryland

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
None

DATE

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

\_\_\_FEDERAL \_\_\_STATE \_\_\_COUNTY \_\_\_LOCAL

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The National Naval Medical Center was constructed in 1939-42 on a 264.7 acre site on Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda, Maryland, directly opposite that of the new National Institute of Health. The original building which is unaltered today, consists of a 20 story central tower rising above a series of interconnecting three and four story pavilions. It may be roughly divided into the central tower block, or the tower with its two "L" shaped wings oriented toward the Wisconsin Avenue entrance on the west, and the rear pavilions to the east. The modernistic building is neo-classical in feeling, its composition characterized by a strictly formal bilateral frontality. The central tower block is sited on a bluff overlooking Wisconsin Avenue and its architectural presence is directed toward this important approach to the nation's capital. The sweeping greensward of a 9 hole golf course together with a mature foundation planting of yew, maple, oak and sycamore enhances the monumentality of the building. The low lying interconnecting pavilions at the rear of the tower block are inconspicuously sited, screened from view by the landscaping, thus reducing the apparent mass of the hospital complex and emphasizing the soaring verticality, the sculptural qualities of the tower itself.

The main block of the building consists of the tower with its flanking "L" shaped pavilions to the north and to the south as well as a central connector to the east which leads to the minor pavilions at the rear of the complex. Construction is of reinforced concrete and structural steel frame clad in precast exposed aggregate concrete panels. The latter are faced with a combination of translucent and opaque quartz mixed with quartz sand and white portland cement. The fenestration of both tower and pavilions is stacked. Bronze sash alternate with serpentine spandrels to form dark verticals which contrast with the brilliant concrete panels creating the major decorative effect of the facades. The pavilions, by this device, become a neo-classical colonnade which acts as a base for the tower. The development of detail, proportions and rhythm here is sensitive and restrained, subordinated to the volumetric concerns of the composition.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1939-42

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Frederic W. Southworth, Navy  
Dept. Paul P. Cret, consult.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda, Maryland was built during the early years of World War II to house the U.S. Navy's principal center for the practice and dissemination of medicine related to the needs of the naval service. The importance which the government attached to this center for education and research in naval medicine is reflected in the evolution of the complex's design which proceeded from rough plan and elevation sketches by Franklin D. Roosevelt on White House stationary to an in-house Bureau of Yards and Docks design effort executed under the close supervision of the noted private consulting architect, Paul Philippe Cret. The twenty story tower block with its two "L" shaped wings enveloping a lawn that slopes down toward Wisconsin Avenue on the east constitutes a landmark of the Bethesda area in the physical sense of the word.

The construction of the National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda was the culmination of over a century in the development of medical facilities to serve American naval personnel. Although the Surgeon General of the Navy had advocated the establishment of a school for naval medical officers as early as 1809 it was not until 1878 that a course of instruction at the Brooklyn Naval Hospital was inaugurated after a study was made of medical education practices in Europe. The school thus established found a more permanent home in 1902 at the Old Naval Observatory, 23rd and E Streets, N.W. in Washington, and was augmented by a hospital in 1906. By the mid thirties the growing complex of medical functions at the Observatory site included a dental school, a medical technology school, and the library of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. Renamed the Naval Medical Center, this complex of functions had outgrown its facilities at 23rd and E Sts. When the Congress acted in 1937 to fund the construction of a new Naval Medical Center, the Observatory site was abandoned due to National Capital Park and Planning Commission opposition to the negative impact of a large building on the setting of the nearby Lincoln Memorial. Instead, President Roosevelt selected the new site for the center in rural Bethesda.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Records of the Naval Shore Establishment, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Archives, Port Hueneme, California
- Building the Navy's Bases in World War II: History of the Bureau of Yards & Docks and the Civil Engineer Corps 1940-1946 Vol. 1. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947
- "Naval Medical Center" Architectural Concrete. Vol. 9, No. 2

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY One

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	8	3	1	8	6	1	0	4	3	1	8	8	3	0
ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING								

B 

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING							

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Building #1 is the tower, the two "L" shaped wings to the north and south, and the eastern connector which attaches it to the rear pavilions (not themselves part of Building #1).

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Lawrence P. Earle, Urban Planner

September 1, 1975

ORGANIZATION

Chesapeake Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

Building #57, Washington Navy Yard

TELEPHONE

202/433-3387

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*John Peace*

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State  Local .

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *James W. Beale*

TITLE

Director, Real Property and Natural Resources

DATE

Aug. 18, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

CHIEF *Key*

DATE

3/8/77

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

3/4/77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED AUG 23 1976

DATE ENTERED MAR 8 1977

CONTINUATION SHEET

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Cont'd)

The cornerstone for the Bethesda Naval Medical Center was laid on Armistice Day 1940 by President Roosevelt in the presence of various dignitaries. The President's interest in the facility was extensive, as his sketch had in fact superseded a design competition among the staff of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, the Navy branch charged with designing shore installations. The crude plan and elevation of the hospital complex which Roosevelt sketched was modeled on the 1924 State Capitol at Lincoln, Nebraska by Bertram Goodhue which had impressed him on a trip west. To develop this Presidentially mandated design concept of a fifteen story tower, flanked by low two story pavilions, BuDocks engaged the services of the internationally famous American architect, Paul P. Cret (1876-1945) to work with the Navy architectural staff under Frederic W. Southworth. Cret's design was larger in scale than Roosevelt's proposal but followed the general outlines of the President's sketch. The building's construction took two years and corresponded with the early period of United States involvement in World War II.

Significant research has taken place at the National Naval Medical Center since its completion in 1942. Research programs at the center produced and tested the acrylic eye, confirmed the value of bone and blood vessel grafting techniques, and developed the use of radioactive gallium for bone tumors. New surgical procedures, psychiatric techniques, and experiments on facsimile limbs were also developed at the center. In addition the National Naval Medical Center has trained thousands of hospitalmen, doctors, nurses, and technicians in special areas such as tropical medicine, radiation exposure treatment, or emergency care to the injured which are of critical or unique importance to the Navy. The Bethesda hospital has provided care to many Presidents of the United States and their families as well as Navy men and women. The addition of other specialized health science units in recent years such as the Naval Medical Data Service Center, the Armed Forces Radiobiology Unit, and the Naval School of Hospital Administration have added to the stature of the National Naval Medical Center.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	AUG 23 1976
DATE ENTERED	MAR 8 1977

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC  
Bethesda Naval Hospital Tower Block  
AND/OR COMMON  
Building #1, National Naval Medical Center

## 2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN  
Bethesda  
\_\_\_\_VICINITY OF  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
Montgomery  
STATE  
Maryland

## 3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE  
United States Geological Survey  
SCALE  
1 : 24000  
DATE  
1965

## 4 REQUIREMENTS

- TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
  2. NORTH ARROW
  3. UTM REFERENCES



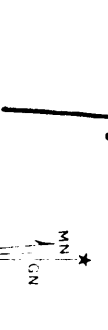
Published by the Geological Survey

C&GS, and WSSC

Photometric methods from aerial photographs  
 checked 1956. Revised 1965

1927 North American datum  
 based on Maryland coordinate system  
 Transverse Mercator grid ticks.

Indicate selected fence and field lines where  
 from aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
 in white only hand-drawn buildings are shown



**Bethesda Naval Hospital**  
 Town Block

SCALE 1:24,000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

BETHESDA NAVAL HOSPITAL  
 TOWER BLOCK  
 Bethesda, Maryland  
 UTM Reference:  
 18/318610/4318830

