

# South Carolina Department of Archives and History

## National Register Properties in South Carolina

### Babcock Building-South Carolina State Hospital, Richland County (Bull St., Columbia )



Facade



Right Oblique  
Central Block



Right Wing



Left Wing



Left Oblique



Left Elevation



Left Rear  
Elevation



Left Rear  
Oblique



Rear Elevation  
Central Block



Right Rear  
Oblique



Decorative  
Brickwork



Cupola Detail

(New South Carolina State Asylum) The Babcock Building at the South Carolina State Hospital in Columbia was built in four campaigns, between 1857 and 1885, as the new asylum for the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. The building is significant as the work of two distinguished architects, George E. Walker, a native of Charleston, and Samuel Sloan, a native of Pennsylvania. Actual construction during Walker's lifetime was limited to the three northernmost blocks of the south wing, but these three blocks established the composition, scale, and style of the entire building. Gustavus T. Berg, in 1880-82, built the north wing in mirror image of the completed south wing. Sloan's center building united the composition, and provided a focal center for the asylum. The building is also significant as an exceptional example of Italian Renaissance Revival design. The Babcock Building embodies the dedication of the state of South Carolina to the provision of adequate and comfortable care and housing for the mentally ill. The building follows, in overall plan, siting, landscaping and interior arrangements, the "Kirkbride system" for insane asylum design advocated by Dr. Thomas Story Kirkbride of Philadelphia. It is probable that the construction of the new asylum was inspired, in part, by the dramatic crusade in support of improved facilities for the mentally ill, led by Dorothea Lydne Dix, that was then sweeping the country. Listed in the National Register October 30, 1981.

View the complete text of the [nomination form](#) for this National Register property. In addition, the [Historic Resources of Columbia](#) includes historical background information for this and other related National Register properties.

Most National Register properties are privately owned and are not open to the public. The privacy of owners should be respected. Not all properties retain the same integrity as when originally documented and listed in the National Register due to changes and modifications over time.

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**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



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

**1. Name** Babcock Building, South Carolina State Hospital

historic New Asylum, South Carolina Lunatic Asylum

and/or common Babcock Building, South Carolina State Hospital (preferred)

**2. Location**

street & number Bull Street \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Columbia \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district Second

state South Carolina code 045 county Richland code 079

**3. Classification**

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

name State of South Carolina (South Carolina Department of Mental Health)

street & number Post Office Box 485

city, town Columbia \_\_\_ vicinity of state South Carolina 29202

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Richland County Archives

street & number 1701 Main Street

city, town Columbia state South Carolina 29201

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes  no

date 1981 \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives and History

city, town Columbia state South Carolina 29211

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Babcock (Administration) Building at the South Carolina State Hospital in Columbia was built in four building campaigns, in 1857-58, in 1870-76, in 1880-82, and in 1883-85. The building was conceived and built as the new asylum building for the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. Architect for the initial building campaign, which finished only part of the south wing but defined the whole complex, was George E. Walker, a native of Charleston, South Carolina. Gustavus T. Berg, a native of Konnesburg, Germany, was the architect for the north wing, which was built in 1880-82. Samuel Sloan, a nationally prominent architect then living in Raleigh, North Carolina, designed and built the center building, connecting the two wings and completing the complex, in 1883-85.

The new asylum building was conceived in the 1850s when the Regents of the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum foresaw the need for expanded facilities. They sought financing for the construction of a new building, on the eastern grounds of the Columbia campus, as early as 1853. Construction began in 1857 upon the appropriation of \$30,000.00 by the state legislature. The completion of the building, according to the original scheme, was long delayed, both by the hesitance of the legislature to appropriate funds, and by the War Between the States.

The new asylum, as conceived and built, includes a four-story central building, and two wings, on the north and south sides of the center building, each consisting of four rectangular blocks of three and four stories. The south wing, the first part of the new asylum to be built, consists of two four-story blocks oriented to the west; and two three-story blocks, perpendicular to the four-story blocks and connecting the four-story blocks to each other and to the center building. The three northernmost blocks of the south wing were built in 1857-58, according to George E. Walker's design with Clark Waring as contractor; the southern four-story block was not built until 1870-76, with James M. Allen as contractor. The south wing is built of brick, laid in common bond, with painted mortar joints to simulate a homogenous surface. The four-story blocks have rusticated ground stories on their western elevations; the rustication is effected by the recessing of regular brick courses from the plane of the wall. Stone courses mark the ground line, above the brick foundation. Stone courses also separate the first and second stories and the third and fourth stories. Stone quoins define the corners of these four-story blocks. The windows of the second story are given prominence by means of stone tabernacle frames with sills and bracketed architraves. Window sash is twelve-over-twelve, with iron grills over the lower sash. A broad wooden cornice crowns the composition. The side elevations of these four-story blocks are simpler than the western elevations; they lack the tabernacle surrounds of the second floor and the simulated rustication of the first floor.

The three-story blocks of the south wing connect the four-story blocks and the center building. These two blocks feature simulated rustication in the brickwork of the first floor, with round-arched windows. The window arches spring from a level defined by a stone course. Stone courses also separate the first and second stories. The three central bays of the three story blocks are brought forward as pedimented pavilions. These pavilions are distinguished by stone quoins and by pedimented tabernacle window frames on the second story. The windows of the third story have tripartite stone architraves, with projecting stone keystones. The brick entablature, which is raked in the pediment of the pavilions, features a stone cornice. The pavilions of the three-story blocks are

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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** 1857-58, 1870-76, 1880-82, 1883-85  
**Builder/Architect** George E. Walker, G. T. Berg, Samuel Sloan

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Babcock Building at the South Carolina State Hospital in Columbia was built in four campaigns, between 1857 and 1885, as the new asylum for the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. The building is significant as the work of two distinguished architects, George E. Walker, a native of Charleston, and Samuel Sloan, a native of Pennsylvania. The building is also significant as an exceptional example of Italian Renaissance Revival design. The Babcock Building embodies the dedication of the state of South Carolina to the provision of adequate and comfortable care and housing for the mentally ill. The building follows, in many points, the "Kirkbride system" for insane asylum design as advocated by Dr. Thomas Story Kirkbride of Philadelphia; the South Carolina asylum incorporates the overall plan, the siting, the landscaping, and the interior arrangements of the Kirkbride system. It is probable that the construction of the new asylum was inspired, in part, by the dramatic crusade in support of improved facilities for the mentally ill, led by Dorothea Lynde Dix, that was sweeping the country.

Additional Information:

The Board of Regents of the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum determined that expanded and improved facilities for the asylum were necessary as early as 1853.<sup>1</sup> The original (Mills) building could no longer accommodate the steadily increasing inmate population.<sup>2</sup> The state legislature was petitioned for funding for the new construction and in 1853 appropriated \$30,000.00 towards this end.<sup>3</sup> Construction of the new asylum was delayed for several years. The regents' report of 1856 described the limitations of the existing facilities; it noted that many patients were forced to sleep in the corridors of the Mills Building.<sup>4</sup> In 1857, construction began on the new asylum building.<sup>5</sup> George E. Walker, then a resident of Columbia, was chosen as architect;<sup>6</sup> Clark Waring, a Columbia brickmason, was contractor.<sup>7</sup> The initial construction completed three blocks of the south wing of the proposed asylum.

The regents' report of 1858 stated that "since the 25th of October, the male patients have occupied the brick wing just completed..."<sup>8</sup> A comparable north wing and a center building were contemplated. The 1858 report further stated:

"To place our Asylum among the first in the land for substantial comforts, it but remains that the main or centre building, with a north wing corresponding to the one already finished, be completed according to the original design."<sup>9</sup>

Clark Waring, the contractor, was paid \$24,472.00 for his work at the asylum, in 1858. The architect, George E. Walker, received \$1,432.94.<sup>10</sup>

The completion of the new asylum was delayed by the outbreak of the War Between the States and by the Reconstruction government. The regents continued to request funding for the building. With the appropriation of \$10,000.00 by the legislature in 1869, the lunatic asylum was in position to continue construction of the new asylum.<sup>11</sup>

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property 14.2

Quadrangle name Columbia North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	7	4	9	7	1	2	2	3	7	6	3	7	9	8
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

1	7	4	9	7	5	4	0	3	7	6	3	2	1	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

1	7	4	9	7	0	4	5	3	7	6	3	4	9	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

1	7	4	9	6	9	5	0	3	7	6	3	7	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is shown as the red line on the accompanying Richland County Tax Map #1C 1S 1A 305, drawn at the scale of 1 inch to 660 feet. This boundary includes the significant building and excludes adjacent non-historic buildings.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John E. Wells

organization South Carolina Department of Archives and History date July 1981

street & number 1430 Senate Street telephone 803 758-5316

city or town Columbia state South Carolina 29211

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

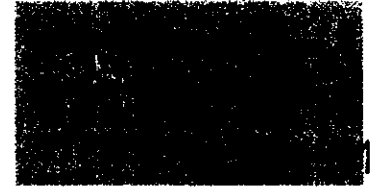
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Christie Z. Jaut, Deputy SHPO, for

title Charles E. Lee, State Historic Preservation Officer date September 4, 1981

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flanked by three-bay wings, which are similarly scaled, but rendered subservient by the absence of both first story rustication and second story tabernacle window frames. The three-story blocks have single bay end pavilions, which are given vertical emphasis by the use of brick arches which encompass the windows of the second and third stories. The brick cornice is continued across the central pavilions, the wings, and the end pavilions. A brick parapet crowns the blocks, running behind the cornice and the central pediments.

The north wing of the new asylum was begun in 1880. Gustavus T. Berg, who had worked with John R. Niernsee on the South Carolina State Capitol, was the architect; Clark Waring was the contractor. The north wing repeats, in mirror-image the composition and detail of the south wing: four blocks, oriented to the west, in serried formation receding from the still-unbuilt but planned center building. The northernmost of the three-story blocks of the north wing does not have the central pediment of its counterparts in the south wing, although the southern three-story block in the north wing does. The 1888 and 1919 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicate that both of these two blocks were built as three-story blocks. The northern three-story block in the north wing has an added fourth story, of brick, with arched window heads.

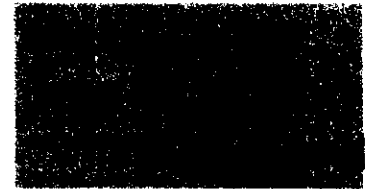
The eastern elevations of the south and north wings are similar to, but less elaborate than, the western elevations. The composition of the elevations is similar, but the use of stone--in belt courses, quoins, or window surrounds--is limited.

The center building of the new asylum was conceived in the original plans of the regents of the lunatic asylum. Appropriations for the center building were not forthcoming until 1883. Samuel Sloan designed the building and R.W. Johnson was the contractor. Sloan's building was designed to unify and focus the sprawling asylum, and to complete the scheme formulated in 1857.

The center building is four stories, of brick construction, in common bond. A forward pavilion, in advance of the foremost blocks of the north and south wings, serves as a focal point for the entire asylum. This pavilion is five bays wide and four bays deep. Entrance into the building is by a formal portico at the second story, approached by a broad stair. This portico is three bays wide with Roman Doric columns; the central bay of the portico is further broken forward, with the columns repeated in this new plane. The serried format of the central pavilion and portico thus reflects and repeats the composition of the entire asylum complex. The columns of the portico are fluted and feature simple torus bases and paterae on their neckings. The entablature of the portico is of wood, and features heavy modillion blocks in its cornice. The pilaster responds of the portico are of brick with white wooden capitals. A dressed-granite surround enframes the central door. The pavilion behind the portico features a brick first story, which is separated from the upper stories by a stone course. Vermiculated stone quoins contrast with the brickwork. The central three bays of the pavilion are brought forward and further distinguished from the main block by the same motif of vermiculated stone quoins. A central doorway on the third story opens onto the roof of the entrance portico; this doorway has a stone pediment, and flanking tabernacle-framed windows. The windows of the rest of the facade have simpler stone surrounds with stone architraves and impost

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blocks. A wooden pediment with a brick tympanum crowns the central three bays of this forward pavilion. A wooden entablature is carried around the entire pavilion; this entablature repeats the heavy modillion-block cornice of the entrance portico. The side elevations of the forward pavilion are four bays wide with centrally located entrances at the first floor. Pediments on the side elevations span the full four-bay width.

The rear section of the center building, behind the forward pavilion, is four stories tall. The western (forward) end of this longitudinal block features a tall cupola with a crowning dome, which serves as the visual focus for the entire asylum complex. This cupola is raised on an octagonal drum, which is sheathed in sheet metal. The cupola is twelve-sided, with a two-over-two sash window in each face. Pilasters appear at the junctures of each of the twelve faces. A bracketed cornice above the cupola has heavy brackets at the twelve corners and smaller brackets between. A tall, pointed, twelve-sided dome rises from the cupola. This dome has sheet-metal sheathing and a crowning finial. The dome is visible from great distance, and dominates not only the asylum, but the entire northern section of the city of Columbia. The fenestration of the longitudinal block is simple, with limited use of stone dressing. Two-story windows, encompassing the third and fourth floors of the easternmost section, identify the auditorium/amusement hall.

Two one-story dining halls are attached to the easternmost end of the center building. These dining halls were designed by George E. Lafaye, and completed in 1916. The dining halls have brick walls, concrete floors, and steel truss roofs, covered with slate. Male patients ate in the south hall, and female patients ate in the north hall.

The southern four-story block of the north wing has a four-story extension on its eastern end. This extension, which follows the design of the original building, was begun between 1893 and 1898, and completed up to two stories. The final two stories were added between 1904 and 1910.

The outermost four-story blocks of both the south and north wings had four-story stairway ells added in 1916. These brick additions conflict, in color, texture, and design, with the original workmanship. Similar one-bay additions appear on the southwest and northeast corners of the northern four-story block of the south wing, and on the south face of the southern four-story block of the north wing. Only one of these additions is visible from the main (western) elevation of the asylum.

The new asylum underwent further expansion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the increasing inmate population demanded expanded facilities. The Taylor Building was built, adjacent to the south wing, between 1898 and 1904; this building was extended between 1910 and 1919. This building has been destroyed. Similarly, the North Building was built, adjacent to the north wing, between 1904 and 1910. This building has also been destroyed.

The new asylum was built with individual patient rooms ranged on both sides of a central corridor, on each floor of each block of the patient wings. The floors were wooden, the walls plastered, and the trim wooden. Between 1915 and 1917, the patient wings were renovated, under the direction of George E. Lafaye, architect. The partition walls were

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received

date entered

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removed, creating large, open dormitories and sitting rooms. New bathrooms were built in all wings. The walls and floors were repaired, and electricity introduced. Further renovations in later years introduced tile floors, a sprinkler system, and new suspended ceilings in some wards. Since the fall of 1980, the north and south wings have been emptied of patients. They are now used for storage, or else lie vacant.

The center building was designed with a central hall, running the length of the building with offices on either side, and a transverse hall connecting to the wards in the north and south wings. The center building included operating rooms on the second floor and residences for the supervisor and some doctors on the third and fourth floors. A large chapel/amusement hall occupied the third and fourth levels of the rear of the center building. Open-well stairways were located at various points of the center building. This building has also undergone modernization, including heating, air conditioning, electricity, a sprinkler system, and some suspended ceilings, but large parts of the building are in original condition. The floors, reeded door surrounds, plaster walls, wooden doors, and mantelpieces are intact in many rooms, and the fourth floor is still used as temporary residences for interns. Numerous administrative offices are still located in the center building.

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Construction of the final four-story block of the south wing began in 1870, with James M. Allen as contractor.<sup>12</sup> This block was described as "an addition to the south wing of the new building, 39 feet wide, and 105 feet long, and four stories high, capable of accommodating about seventy-five patients."<sup>13</sup>

The regents' report of 1876 noted that the new wing to the male ward, under construction since 1870, had finally been completed.<sup>14</sup>

The regents' report of 1878 confirmed the plans for a tripartite complex, according to the original scheme.

"It may not be generally known that the building now occupied by the males was designed to form one wing of a general Asylum, which was begun more than twenty years ago, but whose completion was prevented by the War. According to the design, there was to be a center building, to contain the offices, chapel, &c. and a North wing."<sup>15</sup>

The 1878 report submitted a schematic plan describing the existing facilities, and indicating plans for imminent construction of parts of the north wing, as well as the plan for the completed asylum.<sup>16</sup>

The Fifty-Eighth Annual Report of the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, for the fiscal year 1880-1881 reveals that funds had been allocated for, and construction begun on the north wing of the new asylum.<sup>17</sup> Clark Waring was again the contractor and Gustavus T. Berg was the architect.<sup>18</sup> J. W. Heath supplied dressed granite for the new construction.<sup>19</sup> The report included a schematic plan, showing the existing facilities, the new wing then under construction, and the planned center building.<sup>20</sup> The north wing was scheduled for completion in October of 1882. The superintendent's report noted that no appropriation had yet been made for the center building.<sup>21</sup>

The Fifty-Ninth Annual Report of the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, for the fiscal year 1881-1882, stated that "the necessity of completing the new Asylum by the erection of the centre and connecting building has become far more pressing now....<sup>22</sup> In order that the legislature might better see exactly what is wanted, the (building) committee ... has employed a competent architect, who will furnish plans (complete in every respect) specifications and probable costs, preserving the outward appearance of the original plan...."<sup>23</sup> In the same report, the superintendent noted that the north wing of the new asylum was completed by October 1, 1882.<sup>24</sup>

The architect employed by the building committee was not named in the 1882 report. The sixtieth annual report, in 1883, indicated that Samuel Sloan, then a resident of Raleigh, North Carolina, had been retained as architect.<sup>25</sup> R. W. Johnson was named as contractor for the center building. The sum of \$49,170.00 had been allocated for Mr. Johnson; he was, for this sum, to build "the larger portion of the center building."<sup>26</sup>

The financial report for the year 1882-1883 included the record of payments to Sloan and Johnson, as well as payments to newspapers for advertising for contractors. The payments to Sloan and Johnson were:

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Dec. 1882:	Sam'l Sloan, Ach't, drawing &c. . . . .	500.00
Jan. 1883:	Samuel Sloan, architect, hotel bill . . . . .	65.00
Feb. 1883:	Sam'l Sloan, architect, plans &c. . . . .	85.00
March 1883:	Sam'l Sloan, architect, fees . . . . .	125.00
May, 1883:	Samuel Sloan, architect, professional fees . . . .	80.00
	R. W. Johnson, first payment on contract for center building . . . . .	5500.00
June 1883:	Samuel Sloan, architect, services . . . . .	100.00
July 1883:	Samuel Sloan, professional fees . . . . .	50.00
Aug. 1883:	R. W. Johnson, second payment on contract . . . .	5500.00
Sept. 1883:	Samuel Sloan, architect, salary & expenses . . . .	25.00 <sup>27</sup>

These payments are further verified by the "Centre Building Account", amended to the annual report.<sup>28</sup>

The sixty-first annual report, for the fiscal year 1883-1884, indicated that the front section of the center building was nearing completion, and that a contract for building the rear section of the center building had been given out for the sum of \$30,190.00.<sup>29</sup> A letter from Samuel Sloan, from Raleigh, dated April 8, 1884, to the board of regents, amended to the annual report, recommended that the contract with R. W. Johnson for the erection of the rear section of the center building be closed for the sum of \$30,190.00.<sup>30</sup>

The sixty-second annual report, for the fiscal year 1884-1885, stated that "In August (1885), the center building was completed and occupied."<sup>31</sup> The report described the history of the building, noting that the new asylum was begun in 1857, and that two sections of the south wing had been completed before the war. There was then a ten-year period, during which nothing was done but the completion of the third section of the south wing, before the resumed building activity in 1880. Asylum Superintendent P. E. Griffin's report stated that

"It should be gratifying to the people of the State to know that they have in this new Asylum a building which, in beauty of design, in solidity of construction, in sanitary provision, and arrangement for the comfort of its inmates, will bear comparison with the best hospitals of the country. It is not probable that the State will ever be called on to erect another Asylum as expensive as the one just finished."<sup>32</sup>

Architecture:

The Babcock Building at the South Carolina State Hospital is architecturally significant as the work of the distinguished architects George E. Walker and Samuel Sloan. Actual construction during Walker's lifetime was limited to the three northernmost blocks of the south wing; but these three blocks established the composition, scale, and style of the entire building. Gustavus T. Berg, in 1880-1882, built the north wing in mirror image of the completed south wing, copying the design, materials, and detail of Walker's work. Sloan's center building united the composition, and provided a focal center for the asylum.

