

Chanute Air Force Base, Maintenance Building
(Building 54)
Extender Street
Rantoul Vicinity
Champaign County
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1185-I

HABS

ILL

10-RAN.V,

1 I -

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Chanute Air Force Base, Maintenance Building
(Building 54)

HABS No. IL-1185-I

Location: - Extender Street
Chanute Air Force Base
Rantoul Vicinity
Champaign County
Illinois

HABS
ILL
10-RAN.V.
II -

Present Owner: United States Air Force
OL B, AFBCA
501 East Sopwith, Suite A
Rantoul, Illinois 61866

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: From its establishment in 1917 as a military aviation school, until its closure on September 30, 1993, Chanute Air Force Base (AFB) has served almost continuously as a technical training center for the United States Air Force. As one of the oldest military installations in the Air Force inventory, Chanute AFB has played an important role in the development of the American air defense system. Since its construction, the area of the Historic District has served as Chanute's administrative core, and the design and construction of the buildings and structures within the District reflect the extraordinary growth of the installation just prior to and during the early years of World War II. It was during that period that the base was rapidly transformed from a collection of neglected wooden World War I-era buildings into the permanent brick and steel features that remain as the Chanute AFB Historic District.

In response to massive World War II mobilization, Building 54 was built in 1942 as a maintenance building. It is a contributing element of the Chanute AFB Historic District.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date(s) of erection: 1942
2. Architect: United States Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District
3. Original and subsequent owners: United States Army, United States Air Force
4. Contractors: Unknown
5. Original plans and construction: Plans for the building were drawn by the United State Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District.

B. Historical Context:

Established in 1917, Chanute AFB is one of the oldest Air Force installations in the United States. During World War I Chanute Field provided pilot training and afterwards temporarily became a storage facility. In 1921, the Air Services Mechanics School was transferred to Chanute from Kelly Field, Texas. When the Wilcox Bill (49 U.S. Stat. 610) was passed by Congress in 1935, the large-scale expansion of Chanute began and, in the next ten years, it changed from a neglected World War I Field into a centralized, subdivision-type collection of brick and steel buildings. More than 200,000 military students would graduate from its various technical schools between 1940 and 1945 and over 1,000,000 students would pass through its doors before its closure in 1993.

In general, the history of Chanute AFB parallels the history of American military aviation and its built environment reflects the economic and military priorities, architectural styles, and concepts of military installation planning common to the Office of Quartermaster General (OQMG) and the Corps of Engineers (COE). Most of the buildings and structures within the Historic District reflect Chanute's "Great Renaissance" period (1938-41).

Building 54 was built in 1942 as a maintenance or storage building and is now a contributing element within the Chanute AFB Historic District.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Building 54 is a utilitarian building and does not fit into an established architectural classification.
2. Condition of fabric: This building is in fair condition; both the exterior and interior have been altered.

B. Description of Exterior:

This is a two-story, metal framed, L-shaped structure (approximately 250 ft by 75 ft) on a concrete foundation with a low gambrel roof. There is a one-story addition on the front (west) side with a low gambrel roof that forms the "L"; a one-story addition on the south, in line with the main section; and three, small one-story additions to the north. The

foundation is concrete with a beveled head approximately four feet above ground level and the roof is covered with corrugated metal sheets. There is a concrete, block parapet that runs perpendicular to the ridge line and divides the main section into two parts.

The exterior walls are corrugated metal pierced by a variety of windows and doors. The windows include two-over-two light, wood frame, double hung, sash and modern aluminum frames. The upper windows are metal-framed, nine-light (three rows of three) wire-glass, and hinged. The front entrance has a gabled enclosed entry porch with paired single-light, metal-framed doors and concrete stairs with a metal pipe handrail. There are five entrances on the north side with single or double wooden doors, two or three lights and three horizontal panels in each; porches are wooden platforms and stairs. The original loading dock platform has been removed on the north side. The south side into the courtyard has five entrances into the main building and two into the roofed shed addition.

The addition making the "L" on the north side has corrugated metal siding, eight-over-eight light, wood-framed, double-hung, sash windows, and one entrance on each of the east and west sides. The addition on the west end has eight-over-eight light, wood-framed, double-hung, sash windows and several garage doors.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plan: See attached floor plans

2. Summary Description: Interior features include linoleum and carpeted floors, concrete floors in the south half, plaster walls, acoustical tile ceilings with fluorescent lights, and paneled wooden doors with lights.

D. Site:

Building 54 is located on the northern end of the Chanute AFB Historic District adjacent to several other warehouse and maintenance buildings.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Original drawings for the buildings on Chanute AFB are currently housed in Building 62, Chanute AFB, Illinois.

B. Historic Views:

A large collection of historic photographs is located in the Museum Building (Hangar 4), Chanute AFB, Illinois.

C. Bibliography:

D. E. McGillem and Associates, Inc., 1990. Historic Inventory Chanute Air Force Base.

King, Thomas F. and Paige M. Peyton, 1991. Chanute AFB, Illinois Historic Evaluation.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

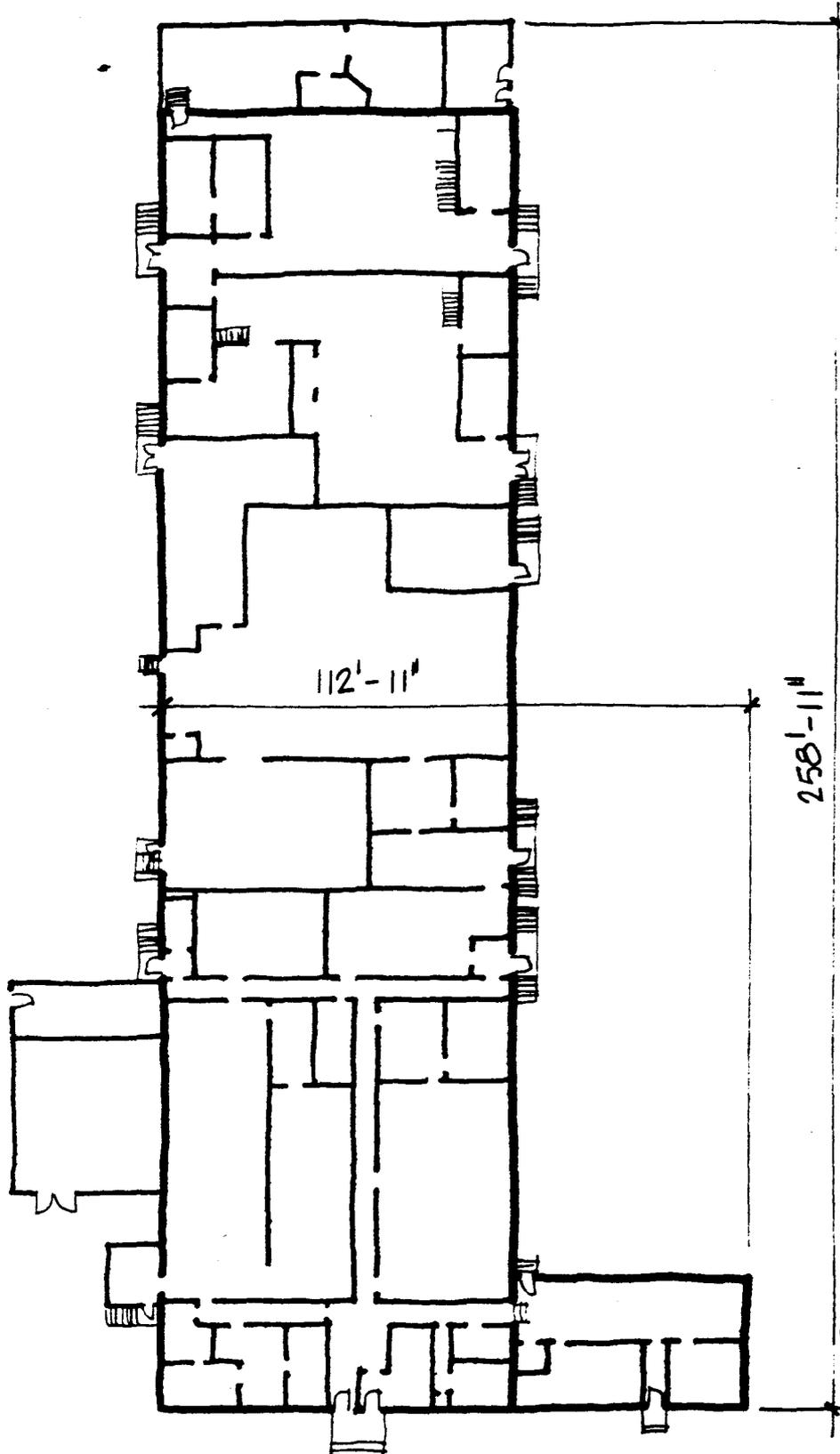
National Register and HABS documentation for the Chanute AFB Illinois Historic District is the culmination of the Section 106 process initiated during the preparation of the Disposal and Reuse Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Chanute AFB. The EIS was precipitated by the Congressional decision to close Chanute AFB as directed by the Base Closure and Realignment Act (BRAC) of 1988. A Memorandum of Agreement among the U. S. Air Force, the Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Eastern Division, has been drafted.

Prepared by: Ana B. Koval, Architectural Historian
Architectural Resources Group
Pier 9, The Embarcadero
San Francisco, California 94111

and

Paige M. Peyton, Historian
The Earth Technology Corporation
1461 East Cooley Drive, Suite 100
Colton, California 92324

May 1994



NORTH

GROUND FLOOR

DRAWN : 11/12/93