Naval Air Station Dallas,
Administration Building
(Naval Air Station Dallas,
Building 2)
Navy Circle
Dallas County
Dallas County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3408-B

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Southwest System Support Office
Department of the Interior
Santa Fe, New Mexico

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NAVAL AIR STATION DALLAS,
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
(NAVAL AIR STATION DALLAS, BUILDING 2)

HABS No. TX-3408-B

Location:

Navy Circle
Dallas
Dallas County
Texas

U.S.G.S. Duncanville Quadrangle (7.5)
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
14.691355.362445

Present Owner:

United States of America
c/o Commander, Naval Reserve Force
4400 Dauphine Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70146-5000

Present Occupant:

Commanding Officer, Administrative Services and Naval Reserve Offices

Present Use:

Administrative Offices

Statement of Significance:

The Administration Building is one of the most significant historic resources at Naval Air Station (NAS) Dallas. Built in 1942 as the headquarters, it remains the center for administrative management and supervisory activities at NAS Dallas. Undertaken during the rapid mobilization efforts of 1942, the building contributed to the expanding role that aviation played in Naval operations. Moreover, it is a tangible link to the Navy's presence in the Dallas-Grand Prairie area and is representative of the important role NAS Dallas played in local history. Designed by Moore, Cooper, White & Moore, Architects and Engineers, Houston, Texas, with E. S. White serving as the project architect and Lt. Commander W. M. Powell, CEC, USNR, in charge of construction, the Administration Building incorporates elements of then popular Art Moderne architectural styling. Its asymmetrical massing and horizontal profile, complemented by the curved, three-story tower, recall the forms of ships and planes, and thus herald the base's function. Built at the same time as installations at Naval Auxiliary Air Station (NAAS) Chase Field (Beeville), Texas, and NAAS Kingsville, the Administration Building at NAS Dallas, with its Art Moderne styling, is a more distinguished example of military architecture than its counterparts at Beeville and Kingsville. It is a distinctive example of World War II military architecture and illustrates one type of building the Navy specified during

the rapid U.S. military mobilization in the early months of World War II. Despite significant alterations to the building, it retains its massing, form, and ability to convey a sense of time and place.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of erection: Original architectural plans were approved August 5, 1942. The exact date that construction began is unknown.

2. Architect: Moore, Cooper, White & Moore, Architects and Engineers, Houston, Texas, with E. S. White serving as the project architect.

3. Original and subsequent owners: United States of America, Department of the Navy.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Lt. Commander W. M. Powell, CEC, USNR, was the officer in charge of construction. Actual contractors and materials suppliers are not known.

5. Original plans and construction: Reproductions of original plans for the building are available at the Public Works Department, NAS Dallas. This building was constructed from standardized plans developed by the Department of the Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks (Y&D drawing Nos. 194-964, 194-965 and 194-969).

6. Alterations and additions: The Administration Building was altered in 1978 with the installation of new interior finishes, interior doors, roof repairs, application of rough textured stucco, and the installation of air conditioning. Metal-frame solar screens were installed over the windows in 1979. Elastomeric stucco was applied in 1988. Despite the removal or covering of much of the building's original historic fabric, its rooflines, massing, and distinctive form remain intact, and the building retains its ability to convey a sense of time and place.

B. Historical Context:

As mobilization for World War II increased, more funding was appropriated by Congress in 1942 to improve and expand military installations throughout the

United States. This second phase of wartime construction provided then Naval Reserve Air Base (NRAB) Dallas with $3.9 million for an extensive construction project. One of the buildings planned was an administration building. Owing to growth of primary flight training programs and depot activities at the base, the administrative offices at NRAB Dallas needed to be placed in a separate facility in order to maintain records for the growing number of personnel, training flights, and aircraft acceptance tests. When the base was first established in 1941, the commanding officers and other NRAB Dallas officials had offices in the "white cottage," a small, white farmhouse that had been built on the site before the government leased the land. Prior to the construction of the Administration Building in 1942, administrative offices for the base were contained in one wing of the Maintenance Hangar (Building 20).[1]

Plans for the new building, which was designed by the firm Moore, Cooper, White & Moore, Architects and Engineers, of Houston, Texas, with E.S. White as the project architect, were approved on August 5, 1941.[2] Construction of the Administration Building, which cost $80,000 and was based on standardized plans developed by the Department of the Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks, was supervised by Lt. Commander W.M. Powell, CEC, USNR. The building was probably completed in the late autumn of 1942.[3]

During World War II, the Administration Building was the hub of all organizational activities at the station and was a focal point for personnel at the station. As the headquarters of a busy military installation responsible for primary flight training and aircraft depot and ferrying activities, the Administration Building contained offices for all of the Navy officials, including the Commanding Officer, and military support staff needed to the station. In addition to civilian employment offered by nearby North American Aviation Inc., an aircraft plant, many residents of Grand Prairie and the Mountain Creek region worked in the Administration Building performing clerical duties. After 1943, many Women in Auxiliary Voluntary Service (WAVES) were also assigned to the Administration Building to maintain record files of all personnel at the station and do secretarial work for officials in charge of NAS Dallas. In October 1946, trees were planted in a "Circle of Remembrance" near the front of the building to honor NAS Dallas personnel killed in combat.[4]

No significant changes were made to the building during the Korean Conflict or the Vietnam era. In 1978 and 1979, the Administration Building underwent many interior and exterior alterations; more exterior alterations were completed in 1988. Today the building and nearby flagpole are valued at $6 million.[5] It will continue

to function as an administrative facility at NAS Dallas until the base closes in 1998 as a result of recommendations by the Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission. The fate of the Administration Building and all other Navy-owned buildings after base closure has not yet been determined.

NOTES

1. Emme, Eugene M., Lt. (jg.), USNR, "A History of Naval Air Station, Dallas, Texas," 15 October 1944, p. 7. Typescript on file at the Dallas Public Library.

2. Bureau of Yards and Docks Drawings, Y&D Nos. 194-964, 194-965, and 194-969, Public Works Department, NAS Dallas, Texas.

3. Crews, Joseph M., *A Historical and Architectural Assessment of the Dallas Naval Air Station, Dallas, Texas*, 2 vols. Prepared for the Fort Worth District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth, Texas, 1 June 1994, vol. 2. n.p.

4. *Dallas News*, 20 October 1946, n.p.

5. Department of the Navy, "Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Disposal and Reuse of Naval Air Station Dallas," April 1995.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Administration Building is distinguished by its horizontal asymmetrical massing that is complemented by a curved, three-story tower that projects from the primary elevation at the northwest corner. Horizontal bands of windows and the curved corner tower utilize spare, streamlined design elements of the Art Moderne style. The massing and details of the primary (north) elevation are reminiscent of the elevation of an aircraft carrier, an appropriate reference for the administration building at a Naval aviation training base. The Art Moderne form was aptly chosen, since that style used transportation and technology as design themes. The Administration Building is a stylistic "companion" to the Art Moderne Gatehouse (Building 1).

2. Condition of fabric: Overall, the Administration Building is in good condition, although alterations to the building have removed or covered the majority of the original historic material.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building measures 152 feet wide, 97 feet deep, and 36 feet high; it encompasses 18,899 square feet. The building has an irregular plan with four components: a main block flanked by a two-story extension to the east and a one-story extension to the west. A small, two-story wing projects from the south (rear) elevation, and a curved, three-story tower projects from the north elevation.

2. Foundation: The building is supported on a concrete sill with terra-cotta and concrete-block in-fill. The sill is pierced with concrete vents.

3. Walls: The exterior of the building, which was originally clad in asbestos shingles, was covered with rough-textured stucco in 1978. In 1988 elastomeric stucco was applied. Metal corners, which probably belong to the surface on which the stucco was applied, are exposed at the corners of walls and window sills. Slightly raised bands in the Art Moderne style emphasize the horizontal massing of the building. They wrap around the building below the first-, second-, and third-floor windows and serve as sills. Aluminum, horizontal-slat wall vents are located on the east and west sides of the building. Sheets of wood cut to fit what appear to be former window openings are found at the corners of the buildings and in various former window openings.

4. Structural system, framing: The Administration Building utilizes a wood-frame structural system.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The main entrance is on the north side of the building and is marked by an integral partial-width porch that utilizes a concrete stoop and steps. A handicapped access ramp constructed of plywood and two-by-four lumber intersects the porch on its east edge. An original, poured-concrete pier remains on the east side of the steps. Additional porches are found on the south, east, and west sides of the building, where original concrete stoops provide access to the south-side entrance of the rear-wing, the east-side entrance, and the west-side entrance. Original concrete steps lead below ground level to the basement entrance on the south side of the main block. Steel handrails are at the first-floor south-side entrance of the main block, basement entrance, and east-side

entrance. Stairways constructed of steel stringers and checker plates lead to exterior second-story entrances on the south side of the rear-wing and south side of the main block.

6. Chimneys: An exterior stucco-clad chimney is located at the wall junction of the rear wing and the east wing.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Entry to the building is through four, single-pane, glass-and-aluminum storefront-type doors set in aluminum-frame doorways. Doors on the south elevation of the rear wing are found on the first and second floors. On the first floor is a glass-and-aluminum door set in a metal frame. On the second floor is a metal door and doorway. Side entrances on the east and west elevations have glass-and-metal doors set in aluminum doorways. First- and second-story doorways and the basement entry on the south (rear) elevation of the main block have metal doors set in metal doorways. Although the locations of the entries remain intact, the original doors have been replaced in most cases.

b. Windows and shutters: Original fenestration was composed of ribbon windows on the first and second floors that wrapped around the building. Although many of the original vertical, four light, check rail, wood-sash wood windows have been removed or covered with wood sheeting, a large number of original windows remain. Window sills have been stuccoed and the windows have had reflective adhesive film applied to the glazing on the inside. Metal-frame solar screens were installed over the windows in 1978.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The Administration Building has a flat roof with built-up tar and gravel covering, most recently repaired in 1978.

b. Cornice, eaves: Metal flashing is located at the roof and wall junction; metal gutters and downspouts provide drainage.

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: A three-story, 11-bay semicircular tower with a flat roof projects from the primary elevation near the northwest corner of the two-story main block.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. Basement: The basement is confined to a small utility room on the south side of the main portion of the building.

b. First floor: Interior office space on this floor is organized around a hallway placed on the east-west axis. A secondary hallway bisects space in the rear wing and provides access and circulation for offices in that part of the building. The original circulation pattern remains largely intact.

c. Second floor: The building has offices on both sides of an east-west hallway and a south hallway, which accesses rear-wing offices. The original circulation pattern remains largely intact.

d. Third floor: Located in the northwest tower, the third floor consists of a nearly round room originally without partitions. Called the Observation Room, it appears to have served as a type of conference room with map tables, teletypes, and built-in bookcases. A short flight of wooden stairs led to the roof, known as the Observation Deck, from where, as the tallest building on the base (except for the Maintenance Hangar), drills, operations, and assemblies could be observed. In 1979 the third-floor room was divided into three offices on an east-west axis by sheet-rock walls. The Observation Deck is no longer used, although the stairs remain.

2. Stairways: Stairs between the first and second floor are located in the center of the building, where the east-west hallway and south hallway intersect. The stairs have rubber-surfaced steps and wood handrails. Additional stairs are located inside the doors of the east, west, and south entrances. These have rubber-surfaced steps and wood handrails. A curved stairway, with a hard-rubber surface and steel handrail, connects the third floor to the east-west second-floor hallway. Stairs at the rear of the third-floor office space lead to a door that provides access to the former Observation Deck.

3. Flooring: Offices are carpeted and hallways are finished with linoleum tile.

4. Walls and ceiling finishes: Remodeling in 1978 resulted in new interior finishes and the removal or covering of most original walls, which consisted of gypsum or asbestos board on wood studs. Original interior wall finishes included

plywood, knotty pine, plaster, tempered hardboard, and brick. Some asbestos-board walls remain in the tower section of the building, on the second and third floors. Current wall material in the hallways consists of a burlap-like fabric with what appears to be a polyurethane finish. Offices have wood paneling. Original ceiling materials included insulating tile board, acoustic tile board, plaster, gypsum board, and cement. Currently the building has dropped ceilings finished with particle board suspended in metal frames. The original rounded, wood chair rail, which also serves as a window sill, curves around the interior of the tower section on the second and third floors. It is similar to a chair rail found in the Gatehouse. The basement has original poured-concrete walls. The underside of the original wood flooring of the first floor is visible from the basement.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Remodeling in 1978 replaced older doors with double metal doors in hallways and wood doors in office spaces. A three-light transom is located over the door to the third floor. Now painted, it is a remnant of original wood-panel doors with glazing and transoms located in various places throughout the building. Doorways on the third floor have rounded molding. A wood hatch with metal latch is located halfway up the stairs to the third floor. It provides access to crawl space above the second floor.

b. Windows: Windows in the tower section on the second and third floors have wood frames and wood trim.

6. Decorative features and trim: Except for those elements described in other sections pertaining to the interior, no decorative features and trim were identified.

7. Hardware: No original hardware was identified.

8. Mechanical Equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Central heating and air conditioning were installed in 1978. The basement contains a hot-water boiler for heating, cold and hot water pumps, a sump pump, and an air compressor for the sprinkler system, none of which are original.

b. Lighting: The building has fluorescent lighting throughout. Fixtures are inset in the dropped ceiling and are not original.

c. Plumbing: Original plumbing and restrooms have been replaced with new materials.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Administration Building faces north toward the base entrance. Placed on an axis with the main entrance to the Administration Building is the Gatehouse, the original security check point for the main entrance to NAS Dallas. During the 1960s the entrance was moved further to the north and a new gatehouse was built. The Administration Building is located in the area of the base devoted to personnel support, which is slightly south and east of the original Hensley Field facility. Quarters are located to the east; administrative buildings are located to the south. Buildings located to the northwest and west provide personnel services. This area of the base has controlled informal landscaping, such as tree-lined streets, shrubs, sidewalks, and lawns. The landscape around the Administration Building is informally landscaped with medium-size hardwood trees, pines, boxwood shrubs, monkey grass, and yucca. A flagpole in front of building was installed in honor of the World War II victory over Japan.

2. Historic landscape design: The street pattern in the immediate area and the lawn around the building are the primary design elements that remain from the 1940s. The main axial approach to the base has been preserved, and the Gatehouse, Administration Building, and Recreation Building lie along this line. The Drill Hall flanks it on the west. A traffic circle, in place by 1949, moves vehicles around the sides of the Administration Building to the Gatehouse. Although the precise location of trees planted near the main gate in October 1946 in honor of NAS Dallas World War II dead is unknown, the trees that form the semicircle in front of the building may be those planted in what was called the "Circle of Remembrance." Historic photographs of the Gatehouse do not show any other trees. Although the historic circulation patterns have survived, street and curbing materials were replaced in early 1993.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original architectural drawings: Reproductions of an incomplete set of original architectural drawings are on file at the Public Works Department, NAS Dallas. These drawings list Moore, Cooper, White & Moore, Architects and Engineers, Houston, Texas, as the architects of record, and E. S. White as the architect in charge. Available drawings include the original floor plans for the first, second, and third floors, and interior wall,

ceiling, window, and door schedules. No decision has been made as to where the drawings will be moved when the base closes.

B. Early views: The Public Affairs Office at NAS Dallas maintains a small collection of historic photographs of the base. Many are aerial photographs that provide an overall understanding of site development but provide minimal information on individual buildings. Other photographs include those taken of buildings in the late 1940s within their immediate context. The earliest known photograph of the Administration Building is undated, but appears to have been taken in the early 1950s. Copies of this photograph, and others in the collection, can be obtained by contacting the Public Affairs Officer, NAS Dallas, Dallas, Texas. Other early views are held at the main branch of the Dallas Public Library in the NAS Dallas files.

C. Interviews: No oral interviews were undertaken to prepare this form.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Moore, Cooper, White & Moore, Architects & Engineers, Inc. Plans and drawings, 1942.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Crews, Joseph M., *A Historical and Architectural Assessment of Dallas Naval Air Station, Dallas, Texas,* 2 vols. Prepared for the Fort Worth District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth, Texas, 1 June 1994, vols. 1-2.

Dallas News, 20 October 1946.

Dallas, Texas. Naval Air Station, Dallas, Texas. Public Works Department. Plans and Drawings, 1945-1995.

Department of the Navy, "Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Disposal and Reuse of Naval Air Station, Dallas, Texas." April 1995.

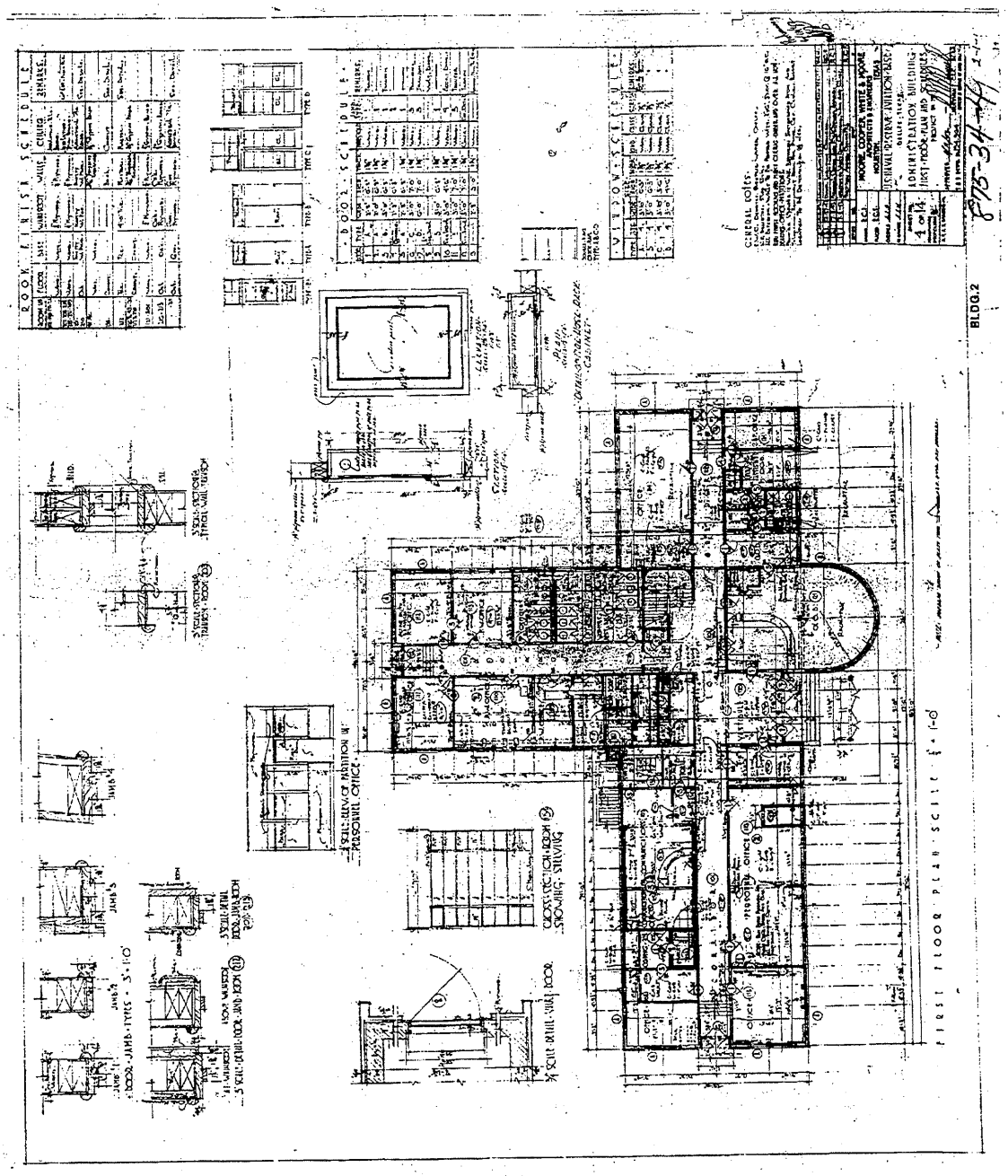
Emme, Eugene M., Lt. (jg.), USNR, "A History of Naval Air Station, Dallas, Texas," 15 October 1944. Typescript on file at the Dallas Public Library, Archives Floor.

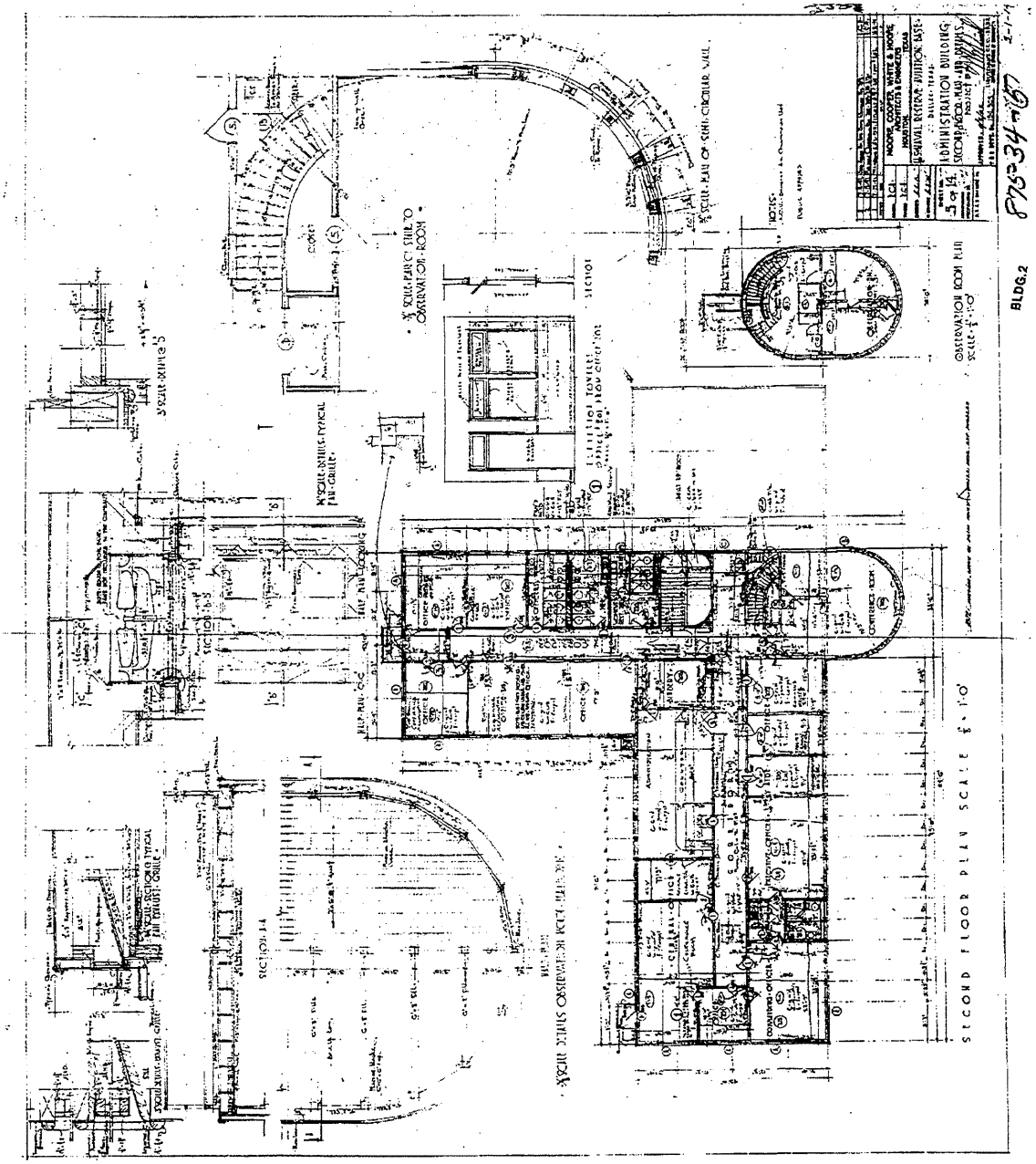
E. Likely sources not yet investigated: Information on NAS Dallas may be held in the National Archives, Washington, D.C., or in the architectural collections of the archives in Suitland, Maryland. These repositories will not be investigated for the purposes of this project.

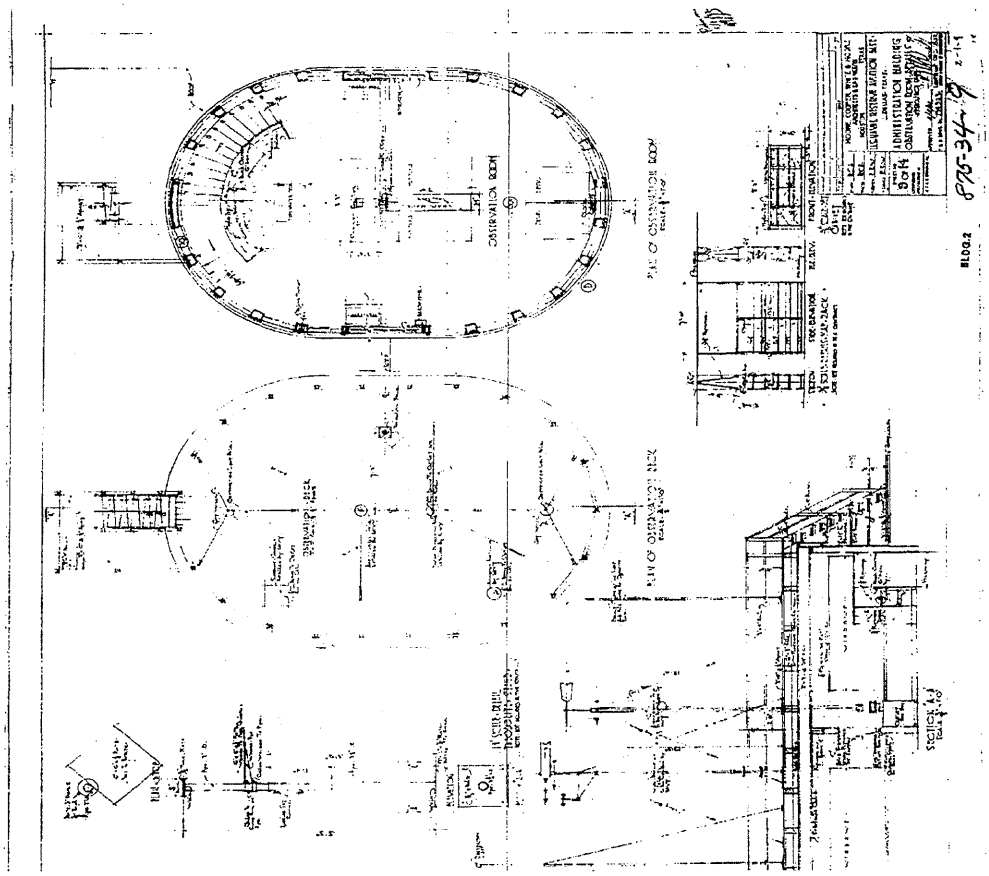
F. Supplemental Materials: N/A

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The decision by the Defense BRAC Commission to close NAS Dallas and relocate needed activities to NAS Fort Worth (the former Carswell Air Force Base), triggered an assessment of the property's potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The Texas Historical Commission determined 12 buildings and structures in a portion of the base built for and associated with World War II Navy activities and two single-family officer's house and two adjacent lagoons built for and associated with Army Air Corps activities in the late 1920s and the 1930s to be eligible for NRHP listing. The Texas State Historic Preservation Officer, the Department of the Navy, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation are in the process of signing a Memorandum of Agreement requiring Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Level I documentation of the 14 buildings and structures and two lagoon areas. Through its Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southern Division, with offices in North Charleston, South Carolina, the Department of the Navy contracted with Turner Collie & Braden, Inc., of Houston, Texas, to oversee the preparation of the HABS recordation. Under contract with Turner Collie & Braden, Hardy•Heck•Moore & Associates, Inc. of Austin, Texas, gathered historical and architectural information and, prepared a historic context and the HABS forms. Diane Elizabeth Williams served as principal investigator and project architectural historian. David Moore served as historian, Sara Kirtland was associate historian and Elliott K. Wright gathered information for the architectural descriptions. Craig Melde, of ArchiTexas, Dallas, Texas, supervised the preparation of the measured drawings, Craig King served as project coordinator, and Stan Solamillo was the field coordinator. Measured drawings were drafted by members of the ArchiTexas staff. Tom Eisenhour recorded the historic resources with large-format black-and-white photographs.


ROOM FINISH SCHEDULE
DOOR SCHEDULE
BLDG.2
FIRST FLOOR PLAN


HABS TX-3408-B
BLDG.2
SECOND FLOOR PLAN SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"
OBSERVATION ROOM PLAN
SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
5 of 14
NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON
HOOPE, COOPER, WHITE & MOORE
ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS
DALLAS, TEXAS


OBSERVATION ROOM
PLAN OF OBSERVATION ROOM
PLAN OF OBSERVATION DECK
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
BLDG. 2
SECTION A-A