

Naval Air Station Dallas,  
Heating Plant  
(Naval Air Station Dallas,  
Building 34)  
Enterprise Drive/Midway Loop  
Dallas  
Dallas County  
Texas

HABS No. TX-3408-J

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,  
HEATING PLANT  
(NAVAL AIR STATION DALLAS, BUILDING 34)

HABS No. TX-3408-J

Location: Enterprise Drive/Midway Loop  
Dallas  
Dallas County  
Texas

U.S.G.S. Duncanville Quadrangle (7.5)  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
14.691120.3623710

Present Owner: United States of America  
c/o Commander. Naval Reserve Force  
4400 Dauphine Street  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70146-5000  
Upon closure of the base, this building, which is owned by the Navy but is on land leased from the City of Dallas, will revert to the ownership of the City of Dallas

Present Occupant: Environmental Department

Present Use: Hazardous Materials Storage

Statement of Significance: The Heating Plant was constructed in 1941 as part of the first major World War II construction program at the Naval Air Station (NAS). Distinguished by a simple but accomplished design and compact form derived from the principles of the Bauhaus, the building is further enhanced by a concrete bas-relief executed in a style typically seen in New Deal-era public art. Located in the transom above the main entry, the relief depicts Prometheus providing the gift of power, rather than fire, for modern technology. The building is significant as a distinctive element of the infrastructural system of the World War II era and for its role in the delivery of steam for heating throughout the base. It retains a high degree of integrity and conveys a strong sense of time and place.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of erection: Plans approved January 7, 1941. No original plans or real property records showing the construction date were located during research

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efforts. However, Joseph Crews cites plans in his 1993 report. That citation is used here to provide information on date, architect, and builder.

2. Architect: Robert and Company, Inc., Architects & Engineers, Atlanta, Georgia, and Corpus Christi, Texas. Howarth served as the project architect.

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

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Commander L. N. Moeller, CEC, USN, was the officer in charge of construction. General contractors were Henger Construction Company (location unknown).

5. Original plans and construction: No original plans were located. However, Joseph Crews cites plans in his 1993 report. Because of base closure and reduction in personnel, some original materials cited by Crews are no longer available at the base. Reproductions of two drawings prepared by Moore, Cooper, White & Moore, dated December 31, 1942, were located in the Public Works Department of NAS Dallas. One drawing shows the placement of additional boilers within the building. The second drawing is undated and shows changes to the oil storage tank. These drawings were prepared from standardized plans developed by the Department of the Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks (Y&D drawing Nos. 195-141 and 195-142). A floor plan prepared March 15, 1955, by personnel of the Public Works Department, NAS Dallas, shows the floor plan at that time.

6. Additions and Alterations: Few alterations have been made to the building. It retains its original exterior form and interior configuration. Modifications include the removal of the mechanical equipment, the installation of exterior metal vents on the front elevation, and the replacement of the original glazing with wire mesh glass in the original window frames in 1990, when the Public Works Department converted the building to a hazardous waste collection facility. A steel platform supported by a steel frame attached directly to the southeast wall was added at an unknown date to increase interior space. The building retains a very high degree of exterior integrity and conveys a strong sense of time and place. 1955 NAS Public Works Office plans show a small office in the northwest corner of the room, lockers along the north wall, and a head in the northeast corner. The 1942 plans by Moore, Cooper, White & Moore show two boilers, and call for the addition of two boilers and a catwalk.

B. Historical Context:

The Heating Plant was built during the first phase of construction at then Naval Reserve Air Base (NRAB) Dallas. As part of appropriations designated for a massive military building program in the National Defense Act of 1940, NRAB Dallas was one three NRABs slated for construction before America's actual entry in World War II, and was identical to bases in New Orleans and Atlanta. The Heating Plant was one of several buildings constructed in the winter of 1940-41. During this initial period of construction at the base, there were only a few utilitarian buildings at NRAB Dallas, including two hangars and a barracks building.<sup>1</sup>

Plans developed by the Atlanta-based firm of Robert and Company, with Howarth as the project architect, were approved on January 7, 1941. There is no information regarding when construction was started or completed, but at the time the base was commissioned on May 15, 1941, most of the buildings were not finished. Although the Heating Plant was basically of simple construction, it displayed strong references to the design principles of the Bauhaus and was enhanced by a concrete bas-relief located in the transom above the main entry. Reminiscent of New Deal-era public art, the relief depicts Prometheus providing power for modern technology and is representative of the role played by the Heating Plant. As an infrastructural support building, the Heating Plant delivered steam for heating throughout the base. The building was modified little after its construction. However, drawings made by Moore, Cooper, White & Moore found in the NAS Dallas Public Works Department dated December 31, 1942, show that additional boilers were added inside the plant and changes were made to the oil storage tank. These plans were prepared from standardized plans developed by the Department of the Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks.<sup>2</sup> A later floor plan, dated March 15, 1955, showed that the building included a small office, lockers, and a head.

A few modifications were made to the building in 1990, but it still retains a high degree of exterior integrity. It is currently used for hazardous materials storage. After NAS Dallas closes in 1998 as a result of 1993 recommendations by the Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission, the ownership of the Heating Plant will revert to the City of Dallas, the entity that owns the land on which the building is located.

Notes

1. *Dallas Times Herald*, 15 May 1941, n.p.
2. 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.; Bureau of Yards and Docks Drawing Nos. 195-141 and 195-142, Plans and Drawings, 1945-1995, Public Works Department, NAS Dallas, Texas.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Heating Plant is meritorious for its utilitarian form that is reflective of the theories of functionality associated with the design concepts of the Bauhaus. These principles are most strongly expressed in the building's rectangular form, volumetric massing, flat roof, and banks of large industrial-type windows. The decorative concrete panel above the main entry adds to the architectural character of the building through its expression of New Deal-era social and aesthetic values.
2. Condition of fabric: The Heating Plant is in good condition with most of its original features intact.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Heating Plant is a rectangular-plan building articulated as a single story that rises in a strongly vertical manner to the roofline. The building is 61 feet wide, 36 feet deep, and 30 feet high. It encompasses 2,196 square feet. The interior space has been increased by the construction of a steel platform supported by a steel frame attached directly to the interior wall on the southeast elevation.
2. Foundation: The building rests on a concrete-slab foundation.
3. Walls: The building utilizes concrete and red brick laid in a six-course common-bond pattern. A concrete belt course encircles the building. It also serves as window sills and separates the concrete and brick portions of the

exterior walls. A slightly projecting brick parapet with concrete coping tops the building at the junction of the walls and the roof. A concrete bas-relief panel is located over the front entrance. Depicting Prometheus, a figure in Greek mythology, providing the gift of energy for modern technology, the sculpture is the only example of New Deal-era public art at NAS Dallas.

4. Structural system, framing: The building utilizes steel and bearing masonry wall construction. A riveted steel frame attached directly to the interior wall on the southeast elevation supports a steel platform used to increase interior storage area.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The main entry is reached by means of a concrete slab, one step high, which forms the stoop.

6. Chimneys: None. The original brick smokestack, seen in an early photograph, has been removed from the rear elevation.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The main entry has its original, double steel doors, each with nine fixed-pane lights set in steel framing. The doors with the bas-relief sculpture above are set in a rectangular, molded concrete surround. The rear entrance consists of a large sliding steel door with fixed-pane lights and an inset hinged door.

b. Windows and shutters: The front and side elevations are pierced with large banks of original, industrial-type steel-frame windows. The front window, a major focal point of the building, is composed of 42 individual windows arranged in banks of 7 across and 6 down with 10 lights each. Inset within each of the windows in the top two rows and the bottom three rows are six light awning windows. Two, large metal vents pierce the main elevation, flanking the window, and are alterations made at an unknown date. Windows on the side elevations are original and have 18 windows with inset, eight-light awning windows. Some of the glazing was replaced with wire-mesh glass in 1990. A large window on the rear elevation has been enclosed with brick.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is a flat, concrete-slab covered with built-up tar and gravel.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The roof has a brick parapet with concrete coping. A metal downspout with a cast-iron drain receptacle is located on the northwest elevation.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

First floor: The building has an open floor plan. A steel frame attached to the southeast wall supports a steel platform. A variety of machinery is scattered around the floor.

2. Stairways: The steel platform has stairs with steel stringers, checker plates, and handrails.

3. Flooring: Flooring consists of a concrete slab.

4. Walls and ceiling finishes: The interior has brick and poured-concrete walls, a riveted steel-frame structure, and a concrete-slab ceiling.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The sole interior door is metal with a metal latch.

b. Windows: Window frames are metal.

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: Window latches are metal lever type. Doors have metal lever handles or metal knobs.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The building has no heating or air conditioning. Ceiling fans provide ventilation through the roof. Exhaust fans on the southeast and southwest sides vent low-lying vapors. These vents and fans are not original. Fresh air is provided through metal vents on front and rear elevations.

b. Lighting: Lighting is provided through ceiling-mounted plastic fixtures. These are not original.

c. Plumbing: An eyewash station, sprinkler system, and pump for sprinklers are found in the building. These do not appear to be original.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The building faces southwest onto Enterprise Drive/Midway Loop. It is located in the industrial area of the installation, which contains buildings devoted to the maintenance, repair, and operation of the base and of the aircraft around which the primary mission of the base revolved. The terrain is flat, with the Pumphouse and Water Cistern directly to the east and the Water Tower to the northeast. Runways are found west of this complex of buildings and structures; additional support buildings are located to the north and south. Mountain Creek Lake is to the east and south, and the administrative and personnel area is to the north. The original Hensley Field facility is to the northwest.

2. Historic landscape design: The area around the Heating Plant is industrial and, thus landscaping, except for the occasional small area of grass, has not been included in the site design. This treatment, which allows large access areas for aircraft, vehicles, and equipment, is in keeping with the historic character of the area. The area immediately around the Heating Plant is landscaped with lawn.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original architectural drawings: No original plans or drawings were located for this building. However, Joseph Crews cites plans in his 1993 report. Because of base closure and reduction in personnel, some original materials cited by Crews are no longer available at the base. The drawings cited by Crews list Robert and Company, Inc., Architects & Engineers, Atlanta, Georgia, and Corpus Christi, Texas. Howarth served as

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the project architect and Commander L. N. Moeller, CEC, USN, was the officer in charge of construction. Two drawings prepared by Moore, Cooper White & Moore were located in the Public Works Department of NAS Dallas. One drawing, dated December 31, 1942, shows the placement of additional boilers within the building. The second drawing is undated and shows changes to the oil storage tank. These drawings were prepared from standardized plans developed by the Department of the Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks (Y&D drawing Nos. 195-141 and 195-142). A floor plan prepared March 15, 1955, by personnel of the Public Works Department, NAS Dallas, shows the floor plan at that time. No decision has been made as to where the drawings will be moved when the base closes.

B. Early views: One early, undated view of the Heating Plant was located. In addition to the Heating Plant, the photograph shows the Maintenance Hangar, the smaller Assembly and Repair Hangar, the Water Tower, the Water Cistern, the Pumphouse, the Paint and Dope Shop, and various other associated buildings. It appears to date from the late 1940s or 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 of the facility are held at the main branch of the Dallas Public Library in the NAS Dallas files.

C. Interviews: No interviews were undertaken to complete this form.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

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

2. Secondary and published sources:

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.

*Dallas Times Herald*, 15 May 1941.

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, TX, 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.

