

INTRODUCTION

Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) Dallas is a government-owned aircraft manufacturing plant near the city limits of both Dallas and Grand Prairie in Dallas County, Texas. The plant is commonly known by the names of the tenant companies that have operated the complex over the years. Among these companies are North American Aviation, Chance Vought Aircraft, Ling-Temco-Vought, Northrop Grumman, and Vought Aircraft Industries, Inc. The current tenant, Vought Aircraft Industries, occupies the entire complex, which encompasses 314.66 acres of land. Of the 343 buildings and structures at the plant, 159 are government-owned and leased from the Department of the Navy.

The plant has made noteworthy contributions to the history and development of Dallas, Grand Prairie, and surrounding communities for over a half century. The Defense Plant Corporation (DPC), a government agency charged with financing and building industrial manufacturing plants before and during World War II, contracted to build the plant in 1940. As originally conceived, the plant was relatively small and was designed to manufacture fighter and trainer aircraft. Facility 1 was the plant's focal point, the future site of final production and assembly. Soon after the plant began operations, the DPC elected to enlarge the complex in order to manufacture bomber aircraft. Facility 6 was the centerpiece of this expansion effort, which took place in 1943. California-based North American Aviation, the original tenant, used the plant throughout World War II to produce military aircraft. The plant was closed immediately after the war, and the federal government tried, unsuccessfully, to sell the complex to private interests. In 1947, the Department of the Navy assumed control of the plant and leased the 1942 section to a newly organized company, TEMCO, and the 1943 expansion area to Chance Vought Aircraft, which moved its headquarters to the plant from Stratford Connecticut. These companies and their successors produced defense-related, as well as commercial, products throughout the Cold War. Products for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) were also manufactured at the plant. NWIRP Dallas expanded when various tenants funded building programs to meet specific production needs; despite these alterations, however, the plant has remained virtually unchanged since the 1943 expansion.

Although the Department of the Navy retains ownership of the plant, the possible divestiture of the plant triggers implementation of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. This provision requires that federal agencies consider the effect of a federal undertaking on historic resources. Any proposed divestiture of NWIRP Dallas constitutes a federal undertaking; thus, in accordance with Section 106, the Department of the Navy funded an in-depth study of the complex to determine if any of the resources are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Navy contracted Hardy•Heck•Moore (HHM), Inc., an Austin-based cultural resource management firm, to inventory and evaluate government-owned buildings at the plant in 1998-99. The firm's report, *Historic Resources Survey of the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant Dallas, Dallas County, Texas*, summarized the findings of a comprehensive survey of the 159 government-owned properties, and assessed the relative significance of the resources within the context of the plant from its World War II construction through its Cold War operations. In 2002, HHM, Inc. completed an Integrated Cultural Resource Plan (ICRMP) for NWIRP Dallas, which re-evaluated the previous survey and identified four additional buildings that merit inclusion for the NRHP.

The *Historic Resources Survey of the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant Dallas, Dallas County, Texas* developed property types for all the resources in order to group them for evaluation. A historic context developed historical themes associated with the plant and the surrounding areas to provide a framework in which to assess the significance of each individual resource. These resources were evaluated for NRHP eligibility using the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and Criteria Considerations. The

report also included a detailed analysis of all resources constructed before 1952. Each narrative included an architectural description, building history, and NRHP assessment. The survey and subsequent ICRMP evaluation concluded that seven of the 159 government-owned buildings at NWIRP Dallas are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Facility 1 and 6 are both manufacturing buildings; Facility 7 is an office building; Facility 49 an Engineering Building; Facility 94 a Structures Laboratory; and buildings 16 and 97 are hangers. Each of these buildings represent the plant's association with aircraft manufacturing during World War II and the Cold War Periods, and possess enough architectural integrity to convey their significance.

The reports were submitted to the project supervisor, the Historic Preservation Officer of Southern Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command in North Charleston, South Carolina, who forwarded the report to the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), in accordance with Section 106 regulations. The Texas SHPO concurred with all of the report's findings and recommended further documentation of the seven NRHP-eligible buildings as a way to mitigate the proposed divestiture of the plant from federal control.

As part of the Department of the Navy's cultural resource responsibilities as outlined in Section 106, the Navy solicited public participation and input by holding a public meeting at the Grand Prairie city hall on December 14, 2000. Notices appeared in area newspapers inviting local citizens and any interested parties to comment on the proposed divestiture. Participants included the Historic Preservation Officer for Southern Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, who represented the Department of the Navy, and the Project Director and Architect of HHM, Inc., the contractor responsible for undertaking the study. A brochure explained Section 106 regulations and outlined a brief history of the plant and the eligible buildings. By hosting the public meeting, the Department of the Navy complied with new 106 regulations that require soliciting public participation in the 106 process when a federal undertaking will to have an adverse effect on a NRHP-eligible resource.

The SHPO-recommended documentation of Facilities 1, 6, 7, 16, 49, 94, and 97 was modeled after Historic American Building Survey (HABS) standards for photography, drawings, and historical background information. The Project Historical Architect completed his field investigations in March and October 2001 and photographed the building using 35 mm film. The black and white photographs, which are part of this submittal, are printed on archival paper. The report also includes one-half size reproductions of selected architectural plans (elevations, floor plans, sections, and details) for each building. The written documentation includes a history of the plant and the three buildings, prepared by an Associate Historian, and architectural descriptions, prepared by the Project Historical Architect. Most of the narrative data was extracted from the 2000 survey report.

While Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation is usually submitted to the National Parks Service and archived at the Library of Congress, the *Historic Building Documentation of Facilities 1, 6, 7, 16, 49, 94, and 97 at NWIRP Dallas* will be submitted to the Texas Historical Commission for permanent storage.

Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant Dallas
140 Fred Bauer Road
Dallas
Dallas County
Texas

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTION DATA
PHOTOCOPIES OF ORIGINAL ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

Historic Preservation Office
Southern Division
Naval Engineering Facilities Command
Department of the Navy
North Charleston, South Carolina