

Naval Air Station Dallas, Water Tower
(Naval Air Station Dallas, Building 62)
Enterprise Drive/Midway Loop
Dallas
Dallas County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3408-K

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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,
WATER TOWER
(NAVAL AIR STATION DALLAS, FACILITY 62)

HABS No. TX-3408-K

Location: Enterprise Drive/Midway Loop
Dallas
Dallas County
Texas

U.S.G.S. Duncanville Quadrangle (7.5)
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
14.691135.3623705

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 structure, 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: Public Works Department

Present Use: Potable water storage

Statement of Significance: The Water Tower was constructed in 1941 as part of the first major World War II construction program at the Naval Air Station (NAS) Dallas. As the tallest feature at the base, it served, and continues to serve, as a visual landmark and as a point of reference. Utilitarian in form and materials, it is significant as a distinctive, highly visible element of the infrastructural system of the World War II era and for its role in the delivery of water 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: The exact date construction began is unknown, but the structure is associated with the first major building program at NAS Dallas, which commenced in 1941 with an appropriation of \$1.2 million.

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2. Architect: According to a plate at the base of the north leg of the tower, it was built by the "Pittsburgh-Des Moines Steel Company, Constructing Engineers, of Pittsburgh, PA and Des Moines, IA."
3. Original and subsequent owners: United States of America, Department of the Navy.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: General contractors were Henger Construction Company (location unknown).
5. Original plans and construction: Original drawings for the Water Tower were not located during research efforts for this document. One elevation drawing prepared by the Public Works Department at NAS Dallas in 1954 was located. The structure appears unaltered from its 1954 appearance.
6. Alterations and additions: The Water Tower has been maintained through regular painting. There are no known or apparent alterations to the structure. The structure retains a high degree of architectural and physical integrity and conveys a strong sense of time and place.

B. Historical Context:

The Water Tower, constructed in 1941, was part of the initial construction phase of Naval Reserve Air Base (NRAB) Dallas. Funded with congressional appropriations from the National Defense Act of 1940, NRAB Dallas was one of three NRABs built in the United States at that time. As it did at identical installations in New Orleans and Atlanta, construction began at NRAB Dallas in the winter of 1940-1941. The Water Tower was constructed as an infrastructural facility for the two hangars and barracks buildings built at the base during that period, which comprised the entire base at that time.

The Water Tower, located adjacent to the Pumphouse (Building 33), the Heating Plant (Building 34), and the Water Cistern (Facility 63), was built by the "Pittsburgh-Des Moines Steel Company, Construction Engineers, of Pittsburgh, PA and Des Moines, IA," according to an inscription at the base of the north leg of the tower. The 50,800-gallon Water Tower cost \$9,480 to build, out of \$1,211,000 allotted for construction at NRAB Dallas in 1941. There is no other specific information about the Water Tower during the World War II era.¹

No original drawings were found for the Water Tower, but a 1954 elevation drawing was found in the Public Works Department at NAS Dallas shows that the structure has remained unchanged since that date. The Water Tower has been maintained through regular painting. When NAS Dallas closes in 1998, following recommendations by the Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission, the ownership of the Water Tower will revert to the City of Dallas, the entity that owns the land on which the tower is located.

Notes

1. 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.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Water Tower utilizes a design typical for elevated potable water storage facilities in the 1940s.
2. Condition of fabric: The Water Tower is in good condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Water Tower is a 69-foot-high steel-frame structure composed of a spherical tank with a 50,800-gallon tank supported by four legs. A pipe extends from the bottom of the tank into the ground.
2. Foundation: The tank is supported by four, riveted, steel-truss legs braced with steel cross-tie rods between the legs and is mounted on concrete piles.
3. Walls: The spherical tank is constructed of riveted steel plates.
4. Structural system, framing: The Water Tank utilizes a steel frame.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Water Tower is located in a flat, grassy area adjacent to the Pumphouse (Building No. 33), the Heating Plant (Building No. 34), and the Water Cistern (Facility No. 63). The area contains a variety of operational support buildings devoted to the maintenance, repair, and operation of the base and the aircraft utilized in training. The hangars and runways are located to the west and Mountain Creek Lake is to the east and south. The original Hensley Field facility is located north-northwest.

2. Historic landscape design: This area of the installation is industrial in nature, and there is no attention to decorative landscaping, except for the occasional small area of grass. Ground surfaces are primarily poured concrete with asphalt streets. This treatment has created a large access area for vehicles and equipment and is in keeping with the historic character of the area. The area immediately around the structure is planted with grass.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original architectural drawings: No original plans or drawings were located at NAS Dallas for this structure.

B. Early views: One early, undated view of the Water Tower was located. It also shows the Maintenance Hangar, the smaller Assembly and Repair Hangar, the Heating Plant, the Paint and Dope Shop, the Water Cistern, the Pumphouse, 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 oral interviews were undertaken to complete this form.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

NAS Dallas. Public Works Department. Drawing, 1954.

2. Secondary and published sources:

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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.

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.