

106 SUCCESS STORY

Restoration of Art Deco Gem Shows Air Force Commitment to Preservation

Dayton, Ohio



“Being able to reuse these architectural treasures is a story that strikes right to the real purpose of BRAC, which is reorganizing and consolidating to more effectively use our resources. As we are improving the ability of the 77th AESW to function as a cohesive unit, we are also making better use of existing structures.”

—JACQUE FISHER
88th Air Base Wing BRAC Director



THE STORY

Wilbur Wright Field was established in 1917 and included the 1910 Wright Brothers' Huffman Prairie Flying Field. Following World War I, the installation grew to include the Fairfield Air Depot, and it was renamed Wright Field in 1927. As the experimental engineering arm of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, it conducted some of the most advanced aeronautical engineering work in the history of aviation. After World War II, Wright Field was renamed Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB). The Wright Field Historic District is comprised of this original campus and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. WPAFB's most elaborate example of 1930s Art Deco architecture, Building 12, was completed in 1935 and is individually eligible for the National Register. Originally home of the Technical Data Branch and the Wright Field Technical Library, it later housed the Army Aeronautical Museum, the first military aviation museum in the country.

THE PROJECT

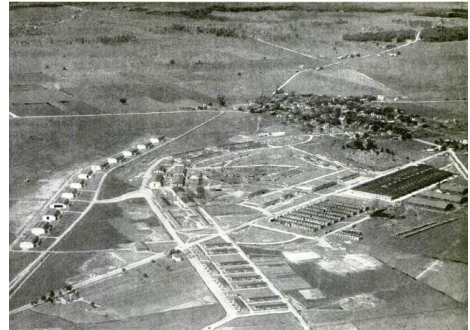
WPAFB is one of the largest and most diverse Air Force bases and is home to numerous organizations. In 2005, the Department of Defense Base Realignment and Closure process identified WPAFB to receive an increase in personnel, which required an evaluation of space allocation on the base. Building 12 was chosen to support the incoming personnel. It would be completely restored and rehabilitated to a historically accurate appearance both inside and out while meeting current security and force protection requirements.

THE 106 PROCESS

The Air Force, the federal agency carrying out this project, was responsible for conducting the Section 106 process under the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires that federal agencies identify historic properties and assess the effects of the projects they carry out, fund, or permit on those properties. Federal agencies also are required to consult with parties that have an interest in the fate of the property when adverse effects are likely to ensue.

Photos: Above, cleaning and repair to the entrance portico, vestibule, and rotunda; Right, Building 12 northeast view second floor; cleaning and repair of interiors (photos courtesy WPAFB)

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Photos: Above, main elevation after restoration (photo courtesy Ohio SHPO); Right, restored atrium (photo courtesy WPAFB); aerial photograph of Wilbur Wright Field, now Wright Patterson Air Force Base, from *Popular Mechanics* magazine 1920,

A primary goal of the restoration was to achieve a United States Green Building Council silver Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating. WPAFB's objective was to maintain the historic integrity of the facility while incorporating both LEED principles and Antiterrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) measures. The restoration included two main areas: exterior cleaning and repair; and cleaning and repair to the entrance portico, vestibule, and rotunda. Original construction drawings and historic photographs were reviewed, and extensive field investigations were conducted to confirm original conditions. All of the restoration work was done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (SOI Standards) for a total cost of \$13 million. The Ohio State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred with the determination of no adverse effects to historic properties.

Consulting Parties:

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base,
88th Civil Engineer Group
Ohio State Historic Preservation
Officer

THE SUCCESS

Often federal agencies opt to build new facilities to meet current mission requirements. However, as Building 12 was located in the desirable "downtown" area of WPAFB and near certain key tenants, it provided an ideal opportunity for consolidation and reuse, especially in light of AT/FP requirements. The need for additional work to restore Building 12 to its original Art Deco appearance did not deter WPAFB from completing this restoration and meeting all LEED silver requirements, AT/FP measures, and the SOI Standards. The restoration of Building 12 was completed in June 2010, adding to the preservation of the Wright Field Historic District both historically and functionally. The restoration highlights the most elaborate example of the 1930s Art Deco architecture in the District, while the improved space provides a working environment to serve new vital functions in the expanding missions at WPAFB. To highlight this success, WPAFB was awarded the Ohio SHPO Preservation Merit Award in 2010 for the project. The preservation and restoration of Building 12 was one reason why WPAFB received the 2011 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award for Cultural Resources Management—Installation.

For more about Section 106 and the ACHP go to www.achp.gov

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