

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number: 02001535**

**Date Listed: 12/19/02**

**Property Name: US Coast Guard Air Station Hangar at Dinner Key**

**County: Dade**

**State: FL**

**Multiple Name: N/A**

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Sarah D. Pope*  
(fn) Signature of the Keeper

12/19/02  
**Date of Action**

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**Amended Items in Nomination:**

The nomination has not adequately justified a national level of significance. An amendment is made to remove the national level of significance. This property is listed at the local level of significance.

This information was confirmed with Barbara Mattick, FL SHPO

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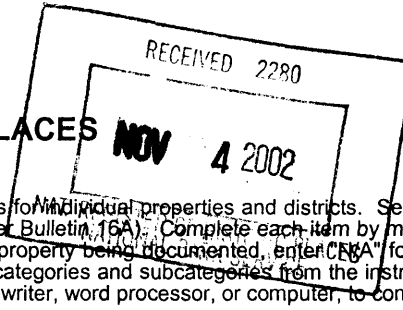
**DISTRIBUTION:**

**National Register property file**

**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Hangar at Dinner Key

other names/site number Virrick Gym; Miami Air Station/ DA 5402

2. Location

street & number 2600 South Bayshore Drive  not for publication

city or town Miami  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Miami-Dade code 025 zip code 33133

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Barbara C. Mattick 11-1-02  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Deputy  
Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper (for) Anall D. Pepe Date of Action 12/19/02

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	2	buildings
0	0	sites
1	3	structures
0	0	objects
2	5	total

Name of related multiple property listings

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Defense: Air Facility

Defense: Coast Guard Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Work in Progress

Recreation and Culture: Sports Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Mission/Spanish Colonial

Revival

Modern Movement: Moderne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stucco

walls Stucco

roof Asphalt

other Cast Stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Military

Maritime History

Period of Significance

1932-1945

Significant Dates

1932

1942

1943

Significant Person

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

U.S. Coast Guard

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of Repository

City of Miami Planning Office

#

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 4.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	5 7 6 8 0 0	2 8 4 5 9 5 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah E. Eaton/Preservation Officer & Barbara E. Mattick/ DSHPO for Survey & Registration

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date October 2002

street & number R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronough Street telephone 850-245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Miami

street & number 444 S.W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue telephone 305-416-1450

city or town Miami state FL zip code 33130

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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**SECTION 4: LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**

Two tracts of land lying and being in the City of Miami, County of Miami-Dade, State of Florida, and described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the Southeasterly line of South Bayshore Drive with the Southwesterly line of Aviation Avenue (formerly Trade Street), as shown on the plat of Dinner Key as recorded in Plat Book 34 at Page 2 of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida, which intersection and point of beginning is marked by a brass pin monument set in concrete; thence running South  $51^{\circ}52'03''$  West along the said Southeasterly line of South Bayshore Drive a distance of 675' more or less to a point marked by a nail in a 1" diameter pipe set in concrete; thence running South  $78^{\circ}25'57''$  East a distance of 599.16' more or less to a point marked by a cross cut on a brass pin set in the top of the steel pile bulkhead on the high water line of Biscayne Bay; thence running North  $13^{\circ}23'33''$  East along the above described steel pile bulkhead and high water line of Biscayne Bay a distance of 399.472' more or less to a point located in the Southwesterly line of Aviation Avenue (formerly Trade Street); thence running North  $40^{\circ}28'42''$  West a distance of 221.85' more or less to a point of beginning hereinbefore described and containing approximately 4.464 acres more or less, all as shown on U.S. Coast Guard Miami Air Station Plat Plan Number 3284, including all rights, title and interest in and to all common law and statutory riparian rights, water privileges and filled land and lands below high water line appurtenant and adjacent thereto; subject to the Northwesterly 44' thereof deeded to the City of Miami for road right-of-way purposes as recorded in Deed Book 34 at Page 2 of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

Subject to the Easement Deed from the United States of America to the City of Miami, dated May 11, 1956, for a 44' right-of-way easement for road right-of-way purposes as recorded in Deed Book 34 at Page 2 of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida.

and

Commence at the intersection of the Southeasterly line of South Bayshore Drive with the Southwesterly line of Aviation Avenue (formerly Trade Street) as shown on the plat of Dinner Key as recorded in Plat Book 34 at Page 2 of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida, which intersection is marked with a brass pin monument set in concrete; thence run South  $40^{\circ}28'42''$  East for a distance of land herein described.

From said point of beginning continue along the last described line for a distance of 61' to a point; thence run South  $63^{\circ}20'82''$  West for a distance of 50.02' to a point; thence run North  $78^{\circ}36'27''$  West

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for a distance of 11.9' to a point in the said Northeasterly line of the Coast Guard tract; thence run North 18°28'33" East for a distance of 69.1' to the point of beginning; containing 0.053 acres, more or less. Subject to any and all existing rights-of-way, easements and covenants, restrictions, reservations, conditions and agreements affecting the above described premises, whether or not the same now appear of record.

Reserving to the Grantor, and its assigns, all oil, gas and other minerals in, under and upon the lands herein conveyed, together with the right to enter upon the land for the purpose of mining and removing the same.

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**SECTION 7: DESCRIPTION**

**Summary:**

The U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Hangar at Dinner Key is located on Biscayne Bay in Coconut Grove, a neighborhood in the southern portion of Miami. The hangar site contains a large seaplane hangar built in 1932, a parking lot and a seaplane ramp now used to launch boats. The hangar is characterized by a textured stucco finish, rounded parapet, bowstring roof, large hangar door and bands of multi-light steel windows. Several additions, including a 1942–1943 Moderne style annex, were built as the functions and needs of the air station expanded. The hangar along with the annex is counted as one building. A 1938 seaplane ramp, now used as a boat ramp, is counted as a contributing structure.

**Setting:**

The U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Hangar at Dinner Key is located directly on Biscayne Bay and is bounded on the southwest by the former Pan American Seaplane Base. The hangar is adjacent to and in line with the four hangars built by Pan American Airways between 1931 and 1938 (see Vicinity Map). The property is partially screened from South Bayshore Drive by a landscape buffer containing mature trees. Although Dinner Key had been characterized by aviation activities since 1917, the properties on the north side of South Bayshore Drive were strictly residential. These single-family residences have been replaced with high-rise multifamily and office buildings that now overlook Dinner Key.

The hangar sits on the south portion of the property and opens onto a concrete apron that leads to a seaplane ramp. This concrete ramp, built in 1938 to replace an original, smaller ramp, is set at an angle to the seawall and is now used as a public boat ramp. New floating docks extend from the ramp, replacing an early boat pier. The waterfront is framed on both sides by mangroves. Directly northeast and south of the building is an area that was once used as a parking surface for seaplanes and is now a concrete parking lot for cars and boat trailers.

**Contributing Resources:**

**Exterior**

The primary contributing building on the property is the former seaplane hangar. The main block of the original hangar is a square building of structural steel and hollow tile construction, with a concrete slab foundation on piles (see photographs 1–4). Measuring approximately 100 feet by 100 feet, the hangar is



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a large bay, single-story space approximately 40 feet in height, with 10,459 square feet of floor area. The exterior walls are covered with textured stucco, and the bowstring roof is covered with modified bitumen roofing.

The (front) southeast façade of the hangar faces Biscayne Bay and features a rounded, stepped parapet with decorative banding, reminiscent of Mission style architecture in South Florida (see photograph 2). The words "U.S. COAST GUARD" and the Coast Guard emblem in cast stone are centered at the top of the parapet. This façade is dominated by a large steel and glass hangar door. Square towers, each containing a single door, anchor both corners of the front façade.

Side elevations are characterized by bands of multi-light steel windows with plain sills, and tall, narrow windows in the front corner towers (see photographs 3–4). The southwest elevation features a narrow, one-story wing with a shed roof extending along approximately two-thirds of the façade (see photograph 4). This wing, constructed at the same time as the hangar, contains smaller, multi-light steel windows and one double door. The rear elevation features a parapet similar in design to the front façade, and a high, off-center projecting wing with a flat roof.

Several additions have been made to the hangar throughout the years. In 1938, a one-story storeroom addition was constructed at the rear of the hangar by John B. Orr, Inc. It is likely that this addition included both of the single-story blocks that flank the taller, rear wing. The addition on the southwest corner of the building contains multi-light windows (see photograph 5). The addition on the northwest corner contains a large door on the side façade (see photograph 3).

The largest addition to the hangar was completed in 1942 during World War II, when an annex was constructed at the rear of the original structure (see photographs 6–7). This one-story masonry building, which is connected to the hangar with a 30-foot passage, measures 50 feet by 120 feet. A second-story addition measuring 32 feet by 120 feet was constructed the following year. The annex, built of concrete block with a smooth stucco finish, features a flat roof with parapet.

The architectural style of the annex departs from that of the hangar and features elements of Moderne style architecture. The northwest façade, which is the one most visible from South Bayshore Drive, is characterized by a strong horizontal composition and features a continuous cantilevered sunshade, or eyebrow, above both the first- and second-story windows (see photograph 7). A continuous sill, which extends across the façade as a raised band, is found below the windows on both floors. Windows are grouped in twos or threes and contain wood double-hung sash with two-over-two lights. Three porthole windows are located above the main entrance. The main entrance contains a double door of glass and wood. A secondary entrance is located on the side façade. A metal stairway on the northwest corner leads to an entrance on the second floor.

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A one-story storeroom addition was constructed on the northeast façade of the annex between 1950 and 1965. This room features a garage door on the side façade and a window and door on the rear.

**Interior**

The interior of the hangar is characterized by a large open space topped with exposed steel trusses (see photographs 8–11). The exposed wood roof deck is supported by purlins and bowstring trusses in a modified Pratt design with additional knee bracing. The floor is concrete. The southwest wall features a row of metal doors that open into small rooms featuring concrete block walls and wood roof decks with exposed wood rafters (see photographs 11). At each corner of the rear of the hangar are storerooms added in 1938 (see photographs 12–13). These spaces feature concrete block walls and shed roofs with exposed steel rafters.

The 1942 annex is connected to the hangar by a passage that leads to a stair hall (see photograph 15). The interior of the annex is utilitarian in nature with no architectural details, reflecting the austere period in which it was constructed. Offices are located on either side of the hallway (see photograph 14). Additional offices, bathrooms and a kitchen are found on the second floor (see photograph 16). The offices have been remodeled over the years, and paneling and acoustical ceilings have been added.

**Alterations**

A number of alterations have been made to the hangar since its construction in 1932. The most noteworthy include the additions described earlier, the replacement of the original hangar door and the blocking in of some windows and doors. Most of the alterations to the hangar are being reversed during the current rehabilitation project that is being partially funded by a historic preservation grant from the Florida Division of Historical Resources. This project includes the installation of a new hangar door to match the original, the replacement of the severely deteriorated windows with replicas, the reopening of original windows and doors and general repair and stabilization. Repairs to the annex will be addressed in a later phase of the project.

Several additions to the hangar that were in very poor condition were demolished in 1999, including a small two-story addition on the southwest façade, built in 1943, and a small one-story storeroom on the northeast façade.

The 1938 seaplane ramp, now used as a boat ramp, was previously described in “Setting,” section. It is a contributing structure.

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**Non-contributing Resources:**

The five non-contributing resources on the property include two small utilitarian structures used as mechanical rooms (see photograph 17), two temporary trailers (see photograph 18), and a metal shed (see photograph 19). The two mechanical rooms, built in 1960, are one story in height and measure approximately 8 feet by 15 feet. Built of concrete and finished with stucco, they are topped with flat roofs. The two temporary trailers are located on the southwest corner of the property and are currently being used by the tenant of the hangar while the rehabilitation is taking place. A wood deck topped by a tent and a separate tent structure adjoin the trailers. The pre-fabricated metal shed is located to the east of the temporary trailers.

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**SECTION 8: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Summary:**

The U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Hangar at Dinner Key is significant at the local and national levels under **Criterion A** in the areas of **Maritime History** and **Military**. The station at Dinner Key is historically significant as the first permanent Coast Guard air station in the country and is one of the most important properties associated with the history of Coast Guard aviation. The erection of the seaplane hangar in 1932 represents the first expenditure of funds by the Coast Guard for the construction of a permanent air station. The hangar is the oldest building associated with the air station. By 1965, when the air station moved its operations from Dinner Key to Opa-locka, the unit had evolved into the busiest air-sea-rescue station in the world.

**Historic Context:**

Although the U.S. Coast Guard had been in existence since 1790, aviation did not become a part of its service until 1915, when the idea was conceived of using aircraft for search and rescue missions. An act of Congress in 1916 authorized the establishment of 10 Coast Guard air stations along the coasts of the United States, but no funds were appropriated.

The Coast Guard's first air station was established in 1920 at Morehead City, North Carolina, when the service took over an abandoned naval air station. Funds were not provided to support the operation, however, and the station was closed the following year.<sup>1</sup>

In 1925, the Coast Guard operated a borrowed U.S. Navy seaplane from the Naval Reserve Air Station at Squantum, Massachusetts, and later from a small base established on Ten Pound Island in Gloucester Harbor. The Gloucester station had meager facilities, a tent hangar borrowed from the Navy, and other insufficient equipment. In 1926, a station at Cape May, New Jersey, was opened when an abandoned naval air station was assigned to the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard's efforts to strengthen its fledgling aviation unit were bolstered in 1928, when a Coast Guard aviation section was created in Washington under Commander Norman B. Hall.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reisinger, The Flying Lifeboat of the Coast Guard, 85.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 86.

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Although the Coast Guard established these early air stations on properties borrowed from the U.S. Navy, no funds were expended for construction. It was not until the early 1930s that funding was made available for the construction of a new seaplane hangar, with South Florida being the preferred location.<sup>3</sup> The Coast Guard's preference for South Florida can be directly attributable to the unprecedented growth of this region of the United States. Miami is a major twentieth-century city that grew from a frontier to a metropolis in only 30 years. The Florida Land Boom of the 1920s had an unprecedented effect on Miami and brought the city into the national spotlight as investors, speculators, and hopeful new residents poured into town from all over the United States. Miami's Boom reached its peak in the fall of 1925, but a devastating hurricane in September 1926 dealt the Boom a fatal blow. Although the city weathered some difficult years following the hurricane, its recovery was swifter than the rest of the nation. One of the focal points of Miami's new development activity during the Depression was a tract of land known as Dinner Key, which is located in Coconut Grove, a neighborhood in the southern section of the city.

Dinner Key, originally a small island in Biscayne Bay, had long been associated with aviation. The island was joined to the mainland during World War I to provide a training ground for the U.S. Navy. The Navy erected barracks and hangars for an air station on the site, but abandoned the property after the hurricane of 1926. In 1930, Dinner Key was selected by the newly-formed Pan American Airways Systems as the base for its inter-American operations (see Pan American Seaplane Base and Terminal Building, National Register, 1975). The facilities at Dinner Key were the first constructed exclusively for commercial passenger seaplane service.<sup>4</sup>

The site plan developed by Pan American for its seaplane base was designed for both the aerial and land view. The plan called for the construction of a "V" shaped line of hangars to be used for machine shops, maintenance, operation and storage. A terminal building was planned for the apex of the "V," at the end of a long driveway, thus forming a shape reminiscent of an airplane.<sup>5</sup>

The Dinner Key base was the nation's busiest commercial seaplane base during the 1930s. During this period, approximately 50,000 passengers per year flowed through the Dinner Key terminal. In addition, the terminal averaged more than 30,000 visitors per month, with as many as 100,000 in the winter months. Often described as the "Air Gateway Between the Americas," the base linked the United States with Latin America by way of air transportation, opening up major trade and passenger routes.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Eaton, "Pan American Seaplane Base: Designation Report", 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 8.

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**Historic Significance:**

Because of the growing amount of air traffic out of Miami, the Coast Guard sought to establish an air station in South Florida, and in 1931 began the search for a suitable location. Commander Norman B. Hall viewed Miami as “the logical place for this first air life-saving station.”<sup>7</sup> With no funds available for the purchase of land, however, and only limited funds available for the construction of a hangar, the Coast Guard approached the City of Miami and Pan American Airways for assistance in securing an available site for a seaplane operation. Both the City of Miami and Dade County passed resolutions agreeing to cooperate with the Coast Guard in the establishment of an air station. Privately, the Coast Guard indicated that if the City were unable to donate sufficient property, the Coast Guard would likely establish its base at St. Petersburg or Tampa instead.<sup>8</sup>

Pan American Airways had subleased the northeastern section of its property at Dinner Key to the City of Miami and Dade County for the construction of either a municipal airport or park. Recognizing the benefit to the area that a Coast Guard air station could provide, the City and County, in turn, agreed to sublease this property on Dinner Key to the Coast Guard. A lease was signed in January 1932. The property was expanded to its current size in 1934 when a second parcel adjacent to the site was leased by the Coast Guard. Both leases provided that the terms of the leases would be coextensive with the term of the lease from Pan American Airways to the City and County.<sup>9</sup>

In anticipation of obtaining a suitable location in Miami for its air station, the Coast Guard headquarters in Washington had prepared the architectural plans for an airplane hangar and advertised for bids. No individual architect is noted on the plans. A low bid of \$37,675 was accepted from Fred Howland of Miami in June 1931,<sup>10</sup> and a contract was signed in January 1932.<sup>11</sup> Associate Civil Engineer Ernest Santangini, stationed with the U.S. Coast Guard Section Base Six at Fort Lauderdale, was named superintendent of the project.<sup>12</sup> The Coast Guard followed the site plan developed by Pan American Airways, with its hangars aligned in a “V,” in the positioning of its hangar. With the completion of the seaplane hangar in July 1932, the Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key was placed in commission.

The earlier air stations established at Gloucester and Cape May were decommissioned in 1935 and 1938, respectively, thus leaving Dinner Key as the oldest remaining air station in service. New air stations were commissioned in Biloxi, Mississippi, (1934); Salem, Massachusetts (1935); St. Petersburg, Florida

<sup>7</sup> Letter from Commander Norman B. Hall to Pan American Airways, Inc., September 22, 1931.

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Captain E. V. Rickenbacker to J. T. Trippe, Pan American Airways, Inc., June 5, 1931.

<sup>9</sup> Miami Air Station, Written summary of lease history, U.S. Coast Guard Correspondence Files.

<sup>10</sup> Letter from Captain B. M. Chiswell to Fred Howland, June 30, 1931.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Chief O. M. Mayam to Fred Howland, January 11, 1932.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Assistant Commandant L. C. Coveil to Fred Howland, January 22, 1932.

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(1935); Port Angeles, Washington (1935); Charleston, South Carolina (1937); San Diego, California (1937); Brooklyn, New York (1938); Elizabeth City, North Carolina (1940); and San Francisco, California (1940).<sup>13</sup> Many of these hangars were identical in design to the one at Dinner Key.

Unlike later air stations established by the Coast Guard, the one in Miami was built without barracks, and housing was provided in a leased hotel at an off-site location. By 1935, the Coast Guard proposed to construct two barracks buildings on the Dinner Key site in an area along South Bayshore Drive. Several factors, however, caused the site to be considered unsatisfactory and prompted the Coast Guard to explore alternate locations for the barracks. In the first place, the U.S. Government did not own the Dinner Key site, and a long-term lease acceptable to the government could not be obtained due to litigation. The site also was considered too small to accommodate both the existing and proposed buildings. Finally, the hurricane of 1935 prompted the Coast Guard to consider the desirability of constructing the barracks on a site higher in elevation than the Dinner Key property.<sup>14</sup> After much negotiation, the property across the street, later referred to as the barracks site, was acquired by condemnation in 1938 as a location for a barracks building and garage (see Barracks and Mess Building—U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key, National Register, 1995). The barracks building was designed to be architecturally compatible with buildings in the surrounding area.

The Coast Guard finally acquired title to the hangar site in 1942 following condemnation procedures against Pan American Airways.

The primary role of the 10 air stations in the United States, including the one at Dinner Key, was to protect life and property along the coast. Major activities included search and rescue of distressed persons at sea, patrol of the coast to prevent smuggling, and enforcement of Federal laws. During its years of operation, the Dinner Key air station, located at the terminus of the Central American, South American and African commercial air routes, evolved into the busiest air-sea-rescue station in the world.<sup>15</sup>

The station was actively involved during and after the hurricane of 1935, providing hurricane warnings in advance of the storm, rescuing survivors and conducting reconnaissance flights for Federal, State and Red Cross officials.<sup>16</sup>

The Dinner Key air station also played a major role during World War II. Prior to November 1941, the Coast Guard was a division of the Department of the Treasury. In that month, however, the Coast Guard

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<sup>13</sup> Annual Reports of the United States Coast Guard.

<sup>14</sup> Letter from Chief L. T. Chalker to Commandant, January 17, 1936.

<sup>15</sup> Press Release from Public Information Office, Seventh Coast Guard District, April 3, 1964.

<sup>16</sup> Letter from Commander C. C. Von Paulsen to Commander, Jacksonville Division, April 22, 1936.

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was placed under the command of the U.S. Navy. When the war began, all Coast Guard aircraft were unarmed and concentrated on patrol and convoy protection duties. Once armed planes were received in 1942, the activities of the air station took on a military nature. The extensive submarine warfare waged by the Germans along the Florida coast kept the planes of the air station occupied throughout 1942. The first attack by Coast Guard manned planes was on March 31, 1942, when seaplanes from the Dinner Key air station sighted a submarine off Fowey Rocks and drove it under the surface.<sup>17</sup>

As the war progressed, the primary mission of the Coast Guard air stations changed from anti-submarine warfare and convoy escort to air-sea-rescue functions. As the station at Dinner Key assumed increased responsibilities, additional buildings were required. The barracks site received numerous temporary barracks, and an addition was made to the hangar in 1942.<sup>18</sup> The receipt of a message "garbler" used in receiving secret teletype messages prompted the addition of a second story on the hangar annex in 1943. This space also provided facilities for members of the Coast Guard Women's Reserve, or Spars, who had been assigned to the station.<sup>19</sup>

Advance planning for post-war projects began as early as 1943. It was recommended that a new hangar be constructed to replace the present one, which was considered to be in poor condition and inadequate.<sup>20</sup> In 1944, it was further recommended that the station in Miami be expanded to facilitate the handling of larger flying boats.<sup>21</sup> Neither proposal was accomplished. In January 1945 a helicopter was assigned to the Dinner Key station for experimental purposes. While taking off the following month, however, the helicopter crashed, and the experiment was apparently abandoned.<sup>22</sup>

After the war, the Coast Guard was placed once again under the Department of the Treasury. The Dinner Key air station resumed its peacetime role that emphasized search and rescue, marine environmental protection and law enforcement. The station also served as a primary response center for the humanitarian Coast Guard efforts in the Cuban refugee boat lift during the 1960s.

Space limitations at Dinner Key, the hazards of increased boat traffic, and the added maintenance costs of saltwater operations forced the Coast Guard to consider leaving its Dinner Key location in 1964. Heavy pleasure boat traffic constituted a significant hazard to amphibious plane takeoffs and landings,

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<sup>17</sup> "Narrative History, Aircraft Operations," 47-48.

<sup>18</sup> Memo from Commandant, Coast Guard Headquarters to DCGO Seventh Naval District Miami, June 30, 1942.

<sup>19</sup> Letter from DCGO to Commandant, April 16, 1943.

<sup>20</sup> Memo from Chief Aviation Operations Officer F. A. Leamy to Chief Operations Officer, June 12, 1943.

<sup>21</sup> Request for Work Authorization, April 20, 1944.

<sup>22</sup> "Narrative History, Aircraft Operations," 50-51.



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especially in the evening and night hours. After several delays, the last Coast Guard flight departed Dinner Key on October 27, 1965.<sup>23</sup>

After the Coast Guard moved its aviation unit to the Opa-locka airport, its present location, the hangar site at Dinner Key was declared to be surplus and was acquired by the City of Miami in 1972. Deed restrictions on the property require that it be used for public park or recreational purposes only.<sup>24</sup> The City has used the hangar for various recreational activities, including a boxing gym and a sailing center. The hangar is currently undergoing a substantial rehabilitation for use as a water sports and recreation facility. This rehabilitation project is being funded in part with a historic preservation grant from the Florida Division of Historical Resources.

The barracks site (separately listed and not included in this nomination) was transferred to the U.S. Navy in 1966 for use as a Naval Reserve Training Center. This site has been declared surplus and is now vacant.

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<sup>23</sup> Percy, A History of U.S. Coast Guard Aviation, 100–101.

<sup>24</sup> Easement Deed from the United States of America, Book 4286, Page 420.

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**SECTION 10: GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

See Legal Description, Item 4.

**Boundary Justification:**

The property includes the entire parcel associated with the original boundaries of the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key. The property, often referred to as the hangar site, was acquired by the U.S. Coast Guard in 1932 and 1934. A parcel on the north side of South Bayshore Drive, which was acquired by the Coast Guard during a major expansion of the station 1938 and which is referred to as the barracks site, is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Barracks and Mess Building—U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key) and is therefore not included within the boundaries of this nomination.

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**INVENTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

1. U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Hangar at Dinner Key  
2600 South Bayshore Drive
2. Miami, Miami-Dade County, FL
3. Sarah E. Eaton
4. November 1999
5. City of Miami Planning Department, Miami, FL

The information above applies to all of the photographs unless noted otherwise.

Photograph 1

6. Southeast and northeast elevations of hangar and annex, looking northwest
7. Photograph 1 of 21

Photograph 2

6. Southeast elevation of hangar, looking north
7. Photograph 2 of 21

Photograph 3

6. Northeast elevation of hangar, looking west
7. Photograph 3 of 21

Photograph 4

6. Southwest elevation of hangar, looking north
7. Photograph 4 of 21

Photograph 5

6. Northwest and southwest elevations of hangar, looking southeast
7. Photograph 5 of 21

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Photograph 6

6. Southwest and southeast elevations of annex, looking north
7. Photograph 6 of 21

Photograph 7

6. Northwest and southwest elevations of annex, looking southeast
7. Photograph 7 of 21

Photograph 8

6. Interior of hangar, looking northwest
7. Photograph 8 of 21

Photograph 9

6. Interior of hangar, looking southeast
7. Photograph 9 of 21

Photograph 10

6. Interior of hangar, looking north
7. Photograph 10 of 21

Photograph 11

6. Interior of hangar, looking south
7. Photograph 11 of 21

Photograph 12

6. Interior of hangar storeroom addition (1938), looking north
7. Photograph 12 of 21

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Photograph 13

6. Interior of hangar storeroom addition (1938), looking northwest
7. Photograph 13 of 21

Photograph 14

6. Interior of annex, typical office
7. Photograph 14 of 21

Photograph 15

6. Interior of annex stair hall, looking northwest
7. Photograph 15 of 21

Photograph 16

6. Interior of annex, second floor
7. Photograph 16 of 21

Photograph 17

3. Ellen Uguccione
4. September 2002
6. Mechanical room, looking north
7. Photograph 17 of 21

Photograph 18

3. Ellen Uguccione
4. September 2002
6. Temporary trailers, looking west
7. Photograph 18 of 21

Photograph 19

3. Ellen Uguccione
4. September 2002

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6. Metal shed, looking northeast
7. Photograph 19 of 21

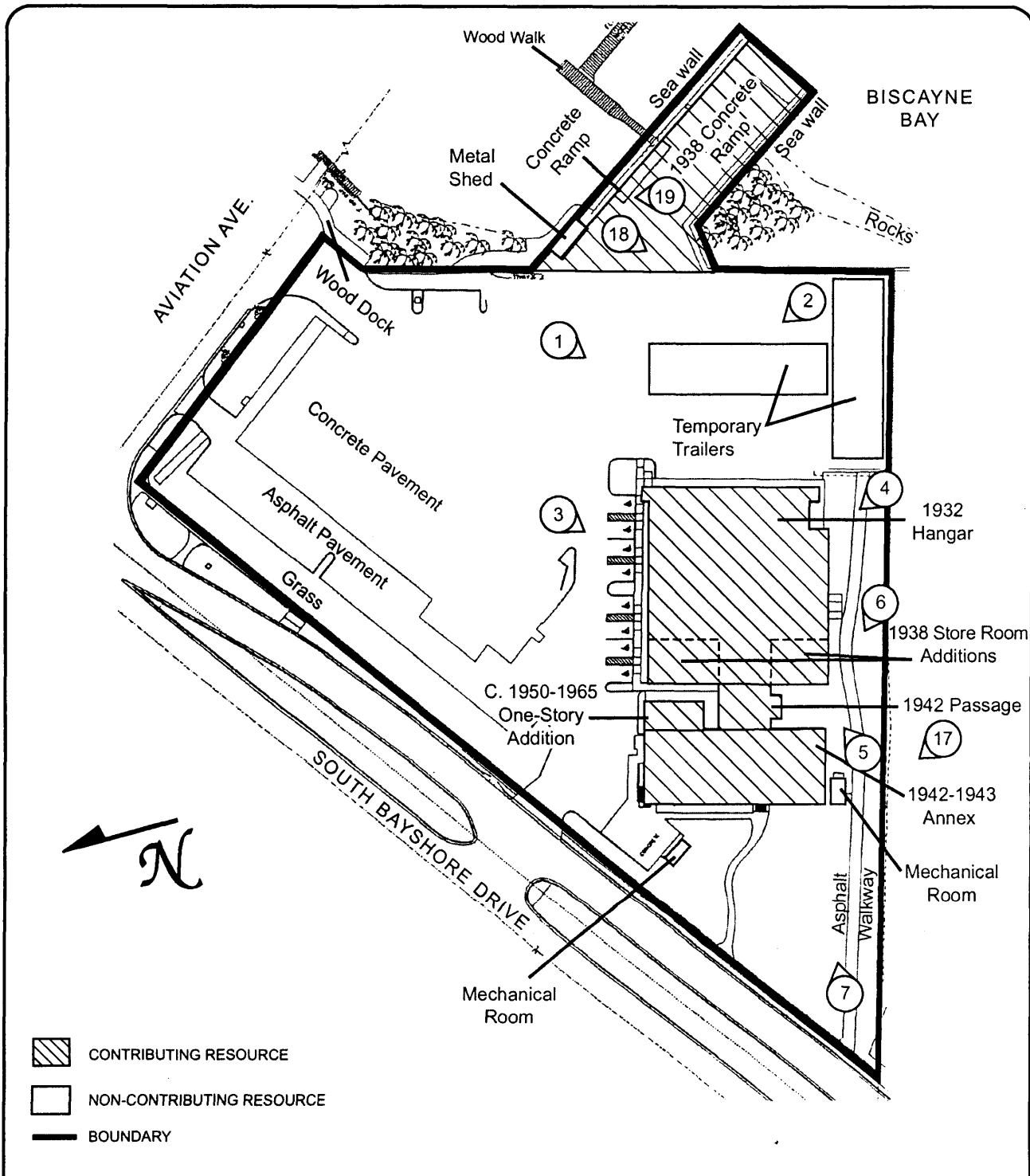
Photograph 20

1. U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key—Hangar Site  
2600 South Bayshore Drive
2. Miami, Miami-Dade County, FL
3. U.S. Coast Guard
4. 1937
5. U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Office of the Historian, Washington, D.C.
6. Aerial view looking northwest
7. Photograph 20 of 21

Photograph 21

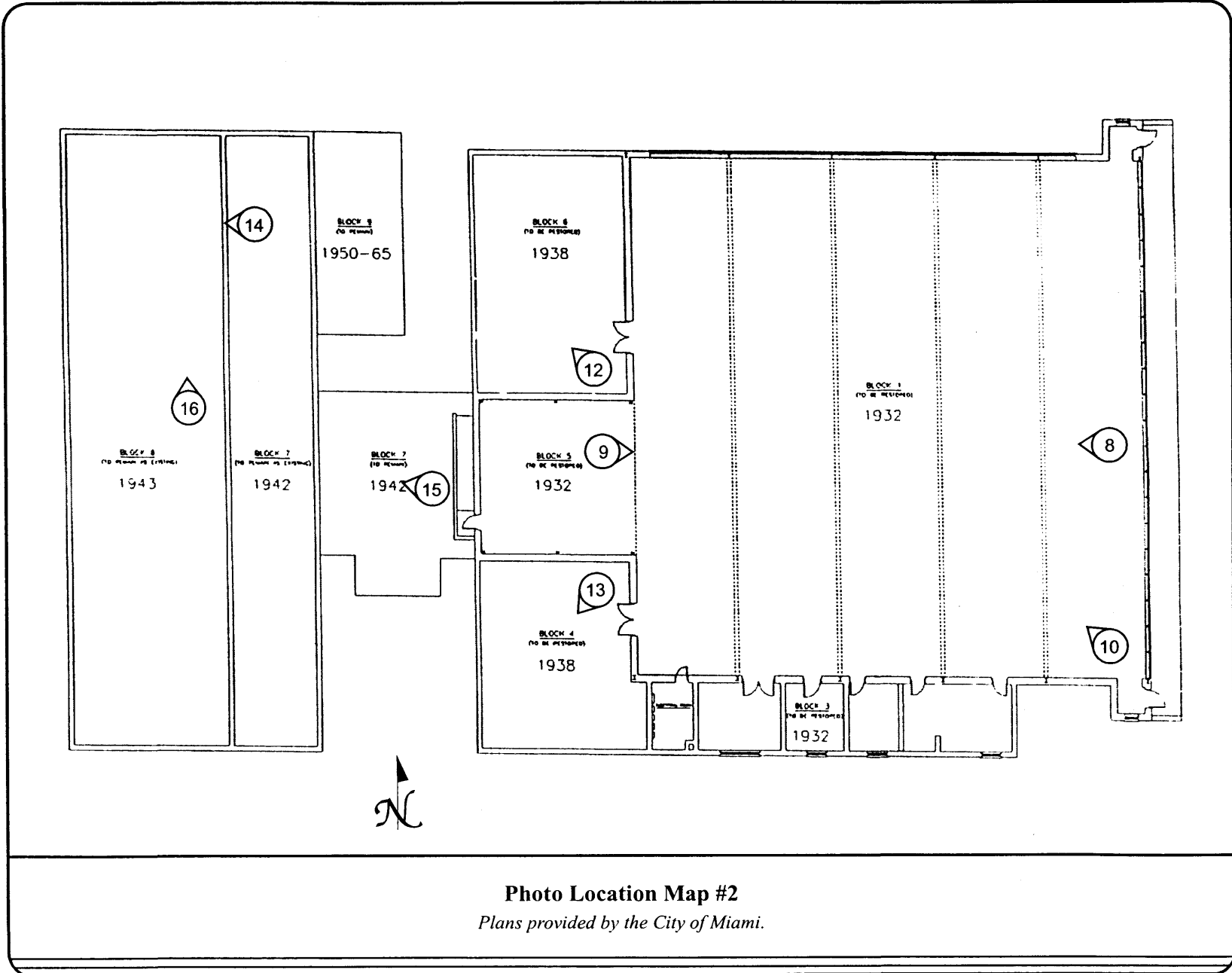
1. U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key—Hangar Site  
2600 South Bayshore Drive
2. Miami, Miami-Dade County, FL
3. U.S. Coast Guard
4. c. 1950
5. U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Office of the Historian, Washington, D.C.
6. Aerial view looking northwest
7. Photograph 21 of 21





**Photo Location Map #1**

*Plans provided by the City of Miami.*



**Photo Location Map #2**  
*Plans provided by the City of Miami.*

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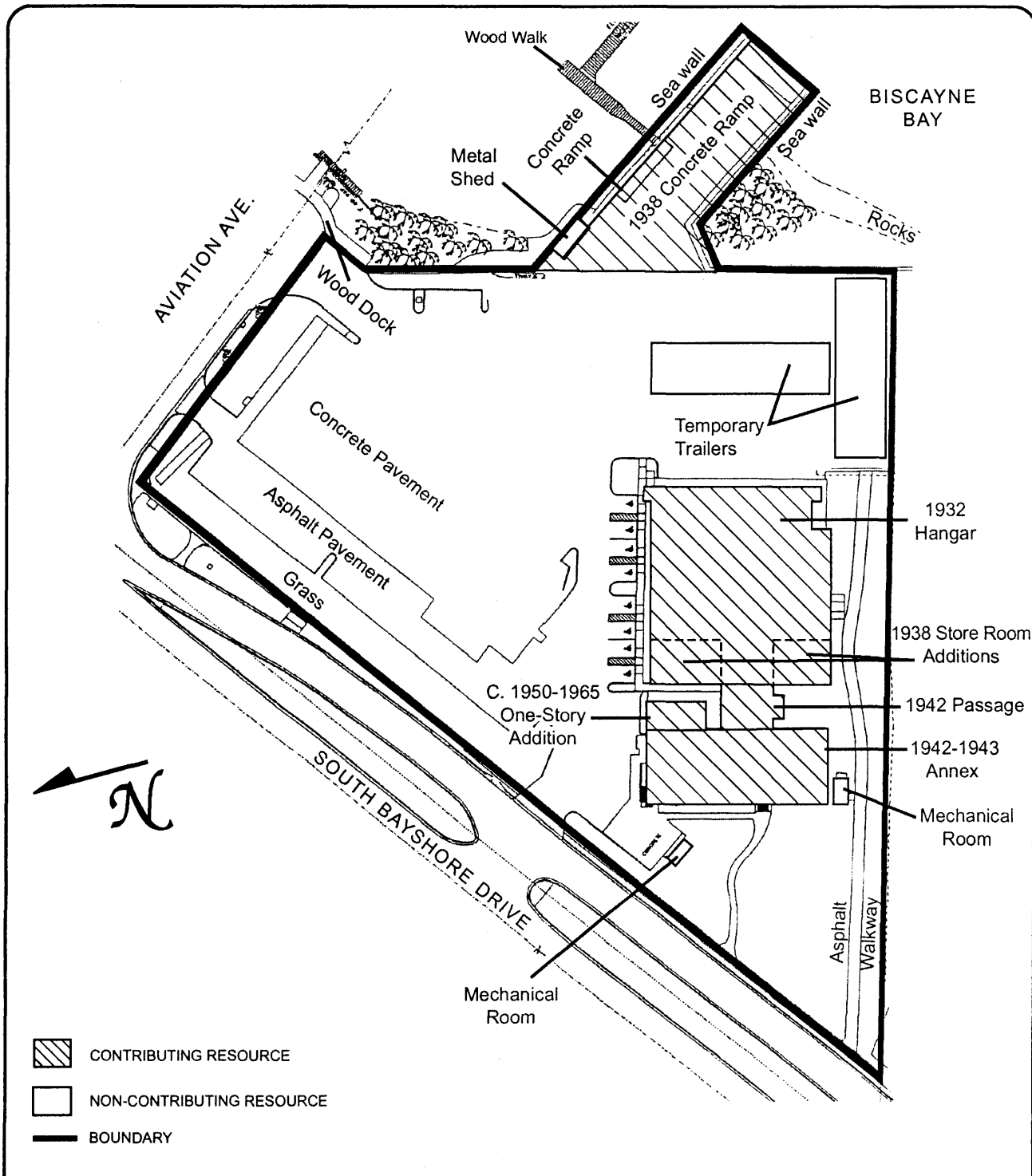
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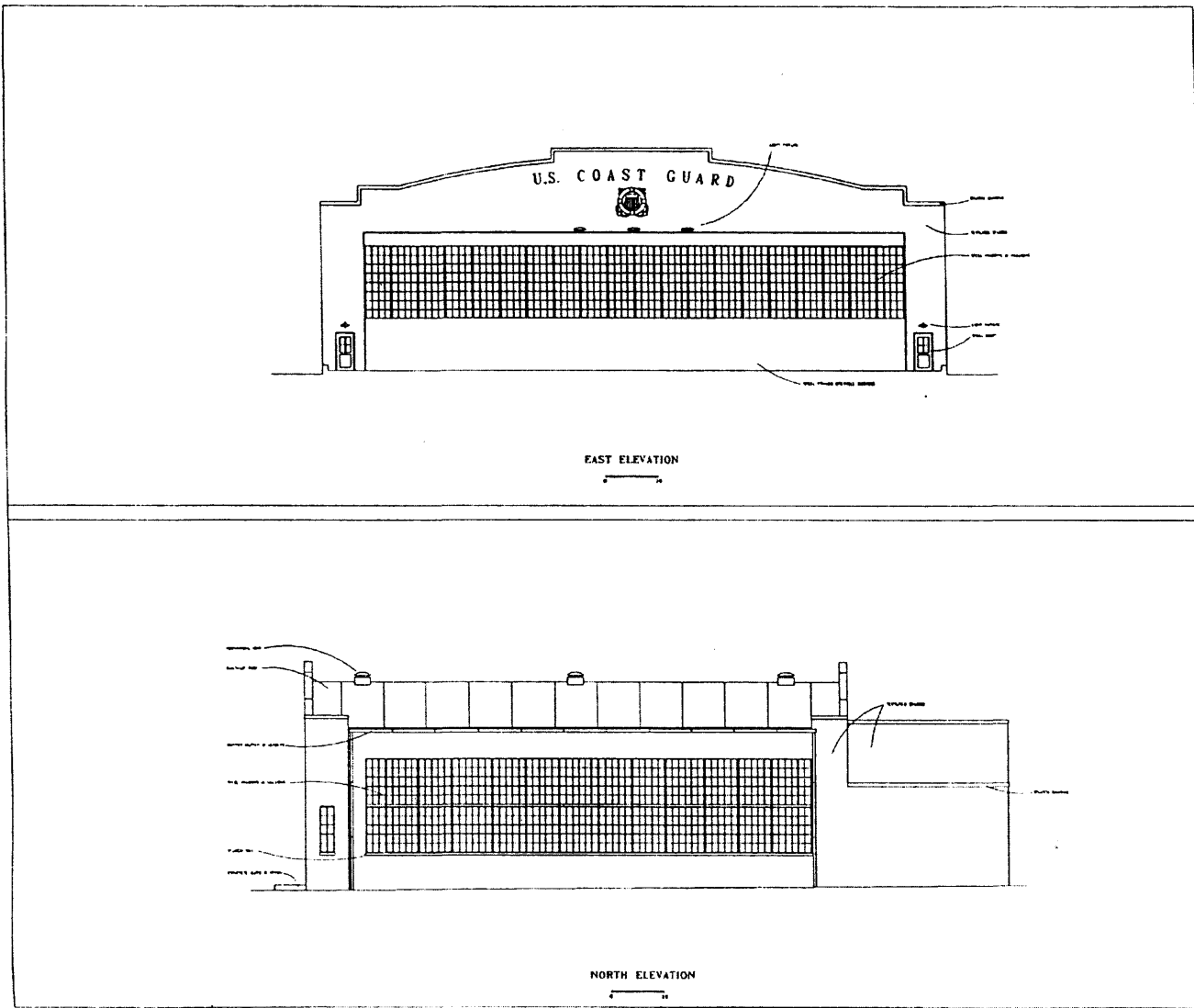
**INVENTORY OF FIGURES**

- Figure 1: Site Plan of the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key – Hangar Site
- Figure 2: East and North Elevations of the Hangar Building
- Figure 3: West and South Elevations of the Hangar Building
- Figure 4: Transverse and Longitudinal Sections of the Hangar Building
- Figure 5: Ground Floor Plan of the Hangar Building and Annex
- Figure 6: Mezzanine Floor Plan of the Hangar Building and Annex
- Figure 7: Floor Plan of the Hangar Building and Annex showing dates of construction



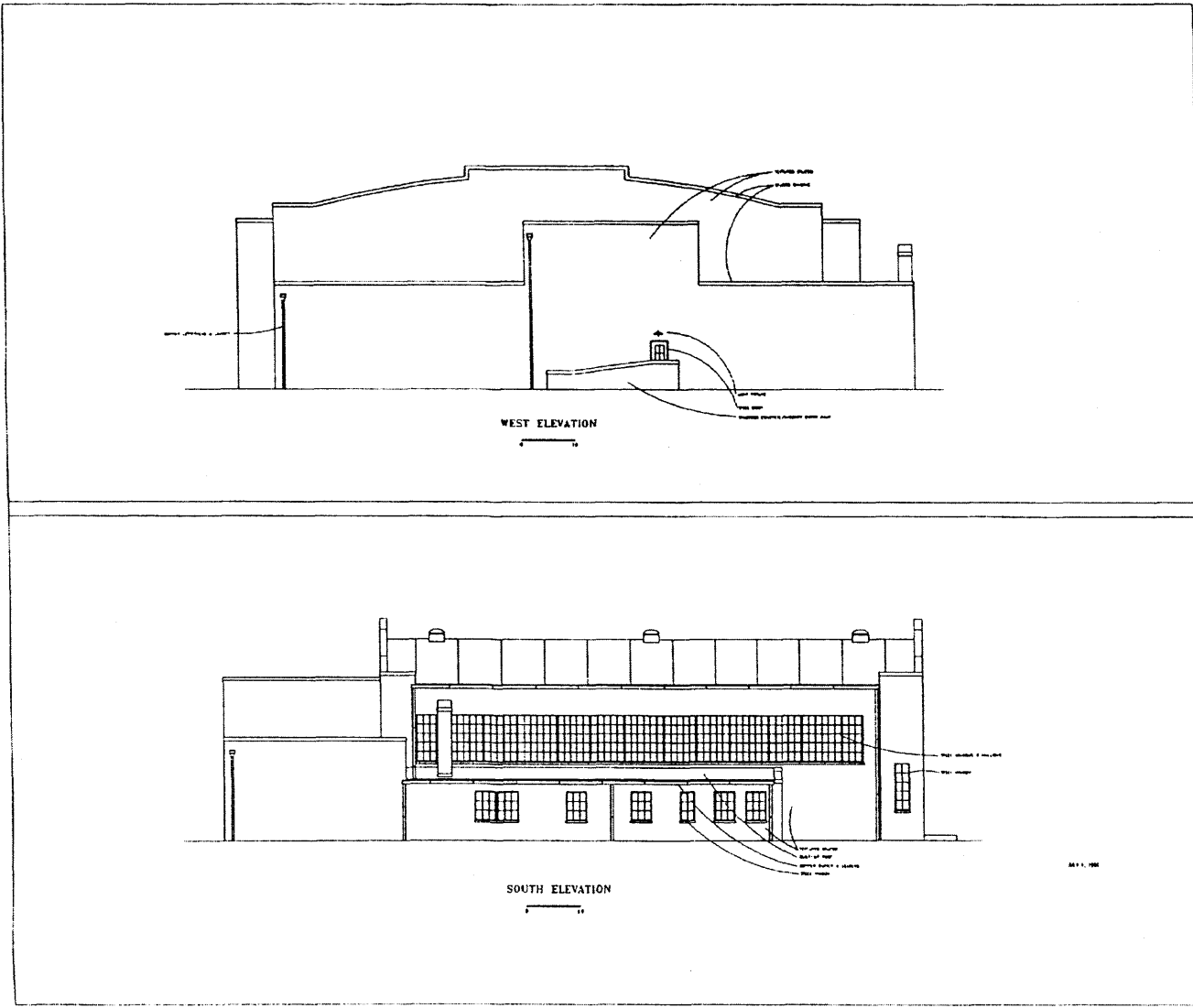
**Figure 1: Site Plan of the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key - Hangar Site**

*Plans provided by the City of Miami.*

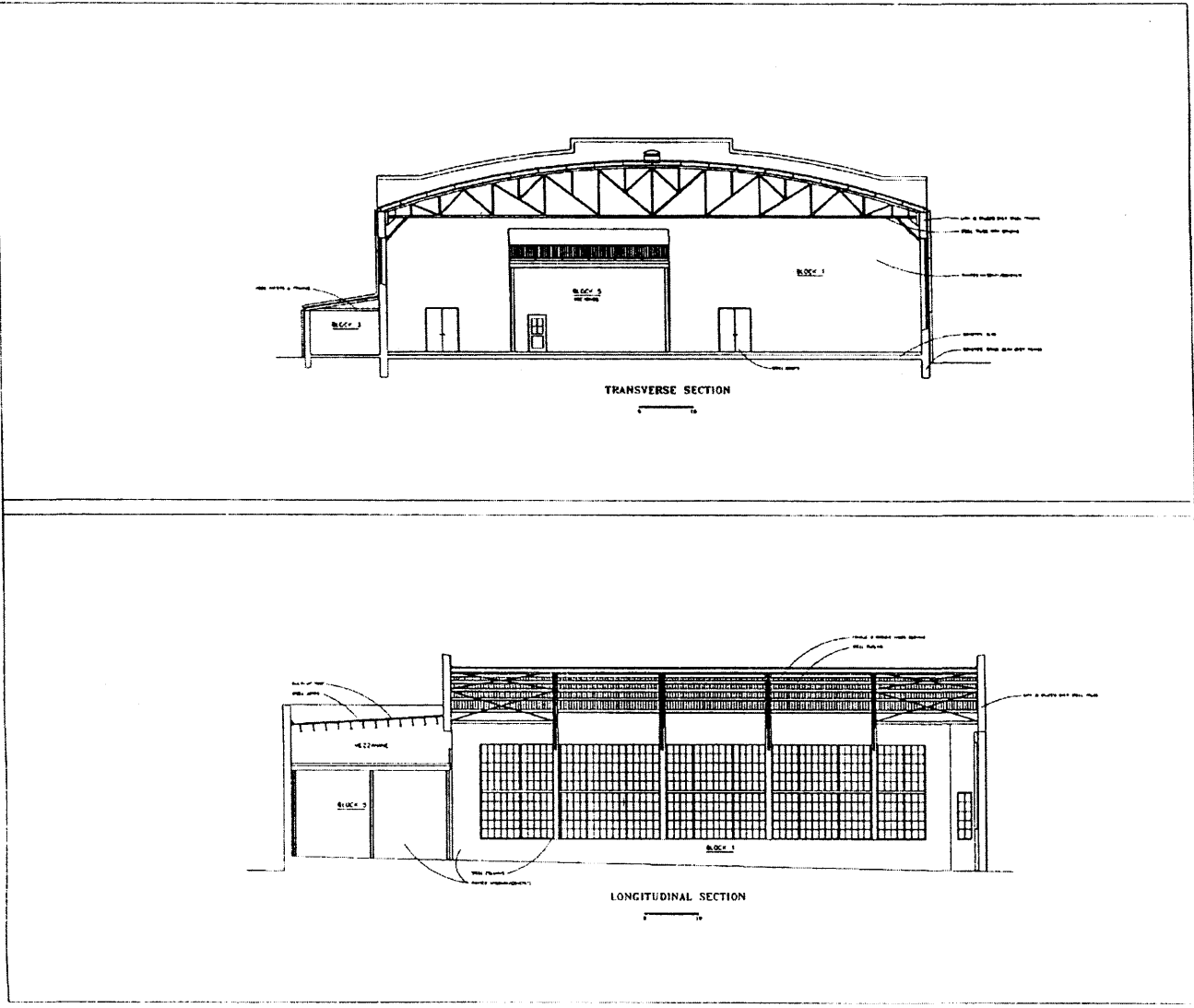


**Figure 2: East and North Elevations of the Hangar Building**

*Plans provided by the City of Miami.*

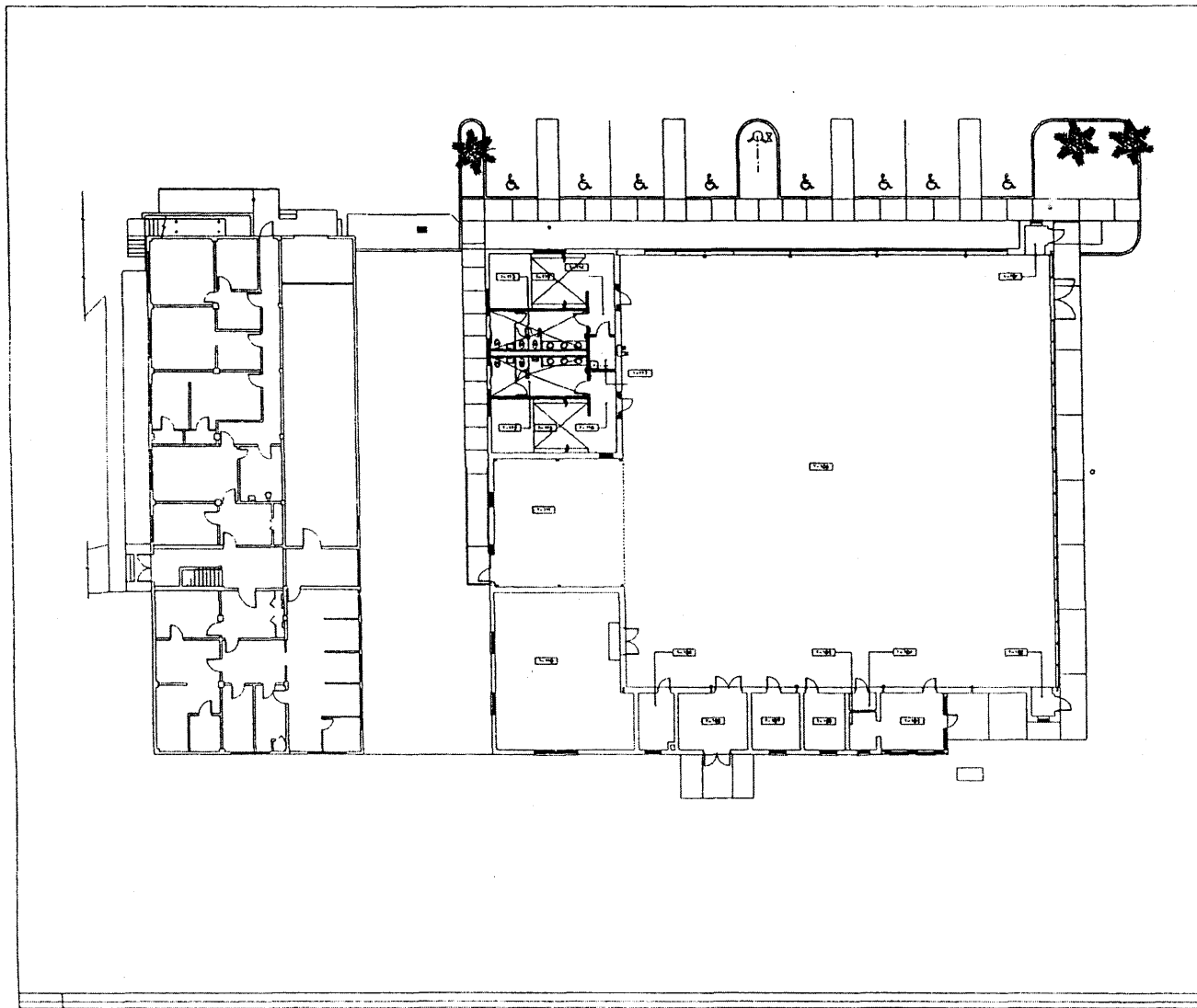


**Figure 3: West and South Elevations of the Hangar Building**  
*Plans provided by the City of Miami.*



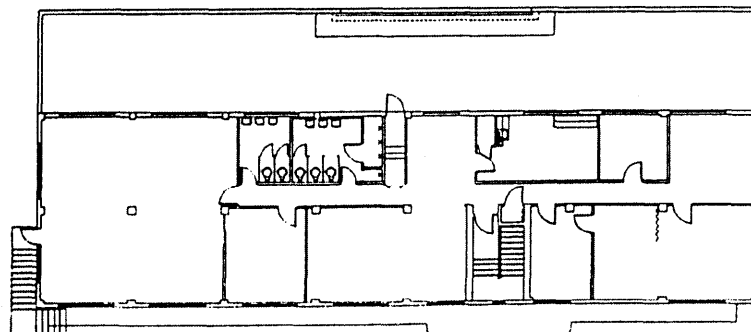
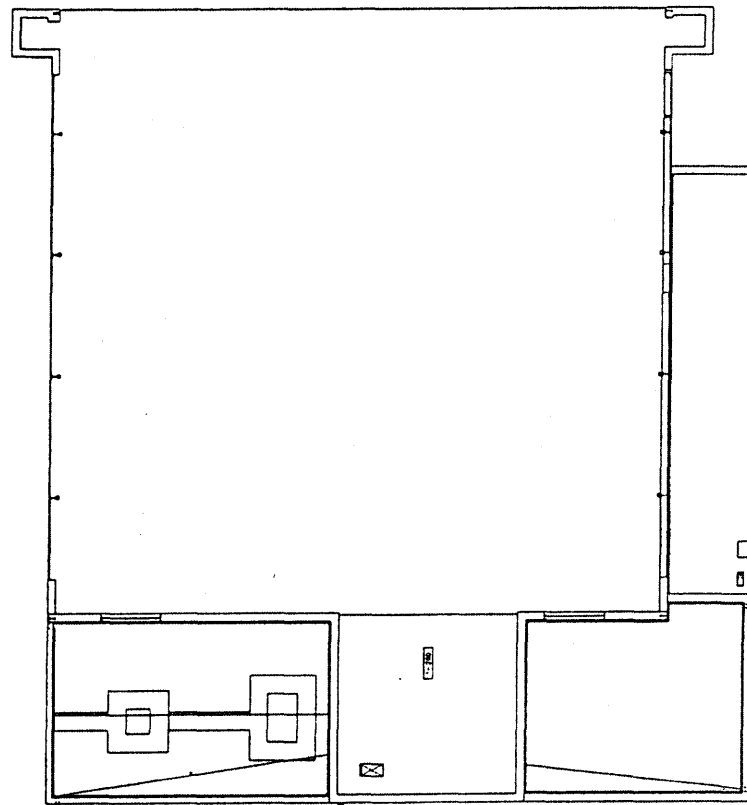
**Figure 4: Transverse and Longitudinal Sections of the Hangar Building**

*Plans provided by the City of Miami.*

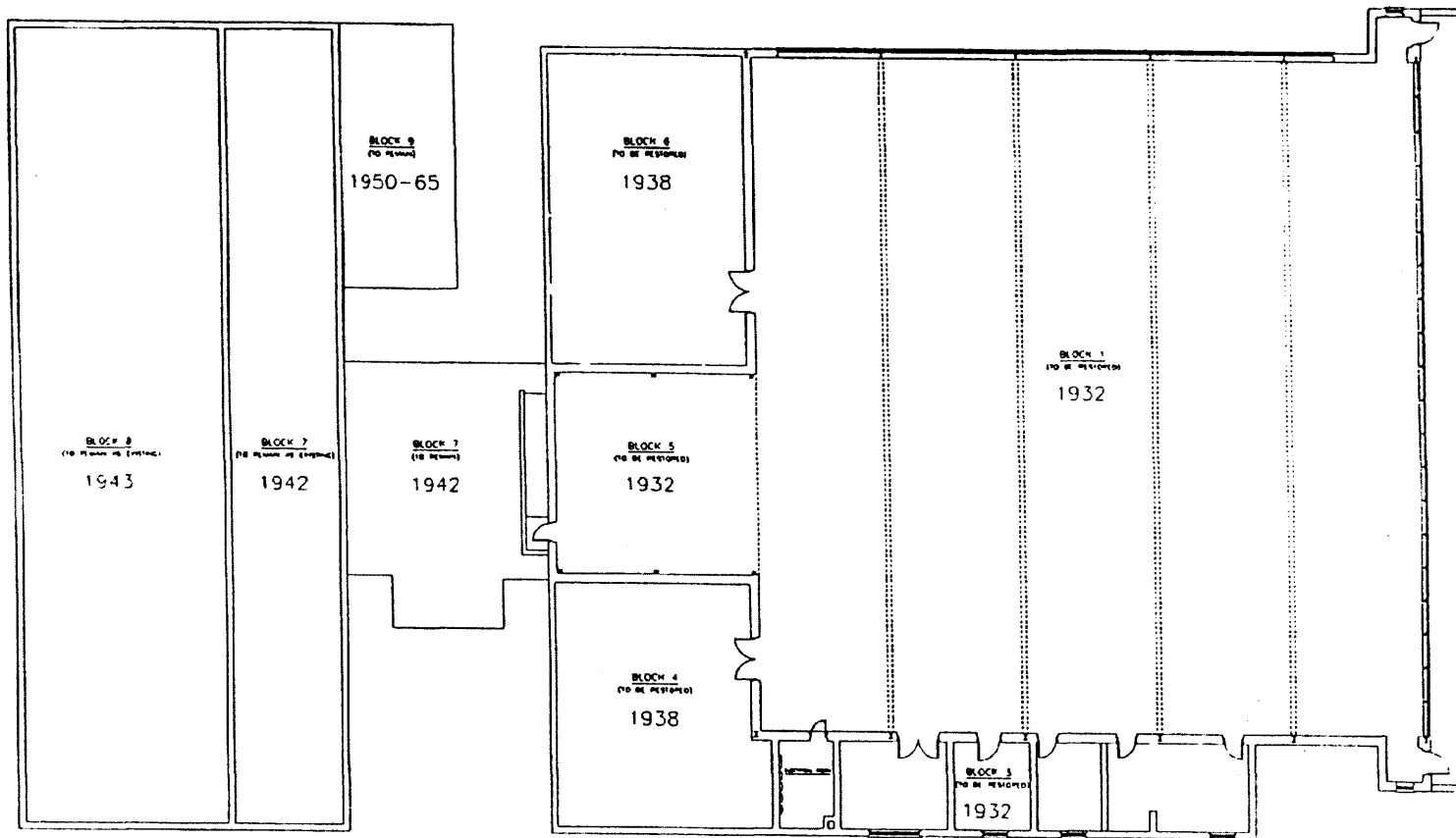


**Figure 5: Ground Floor Plan of the Hangar Building and Annex**  
*Plans provided by the City of Miami.*





**Figure 6: Mezzanine Floor Plan of the Hangar Building and Annex**  
*Plans provided by the City of Miami.*



**Figure 7: Floor Plan of the Hangar Building and Annex showing dates of construction**

*Plans provided by the City of Miami.*