

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Florida
COUNTY: Dade
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE FEB 20 1975

1. NAME

COMMON: Pan American Seaplane Base and Terminal Building
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 3500 Pan American Drive			
CITY OR TOWN: Coconut Grove		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:	
STATE Florida	CODE 12	COUNTY: Dade	CODE 025

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: City of Miami		
STREET AND NUMBER: 3500 Pan American Drive		
CITY OR TOWN: Coconut Grove	STATE: Florida	CODE 12

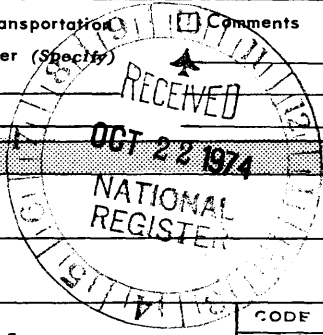
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Dade County Courthouse		
STREET AND NUMBER: 73 West Flagler Street		
CITY OR TOWN: Miami	STATE: Florida	CODE 12

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: State of Florida Historic Sites Survey		
DATE OF SURVEY: 1972 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local		
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Division of Archives, History and Records Management		
STREET AND NUMBER: Dept. of State, The Capitol		
CITY OR TOWN: Tallahassee	STATE: Florida	CODE 12

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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ENTRY NUMBER: FEB 20 1975
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Pan American Terminal building and hangars at Dinner Key were the major structures comprising the Pan American Clipper Ship base in the 1930's. The entire complex, at one time consisting of 43 acres, included several huge hangars, maintenance buildings, and the passenger terminal which has served as the Miami City Hall since 1954.

Prior to construction of the terminal in 1931, two immense steel hangars were erected. Each structure was 140 ft. square, with entrances 28 ft. wide and a clearance space of 128 ft. In 1937 a third hangar measuring 210 ft. x 180 ft., and containing 54,000 square feet of space was built. In 1938, the final group of hangars was completed. The physical arrangement of terminal building and hangars followed a "V" shape, with the terminal at the center point of the "V." The hangar units were used for maintenance and machine shops, operation and storage. The two largest units, northwest of the terminal building, were joined together and converted to an exposition building when the City acquired the property in 1946. These hangars, containing 76,000 square feet of space, presently serve as a convention hall and auditorium.

The terminal building is a two-story rectangular shaped building with white stucco exterior walls and a flat roof. Dimensions are 138 ft. x 69 ft. Construction material is structural steel and masonry with stuccoed walls and ~~concrete~~ foundations supported by pilings. The center portion of the terminal is two stories high, with one-story extensions on each side. Extending around the building just below the cornice is a frieze of winged globes and rising suns, connected at the corners by sculptured eagles. The words "Miami City Hall" appear on the main facade, above the main entry. The entrance is located in the center of the main facade and is covered by a wide, curving overhang. The doors are modern glass and aluminum, replacing the originals. They open into a two-story lobby with enclosed balcony space at the second level. This area is now utilized for offices, but formerly served as a restaurant and cocktail lounge overlooking Biscayne Bay. Take offs and landings could be observed from an outer promenade on the second floor. At the first floor level were waiting rooms, an international mail office, customs, public health offices, immigration, and ticket counters. A giant, three and one-half ton revolving world globe in the lobby once attracted thousands of visitors to the building. The globe has since been relocated to the Museum of Science in Miami, Florida.

Four covered steel gangways led to the docking floats. Below the main level, on the ground floor, was a series of passageways which separated incoming from outgoing passengers.

Approach to the terminal building is via a wide landscaped boulevard ending in a traffic circle directly in front.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1930-1938

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Pan American Seaplane base in Coconut Grove, Florida is a landmark site in the history of the aviation industry. Dinner Key was a small island in Biscayne Bay, and was joined to the mainland during World War I to provide a training field for the U.S. Navy. After the War, the base was used by non-scheduled commercial fliers, until the naval facility was destroyed by the 1926 hurricane. In 1930, a newly-formed airline company, known as Pan American Airways, and symbolized by eagles and globes, acquired the New York-Rio-Buenos Aires Airline. This company flew twin-engine Commodore flying boats between Miami and Buenos Aires.

The former naval air base at Dinner Key was selected by PAA as the base for its inter-American operations with the inaugural flight from Dinner Key to Panama taking place on December 1, 1930. Charles Lindbergh, who was a technical advisor to PAA, surveyed some of the early air routes. Because of inadequate landing facilities along the South American route, flying clipper ships were utilized by Pan American Airways, forming a vital link between North and South America.

Pan American opened the first hangar in 1931; a houseboat obtained in Havana, Cuba, and towed by tugs to Miami served as the first terminal. This houseboat, which was anchored to pilings with barges at each end, was the first passenger "terminal" at the Dinner Key seaplane base.

In 1931, expansion of the facilities at Dinner Key was undertaken. Additional land was filled in, and a deeper channel, one mile long and 700 feet wide was dredged. The dredging of the channel was a significant event, marking the first time an appropriation was approved by the Congressional Rivers and Harbors Committee "expressly for dredging to create a navigable channel for marine aircraft." The present terminal building and several additional hangars were also constructed during this period of expansion. By 1938, all major structures called for in the plans were completed and operative.

(con't.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE ATTACHED SHEET

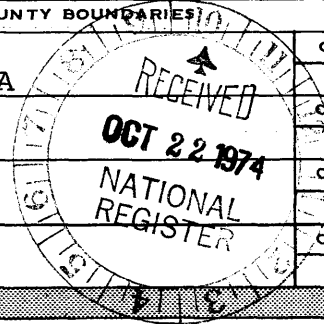
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	N25° 43' 39"	W80° 14' 18"				
NE	25° 43' 51"	80° 14' 06"				
SE	25° 43' 30"	80° 13' 56"				
SW	25° 43' 41"	80° 14' 09"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: approx. ten acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A		N/A	
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Mary K. Evans, Historic Sites Specialist

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives, History & Records Mgmt. DATE: May 27, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER: Dept. of State; The Capitol

CITY OR TOWN: Tallahassee STATE: Florida CODE: 12

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Robert Williams
 Title: State Historic Preservation Officer
 Date: October 14, 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

AK Worleson
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
 Date: 7/20/75

ATTEST:
W. M. ...
 Keeper of The National Register
 Date: 2.18.75

HM 17 NE 576740 2845990 SE 547060 2845620 SW 576670 2845300 NW 576390 2845580
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

Pan American Seaplane Terminal and Base
(Resubmission)

7. Description

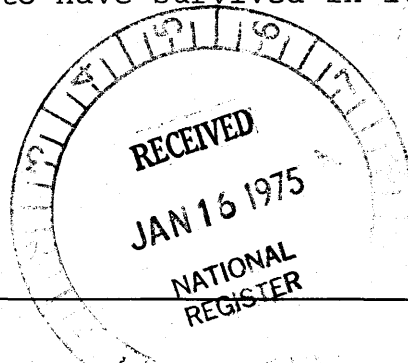
The docking floats have been replaced by permanent marina docks for the multitude of boats moored in Biscayne Bay and surrounding the terminal building on three sides. Two of the original covered gangways still remain on the east side of the structure. A paved walkway now encircles the terminal building. (See attached historic photographs of the original docking floats and covered gangways). (Additional historic photographs depicting the area and specific structures being nominated are also enclosed).

8. Significance

The nominated property possesses a strong degree of significance at all three levels--local, state, and national. The advent of commercial aviation, and the many aviation-related industries which emerged, were major factors in the revitalization of the post-depression era and had a tremendous impact on the economy of Dade County and the State of Florida. Location of the Pan American Base at Dinner Key is important from a national standpoint because it linked the U.S. with South American countries in terms of trade and passenger routes via air transportation.

There are, in addition, two important "firsts" associated with the nominated property and which justify its historic significance: (1) establishment of the seaplane base marks the first time in aviation history that an airline was granted eminent domain (i.e., Florida granted Pan American eminent domain to reserve its rights to the land at Dinner Key); and (2) it was the first time the Congressional Rivers and Harbors Committee approved an appropriation for dredging of a navigable channel for marine aircraft.

Finally, the seaplane base itself is unique within the State of Florida, and is possibly the only existing seaplane facility to have survived in its nearly original condition.



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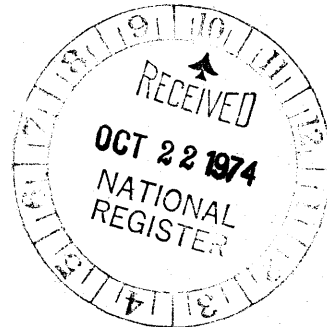
(Number all entries)

8. Significance (continued)

During World War II, the Key again served as a base for the U. S. Navy, as well as continuing to serve the needs of international air travelers.

With the appearance of landing fields in Latin America, came a decrease in the need for seaplanes. PAA's final flight to Dinner Key took place August 9, 1945. In 1946, the City of Miami purchased 39 acres of the site. In 1954, the terminal building was adapted for use as the Miami City Hall. It continues in use today as the City Hall facility.

The seaplane base and terminal building were, for several years, one of Miami's most popular attractions, as well as the world's busiest commercial seaplane base. The hangars serve a variety of purposes; among them, the Dinner Key Auditorium and Convention Hall; a sports arena; and numerous marine facilities.



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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries) 9. Major Bibliographical References

Caldwell, Thomas P. "The History of Air Transportation in Florida," Tequesta, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1941.

Dade County Courthouse, Miami, Florida. Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Dade County Records. (Subgroup: deeds).

Douglas, Marjory Stoneman. The Grove Road, Vol. 1, No. 25, December 22, 1933.

Florida. A Guide to the Southernmost State. Federal Writers Project, American Guide Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 1939.

Florida Collection. Documents, photographs, news clippings: "Aviation Industry in Florida." Miami Public Library, Miami, Florida.

Historical Museum of Southern Florida and the Caribbean. Special collection relating to the history of Florida aviation--includes scrapbooks, photographs, documents, news articles and miscellaneous materials. Miami, Florida.

Muir, Helen. Miami, U.S.A. Coconut Grove, Florida: Hurricane House Publishers, Inc., 1953.

City of Miami Planning Department, City Hall, Dinner Key, Florida.

