

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91001442 Date Listed: 9/24/91

Felts Field Historic District
Property Name

Spokane WA
County State

N/A
Multiple Name

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.

fr Anthony J. Lee
Signature of the Keeper

9/30/91
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Description: The Materials are amended to read as follows:
walls: wood; weatherboard, metal, brick
roof: composition, metal
other: (leave blank)

This information was confirmed with Leonard Garfield of the Washington State Historic Preservation Office.

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

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See Instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the Instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Felts Field
other names/site number Felts Field Historic District (Preferred)

2. Location

street & number Rutter Ave. roughly bounded by Fancher Rd./Dollar Rd. not for publication
city, town Spokane vicinity
state Washington code WA county Spokane code 063 zip code 99212-1499

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>2</u>	— sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>8</u>	— structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		— objects
			<u>4</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Jacob E. [Signature] 8/13/91
Signature of certifying official Date
Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Antoinette [Signature] 9/24/91
 See continuation sheet. _____
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. _____
 determined not eligible for the National Register. _____
 removed from the National Register. _____
 other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: air-relatedDefense: air-facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: air-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Art DecoOther: vernacular hangars

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concretewalls wood: weatherboardmetalroof brickother metalroof: composition

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Felts Field Historic District consists of eight contributing structures related to early aviation in Spokane and the Inland Northwest. Three historic aircraft hangars, a passenger terminal, a National Guard headquarters, a small storage building, a clock tower, and a free standing metal and neon sign comprise the significant historic elements of the district. Together with the adjacent field, the buildings form a largely intact property which vividly illustrates the formative years of commercial and military aviation from the late 1920's through 1941.

The noncontributing structures, clustered in the center of the district, include two historic but altered hangars, a nonhistoric hangar, and a nonhistoric control tower. Because most of the noncontributing elements share the scale and many of the structural characteristics of the contributing buildings, the integrity of the district is impacted minimally. The airfield's setting, surrounded by expansive open space, remains almost unchanged since the early years; the runways were first paved between 1939 and 1941. In recent years nonhistoric metal sheds and hangars have been erected outside the district boundaries but they do not detract from the cohesion of the historic complex.

The buildings in the district are built on a linear plan along Rutter Avenue, a street that runs in an east-west direction parallel to the landing strip and which serves as the southern boundary of the district. The district is roughly bounded on the east by Dollar Road and on the west by Fancher Road. Contributing buildings within these boundaries are those constructed during the period of significance (c. 1927-1941) which retain integrity of form, fabric, function, and general style. Noncontributing buildings are those built outside the period of significance or historic structures that have lost significant amounts of fabric or physical character.

The east end of the district is anchored by the historic Northwest Airlines Company hangar, a large wood frame building constructed in the mid-1930s. The hangar measures 100 feet by 114 feet, rests on a poured concrete floor, and is sheltered by a bowstring truss roof that spans a vast open interior. South of the arched hangar is a connected two story flat roof office section.

The west facade of the hangar is framed by stylized Art Deco pilasters, with vertical striation meant to suggest fluting, executed in wood and ornamented with large round medallions near the frieze (once embellished with the Northwest logo). The pilasters flank a ten-panel sliding wood door, which moves along tracks embedded in the concrete floor and fits into side pockets, providing a 100 foot wide opening for aircraft. Each door panel is lighted by a eighteen-pane steel sash window. A pedestrian door is located in a southern sliding panel. The north side wall and east rear wall of the hangar are lighted by 32-pane steel sash windows. Against the south wall of the hangar is the two story frame office annex.

 See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation
Military

Period of Significance

c. 1927-1941

Significant Dates

1927, 1932, 1934

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wells and Bertelsen, Architects
(see text)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Felts Field Historic District is significantly associated with the growth of aviation in the Inland Northwest, serving as the region's first and, for two decades, principal commercial and military airport. The contributing structures, including historic civilian and military hangars, passenger terminal, National Guard headquarters, and commemorative clock tower, closely reflect the development of aviation in Spokane from the mid-1920s to 1941. Although the airlines and National Guard unit relocated by the late 1940s, the buildings remain well preserved and still reflect the Moderne idiom and functional characteristics of the historic period.

Historical Background: Felts Field is one of the oldest officially designated airports in the nation, formally recognized by the United States Department of Commerce in 1926. But the field traces its roots to the earliest history of aviation in Spokane.

That history began on October 2, 1911, when pilot Cromwell Dixon, Jr., of Ohio-- who had just set a record as the first person to fly across the Continental Divide--took flight at Spokane's Interstate Fair. Minutes after takeoff, his plane crashed and Cromwell (advertised as the youngest licensed pilot in the world) died in the wreck.

The following year, R.C. McClellan, a pilot from Ronan, Montana, taught four students to fly on a level field near what is now the south parking lot of Joe Albi Stadium. In 1913, McClellan moved his operation to a field near Parkwater in the Spokane Valley on land acquired by the city to protect its underground water supply. The field would become Felts Field.

In the wake of World War I, former army pilots and surplus planes led to a national surge in aviation activities. In Spokane, the city dedicated the Parkwater site as a municipal field (known for a while as Earl Hoisington Field). In February 1919, the Northwest Aircraft Company leased 1,000 acres from the city at the field. The company, attempting to develop passenger service, used the field as a training ground and a site for hangars. Before the end of the year, the firm was flying passengers to Lewiston, Tacoma, and Seattle.

Other firms soon located at the municipal field. The next year, the Spokane Aviation Company, founded by former Army Air Service pilot W.T. Barnard (with two other pilots and a mechanic) established passenger service at the field. By March, 1920, the Spokane Chronicle reported that the firm was hauling

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Jim McGoldrick, One Man's Opinion of the Spokane Aviation Story (Fairfield, WA: Ye Gallion Press, 1982)

Spokane Chronicle articles:

- "Praise, Dedicated Spokane Airport," Sept. 23, 1927
- "Review Plans on Airport Job," July 13, 1939
- "St. Paul Planes Start June 10," August 31, 1930
- "Flying Service Ready to Coast," April 24, 1930
- "Northwest Airline Starts Spokane-Portland Service,"

Spokane Spokesman-Review articles:

- "Link East with Spokane by Air," Feb. 20, 1930
- "4225 Patronize Manner Air Line," Oct. 26, 1930
- "City Air Service is 20 years old," Sept. 23, 1949
- "New Administration Building Serves Aviation," June 12, 1932

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) 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
- Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 20 acres

UTM References

A	<u>11</u>	<u>476270</u>	<u>5280800</u>	B	<u>11</u>	<u>476280</u>	<u>5280680</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>11</u>	<u>475600</u>	<u>5280440</u>	D	<u>11</u>	<u>475560</u>	<u>5280560</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The district is a rectangular property described thusly: Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of Rutter Avenue and Fancher Way, proceed west approximately 200 feet along the north edge of Rutter; then proceed northerly to the northern edge of the perimeter taxiway; then proceed east along the taxiway approximately 2,250 feet; then proceed southerly to the northeast corner of the intersection of Rutter Avenue and Dollar Road; then proceed west along the north edge of Rutter Avenue to point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the nucleus of historic structures and the adjacent taxiway associated with Felts Field between 1927 and 1941.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title	<u>Susan Beemer; assisted by Craig Holstine, Frederic Long; edited by L. Garfield</u>		
organization	<u>Eastern Washington University</u>	date	<u>November 29, 1990</u>
street & number	<u>East 513 9th Avenue</u>	telephone	<u>(509) 456-8873</u>
city or town	<u>Spokane</u>	state	<u>WA</u> zip code <u>99202</u>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 7 Page 2

The interior of the hangar features a large undivided space with 18 foot ceiling heights. The ceiling is covered with Celetex, a cane fiber material used to soundproof and insulate buildings. Although Celetex is highly flammable (and no longer available) it remains intact in the hangar. The southern 14 feet of the building (not under the bowstring truss) is a two story frame office annex. Although the office space has been remodelled on the interior, some original wood siding and door and window trim remains on the interior wall separating the hangar from the office. There is an exterior door leading from the offices in the south wall.

A nonhistoric control tower, built in 1968, was constructed between the Northwest hangar and the historic Terminal Building located 400 feet to the west. Built in 1932 and reflecting the streamlined classicism of the Art Deco period, the terminal is a flat roof, two story structure constructed of poured concrete and built on a rectangular plan that measures 42 feet by 63 feet. Additions to the building during the early 1940s include a two story concrete baggage and storage section located on the north elevation (projecting 12 feet from the north facade and measuring 40 feet along the first floor and 18 feet on the second floor); a one story concrete addition (35 feet by 38 feet) along the west wall; and a 12 foot by 12 foot wood frame rooftop observation tower which rises eight feet above the roof. The additions are executed in a compatible modernistic style, and contribute to the character of the building.

Because the original additions are located mostly on the field elevation, the south facade facing Rutter Avenue retains good integrity. The facade is articulated by colossal Art Deco pilasters with stylized vertical striation to represent fluting. The pilasters divide the facade into five bays. The side bays are lighted by tripartite metal sash windows with six lights in each panel, while the center bay features aluminum frame glazed entry doors (which replaced the original wood frame double doors). A bas-relief molding of Pegasus ornaments the spandrel above the central entry while caduceus moldings ornament the spandrel panels between the pilasters. Large metal letters spelling "Spokane Airport" are placed on the frieze and flanked by decorative cartouche moldings. Each cartouche is a square with rounded corners, ornamented with an hour glass resting on clouds beneath a six-pointed star.

The ornament on the other elevations is similar. The well preserved east side elevation features three bays divided by two Art Deco pilasters, with caduceus moldings in the spandrels. The north elevation facing the field retains some of the decorative pilasters as well as the nameplate, cartouches and caduceus ornament, although the two story baggage addition obscures some of the original elevation. The ornament on the lower level of the west side elevation also has been obscured by the one story addition, although the upper level cartouches are intact.

The interior of the terminal is dominated by a large open lobby with a high ceiling. Although remodelled in 1982 with rough hewn cedar siding applied to the lower half of the walls, the lobby retains its original plan, the original plaster upper walls, and some original millwork trim. The rooms to either side of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 7 Page 3

lobby included office spaces and, on the north wall, the baggage room (now used for storage). Cast iron steam radiators remain in place, but the lighting fixtures have been replaced with fluorescent tubes. The second floor offices feature an acoustical tile ceiling, some original wood door surrounds, and most of the original plaster walls. A stairway leads to the rooftop control tower, no longer in use. The wooden tower is surrounded by windows on the north, east, and west sides. Outside the control tower, and running along most of the roofline of the main building, is a steel pipe railing, forming an observation deck (no longer in use). The current observation deck is located on top of the one story addition on the west side.

Eighty feet to the west of the terminal building is a neon and metal sign atop a 24 foot metal column. Built in 1943, the metal sign takes the form of a saluting gasoline service station attendant outfitted in uniform complete with cap and tie. The figure stands atop large letters that spell "Chevron." The structure is intact but some of the neon tubing is missing, the paint is peeling, and the sign is no longer operable.

The Nick Mamer Memorial Clock is located ten feet to the southwest of the sign. Built in 1939, the clock is a monolithic poured concrete structure that measures about 14 feet square with a flat roof. The squat proportions are given a vertical emphasis by Art Deco "pilasters" formed by vertical fluting. A clock face is placed on each elevation, with sweeping green and white hands and red circles denoting hours. A decorative bronze door on the north side of the tower provides access to the motor room, where a new motor has been installed. Bronze plaques from the period are embedded in the concrete walls, commemorating the influence of Lt. Mamer who died in a flying accident the year before the clock was built. The structure retains excellent integrity; the only change occurred when the clock hands, originally painted black, were painted in green and white.

West of the clock is a series of noncontributing elements. The first noncontributing structure is a gabled roof wood frame hangar. The exterior of the hangar has been sided in corrugated metal, and a one story office annex along the east wall has been resurfaced and re-glazed thus altering the appearance of the structure from the east. But the form and structural characteristics of the building remain intact, with an open interior and exposed heavy timber roof truss, vast sliding doors on the north elevation which move along tracks into pockets, and multi-pane windows along the west side elevation.

To the west is a nonhistoric metal hangar with metal fold-up doors. To the west of this hangar is a second historic hangar which has been altered through extensive additions, including a large deck structure built on the north end, which detracts from the original form and fabric of the structure.

West of these noncontributing structures is a frame hangar with a barrel vaulted roof. The hangar, built in the 1920s, is sided in corrugated metal: the building form and its sliding doors with multi-pane windows

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 7 Page 4

are still intact. Inside, a vast open interior spanned by a massive truss is preserved. Next to this hangar is a small brick storehouse (built c. 1935) used to stockpile hazardous materials. The building is built on a square plan (measuring 20 feet on all four sides) and rises 12 feet to a flat roof. The building is lighted by steel sash casement windows (with nine lights) on the east and west sides. A metal door in the north facade provides entry to the structure.

Immediately to the west of the storehouse is the historic National Guard hangar, built in 1934. The hangar is a large, rectangular brick structure that measures 100 feet by 200 feet, rests on a poured concrete floor and rises to a flat roof. The brick side and rear walls are divided into bays by brick piers, and lighted by steel sash 18-light windows. The north wall of the building is dominated by great sliding steel doors, which are motorized and move along tracks in the concrete floor into side pockets, providing a full width opening for aircraft. The upper two thirds of the door panels are glazed with steel sash windows. The opening is framed by two brick piers, each ornamented at the frieze with an ace of spades by a dagger. Inside, the open space is spanned by a steel truss. The ceiling was originally surfaced in 2 foot by 4 foot sheets of Magnesite Tectnum board on wood joists fastened to the lower chord of the steel truss. This ceiling board, made of wood chips and magnesite, was used to fireproof the building, although most of the board is now gone. When the ceiling got wet the resulting rusted fastenings caused the board to deteriorate and drop off.

Forty feet to the west of the Guard hangar is the National Guard headquarters building. Constructed in phases between 1927 and 1932, the structure is a two story brick building with a hipped roof covered with composition shingles. The building is built on a rectangular plan, measuring 213 feet across the north and south elevations and 40 feet on the east and west sides. According to the original blueprint drawings by the firm of Wells and Bertelsen, the first section of the building, constructed in 1927, was the eastern two story rectangular brick office building measuring 100 feet long. It contained offices for three officers, a map room, a squad room, and restrooms, and is lighted by steel sash windows, some with concrete sills. A bay window located on the north side of the second floor provided one officer with a view of the field. The second phase was built in 1929, according to blueprint drawings. It added 38 feet to the west end and housed the photo lab, with drying room, printing room, photo supply room, and filing and drafting room. A locker room and map room were on the second floor. The third and final phase, constructed in 1932 according to drawings, extended the building an additional 74 feet to the west. This addition housed the garage and medical detachment. The medical detachment included the surgeon's office, examining room, locker room, supply room, and bathroom. Stairs led to the radio room on the second floor.

The interior of the original office portion of the building has been remodeled on the first floor for current tenants. But the second floor is mostly intact, with hardwood floors, plaster walls, and the five-sided bay window that may have served as the original control tower for the airfield. The interior of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 7 Page 5

garage retains the original poured concrete floor and an open interior spanned by two 50-foot long laminated wood girders resting on brick piers. A low river rock wall surrounds the building.

North of the buildings is an open field which extends to the Spokane River. The nominated property includes that portion of the field that contains the southernmost taxiway, which, according to historic photographs, was first paved between 1939 and 1941. The cluster of nonhistoric sheds and hangars located east and west of the district does not visually intrude on the historic complex nor impinge on the open space of the landing field.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 8 Page 2

passengers from Parkwater Field (as the site was also known). At about the same time, a third aviation company--the United States Aircraft Corporation, headed by Claude Messer and chief pilot Lt. Nick Mamer--also located at the field.

Although the area's busiest, Parkwater Field was not the only landing site in the area. In 1920, the United States Army Air service published a map of municipal fields and noted several in region. But activity at Parkwater surpassed the others. One competing field, also located in Parkwater, was used briefly by the Russell-Symons Aviation Company. Located at the corner of today's Sprague Avenue and Fancher Way, the field was first used in the winter of 1919-1920, and continued in competition with Parkwater Field for several years until Russell was killed in a crash and the company went out of business.

Military Aviation: In addition to early commercial activity at Parkwater, the field was the site of the region's first National Guard air unit. In 1924, the 116th Observation Squadron, 41st Division, Air Service, Washington National Guard, was formed and located at the municipal field at Parkwater. The 116th was a reorganization of the Army's 116th Aero Squadron which served in France during World War I.

By spring 1925, the 116th had 13 original officers and several new officers as well as enlisted men interested in learning aviation skills. At the first two-week encampment held at Parkwater Field in June, 1925, the unit tested ground-to-air radio communications for the first time. The public showed so much interest in the encampment that Major John Fancher, the commanding officer, decided to hold an aerial circus at Parkwater in September. The unit's first fatalities occurred at that event, when a lieutenant and a private were killed in an air crash. The second fatal crash occurred when Lt. Buell Felts was killed. In the spring of 1927, Major Fancher announced that the field at Parkwater would be called Felts Field in honor of the lieutenant. Adjutant General Maurice Thompson officiated at the dedication. That same year, a new National Guard headquarters building, designed by Wells and Bertelsen, was under construction at the field.

In September, 1927, Felts Field was the site of the National Air Races, the first major air show in the region. The city raised over \$63,000 in cash and trophies for the contestants and the races were a huge success. On September 12th, shortly before the races, Charles Lindbergh visited the city as part of a national tour in the wake of his successful transatlantic flight. Lindbergh spoke to a crowd of 20,000 during which time he praised the air races at Felts Field.

In 1928, Major Fancher died in a training accident. Hardesty Road, which borders Felts Field on the west, was re-named in his honor, and Major C. V. Haynes succeeded him as commanding officer. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 8 Page 3

next year an addition to the National Guard headquarters was built to provide a photography laboratory and other facilities to assist in the Guard's aerial photographic work.

A major aerial event in 1930 drew national attention to Felts Field. That year, Lt. Nick Mamer and Art Walker took flight from the field in the Spokane Sun-God. The two pilots were in the air for 120 hours from August 15th through 20th, travelling from Spokane to San Francisco to New York and back to Felts Field. During the entire 7,200 mile trip, the plane never touched down; it was refueled and the men fed and cared for in the air. When it was over, the Sun-God flight had set several records including the first transcontinental refueling, the first refueling above 8,000 feet, and the world's record non-stop mileage. The accomplishments of the Spokane Sun-God were more than just stunts; the technical achievements helped establish the basis of future military air operations.

In 1932 the headquarters building expanded again to provide a medical detachment and a garage for the unit. Then in 1934, the National Guard built what was described as the most modern hangar in the country, a large brick structure with motorized sliding steel doors and great expanses of steel sash windows.

The National Guard remained at Felts Field through the 1930s, during which time it became the first unit in the nation to achieve full flight qualifications for all its officers. In the late 1930s, the unit was asked to take aerial photos to assist in the construction of Grand Coulee Dam. In 1940, however, the unit was called to active duty at Fort Lewis near Tacoma, where it made patrol flights along the coast. The unit was disbanded in 1943 and assigned to serve other units for the duration of World War II. In 1947, it was reactivated as the 116th Fighter Squadron, based again at Felts Field until 1949 when the squadron moved permanently to the new Spokane airport at Geiger Field.

Commercial Aviation: The growth in airline passenger service after World War I was reflected in increased activity at Felts Field. The Northwest Aircraft Corporation, the Spokane Aviation Company, and the United States Aircraft Company all operated aircraft at Felts Field in the early 1920s. But the real growth in commercial air traffic took place after 1925 when the United States government began to contract private carriers to deliver air mail. On September 15, 1929, the Spokane newspapers heralded the first Spokane airmail arriving at Felts Field with the banner headline "Ton of Mail on First Planes."

The planes that flew those initial mail flights were owned and operated by Varney Airlines. One year later, in 1930, Varney began offering regularly scheduled passenger service from Felts Field to Chicago via Pasco. The same year Mamer Flying Service offered tri-weekly flights to St. Paul. In 1931, Varney Airlines merged with other companies to form United Airlines, and passenger service to and from Spokane continued at Felts Field under the new corporate name.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 8 Page 4

In 1933, Northwest Airlines began offering passenger service at Felts Field. The next year, Northwest and United began regular service between Seattle and Spokane. But some other commercial firms were less successful. Nick Mamer's company could not compete with the two larger airlines, and Mamer sold his Ford Tri-motors and his hangar and became Northwest Airlines western operations manager as well as chief pilot for the Twin Cities-Seattle flight. Mamer did continue a flying school at Felts Field, which was the only government approved school in the area.

The terminal building constructed in 1932 by the City of Spokane reflected the growth in commercial aviation during this period. The building originally housed United Airlines offices and ticket and waiting areas, as well as the weather bureau. When Northwest arrived the following year, United moved to the west end of the building and Northwest occupied the east end. A catwalk was added to the top of the building in 1935 for use as an observation area, a rooftop control room was added in 1941, and baggage rooms were added to the north side in 1944.

Changes in commercial aviation led to changes at the field. The single engine planes used by the airlines in their first years were soon replaced by twin-engine transports seating ten. These big planes could not fit into any hangar at the field, so a new hangar was built east of the terminal building in the mid-1930s, jointly funded by Northwest Airlines (which supplied the materials), the City of Spokane (which gave the land), and by the federal Works Progress Administration (which paid for labor). When completed, the hangar was used by both Northwest and United. The frame structure, with its expansive open interior and sliding doors, still stands in good condition at the eastern end of the district.

In 1938, Nick Mamer, his co-pilot, and eight passengers were killed in a commercial plane crash near Bozeman, Montana. In commemoration, a memorial clock tower was built just west of the terminal building the following year. The concrete tower is a dramatic moderne structure with clock faces on all four sides. At this time, on the eve of World War II, the field had achieved the appearance and character that it retains today. The runways were paved between 1939 and 1941, but the field itself remains a large open area stretching toward the Spokane River.

With the outbreak of hostilities in Europe in the late 1930s, the federal government established a Civilian Pilot Training Program as a preparedness measure. Many of the general aviation companies operating at Felts Field assisted in the training program. But the increased activity led to a demise in Felts Field. As the airport became busier with general and military traffic, it became apparent that it was not large enough to handle the extra activity. Instead, the county purchased land west of Spokane for a new super-facility to be known as "Sunset Airport." Land was cleared and leveled for runways with WPA project monies in 1940. The same year, the federal government took over Sunset and re-named it Geiger Field. In 1946, commercial air traffic moved permanently from Felts Field to Geiger and in 1949, the National Guard unit relocated as well. In 1960, Geiger was re-named Spokane International Airport. Owned by

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 8 Page 5

the municipal Spokane Airport Board, Felts Field continues to serve as the primary general aviation facility in the area.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 9 Page 2

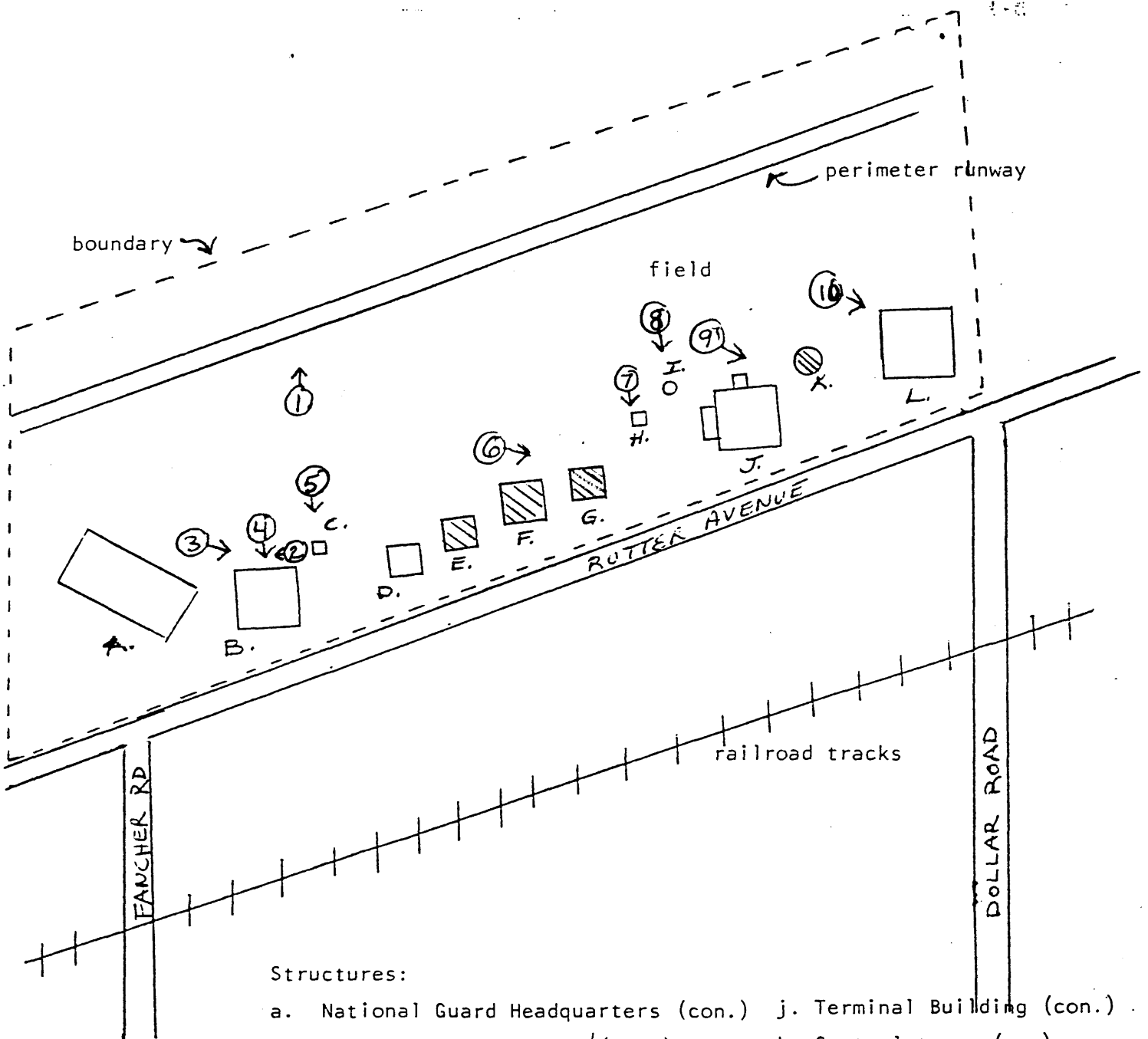
Spokane Spokesman-Review articles:

“New Control Tower Opens in March,” Jan. 28, 1968

“Tomorrow on Silver Wings,” Oct. 22, 1944

Dorothy Woodward, “The History of Felts Field,” 1969, typescript manuscript at Spokane Public Library.

FELTS FIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT, Spokane, Spokane County



Structures:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. National Guard Headquarters (con.) | j. Terminal Building (con.) |
| b. National Guard Hangar (con.) | k. Control tower (non) |
| c. Storehouse (con.) | l. Historic hangar (con.) |
| d. Historic hangar (con.) | |
| e. Historic hangar, altered (non) | |
| f. Nonhistoric hangar (non) | |
| g. Historic hangar (non) | |
| h. Mamer Memorial clock (con) | |
| i. Chevron sign (con) | |

KEY

□ = Contributing

▨ = Noncontributing

⊙ = photo view

NOT TO SCALE