

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF HANGAR 11

at the former Edmonton Municipal Airport, Alberta



FINAL REPORT

Prepared by David Murray Architect in association with Next Architecture and Ken Tingley April 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hangar 11 was built on the northeast section of the Edmonton Municipal Airport during 1942 and 1943. This structure was built during one of the most important historical periods in Edmonton history. As such, it remains one of two remaining physical reminders of this period when the city assumed a significant role in northwest continental defense.

Hangar 11 has been assessed using the standard municipal criteria that are employed to assess the significance of Edmonton's historic resources. Hangar 11 is on the Inventory of Historic Resources but has never been critically assessed for its heritage significance. Hangar 11 is a significant historic resource in the following categories:

THEME/ACTIVITY

There are 3 significant themes associated with Hangar 11:

Military, Business and Commerce, Transportation.

Each of these themes is associated with operations at Edmonton's historic Blatchford Field, later known as Edmonton Municipal Airport (City Centre Airport) from 1942 when Hangar 11 was constructed until the late 20th C. when the airport was closed. Hangar 11 was associated with the Canadian/US military operations during WW2. Hangar 11 is also associated with the important civil activities of Northwest Industries Ltd, a commercial aircraft service company, after WW2.

INSTITUTION/PERSON

Hangar 11 is associated with:

- Aircraft Repair Ltd. later known as Northwest Industries Ltd.
- Wilfed Leigh Brintnell 1895 - 1971
- Francis G. Winspear 1903-1997

W. Leigh Brintnell and Francis G. Winspear were both decorated Edmontonians who were associated with Northwest Industries Ltd, a significant tenant of Hangar 11, during its period of significance.

DESIGN/STYLE/CONSTRUCTION

Hangar 11 is a unique and significant industrial structure in the city and is the only remaining hangar of its type, known as the 20thC Functional Style. The value of these utilitarian structures is in the expression of their function, either in their layout, design or materials, reflecting the nature of the working processes that they supported. Examples include hangars, factories, shipyards and manufacturing. The functional design of these industrial structures reflects specific forms that were tailored to their specific uses. They have value in demonstrating the nature of labour, economic drivers, processes and products important to the development of the city.

Construction of the building is indicated as including prominent Edmonton Architect G.H. MacDonald, probably as the architect of record, and contractor H.S. MacDonald.

LANDMARK/SYMBOLIC VALUE

Hangar 11 is a very large and unique industrial building at the former Edmonton Municipal Airport. It stands out, in its diminished airport context, as the last remaining hangar on the east side of the former airport lands. Hangar 11 is noted for its overall imposing composition consisting of massive, clad Bowstring trusses resulting in a huge curved roof over a large airplane hall, flanked by 3-storey office wings.

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INTEGRITY



Integrity refers to the originality of the building components. The main building alterations over the years include the following:

EXTERIOR

- The original control tower has been dismantled. The base of the tower above the west office wing remains as a remnant of the original configuration.
- The 2 loading bays on the west side are not original. The date of their construction is undetermined.
- The original exterior siding over the entire building has been removed and replaced with aluminum siding. The original siding material remains undetermined.
- All the original exterior windows and doors have been replaced. The date on the sealed glazing units is 1977, which may be the date of other exterior alterations such as the siding replacement. The original window and door openings remain intact.
- One of the rolling doors in the south elevation has been replaced with a contemporary upward-opening garage door.

INTERIOR

- There have been some modifications to the interior configuration and finishes of rooms in the office wings.
- There have been a few modifications to the door and window openings from the office wings into the main Hall.
- There have been a few modifications to the wall finishes in the main hall.
- Most of the washrooms have been upgraded.
- The linoleum-type flooring covering in some areas of the office wings may not be original. Some floors in the west office area were covered in wood parquet.
- The ceiling lighting in the main hall has been replaced with contemporary, high efficiency fixtures.

Hangar 11, as a historic building, retains a high level of overall integrity (originality) due to the fact that it has not been significantly altered. Hangar 11 does not currently retain Association integrity. The airport has been closed and the building has no current use.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this study is to determine the historical significance of Hangar 11 in, especially, the municipal context. Consideration has also been given to also understand significance in the provincial and federal context. After the heritage value of an historic place has been determined, conservation considerations can begin. In this case, conservation of Hangar 11 has not yet been considered.

This report was initiated to undertake the following tasks:

- Conduct readily available research in order to prepare a historical context paper.
- Conduct a detailed site survey in order to assess the integrity of the resource.
- Complete the Mandatory Documentation using the City's standard form.
- Prepare a Statement of Significance
- Prepare a report summarizing the significance of Hangar 11.

Based on Alberta Culture and Tourism's Municipal Heritage Partnership Program's Evaluating Historic Places framework, the following five criteria are used to assess the significance of a historic resource:

A Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event

A resource must be directly associated with a theme, activity, cultural practice or event that has made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of municipal history.

B Institution / Person

A resource must be directly associated with a significant institution or with the life of a significant person in the municipality's past.

C Design / Style / Construction

1. Style / Type / Method of Construction
2. Work of a Master
3. High Artistic Value

A resource must embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, style, period or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or express high artistic values.

D Information Potential

A resource must have yielded, or be likely to yield, information important to the municipality's history, prehistory or natural history.

E Landmark / Symbolic Value

A resource must be particularly prominent or conspicuous, and must have acquired special visual, sentimental or symbolic value that transcends its function. A landmark contributes to the distinctive character of the municipality*

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2.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW

2.1 A HISTORY OF EDMONTON MUNICIPAL AIRPORT HANGAR 11 (1942) by Ken Tingley, March 2017

Hangar 11 was built on the northeast section of the Edmonton Municipal Airport during 1942 and 1943. This structure was built during one of the most important historical periods in Edmonton history. As such, it remains one of two remaining physical reminders of this period when the city assumed a significant role in northwest continental defense.

During the Second World War, Edmonton became the nexus of several important defense projects, including the Alaska Highway and the CANOL pipeline project. However, the Northwest Staging Route (NWSR) would prove to have the most lasting impact on wartime development and postwar aviation and communication initiatives. The Alaska Highway was not launched entirely into a vacuum; its route had essentially been determined by the NWSR, much of which was already in place by 1942. The NWSR consisted of a series of airfields leading from the United States to Ladd Field in Alaska. Edmonton was its command and communications centre.

The NWSR gained new prominence late in 1942 after the United States extended the Lend-Lease program to the Soviet Union, our wartime ally. The Americans supplied massive amounts of military material, including as many as 10,000 planes which, marked by the Soviet red star, were flown along the staging route to Fairbanks, where they were turned over to Soviet pilots. **Lend-Lease** was the important allied program to provide Russia with aircraft to fight the Germans on Russia's western front. The planes were manufactured/modified in the US and Canada (Edmonton) and flown to Alaska where they were picked up Russian pilots who then flew them across Russia for use at the western front.



Aircraft Repair Ltd. hangar. Ansons, Harvards, Lend-lease Bell P-39 Airacobras en route to Russia via Alaska. Courtesy, Alberta Aviation Museum, from *For King and Country*.

This photo is probably not Hangar 11, but it illustrates the work that would have also taken place in Hangar 11, by Aircraft Repair Ltd. They operated from several hangars.

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Over \$41 million was spent on the construction, improvement, and maintenance of these airfields between 1942 and 1944. As the foundation on which all the Northwest defense construction rested, they were given a higher priority even than the highway and the pipeline, though they never achieved the publicity of the more glamorous projects.

Facilities at these airfields were rudimentary. Few of them had hangars—only the ones at Edmonton, Whitehorse, and Fairbanks as late as 1943—making cold-weather operations difficult. Since it was impossible to shelter planes in the winter, engines froze, rubber hoses became brittle, and oil congealed. It was a major challenge to keep planes in the air under such circumstances, and just as difficult to repair them. Hangars were planned to meet these challenges. In the summer of 1943, much construction was turned over to American civilian contractors; by the fall of 1943, a network stretching from Edmonton to Alaska (and beyond to Russia) was in working order.

HANGAR 11 IN ITS CONTEXT

The impact of the Second World War came swiftly to Blatchford Field in 1939. Under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP), many aircraft were used for training, and many crashed, forcing the Department of National Defense to open an aircraft repair depot on the north side of the airport, that site becoming the nucleus for aero manufacturers and maintenance for decades. But more than anything else, it was the arrival of the United States Army Air Force that really changed the airport. The USAAF built its own hangars on the east side, but so many of its aircraft were flying through that by 1944 it began building its own, larger air base at Namao.

Women became an important part of the BCATP activities as the war progressed. Their wartime role at Aircraft Repair Inc. and Northwest Industries Ltd. in Edmonton also should be remembered as an important contribution to the war effort.

Aircraft Repair Ltd., with a significant connection to Hangar 11, held an extraordinary general meeting in May 1942, and redrafted its articles of association. The company also was reorganized at that time. The shareholders in the new company included many influential people: W. Leigh Brintnell, president; Harry W. Hayter, general manager; and Archibald McMullen, test pilot. By January 1942 Leigh Brintnell, had made “satisfactory arrangements through the [Canadian] Department of Munitions and Supply to take care of the servicing and what storage can be accommodated [of USAAF aircraft]. Should there be an overflow at any time and [Edmonton] have space available in one of the Municipal hangars.”

In April 1942 the USAAF requested additional facilities and accommodation along the Northwest Staging Route to take care of their increased activity northward to Alaska and the Aleutians. Further requests were made in June, and more construction began as a large influx of workmen and engineers headed north. The demands on the local labour force was so great that the United States Army moved a Labour Battalion to Edmonton and northward to the various aerodromes along the expanding air route. Construction planned in Edmonton for the US Ferry Command by the Aerodrome Development Committee, included a hangar; the hangar was to be constructed of steel if possible.

G.L. McGee, Supervising Engineer of Aerodromes, visited Edmonton on 26 June 1942, and visited H.G. MacDonald, the architect and building contractor for the US Army projects. After inspecting the building site, McGee arranged for MacDonald to lay out the work. The USAAF created a great deal of pressure to speed up construction of its facilities in Edmonton. In November 1942 its local officers made demands that construction of an additional hangar, *despite the fact that no detailed drawings existed at the time*. This seems to refer to what came to be named Hangar 11. With only preliminary plans, and with winter weather closing in, problems seemed inevitable. Progress was made on footings for the structural timber trusses provided by the USAAF. Specifications were worked out as the job hurried ahead.

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Con Farrell, a Canadian flying ace during World War I and RCAF pilot in WW2, reported that the most important and largest of the Canadian bases on the route was Edmonton. More than any other of the complexes on the route, the Edmonton air facilities were constructed by Canadians. This was because Edmonton labour and political organizations insisted that Canadian workers be used for local construction projects. Important modification facilities existed in Edmonton, where aircraft could be adapted for extreme weather or battlefield conditions, or defects could be corrected. Great demands were made on the staff of the repair shops in Edmonton. When on one occasion Soviet officials demanded that Lend-Lease P-63 fighters be modified with strengthened fuselages before they could be accepted, Aircraft Repair Limited accomplished the work on sixty-two of the planes in two weeks.

Building Permit #1841 was granted by the City on 17 November 17 1941. The Dominion Government took out the permit, to be built at the "Airfield." The building is listed as "Assembly Plant Buildings," to be built for \$650,000, with the architect listed as G.H. Macdonald, and contractor as H.S. Macdonald.

Permits for the year 1942 show continued growth and activity at the airport. The *Edmonton Bulletin* reported on that between 1 January and 25 August 1942, building permits for \$2,497,075 were applied for, including hangars, none of them identified in any concise detail.

Since the end of the war Hangar 11 has been most closely and significantly associated with Northwest Industries Ltd. During the war Northwest Industries Ltd. (originally Aircraft Repair Ltd.) was a major manufacturer, repair facility, and a significant employer of men and women in the Edmonton area.

In 1999 Art Breier purchased Hangar 11 from City Centre Airport Authority, and subleased it to a paintball operation and a holistic healing centre. By 2003 Hangar 11, which included two three-story annexes, housed 42 small businesses, including Breier's airplane kit firm. About 65% of these businesses were estimated to be related to the field of aviation at the time.

SIGNIFICANCE OF HANGAR 11

The significance of Hangar 11 is demonstrated in a number of areas. It is an example of the critical nature of Edmonton's contribution to the Allied Forces success in World War II, with its connections to the United States efforts to operate the Lend-Lease program.

Construction of the building is indicated as including prominent Edmonton Architect G.H. Macdonald, and contractor H.S. Macdonald, as noted on the "Assembly Plant Buildings" cited on Building Permit #1841, of 17 November 1941.

Aviation pioneer and entrepreneur **W. Leigh Brintnell** is an individual significant in Edmonton's aviation history, associated with Mackenzie Airlines, North West Industries, and Aircraft Repair Ltd. He was one of the foremost aviation pioneers and entrepreneurs in the history of western Canada. Brintnell was credited with beginning the first airline from Edmonton into the Arctic in 1929. During the Second World War, Brintnell was president of Northwest Industries Ltd., resigning to take over the aircraft repair plant in Edmonton operated by Mackenzie Air Services Ltd.

Leigh Brintnell bought the plant in 1942 and established Aircraft Repair Ltd. in April of that year. In July 1946 Leigh Brintnell received the Order of the British Empire for his work with the aircraft repair plant, a vital part of maintaining the Northwest Staging Route, and the Lend-Lease flights through Edmonton. Leigh Brintnell was inducted into the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame in 1975.

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Another prominent Edmontonian, **Dr. Francis G. Winspear** was associated with Hangar 11 as part owner and president of Northwest Industries Ltd, after Leigh Brintnell, in the late 1940s. He was CEO of at least 19 businesses. There was hardly a major industry he didn't manage or develop over his 60-year career, all of which were important to Alberta's development. Dr. Winspear had a special genius to inspire and lead others, and was a major factor in building the strongest university accounting program in Canada. Dr. Winspear's gift, the single biggest by an individual to a Canadian arts organization, resulted in the successful construction of Edmonton's Winspear Centre concert hall.

THE CANADIAN LUMBER INDUSTRY

Building permit and newspaper research suggest a significant use of regionally sourced building materials, specifically large amounts of lumber from British Columbia. This is significant because the impressive structure of Hangar 11 is entirely from lumber.

2.2 THE NORTHWEST STAGING ROUTE AND THE LEND-LEASE PROGRAM

This material has been extracted from Wikipedia:

"The route was developed in 1942 due to several reasons. Initially, the United States Army Air Corps 7th Ferrying Group, Ferrying Command (later Air Transport Command) at Great Falls Army Airfield was ordered to organize and develop an air route to send assistance to Russia through Northern Canada, across Alaska and the Bering Sea to Siberia, and eventually over to the Eastern Front.

The Permanent Joint Board on Defense — Canada and the United States — decided in the autumn of 1940 that a string of airports should be constructed at Canadian expense between the City of Edmonton in central Alberta and the Alaska-Yukon border. Late in 1941 the Canadian government reported that rough landing fields had been completed.

With the outbreak of war, American lines of communication with Alaska by sea were seriously threatened and alternative routes had to be opened. The string of airports through the lonely tundra and forests of northwest Canada provided an air route to Alaska which was practically invulnerable to attack, and it seemed to be in the best interests of international defense to develop them and open a highway which would at once be a service road for the airports and a means for transporting essential supplies to the Alaskan outposts.

In response to this need, United States Army engaged in the Alaskan Highway project. Neither the Eleventh Air Force, nor the United States Army military installations, nor the Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union could wait for the Alaska Highway to be completed. The long route through the Caribbean to Brazil and across Africa to Iran was unworkable, nor could aircraft be flown via Greenland or Iceland. A huge program of airport construction and road making, therefore, was undertaken. The Alaska Highway was but a part of the defenses provided for the Northwest North American frontier.

Much less is known about the great air route leading from the United States to Alaska through Canada. Airfields were built or upgraded every 100 mi (160 km) or so from Edmonton, Alberta to Fairbanks, Alaska ("the longest hop being the 140 miles or so between Fort Nelson and the Liard River flight strip"). The route of the Alaska Highway, which was built to provide a land route to Alaska, basically connected the airfields together. Edmonton became the headquarters of the Alaskan Wing, Air Transport Command.

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Lend-Lease

Two routes were developed from the United States, which met at Edmonton, Alberta, from which the aircraft were ferried to Ladd Field, near Fairbanks, Alaska where the American-built aircraft were to be turned over to Russian flight crews. Marks Army Airfield, near Nome, Alaska was 500 miles closer to Russia, but was ruled out because the United States feared it was too vulnerable to Japanese attack. One route originated at Great Falls Army Air Base, Montana, where aircraft bound for Russia were ferried from their manufacturing plants in Southern California.

The other route originated at Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Wold-Chamberlain Airport was used as an aircraft staging point for aircraft manufactured in the Midwest and northeastern United States. The Minneapolis-Edmonton route, however was turned into a transport route only by the end of 1943, with aircraft ferrying operations being shifted to Great Falls, Montana. In addition to the Lend-Lease aircraft, Alaskan Eleventh Air Force aircraft were also ferried up the NSR, with the aircraft being flown to Elmendorf Field, near Anchorage from RCAF Station Whitehorse upon their arrival.”

Edmonton Municipal Airport was critical to the operations of the Northwest Staging Route and the Lend-Lease Program. Aircraft were flown into Edmonton where they were serviced and made ready for the remainder of the trip to Alaska. Hangar 11 was used during WW2 for this purpose by Aircraft Repair Ltd.

The Aircraft

Three main types of combat aircraft were ferried to the Soviet Union under Lend-Lease. Fighter aircraft were Bell P-39 Airacobras, and later its successor, the Bell P-63 Kingcobra, which were favored by the Red (Soviet) Air Force who used the two types with great success. The majority of the P-39s shipped to the Soviet Union were the definitive Q-models. Bombers included the Douglas A-20 Havoc light attack bomber and North American B-25 Mitchell medium bombers that were also sent to the Red Air Force. Transport aircraft were made up of predominantly, the Douglas C-47 Skytrain, also supplied in great numbers.

The Bell fighters and the B-25 Mitchells were flown up to Ladd via Minneapolis; the C-47s and A-20s came up via Great Falls. A handful of other aircraft types, North American AT-6 Texan trainers, some North American Curtiss P-40 Warhawk fighters, three Republic P-47 Thunderbolts and one Curtiss C-46 Commando transport were also ferried to Russia. The aircraft were supplied with Russian language operations and maintenance manuals, as well as painted in Red Air Force camouflage colors and national markings.^{[3][4]}

Other uses of the Northwest Staging Route

In addition to facilitating the military activities, the Northwest Staging Route was used for diplomatic purposes between Washington DC and Moscow, where “Diplomats, high political figures and countless other government officials shuttled back and forth along it in transports during the war. Wendell Willkie, Vice-President Henry A. Wallace, Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, and Andrei Gromyko were but a few who used the route. President Roosevelt considered holding a summit in Fairbanks in 1944 to meet with Stalin, however the location was subsequently changed to Yalta in the Soviet Union. Also the route provided a means over which the Russians moved intelligence agents and classified information obtained illegally in the United States. The Soviets, claiming diplomatic immunity routinely moved large numbers of suitcases in batches of 50 or more, their contents diplomatically sealed.

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The Russians who arrived in Alaska also frequently visited shopping areas in Fairbanks and Nome, and contingents visited the aircraft manufacturing plants in the United States. They maintained a strict decorum and politely paid for their purchases, sometimes in old US gold certificates. Many luxury items were bought and shipped back to the Soviet Union on the Lend-Lease aircraft with the hope that they would reach their final destinations in Russia. Most of the Russian pilots were experienced combat veterans who saw the ferrying mission as a respite from their combat missions. They were generally reserved and political officers were sent to Alaska to ensure their loyalty.”

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

These associations indicate **national, regional and local** significance for Hangar 11. While not as intact in its original configuration as Hangar 14, the Alberta Aviation Museum across the field from Hangar 11, it is now only the second survivor of the important period of continental defense and international warfare that impacted Edmonton in so many ways. Hangar 11 retains its intrinsic value as a cultural reminder of this very important phase in Edmonton’s history.



Hangar 11 with other hangars on the east side of the airport, circa 1944

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3.0 EVALUATING THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF HANGER 11

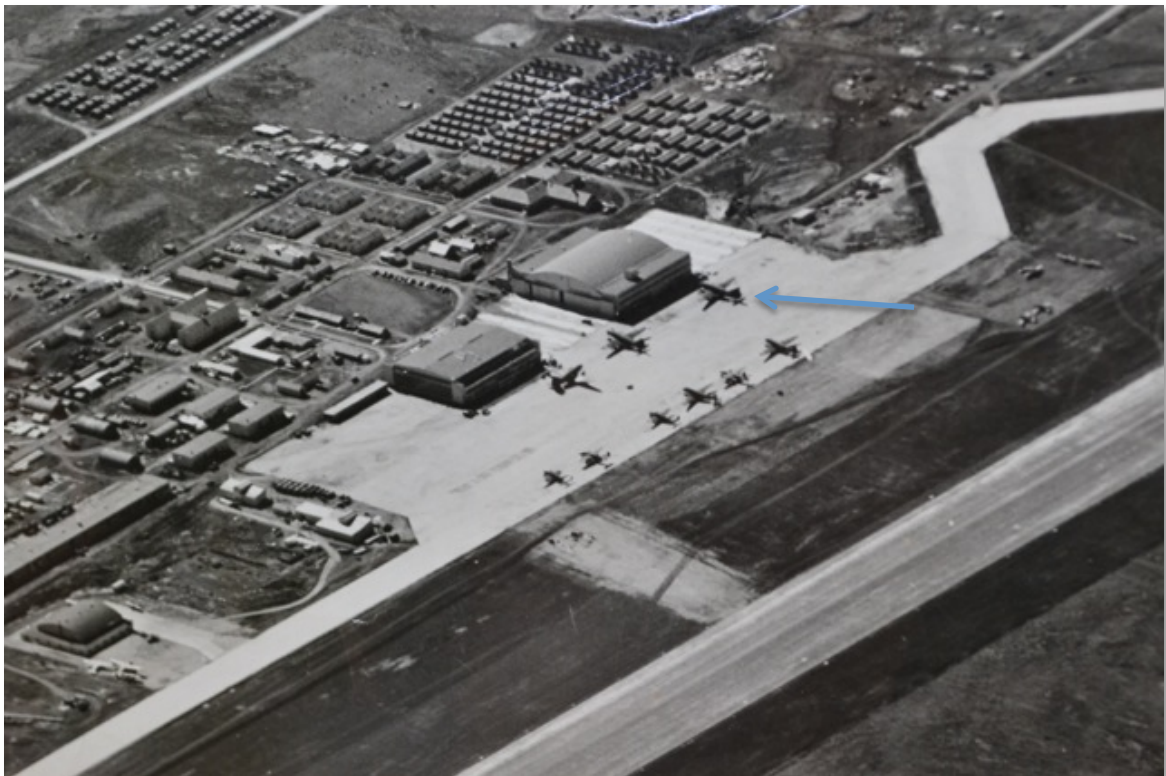
3.1 Part One: Assess Eligibility

Not all historic resources are eligible for inclusion on a Municipal Heritage Inventory or designation as Municipal Historic Resources. The eligibility requirements listed below were developed by staff of the Historic Resources Management Branch after considerable reflection on the meaning and management of historic places. Although municipalities may choose to define their own eligibility requirements, normally only those Municipal Historic Resources that conform to guidelines below will be considered for listing on the Alberta Register of Historic Places and be eligible for conservation grants from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.

Assessing a resource's eligibility involves three steps:

1. Describe the resource
2. Is the resource an excluded type?
3. Does the resource qualify for an exception?

Hangar 11 is not an excluded type as defined in "Evaluating Historic Places". Therefore it is eligible for inclusion on the Alberta Register of Historic Places.



Hangar 11 circa 1943

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3.2 Part Two: Assess Significance

Assessing the significance of a resource involves three steps:

1. Which Significance Criteria Apply?
2. What is the context of the resource?
3. Does the resource have municipal significance?

The following five criteria are used to assess the significance of resources to Alberta's history, architecture, archaeology, palaeontology, natural history, engineering and culture. The resources assessed can include districts, landscapes, places, sites, buildings, structures and objects.

3.2.1 Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event

There are 3 significant themes associated with Hangar 11:

Military Business and Commerce Transportation.

Each of these themes is associated with operations at Edmonton's historic Blatchford Field, later known as Edmonton Municipal Airport (City Centre Airport) from 1942 when Hangar 11 was constructed until the late 20th C. when the airport was closed.

Hangar 11 is associated with the Canadian/US military operations during WW2.

Hangar 11 is associated with the important industrial activities of Aircraft Repair Ltd., later known as Northwest Industries Ltd after WW2, a commercial aircraft service company.

Hangar 11 was an integral part of the international airline service industry, servicing civil and military aircraft from around the world.

Hangar 11 is associated with the transportation industry that serviced northern Canada from its base at the Edmonton Municipal Airport.



An early photo of Hangar 11

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3.2.2 Institution / Person

A resource must be directly associated with a significant institution or with the life of a significant person in the municipality's past.

Hangar 11 is most closely associated with **Aircraft Repair Ltd.** later known as **Northwest Industries Ltd.**, which occupied the hangar during and after WW2 until the early 1980s. Northwest Industries Ltd. was a major manufacturer, repair facility and a significant employer of men and women in the Edmonton area.

Aircraft Repair Ltd. was engaged by the military during WW2 to provide aircraft manufacturing, repairs and servicing at the Municipal Airport. After WW2, it transitioned to become known as Northwest Industries Ltd. and remained the most prominent tenant of Hangar 11. The Edmonton Municipal Airport was a busy hub of northern flying. In the early 1950s, with the introduction of commercial aircraft service, Northwest Industries Ltd. began to handle civil aircraft. Until then, they had exclusively handled RCAF contracts. Hangar 11 became the new commercial aircraft service hangar, located at the east side of the airport. Here, they provided full maintenance repair, overhaul, servicing modification and conversion facilities for the many civil operators who base or port of call was Edmonton. The executive office of Northwest Industries was located at the airport.

NWI closed down its operations during 1982-1983. Following decades of large contracts repairing and modifying U.S. military aircraft, this work dried up for NWI by the early 1980s. At the end of 1982 NWI "announced plans to transfer its large aircraft repair and overhaul business from the city-owned Municipal Airport."

"Under an agreement with Alberta Transportation the company will take over the leasing of the provincially-owned Wardair Hangar at the Edmonton International Airport." NWI already owned a large hangar at the International capable of accommodating a Boeing 707. The new acquisition would allow NWI to accommodate a Boeing 747. NWI agreed to lease space in both hangars to Wardair and PWA.

"Northwest has not yet made a decision on what will be done with the 30 acres of land and about 18,580 square metres of building space it owns at the Municipal Airport."

The move was expected to be complete by March 1983. An examination of Edmonton Hendersons city directories from 1980 to 1984 indicated that NWI was listed as being on the Municipal Airport, in 1981, but was not listed at this site in 1982. By this time the move probably was under way to the new location at the Edmonton International Airport.

"The company, western Canada's largest airframe and aircraft systems maintenance, repair and overhaul centre, has been forced to significantly trim its operations during the past year because of declining work opportunities."

"Staff levels have dropped to about 200 skilled employees from a 1981 peak of 500 as major contracts have been completed without significant new contracts being obtained."

Larry Procop was NWI president at this time.

[Bobbi Lambright, "Northwest to leave Municipal Airport," *Edmonton Journal*, 11 December 1982, p. C12]

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W. Leigh Brintnell, aviation pioneer and entrepreneur, is a significant individual in Edmonton's aviation history, associated with Mackenzie Airlines, North West Industries, and Aircraft Repair Ltd. Hangar 11 has a close association with one of the foremost aviation pioneers and entrepreneurs in the history of western Canada.

Brintnell was credited with beginning the first airline from Edmonton into the arctic in 1929. During the Second World War Brintnell was president of Aircraft Repair Ltd., which he bought in April 1942, later known as Northwest Industries Ltd. resigning to take over the aircraft repair plant in Edmonton operated by Mackenzie Air Services Ltd. He bought the plant in 1942 and established Aircraft Repair Ltd. in April 1942. In July 1946 Brintnell received the Order of the British Empire for his work with the aircraft repair plant, a vital part of maintaining the Northwest Staging Route, and the Lend-Lease flights through Edmonton.

Leigh Brintnell was inducted into the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame in 1975. A neighbourhood in north Edmonton also bears his name.

Dr. Francis G. Winspear, 1903-1997, was a prominent businessman and philanthropist living in Edmonton. He was the president of Northwest Industries Ltd, a significant tenant of Hangar 11, during its period of significance.

Dr. Winspear was the President and CEO of at least 19 businesses. He had a special genius to inspire and lead others, and was a major factor in building the strongest university accounting program in Canada. Dr. Winspear's gift, the single biggest by an individual to a Canadian arts organization, resulted in the successful construction of Edmonton's Winspear Centre concert hall.

Coming to Canada from England with his family as a young child, Dr. Winspear grew up in a prairie hamlet south of Strathmore. He attended high school in Calgary and graduated at the age of 14. Too young for university, he opted to work four years at the Calgary branch of the Bank of Toronto, take correspondence courses from Queen's University and eventually article with Touche and Co. In 1928, Dr. Winspear was hired by Peat Marwick and Mitchel to run their sub-office in Edmonton.

With a special genius to inspire and lead others, Dr. Winspear was fully engaged in all aspects of life. He was the President and CEO of at least 19 businesses and served on the Board of Directors of 14 other public companies. With a flair for resuscitating failing businesses, there was hardly a major industry he didn't manage or develop over his 60-year career, all of which were important to the development of Alberta from the 1930s through to the 1960s. Among the 40-odd companies he owned: Premier Steel, which opened the first basic steel plant in Alberta; the aviation repair giant Northwest Industries; Gold Standard Oils, which was a shareholder in the Great Canadian Oils Sands venture; controlled Echo Bay Mining, one of Canada's largest silver producers; B.C. Airlines, Swanson Lumber, Consolidated Finance and companies dealing in products as diverse as furniture and oxygen.

Dr. Winspear was associated with the University of Alberta from the late 1920s, as a professor of accounting for 20 years, dean of the business school, and Professor Emeritus. He was a major factor in building the strongest university accounting program in Canada, as an instructor for many years, and as a major donor to several faculties at the University of Alberta, as well as a renowned library. Professors in accounting, international business, labour economics and music are at the University of Alberta due to Dr. Winspear's support. The Francis G. Winspear Chair in Professional Accounting was the first Chair at the University to be funded by a private donation.

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He was astonishingly generous to an array of culture, education and social service groups and an exceptional patron of the arts. Dr. Winspear felt strongly that music is part of an educated man's well-being. Dr. Winspear's gift, the single biggest by an individual to a Canadian arts organization, resulted in the successful construction of Edmonton's newest concert hall, opening in 1997, which is named in his honour. He was not a passive financial supporter but was knowledgeable and often contributed needed expertise to strengthen the boards of many organizations. He was one of the founders of the Edmonton Opera Company and, through the Winspear Foundation, established several decades ago and now the Winspear Fund, substantially supports the Edmonton Art Gallery and was the main source of funds for many Alberta and Western Canadian charities.

He was named an Officer in the Order of Canada, and received an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree and Honorary Doctor of Science degree from the University of Alberta.

Dr. Winspear was also Past President of the United Way, the Edmonton and Canadian Chambers of Commerce, honorary Chairman of Edmonton Opera and the Edmonton Community Foundation.

Dr. Winspear's analytical mind, memory for detail and capacity for working long hours laid the foundation of his fortune. He strongly believed that people should be interested in their communities and do what they can to make them satisfactory in every respect, as beautiful as possible, as receptive as possible to the good things in life.

Through his uncommon vision, business acumen, leadership, philanthropic activity and care for his community, Dr. Francis Winspear provided a role model for individuals who have known him and known of his accomplishments. His leadership by example will be lasting.

Reference: This description of Francis G. Winspear was extracted from the Albert Order of Excellence website. <https://www.lieutenantgovernor.ab.ca/Aoe/arts/francis-winspear/index.html>



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3.2.3 Design / Style / Construction

1. Style / Type / Method of Construction
2. Work of a Master
3. High Artistic Value

The Edmonton Municipal Airport (originally Blatchford Field) was initiated in 1924. Over the years, the airport was a critically important component in opening up the north. During the WW2 years, the airport served the Canadian and American defense of the west coast. Many hangars were constructed to accommodate military operations at the airport. After the war, Hangar 11 reverted to commercial/industrial use until it closed in the early 2000s. Hangar 11 is a unique and significant industrial structure in the city and is the only remaining hangars of its style. The history of Edmonton has been deeply influenced by the numerous operations at Edmonton Municipal Airport and its unique buildings.

Many buildings and structures were designed for industrial and functional reasons, without pretension to architectural style. The value of these utilitarian structures is in the expression of their function, either in their layout, design or materials, reflecting the nature of the working processes that they supported. Examples include hangars, factories, shipyards and manufacturing. The functional design of these industrial structures reflects specific forms that were tailored to their specific uses. They have value in demonstrating the nature of labour, economic drivers, processes and products important to the development of the city.

The 20th C. Functional Style of Hangar 11 is defined by its wood component Bowstring truss roof structure to provide a huge clear span in order to accommodate the servicing and repair of large aircraft. Unlike many other hangars, Hangar 11 also accommodated significant office uses, which flanked the main hanger hall itself, using functional design elements derived from the 20th C. International Style that was just coming into fashion in Edmonton. This is reflected mainly in the use of multiple rows of strip windows and the lack of ornament on both the exterior and interior of the building.

Construction of the building is indicated as including prominent Edmonton Architect G.H. MacDonald, and contractor H.S. MacDonald, as noted on the "Assembly Plant Buildings" cited on the \$650,000 City of Edmonton building permit #1841, of November 17, 1941.

George Heath MacDonald was one of Edmonton's most prolific architects during the first half of the 20th century. His career spanned more than half a century and was high-lighted by buildings such as the Edmonton Public Library. MacDonald had returned to Edmonton where he had worked as a draftsman and student architect since 1904 following his graduation from McGill's School of Architecture in 1911. Like other graduates of McGill, he had to adapt his academic training to a location where building traditions, materials, and processes were different from Montreal. After MacDonald graduated from McGill University with honours in 1911, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Architecture, he returned to Edmonton in time to profit from a period of building growth not equaled until the oil boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s. His continued association with architect Magoon was formally recognized in the partnership Magoon and MacDonald. From the outset it is evident that MacDonald assumed the role of designer and Magoon, who sought the clients, assumed the role of office manager. By the early 1920s, however, MacDonald was becoming responsible for more and more of the managerial tasks as well as continuing in his role as the design partner in the firm. MacDonald's contributions were recognized with the name of the firm being changed to MacDonald and Magoon, beginning in 1922. They remained partners until Magoon's retirement in 1938.

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MacDonald retired in 1958, his career as a licensed architect spanning more than 40 years. Between 1911 and 1958 MacDonald was involved in more than 180 projects in Edmonton alone. Much of his work reflects the education he received at McGill, modulated by the evolving trends in Canadian architecture during the years surrounding the two world wars. Some Edmonton examples, in addition to the Public Library, which depict the variety of his work are the numerous houses he designed, the Ruthenian Girls School (1912), the YWCA (1921), the Salvation Army temple (1925), and the buildings for Concordia College (1930).

Reference: SSAC Bulletin 21:3



The wood component Bowstring roof trusses

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3.2.4 Landmark / Symbolic Value

A resource must be particularly prominent or conspicuous, and must have acquired special visual, sentimental or symbolic value that transcends its function. A landmark contributes to the distinctive character of the municipality.

Hangar 11 is a very large and unique industrial building at the former Edmonton Municipal Airport. It stands out, in its diminished airport context, as the last remaining hangar on the east side of the former airport lands.

Hangar 11 is noted for its overall imposing composition consisting of massive, clad Bowstring trusses resulting in a huge curved roof over a large airplane hall, flanked by 3-storey office wings.

Hangar 11 contributes to the distinctive character of the area formerly known as Blatchford Field and Edmonton Municipal Airport and currently known as “Blatchford”.



Hangar 11 as seen from the northwest in 2017

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3.2.5 Integrity

Integrity refers to the originality of the building components. **Hangar 11 retains a high level of integrity with few major alterations.** The main building interventions over the years include the following:

EXTERIOR

- The original control tower has been dismantled. The base of the tower above the west office wing remains as a remnant of the original configuration.
- The 2 loading bays on the west side are not original. The date of their construction is undetermined.
- The original exterior siding over the entire building has been removed and replaced with aluminum siding. The original siding material remains undetermined.
- All the original exterior windows and doors have been replaced. The date on the sealed glazing units is 1977, which may be the date of other exterior alterations such as the siding replacement. The original window and door openings remain intact.
- One of the rolling doors in the south elevation has been replaced with a contemporary upward-opening garage door.

INTERIOR

- There have been some modifications to the interior configuration and finishes of rooms in the office wings.
- There have been a few modifications to the door and window openings from the office wings into the main Hall.
- There have been a few modifications to the wall finishes in the main hall.
- Most of the washrooms have been upgraded.
- The linoleum-type flooring covering in some areas of the office wings may not be original. Some floors in the west office area were covered in wood parquet
- The ceiling lighting in the main hall has been replaced with contemporary, high efficiency fixtures.

Integrity Assessment

1. **Location** is the place where an historic resource was constructed or the site where an historic activity or event occurred

Hangar 11 retains satisfactory Location integrity.

2. **Design** is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure and style of a resource.

Hangar 11 retains satisfactory Design integrity.

3. **Environment** is the physical setting of an historic resource. Whereas location refers to a specific place, environment refers to the character of the place in which a resource played its historic role.

Hangar 11 does not retain satisfactory Environment integrity. The airport has been closed and the building has no current use.

4. **Materials** are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period(s) or time frame and in a particular pattern or configuration to form an historic resource.

Hangar 11 retains satisfactory Materials integrity.

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5. **Workmanship** is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history.

Hangar 11 retains satisfactory Workmanship integrity.

6. **Feeling** is the resource's continued *ability to convey* the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

Hangar 11 retains satisfactory Feeling integrity .

7. **Association** is a *direct link* between an historic resource and a significant historical theme, activity or event, or an institution or person.

Hangar 11 does not currently retain Association integrity. The airport has been closed and the building has no current use.



The interior of hangar 11 in 2017

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4.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

The 1942 Hangar 11 is one of numerous hangars that were constructed at the Edmonton Municipal Airport, also known as Blatchford Field (1924), during WW2. It is located in the north central sector of the city and is situated at the east side of the former airport, north of Kingsway Avenue, along Airport Road, formerly 109 Street.

4.2 HERITAGE VALUE

Hangar 11 is associated with the Canadian/US military operations during WW2 at the Edmonton Municipal Airport. The Edmonton Municipal Airport was significantly expanded during WW2 in order to accommodate military flight operations of the Royal Canadian Air Force and the USA Air Force. This airport was one of the busiest in North America at the time and was instrumental in developing access to the Canadian North and Alaska while defending the west coast of North America from invasion.

Hangar 11 is associated with various important aspects of the WW2 operations at the airport, including the Northwest Staging Route in order to provide a secure route by land (the Alaska Highway) and air for the delivery of aircraft and personnel to Alaska as part of the Allied defence of both the Pacific and the western border of Russia.

Hangar 11 is associated with the important Lend-Lease Program that provided aircraft to Russia during WW2, the Edmonton Municipal Airport being one of the busiest and most important service centres and staging grounds along the Northwest Staging Route.

Hangar 11 is associated with the important industrial activities of Aircraft Repair Ltd., later known as Northwest Industries Ltd after WW2, a commercial aircraft service company. Aircraft Repair Ltd. was a prominent commercial aircraft service company that provided full maintenance, repair, overhaul, servicing, modification and conversion facilities during WW2 for the military. The company became known as Northwest Industries Ltd. providing the same services after WW2 for civil operators whose base or port of call was Edmonton. Among the services provided were "airline terminal" lounge facilities and full weather and flight-planning information. Northwest Industries Ltd employed 800 people at the Edmonton Municipal Airport during the mid-1950s. *Reference: Flight Magazine, 24 August 1956*

Hangar 11 is associated with the civil transportation industry after WW2 that serviced northern Canada from its base at the Edmonton Municipal Airport.

Hangar 11 is associated with prominent Edmonton aviation pioneer W. Leigh Brintnell who was an owner and president of Aircraft Repair Ltd., which was the tenant during WW2. He remained in this position with Northwest Industries Ltd. until 1948. W. Leigh Brintnell, aviation pioneer and entrepreneur, is a significant individual in Edmonton's aviation history, associated with Mackenzie Airlines, North West Industries, and Aircraft Repair Ltd. Hangar 11 has a close association with one of the foremost aviation pioneers and entrepreneurs in the history of western Canada.

Hangar 11 is associated with prominent Edmonton businessman and philanthropist, Francis G. Winspear who was an owner and the president of Northwest Industries Ltd. after the departure of Leigh Brintnell in the late 1940s. As a successful businessman, Francis G. Winspear was generous to an array of culture, education and social service groups and an exceptional patron of the arts. Dr. Winspear felt strongly that music is part of an educated man's well-being. Dr. Winspear's gift, the single biggest by an individual to a

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Canadian arts organization, resulted in the successful construction of Edmonton's newest concert hall, opening in 1997, which is named in his honour. He contributed needed expertise to strengthen the boards of many organizations. He was one of the founders of the Edmonton Opera Company and, through the Winspear Foundation, established the Winspear Fund, which substantially supports the Edmonton Art Gallery and was the main source of funds for many Alberta and Western Canadian charities. Francis G. Winspear was an Officer of the Order of Canada.

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Reference: SSAC Bulletin 21:3



WW2 troops outside the Post Exchange with Hangar 11 in the background

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4.3 CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

SITE

- original location at the east side of the former City Centre Airport.

EXTERIOR

- form, scale and massing as expressed by its central vaulted roof over the main Hall, flanked on the east and the west by three-storey attached office wings, a single story office wing adjacent to the main east entrance, a single storey boiler wing and chimney at the NE corner and single storey loading bays on the west side.
- 20thC Functional Style mixed with International Style elements. The main Hall roof is a functional expression of the long-span, Bowstring truss structure. The adjoining 3-storey office wings express the stripped down International Style with long rows of strip windows and no decorations.
- the original exterior cladding (undetermined) has been replaced with aluminum siding;
- original, tall, rolling access doors to the main Hall at both the north and south facades, clad in panelized painted wood veneer with a single window in each south access door. The rolling doors are fitted with steel roller wheels on embedded steel tracks in the concrete floor for complete opening up of the main Hall at both ends;
- original window and door openings throughout;
- original exterior fire escapes on all elevations with wood platforms and wood steps and handrails, as well as some with steel escape ladders.
- remnant base of the original control tower protruding above the west office wing roof;
- two one-storey loading bay additions (not original to 1942) on the west side of the building;

INTERIOR

- form and scale of the main Hall;
- concrete floor in the main Hall with wood drainage grilles across the rolling door openings;
- heavy-timber structure for both the Hall structure and adjoining office wings;
- massive wood Bowstring trusses over the main Hall;
- exposed heavy timber columns with diagonal bracing to support the Bowstring trusses over the Hall;
- wood 2x12 roof framing with diagonally placed 1x6 wood sheathing exposed on the interior of the truss space above the Hall;
- suspended wood-framed ceiling over the main Hall;
- gypsum board wall cladding for the walls and ceiling of the main Hall;
- original tall rolling doors, clad in painted panelized wood veneer, with a single window in each south

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- door, in both the north and south ends of the Hall in order to provide access for planes;
 - rolling door hardware, steel tracks and storage pockets built into the ends of the office wings;
 - original painted single-hung wood windows between the second floor of both office wings and the Hall;
 - linoleum-type floor coverings on many of the floors in the office wings;
 - original 1x4 clear fir flooring throughout the office wings;
 - many remnants of the original room layouts in the office wings;
 - many original painted wood panel office doors with painted wood trims;
 - wood stairs between floors in the office wings;
 - large freight elevator in the west office wing with counter-balanced, upward sliding slatted-wood gates;
 - mechanical rooms in the office wings with original air-handling units;
 - washroom layout in the east wing main floor with original fixtures and painted wood privacy screens;



A washroom with its original fixtures and finishes

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APPENDIX: EDMONTON MUNICIPAL AIRPORT HANGAR 11 (1942)

by Ken Tingley

Prepared for the Heritage Assessment of Hangar 11, March 2017

The impact of the Second World War came swiftly to Blatchford Field. Historian Mark Hopkins describes the first reaction of Edmonton's aviation community to the outbreak of hostilities in Europe in September 1939. "The city of Edmonton was quick to recognize the potential use of Blatchford Field in the war effort, and offered Ottawa the use of its air harbour facilities" he wrote.

Ottawa was equally swift to respond; and Canada agreed to pay the city of Edmonton one dollar per annum for the duration of the war. Initially two criteria were established, the first being that Blatchford Field continue its operations as one of the nation's leading air-freight centres. Commercial business and services, especially to the north, were to continue as before. The second requested that Captain Jimmy Bell continue to manage the overall operation of the airport under the jurisdiction of the Royal Canadian Air Force. This met with full approval as Captain Bell already had been associated with, or been managing, the airfield for almost two decades with great success.

This agreement ensured that the city airport would see an incredible increase in the volume of air traffic during the war. This situation rapidly increased the need for storage and maintenance facilities. [1]

The Second World War transformed the old Blatchford Field, already famous as a jumping off point for the north. Its physical appearance and infrastructure underwent a significant change, becoming a true international airport. One history describes this change:



Edmonton Municipal Airport, April 1st, 1939. National Archives of Canada, C147985.

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aircraft were used for training, and many crashed, forcing the Department of National Defence to open an aircraft repair depot on the north side of the airport, the site becoming the nucleus for aero manufacturers for decades after.... [2]

In 1941, Edmonton raised \$92,000 to build an impressive two-story terminal at the airport, with a control tower, offices for both Trans-Canada Airline and Canadian Pacific Airline, as well as the airport administration.

More than anything else, it was the arrival of the United States Air Force that really changed the airport. Edmonton was a major refueling base on the Northwest Staging Route the United States Army Air Force used to ferry aircraft to Alaska and then to the Soviet Union. The USAF built its own hangars on the east side, but so many of its aircraft were flying through (sometimes 800 a day) that it eventually built its own air base at Namao, north of the city and moved out of Blatchford in 1945. After the war all the RCAF's military activities were also transferred from Blatchford to Namao.... With the war's end, the City of Edmonton took control of its airport once more, with the Department of Transport providing a small financial subsidy. By 1957, even this aid was unnecessary as Blatchford was busy enough to become entirely self-supporting. [3]



Aircraft Repair Ltd. hangar. Ansons, Harvards, Lend-lease Bell P-39 Airacobras en route to Russia via Alaska. Courtesy, Alberta Aviation Museum, from *For King and Country*.

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The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan was one of Canada's greatest contributions to the war effort. And, as historian Patricia Myers observes, "[in] Alberta, the BCATP dominated aviation throughout the war years." [4]

On 2 July 1940 the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force was authorized to recruit women for training in a number of ground trades to release men for combat duties. Later renamed the RCAF Women's Division, it recruited and trained 17,038 women. Women became an important part of the BCATP activities as the war progressed. Their wartime role at Aircraft Industries Inc. in Edmonton also should be remembered as an important contribution to the home front.



Women working at No 2 AOS, Blatchford Field. City of Edmonton Archives, EA 10-3181-46-4.

On 5 June 1942 the original BCATP agreement, which was to last until 31 March 1943, was extended to 31 March 1945, and included many additional facilities. However, by 16 February 1944, the large reserve of aircrew already trained or in training led to a reduction in the BCATP. During May and June 1944 recruiting was suspended and the recruiting offices in Edmonton and across the country were closed.

On 1 June 1944 the North West Air Command (NWAC) was formed, with headquarters located in Edmonton, the result of an incredible increase in air traffic through the city airport. The NWAC was placed under the command of Air Vice Marshal T.A. Lawrence, whose responsibility was to take over the control, operation and maintenance of the aerodromes and aircraft control facilities comprising the North West Staging Route. (On 1 March 1947 the RCAF was reorganized into two geographical commands: Central Air Command, with headquarters located in Trenton, and North-West Air Command, with its

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headquarters located in Edmonton. By this time most activities had transferred to the new air facilities located at Namao.)

Under BCATP, Edmonton became the location of an Initial Training School, an Elementary Flying Training School, and an Air Observer School. Air Observer School 2 was located at the Edmonton Airport, as was Elementary Flying Training School 16.

Canadian Airlines won the contract to operate the No. 2 AOS, and grew accordingly in commercial strength, reputation, and postwar prospects. No. 2 AOS operated from 5 August 1940 to 14 July 1944, and used Ansons for training purposes for the duration.

The speed with which the airport facilities were constructed was breathtaking. Tony Cashman describes how this occurred:

Construction must keep a step ahead of the Training Plan. This cannot be done with conventional designs and methods. A simple hangar is required. Army engineers already have it; just take a standard army drill hall and add aircraft doors. The key is prefabrication.

The forests of British Columbia are mobilized for fir for hangars. Canadian Creosote, a CPR company, has timber rights and a Vancouver plant that can pre-cut massive fir beams and pre-drill them for bolts and rings. Pieces are shipped to every site in Canada, where they are laid on the ground to be bolted and cabled and then raised to position. Thousands of multi-paned windows are framed in wood by Pilkington Glass. Wooden doors are shipped by Rogers Wilcox. It is a typical Canadian success story; no one ever hears about it. [5]

Blatchford Field needed substantial work to bring it up to acceptable specifications for long-distance flights, let alone the requirements which it would soon become necessary with the advent of the war. On 17 November 1939 Order-in-Council PC 3710 came into effect. This gave the government the authority to follow recommendations of the Ministers of Defence and Transport by selecting "suitable aerodrome sites for the purpose of the scheme for the training of Air Force personnel of the United Kingdom and Dominions in Canada", survey of the sites, the preparation of development plans and specifications, the acquisition of the necessary properties, and the development and construction of the aerodromes. [6]

K.S. Maclachlan, Acting Deputy Minister (Naval and Air) alerted his Deputy Minister that "[in] arriving at agreements for the acquisition of aerodromes belonging to municipalities it is considered essential that the control and administration of the aerodromes used in connection with the ... plan must be vested in the Department of National Defence or the Department of Transport, and not in any Municipality or private body...."

On the same date Maclachlan noted that the first flight schools were scheduled to open on 27 May 1940. "It is, therefore, obviously essential that the development of these aerodromes be put in hand within the next few weeks." [7]

Bert Haddow wrote to the Department of National Defence on 25 January:

I do not know just what is in mind in the way of enlargement, and construction on the field, and also hangar and housing construction, but I would like to say that we are very anxious to co-operate in any way we can and we would be very glad if it would relieve your own Department, or the Royal Canadian Air Force, to supervise any work which you have to do here. [8]

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The Minister of Munitions and Supply tabled a report on the transfer of the Edmonton airport with the Committee of the Privy Council dated 12 August 1940. On 13 August Order-in-Council PC 3874 authorized the agreement, and it came into effect. Under the agreement the federal government took over virtually all aspects of the operation of Blatchford Field, and made provision that hangars and other infrastructure be given to the city when the federal government no longer had need of them. The City would receive one dollar for the use of the airport. This document would govern the history of Blatchford Field for the duration of the war. It had been put together very quickly, but involved several drafts and much discussion. [9]

The original “agreement between His Majesty and the City of Edmonton covering the operation of the Edmonton Airport for war training purposes during the period of hostilities” [Agreement 32081] came into play in August 1940 when an inspector visited Blatchford Field to arrange the various financial details of the agreement. At this time, airport control had been instituted “using such space as is available at the top of the hangar until such time as the Control Tower is completed”. [10]

In March 1941 the British Columbia lumber industry lobbied the government to use BC lumber in standard timber construction, used previously by the RCAF. One civil servant noted in a memo to Commander C.P. Edwards, Deputy Minister of Transport: “There is, of course, the advantage of utilizing a native product, available in adequate quantities in British Columbia, as compared with using steel, for which the war demand is heavy in comparison with the available Canadian supply.” [11]

By January 1942 Leigh Brintnell, with Aircraft Repair Limited, had made “satisfactory arrangements through the Department of Munitions and Supply to take care of the servicing and what storage can be accommodated [of USAAF aircraft]. Should there be an overflow at any time and [Edmonton] have space available in one of the Municipal hangars, I am sure they would appreciate if you would arrange storage at the usual rates.” [12]

By May 1942 field development at Edmonton was forging ahead. A contract had been awarded for the construction of the North-South runway, and the extension and widening of the existing runways to the dimensions required. The contractor was setting up the plant for aggregate supply and placing orders for drain tile. He had ordered in additional concrete equipment for early delivery and was engaged in laying out a concrete mixing plant. Tentative sketches were prepared for the barracks, mess hall and garage.

Mr. Murphy of the Department of Munitions and Supply has been endeavouring for the last ten days to get a ruling from the Steel Controller as to whether we can get structural steel to erect the standard R.C.A.F. design for this size of hangar. We have requested Colonel Hyde to forward specifications and further details of the vaulted arch trusses of the hangar erected by North West Air Lines at Fargo, so that this design can be considered in the event that we cannot get structural steel. Mr. Murphy promised to have something definite on the structural steel deliveries by the end of the week.” [13]

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In April 1942 the USAAF requested additional facilities and accommodation along the Northwest Staging Route to take care of their increased activity northward to Alaska and the Aleutians. Further requests were made in June, and more construction began as a large influx of workmen and engineers headed north. An RCAF report noted that, “[due] to the increasing military character of the traffic over the route it was considered advisable for the RCAF to take over the care and maintenance of the aerodromes. This decision was arrived at in the month of June and supervisory officers were posted to the airports in July....” However, the demands on the local labour force was so great that the United States Army moved a Labour Battalion to Edmonton and northward to the various aerodromes along the expanding air route. [14]

Construction planned in Edmonton for the US Ferry Command by the Aerodrome Development Committee, included a hangar, two 54-man barrack units, two 30-man barrack units, a double mess hall and a garage. The hangar was to be constructed of steel if possible. The hangar site was to be considered further “as clearances were not considered satisfactory”. [15]

G.L. McGee, Supervising Engineer of Aerodromes, visited Edmonton on 26 June 1942, and visited H.G. MacDonald, the architect and building contractor for the US Army projects. After inspecting the building site, McGee arranged for MacDonald to lay out the work. McKee reported:

Checked one concrete plant on the field and contractor’s city plants with contractor R.C. Marshall, Assistant D.A.E. and Resident Engineer. Plants all set up and ready to operate. Excessive rains in June had slowed up the works program. Gravel base laid for concrete apron for hangar. [16]

On 11 July 1942 J.A. Wilson, the Director of Air Services sent a staff circular to all interested parties outlining an important change to the organization and administration of airports along the Northwest Staging Route. The Department of National Defence reorganized R.C.A.F, with detachments to be assigned to the NWSR for the purpose of operating the airports and the airway. Wing Commander C. M. G. Farrell, C. 364 – was in charge of Edmonton while Flight Lieutenant D. M. Shields, C. 3367 – was also posted to Edmonton. [17]

In August 1942 Major Mensing, Ferrying Division, US Transport Command, telephoned Controller of Civil Aviation McLean from Great Fall, Montana. He requested that work be sped up along the NWSR, including Edmonton, where he asked that a 55-hour week be initiated on the Edmonton contracts. The contractor responded by noting that “while the heavy carpenter work is in progress, no good purpose would be served by working the carpenters much beyond the regulation week as they are mostly men of middle age or over and might play out if worked long hours and in the end nothing would be gained.... With the labour conditions such as they are, it is impossible to get younger experienced carpenters able to work the long hours”. [18]

The USAAF created a great deal of pressure to speed up construction of its facilities in Edmonton. In November 1942 its local officers made demands that construction of the additional hangar, a hospital and 150-man barrack be hurried ahead, *despite the fact that no detailed drawings existed at the time*. [Italics added] With only preliminary plans, and with winter weather closing in, problems seemed inevitable. Progress was made on footings for the structural timber trusses provided by the USAAF. Specifications were worked out on the job as it hurried ahead. [19]

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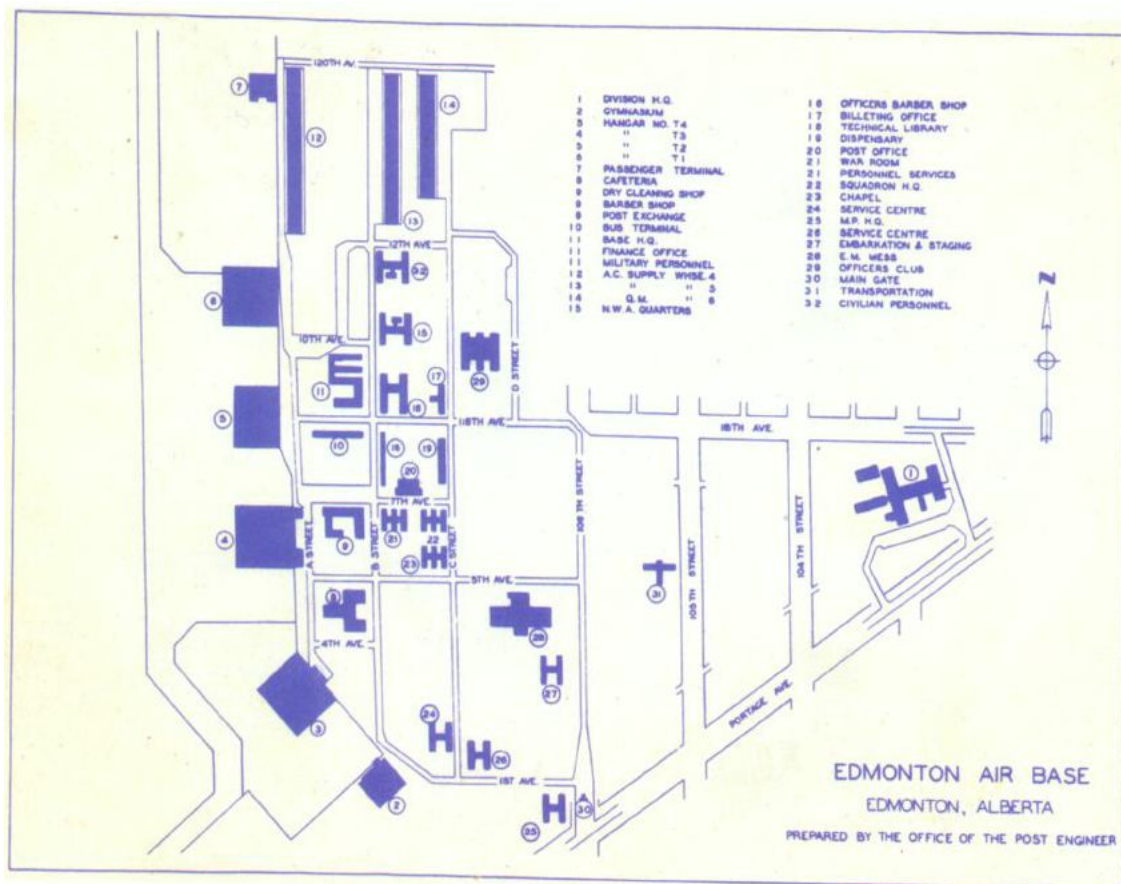
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Control of the North West Staging Route came under the Air Officer Commanding, No. 4 Training Command, on 15 October 1942. That officer was Wing Commander Con Farrell.

The most important and largest of the Canadian bases on the route was Edmonton. More than any other of the complexes on the route, the Edmonton air facilities were constructed by Canadians. This was because Edmonton labour and political organizations insisted that Canadian workers be used for local construction projects. Edmonton served as headquarters of the Alaskan Wing of the Air Transport Command and became home of most of the wing's Canadian-based personnel. Important modification facilities also existed in Edmonton, where airplanes could be adapted for different weather or battlefield conditions or defects could be corrected. When Soviet officials once demanded that Lend-Lease P-63 fighters be modified with strengthened fuselages before they could be accepted, Aircraft Repair, Limited, of Edmonton accomplished the work on sixty-two of the planes in two weeks. [20]

During the summer of 1943 there was a marked increase in air activity along the N.W.S.R.



Map of the airport given to arriving U.S. personnel. From *Gateway to the North*.

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A contract was awarded to Bennett & White Limited, Edmonton, for construction of a 130 ft. clear span hangar with two-story “lean-tos” for administration offices, a stores building and an 8-bay garage. The site had been prepared by September 1943, but the contractor was experiencing great difficulty in obtaining labourers. The manager of National Selective Service, was requested repeatedly by NWSR Headquarters to give priority to the project, with little success. [21]

Building Permits housed in the City of Edmonton Archives document much of the wartime development at the Municipal Airport.

In October of 1940, permit #1178 is entered on Oct 9 by the Dominion Government for #18 Edmonton Flight Training School at 115 Street and Kingsway. The permit for \$105,000 is for work to be done by Northern Boat Building Company.

Permit #1209 is given on October 9, 1940 to the Dominion Government at the airport for steel work for an “Assembly Plant” for a total of \$80,000. MacDonald and Magoon are the supervising architects, Dominion Bridge Company the contractor.

On October 29, 1940, permit #1306 is taken out by the Dominion Government for an “Aircraft Assembly Plant, totaling \$239,200. Allward and Gavilock and MacDonald and Magoon are listed as Architects. H.G, MacDonald is listed as construction..

Building permits from 1941 show the continued development of the site.

Permit #171 on March 24, 1941, to the Dominion Government is valued at \$16,000. The address of the construction is give as Kingsway [Reserve] and [Quarters]. The contractor listed is Northwest [Roofing or Paving] Co. Ltd.

Permit #265 on April 8, 1940, to the Dominion Government is listed as #2 Air Observers School on the Airport for a total of \$25,000. Bennett and White are the contractors building a canteen and quarters.

Permit #1030 is granted July 12 to the Dominion Government to put up #30/33 steel buildings at 116 and Kingsway. Northern Boat Building has the \$31,000 contract.

The final permit of 1941, #1841, is listed on November 17, 1941. Again, the Dominion Government, at the Airfield, applies, this time for \$650,000. The building is listed as “Assembly Plant Buildings” with the architect listed as G.H. Macdonald, and contractor as H.S. Macdonald.

Permits for the year 1942 show continued growth and activity at the airport.

On August 25, the Department of Transport in Ottawa receives permit #1284 for “Various” buildings on the Airfield. G.H. Macdonald is the architect, S.H. Macdonald the contractor, for the \$350,000 project.

A second permit on August 25, #1285, is listed to the Department of National Defence for \$526,000 on the airport. The Dominion Government Architect is listed as architect.

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Other permits found pertain to general wartime development: August 30, #1516, for \$11,700 at No 3 Manning Depot to the Department of Munitions and Supplies; October 3, #1529, for \$2,000 for repairs to No 3 Manning Depot also to Department of Munitions and Supplies; November 27, #1756, to U.S. Army Engineers at 11250 Jasper Avenue for \$125,000 to build offices, contract to Arch. J. Turnbull and Sons, Constructions Poole; November 28, #1758, Depart of Munitions and Supplies, Exhibition Grounds, for \$8,000 to build Administration and Hospital, Bennett and White contractors; Department of National Defence, #9708 102 Street, to build a Drill Hall and Administration for \$91,000; December 7, #1776, Department of National Defence for Manning Depot #3 Drill Hall, for a total of \$40,000, contractor Waterman and Waterbury.

The *Edmonton Bulletin* reported on 25 August 1942 that between 1 January and 25 August 1942, building permits for \$2,497,075 were applied for, including a major permit for the No. 2 AOS at the airport, including hangars. Another large permit covered the construction of “one large hangar,” among other buildings on the airport site. This was valued at \$350,000 in total.

In late September 1943 excavation was completed for the foundation and concrete was being poured for Hangar No. 67; Officers’ Quarters No. 103, No. 105, No. 106, and No. 107 were just beginning; Enlisted Men’s Mess No. 109 was beginning construction; Barracks and Lavatories No. 111, No. 112, No. 114 through No. 121, and No. 130 and No. 131 were in various stages of construction. Work also was under way on the “Edmonton Satellite Field” in Namao. [22]

The American presence became even more pronounced during 1944. On 18 November 1943 the 402nd Service Squadron was attached to the Edmonton field, as was the 405th Service Squadron at Whitehorse. These units with the 6th Air Depot Group at Fairbanks and the 398th Service Squadron at Nome provided the “higher echelon aircraft maintenance required at the major bases.” [23]

The physical impact of the wartime development on the Edmonton airport was massive. The following examples illustrate the scale of construction for most of the duration of the war. During July 1943 the “U.S. hangar” was complete except for connecting the boilers; the 500-man mess was complete except for installation of the bakers’ oven; the warehouse was complete except for the refrigeration units. By October the crash truck garage and gas station were finished, and officers quarters, motor repair shop and other warehouses under way. The “south” and “north” hangars were just getting started. Runway lighting, taxi strip lighting, northeast approach lighting, all were nearing completion. Lighting for the north-south approach was just getting started, as was the southwest approach lighting.

In March 1944 the “north” officers’ quarters were complete, while the “south” hangar was almost done. The warehouses and the “north” hangar were progressing as expected. During April the Crew Chief and Terminal Building were reported completed and occupied. The “north” hangar was almost finished.

In May 1944 the existing bituminous runways began to be upgraded, with steel frames set to take the conversion to concrete. The Americans, on 10 April 1942, had had asked to have the Edmonton runways upgraded to accommodate aircraft up to 80,000 pounds. They then required accommodation for 130,000 pound planes. By the end of July about a thousand cubic yards of concrete were being laid each day. Estimated costs were \$1,250,000. [24]

By the end of September 1944 heavy excavation was under way on the taxi strip from the Administration Building east. Over two hundred labourers still were working on the site. By the end of October the concrete runways were virtually complete. [25]

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Since the end of the war the hangar has been most closely associated with North West Industries. During the war North West Industries was a major manufacturer, repair facility, and a significant employer of men and women in the Edmonton area.

In 1999 Art Breier purchased the hangar from City Centre Airport Authority, and subleased it to a paintball operation and a holistic healing centre. By 2003 Hangar 11 included two three-story annexes and housed 42 small businesses, including Breier's airplane kit firm. About 65% of these businesses were estimated to be related to the field of aviation at the time. [26]

The significance of Hangar 11 is demonstrated in a number of areas. It is an example of the critical nature of Edmonton's contribution to the Allied Forces success in World War II, with its connections to the United States efforts with Lend Lease, and the work with the Commonwealth during this period. Aviation pioneer and entrepreneur, Lee Brintnell, is an individual significant in Edmonton's aviation history, associated with North West Industries and Air Craft Repair. Building permit and newspaper research suggest a significant possibility of the use of regionally sourced materials, specifically lumber from B.C. Construction of the building is indicated as including prominent Edmonton Architect G.H. Macdonald, and contractor H.S. Macdonald, as noted on the "Assembly Plant Buildings" cited on the \$650,000 City of Edmonton building permit #1841, of November 17, 1941. These connections indicate national, regional and local significance for this structure.

End Notes and References

1. [Mark Hopkins, "Blatchford Field: The War Years, 1939-1945", *For King and Country Alberta in the Second World War*. Ed. Ken Tingley. Edmonton: Reidmore Books; Provincial Museum of Alberta, 1995, p. 229.]
2. [Peter Pigott, *Gateways Airports of Canada*. Lawrencetown Beach, NS: Pottersfield Press, 1996, pp. 59-60.]
3. *Ibid.*
4. [Patricia A. Myers, *Sky Riders An Illustrated History of Aviation in Alberta 1906-1945*. Edmonton: Fifth House Publishers, Friends of Reynolds-Alberta Museum, 1995, p. 154]
5. [Tony Cashman, *Gateway to the North*, Edmonton: Duval Publishing, 2002, p. 140]
6. [OC PC 3710; 17 November 1939; see library and Archives of Canada RG 12 Volume 624 File 11-6-9]
7. [Library and Archives of Canada RG 12 Volume 624 File 11-6-6; 28 December 1939]
8. [Library and Archives of Canada, RG12 Volume 2695 File 5151-W110 part 5; 25 January 1940]
9. [Library and Archives of Canada RG 12 Volume 624 File 11-6-6.]
10. [Library and Archives of Canada RG 23 Volume 2695 File 5151-W110; 3 September 1940]
11. [Library and Archives of Canada RG 12 Volume 1836 File 5158-8 part 4; 6 March 1941]
12. [Library and Archives of Canada RG 23 Volume 2695 File 5151-W110; Wilson to Haddow, 7 January 1942]
13. [Library and Archives of Canada RG 12 Volume 977 File 5164-11 volume 1; Memo: North-West Route, 1 May 1942]
14. [Library and Archives of Canada RG 24 Volume 5170 File HQS 14-16-10; 17 September 1942]
15. [Library and Archives of Canada RG12 Volume 1836 File 5158-8 part 6; Flight Lieutenant J. Vokey, Secretary, Aerodrome Development Committee, DND for Air, Minutes of Special Meeting, 18 May 1942]
16. [Library and Archives of Canada, RG 12, Volume 649, File 14-4-15 Report, 17 July 1942]
17. [Library and Archives of Canada RG 12 Volume 977 File 5164-11 volume 1; Staff Circular 20/42, 11 July 1942]
18. [NAC RG 12 Volume 1405 File 5150-32 volume 2; Draft Report 25 August 1942]
19. [Library and Archives of Canada RG12, Volume 1405 File 5150-32 volume 2, Draft Report 25 August 1942: T. Earl Walker, Acting General Purchasing Agent, Memorandum to the Deputy Minister, 9 November 1942]

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20. [Daniel L. Haulman, "The Northwest Staging Route", *Three Northern Wartime Projects Alaska Highway, Northwest Staging Route, Canol.* Bob Hesketh, ed. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, Canadian Circumpolar Institute, Edmonton and District Historical Society, 1996, pp. 39-40]
21. [Daniel L. Haulman, "The Northwest Staging Route", *Three Northern Wartime Projects Alaska Highway, Northwest Staging Route, Canol.* Bob Hesketh, ed. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, Canadian Circumpolar Institute, Edmonton and District Historical Society, 1996, pp. 39-40]
22. [Library and Archives of Canada RG 12 Volume 1406 File 5150-32 volume 4]
23. [Deane R. Brandon, "ALSIB; The Northwest Ferrying Route through Alaska, 1942-45", *Journal of the American Aviation Historical Society*, Volume XX No. 1 [Spring 1975], p. 28]
24. [Library and Archives of Canada RG 12 Volume 645 File 14-4-5 part 2; NAC RG 12 Volume 1406 File 5150-32 volume 5]
25. [Library and Archives of Canada RG 12 Volume 646 File 14-4-5 part 3]
26. [*Edmonton Journal*, Dave Finlayson, "Hangar tenant says airport authority trying to goad him out of City Centre," 1 March 2003]

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APPENDIX: NAMING DATES FOR EDMONTON'S FIRST AIRPORT

June 16, 1926

Designated as the first municipal airport in Canada, operated under Engineer's Department [City of Edmonton Archives information]

Granted license June 16, 1926 under the 1920 Air Regulations (Federal) to be used "by day" as a "Public Air Harbour" at New Haggmann Estate, Summerwilde. [Victor Sims, CEA, A Historical Description of Activities at the Edmonton Municipal Airport, nd]

22 November 1926, City Council meeting October 1926, resulted in an official name change request to "Blatchford Field". Granted by the Department of National Defense 1 December 1926.

Henderson's Directory 1930

First mentioned as "Municipal Airport" in addresses of businesses

Federal government took over operations because of importance to War effort, and retained control from 1940 to 1946, Edmonton Municipal Airport continued to be the name. [City of Edmonton Archives information]

In 1947 the airport was returned to the City, and a Superintendent was appointed, making the airport a separate department of the City. Name continued as "Municipal Airport" or "Edmonton Municipal Airport" [City of Edmonton Archives information]

Henderson's Directories 1931-1963 indicate the name as "Municipal Airport" or "Edmonton Municipal Airport", with Eldorado Aviation Ltd. in Hangar 11 from 1961 to 1963.

20 November 1964, John. C. Barford suggested at the City Names Advisory Committee that the name "Edmonton Municipal Airport" be changed to "Industrial Airport". The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce had requested this change to the name previously, and the "Industrial Airport" was in general use by 1965.

Henderson's Directory 1964 lists Eldorado Aviation Ltd. at Hangar 11, in the "Industrial Airport". This is the first appearance of the name "Industrial Airport."

In 1965 the airport returned to the City Engineering Department (likely for budgetary reasons) [City of Edmonton Archives information]

A formal bylaw (No. 3092) regulating the airport as the "Edmonton Industrial Airport" was passed December 29, 1967, and the airport again became a separate entity in the City.

Henderson's Directories from 1967 until 1977 addresses appear as "Industrial Airport"

Henderson's Directories show addresses as either "Municipal Airport" or "Industrial Airport" from 1978 to 1980

Henderson's Directory 1981 shows all addresses as "Industrial Airport"

Henderson's Directory 1982 uses both "Industrial Airport" and "Municipal Airport" in addresses

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Henderson's Directory 1984/85 has all addresses listed as "Municipal Airport"

Henderson's Directory 1986 names the airport as "Edmonton Municipal Airport" in its description of transportation in the city.

Henderson's Directory 1987 has first listing for this airport by any name in the business listings, as "Edmonton Municipal Airport"

Henderson's Directories end in 1987. Edmonton Telephone Directories Continue to list the Edmonton Municipal Airport as a separate entity until 1996, when it is placed and noted under the Edmonton Regional Airport Authority.

Telus White Pages Directory 1997-98 lists the name of the airport as "Edmonton City Centre Airport", under the Edmonton Regional Airport Authority.

City Council voted on July 8, 2009, to close the City Centre Airport in stages, starting with Runways 16 to 34 on August 3, 2010 and the last flight out being the Boeing 737 headed to Villeneuve Airport on Nov 29, 2013.

Research Summary:

Edmonton Municipal Airport: 1926-1963

Naming usage varied as follows:

- Edmonton Air Harbour: 16 June 1926, original legislative designation
- Blatchford Field, 1 December 1926, granted by Department of National Defense
- Edmonton Municipal Airport: in general use by 1930, see Henderson's Directory first entry for facility

Edmonton Industrial Airport: 1963-1975

Edmonton Municipal Airport: 1976-1996

Naming usage varied as follows:

- Addresses have references in 1978-1983 to both "Edmonton Municipal" and "Industrial" Airport. This may have been for business convenience.
- In 1986 Henderson's Directory stops referencing a "Class A Airport" in front matter information on City transportation, and specifies the "Edmonton Municipal Airport"

Edmonton City Centre Airport: 1997-2009

- Closure voted for August 2009.
- Closure phased in starting August, 2010.
- Operations ended November 30, 2013.