

March 25, 2013

Ms. Carol Shull
Interim Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW (2280)
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull,

Preservation Texas would like to formally comment on the significance of the Braniff Operations and Maintenance building located at 7701 Lemmon Avenue in Dallas on the Love Field airport. Preservation Texas, founded in 1985, is the only statewide organization dedicated to being the advocate for the historic resources of Texas. We advocate on behalf of our membership and local affiliates for actions by public agencies, private organizations and citizens to protect, restore, and insure economic benefit from historic building, places, artifacts and archives.

We believe that this 1958 building is a significant example of Mid-Century Modern architecture and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to its cultural and architectural significance.

We understand that the eligibility for National Register listing is currently under review at your office, and we wanted to inform you of the some of the reasons we find it to be eligible. After reviewing the building's history and consulting with those involved with the issue we have come to the conclusion that the building should be eligible for listing.

It is our opinion that the Braniff Operations and Maintenance Facility is eligible for listing on the National Register due to its association with Braniff Airways International (Criteria A) and the importance of its architectural design by William Periera and Charles Luckman (Criteria C).

The association of Braniff with the building is very significant as it was designed specifically for their operations center and maintenance, facility which served its fleet and operations around the world. Braniff had a long history with Dallas, as it helped to establish Love Field and later DFW Airport as destinations and international airports. The airline's use of international designers for its planes, uniforms, and buildings was also complementary to Dallas' image as a fashion center. The Operations and Maintenance Facility is one of three Braniff related buildings left in Dallas, the other two being the former Braniff Hostess College (1968) and the Braniff Airways National Headquarters (1957). The Operations and Maintenance Facility was constructed due to the tremendous growth of the airline in the early 1950s and the need to provide a modern center to run operations and efficiently repair airplanes. The operations center was also the first in the country to use a computerized reservation system changing the way airlines reserved tickets for customers.

The design of the building is also extremely significant as it was designed by William Periera and Charles Luckman of Charles Luckman Associates, an important national architectural firm based in Los Angeles. Some of their nationally famous work include the iconic "Theme Building" at the Los Angeles International Airport completed in 1961, and the Transamerica Tower in San Francisco in 1972. Supervising the local design of the building was Dallas architect Mark Lemmon, a notable local architect who designed many outstanding buildings in Dallas, including the Tower Petroleum Building and the Hall of State at Fair Park.

Although changes have occurred to the building from the 1960's through 1995, Preservation Texas finds there to be sufficient evidence to support listing on the National Register based on our understanding of the seven aspects of integrity, and here is where we believe the Braniff building falls:

1. Location – The building is in its original location.
2. Setting – The building still remains a part of the original setting for which it was designed as part of Love Field, an active airport. The construction of a parking garage structure in 1995 does impede visibility of the west wing, but not of the primary and most significant forms of the building.
3. Design – There have been changes to the building with additions and alterations; however, the primary component of the original design with its inverted roof form supported by a steel skeleton is still visible from the public façade. Most of the changes that have been made to the building are reversible.
4. Materials – It is not clear how much of the original material remains in back of the building; however, in the front or north elevation, there appears to be original material present.
5. Workmanship – Modern manufactured materials such as the glass and metal curtain wall and metal cladding remain intact.
6. Feeling – The building still feels very important and modern, and its design still imparts the feeling of flight with its wing roof design visually signaling the building could “take off,” which is very appropriate for its original use and setting as part of Love Field.
7. Association – The association with Braniff Airways is not evident since the airline is no longer in business; however, that could easily be brought back with restoring the lettering to the building identifying it as once part of Braniff.

With these aspects of integrity intact, Preservation Texas finds that the Braniff Operations Center and Maintenance Building is significant enough culturally and architecturally for it to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It is an outstanding example of Mid-Century aviation architecture designed by significant national architects for a business which had a tremendous impact on the City of Dallas. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Anna Glover Hudson
Executive Director



Charlene Orr
President



Walter Diggles, Sr.
Advocacy Chair

Cc: Linda Henderson, Texas Historical Commission
Mary Suhm, City of Dallas - City Manager
Angela Hunt, City of Dallas - Council Member District 14
Mark Duebner, City of Dallas – Director of Aviation
Katherine Seale, City of Dallas -Landmark Commission, Chair