

National designation sought for hangar



Ron Eland/Boulder City Review The Boulder City Navy Hangar was constructed more than 90 years ago and has been owned by the city since the 1960s.

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It's a small piece of Boulder City history that while out of sight, isn't necessarily out of mind.

It was announced last week that the Nevada State Board of Museums and History approved the National Register of Historic Places nomination of the Boulder City Navy Hangar.

Now that it's cleared that hurdle, the National Park Service will determine if the hangar meets the qualifications for national designation.

The hangar was once an integral part of the former Bullock Field, now known as the Old Airport. Over the years it played an important part of Boulder City's aviation history, including that in World War II. The city has owned the hangar, at 1401 Boulder City Parkway, since 1961 and currently uses it for storage.

The city has been behind the hangar receiving designation for quite some time. Earlier this month, Boulder City Historic Preservation Commission chairwoman Blair Davenport wrote a letter to the state regarding the city's support of the hangar, which was constructed in 1933 by master architect Albert Kahn, receiving national recognition.

In her letter she wrote in part, "The hangar stands as an important example of the innovative and functional military and aviation architecture that characterized this critical period in American history. Additionally, the hangar contributes to Boulder City and Henderson's designation as an American World War II Heritage City."

She added, "After reviewing the nomination materials, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the property satisfies the applicable National Register criteria due to its historical significance in aviation and military history, as well as its architectural significance through its association with Albert Kahn and the development of standardized military aviation facilities."

Last year, the Boulder City Council approved a resolution seeking the nomination of the hangar for national designation. Broadbent & Associates, Inc. completed a historic resource survey of the Bullock Field Airport and determined that the Bullock Field Navy Hangar is individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for its association with national defense and military aviation, and for its architectural significance as

an example of Kahn's standardized military hangar design, the city resolution states.

"The hangar is an important part of our city's history and ties in with Boulder City's designation as a World War II Heritage City by the National Park Service," Boulder City Deputy City Manager Michael Mays said this week. "Currently, the hangar is being used for city equipment storage, but in the future when alternative storage space is available, the city council will have the opportunity to solicit other uses for the building through a request for proposal (RFP) process."

Some military history

According to the state report, in July 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order formalizing the transfer of 20 acres at Bullock Field from the Department of the Interior to the Navy Department for use for naval aviation purposes.

Nevada Congressman James Scrugham subsequently secured approval for a \$500,000 expenditure to construct barracks and improve the facility. However, the appropriation was never finalized, and nothing but the hangar, fuel tank, and comfort building were ever constructed. By October of 1941, the commander of the Carrier Division at the Naval Air Station at San Diego recommended that no future expansion of naval aviation facilities at Boulder City be considered.

"The existing facilities had not been used by fleet aircraft since their completion, and considering the distance from the coast, the commander determined that the facility had limited future development potential," the report states. "While additional military posts were established in Boulder City (including Camp Williston) and around the dam following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Navy hangar was not part of this build-up, and was never used by the Navy."