

# News Release



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## **NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION NAMES HANGAR ONE, MOFFETT FIELD IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA TO ITS 2008 LIST OF AMERICA'S 11 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES**

### ***Stunning Piece of California's Aviation History Hangs in the Balance***

**Washington, D.C. (May 20, 2008)** – Today, the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** named **Hangar One, Moffett Field in Santa Clara County, California** to its **2008** list of **America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places**. This annual list highlights important examples of the nation's architectural, cultural and natural heritage that are at risk for destruction or irreparable damage.

Hangar One, with its exceptional character, innovative design and technical virtuosity, has long been one of the most recognizable landmarks of California's Silicon Valley. This cavernous, dome-shaped structure, built in 1932 to house U.S. Navy dirigibles, measures 200 feet tall and covers more than 8 acres of land. Despite its historical and architectural significance, Hangar One's future now hangs in the balance.

A 2003 inspection revealed PCBs are leaking from Hangar One's metallic exterior. Although the Navy transferred Hangar One to NASA in 1994, it remains responsible for environmental remediation. The Navy is not, however, obligated to preserve the building and NASA cannot fund a potential restoration.

The Navy originally proposed to demolish Hangar One, which resulted in an outcry from local residents, preservation groups and elected officials. In response to this public opposition, the Navy agreed to prepare a revised Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis report to assess other viable solutions. While demolition is still a very real possibility, there are preservation-friendly alternatives, such as removal of the contaminated exterior skin and re-cladding it in other materials.

The effort to save Hangar One is now at a critical juncture. Even if complete demolition is avoided, it is anticipated that the Navy will recommend removing the interior structures as well as the skin of the building. This treatment will leave only a skeletal frame exposed to the elements. Advocates fear that this will lead to the slow deterioration and eventual loss of Hangar One. As the community awaits the Navy's final decision, a group of local citizens have formed the grass roots organization Save Hangar One. They continue to wage an effective campaign, coordinating information for the community and others on the status of the Navy's remediation plan and meeting notices. The group is also mobilizing efforts to have the Navy consider rehabilitating Hangar One for adaptive reuse or educational purposes.

"Hangar One is a true architectural landmark of Northern California and an undeniable anchor to Silicon Valley's sense of place," says Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "For a resource of this magnitude and rarity, preservation is crucial. It recalls a bygone era of early aviation and is one of the last visible links we have to the Golden Age of the Great Airships."

Hangar One is one of the largest remaining purpose-built hangars. Even today, it dominates the landscape, towering over an impressive array of 1930s-era Spanish Colonial Revival military buildings, which are now part of NASA's Ames Research Center. It is notable for its colossal Streamline Modern form, and is regarded as a significant catalyst in Silicon Valley's widespread contributions to aviation and space advancement as well as technology research and development. During World War II, it served as a docking station for the USS Macon, the largest aircraft in the world at the time. Hangar One is a contributing element of the Shenandoah Plaza National Historic District, which encompasses 124 acres and 25 structures. It is also individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

**The 2008 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places (in alphabetical order):**

**Boyd Theatre, Philadelphia, Pa.** - Philadelphia's last surviving downtown movie palace—a masterpiece of Art Deco design—faces an uncertain future as it sits vacant and remains vulnerable to demolition. It awaits a preservation-minded buyer to return the vintage venue to its original grandeur.

**California's State Parks** - California's state park system, the largest park system in the U.S., encompasses a vast array of historic and cultural resources that chronicle the state's rich and storied heritage. It also has suffered greatly from years of chronic underfunding and has \$1.2 billion in deferred maintenance. Proposed budget cuts, which would have led to the closure of 48 state parks, have been staved off. The underlying problem remains. Current funds only cover 40% of actual maintenance and operations needs, which means irreplaceable historic and cultural resources remain endangered.

**Charity Hospital and the adjacent neighborhood, New Orleans, La.** - While Charity Hospital sits abandoned, plans call for the demolition of nearly 200 homes in the adjacent Mid-City neighborhood to accommodate construction of two new hospitals. Alternate locations for the new hospitals are available, and Charity Hospital, a National Register-eligible building that closed after Hurricane Katrina, could be rehabilitated to once again serve the community.

**Great Falls Portage, Great Falls, Mont.** - This National Historic Landmark, one of the best preserved landscapes along the Lewis and Clark Trail, is slated to get a massive coal-fired power plant in its front yard. Development abutting the Great Falls Portage, an undeveloped rural area under panoramic blue Montana skies, will irreparably harm the cultural and visual landscape.

**Hangar One, Moffett Field, Santa Clara County, Calif.** - The hangar, a local icon built in 1932 to house U.S. Navy dirigibles, is a cavernous, 200 foot tall dome-shaped structure covering more than 8 acres of land. A 2003 inspection revealed PCBs leaking from the hangar's metallic exterior. Although the Navy transferred Hangar One to NASA in 1992, the Navy is responsible for environmental remediation, but has no mandate to replace the exterior and preserve the building.

**The Lower East Side, New York City** - The Lower East Side embodies the history of immigration, one of the central themes of American history in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, yet development threatens to erase the surviving historic structures. This includes houses of worship, historic theaters, schools and the tenement, a unique architectural type which, by the sheer numbers who lived in such a building, had an impact on more Americans than any other form of urban housing. A New York City landmark designation and contextual zone changes within the neighborhood would preserve the physical character of the neighborhood.

**Michigan Avenue Streetwall, Chicago, Ill.** - This 12-block stretch of historic buildings—dating back to the 1880s—is a virtual encyclopedia of the work of the city's best architects, including Daniel Burnham

and Louis Sullivan. Although this “streetwall” was designated a Chicago Landmark in 2002, its historic character is now being threatened by the inappropriate addition of large-scale towers that retain only small portions of the original buildings or their facades.

**Peace Bridge Neighborhood, Buffalo, N.Y.** - The neighborhood and the site, with homes and buildings dating to the 1850s on two National Register Olmsted parks, is an iconic section of the City of Buffalo. The Public Bridge Authority (PBA) proposes to expand Peace Bridge and include a 45 acre plaza that will eliminate over 100 homes and businesses (dozens of which are eligible to the National Register) and diminish the Olmsted parks. Suitable alternate sites exist, but PBA refuses to properly consider them.

**The Statler Hilton Hotel, Dallas, Texas** - When the Statler Hilton opened in downtown Dallas in 1956, it was hailed as the most modern hotel in the country. Today, the building sits vacant. Located on an increasingly attractive piece of real estate, the Statler Hilton faces an uncertain future as encroaching development pressure heightens the threat of demolition. Current regulations restrict alternate uses, so a sympathetic developer is needed to restore and reopen the Statler as a hotel.

**Sumner Elementary School, Topeka, Kan.** - The school, a National Historic Landmark, helped launch the nation’s Civil Rights Movement as the centerpiece of the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Currently vacant, the school suffers from deferred maintenance and has sustained significant damage from water infiltration and vandalism. Though the city of Topeka owns the school and is required to maintain and protect it, the City Council has authorized its demolition. A sympathetic developer is needed to save and restore this icon.

**Vizcaya and the Bonnet House, Fla.** - Pending development of out-of-scale buildings and corresponding zoning changes will permanently ruin the vistas surrounding Vizcaya Museum & Gardens (Miami) and Bonnet House Museum & Gardens (Ft. Lauderdale) and threatens to set a precedent for future high-rise structures.

**America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places** has identified 200 threatened one-of-a-kind historic treasures since 1988. While a listing does not ensure the protection of a site or guarantee funding, the designation has been a powerful tool for raising awareness and rallying resources to save endangered sites from every region of the country. Whether these sites are urban districts or rural landscapes, Native American landmarks or 20th-century sports arenas, entire communities or single buildings, the list spotlights historic places across America that are threatened by neglect, insufficient funds, inappropriate development or insensitive public policy. At times, that attention has garnered public support to quickly rescue a treasured landmark; while in other instances, it has been the impetus of a long battle to save an important piece of our history.

**To download high resolution images of this year’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places, please visit <http://press.nationaltrust.org>.**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history – and the important moments of everyday life – took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, 9 regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America’s stories. For more information, visit [www.PreservationNation.org](http://www.PreservationNation.org).

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