

446/Mouring

JUL 3 1995

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Mr. David H. Dutton
Director of Projects Review
Department of Historic Resources
221 Governor Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Subject: Deactivation of the Full-Scale Wind Tunnel,
NASA Langley Research Center (LaRC), Hampton, Virginia

The active Full-Scale (30 x 60) Wind Tunnel at LaRC is a National Historic Landmark (NHL). As part of NASA downsizing and streamlining, LaRC is working toward terminating operations in the 30 x 60 by the end of this fiscal year (September 1995).

LaRC requests consultation with your Department on this initial deactivation status, which is judged by LaRC to be the equivalent of a Category I.A.4. Activity as set forth in the Agency Programmatic Agreement (PA) on our NHLs, (i.e. PA among the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Council).

The initial deactivation as of October 1, 1995, will at least create an inactive facility in mothballed status as described in the enclosed "Facility Activity Policy" statement, dated October 6, 1994, (Enclosure 1). Certain removable and adaptive equipment will likely be transferred to another tunnel at LaRC, but this newer measuring or controlling equipment does not pertain to historic property nomination characteristics. There are no plans to disrupt the historic major interior features. Due to the large size of the 30 x 60 and the presence of asbestos in siding and roofing panels, economics, at this juncture, favor maintaining rather than demolishing the structure. This is the LaRC position and the basis of our immediate consultation.

This correspondence is also intended to serve as advance notice of three potential scenarios that may evolve as a result of this deactivation, and that

would require further consultation and an individual Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

One potential scenario that could follow deactivation is a remote and unfeasible one, but it does have a legal basis. The 30 x 60, as with other LaRC facilities in the LaRC East Area on Langley Air Force Base (LAFB) is "permitted". This permission to maintain the existence of such structures is keyed to performing research and testing in them. Technically, under terms of the permit, the Air Force could require LaRC to remove associated structures and utilities when the permitted activity ceases.

Another undetermined scenario would, in contrast, involve continued use of the 30 x 60 as a historic resource. If it emerges that private industry and/or universities or a consortium of them determines to assume operation of the 30 x 60 (with Air Force agreement as landlord), the historic fabric preservation will be enhanced. A MOA among the parties would be in order in that event.

As the third possibility beyond deactivation, LAFB has expressed interest in utilizing deactivated LaRC facilities in the East Area for Air Force purposes (e.g. shops, warehousing, administrative, etc.). Such a transfer would entail various modifications depending on the particular facility and its intended use. For any historic properties involved, MOAs would be in order with the Air Force as one of the primary signatory parties.

In keeping with the documentation stipulation of the PA, the following enclosures are provided to refresh or augment your files on the 30 x 60 tunnel:

- Enclosure 2: Facility Brochure print entitled, "30 x 60 Foot Tunnel, Facility No. 643", revised April 1, 1987.
- Enclosure 3: Two-page excerpt from NASA Facts, dated May 1992.
- Enclosure 4: Two-page excerpt from "Wind Tunnels of NASA", 1981, pp. 22, 23.

LaRC anticipates that some degree of mitigation of the effect(s) of any of these undertakings will be appropriate. Therefore, LaRC has recently contracted with the Historic American Engineering Record of the Department of the Interior to officially record the 30 x 60 for the Library of Congress and for other documentary or interpretive applications.

To expedite this initial consultation, LaRC is also giving notice to the Council by a copy of this correspondence with documentation as referenced above.

We request that your Department telephone the LaRC Facility Preservation Officer (FPO) at your earliest opportunity to indicate the receipt of this correspondence and to conduct or arrange initial consultation. The Center looks forward to your timely response, which will not only be valuable, but will satisfy timing stipulated in the PA. The FPO is Mr. John Mouring, voice (804) 864-6861, fax (804) 864-8096.

We continue to appreciate your assistance in our preservation responsibilities.

original signed by

H. Lee Beach, Jr.
Deputy Director

4 Enclosures

cc (w/Encl.):
NASA--JE

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Eastern Office of Review
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Room 803
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