

Fill er' up – with new tenants

Building last used as Shoppette nears completion of restoration

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There are almost 250 historic buildings and structures on Langley Air Force Base, and centrally located adjacent to St. John Circle on Hammond Avenue is Building 442. For people stationed here from 1965 to 1997, it was the Shoppette. For those who were here from 1940 to 1965, it was the base service station.

When complete, the lot where the building is located won't have gas pumps, air for tires or water for radiators. There won't be those black cords stretched across the concrete to send out that old-time gas station signal bell. And no bow-tied attendant will be on hand to fill up your tank with Ethyl gas. But, the restored architectural features will certainly convey the building's original use.

Once again the facility will resemble how it looked when originally constructed in 1940, albeit with an entirely new purpose. When the restoration of the building is complete in January 2005, it will be home to Air Combat Command Inspector General staff, the Equal Employment Opportunity Office and the Military Equal Opportunity office.

The \$600,000 restoration project was made possible through a memorandum of agreement with the base and the State Historic Preservation Office. Construction of three new F/A-22 hangars required three circa 1932 hangars to be demolished to make room for the new Raptor hangars. To mitigate this loss of historic structures, the restoration of the 64-year-old building became a reality.

The non-historic addition that masked the façade has been removed. The floor to ceiling windows at first glance look like original garage bay doors. A leaded glass window over the entrance will be restored and reinstalled and copper flashing and the original slate roof of the building will be restored and reused.

Changing a buildings' use when its original function has become obsolete is known in Civil Engineer circles as adaptive reuse. A new 20-by-50 foot conference room addition is now located behind Bldg. 442, further supporting the adaptive reuse concept. Brick and synthetic slate comparable to the materials on the original facility will be used in accordance with Secretary of the Interior design standards.

“With these changes, the building will shine as an important component of the historic district of Langley, in the design its original architect once intended.” said Laura Baie, 1st Civil Engineer Squadron Community Planner and Cultural Resources Manager. “Its restoration is a solid example of the commitment Langley has made to the preservation of its heritage.”

As the people in the base and the wing move on to be a part of the Air Force's mission in the 21st Century, many appreciate the quaint reminders of the olden days. For the new tenants of the building: ding-ding – fill ‘er up?