

6. THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

This section provides a focused, analytical discussion of the historical patterns, significant events and activities, environmental, social, political, technological and cultural influences relevant to each theme within the context of Aviation in Ontario. It is intended to establish through analysis the historical significance of the properties associated with each theme. A detailed analysis of each theme, including period of significance, criteria for evaluation, and associated property types, is included.

Properties may be significant for their association with the history and development of Aviation in Ontario under one or more of the identified historic contexts. The selection of property types and associated character-defining features associated with each theme is intended to be inclusive, yet not definitive, in the identification of individual properties that may possess significance.

The threshold of integrity is defined as the ability of the property to convey its historic appearance and/or its historical association. The property should retain a significant number of character-defining features, such that visual, spatial, and contextual relationships may be understood. For example, the property's materials may be replaced, modified, added to, or have new uses yet still retain integrity if its overall appearance continues to convey its original design intent.

Alterations completed within the period of significance will not diminish the historic integrity of the property. Significant alterations occurring outside the period of significance may remove a property for consideration from NRHP listing unless they demonstrate the evolution of the property. Examples of significant alterations include relocation of the building or structure, the introduction of new circulation patterns, and removal of previously documented details and/or ornament. The rarity of a property type should be considered in assessing its degree of alteration. A rare or unique property type permits a greater degree of alterations if its character and association is preserved.

THEME: COMMERCIAL AVIATION, 1946–1967

Major aviation companies, including Lockheed Aircraft Services and GE Aircraft Engines, operated international aircraft support services out of ONT beginning in 1946. ONT's location near the population center of Los Angeles and ground transportation, yet sufficiently removed from developed areas, meant available acreage for multiple hangars and unobstructed runways. The lower costs for property and labor further enticed commercial aviation-related companies to locate divisions at ONT. ONT's capacity to receive and ship heavy cargo was essential to the operations of aviation support services at the airport.

Sub-Theme: Aviation Support Services, 1952–1967

Several international aircraft companies established divisions at ONT that focused on aviation-related support services, including maintenance, modification, and testing of aircraft engines, rather than manufacturing. Support services also included the development of instruments and flight data recorders for both commercial and military clients. In addition to major aviation-related corporations such as Lockheed and GE were numerous smaller companies that provided various services to airline companies, as well as to the military at ONT.

Lockheed Aircraft Services

From 1952 to 1998, LAS, a division of Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, operated at ONT, primarily within a 70-acre parcel in the northwest area of the airport. During its 46 years of operation at Ontario, Lockheed built more than 25 structures, including hangars, office buildings, machine shops, and auxiliary buildings (Douglas and Livingstone 2006) (Figures 8-11).



Figure 8. Aerial view of LAS area (the hangar in the fore right has been demolished), post-1953.
Photographer: Gordon Ayers. Source: Ontario City Library Robert E. Ellingwood Model Colony Room.
Accession No. 3677.



Figure 9. Historic view of entrance to Lockheed executive office building, designed by architect George Vernon Russell. Undated.
Source: Colin Russell.

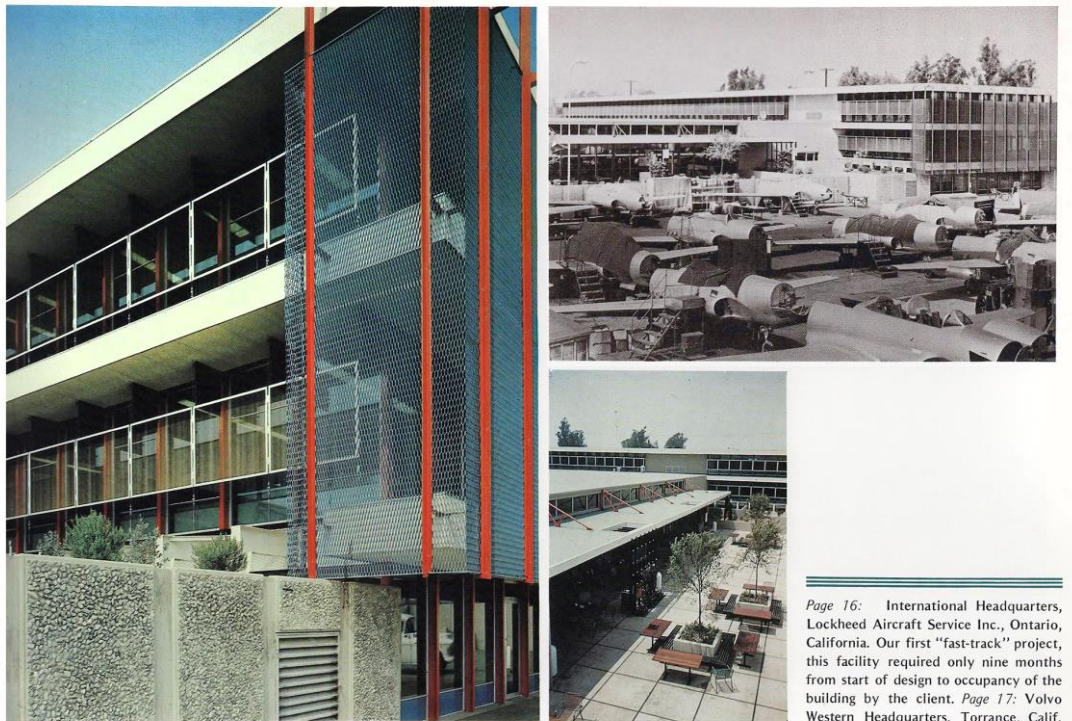


Figure 10. Lockheed brochure showing Mid-Century Modern construction of the executive office building and cafeteria, designed by architect George Vernon Russell. Undated.
Source: Colin Russell.



Figure 11. Lockheed Hangar 2, looking southwest. December 6, 2016.
Source: ASM.

Primary LAS activities at Ontario consisted of modifying and refurbishing commercial and military aircraft. The Ontario facilities served as headquarters for LAS's domestic and international operations (LADOA 1983). LAS also produced a complete line of flight data recording devices, data playback stations, and training and simulation devices (LADOA 1983). Lockheed's manufacture of flight recorders began in 1958 with the introduction of the Model 109 (LADOA 1983:5).

After World War II, with its expertise in maintenance, modification, and overhaul of aircraft, LAS saw an opportunity to expand its support services. In the U.S., the division constructed facilities in California, New York, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Hawaii. In the 1960s, LAS in Ontario became the maintenance and modification center for the highly classified U.S. Air Force fleet of four-engine turbo-prop C-130 aircraft under the program known as "Big Safari" (Lockheed 2017). Big Safari was an Air Force program responsible for maintenance and modification of specialized mission aircraft. It was not a technology development project, but a management program to support multiple projects simultaneously. Big Safari Detachment 4 was located at LAS in 1964 specifically to oversee modification of aircraft for special missions to Southeast Asia. LAS ONT also modified six C-123Bs, which were first-generation deep-penetration jamming aircraft fitted with special receivers and transmitters, Doppler navigation systems, and camouflage paint (Jenkins 2001:121). In 1998, LAS ended 46 years at ONT and permanently closed the facility (Sable 1998).