

NASA INDUSTRIAL PLANT, PROPELLANT TEST LABORATORY
(NASA Industrial Plant, Building No. 128)
12214 Lakewood Boulevard
Downey
Los Angeles County
California

HAER No. CA-310-0

HAER
CA-310-0

**PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

**Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California**

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

NASA INDUSTRIAL PLANT, PROPELLANT TEST LABORATORY
(NASA Industrial Plant Building No. 128)

HAER No. CA-310-O

Location: 12214 Lakewood Boulevard, Downey, Los Angeles County, California.

Date of Construction: Circa 1941

Present Owner(s): City of Downey

Present Occupant(s): Vacant

Present Use: Storage Facility
To be demolished Winter 2003.

Significance: Building No. 128 was used as a propellant test laboratory/ cryogenic/ pneumatic lab support during World War II.

Report Prepared by: Audrey Rutkove, Onyx Architects, 16 N. Marengo Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101

Date: February 2003

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NASA INDUSTRIAL PLANT, PROPELLANT TEST LABORATORY (NASA Industrial Plant Building No. 128)

HAER No. CA-310-O

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- Location:** 12214 Lakewood Boulevard, Downey, Los Angeles County, California.
- UTM:** Zone: 11 395700 mE/3753920 mN
- Significance:** Building No. 128 was used as a propellant test laboratory/ cryogenic/ pneumatic lab support during World War II.
- Description:** Building 128 is a 1,515 square foot "L" shaped plan with two small second story spaces located on both sides of the perimeter of the building (see HAER No. CA-310, page 10 for location of building on site). The lower spaces are constructed of concrete block, with poured in place slab and a concrete roof measuring 1,515 square feet¹.
- The upper level spaces are constructed of wood and appear to have been erected at a later date than the original lower structure. When the upper spaces were initially constructed they were used for offices, then later as storage. The interiors of these spaces are outfitted with electricity, fluorescent lighting and ample shelving (Photograph No. CA-310-O-3). The upper level spaces are accessed by a metal stairwell on the western side of the building and have a small metal walkway leading to each of the spaces (Photograph No. CA-310-O-2).
- In the large rectangular space on the first floor there is acoustic panel on the ceiling and walls (Photograph No. CA-310-O-3 and CA-310-O-4). This was believed to have been placed in the 1960's or 70's to dampen the sounds and vibrations that occurred during testing. There are reinforced steel doors on the first floor of the structure.
- There are still remnants of the work that went on in the laboratory, including the scientific instruments that were used. There are two large ancillary structures at the east and west sides of the buildings. The western structure, which is taller and thought to be older, has a large sloped metal truss roof, steel columns, and no exterior walls (Photograph No. CA-310-O-1 and CA-310-O-2). There are portable metal test cells inside the space that were two levels high. They are labeled test cells A and B. It is believed that thermal protection testing was done inside these metal chambers².
- The smaller and shorter, eastern ancillary structure has a covered sheet metal flat roof, steel framing, and columns. The eastern structure is also without walls, but has a canvas cover over most of it to keep what was within it private and also keep the sun out³.
- Historical Context:** Building 128 was erected in 1941 as a propellant test laboratory. The records for this facility are scarce, however, it is believed that the structure changed functions after 1973 it was used for storage up until 1999. Building 128 is essentially unchanged from its original construction at the lower level and retains a high degree of integrity. In 1999, Boeing closed the Downey plant, and the City of Downey has purchased the vacant property⁴.

Sources:

National Aeronautics and Space Administration. "Final Historic Buildings and Structures Inventory and Evaluation, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Industrial Plant Parcels I and II Downey, California." November 1999. Available from City of Downey, Economic Development Department, City of Downey, Downey, California.

Lea Petersen - The Planning Consortium - 1111 Town and Country Road, Suite 37, Orange County 92868 phone:(714)-569-0616 Interviewed: January 14 and 17, 2003.

Endnote:

1. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. "Final Historic Buildings and Structures Inventory and Evaluation, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Industrial Plant Parcels I and II Downey, California." November 1999 Appendix G.
2. Lea Petersen - The Planning Consortium.
3. Ibid.
4. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. "Final Historic Buildings and Structures Inventory and Evaluation, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Industrial Plant Parcels I and II Downey, California." November 1999 pg 4-25.

Project Information:

This structure is planned for demolition as the City of Downey adapts the abandoned industrial plant for new commercial and municipal uses that include creating a corporate park, public thoroughfare, and making the land available for retail use. Report prepared by Audrey Rutkove, Onyx Architects, February, 2003.

See contextual photographs in HAER report No. CA-310 for views of Building 128.