

The United States Air Force is initiating section 106 consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) for a federal undertaking to construct a new Operational Test Facility and associated detached communications/internet support facility at Nellis Air Force Base (NAFB) in Clark County, Nevada. The purpose of the buildings is to expand the 53rd Wing Group's Operational Test mission vital to continued national security.

The area of potential effects (APE) is located on the eastern corner of the intersection of England Ave and Devlin Dr (Attachment 1). The new Operational Test Facility will be a single-story, 40,000-square foot building 20 feet high. The entire construction footprint will be approximately 165,000 square feet (15,300 square meters). The APE is currently occupied by paved parking lots and landscaped buffer areas.

There are no recorded historical sites within the direct APE. Several historic-age structures that are located within one-half mile of the APE were previously determined not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NHRP). There are three historic structures that previously have been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion A for their association with fighter pilot training during the Cold War located approximately 450ft to the southwest, 500ft to the northeast, and 2,550ft to the west, respectively. The location, design, materials, workmanship, and association—such that they are—will not be altered by the addition of new structures of similar design and function in the vicinity.

Setting and feeling are the only two aspects of integrity for the historic buildings that have the potential to be altered. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) establishes as the policy of the Government to “use measures...to foster under which our modern society and our prehistoric and historic resources can exist in productive harmony and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations” (16 USC 470–1[1] and [5]). The facilitation of new construction, improvements, and upgrades to the flightline and associated infrastructure ensure that NAFB can continue to be utilized for its purpose of training the next generation of elite fighter pilots. NAFB has *Installation Facilities Standards* (IFS 2019:99), which states that new buildings must “Maintain architectural compatibility following AFCFS [Air Force Corporate Facility Standards] and this Installation Facility Standards (IFS) document to create continuity while avoiding monotony.” These standards consider the importance of the historic elements within the overall installation and are consistent with the express purposes of the NHPA and negate any potential visual impacts that would alter the integrity of setting or feeling.

No new aircraft will be added to the installation as part of this undertaking and construction noise will not exceed the noise level of the current array of fighter jets; therefore, there is no short- or long-term auditory effect from this project. Construction of the Operational Test Facility will increase the amount of dust and machinery fumes temporarily. The increased potential for dust will be mitigated through a dust control permit and plan. This potential for an increase in atmospheric dust is temporary and will not have long term cumulative effects.

Overall cumulative effects to the project area include an increase in traffic and personnel to the project area for the duration of the construction project; once construction is complete, approximately 70 additional personnel will be hired or stationed at NAFB after the

implementation of the undertaking at NAFB as a result of this project. As discussed above, the visual effect to historic properties is negated using the IFS, which is consistent with the spirit of the NHPA. As the new buildings will be consistent with the visual, auditory, and atmospheric nature of NAFB, there will be no effect to the significance or the integrity of the known historic properties within the indirect APE. There are no historic properties within the direct APE. NAFB, therefore, has determined there are *no adverse effects* to historic properties.

In accordance with 36 C.F.R. § 800.3(e), NAFB is inviting you to participate in consultation for this undertaking and is seeking your views so they may be considered. A similar letter also will be sent to the State Historic Preservation Office.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this undertaking, please contact the Cultural Resources Office at Nellis Air Force Base via email 99CES.CulturalResources@us.af.mil.

