

INTRODUCTION

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF HRS

Purpose

This study documents historic buildings, structures, and other resources within the Wright Brothers National Memorial, located in Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina. It has been conducted in compliance with Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and as set out in 36 CFR Parts 63 and 800. It has been undertaken as part of a cooperative agreement between the University of Georgia Research Foundation and the Southeast Region of the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Department of the Interior (Cooperative Agreement Number 5000-8, Sub-Agreement Number 5). The study includes a detailed inventory of historic buildings, structures, and sites in accordance with recognized survey procedures as set out in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation* (FR, No. 190, Sep. 29, 1983, pp. 44,720 - 44,726) and, most recently, in National Register *Bulletins* 15, 16, 18, and 21.

An immediate product of the survey is an updated set of List of Classified Structures (LCS) forms for the Park together with completed state inventory forms on each property. Completed LCS forms and photographs are submitted with the study. Additionally, the study includes physical descriptions, historical background information, and assessments of significance, as well as management recommendations. Information provided in this study will be used to update National Register documentation for the park district.

Scope of Work

The Scope of Work described in NPS Cooperative Agreement No. 5000-8-8009, Sub-Agreement No. 5, entitled "Southeastern Park(s) Inventory" called for "a comprehensive inventory of all standing structures constructed before 1950" within a number of parks in the Southeast Region. It also called for updated LCS forms and state inventory information sheets, as well as National Register nominations for eligible properties. Additionally, the Scope called for an overview of historic cultural resources in each park, a discussion of relevant historic contexts and associated properties or property types, as well as management recommendations. Reference to landscape features is also specified in the Scope of Work.

This report meets the requirements set out in the Scope of Work, and in many ways extends beyond the original Scope. In the case of the Wright Brothers National Memorial, a number of structures and features postdating 1950 have been inventoried and assessed. Although the 1959-1960 Wright Brothers Memorial Visitor Center and the 1963 First Flight Airstrip are not presently considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, both may be at a future date.

The study includes a historic base map for the Wright Brothers National Memorial in order to place each resource within an overall geographical context. U. S. Geological Survey maps are also provided. Resources have been documented with two to four photographs (with more extensive photographic coverage for many of the properties).

Contexts

This report relies on the context-based approach to assessment and evaluation as set out particularly in National Register *Bulletins* 15 and 16 (now published as *Bulletins* 16A and 16B). As described in National Register *Bulletin* 15, “to qualify for the National Register, a property must be significant; that is, it must represent a significant part of the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture of an area, and it must have characteristics that make it a good representative of properties associated with that aspect of the past” (National Park Service [1991]a: 7). To assess significance, all properties must be judged against contexts either already recognized or new contexts developed for purposes of the reports. This report relies on the development of a substantial new context, “The Commemoration of the Wright Brothers, 1926-1941,” as well as the long-recognized context for the site, “The Wright Brothers and Early Flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, 1900-1903 .”

The context-based approach allows for the expansion of the periods of significance originally conceived for the park and enables the identification of seven resources as significant and therefore eligible for listing in the National Register. The context approach, especially as applied at the Wright Brothers Memorial, helps to underscore the overall significance of later, essentially commemorative contributions to a site originally valued for its association with the experimental air flight efforts of Orville and Wilbur Wright. Efforts of national and local organizations, federal programs, and even the NPS had important, now historic, impacts on the site, which this study identifies through the context approach.

Project Personnel

This report was undertaken by faculty and graduate students in the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia. The Principal Investigator and the author of the report is William Chapman a Ph.D. anthropologist and historic preservationist (as well as faculty member at the University of Hawaii) with considerable experience at the local, state, and national level in surveying and evaluating historic structures. He was assisted on-site by Ian Firth, another faculty member at the University of Georgia, who provided insights and advice on landscape

features in particular; Firth is a recognized authority on cultural landscapes and a frequent consultant to NPS.

The project also included up to seven graduate assistants, who participated in various levels of the survey and information-gathering for the project. They include Cathleen Turner, Scott Butler, Deborah Rushton, Kinney Clark Joanna Carter, and Jean Arnold, all graduate students in the Historic Preservation Program at the University of Georgia. Tamas Deak, a graduate student in the Landscape Architecture Program, completed the site plans and other illustrations. Graduate student Lisa Crowder was responsible for final production of the report, including many editorial suggestions. Anne Catherine Christian and Laurel Davis, also graduate students in historic preservation at the University of Georgia, proofread the document and made the final assembly of materials. Jill Hanson, historian in the NPS Southeast Field Area Office, substantially revised and edited the final draft submitted by the University of Georgia team.

NPS personnel, particularly Steve Harrison, Museum Curator, Bebe Woody, Cultural Resources Officer, and Mary Moran, Management Assistant, of the Cape Hatteras Group, as well as Len Brown and Kirk Cordell in the NPS Southeast Field Area Office in Atlanta assisted project staff Ruthanne Mitchell and Karen Rehm of NPS provided additional advice on LCS forms and inventory procedures.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WRIGHT BROTHERS NATIONAL MEMORIAL

Location and Boundaries

The Wright Brothers National Memorial park is located on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, about four miles south of the older community of Kitty Hawk, and about seven miles north of the historic coastal village of Nags Head, in Kill Devil Hills. The park is accessible from state route 158, and its entrance gate is located just 300 feet from the highway. Colington Road is located along the south periphery of the park bifurcating park lands in the southwest quadrant.

The Wright Brothers National Memorial comprises approximately 431.4 acres of federally owned land and 6.63 acres of nonfederal land. Expanded from its earlier 314-acre size on June 23, 1959, the park incorporates the historic Kill Devil Hill, the larger of three sand hills present on the site at the time of the Wright brothers experiments of 1900-1903 and now the site of the Wright Brothers Monument; the granite First Flight Marker, north of the monument; the modern visitor center, located in the northeast; a superintendent's quarters (residence) and maintenance area in the southwest; and the First Flight Airstrip, a small airstrip spanning the western boundary of the park. State Route 158 forms the eastern boundary of the park with the exception of a small buffer parcel of land on the east side of the highway; the historic West Hill and relatively arbitrary changes in the boundary due to land ownership defines the west boundary; and Colington Road effectively forms a south boundary. The area is surrounded by vegetated areas on the west and southwest, and by more built-up areas on the southeast, east, and north (see Figures 1 and 2).

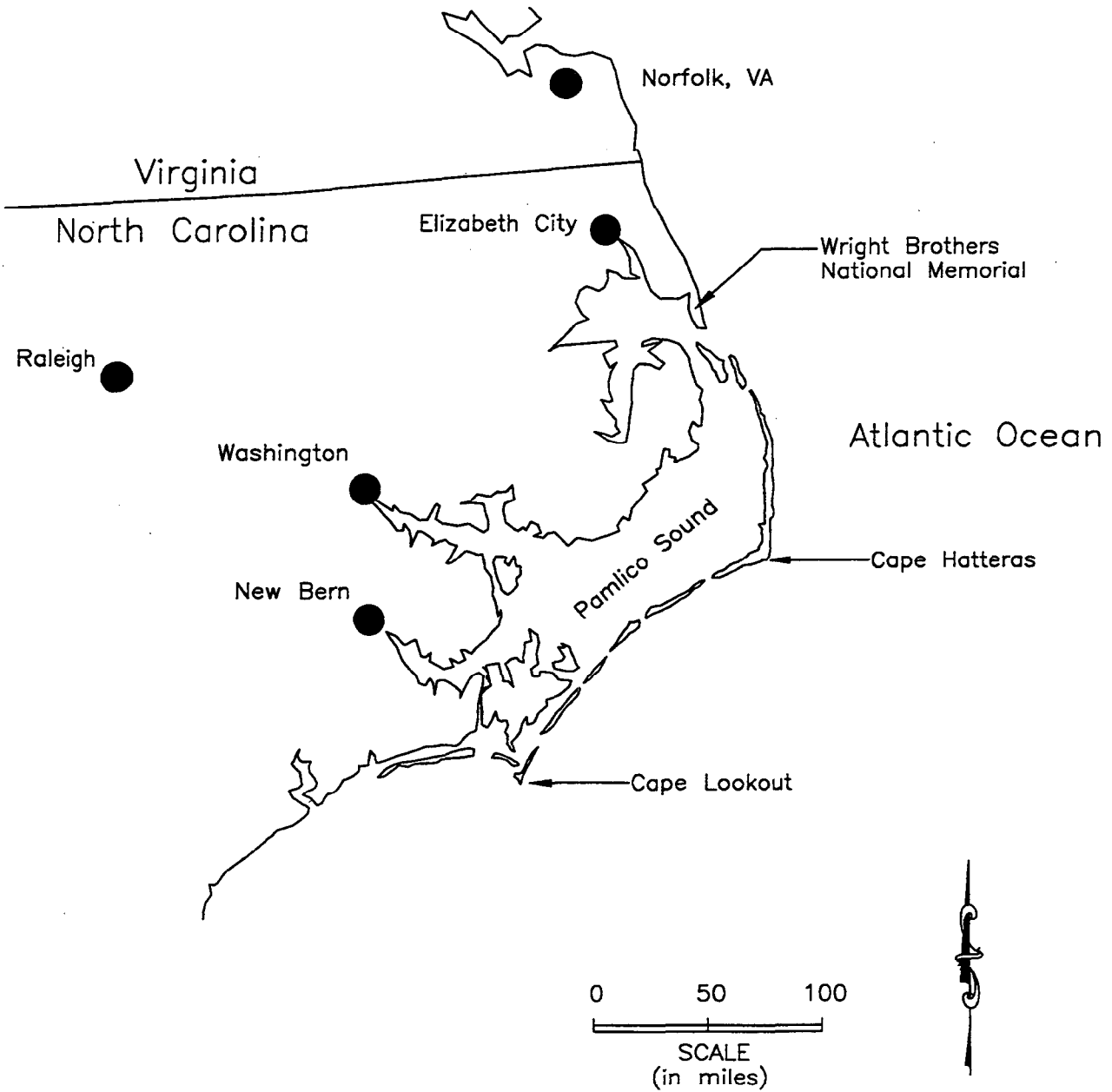


Figure 1 Vicinity Map

Wright Brothers National Memorial

Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina

Existing Conditions Summer 1996

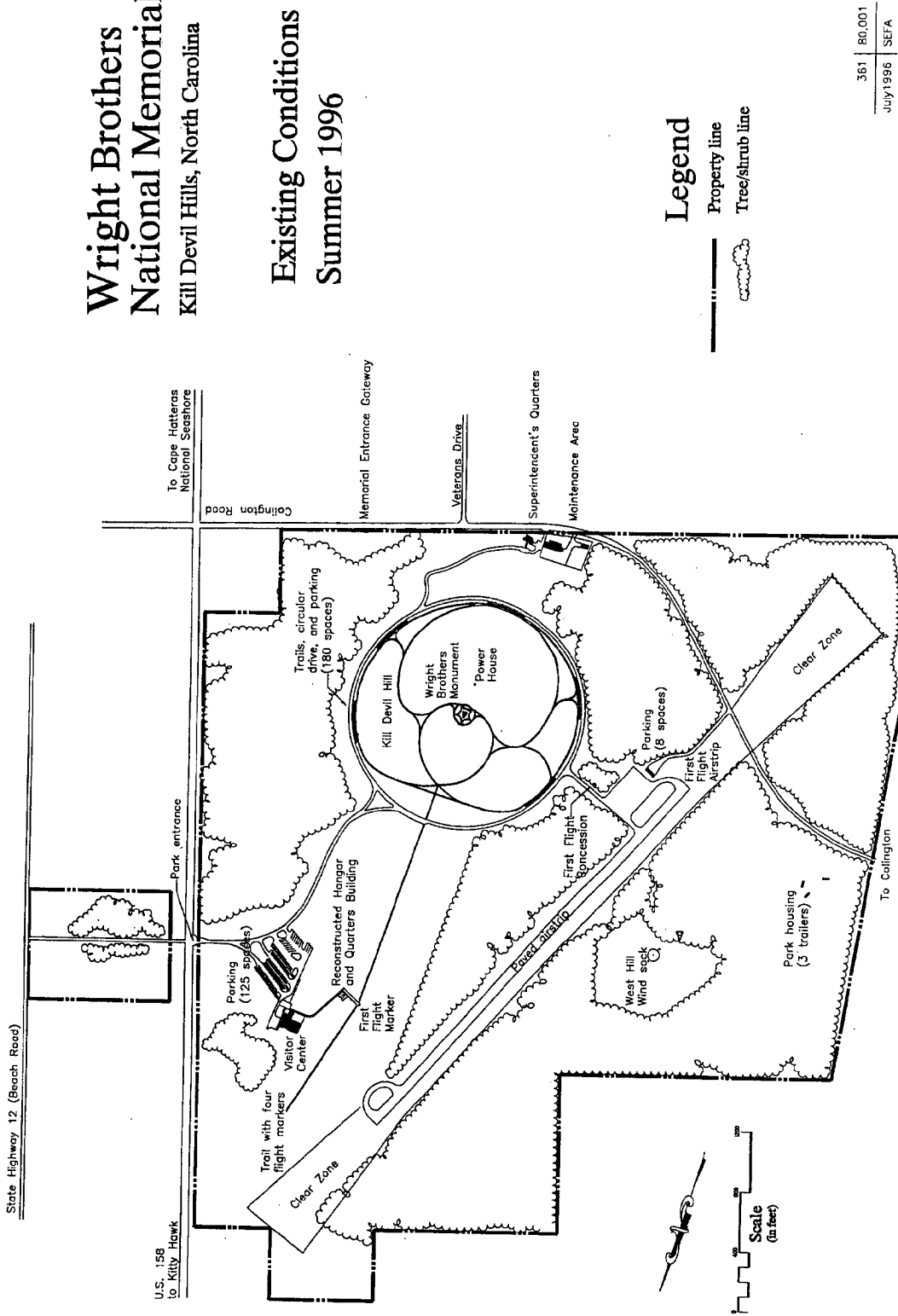


Figure 2 Current Conditions Map

History and Significance of the Wright Brothers National Memorial

The Wright Brothers National Memorial incorporates the site of the first successful powered air flight in history—an accomplishment attained by Orville and Wilbur Wright, two ingenious mechanics from Dayton, Ohio, on December 17, 1903. The Wrights occupied the site, known historically as the Kill Devil Hills (Stick 1958: 267), on successive seasons beginning in 1900 (when they in fact spent only a day at the site) and ending in 1903, living and working in two temporary wood camp buildings. While Orville and Wilbur Wright returned to the area in 1908 for further powered-flight experiments and Orville returned again for tests in 1912, the greatest contributions to flight were glider experiments in which they learned to control flight during four seasons spent at Kill Devil Hills between 1900 and 1903 and a series of four powered flights in 1903.

Following the successful experiments of 1903, and subsequent reuse of the camp buildings in 1908 and 1911, the original camp deteriorated. The buildings had disappeared, either covered by sand or scavenged by local inhabitants for their wood, by the late 1920s when the first tangible efforts were made to commemorate and recognize what the Wrights had done at Kill Devil Hills. The topography changed as well; the largest of the four sand hills in the area, known as Kill Devil Hill and as Big Hill by the Wrights, drifted approximately 450 feet to the southwest.

Both local and national players sought to commemorate the Wrights' accomplishments in the Kill Devil Hills area in the 1920s. W.O. Saunders, the boosterish editor of the *Elizabeth City Independent*, spearheaded the local effort (Hewes 1967:16). Frank Stick of the Carolina Development Company, and Allen R Heuth and Charles M. Baker, New Jersey sportsmen, who donated land for the memorial, joined Saunders. At the national level help came from the National Aeronautics Association (NAA), with its many influential members, including Senator Hiram Bingham of Connecticut, Charles Lindbergh, and others. Finally, North Carolina Congressman Lindsay Warren pushed a bill through Congress to create a memorial to the Wrights on land donated for the purpose in 1927.

The first commemoration of the site was the First Flight Marker, a 6-foot-high, rock-faced granite marker indicating the approximate site of the Wrights' first historic liftoff on December 17, 1903. This was erected in 1928 to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Wrights' flight. A cornerstone for a proposed larger monument was also dedicated the same day. Finally built in 1931-1932, the completed monument stood as a striking memorial in the open landscape of the Outer Banks. By the time of its transfer from the War Department (which supervised the construction of the monument) to NPS on August 10, 1933, the site was already a well-established tourist destination.

At the time of its transfer from the War Department to NPS, the park (officially known as the Kill Devil Hill Monument) consisted of the granite First Flight Marker, mounted on a small earthen mound; the Wright Brothers Monument, an impressive Art Deco-inspired granite memorial placed at the top of the stabilized Kill Devil Hill; an entrance gate, contact station, and caretaker's office at the southeast corner; a powerhouse, situated southeast of the main monument; a road leading from the entrance, circling the east side of the monument hill, and

traveling north up to and around the granite marker; and a trail leading straight up the hill to the monument.

The availability of Public Works Funds from 1933 to 1939 enabled NPS to undertake extensive development at the site. The park's circulation system as altered and expanded between 1933 and 1936, included the main visitor entrance to the southeast, a road from the entrance up to and encircling the monument, a series of curving trails around the monument, and a single, axial road linking the monument to the marker some 2,000 feet to the north. By 1939, the park included a comfort station for visitors, located southeast of the monument; a superintendent's quarters south of the monument, added in 1935-1936; and a maintenance area, just west of the superintendent's quarters. The park supplemented the grass and shrubs planted in 1928 with additional landscaping, allowing trees and other vegetation to become established. Plans were also afoot for a museum or visitor center, and local and national organizations continued to push for an airstrip, a feature suggested since the Memorial's earliest years. Following the development of the 1930s, there were few major changes to the park until the early 1950s.

World War II interrupted the park's commemorative development. Development resumed after the war with the 1947 Master Plan calling for major changes to the site. These changes included the alteration of the circulation pattern and the development of more visitor-oriented facilities on the east side, near the First Flight Marker. The local and national promotional organization, the Kill Devil Hills Memorial Association (later the First Flight Society), pressed for more interpretive displays in anticipation of the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of 1953, including the reconstruction of the Wrights' 1903 camp. In 1958, the park closed the old road and built a new entrance on the east, from state route 158, just opposite the reconstructed camp buildings.

Acquisition of additional lands in 1959, resulting from a donation by the Avalon and Old Dominion Foundation and funding from the State of North Carolina, allowed for the construction of a new visitor center, one of NPS's Mission 66 projects. The visitor center, designed by the firm of Mitchell/Giurgola, echoes the modern airport designs of architects such as Eero Saarinen, and now serves as the museum, gift shop, interpretive center, and administrative offices for the unit. An essentially commemorative airstrip was added in 1963, also on the newly acquired land. Linked administratively to the Cape Hatteras National Seashore, established in 1953, the site is now an important tourist destination on the Outer Banks and an important landmark in the area.

Geographical Character

The Wright Brothers National Memorial has a controlled entry point at the east, paved parking lots, a reception area (the visitor center), and park exhibits, including the reconstructed hangar and quarters. There are several asphalt roads, including the entrance road and a circular drive around the base of the monument hill. The airstrip is also paved, as are trails to the Wright Brothers Monument and various other access and maintenance roads.

Mature trees cover much of the periphery of the park, especially in the southeast and southwest corners, and along the west and north. Species include laurel oaks, other evergreen and deciduous trees, along with a wide variety of shrubs, including holly, wax myrtle, and wild olive. There are several strikingly open areas, including Kill Devil Hill and the area between its summit and the Visitor Center to the northeast and the equally open grassy area to the south.

In the 1900 to 1903 period when the Wright brothers completed their successful glider and powered-flight experiments, the area was a sandy expanse of open space with sand dunes or hills, of which the Kill Devil Hill, with its elevation of approximately 100 feet, was the most prominent. By the time of the earliest commemoration of the Wrights' achievements in 1928, this main hill had drifted approximately 450 feet from its site twenty-five years before (*New York Times* 12/18/28). As a result, the War Department decided as early as 1927 that the site needed stabilization. Following a procedure developed in part by local land developers and property donors Frank Stick Allen Heuth, and Charles Baker, Captain William H. Kindervater of the War Department began a program of sodding and stabilizing the site. Kindervater also introduced a number of shrubs and small trees, which grew to maturity by the 1960s. While the Master Plan of 1965 called for and resulted in the removal of some vegetation, NPS decided a full restoration of the 1903 landscape was a practical impossibility. If returned to sand, site features would continue to migrate as they had during the early part of the century. The present site, with open grassy areas and peripheral trees and shrubs, represents a compromise, meant to provide an appropriate background for appreciation of the Wrights' achievement, but not to reproduce 1900 to 1903 conditions.

Recognized Historic Themes for Historic Resources

The Wright Brothers National Memorial is a fairly complicated park in terms of its historic resources. Although the park is listed on the National Register as a district because of its significance as the site of the Wright brothers' successful flying experiments in 1900 to 1903, no structures and few landscape features remain from this period of significance. The first context presented in this study establishes the significance of the Wright brothers work. The original 1978 National Register district boundary, identical with the park boundary, will not be changed; the district retains its national significance under National Register Criteria A and B for its association with the Wright brothers and their successful flight trials. The Kill Devil Hill and the West Hill are the only remaining features of the site present during the Wright brothers work. They are nationally significant under National Register Criteria A and B. As detailed below, the reconstructed hangar and quarters buildings are exhibits that fail to satisfy the National Register criteria for reconstructions.

The second context for the park encompasses the local and national efforts between 1926 and 1941 to commemorate the Wright brothers' achievements at Kill Devil Hills. National Register-eligible resources from this period include the First Flight Marker, erected in 1928; the Wright Brothers Monument and its associated powerhouse, built 1931 to 1932; the curving trail and circular road system around the monument, established 1933 to 1936; and the spatial

relationship between the marker and the monument, created in 1928. They are all significant under National Register Criterion A as examples of the recognition and commemoration of the Wright brothers' achievements and under National Register Criterion C for associated architectural and landscape design qualities. The First Flight Marker and the Wright Brothers Monument are nationally significant; the powerhouse, the curving trail and road system, and the spatial relationship between the marker and monument are significant at the state level.

Overview of Resources Evaluated

The landscape and structural features within the boundaries of the Wright Brothers National Memorial evaluated for this report include:

1. Wright Brothers Reconstructed Quarters
2. Wright Brothers Reconstructed Hangar
3. First Flight Marker
4. Wright Brothers Monument
5. Wright Brothers Monument Powerhouse
6. Memorial Entrance Gateway
7. Superintendent's Quarters and other staff housing
8. Wright Brothers Memorial Visitor Center
9. First Flight Airstrip
10. Circulation System including roads and paths
11. Landscape features including the spatial relationship between the Monument and the First Flight Marker
12. Maintenance Area
13. Kill Devil Hill
14. West Hill
15. Fee collection kiosk
16. Four stone landing markers
17. Metal information panel next to hangar
18. Metal information panel between Monument and Marker
19. Two Wright bust sculptures at Monument
20. Plaque next to Visitor Center.

Of these, the following are features that contribute to the significance of the National Register district :

1. First Flight Marker (placed 1928; reoriented 1966)
2. Wright Brothers Monument (cornerstone laid 1928; built 1931- 1932)
3. Wright Brothers Monument Powerhouse (constructed 1931- 1932)
4. Monument's curving trails and circular road with parking areas (completed 1936)
5. Spatial relationship between the First Flight Marker and Wright Brothers Monument (established 1928)

Kill Devil Hill (stabilized 1928)
West Hill.

The following resources are considered noncontributing because of an overall loss of integrity, particularly design material, and setting integrity; a lack of association with the Wright brothers context or commemoration context; or a construction date later than the 1900- 1941 period of significance for the park:

1. The Memorial Entrance Gateway (constructed 1932; entrance relocated and gates removed 1958)
2. Superintendent's Quarters (constructed 1935- 1936; roof replaced 1944; altered 1954; interior changes 1960s; altered, including windows replaced, 1974).
3. Maintenance Area (constructed 1939, numerous alterations and additions)
4. Visitor Center (constructed 1959-1960)
5. First Flight Airstrip (constructed 1962- 1963)
6. Fee collection kiosk (constructed 1987)
7. Four stone landing markers (erected 1963, replaced 1993)
8. Metal information. panel next to hangar (1966)
9. Metal information panel between Monument and Marker (1966)
10. Two Wright bust sculptures at Monument
11. Plaque next to Visitor Center (placed by Soaring Society of America, 1963).

The following two elements are classified as noncontributing features in the park's National Register district documentation:

1. Wright Brothers Reconstructed Quarters (reconstructed 1953, 1964-1965, 1976-1977, 1993)
2. Wright Brothers Reconstructed Hangar (reconstructed 1953, 1964-1965, 1976-1977, 1983, 1993).

The original 1978 documentation included the structures as elements of the district, but revised documentation will list them as noncontributing elements. They are relatively recent reconstructions of original buildings that do not conform to the special requirements of Criteria Consideration E, "Reconstructed Properties," and therefore are not eligible for listing. Neither of these properties is a fully accurate reproduction of the original; further, they are not in a fully suitable environment nor are they part of a restoration master plan, as set out in NPS guidelines (National Park Service [1991]a:30). As a result, they are considered interpretive exhibits only.

Finally, the museum collection at the park contains many original objects directly associated with the Wright brothers and their work. While most of the objects cannot be directly linked to Kill Devil Hills or the Wrights' gliders and planes, the collection does include the following objects from the 1903 *Flyer* that contribute to the significance of the National Register district:

1. Engine (crankcase), WRBR-345
2. Propeller, WRBR-346
3. Cloth from wing, WRBR-364

SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

Survey Methodology

The survey team, including Principal Investigator William Chapman, faculty member Ian Firth, and three graduate students, photographed and measured each park site and structure in April 1990. At least three photographs were taken of each property; in the case of larger sites, such as the Monument, at least six to eight photographs were taken.

Field research was supplemented by extensive archival investigation, most of it conducted by Cathleen Turner, a graduate student assigned to the project. The survey effort benefitted from the fact that Cultural Resource Manager Bebe Woody and other NPS cultural resource managers and historians at Cape Hatteras Group Headquarters, located at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, consolidated a large number of documents. The team made photocopies of maintenance records, historic photographs, manuscripts, and site plans and made blueprints of larger drawings and plans, including successive plans for the monument and the visitor center. The material proved useful in dating properties and in developing conceptual and historic frameworks for evaluation.

Finally, the author developed contexts on the basis of primary and secondary materials gathered at the park and additional published materials available in the University of Georgia Libraries.

Survey Dates

The survey of Wright Brothers National Memorial occurred over three separate campaigns. The initial field work took place from April 4 through April 9, 1990. Personnel included Chapman (the Principal Investigator), Firth (faculty member), Turner, Rushton, and Butler. Chapman returned for a week-long follow-up from August 21 to August 27, 1990, in order to further consult NPS records. Turner returned in July 1991 to check on a few missing items of information and to reexamine some of the properties. Write-up of the project began in the spring of 1991 and was completed in July 1992. Following suggested changes by the staff of the Southeast Regional Office (SERO), a final draft was submitted in November 1992, which has been further revised by NPS.

Meetings with Park Personnel, Contacts with Local Historians

NPS staff have been extremely helpful throughout the project. Kirk Cordell and Len Brown of SEFA provided basic background information. Park personnel, including Museum Curator Steve Harrison, Management Assistant Mary Moran, Cultural Resources Manager Bebe Woody, Exhibits Specialist Bernie Weisgerber, Carpenter David Frum, and Ranger Hugo Desch, provided advice and supplied much useful information. Wright Brothers Interpreter Darrell

Collins provided last-minute information on several properties. Bebe Woody, in particular, has been indispensable to the success of this report. She provided both material and insights on the Park that added greatly to our understanding of its significance and the significance of its resources. Thomas L. Hartman, former Superintendent at Cape Hatteras and current Superintendent Russell W. Berry, Jr., have been most cooperative and helpful with time and information.

Historical Research, Sources of Information

Research for the project was based on archival materials housed in Cape Hatteras Group Headquarters at Fort Raleigh, materials in the climate-controlled storage facilities in the maintenance section at Fort Raleigh, and also some materials held at the Wright Brothers National Memorial. Specific records included historic photographs, construction drawings, manuscripts, earlier maintenance and management planning documents, and NPS maintenance records. Interviews with NPS maintenance staff, as well as the Cultural Resources Manager, helped fill in a number of gaps not covered in the written or printed record.

Much of the background information was obtained from secondary sources. Several publications by North Carolina historian David Stick were indispensable. These include his comprehensive work, *The Outer Banks of North Carolina* (1958), and his more recent work, *Dare County: A History* (1970). Gary S. Dunbar's *Historical Geography of the North Carolina Outer Banks* (1958) has been useful for geographical information on the area.

On the Wright brothers and their efforts at Kitty Hawk and the Kill Devil Hills, essential background has been provided in Fred Howard's *Wilbur and Orville: A Biography of the Wright Brothers* (1988) and Harry Combs's *Kill Devil Hill: Discovering the Secret of the Wright Brothers* (1979), as well as Fred Kelly's classic *The Wright Brothers* (1943). To put the Wrights' work into perspective several standard histories of flight have been employed. These include Roger Bilstein's *Flight Patterns* (1983) and *Flight in America* (1984); Walter Bonney's *The Heritage of Kitty Hawk* (1962); Walter Boyne's *The Smithsonian Book of Flight* (1987); and Tom Crouch's *A Dream of Wings* (1981). Most important have been the major works of Charles H. Gibbs-Smith (1954, 1962, 1963a, 1963b, 1966, 1970, 1974a, 1974b), upon which much of the comparative material presented in this report is based.

For the history of the park Andrew M. Hewes's *Wright Brothers National Memorial: An Administrative History* (1967) and Theodore A. Amundson's sequel *Wright Brothers National Memorial: An Administrative History 1968-1987* (1987) have been indispensable. Some perspective on the significance of the Monument was gained from Lois Craig's *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and National Design* (1984); from Alastair Duncan's *Art Deco* (1988); and from Richard Guy Wilson, et al, *The Machine Age in America, 1918-1941* (1986). Finally, on the new visitor center of 1959-1960, Mitchell and Giurgola's own monograph, *Mitchell/Giurgola Architects* (1983) has been useful.

Criteria for Evaluation

All properties surveyed have been evaluated in accordance with National Register criteria set out originally in the *Federal Register*, 41, No. 28, Section 60.6, p. 5907, and further described in the National Register *Bulletins* 1, 9, 15, 16, and 21. Specific National Register Criteria for Evaluation are:

- a. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- b. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- c. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction; or
- d. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In order to assess significance it has been necessary to reexamine the explicit and implicit historical contexts represented by the park unit and, in the case of the Wright Brothers National Memorial, to develop a new context for evaluation of later contributions and changes to the site. The primary theme or context at the Wright Brothers Memorial is “The Wright Brothers and Early Flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, 1900-1903.” A related secondary theme is “The Commemoration of the Wright Brothers, 1926-1941,” a historical context that has, due to the passage of time, gained increasing significance in its own right. It is hoped that this historic resource study will help call attention to the later efforts to preserve the site of the Wright brothers’ historic flights and to the NPS’s ongoing mission at the Wright Brothers National Memorial.

Historical Base Map

All properties surveyed as part of this study are indicated on the accompanying base map. The properties are also indicated on the U.S. Geological Survey map included in the appendices.

Overview of Historic Contexts

As emphasized, this report relies on the historic context-based approach to assessment and evaluation, as described in National Register *Bulletins* 15 and 16. The context-based approach underscores the changing historic significance of the Wright Brothers National Memorial and gives greater emphasis to the more recent history of the site, including the significance of the site as a focus of preservation and commemoration efforts in the twentieth century.

The two contexts recognized and developed for this study are: “The Wright Brothers and Early Flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, 1900-1903” and “The Commemoration of the Wright Brothers, 1926-1941.”

Background information for other potential contexts was also collected and much of it incorporated within historical background discussions for the contexts in this study. Contexts developed and presented in this study are resource-driven and relate to the main historic significance of the site.

Relationship of Contexts to State Historic Preservation Plans and National Park Service Thematic Framework

The themes developed for this report closely correspond to historic themes and contexts developed by the State of North Carolina, Division of Archives and History, and by NPS (Revision of the National Park Service's Thematic Framework, June 28, 1994). The strongest link to a North Carolina Comprehensive Planning context is the "Transportation, Air Transportation" theme identified by the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. The primary park context falls under the NPS theme, "Expanding Science and Technology," and the secondary park context falls under the NPS theme, "Expressing Cultural Values."