

Historic Terminal A

Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport

Original Name: Main Building, National Airport

Address: 1 Aviation Circle
Arlington, Virginia 20001

Architect(s): Howard L. Cheney; Charles M. Goodman, chief designer

Year of Construction: 1941

Current Status: Airline Terminal

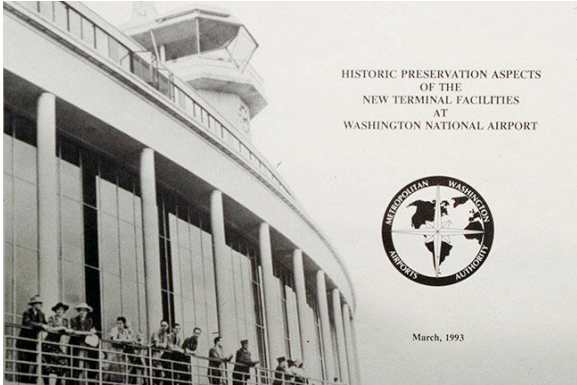
Original Use: Transportation & Infrastructure

This is an important building that most of us don't really look at - and it has been very nicely renovated. Visitors who have time to do more than catch a plane can see the museum display at the top of the stairs in the former restaurant as well as the nearby restrooms that preserve some original features.

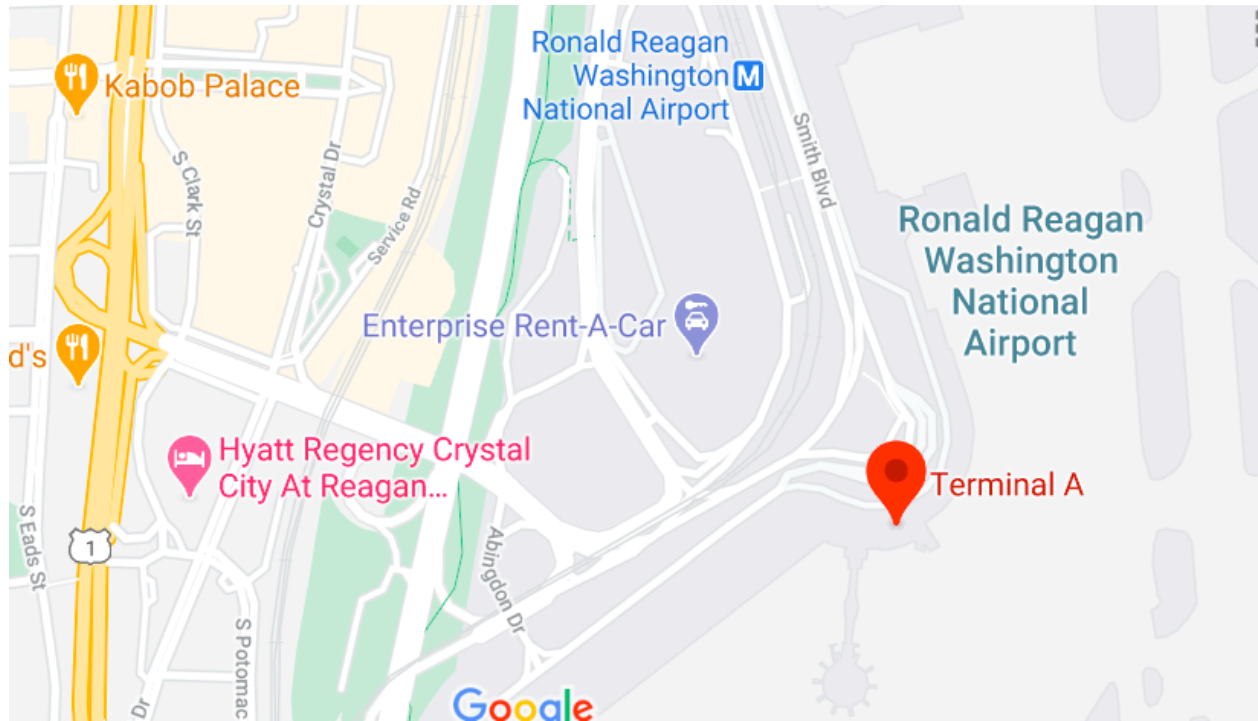
What was important here was the debate over style--modern, streamlined, glass-filled, forward-looking spaces vs. President Franklin Roosevelt's preference for a traditional building and portico. But the plan was innovative, intended to facilitate the new experience of air travel. Passengers and baggage were separated and processed on separate levels, in contrast to the experience at train stations. Baggage was sent down chutes, while passengers went across the waiting room to the observation deck (a quaint relic of earlier times) before going down to the planes. There was also a lower roadway for shipping and other service functions.

The new terminal was a "destination" facility, featuring fine dining, planned and designed by Ethel Pilson Warren, a Presidential waiting room, and other ceremonial features. The waiting room was itself a skillful design with huge curved windows overlooking the runways, echoed by the curve of the mezzanine and the ticket counters below.

Outside, the curves are reflected in the front portico and the curving canopy down at the end: a more modern than traditional effect. Not many people notice the precast concrete polychrome mosaic panels fabricated by John Joseph Earley that were used as the formwork for the poured concrete roof of the portico, which is also lighted with an early use of fluorescent lights in the columns.



Static (Fixed) Google Map:



Dynamic (Searchable and Expandable) Google Map:

<https://tinyurl.com/y4qsjmlx>