

RESTORING AN ART DECO GEM



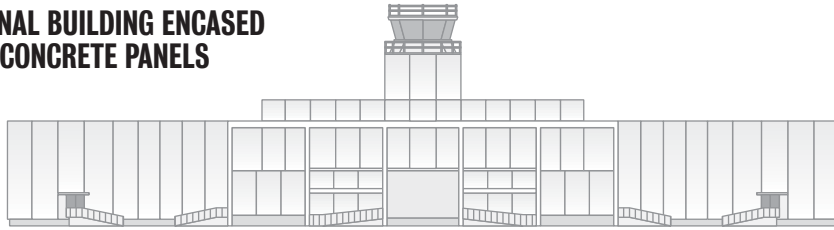
A look at the plan to return the New Orleans Lakefront Airport to its former glory

Architects hired by the state to restore the Lakefront airport terminal hope to salvage as many of the building's original fixtures as possible. Much of the 1930s-era material is still in place, though hidden by wall coverings, vinyl flooring, ceiling tiles and other materials added during later renovations.

CURRENT

ORIGINAL BUILDING ENCASED WITH CONCRETE PANELS

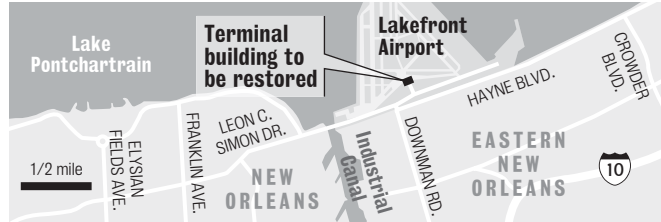
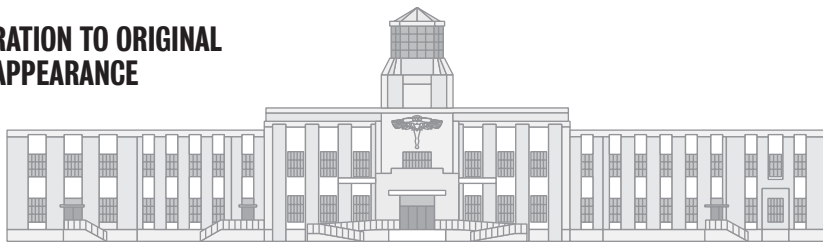
A 1964 renovation covered the Art Deco airport terminal building with metal plates and concrete panels.



PLANNED

RESTORATION TO ORIGINAL 1930s APPEARANCE

The restoration would strip away the 1960s façade and repair the original cement exterior.



TOWER

Original: Functioning aluminum and glass tower with rotating beacon.
1980s: Re-tooled as high-tech tower to meet FAA standards.
Planned: Aluminum and glass observation tower; no air traffic control function.

WINDOWS

Original: Non-insulated, single pane, openable wooden windows.
Circa 1964: Covered with bricks before the building was encased in concrete.
Planned: New windows will be insulated, metal, fixed glass.

EXTERIOR WALLS

Original: Composed of a cement/marble aggregate.
Circa 1964: Metal frame erected around building, then white concrete panels added. All but a few windows covered.
Planned: Concrete will be stripped away; metal frame holding it in place will be dismantled. Exposed original walls will be power washed, damaged areas repaired by masonry experts and window frames rebuilt.

Highlights of the terminal restoration, set to begin this fall

FLYING ANGEL

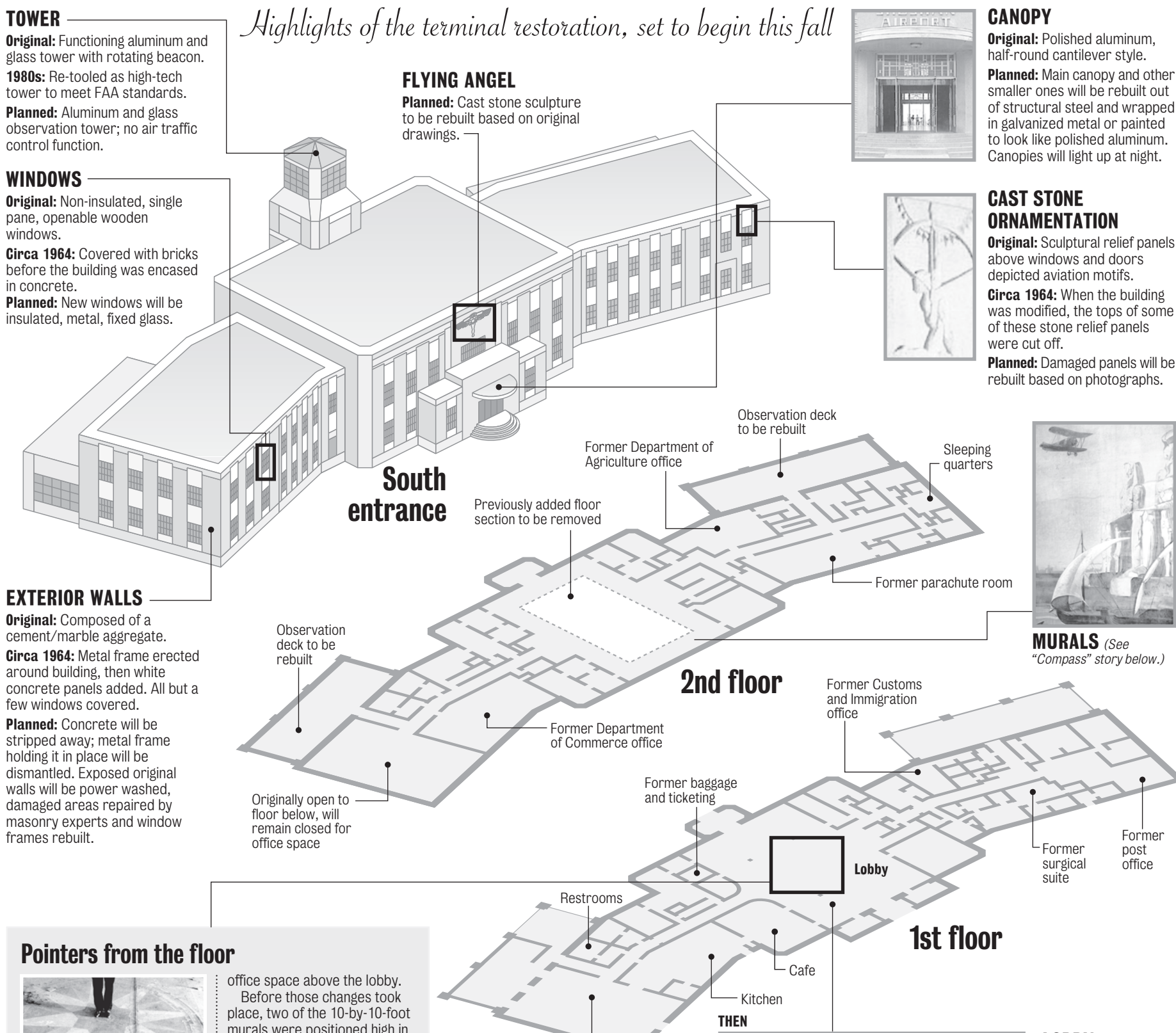
Planned: Cast stone sculpture to be rebuilt based on original drawings.

CANOPY

Original: Polished aluminum, half-round cantilever style.
Planned: Main canopy and other smaller ones will be rebuilt out of structural steel and wrapped in galvanized metal or painted to look like polished aluminum. Canopies will light up at night.

CAST STONE ORNAMENTATION

Original: Sculptural relief panels above windows and doors depicted aviation motifs.
Circa 1964: When the building was modified, the tops of some of these stone relief panels were cut off.
Planned: Damaged panels will be rebuilt based on photographs.



Pointers from the floor



COMPASS

To the unknowing observer, the giant compass displayed on the terrazzo floor in the center of the lobby is just a funky Art Deco detail. But closer examination reveals there was grand purpose in the design.
 When the terminal opened in 1934, the compass served as a guide to eight aviation-themed murals painted by Spanish-born artist Xavier Gonzales that encircled a balcony above the lobby's center atrium. The atrium is gone now, obliterated by a 1960s renovation that installed a false floor to create

office space above the lobby. Before those changes took place, two of the 10-by-10-foot murals were positioned high in each corner of the balcony. The compass points were carefully placed to reflect the geographic positions of New York, Paris, Egypt, Rio de Janeiro, the South Pole, Mayan ruins, Bali and Mount Everest, each depicted in one of the murals.
 Restoration plans call for reopening the atrium and showcasing six surviving murals, including three now hidden by walls.
 During the 1964 renovation, one mural was inexplicably moved to the Louisiana State Museum, where it remains in storage. Officials overseeing the restoration hope to restore the painting, which was damaged in the move, and return it to the terminal. Whether the final mural was destroyed, misplaced or stolen remains a mystery.

WALNUT ROOM

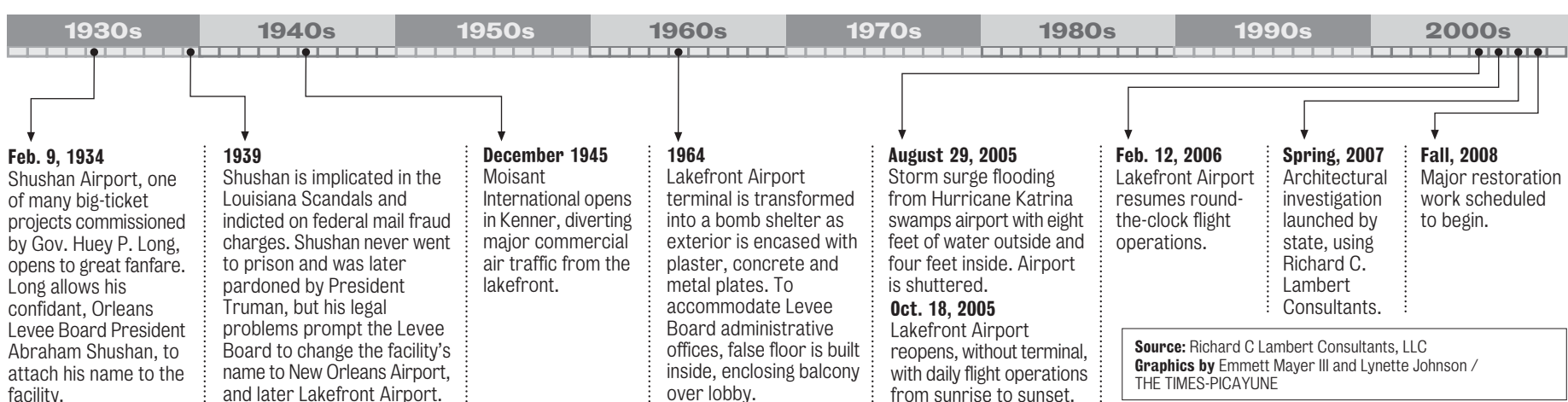
(In use prior to Katrina)
Original: Dining hall was site of large parties and receptions. Atrium afforded view of the dining hall from a 2nd floor balcony.
Circa 1964: A ceiling cutting off 2nd floor view installed; will remain in place after restoration.
Planned: Vinyl floor tiles and wall covering added after 1964 to be removed. Restoration workers hope to salvage original walnut wall paneling, terrazzo floor and marble wainscoting, all still in place. Room will open onto restored portico.

LOBBY

Original: Featured two-story center atrium with art-deco balcony railings and marble columns.
Circa 1964: Ceiling installed in lobby closed off view of upper floor.
Planned: Many original finishes still in place will be restored: smoked-glass light fixtures, transom grills above retail storefronts, marble wainscoting, travertine stair treads, terrazzo floors, decorative plaster motifs and aluminum doors. Long-term plan is to remove lobby ceiling.



TIMELINE: Art Deco jewel through the years



Source: Richard C Lambert Consultants, LLC
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