

Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum, Stephen F. Udvar-Hazy Center

Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum
Opens New Facility at Dulles International
Airport

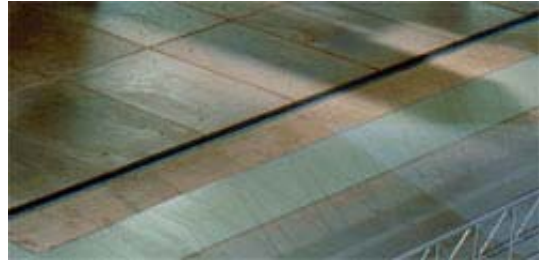
Home to famed artifacts from America's aeronautical heritage such as the Enola Gay, the Spirit of St. Louis and the Wright brothers' original Wright Flyer that flew at Kitty Hawk, the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum is the world's most visited museum. It is located on The Mall in Washington, D.C., and hosts over nine million guests per year. As the museum continued to grow and acquire massive items for exhibits such as the space shuttle Enterprise, it became apparent that a new, secondary location was necessary in order to share its dazzling treasures with visitors from across the country and around the globe.

Ultimately, the Smithsonian Institute selected a 176.5-acre site adjacent to Dulles International Airport in Chantilly, Va., as the site for the new facility. Named the Stephen F. Udvar-Hazy Center, after the project's major donor, the new museum is a massive 350,000-square-foot exhibition space comprised of two hangars with 350 major exhibits on three levels including historic warplanes, military and commercial aircraft and artifacts from the U.S. space program. A system of catwalks allows up-close views of planes suspended from the rafters. Notable exhibits include the space shuttle Enterprise, the Boeing B-29 Bomber Enola Gay, and a Concorde jet donated by Air France after the airline retired the trans-Atlantic luxury fleet.

The new museum was designed by Bill Helmuth of Helmuth, Obata + Kassabaum, the St. Louis-based architectural firm that also designed the flagship National Air and Space Museum facility 25 years ago. Hensel Phelps Construction Co. of Chantilly, Va.,



served as general contractor and enlisted David Allen Company to join the team as the tile contractor. Porcelain and ceramic tile are used extensively throughout the display areas, public corridors and restrooms, providing both the aesthetics and durability required for such a prestigious project that will host millions of visitors each year.



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The Udvar-Hazy Center opened on schedule on December 15, 2003, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Wright brothers' first powered flights. Former astronaut and U.S. senator John Glenn and Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon, were among the luminaries in attendance for this important event. The Smithsonian anticipates an estimated three million visitors to the new facility each year.