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Haskell Architects and Engineers *jacksonville*

General Electric Transportation and Aircraft Engines Learning Center, Evendale, Ohio



The main façade of the Center features correctly proportioned replicas of compressor blades used in aircraft engines. All photos by Anthony Rieck Photography.

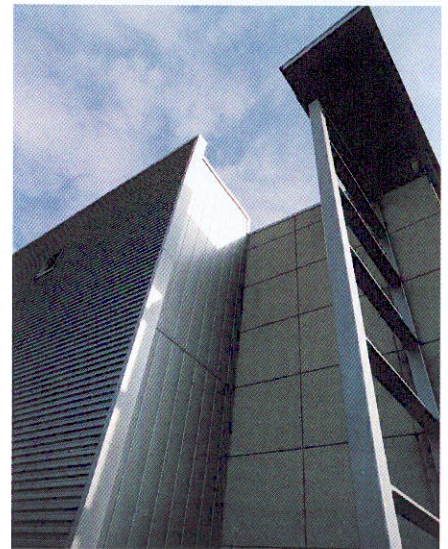
The General Electric (GE) headquarters and manufacturing plant in Ohio is a complex of buildings dating from World War II. It was no small task for Haskell Architects and Engineers to design a new gateway to the aging campus that hadn't seen any new construction in 40 years. The Haskell design team embarked on the project three years ago and the result is 50,000-square-foot, \$15 million learning center that includes a 350-seat auditorium, a dozen classrooms and customer meeting areas and GE's jet propulsion museum.

Located along the I-75 corridor in Ohio, GE's 300-acre site contained mostly pre-World War II buildings. The culture of the facility had changed over the years from a manufacturing environment to one concerned with research, design, testing and development of aircraft engines. As part of the company's vision to communicate its identity as the leader

in developing and manufacturing engines, GE was committed to build a state-of-the-art Learning Center for clients, employees and the public.

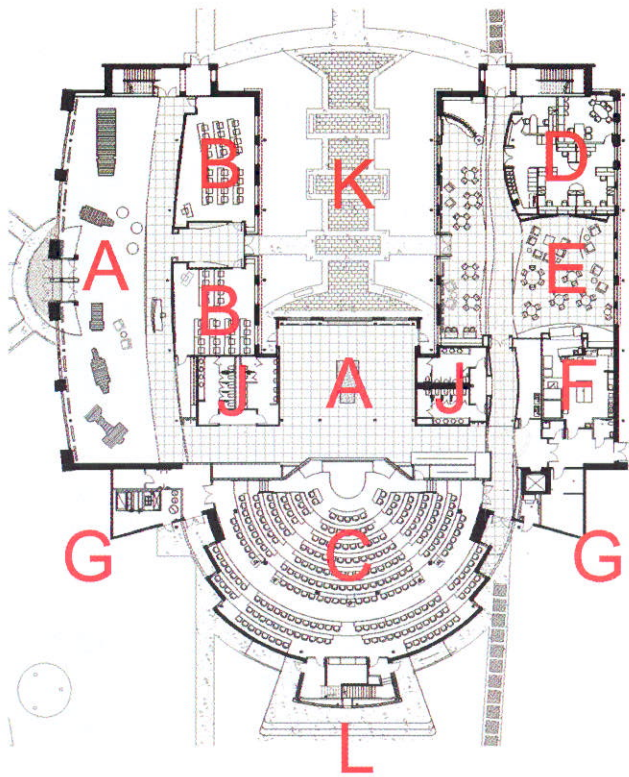
The Learning Center is sited in the midst of a sea of warehouses and manufacturing facilities. It is the sharp contrast between the existing buildings and the elegant lines and fabric of the Center that make it particularly imposing. With white sandstone walls and a transparent façade that reveals suspended aircraft engines inside, the building appears very welcoming and very exciting. At the roofline above the main entrance, replicas of compressor engine blades symbolically "flare out to welcome visitors." To avoid turning its back on the campus, a walkway used to connect all of the major buildings on the campus passes through the middle of the Center, practically unnoticed.

Design Architect Roland Udenze, AIA, wanted the architecture "to



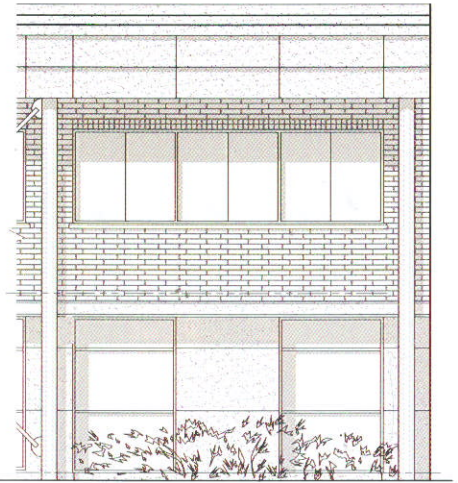
Compressor blade replica detail with stair tower clad in corrugated metal.

evolve from the creation of specific points of destination and the intervening journey of discovery." Hence, the "floating" learning rooms, the "dominating" exchange forum and the "forced" courtyard garden that creates a tension the architects welcomed. Other key features include the strategic exposure of structural



Legend for Floor plan

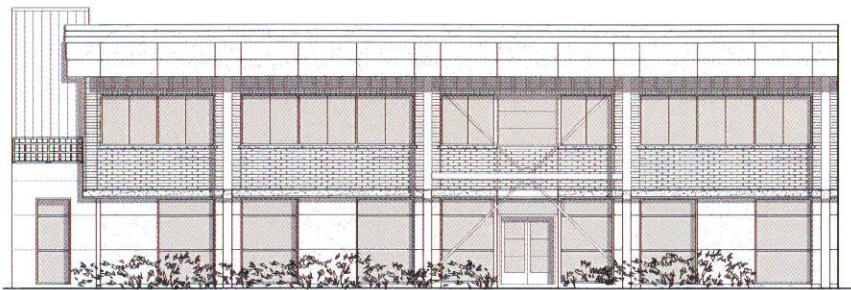
- A – Engine Displays
- B – Learning Rooms
- C – Exchange Forum
- D – Administration
- E – Café
- F – Kitchen
- G – Utility Rom
- J – Toilet Rooms
- K – Courtyard



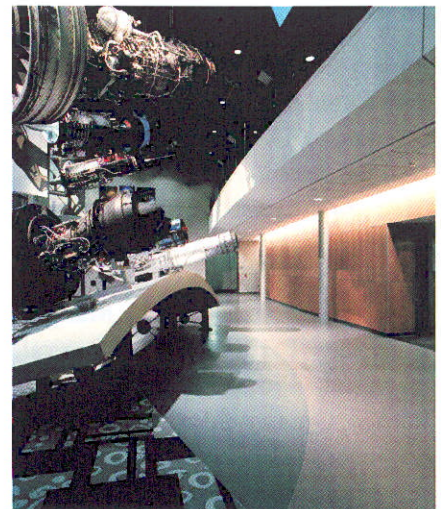
columns both inside and outside, the creation of little getaway “nooks and crannies” where discussions can take place between training sessions.

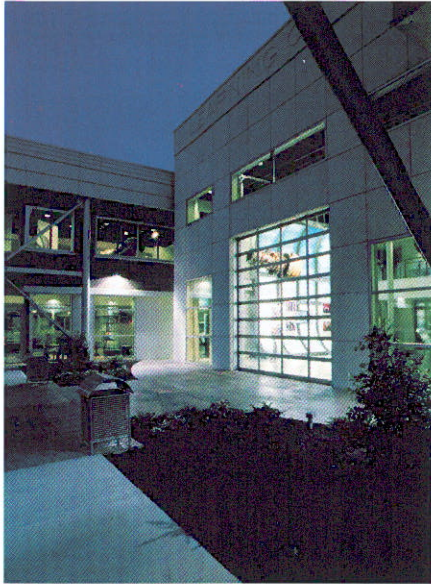
State-of-the-art technical details abound in the new facility, including kiosks at every display that provide historical data, overhead track lighting that spotlights specific aircraft engines, audience microphones that can be selectively activated in meeting rooms and video conferencing capability halfway around the world.

As one of the few learning centers in the country that combines the company’s products with its learning space, this facility sets the tone for the future of the company and architectural design.



Above and top, right: drawing and detail of rear elevation. Below: The Exchange Forum “Sanford Moss Hall” features an upside down dome for acoustical clarity, second floor breakout rooms, video conferencing facilities and remote controlled blackout shades. Bottom right: The Propulsion Gateway display area. Note the floating balcony and wooden accent wall.





The Courtyard Garden looking to the Southeast.



The Runway Café looking north toward administration offices defined by the curved blue walls.



Above: The Propulsion Gateway display area and below: the rear elevation of the center.

Project Credits: Haskell Architects and Engineers: Architect; Roland Udenze, AIA: Design Architect; Dennis Reese, AIA, Nikhil Shah, AIA: Architects; Patricia O'Neil, IIDA: Interior Design; Mike Herring PE/Tom Grogan, PE: Structural Engineers; Frank Mangin, PE/Jimmy Barber, PE: Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing Consultants; John Quattrochi, PE: Civil Engineer; Gary Siebein, AIA: Acoustics.

