

106 SUCCESS STORY

DART's Historic Monroe Shops: A Powerful Motivator for Change

Dallas, Texas

"We have always considered our DART Rail stations as gateways to the community, and the Monroe Shops at Illinois Station is no different. Now, almost 100 years later, with DART moving into the neighborhood, we hope history repeats itself and we help renew economic growth all over again."

— JACK WIERZENSKI

DART Director of Economic Development



THE STORY

In the early 20th century, streetcar and interurban lines were influential in the growth of American cities and suburbs. The lines made possible a suburban lifestyle in a pleasant residential community with an easy commute to work in the city center. At one time the longest interurban railway west of the Mississippi River, the 226-mile Texas Electric Railway, centered in Dallas, provided passenger and freight service across North Central Texas. The Railway built the structure known as the Monroe Shops in 1914 to serve maintenance needs with a machine shop, car repair barn, paint shop, offices, and lecture hall. Today it remains the only example of an interurban railway maintenance facility in Texas, and, as such, has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

THE PROJECT

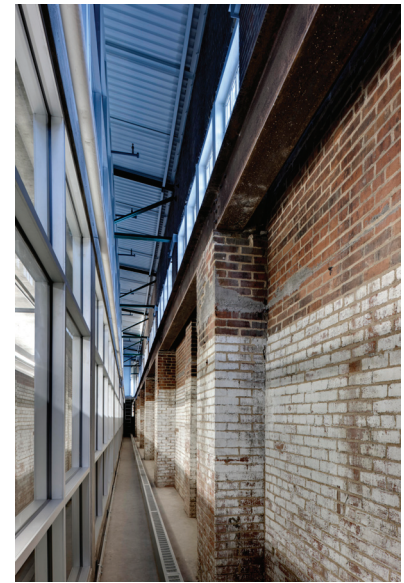
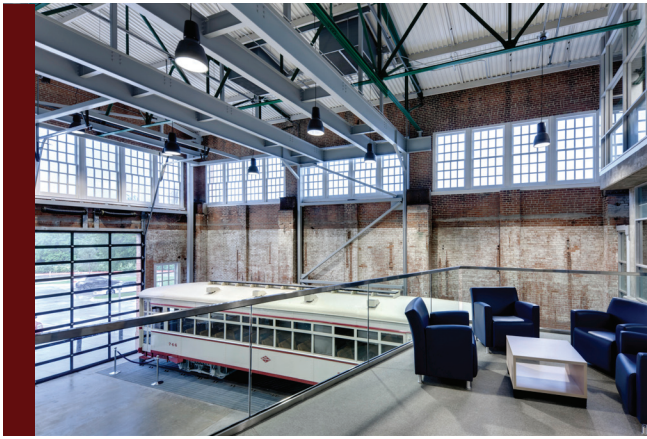
In 1983, the citizens of North Texas voted to create a regional transportation authority, the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), and a decade later DART received federal funding for its regional light rail project. In 1994, as part of that project, DART acquired the Monroe Shops. Efforts to market the Shops for retail or other transit-oriented uses were unsuccessful, leaving the structure vacant for years. In public hearings, citizens suggested demolishing the building viewed as an eyesore, but DART had a vision for an adaptive reuse of the Shops. In 2006, the DART Police Department, responsible for protecting the nation's longest light rail system, initiated plans for a new facility. To accommodate the DART police personnel needed for the growing transit system, DART decided to adapt the historic Monroe Shops for its purposes.

THE 106 PROCESS

In 1993, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (now the Federal Transit Administration [FTA]) of the U.S. Department of Transportation provided funds for the light rail system and was the federal agency responsible for conducting the Section 106

Photos: Above, Monroe Shops with track locomotive 1920s and 1930s; Right, 1942 Clarendon Interurban Bridge, Dallas; train ticket; Monroe Shops

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Photos: From left, how the Shops look today, interior balcony; LEED award; the old and new side-by-side; Monroe Shops north facade (all photos courtesy DART)

process under the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires that federal agencies identify historic properties and assess the effects of the projects they carry out, fund, or permit on those properties. Federal agencies also are required to consult with parties that have an interest in the fate of the property when adverse effects are likely to ensue. The Dallas Landmarks Commission helped identify historic properties, including the Monroe Shops; some of which would be adversely affected by construction along the alignment. As a result, the consulting parties entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with a provision to stabilize and plan for the long-term reuse of the Shops.

In 2011, DART completed a \$20 million rehabilitation of the Monroe Shops. DART worked closely with the Texas Historical Commission (the Texas State Historic Preservation Office), the FTA, and City of Dallas to ensure that the renovation of the Monroe Shops was consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as required by the MOA and performed in an environmentally sensitive manner. The original 45,000-square-foot building was expanded to 69,000 square feet with the sensitive insertion of new floors into the voluminous interior space, thereby providing workspace for police personnel on three floors with modern offices, meeting rooms, and exercise facilities.

THE SUCCESS

Located adjacent to a new DART station, the renovated Monroe Shops demonstrates a public commitment to preservation and sustainability, a high-profile project in an underserved area of the city. The United States Green Building Council certified the Shops as the first publicly owned building listed in the National Register to achieve the LEED Platinum Certification, demonstrating that adapting a historic building can use less energy and natural resources and create less waste than a conventional new building. In addition, the rehabilitated Monroe Shops is drawing other activities to the area. DART, Dallas city officials, and community leaders recently opened the South Oak Cliff Community Court at the Shops. Developers are discussing new mixed-use developments nearby. By its major investment in a historic structure, DART is doing its part to spark economic growth and stabilize a deteriorated neighborhood.



Consulting Parties:

Federal Transit Administration
Texas Historical Commission
ACHP
DART

For more about Section 106 and the ACHP go to www.achp.gov

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