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### HELSINKI-MALMI AIRPORT



Helsinki, Finland

WMF Program:  
[2006 Watch](#), [2004 Watch](#)

Keywords:  
[airport](#), [modernism](#)

Site Types:  
[Public Architecture](#)

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## INFORMATION

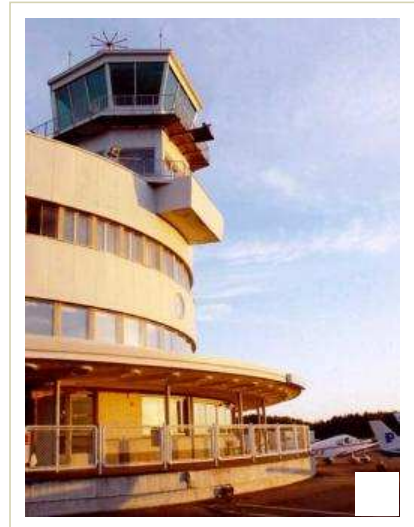
Finland's Helsinki-Malmi Airport was built in 1936 as the capital's first international airport. Upon completion in 1938, the ultra-modern aerodrome was the second in Europe to have fully paved runways. After playing a key role in the air defense of Helsinki during World War II, the airport found a new role as a general aviation aerodrome. This enabled it to remain virtually unchanged as an authentic 1930s international airport amid acclaimed functionalist architecture. Today it remains the second-busiest airport in Finland while still evoking the pioneering era of commercial aviation. Home to several commercial pilot schools and aviation clubs, the airport is a popular destination for hobbyists, and is used as a venue for public events such as concerts and motor sports. Although the entire complex is now a landmark, local authorities and business interests continue to express interest in demolishing portions of the site to make way for new housing.

The decision to use the airport area for residential purposes, based on an agreement between the state government and the municipality, prompted the airport's listing on the Watch in 2004 and 2006. As a result of local efforts and Watch listing, the airport protection controversy received substantial coverage in the press and a revised landmark inventory was expanded to include the entire airport. Previous listings only included the terminal and thus threatened protection of the airport runways, and thus the site's overall character and scale. Since a final decision on development is still pending, the future of the Helsinki-Malmi Airport remains uncertain.

Finland's Helsinki-Malmi Airport is a rare surviving example of an architecturally significant airport in the 1930s Modernist style that has been in use since its construction. This airport played a key role in the defense of Finland's capital in World War II. Today, the architectural complex retains not only its original purpose, but many of its original details. In addition to its architectural significance, the Malmi Airport is a cherished part of the locality's identity and is valued as the last remaining large open space in the city. A nature path around the aerodrome is widely popular, and the airport offers aviation enthusiasts a chance to experience a uniquely well-preserved 1930s international airport.

## UPDATE

In June 2010 it was announced that a decision about the future of the airport would be postponed indefinitely. While Helsingin Sanomat suggested at the time that light aircraft may continue to fly at Malmi into the 2020's, in March 2014 the Finnish government again proposed that the Helsinki-Malmi Airport be closed. In spite of strong opposition, including a protest outside Parliament and a petition that was signed by 68,000 people, in October 2014 it was decided that the airport would close by 2016 in order to make way for housing. Supporters of the airport remain hopeful for a reversal of this decision. *November 2014*



Main Building, 2004



Main Building, 2002



Main Interior, 2004

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