

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name KENI Radio Building
other names/site number AHRS Site No. ANC-361

2. Location

street & number 1777 Forest Park Drive not for publication
city, town Anchorage vicinity
state Alaska code AK county Anchorage code 020 zip code 99517

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		<u>0</u> objects
			<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Judith E. Bittner 2/29/88
Signature of certifying official Date

Alaska
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

[Signature] 2/28/88

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Processing/Extraction:
Communications facility (radio station)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Processing/Extraction:
Communications facility (radio station)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

roof Asphalt/concrete

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

A two story, flat-roofed, reinforced concrete building with full basement, the KENI transmitter building was designed by Seattle architect Augustine A. Porreca, A.I.A., in 1947, and built under the supervision of Al Swalling the following year. The transmitter building overlooks Westchester Lagoon, a small lake about a half mile west of downtown Anchorage. The transmitting tower stands below the transmitter building at the edge of the lagoon.

The KENI Building, as it is popularly known, is one of only four commercial Art Deco buildings in Anchorage. The building is rectangular in plan, with beveled corners. The front is located in the long side of the rectangle. The first floor is defined by a base, 1" wider than the sides of the building, and extending up to the height of the window sills and is capped by a 1" wide groove about 10" below the sills that runs around the entire building. The 1" groove is a motif that is often repeated: the first and second floors are divided by two grooves running around the building and a frieze at the height of the second floor window sills. A parapet wall caps the building and contains, reading toward the top, another groove running around the building, three more grooves above each window, and two final grooves that run around the building.

The location and size of the second floor openings are identical to those on the first, except that windows are used in place of doors. From left to right, the building has three bays. The first bay contains large, central windows on the first and second floors. Each is a 2/2 double hung window with horizontal muntins, surrounded by heavy mullions, side lights, and a transom.

The central bay is set at an angle to the mass of the building, the left side extends out five feet while the right is flush with the building's mass. A marquis above the first floor extends out another five feet, sheltering three entrance steps. The bay contains, from the left, a recessed door on the first floor with a simple 2/2 window directly above on the second floor, and a deeply recessed principal entry on the first floor with a similar window on the second floor. The principal entry contains a central, double door with full-length glass panels and transom, and wide floor-to-ceiling windows on either side, each containing five panes with thick, horizontal muntins. The second floor window above it maintains the design of the door.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1948

Significant Dates

1948

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

A. A. Porreca (Architect)

Al Swalling (builder)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The KENI Building, built in 1947-1948, is an excellent example in Anchorage of Art Deco style architecture that was popular around the United States from the 1920s through the 1940s. Radio station KENI signed on the air on May 2, 1948, and has transmitted from the same building every day since. The KENI Building is one of only a few major commercial buildings in Anchorage built before 1950 that is still used for its original purpose.

Austin E. "Cap" Lathrop planned to start a radio station in Anchorage in the early 1940s. Lathrop was one of Alaska's leading public figures and a business and industry entrepreneur during the first half of the twentieth century. Among other business ventures, Lathrop had an "entertainment empire" of movie theatres and had several communications ventures including radio stations and several newspapers. Lathrop started his first radio station, KFAR, in Fairbanks in 1939.

Lathrop's plans to construct the radio station and another Anchorage commercial building, the Fourth Avenue Theatre (listed in the National Register of Historic Places) were interrupted by World War II. After the war, Augie Hiebert, Lathrop's engineer, came from Fairbanks to Anchorage to oversee construction of the radio station. The builder, Al Swalling, began construction that month although title to the property was not transferred until August 22, 1947. The building was finished in April, 1948.

On May 2, 1948, the radio station signed on the air. It was the fifth station in Alaska, the second in Anchorage. Anchorage was the first city in Alaska to boast of more than one radio station. KENI has been on the air every day since. The station's tower is the oldest commercial radio tower still standing in Anchorage.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Anchorage Times, April 9, 1948; May 2, 1948.

Carberry, Michael E., Patterns of the Past: An Inventory of Anchorage Heritage Resources. (Anchorage: Municipality of Anchorage, Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1979).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

A

0	6
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3	4	2	9	6	0
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6	7	8	9	0	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The building occupies Lot 5 of Lagoon Estates. The tower occupies a triangular plot, approximately 50' on a side, immediately to the north of Lots 7 and 8 of Lagoon Estates, about 100 yards from the building.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the lot occupied by the building, ^{and} the tower that has historically been part of the radio station.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Dunham, General Assistant
organization Pacific Rim Broadcasting date January 11, 1988
street & number 1777 Forest Park Drive telephone (907) 272-7461
city or town Anchorage state Alaska zip code 99517

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Section number 7 Page 2 KENI Radio Building (AHRS Site No. ANC-361)

The second and third bays are divided by a concrete tower, extending out about five feet, and rising a full story above the roof. Its front and sides were cast in several planes and 1" indented grooves run at right angles to one another. The station's call letters are prominently cast into the front of the tower above the second floor.

The third and first bays are identical. The third bay has a double-hung 1/1 window on the second floor. The window is located between the tower and large 2/2 double-hung windows.

On the first floor the right side contains a small, central window, flanked by larger, single windows on either side. The second story windows are identically placed on both the left and right sides of the building. The ground floor on the left side has a window on the far left, directly under the second floor window, no central window, and on the right side a door under the second floor window.

The rear of the building is also divided into three bays, the central bay extends out three feet and contains a pair of double windows on the second floor. On the first floor a single, central window with a fresh air intake above it is flanked by three 3' circular holes for exhaust fans, one on the right and two on the left. The left bay contains a pair of single windows on each floor; these are duplicated in the second floor of the right bay. The ground floor of the right bay contains two garage doors.

Inside, the main floor had a foyer, control room, shop, garage, and a one bedroom apartment. Two more one bedroom apartments were upstairs. Walnut paneling, designed to create horizontal panels on the walls, was used in the station's interior. A simple, curved balustrade completed the central stairwell.

Few changes have been made to the exterior of the KENI Building. Two round ventilator holes in the rear have been boarded up; two rectangular metal fan housings, also in the rear, have been installed at ground level. Otherwise, the exterior has undergone virtually no changes since the building was built.

On the interior, the apartments have been remodeled several times to create offices and studios. Original interior walls have been removed, false walls and ceilings have been added, plumbing and kitchen fixtures have been taken out and wiring and heating has been changed to conform to code. Several major features remain intact, including the rich wood staircase and landing, walnut woodwork in the foyer, and walnut trim in the present sales area featuring the station's call letters inlaid in wood paneling.

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The KENI Building's features are predominantly Art Deco, with Art Moderne elements, indicating an evolution and careful integration of both subtypes into the Modernistic style. The building's long, low massing, smooth wall surfaces, flat roof, parapet wall, and tower evoke the Art Deco style. The tower, also an Art Deco element, shows an elegant and simple use of geometric motifs. The asymmetrical facade, extensive use of horizontal grooves in the walls, horizontal panes of glass, and round exhaust openings are uniquely Art Moderne. This mixture of subtypes is not unusual in the project completed after the generally recognized dates of the Modernistic period (1920-1940), and is often found in commercial Modernistic buildings.

There is a striking similarity between the KENI Building and the Fourth Avenue Theatre (entered in the National Register of Historic Places on October 5, 1982). While the Fourth Avenue Theatre is a large, urban building, both are reinforced concrete structures that display strong horizontal elements, have a central tower carrying the name of the building, use grooves and projecting geometrical motifs, and display rich interior woodwork. The similarity is easily explained because the KENI Building's architect, A.A. Porreca, in partnership with B. Marcus Priteca, designed the Fourth Avenue Theatre in the early 1940's.

The station's 326-foot transmitting tower stands on massive concrete piers set on the inside edge of Westchester Lagoon. Described in the station's Federal Communication Commission license as a "self-supporting, vertical radiator," it is a tripodal, steel structure that requires no guy wires. Copper radials of a length equal to the height of the tower are embedded in the surrounding ground. The top fifty feet of the tower was damaged and replaced after the 1964 earthquake. Apart from this change, the tower is unchanged from its original construction.

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Photograph identification:

1. KENI Radio Building (AHRS Site No. ANC-361)
Anchorage, Alaska
Paul W. Chattey
June 1987
Office of History & Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation
View of tower and radio building behind private residence, camera facing south
2. KENI Radio Building (AHRS Site No. ANC-361)
Anchorage, Alaska
Paul W. Chattey
January 1987
Office of History & Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation
View of front of building, camera facing southwest
3. KENI Radio Building (AHRS Site No. ANC-361)
Anchorage, Alaska
Paul W. Chattey
January 1987
Office of History & Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation
View of front of building, camera facing southeast
4. KENI Radio Building (AHRS Site No. ANC-361)
Anchorage, Alaska
Paul W. Chattey
January 1987
Office of History & Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation
View of staircase in lobby of building, camera facing west



Reduced copy of the main floor plan showing general location of rooms.

No scale

Source: Construction drawings by Augustine A. Porreca, AIA, done in 1947; copy was made from original blueprints in possession of owner.

