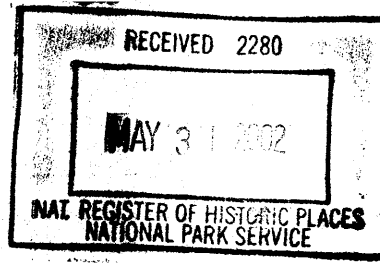


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

767

1. Name of Property

Historic name Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building

Other names/site number Norfolk Municipal Airport Administration Building (NeHBS #MD03-023)

2. Location

Street & number 4100 South 13th Street Not for publication

City or town Norfolk Vicinity

State Nebraska Code NE County Madison Code 119 Zip code 68702-1343

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Lance Sommer
Signature of certifying official

5/24/02
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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): _____

Edson H. Beall 7/11/02

[Signature]
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building
Name of Property

Madison County, Nebraska
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/air-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/air-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Moderne/Streamlined Moderne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation CONCRETE

Walls CONCRETE

Roof OTHER/tar paper and gravel

Other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** Removed from its original location.
- C** A birthplace or a grave.
- D** A cemetery.
- E** A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** A commemorative property.
- G** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1946-1952

Significant Dates

1946

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Watson, E.B.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location for additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: Nebraska Dept of Aeronautics

10. Geographical DataAcreage of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	630090	4649050	3.			
2.				4.			

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary R. Ebeling and Christina Slattery, Historic Preservation Specialists
 organization Mead & Hunt, Inc. date July 2001
 street & number 6501 Watts Road telephone (608) 273-6380
 city or town Madison state WI zip code 53719-2700

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title City of Norfolk
 street & number 127 North 1st Street telephone 402.644.8720
 city or town Norfolk state NE zip code 68701

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building

Name of Property

Madison County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

Description

Introduction

The Karl Stefan Memorial Airport is located on the east side of 13th Street, approximately 3 miles south of the city of Norfolk. The airport is bounded on the north, south, and west by county roads, and on the east by 13th Street (former Highway 81 alignment). The land to the north of the airport is primarily commercial, while the area to the east is residential. Agricultural development characterizes the landscape to the south and west of the airport. The airport complex includes resources dating from the mid-to-late twentieth century, including an airport administration building, a system of runways and taxiways, an electric vault, generator house, a beacon, a Visual Omni Range (VOR), a wind sock pole, and a complex of hangers and maintenance buildings. The 1946 Streamline Moderne style administration building is the focus of this nomination.

The Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building

The administration building stands at the end of an entrance drive bracketed by an allée of trees that were planted prior to 1961.¹ The airfield is located to the west of the building, and a parking lot is located to the east. A concrete sidewalk encircles the building and a chain-link fence extends north and south from the rear of the building, thus partitioning the airfield from public access areas of the airport.

The original building measured approximately 92 feet by 40 feet and has a one-story addition on the north elevation approximately 40 feet long. The concrete administration building faces east and has a cross-plan footprint. The flat roof is covered with asphalt and gravel. Two, one-story wings flank a centrally placed, two-story tower. Exterior wall surfaces are poured concrete with vertical and horizontal scoring. The horizontal lines have been dyed to emphasize this detail. All of the corners of the building are curved. Original windows have been retained throughout the building.

The main, or east, elevation displays a symmetrically arranged fenestration pattern. Two, nine-pane, round windows bracket paired three-pane rectangular openings on the one-story wings. A concrete string-course runs under these windows. A one-story, concrete addition is appended to the north elevation. The addition, completed c. 1977, was planned by the National Weather Service to accommodate their offices.²

The east elevation of the tower contains the main entrance to the airport from the road and parking lot. Two narrow windows flank the entry, and protective coping shields the door. The vestibule has been extended outward to the edge of the coping to accommodate an enclosed vestibule and modern automatic doors. The words "Norfolk Airport" are inscribed above the entrance. A pair of evenly spaced, three-pane windows are set between the horizontal scoring and illuminate the upper floor of the tower. An abstract pair of wings with a location for a clock is situated at the top of the

¹ Aerial photograph of the Norfolk Airport, c. 1961, collection of the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

² Plans for the addition were completed by the National Weather Service, Central Region, Kansas City, Missouri, in October 1977, in the collection of the Karl Stefan Memorial Airport, Norfolk, Nebraska.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building

Name of Property

Madison County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

tower, above the windows. The clock was included in plans for the airport but does not appear to have been installed (see attached architectural plans).³

On the north elevation, the one-story addition extends to the north approximately 40 feet. This new wing dates to c. 1977 and is constructed of concrete. The addition has also been scored to resemble the main block of the terminal. The south elevation of the building has a row of three, three-pane windows at the southwest corner, and a replacement service door and pedestrian entrance at the southeast corner.

The west, or rear, elevation abuts the airfield. This elevation displays horizontal and vertical scoring of the concrete. Paired and tripled, three-pane windows illuminate the one-story wings of the building and wrap around the corner of the building. The west elevation of the central tower contains the passenger access door leading to the airfield. This entrance, flanked by windows, is protected by coping. The entry on this facade has also been extended out to accommodate an enclosed vestibule and modern automatic doors. An etched sign reading "Norfolk Airport" and a pair of abstract wings similar to those found on the east elevation further accent the west facade of the tower. A band of four, three-pane windows stretch between the airport sign and the wing decoration. Three-pane corner windows wrap around to light the north and south facades of the upper portion of the tower.

Original plans for the building illustrate a first floor that featured a central lobby space entered from both the east and west elevations. A café, kitchen, and a utility closet were located in the southern half of the building; and the northern half of the building included an airport office, the U.S. Weather Bureau office and U.S. Weather Bureau room, and restrooms (see attached architectural plans).⁴

Presently, the interior of the airport is divided into various use areas. The central lobby remains as a lobby space. The ticket counter is located against the southeast wall of the terminal in the former location of the kitchen, and an airline carrier waiting room occupies the former café space. The utility room in the south wing has been removed. In the northern wing of the building the interior spaces have been reconfigured to house the airport security equipment and checkpoint, meeting room for the airport authority, and an office. The restrooms remain in their original location. The c. 1977 north elevation addition houses the kitchen and an additional meeting space.

The first floor of the airport, although modified, retains some original features. Terrazzo flooring survives on this level of the building, as well as on the stairs leading to the second floor. The stairway retains its simple wood railing with diminutive newel post and closed balustrade.

The second floor is a large open room with a bank of windows facing the airfield to the south, west, and north. Historically, this space may have been used as a meeting room for the airport authority and an observation area. Currently, the second floor is used as the airport manager's office.

³ E.B. Watson, Architectural Drawings for Norfolk Airport, 1945. Available at the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics, Lincoln Nebraska.

⁴ E.B. Watson, *ibid.*

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building

Name of Property

Madison County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 3

Integrity

The Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building retains a high degree of overall integrity. Alterations to the building's exterior include the addition of a one-story wing on the north facade and the enclosure of the entry vestibules on the east and west elevations. The new wing is compatible to the main building in both materials and design, minimizing the impact of the addition on the historic administration building.

Interior modifications to the building include the reconfiguration of interior spaces and the installation of drop ceilings. The U.S. Weather Bureau office equipment was removed from the building when they left the airport in the early 1990s. Modifications to the building's exterior and interior do not diminish the historic integrity of the property.

This nomination was completed in May 2001. In July, 2001 the NESHPO learned of a plan to alter the primary and airfield entryways to the building. The NESHPO elected to delay this nomination until the project was completed, and its affect to the historic integrity of the Stefan Memorial Airport Building was assessed. The project was completed, and the NESHPO determined that it had not adversely affected the overall physical integrity of the building.

The project consisted of attaching a poured concrete "airlock" to both the east and west (primary and airfield-side entries) doorways. The "airlocks" are approximately 9x6x12 and resemble nothing less than a box culvert lain on end. The "airlocks" were designed with curved angles and flat surfaces sensitive to building's Moderne architecture, and were painted to match the building. Relative to the overall integrity and overall scale of the building and taking into account the relative rarity of Art Moderne architecture in Nebraska, these changes do not meaningfully detract from the building's historic integrity, and the building remains eligible for listing in the National Register.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building

Name of Property

Madison County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

Statement of Significance

The Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building is eligible for the National Register at the state level under *Criteria A*, and *C*. The 1946 administration building meets *Criterion C* as an excellent and rare example in the state of the Streamline Moderne style applied to airport architecture.⁵ According to the Nebraska Historic Building Survey, this building is, in fact, unique in the state. The property also meets *Criterion A* for its regional importance as a transportation center associated with the development of aviation in northeastern Nebraska. The Norfolk Airport provided a central location for regional aviation activities. The Norfolk Airport Administration Building was designed to include offices of the U.S. Weather Bureau and was one of three weather stations in the country to experiment with new technology provided from World War II surplus Navy radar equipment. In the late 1940s, the airport played a significant role in emergency relief efforts such as "Operation Snowbound," which aided stranded citizens during a series of blizzards, which further illustrates the local and regional significance of this property. The period of significance for the administration building begins with the date of construction, 1946, and continues through 1952, which currently represents the closing date for periods of significance.

Development of Aviation in Nebraska

Throughout the 1920s, inventors and "barnstorming" demonstration pilots dominated Nebraska aviation. Nationwide, war-trained aviators became active spokesmen for the future of aviation. The first legislation was enacted at state and federal levels during this period to promote airport construction and encourage safety in the industry. The 1920s also saw the strengthening of airmail service, including provisions for night flights by 1923 and the use of private contractors in 1925. Nebraska's place on airmail routes increased public awareness and likely contributed to support for state aviation legislation. The number of pilots, airplanes, and airports in the state remained small at the end of the decade, though proliferating aviation schools were introducing many new people to flying. By 1929, the state had 20 aviation schools.⁶

As air transportation increased in the 1930s, the need for improved airports and navigation devices became apparent. During the early years of the Depression, however, little changed at the nation's airfields as minimal money was available for equipment and facilities. A huge shift took place mid-decade as resources were targeted toward public facilities such as airports. In Nebraska, contributions to the development of aviation came from two sources: the support provided by the newly established Nebraska Aeronautics Commission, and the funding and labor provided by federal relief programs.

On the eve of America's entrance into World War II, the public's interest in aviation was increasing. The number of licensed aircraft and airfields corresponded to this interest. In 1939 there were 97 airplanes in the state and 29 civil airports; by 1941, there were 283 aircraft and 50 civil airports. In 1940, 24 aviation schools were licensed in the state. In October 1940, Congress appropriated \$40 million for construction and improvement of up to 250 airports nationwide. To

⁵ The construction date of the airport is attributed from references to the U.S. Weather Bureau being established in the administration building in 1946. Karl Stefan, Washington, D.C., to Commander F.W. Reichelderfer, U.S. Department of Commerce, Weather Bureau, 19 September 1946, *Karl Stefan Papers*, manuscript collection No. 2624, box 19, folder 163.

⁶ Jack D. Timmons, "The Nebraska Department of Aeronautics: Aviation Regulation and Promotion" (M.A. thesis, University of Nebraska, July 1962), 36.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building

Name of Property

Madison County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

qualify for federal funds, improvements had to be deemed necessary for the national defense. Once sites were selected, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) undertook construction at the many selected sites in the 1940s.⁷

During much of the early 1940s, federal funding and assistance were directed towards war efforts with limited state-level airport projects. In 1941 the Nebraska Aeronautics Commission hired a draftsman and field engineers to develop plans for airports in the state – surveys were made at 10 airports across the state (Ainsworth, Chadron, Fairbury, Falls City, Hartington, Hebron, Holdrege, Imperial, McCook, and York); master plans were prepared for 13 communities (Ainsworth, Chadron, Fairbury, Falls City, Fremont, Hartington, Hebron, Holdrege, Imperial, McCook, Norfolk, Scottsbluff, and York); and improvements were made at 14 airports (Ainsworth, Beatrice, Blair, Chadron, Crete, Fairbury, Fremont, Hastings, Norfolk, North Platte, Omaha, Peru, Scottsbluff, and Tecumseh).⁸

Federal funds, distributed to Nebraska by the Civil Aeronautics Administration, were used for allowable project costs and had to be matched by state or municipal funds for construction costs. The federal share for acquiring land for an approved project, prior to May 13, 1946, was limited to 25 percent of the allowable cost of acquisition. Nebraska's federal funding increased toward the end of the decade, totaling \$1,485,367 for the years 1946-1949. The Nebraska Department of Aeronautics during this same time used the funds to build 21 new airports and to finance improvements on 22 existing facilities. Since federal activity focused on airports serving the national defense, the development of private aviation lagged behind at the end of the war. In 1946 Congress passed the Federal Airport Act to provide direct grants for airport development. The act was modified in 1946 to allow for channeling of funds through the states. From the passage of the Federal Airport Act in 1946 until 1958, approximately \$400 million was spent or obligated by the federal government for airport development. In 1946 Congress allocated \$45 million under the National Airport Plan, and \$32.5 million in 1948. Seventy-five percent of the funds were dedicated to the states based on each state's population and size.⁹

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport

State and federal legislation passed in the 1920s to spur airport expansion assisted the development of national and state aviation facilities, including Norfolk. The early development of the airfield at Norfolk had its roots in the flying school established on March 1, 1928, by Andy Risser. By 1934, Risser had leased 160 acres south of Norfolk on U.S. Highway 81 for a flying school. Risser's operation was located in what is now the northeast corner of the current airport grounds.

Activity at the Norfolk airfield continued to increase, and between 1935 and 1939, the Federal Emergency Relief Act made improvements to the facilities.¹⁰ On July 7, 1942, the WPA, in partnership with the city of Norfolk, received

⁷ Nebraska Aeronautics Commission, *Report of the Nebraska Aeronautics Commission, 1943*, (Published by the Commission, 1 July 1943), 2-3; Jack V. O'Keefe, *Development of Aviation in Nebraska* (Lincoln, Nebr.: Department of Aeronautics, 1961), 28; Robert Burkhardt, *The Federal Aviation Administration* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 17.

⁸ Nebraska Aeronautics Commission, *Report of the Nebraska Aeronautics Commission, 1943*, 12.

⁹ Nebraska Department of Aeronautics, *Annual Report, 1947*, 13; Nebraska Department of Aeronautics, *Annual Report of the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics, 1949*, (Published by the State, 1949), 4; Timmons 17-18.

¹⁰ *Norfolk Daily News*, 9 June 1950, Section F, p. 1, Progress Edition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building

Name of Property

Madison County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

approval for the construction of a municipal airport at this site. This approval came during World War II when only airfields and airports with a war-related priority were approved for improvements and funding. The Norfolk facility was approved to serve as an auxiliary airfield to several airports, including Sioux City Air Field.¹¹ Contracted work included clearing the site, runway construction and paving, and drainage work.¹² Construction of the two concrete runways at Norfolk was delayed in 1943 due to approval and funding of projects during the war.¹³ The Norfolk Municipal Airport was dedicated on October 22, 1944.

The developing airport soon found a champion in Nebraska Congressman Karl Stefan. Stefan, a Norfolk resident and an avid aviation supporter, served as a member of the Congressional Air Policy Board. The influential politician used his clout to secure continued funding for the airport and special programs, such as the installation of an experimental U.S. Weather Bureau Station. Stefan spearheaded the efforts to fund the construction of the administration building. Planning for the construction of an administration building had begun by 1945, as reflected in a letter from Karl Stefan to Gene Eppley.¹⁴ Construction of the administration building was funded with a \$25,000 grant from the Nebraska State Aeronautical Commission in August of 1946.¹⁵ The Streamline Moderne style building, designed by local architect E.B. Watson, was completed in 1946. Stefan's influence likely allowed for the completion of this airport administration building during World War II. On April 16, 1947, the Norfolk Airport site was approved by the Civil Aeronautics Authority, and 3 days later it was approved by the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics.¹⁶

¹¹ Research file, Norfolk Airport, collection of the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office.

¹² "Federal Works Agency, Notification of Project Approval," *Karl Stefan Papers*, manuscript collection No. 2624, box 1, folder 5, collection of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹³ Karl Stefan, Washington, D.C., to Gene Eppley, Omaha, Nebraska, 20 December 1943, *Karl Stefan Papers*, manuscript collection No. 2624, box 1, folder 5.

¹⁴ Karl Stefan, Washington, D.C., to Gene Eppley, Omaha, Nebraska, 29 January 1945, *Karl Stefan Papers*, manuscript collection No. 2624, box 1, folder 5.

¹⁵ Karl Stefan to Gene Eppley, 29 January 1945.

¹⁶ Correspondence files, Nebraska Department of Aeronautics, Lincoln, Nebraska.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building

Name of Property

Madison County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 4

Stefan lobbied for the establishment of a U.S. Weather Bureau office at the Norfolk Airport and space in the administration building was specifically designed for the U.S. Weather Bureau.¹⁷ The U.S. Weather Bureau office opened at the Norfolk Airport in 1946 and continued operations at this location until c. 1994. Prior to completion of the administration building, the U.S. Weather Bureau had been housed in the Norfolk Auditorium building. For the Norfolk Weather Bureau office, Stefan obtained surplus Navy radar equipment for use in forecasting. The radar-equipped station at Norfolk was one of three weather stations in the country working with this advanced technology. The application of radar for weather prediction was experimental at the time, thus setting the Weather Bureau office at Norfolk near the forefront in the field of climate studies.¹⁸

A few years after the completion of the administration building, the Norfolk Airport earned distinction for its role as headquarters for "Operation Snowbound" during the winter of 1948-49. This program performed aerial drops of food to stranded Nebraskans in the effort to provide relief to farmers and livestock who were literally snowed in. The abnormally harsh series of winter storms began in November and continued through the winter, with some areas still inaccessible in April.¹⁹ Planes out of the Norfolk Airport participated in deliveries of food and supplies to isolated residents and in dropping hay to livestock. These missions also occasionally airlifted the sick to hospitals for treatment.²⁰

In the early 1950s, Norfolk grew as a regional center for commercial flight activities and Mid-West Airlines and Skyways, Inc., offered commercial and charter flights from the Norfolk Airport. By 1953, Mid-West and Braniff Airlines recorded a total of 627 passengers flying out of Norfolk.

Architecture

The Norfolk Airport Administration Building, completed in 1946, is an excellent example of Streamline Moderne movement. The Streamline Moderne style gained popularity between 1920 and 1950. This style resulted from the influence of industrial design, specifically the forms being developed for airplanes, ships, and automobiles. The reference this style makes to the modern airplane form could not have been lost on the airport designers. This building displays many of the characteristics of this form, including the flat roof, curved corners, round windows and windows that carry around corners, concrete construction, and patterned scoring of exterior walls.²¹

Locally prominent Norfolk architect Elbert B. Watson (1879-1963) was chosen to design the Norfolk Airport Administration Building. Watson designed several landmark buildings in the city of Norfolk, including the Norfolk Municipal Auditorium (1939-40), the Koenigstein Block and Granada Theater (1927), and three area schools in the late

¹⁷ "Army Approval is Needed on Airport Job," *Norfolk Daily News* 2 February 1943; Karl Stefan to Gene Eppley, 29 January 1945.

¹⁸ Karl Stefan, Washington, D.C., to Commander F.W. Reichelderfer, U.S. Department of Commerce, Weather Bureau, 13 February 1947, *Karl Stefan Papers*, manuscript collection No. 2624, box 19, folder 163.

¹⁹ Jill Marie Koelling, "The Blizzard of the Century," *Nebraska History* 81, No. 4 (Winter 2000): 185.

²⁰ Library Committee of the Elkhorn Valley Historical Society, *Images of America, Norfolk Nebraska*, Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 79.

²¹ Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1994), 465-66.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building

Name of Property

Madison County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 5

1920s to the early 1930s. Watson employed a strikingly modern design for the building, reflecting the importance of this airport.

The Norfolk Administration Building was planned and constructed to be a large-scale, architecturally prominent building. In comparison to similar properties throughout the state, the building is larger in scale and reflects more high-style design characteristics. Karl Stefan likely influenced the prominent design and scale of the building, and plans to include the U.S. Weather Bureau office contributed to its size. The architectural distinction and size of the building emphasizes the regional importance of this airport.

Conclusion

Detailed contextual research about the other properties and activities associated with Karl Stefan as a US Congressman was not required as a part of the contract to complete this nomination. However, additional contextual investigation of extant properties and Stefan's activities in Congress may reveal that this nomination should be amended to address this building's eligibility under *Criterion B* for its association with Karl Stefan.

In any event, the Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building meets National Register *Criteria A* and *C*. The building is significant statewide under *Criterion A* for its important role as a transportation center in Nebraska, the association with the experimental U.S. Weather Bureau station, and for its status as the headquarters of "Operation Snowbound" in 1948-49. The property is also significant under *Criterion C* as a rare example of a Streamline Moderne airport administration building in Nebraska. The distinctive and progressive architectural style of the building contributes to the property's significance. According to the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, a database currently of over 60,000 historic properties statewide, this building is, in fact, a unique example of a Streamline Moderne airport facility, and one of only a handful of Moderne structures in the state.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building

Name of Property

Madison County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

Bibliography

Adams, Gerald. Airport Manager, Mead & Hunt interview 21 March 2001.

"Army Approval is Needed on Airport Job." *Norfolk Daily News*, 2 February 1943.

Burkhardt, Robert. *The Federal Aviation Administration*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967.

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport files. Collection of the Karl Stefan Memorial Airport, Norfolk, Nebraska.

Koelling, Jill Marie. "The Blizzard of the Century." *Nebraska History* 81, No. 4 (Winter 2000): 185.

Library Committee of the Elkhorn Valley Historical Society. *Images of America, Norfolk, Nebraska*. Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 79.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1994.

Memorial Services held in the House of Representatives in Eulogy of Karl Stefan. United States Government Printing Office, 1952. Collection of the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office.

Nebraska Aeronautics Commission. *Report of the Nebraska Aeronautics Commission, 1943*. Published by the Commission, 1 July 1943.

Nebraska Department of Aeronautics. *Annual Report of the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics, 1946-1960*. Published by the state, 1946 to 1960.

Nebraska Department of Aeronautics. Correspondence files. Collection of the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Norfolk Daily News, 9 June 1950, Section F, p. 1, Progress Edition.

O'Keefe, Jack V. *Development of Aviation in Nebraska*. Lincoln, Nebr.: Department of Aeronautics, 1961.

Stefan, Karl, Papers. Manuscript collection of the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Timmons, Jack D. "The Nebraska Department of Aeronautics: Aviation Regulation and Promotion." M.A. thesis, University of Nebraska, July 1962.

Watson, E.B. "Architectural Drawings for Norfolk Airport, 1945." Available at the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics, Lincoln Nebraska.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building

Name of Property

Madison County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 10 Page 1

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building follows the outer edge of the sidewalk that encircles the administration building.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Administration Building encompasses the entire historic resource. The sidewalk visually separates the building from the airfield and the parking lot while creating a small buffer around the building.