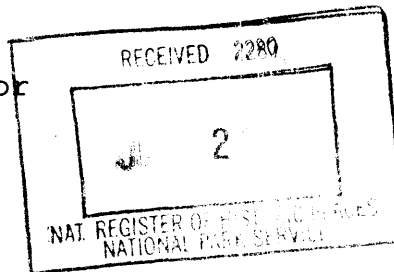


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



872

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Boulder-on-the-Park

other names/site number Holland Hall; Aero Exploration Corporation

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 1850 South Boulder Avenue not for publication N/A
city or town Tulsa vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Tulsa code 143
zip code 74119

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

7-21-03
Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
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 commenting or other official

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

[Signature]

other (explain): _____

SEP 2 2003

[Signature]

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

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

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

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: INDUSTRY Sub: communications facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE Sub: professional

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Moderne

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
roof ASPHALT
walls BRICK
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.)

- 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNICATIONS

Period of Significance 1947-1953

=====
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)
=====

Significant Dates _____

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Atkinson & Olston, architect
C.A. Sanderson & Son, contractor
McCune, Malcolm L., architect

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

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

(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 of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>15</u>	<u>231040</u>	<u>4002730</u>	3	_____	_____
2	<u>N/A</u>	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

N/A 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 Cynthia Savage, Architectural Historian, for Ellis L. McIntosh

organization Savage Consulting date January 2003

street & number Rt. 1, Box 116 telephone 405/459-6200

city or town Pocasset state OK zip code 73079

=====
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 Boulder On The Park LLC

street & number 1850 S. Boulder Ave., Ste. 200 telephone _____

city or town Tulsa state OK zip code 74119

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SUMMARY

Boulder-on-the-Park is a three-story, brick building with a flat roof and a concrete foundation located in a mixed commercial/residential area south of downtown Tulsa. Constructed in 1923 by C. A. Sanderson & Son in a plain Commercial Style designed by the local architectural firm of Atkinson & Olston, the building was used as a school, Holland Hall, until 1932. Following this it was used as office space, most notably for the Aero Exploration Corporation which occupied the building from about 1938 to 1946. KTUL Radio moved into the building in early 1947 after extensive renovations designed by Tulsa architect Malcolm L. McCune. The 1947 modifications included painting the brick and adding Moderne details to the facade. Although lacking sufficient integrity to convey its original function, the building is nominated for its historic significance as a broadcast radio station. As such, the building is described in context of the 1947 modifications with reference to the original appearance.

As originally constructed, the building retains the majority of its paired and triple, six-over-one, hung, wood windows with simple, brick, rowlock sills. The front entry consists of the historic, single, metal, paneled door with a single light. A rear entry was cut into the back wall as part of the 1947 alterations. This entry is now a single, metal, slab door with a divided sidelight on the south side. The front portion, including the facade and about a quarter of the sides of the building, is composed of more decorative facing brick while the remaining sides and rear of the building are common brick. The 1947 painting of the brick enhances the difference between the two bricks. A tall brick parapet extends above the slightly sloped roof on the north, east and south sides. A brick chimney remains on the northwest corner of the building. Other original decorative details include a stone coping, multiple decorative brick tables with stone ornaments on the pediment, a projected stone beltcourse, brick stringcourse and water table. Except for the stone coping which extends the full length of the parapet, the other decorative details are confined to the front portion of the building. As part of the 1947 change, Moderne details were added to the central projected section of the facade to accent the verticality of the building. These include a central, projected, vertical, glass block shaft with accenting metal rods, blue ceramic tile between the upper story windows and an elaborate, black, structural glass surround with a flat metal canopy over the entry.

After 1968, a brick stair tower addition was constructed on the northeast side of the building. Although compatible, the smooth-finished addition is easily differentiated as it is not the same materials or height as the historic building and only covers a small section of the north elevation. The addition has a metal, glazed, slab door with a narrow sidelight and transom. Above the

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entry is a vertical row of fixed, double, metal windows which continue the pattern of the entry. On the back side of the addition is a second floor entry, consisting of a single, metal, glazed, paneled door, with a concrete bridge connecting it to the adjacent north-side parking area. The addition has a concrete coping similar to the larger building and a thick, front, concrete step which has been ramped for wheelchair access.

Other changes to the building including paving around the building. Historically, the front of the building had a central concrete walk dividing a grassy area containing the eye-catching KTUL sign. The sign was probably removed when the radio station moved out of the building in 1955. The grassy area has given way for the most part to a black-topped parking area. A small grassy strip remains to separate the parking lot from the concrete sidewalk which directly borders the curving street in front of the building. A black-topped drive extends around the other sides of the building as well with another parking area on the north side.

The setting of the building is much as it was historically. A large, eight story, Modern style, apartment building, Park Plaza, was erected to the north of the radio station in about 1950. There is a two-story, brick building to the south which is possibly newer than Boulder-on-the-Park or a building which has undergone extensive modification. The defining park which was historically located across the street east from the building remains a large grassy expanse. Originally named Boulder Park (from which on-air persons coined the name of the building), the park has been renamed Veterans Park. To the rear of the building, historic housing, dating from the first half of the twentieth century, constitutes the majority of the historic Riverview neighborhood.

Overall, Boulder-on-the-Park retains its integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. Despite the changes over the last fifty years, including the removal of the KTUL sign and the stair tower addition, the building continues to clearly convey its historic significance as Tulsa's only extant broadcast radio building from the first half of the twentieth century.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

Boulder-on-the-Park was built into a hill with the first level being below grade. As such, the lower level is increasingly obscured going west into the hill with none of the first floor being visible on the back side. The area around the building retains its original sloped appearance; however, the slope has been steepened by a black-topped drive which encircles the building. This is most noticeable on the north side of the building.

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The facade of Boulder-on-the-Park faces east onto the open grassy area of the former Boulder Park. The front portion of the building, constructed of facing brick, has been painted three shades of gray. The base of the first floor, to the brick watertable, is a dark gray. To the sides of the paired, wood, six-over-one, hung windows is a lighter shade of gray. In between the windows and completely covering the projected center of the facade is a lighter gray. The remainder of the building, consisting of common brick, is painted a similar light gray. The painting of the building was undertaken as part of the 1947 modifications.

The striking face of the building has three original sections. The narrower outer two sections are identical with paired, wood, six-over-one, hung windows marking each floor. The larger center section contains the modern elements which altered the classification of the building from the plain Commercial style to a restrained Moderne style. Overall, the modifications were relatively simple but they profoundly changed the building. The central section retains its original decorative brick table with a centered stone diamond on the parapet which matches both the narrower sections on the front, as well as the decorative eastern sections on the sides. Below this is the original projected stone beltcourse which ornaments the length of the front decorative portion of the building. Extending from the beltcourse in the central section is the vertical column of glass blocks which covered the two original, six-over-one, wood, hung windows which lit the front interior stairwell mid-way between floors. The verticality of the glass block shaft is reinforced by the metal rods which come over the concrete crown of the glass block shaft to the top of the black structural glass entry surround. The original, small, six-over-one, hung, wood windows on the second and third floors remain relatively intact but ceramic tiles in two shades of blue have been inlaid between and around the windows. The tile outlining the rectangular form created from combining the windows into one decorative element is a turquoise blue, matching the two strips extending vertically through the recessed ceramic tile panel between the windows. The other tile in the panel is a lighter blue.

The fenestration pattern of the first floor was extensively altered in the 1947 renovation. The original, Classical, stone surround was replaced with a dramatic, projected, black, structural glass surround. The black surround extends from the glass block shaft to a concrete foundation. A thin, metal, horizontal canopy projects from the black surround, supported by two slender metal rods springing from the concrete planters immediately in front of the entry. Below the canopy, on either side of the black surround are historic, Art Deco style, metal and glass light fixtures. Between the black surround and the single, metal, glazed, paneled door is a narrow strip of glass blocks. Sheltered by the metal canopy but outside of the black surround are two

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original openings. Originally containing wood, six-over-one, hung windows, the openings are now filled with six, small, concrete, hexagon openings. The original, brick, rowlock sills remain in place.

The south elevation remains much as originally constructed. The east section of the south wall is ornamented similar to the front of the building, including its facing brick construction, paired six-over-one hung wood windows on each floor, decorative brick table with stone diamond ornament on the pediment, projected stone beltcourse, brick stringcourse and watertable and tri-colored painting scheme. To the west of this, the wall is constructed of common brick painted a single shade of light gray. The fenestration pattern in the back portion of the wall is identical on the two upper floors. From the west, there is a triple window, then two sets of paired windows, then another triple window. All of the windows are six-over-one, hung, wood with simple, brick, rowlock sills. Due to the uneven grade, the first floor windows are different and there is an original set of concrete stairs which extend upward from the west edge of the decorative front portion of the building. On the first floor of the south elevation, east of the decorative front section, there is a triple window matching those above. To the west of this, there are two other fixed windows on the first floor, both located in relationship to the adjoining stairs. Both windows are small, fixed, wood squares situated adjacent to landings on the rising steps. As such, the west window is higher than the other first floor windows on the south elevation while the middle window is level with the top of the other first floor windows. A concrete retaining wall has been constructed on the south side of the stairs and a steep black-topped drive now allows full access to the building.

The west elevation or rear of the building is composed of only two floors. There is an original, tall, rectangular, brick chimney located on the north side of the elevation which rises above the parapet of the other elevations. Adjacent to the chimney on both floors is a set of paired, wood, six-over-one, hung windows which are identical to the windows on the south side of the elevation. Notably, the top windows are wider than the lower windows. To the inside of both sets of paired windows are small openings on both floors. On the north side, the openings are filled with the original, single, six-over-one, hung, wood windows. The south side openings are filled with metal slats. Centrally located on the west elevation is a single entry on the bottom floor with a mid-floor-level window above which lit the back stairwell. The entry, historic to the 1947 modifications, is a single, metal, slab door with a multi-light sidelight. A concrete sidewalk extends the length of the elevation, connecting with the exterior stairwells on either side of the building.

The north elevation of the building is almost identical to the south elevation. The fenestration pattern is the same, as are the decorative elements, except

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for the area covered by the stair tower addition which was added after 1968 as it does not appear on the 1968 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. The smooth-finished addition begins immediately below the decorative brick table and extends to the ground. The addition is painted gray similar to the historic building, including a darker shade of gray on the bottom. On the east side of the addition is the ground-level entry which consists of a metal glazed slab door with a narrow transom and sidelight. Above this, fixed double windows, divided identical to the entry, form a continuous, glazed, vertical band before terminating below the projected cornice of the addition which corresponds with the stone beltcourse on the historic building. On the north side of the east elevation are single, fixed, metal, rectangular windows located at mid-level between both the first and second floors. On the north wall of the addition are two identical windows, also located at mid-level. On the west side of the addition, there is a single, fixed, metal window on the third floor and a single, metal, glazed, paneled door on the second floor. Below this, towards the north, is a single fixed metal window located at the same height as the window on the mid-level north side.

Outside of the addition, a concrete retaining wall follows the steep black-topped drive which curves around the north side to allow parking on this side of the building. A metal black railing is situated on the retaining wall on the top side. The railing consists of a black rod above a metal fence-like panel. The black railing also extends to the concrete bridge in front of the addition's second floor entry which connects to the above grade parking area on the north side. Below the bridge, the original concrete stairs extend upwards from roughly the addition to the concrete sidewalk on the back of the building. The railing extends along the upperside of the stairwell as a barrier to prevent accidental falls.

Currently, the building is being used as office space. The interior of the building has been changed numerous times since KTUL moved out in about 1955. The marble vestibule on the first floor remains relatively intact, as does the rear interior stairs.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

During the period of significance, there was a large, eye-catching, Art Deco-influenced sign in the grassy area in front of the building. In addition to the station call letters, the sign also advertised the station's affiliation with the CBS Radio Network. The sign, a separate countable resource, was probably removed shortly after 1955 when the station relocated to Lookout Mountain. Although lamentable, the loss of the sign does not significantly impact the ability of the building to convey its historic significance.

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The most visible alteration to the building itself is the post-1968 addition of the stair tower on the north elevation. The addition is compatible with the historic building while also being easily discernible. The addition is not as tall as the building and is clad with a smooth finish which has been painted to match the building. As such, the overall impact on the building is minimal. The other discernible modification is the black-topped drive and parking areas surrounding the building. Due to the limited lot space, this modification was necessary for the continued use of the building. Quite simply, there is no other area available for parking. The concrete retaining walls on the north and south sides of the building relate to the black-topped drive, as does the metal railing on the north side. These alterations are safety issues and, as such, also relate to the continued use of the building.

Overall, Boulder-on-the-Park retains its integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. The building amply conveys its historic appearance of the late 1940s and early 1950s when KTUL Radio, 1430 AM, broadcast from within.

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SUMMARY

Boulder-on-the-Park is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A for its association with KTUL Radio, 1430 AM, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. KTUL went on the air in early 1934, the second radio station in Tulsa. Like the majority of early broadcast radio stations, KTUL first broadcast from a multi-story office building in Tulsa's central business district. In 1947, KTUL moved into Boulder-on-the-Park from the National Bank of Tulsa Building. Boulder-on-the-Park, located in a mixed commercial/residential area south of downtown, was exclusively used by KTUL Radio from 1947 until the station moved to Lookout Mountain in 1955 and became a television station. Boulder-on-the-Park is the best remaining resource associated with early broadcast radio in Tulsa. There were six radio stations operating in Tulsa by the early 1950s. Two of these broadcast from multi-story, downtown, office buildings which do not retain any visible connection with Tulsa's early broadcast radio history. The remaining four, including KTUL, occupied their own buildings. Of these, only Boulder-on-the-Park remains extant. The period of significance for the building extends from 1947, when KTUL moved into the building, to 1953, the current National Register fifty-year mark.

BACKGROUND

The town of Tulsa existed as early as 1879 when a post office was established on the Perryman Ranch in the Creek Nation. The town, first called "Tulsey Town," grew slowly. During the early 1880s, the town was a haven for gamblers and "bad men" due to its isolation. At the time of the first government townsite survey in Indian Territory in 1900, Tulsa's population stood at merely 1,390.¹

Shortly after this survey, a momentous event occurred near Tulsa, Indian Territory. This event not only had a major impact on Tulsa but the entire state of Oklahoma. In 1901, the state's first important commercial oil well blew in. Located in Red Fork, this landmark well was across the Arkansas River from Tulsa. Two years later, the Secretary of the Interior allowed the leasing of restricted Indian Territory lands under Department of the Interior supervision. The oil rush was on as oil men from Pennsylvania and other states flocked to Indian Territory. In 1904, three men built a toll bridge over the Arkansas River connecting Red Fork and Tulsa. In addition to allowing Tulsa to benefit from the Red Fork strike, the toll bridge also enabled the town to

¹The WPA Guide to 1930s Oklahoma (Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1986), 206-208.

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profit from the fabulous Glenn Pool strike which blew in in 1905. Within months of the discovery, the Glenn Pool field was "famous throughout the industry as the richest small field in the world."²

By 1910, Tulsa's population stood at 18,182 and a building boom was well underway in the city with brick plants working at capacity. Hotels, office buildings and fine residences were under construction as the streets were paved. By 1920, Tulsa's population had grown to 72,075, a tremendous increase in merely ten years. With a swelling population came the need for better educational opportunities. In September 1922, Holland Hall opened the doors of its newly constructed three-story building located at 1850 South Boulder Avenue. The all-girls preparatory school remained at this location until 1932 when it moved to a larger campus.

Like Holland Hall, the city of Tulsa continued its explosive growth during the decade of the 1920s. Nearly doubling in size, by 1930 Tulsa's population stood at 141,258 and the city was the second largest in the state. Although oil drilling activity occurred all over eastern Oklahoma, the oil companies' headquarters were generally located at Tulsa and that is where the oil men in charge made their homes. As such, Tulsa became known as the "Oil Capital of the World."⁴

Like the rest of the nation, the oil business and Tulsa did not escape unscathed by the Great Depression of the 1930s. Further worsening the status of the oil industry in Oklahoma was the October 1930 discovery of oil in the East Texas field. Forty-five miles long and five to ten miles wide, the East Texas field quickly yielded a sufficient amount of oil by itself to satisfy national demand. The worsening economic conditions combined to such an extent that by 1933 the price of oil had reached bottom of the barrel prices and a good portion of Tulsa's residents were jobless. Although oil prices stabilized between 1934 and 1940, the decade of the 1930s proved to be difficult for Tulsans, as all Americans. In 1941, the city's population stood at only

²Ibid., 208. See also Angie Debo, Tulsa: From Creek Town to Oil Capital, (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1943), 86-88.

³Ibid., 208-209. See also Debo, Tulsa, 88 and 97.

⁴Ibid. See also Debo, Tulsa, 88 and 97.

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142,157. This represented a growth of only 899 citizens since 1930.⁵

American's involvement in World War II proved to be a major redeeming event for Tulsa, as well as the nation as a whole. Although Tulsa and Oklahoma did not benefit from the increased military spending of early 1940, it quickly became apparent Tulsa enjoyed certain important characteristics that made it ideal for subsequent military spending. These features included its central, secure location in the middle of the country; ready sources of cheap fuel; a good network of roads and highways; and, a large pool of trained and unemployed workers. In early 1941, the War Department named Tulsa as a potential site for the new \$15 million Douglas Aircraft Company plant. On 2 May 1941, a ceremonial ground breaking heralded the start of construction on the mile long building which by the summer of 1942 occupied one-and-one-half million square feet of floor space. By the fall of 1942, the Douglas plant was in need of expansion and the plant payroll included nearly fifteen thousand workers earning an average of just over \$185 a month.⁶

The Douglas Aircraft plant was not the only wartime plant impacting Tulsa in the early 1940s. Although the aircraft industry expended more than twenty million dollars during the period to expand their facilities in Tulsa, other factories in the city spent more than seven million dollars in expanding their industrial plants during the war. In 1939, Tulsa manufacturers employed eleven thousand Tulsans in primarily oil-related manufacturing jobs. By 1945 forty-two thousand residents worked in local manufacturing plants. The majority of these in non-oil related capacities. In 1945, the United States Department of Labor determined that Tulsa was among the top three cities impacted by the wartime industrial expansion. In terms of the numbers of residents, between 1940 and 1945, Tulsa's population expanded by nearly a third to reach 185,000.⁷

Following the end of World War II, Tulsa continued to enjoy a prosperity unthought of in the 1930s. Responding to consumer demands for goods of all types, Tulsa continued to expand its manufacturing base. Further boosting the city's economy was continued spending by the Federal government on military-related industries during the Cold War of the late 1940s through the early 1990s. This remarkable varied industrial development spurred Tulsa's growth

⁵Danney Goble, Ph.D., Tulsa! Biography of the American City (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Council Oak Books, 1998), 139-140, 143, 151 and 181. See also WPA Guide, 205.

⁶Ibid., 170-180.

⁷Ibid., 181.

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through the 1950s and 1960s. By the early 1970s, Tulsa led the state in manufacturing.⁸

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Radio began changing communication worldwide at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century. In 1901, the first transatlantic signals were sent. Five years later, operators at sea heard voice transmissions for the first time. Building their own radio sets, many amateurs began experimenting with the new technology. A disaster at sea, the sinking of the Titanic in 1912, boosted general interest in radio, as well as highlighted the need for regulation of radio transmissions. The federal government responded with the Radio Act of 1912 which mandated station operators register with the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, among other things. At the time, radio operators could use all frequencies except those between 187 and 500 kilohertz, which the government reserved for their use.⁹

As with most industries, radio devoted itself to the war effort during World War I. The Navy Department controlled all radio operations during the period with all non-military stations remaining off the air. Following the end of hostilities, the Secretary of Commerce resumed control and civilian stations took to the air with a renewed enthusiasm. In addition to amateur operators who were taking advantage of cheap surplus radio parts to boost their sets and newspapers which established local news services, radio was beginning to reach the masses. In 1920, the first commercial use of radio began with the Joseph Horne Department Store in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The store advertised and sold receiving sets which area residents could then use to tune into a regular weekly program of broadcasts from the store. Seeing the immense opportunity, the vice-president of Westinghouse, Harry P. Davis, took radio a step further by broadcasting the election returns of the 1920 presidential race in between musical interludes provided by a hand-cranked phonograph. Capturing the attention of the nation, citizens across the country quickly lined up to purchase their receiving set from local department and electric stores, bringing radio directly into the American home.¹⁰

⁸Ibid., 242-245.

⁹Donald K. Tolman, "Through the Ether: The Birth of Radio in Central Oklahoma," The Chronicles of Oklahoma (Volume 61 (Spring 83), 130-147), 130-132.

¹⁰Ibid., 132.

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After 1920, commercial radio broadcasting boomed in the United States. Within a year, thirty-two stations nationwide were licensed and the Department of Commerce recognized broadcast radio as a separate entity. By January 1947, the number of stations in the United States exceeded a thousand, including both AM and FM stations. With most stations on the air at least sixteen hours a day, about 17,000 programs were broadcast daily. These programs included local, state and national news, as well as various entertainment. In terms of receiving sets, it was estimated that ninety-three percent of American families had at least one in 1948 with some areas putting the percentage of radio ownership at 99.7. Overall, radio profoundly changed communication and became a fundamental part of daily life.¹¹

In Oklahoma, the first broadcast stations were located in central Oklahoma with Oklahoma City having two of the first three licensed stations and the third being located nearby in Norman. In 1924 a radio station out of Bristow, located in the northeast part of the state, began broadcasting. Operated by the Southwest Sales Corporation, a radio wholesaler, KFRU was acquired by Tulsa oilman W.G. Skelly in late 1925, at which time the station's call letters changed to KVOO. KVOO moved to Tulsa in 1928, at which time it acquired a clear channel license for its new 25,000-watt station. In about 1935, KVOO moved to the Philtower Building (NR 1979) in downtown Tulsa. Occupying the twenty-second and twenty-third floors of the building, KVOO continued to broadcast from this location through the 1950s.¹²

KVOO was Tulsa's only broadcast radio station until early 1934 when KTUL Radio went on the air. The station owner, J.T. Griffin, acquired the license and frequency from the Oklahoma College for Women (OCW; NR 2001) in Chickasha in 1932. OCW began broadcasting in October 1924 on a frequency of 1400 kilocycles with a 50-watt transmitter under the call sign KFGD. Operated primarily by students at the all-girls school, the station was boosted to a 100-watt transmitter in January 1925 and to 200-watts in April of the same year. By 1927, the station had a 500-watt transmitter and the call letters had changed to KOCW. However, strict equipment requirements mandated by the Federal Radio Commission, created in 1927, caused the school to sell the station to Griffin

¹¹Ibid. See also Talbot Hamlin, ed., Forms and Functions of Twentieth-Century Architecture Volume IV: Building Types, (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 169.

¹²Bryan Kelly Raines, "Of Crooners, Hucksters, Tycoons, and the Lonesome Cowboys of the Airwaves: Oklahoma Musicians and the Broadcast Frontier," (M.A. Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1995), 40-41.

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in 1932.¹³

Although apparently first moving the station to Muskogee, Griffin put KTUL on the air in Tulsa on 22 January 1934 under the general management of William G. Gillespie. At that time, the station broadcast at the 1400 kilocycle frequency with 250 watts of power at night and 500 watts during the day. In 1938, KTUL was granted a power boost to 1,000 watts at night and 5,000 daytime watts. Two years later, KTUL's power increased to 5,000 watts day and night. The following year, under the Havana Treaty, KTUL's frequency was reallocated from 1400 to 1430 kilocycles, at which it remained through the period of significance.¹⁴

KTUL, operated by the Tulsa Broadcasting Company, began broadcasting from the twenty-first floor of the National Bank of Tulsa building in downtown Tulsa. In 1946, KTUL signed a ten-year lease for the three-story, brick building located at 1850 South Boulder Avenue. From the late 1930s until 1946, the building functioned as the offices and photographic laboratory of Aero Exploration Company. Before this, the most notable use of the property had been as the school building for Holland Hall, an all-girls college preparatory school, from its construction in 1923 until 1932. Purchased in early 1946 by Tulsans Frank E. Brown and John Esau, general manager of KTUL, the building was occupied by Aero Exploration Company until about 1 July 1946. After this, the owners, in conjunction with KTUL Radio, planned to improve both the interior and exterior of the building, as well as the landscaping, so the building could be used as the broadcasting studio and offices of KTUL Radio.¹⁵

In about February 1947, KTUL Radio moved into its new home. On 9 February 1947, the station held an open house for the public at their new Boulder-on-the-Park location. The building was touted as "...Tulsa's only exclusive Radio Center - Designed and equipped for the Best Broadcasting Service in Tulsa and Northeastern Oklahoma." It was estimated that "Between 25,000 and 30,000 persons visited KTUL's new radio station and headquarters at "Boulder on the Park." Two days previous, an invitational open house was held at the

¹³Ibid., 143. See also The Tulsa (Oklahoma) Daily World, 20 January 1954.

¹⁴The Tulsa Daily World, 20 January 1954.

¹⁵Polk City Directory, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1935. See also John Esau, letter to the Tulsa Board of Adjustments, 4 June 1946 (Available in the Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory, Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma).

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building. At that time, 750 guests toured the station's studios with equipment demonstrations and presumably live entertainment being provided in the auditorium.¹⁶

When KTUL moved into Boulder-on-the-Park, Tulsa boasted three radio stations. In addition to KTUL and KVOO, KOME had begun broadcasting in Tulsa by 1940. In 1947, KVOO remained in the Philtower Building in downtown Tulsa and KOME, operated by Broadcasters Service Incorporated, was located in the KOME Building at 8th and Main. Constructed between 1940 and 1944 within the central business district, the KOME Building, for unknown reasons, apparently never received a numbered street address. Within six years, the number of radio stations in Tulsa doubled. In addition to the above three, radio stations KAKC, KFMJ and KRMG all broadcast from Tulsa. KAKC, operated by Public Radio Corporation, occupied the twelfth floor of the American Airlines Building at 910 South Boston, one floor above the first location of KOME. KFMJ, operated by the Jones Fred Broadcasting Company, broadcast three blocks away from KAKC at 1242 South Boston and KRMG, operated by All Oklahoma Broadcasting Company, from 311 South Denver.¹⁷

Tulsa's "premier" and oldest station, KVOO, broadcast from the Philtower Building. Although an historically significant building which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Philtower Building exhibits no tangible connection to KVOO. It is a Late Gothic Revival style, multi-story office building in downtown Tulsa, noted for its architectural significance and association with persons significant in the oil and gas industry in Tulsa. Similarly, by the end of the period of significance, KAKC broadcast from the American Airlines Building in downtown Tulsa. This was the same building from which KOME broadcast from before moving into their own building at 8th and Main. Like the majority of buildings in this area of downtown Tulsa, 910 South Boston Avenue has been demolished to create more parking space for the Tulsa Community College.

The other four stations in Tulsa, including KTUL, all occupied their own buildings by the early 1950s. Notably, only Boulder-on-the-Park was located outside of the central business district. Additionally, all of the other buildings have been demolished. The majority of locations are now parking lots, although the KRMG building is now part of the Metropolitan Tulsa Transit

¹⁶The Tulsa Daily World 9 February 1947 and 10 February 1947.
See also The Tulsa (Oklahoma) Tribune, 8 February 1947.

¹⁷Polk City Directories, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1940, 1944, 1947 and 1954.

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Authority's facilities.

As the only broadcasting station located outside of downtown Tulsa during the period of significance, Boulder-on-the-Park was noteworthy for its unusual setting. Located across the street from a city park in a mixed commercial/residential area south of downtown Tulsa, the setting was distinctive. Additionally, the building is located within the potentially National Register eligible Riverview neighborhood, identified in The 1997 Tulsa Historic Preservation Resource Document. However, continued study of the area has resulted in division of the neighborhood with the location of Boulder-on-the-Park outside of any identified potentially significant district. Nonetheless, other buildings in the immediate vicinity of the radio station merit individual investigation, most notably the Modern style Park Plaza Apartments directly to the north of the station.

Overall, Boulder-on-the-Park is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as the only remaining, identifiable, broadcast radio building in Tulsa from the first part of the twentieth century. Of the six stations located in Tulsa by the end of the period of significance in 1953, only two buildings remain extant. Of these, only Boulder-on-the-Park retains a visible connection to its radio days. As home to KTUL Radio, 1430 AM, throughout the period of significance, Boulder-on-the-Park is significant within the history of broadcast radio in Tulsa.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

North 20 feet of Lot 29, all lots 30 and 31 and South 15 feet of Lot 32, Block 6, Buena Vista Park, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the building.