



# 2023 Olympia Preservation Award Nomination

*Olympia's Preservation Award supports the Heritage Commission's goal of recognizing excellence in the rehabilitation of historic objects, buildings, structures, sites and districts, as well as new construction in historic areas (OMC 18.12.055).*

## PERSON MAKING NOMINATION:

Name	Contact Details	Date of Nomination
Holly Davies	<a href="mailto:hdavies@ci.olympia.wa.us">hdavies@ci.olympia.wa.us</a>	4/19/2023

## NOMINATION TYPE:

- Person                       Project                       Other:  
 Organization               Building

## CATEGORY OF NOMINATION:

- Preservation                       Education                       Other:  
 New Construction               Scholarship

## NOMINEE:

Name	Address	Phone/Email
KGY Radio	1700 Marine Drive NW	nick.kerry@kgymediagroup.com

## SIGNIFICANCE OF NOMINATION:

*Brief summary of the significance of the person, organization, project or building. This text will be used by the City of Olympia in preparing and presenting the award at the City Council meeting. Attach additional pages as needed.*

Today KGY serves as an excellent and intact example of mid-20th century modern architecture and is notable as an intact project of [G. Stacey] Bennett. The design by Bennett incorporated the latest technology and aesthetic standards. Having been in continuous operation since 1922, KGY Radio Station is ingrained in the city's and the region's cultural, social, and economic history. From the station's first programming by Father Ruth, a defining characteristic has been its commitment of service to the community. KGY's longtime owner and manager Tom Olsen instilled the value of the station's engagement with its listeners and civic involvement. Olsen also understood the financial benefit to the company. Olsen's emphasis on community involvement resulted in a KGY presence at countless events, sales promotions, grand openings, fund raisers, games, parades, civic luncheons, celebrity appearances, disasters, and the list goes on. Of course, all these events were reported on during KGY news, sports, and weather broadcasts.

Key character-defining features are enumerated in detail in the nomination and include overall architectural form, roof, exterior finishes including signage, windows, covered entry walkway, and distinctive interior spaces, configurations, and finishes, and building site and its use as an expression of transparency, accessibility, and commitment to community service. KGY is an outstanding work of noted architect G. Stacey Bennett who has made a substantial contribution to the art. KGY Radio Station exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering or architectural history.

The Bennett and Johnson partnership "...had a profound impact on the built environment in Olympia in the second half of the 20th century." The firm thrived with several prestigious and prominent commissions designed in the idiom of modern architecture widely seen in the 1960s and 70s. Bennett and Johnson's success resulted in an expanded practice and partnerships culminating in formation of BJSS Architects in 1983, thus becoming one of the largest and most prominent firms in Olympia and the South Puget Sound region.

Key character-defining features of the building deserving of care and preservation include, but not limited to, the following:

- A broad, side-gabled, saltbox roof with the ridgeline oriented on an east-west axis.
- Two floors contained within a rectangular wood frame structure of 50' x 32' in dimension.
- The first floor is encircled by a 4' to 7' wide wood-plank walkway (altered in 1976).
- A 4' wide exterior walkway spans the 2nd floor north elevation and extends only to about one-half of the east and west facades.
- Exterior staircase on the east façade linking the 2nd floor to the exterior walkway.
- Affixed to the vertical board wood siding on the west façade are "KGY 1240AM 96.9FM" in bold letters and numbers painted in orange to match all the building entries.
- A 48' long and 7' wide wood plank walkway (labeled as "Bridge" in the architect's drawings) connects the parking lot (and historically the transmission tower compound) to the main entry. The walkway is entirely covered by a shallow sloped, gabled roof with extended, broad eaves. The gabled roof of the walkway intersects with the broad south-facing building roof slope resulting in a dramatic geometric juncture. The walkway (or bridge) is clearly intended as a convenience to visitors for protection from rain; but it also adds a fun and nautical touch to the building as if it were a gangway for boarding a ship.
- The main entry is a double leaf threshold painted orange although only the right leaf of the threshold actually functions as a door. The station's call letters "KGY" are vertically affixed on the stationary left leaf of the threshold and painted gray that matches the color of the body of the building's gray and white paint scheme.
- In the southwest corner of the building, the reception area receives south daylight from floor to ceiling windows.
- Siding on the east, south, and west facades is vertical wood (probably cedar) panels painted gray. On the first-floor south façade three windows are aluminum sliders; the left and right windows are set within white painted spandrels (perhaps plywood sheets). The center (slightly smaller sliding window is inserted in the vertical wood board siding (see discussion about integrity).
- The second floor, north-facing windows in the sales office area are original wood framed, custom-made windows that are hinged on the left (from the interior) side and open inward for natural ventilation. Alternating window panes are fixed-in-place and are in a continuous band across the façade but terminating at the floor to ceiling windows in the manager's office. Note: originally the first-floor north elevation fenestration plan duplicated that of the existing second floor windows. However, the first-floor fenestration was replaced in a 1976 renovation (see comments in the

discussion on integrity). Also note that it is not known why the north façade fenestration differs from the aluminum slider windows on the south elevation; though speculation has it that the north façade projects a more aesthetic, image-making quality especially when reflected in Budd Inlet waters. In contrast, the south façade is fronted by more functional land uses and surfaces. • Inside, key spaces and features include the reception area that occupies the southwest corner of the building. This area receives full natural light from six fixed-in-place single-pane floor-to-ceiling windows that reaches the full height of the space where it meets the south facing roof 4 plane. These large windows bring in light that make the space warm and inviting. The broad eaves from the roof plane protect the room (and all facades) from direct light. • The main entry door (described above) opens into a small vestibule with a pony-wall that provides a separation from the open staircase. A sharp turn to the left brings one into the reception and visitor waiting area. Above the entry door are two large fixed-in-place, singlepane clerestory windows. • Behind the reception desk, windows afford a view directly to the adjacent broadcast studio. In the broadcast studio in the northwest corner of the building, floor to ceiling windows afford views to the north and west. A door with window (added during the 1976 renovation) provides access to the exterior walkway on the west side of the building. A key feature of the broadcast room is the facing of the original RCA transmitter and control panel that line the east wall. • Another key interior feature is the elegant open staircase from the reception area to second floor offices. • At the top of the stairs and to the left is the station manager's office. The room is slightly cantilevered over the reception area and inside the office the volume is open to the roof plane above with an interior window looking toward the reception area below. On the north side of the room is a sliding glass door and a corner window opening onto the exterior walkway affording sweeping views of Budd Inlet and the Olympic Mountains. • Other than windows, wall surfaces in the reception/open staircase area, the broadcast room, and manager's office are vertical tongue and groove cedar siding painted gray and recalls the vertical wood siding on the exterior. • An east-west double-loaded corridor on both floors access studio and production rooms, offices, a lunch room, restrooms and storage area. Exit doors are located on both floors at the east end of the building.<sup>11</sup> • The entire building volume and its cantilevered exterior walkways were built on a platform supported by pilings consisting of four rows of six columns and stringers. The pilings were driven into Budd Inlet tidelands. The entire parcel including tidelands and the upland are leased to KGY by the Port of Olympia.

- I have attached information to support my nomination, including documents, images, & other recognitions.*
- For a project nomination, I have included "before" and "after" photos.*

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION – PROVIDE AS APPLICABLE**

**PROPERTY OWNER FOR BUILDING/PROJECT BEING NOMINATED** (if different from above):

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone/Email</b>
KGY Media Group		

**ARCHITECT / CONSULTANT FOR PROJECT BEING NOMINATED** (if different from above):

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone/Email</b>

**BUILDING DETAILS:**

<b>Address</b>	<b>Historical Name</b>
1700 Marine Drive NW	<b>KGY Radio Station</b>
<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Year Rehabilitated</b>
1960	
<b>Original/Early Owner</b>	<b>Original Architect/Builder</b>
KGY	<b>G. Stacey Bennett; A.J. Phillips Construction Co.</b>
<b>Original Use</b>	<b>Current Use</b>
Radio Station	Radio Station
<b>Heritage Designation Status</b>	<b>Other Information</b>
OHR Eligible; NRHP Eligible	

*Attach additional pages as needed*









KGY Radio Station on Budd Bay, Olympia, June 1960.  
The Olympian Photograph Collection, Washington State Historical Society





*RADIO STATION*  
*Olympia, Washington*

**KGY**

*"One Of America's Most Uniquely  
Situated Broadcasting Stations"*

WALT SCARFF  
PHOTOGRAPHY