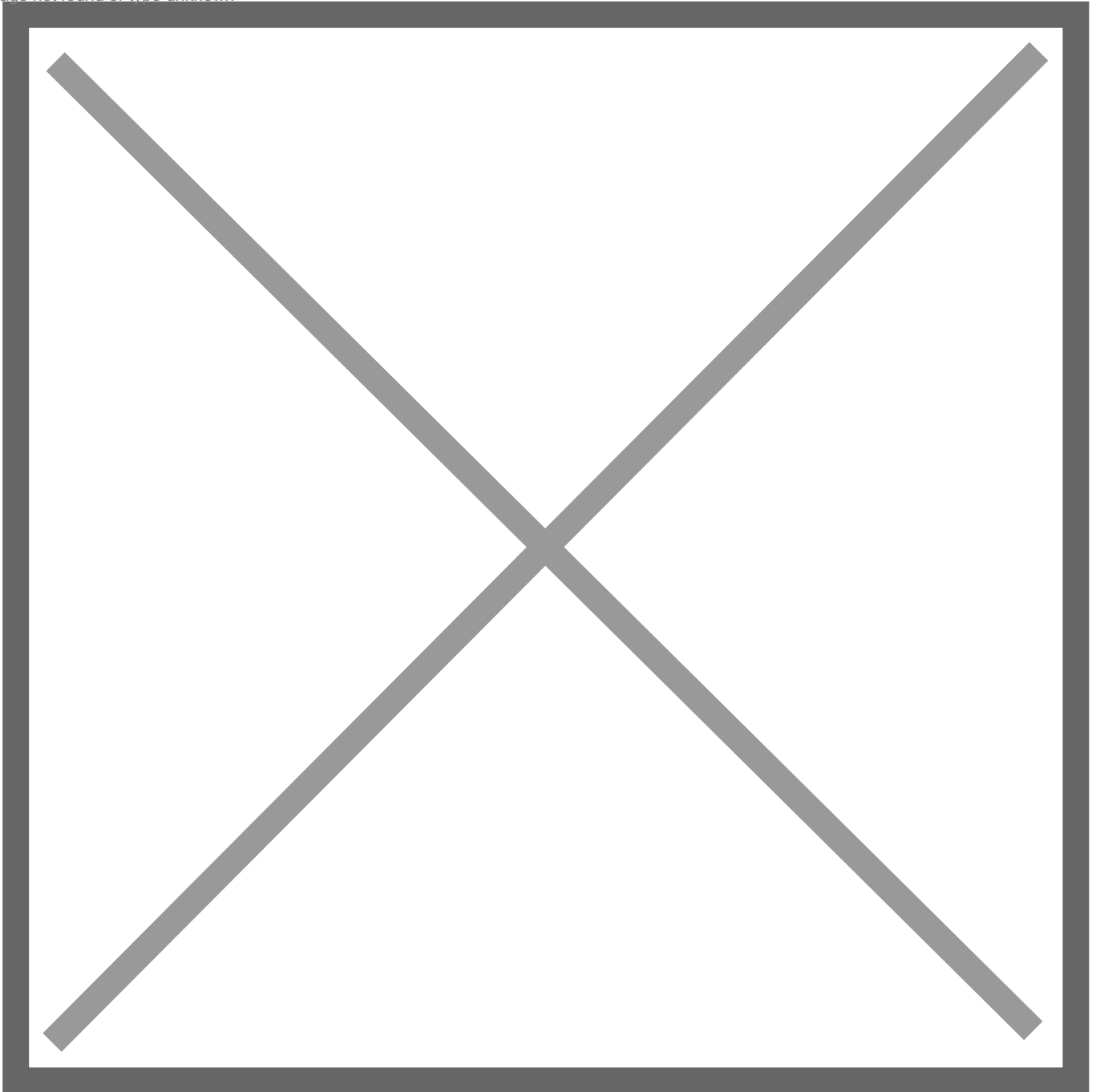


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Radio Kootwijk

Netherlands

Radioweg 1
Gelderland 7348 BG Apeldoorn

Commission

1918

Completion

1922

Original name

Radio Kootwijk

Original use

Infrastructure / radio station

Current use

Infrastructure / radio station

Architects

Julius Maria Luthmann

Concrete by reinforcement

Reinforced concrete

Construction method

Cast-in-place concrete, in-situ concrete

Architectural concrete

Architectural concrete

Structural types

One-dimensional/concrete frame, One-dimensional/diaphragmatic arches, Vertical wall structure

Description

A building of considerable size, monumental in its architecture, stands alone in the middle of the landscape of the Dutch interior, with no populated areas nearby. This abnormal situation starts to make sense once the building's function is revealed: it once housed a low frequency radio telecommunications system, which let the Dutch metropolis maintain contact with its colonies in what is now Indonesia (the Dutch East Indies). Over time, other transoceanic communication systems, such as the telegraph, situated their centre of operations in this infrastructure, central to Dutch history for much of the last century.

Since it was a typology without an architectural tradition behind it, there were no clear references that suggested an architectural form. The result was a building with a configuration that resembles a Christian temple: a tall tower along the axis of symmetry, where the entrance is located, adjacent to a large nave built using diaphragmatic concrete arches, topped by a window open onto the landscape.

The exterior, made entirely of exposed concrete, has a compact character, lightened only by vertical strips of long narrow windows that refer, once again, to religious architecture. This aspect is tempered by decorative shapes and details in the Art Deco style, which lend an interest to the volumes that stretches beyond that of a purely functional building dedicated to infrastructures. A fenced garden, also Art Deco in its design, provides a welcoming transition space between the natural landscape and the building.

Emerging satellite telecommunication technologies ultimately left the installations without a function in 1980. Nevertheless, the building, which is considered one of the most beautiful Dutch buildings from the early 20th century, is still in top condition, although its isolated location runs counter to any intensive and continuous alternative uses.

Links

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