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 National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 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.

1. Name of Property
   Historic name: Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building
   Other names/site number: Beckman Coulter, Inc. Administration Building
   Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
   (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location
   Street & number: 4300 N. Harbor Boulevard
   City or town: Fullerton     State: CA     County: Orange
   Not For Publication:   Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following
   level(s) of significance:
   ___ national     ___ statewide     ___ local
   Applicable National Register Criteria:
   ___ A     ___ B     ___ C     ___ D

______________________________
Signature of certifying official/Title:     Date

______________________________
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

______________________________
Signature of commenting official:     Date

______________________________
Title:     State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building
Orange, CA

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:)

Signature of the 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)  [x]
District [ ]
Site [ ]
Structure [ ]
Object [ ]

Sections 1-6 page 2
Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
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Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
COMMERCE/business

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
VACANT/NOT IN USE
7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Mid-Century Modern

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: stucco, glass, cut-stone, aluminum

Foundation: concrete
Walls: stucco, cut-stone (flagstone); glass, aluminum
Roof: stucco, aluminum, asphalt, synthetics

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Constructed in 1953/54, the headquarters and administrative office building of Beckman Instruments, Inc. (later Beckman Coulter, Inc.) is an early local example of Mid-Century Modern architecture applied to a non-residential building. Well preserved with few alterations, the building is the best example of this style in Fullerton, California. From its completion in 1954 to 2010, the structure served as the headquarters of Beckman Instruments and later iterations of the corporation. The building has remained vacant ever since the corporation moved its facilities to Brea, California in 2010. The structure is situated on a 35-acre parcel that, in addition to the Administration Building, was developed with low, rectangular laboratory and manufacturing facilities, now demolished, that covered the acreage. The Administration Building is located at the western portion of the property. Although it faces west to Harbor Boulevard, it is set back over 80 feet from the street, and access to the building is from a parking area on the south portion of the building.
Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building  Orange, CA
Name of Property  County and State

The Administration Building is one story, but its irregular footprint comprises over 43,000 square feet of interior space. At the time, the building’s design was highly modern and reflected the precision and high technology associated with Arnold O. Beckman and Beckman Instruments. The building’s main architectural features include cut stone and smooth stucco walls, a flat roof with a wide overhang, and a modular window treatment. A good portion of the structure has glass curtain walls with a continuous modular pattern. The exceptionally large cantilevered roof, almost wing-like in appearance with its flat profile and tapered design, is the defining feature of the building. The interior, which originally contained modular walls that could be quickly and efficiently reconfigured to accommodate changing needs, has been stripped down to the bare walls/windows and steel supports. The building retains nearly all of its exterior integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and some of its interior integrity. Overall the building is in good condition but has experienced some minor vandalism and disrepair.

Narrative Description

Location/Setting

In 1951, Arnold O. Beckman and one of his officers, Lowell Stanley, unhappy with the site proposed by a real estate firm for Beckman’s new building complex, drove around Orange County looking for a new location. After looking at ten sites, Beckman selected a 38-acre property on Harbor Boulevard (then Spadra Road) because of its high visibility. Covered with orange trees, the property and the surrounding area had recently been rezoned industrial in a concerted effort by Fullerton planners to attract new manufacturing to the still largely rural city. The property straddled Fullerton and La Habra, and there was intense competition between the two cities for the new plant. The facility was given the address of 2500 N. Harbor Boulevard, Fullerton, but in 1998, the address was officially changed to 4500 N. Harbor Boulevard to correspond with the numbering of adjacent properties.

The Administration Building is located at the corner of Lambert Road and North Harbor Boulevard, at the northern edge of the city of Fullerton. The building is located at the western portion of the 35-acre property. Although the building faces Harbor Boulevard, it is set back over 80 feet from the street, and access to the building is from a parking area on the south portion of the property. Still zoned for industrial use, the property is surrounded by industrial and commercial development. To the north, across Lambert Road, property is developed for commercial use. To the west, across Harbor Boulevard, property is developed with warehousing and other industrial uses. Commercial uses are located to the south, and an industrial park is located to the east of the property across Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The vast majority of land in the vicinity of the Administration Building has been fully improved with buildings having a suburban pattern of development.

Current Status

From its completion in 1954 to 2010, the building served as the headquarters of Beckman Instruments, Inc. and later iterations of the corporation. The Administration Building has remained vacant ever
since the corporation moved its facilities to Brea, California in 2010. In 2014, the various industrial properties – serviceable, boxlike structures – were demolished, and remediation activities to clear contaminated soils and groundwater on the property took place. Landscaping around the Administration Building consisted of a large lawn area, shrubbery, and trees when Beckman Instruments occupied the property, but presently the acreage is largely void of landscaping given its transitional state of redevelopment.

Directly south of the property is an undeveloped 9-acre parcel, also owned by the present owner of the Beckman property. This 9-acre parcel is being packaged with the 35-acre parcel, now cleared of structures except for the Beckman Instruments Administration Building, to be sold to a developer in the coming months. The property will likely be redeveloped with new buildings in the next few years. It is unknown whether the Administration Building will be part of the developer’s plan for the 44-acre site.

**Exterior**

Constructed in 1953/54 for $2.5 million dollars, the administrative office building of Beckman Instruments, Inc. is an early local example of Mid-Century Modern architecture applied to a non-residential building. The building’s distinctive flat roof – with a massive cantilever and angled profile – is the defining element of the structure. While cantilever roofs are routinely seen on Mid-Century Modern architecture, the size (extension) of the building’s overhang is exceptional for an industrial structure constructed in the 1950s. The flagstone-cladded exterior walls are very evocative of 1950s taste. Its use in a non-residential building is unusual, however, and provides a rough, warm exterior finish to counter and soften the precision and use of cold materials (glass and metal) that are characteristic of the Mid-Century Modern style. The building’s strong architectural elements – roof line, repeated window treatments, flagstone veneer – are found on all sides of the building, unifying the exterior look of a large one-story structure that covers over 43,000-square-feet of interior space.

**West Elevation:** As the building’s primary elevation, it faces Harbor Boulevard but is set back over 80 feet from the street. While nearly 400 feet in length, the focal point of the building’s one-story façade is the tower element adjacent to the main entrance. The main entrance is recessed and consists of double aluminum and glass storefront doors with large, single-light sidelights and a single-light transom. There is a metal vent above the main entrance, set into a pop-up clad with flagstone. The southern portion of the west façade is dominated by a band of modular aluminum windows above a flagstone base. The band is composed of fixed central windows with awning windows above and below. At the northern portion of the west façade, a large exterior recess of the building has windows on three of its sides. The building’s façade on either side of this recess is mainly solid, with the scored, stucco walls pierced only with a short band of centrally located windows, surrounded by large projecting frames.

**South Elevation:** The south elevation of the building displays a continuation of the band of modular aluminum windows above a flagstone base – the defining element along the south end of the west elevation. The building’s soaring cantilevered roof, approximately 14 feet wide, is also prominently featured.
East Elevation: The east elevation consists of more modular bands of the fixed aluminum windows above the continuous flagstone base. At midpoint, there is an entrance similar to the west elevation’s main entrance – a pair of double aluminum and glass storefront doors with large, single-light sidelights and a single-light transom. There are three other doors on the east elevation, each composed of aluminum and glass with fixed transoms. The façade has other, smaller windows, consisting of pairs of stacked aluminum awning windows. The 14-foot roof overhang is continuous along the east side of the building.

North Elevation: The east end of the north elevation is clad in flagstone, with a band of the same modular window design matching that in other sides. The cantilevered roof extends northward. Entrances consist of two pairs of aluminum and glass storefront doors with fixed single-light transoms. The north end of the building features two courtyard areas with landscaping, one enclosed with a carport structure to the north and the other with a six-foot-high masonry wall.

Interior

Irregularly shaped, the building’s interior featured modular walls and panels that could be refigured quickly and efficiently to accommodate changing needs. When Beckman Coulter moved its headquarters to Brea, the interior was stripped down to the bare walls/windows and steel supports. The interior now basically consists of open space with a few pipe supports.

The Administration Building’s most significant interior feature was a mural – The Age of Instrumentation – created by Standish Backus, Jr. and Joseph E. Knowles. The mural depicted five periods in “man’s quest for knowledge and his application of it to improve its existence: Discovery, Curiosity, Analysis, Technology and Automation.” The mural was removed when the corporation moved to Brea in 2010.

Alterations

The building has had no significant alterations to its exterior and retains a high degree of integrity. The only alteration indicated on Fullerton building permits for the building was a reworking of the interior lobby in 1986, which was then used to accommodate the Beckman Heritage Center, a museum devoted to the history of the corporation. The building is in overall good condition, but there is a small amount of vandalism and disrepair (graffiti, broken windows, dying landscape).
Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building

Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building

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.)

- [x] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [x] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] 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 grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

INVENTION
ARCHITECTURE
INDUSTRY
SOCIAL HISTORY

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Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building

Period of Significance
1954-1965

Significant Dates
1954

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
Beckman, Arnold O.

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Davidson, Lawrence Whitney
M. J. Brock & Sons, Inc.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Administration Building of Beckman Instruments, Inc. is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, and C at the local level of significance in the areas of social history, association with a notable individual, and architecture. As the first high-tech company in Fullerton, California, Beckman Instruments, Inc. was one of the most iconic and important companies in the history of postwar Fullerton, California. An integral part of Fullerton’s postwar economic growth and development, the business brought international recognition and high-tech prominence to the city, becoming a business hallmark for the city. On all accounts, Arnold O. Beckman was a brilliant inventor, entrepreneur, industrialist, and philanthropist. His legacy of science and business leadership spans the entire 20th century, from his early days as a scientist at the California Institute of Technology during the 1930s, to his invention of the device that revolutionized scientific instrumentation – the pH meter – and to his time as leader of megacorporation Beckman Instruments, Inc. His brilliant inventions, and the company he founded to commercialize them, represented the beginnings of the American chemical instrument industry. An early example of Mid-Century Modernism in Fullerton,
the administrative office building of Beckman Instruments is the best example of this style of architecture applied to a non-residential building in Fullerton. The first large high-tech industrial “campus” to be developed in Fullerton, and one of the earliest in postwar Orange County, the facility served as both a planning and architectural model for high-tech complexes that followed in the 1950s and 1960s. Designed by notable and prolific architect Lawrence Whitney Davidson, the building’s period of significance is 1954-1965, when the building was completed and Arnold Beckman served as president of Beckman Instruments, Inc. During a 2001 historic survey of Fullerton, the Administration Building was designated a “Potential” Significant Property because the headquarters offices were not yet fifty years old.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Criterion A: Social History**

Following World War II, Fullerton remained largely an agricultural community. Revenues from the oil industry had begun to fade around the end of the war, and the city’s economy depended heavily on crop production and food canning and preserving, still a multi-million dollar industry. A new era, however, began after the war, and during the national flurry of industrial expansion in the 1950s, Fullerton attracted hundreds of new businesses and industries which gradually replaced agriculture. While all of Orange County was experiencing unparalleled postwar industrial development, Fullerton led the county in manufacturing gains as one industrial giant after another – Beckman Instruments (1953), Kimberly-Clark Corporation (1956), Hughes Aircraft Company (1957) – moved to Fullerton.6

Realizing that the costs of city services for an expanding population were going to rise faster than tax revenues, the Fullerton City Council adopted a new industrial policy designed to move the still largely rural town toward manufacturing and away from the agricultural economy that had existed since the city was founded in 1887. The city had attempted a similar plan in the 1920s to attract new industries, and the plan had failed miserably, so the new industrial policy was not without risks.7 The City Council designated two large areas – one of 500 acres in the southwest part of the city, and another of 200 acres in the northwest section of the city – for industrial purposes. Mayor Tom Eadington hired Robert (Bob) L. Clark (1914-1997) as Industrial Coordinator for Fullerton, the first such position created by a California city. Clark’s job, which lasted from 1952 to 1958, was to bring industry into the city. Clark contacted and informed industrial prospects of local opportunities and then smoothed the way for agricultural lands to be developed for manufacturing facilities. Before taking the Fullerton job, Clark had made a name for himself in movie special effects by bleaching cornflakes to create falling snow in the film Heidi (1937), starring Shirley Temple, and he became an expert at making volcanoes erupt and buildings blow up.8 Clark, who would be later honored by the City Council and named Man of the Year by the Fullerton Chamber of Commerce,9 took his civic responsibilities seriously, working long hours and practicing his speeches into a tape recorder. After just two years, the innovative industrial development plan had resulted in 5,000 new jobs. In his first three years alone, Clark brought in more than $30 million in new industries. The new industries brought in so many new residents that real estate firms began specializing in homes for relocated workers. One full-page advertisement in the
August 25, 1954 issue of the *Fullerton News Tribune* listed brokers available to “Find Homes for Industrialists.”

One of Clark’s strategies was to win over large established companies, which would, in turn, attract other businesses that would provide the goods and services needed by the larger firms. Clark’s first big catch and the jewel in his crown was Beckman Instruments, Inc. Arnold O. Beckman had selected 38 acres of orange grove in unincorporated land between Fullerton and La Habra, and as competition for the company heated up, Clark extolled the virtues of Fullerton. Known for being out-going and direct, Clark wooed Arnold O. Beckman for weeks. In an article in the February 20, 1953 issue of the *Fullerton News Tribune*, Beckman admitted that he selected Fullerton because of its lower tax rate and ample supply of water to conduct his operations. He also thought that Fullerton’s residential areas would be a good fit for his present and future employees. An unheard of 8,000 people toured the new Beckman facility during its opening in November 1954, an amazing number of visitors at a time when Fullerton’s population was only 13,958. A milestone in the business development of Fullerton, Beckman Instruments’ relocation to the city signaled to both government officials and residents alike that Fullerton, still very much a small town, could attract large successful companies. The massive campus-like facility, with its extensive landscaping and inter-connected buildings, was a new architectural and business model for the city that would be repeated in the 1950s and 1960s. As the city’s first high-tech firm, Beckman Instruments showed the promise of what Fullerton could become in a newly industrialized world. The relocation of Beckman Instruments to Fullerton was also a source of pride to local residents, and as Beckman grew in size, stature, and international influence, it became a business hallmark for the city.

When the Beckman facility opened in 1954, it employed 900 workers, a combination of relocated employees from Pasadena and South Pasadena, and new ones from the local area. Three of the company’s top officials – Joseph L. Fahey (120 Miramonte Drive), vice-president of finance; Earl C. Jason (1211 Luanne Avenue), plant manager; and John F. Bishop (1934 Richman Knoll) – would immediately relocate to Fullerton, with more to follow. As the company continued to expand in the 1970s and 1980s, it remained a key player in the local economy. A multitude of scientific professions, crafts, and skilled workers were required at Beckman (Figure 1), and over the decades, the company would employ thousands of Fullerton residents, many of whom would spend a lengthy portion of their careers or their entire careers at the Harbor Boulevard facility. Fullerton College and California State University, Fullerton graduates would find employment with the company. Employees at the Fullerton facility became a tight-knit group, forming clubs, taking field trips and outings together, and producing an employee newsletter, *Feedback Notes*. Former employees and executives would also leave Beckman Instruments to form new Fullerton companies, such as the International Biotronics Corp. An active group of Beckman retirees still meet in Fullerton.

By the time Beckman Instruments had closed its doors in 2010, the company had become an integral part of Fullerton’s postwar economic growth and development. The company had provided extensive employment and revenue to Fullerton, but equally significant, it had become a part of the social, cultural, and geographic landscape of the city. Always a good corporate neighbor, Beckman made generous donations to Fullerton groups, including St. Jude Hospital, the Boys Club, the United Fullerton Fund, and the Children’s League of Fullerton. Beckman was also a constant partner in science education through generous donations to Fullerton schools over the years. Dozens of
scholarships were given to local high school and college students; instruments and equipment were
donated to Fullerton College and Cal State Fullerton; and funding was provided for science and
technology exhibits, programs, and field trips. Arnold O. Beckman encouraged a corporate culture that
rewarded and encouraged employees to get involved in the community and nonprofit corporations, and
hundreds of Beckman workers volunteered their services to local groups, supporting a wide number of
important causes. Beckman remains one of the most important and iconic companies in the history of
Fullerton.

Criterion B: Arnold Orville Beckman

A creative scientific genius, Arnold Orville Beckman (1900-2014) would have four distinct careers:
research scientist and educator; entrepreneur and businessman; civic leader; and philanthropist. His
brilliant inventions, and the company he founded to commercialize them, represented the beginnings of
the American chemical instrument industry. His devices, credited with saving countless lives,
transformed medical research and the practice of clinical medicine. His professional life was
intertwined with 20th-century history. Jonas Salk used a Beckman centrifuge to isolate the virus that
causes polio; a Beckman device made it possible to develop radar in time for use in World War II;
Beckman provided the diometers worn by staff members of the Manhattan Project; and Beckman
instruments are on the moon and Mars.16 The start of silicon electronics in Silicon Valley began in 1955
when physicist William Shockley and Beckman created the Shockley Semiconductor Laboratory.17

A blacksmith’s son, Beckman became fascinated with chemistry when at the age of nine he discovered
a popular chemistry textbook, Joel Dorman Steele’s Fourteen Weeks in Chemistry (1861), in the attic of
his family’s Midwest home. By the time he graduated from high school, he had over two years’ worth
of college chemistry under his belt. He enrolled in the new discipline of chemical engineering at the
University of Illinois in 1922, and earned his master’s degree in 1923. To help support his family and
pay for his studies, Beckman played the piano in silent movie theaters. In 1928, he graduated with a
Ph.D. in chemistry from the California Institute of Technology, then joined its faculty. In 1934, he was
approached by a former Illinois classmate, who was working in the citrus industry, for help in
measuring the acidity of lemon juice. Working with two students in a metal shed, Beckman developed
a pH meter, a revolutionary device that could determine precisely the acidity or alkalinity of virtually
any solution. The pH meter was “the seed that planted the tree of electronics in the field of chemical
instrumentation,” and the device would be designated a National Historic Chemical Landmark by the
American Chemical Society on March 24, 2004.18

Although not sure if the pH meter would sell, Beckman took out a loan for $35,000, hired people,
obtained inventory, and created his firm company, National Technical Laboratories. His initial
attempts to garner support met with only lukewarm response, but he plunged forward anyway, and by
the second year, he had sold 440 units.19 He reluctantly resigned from CalTech and assumed the full-
time presidency of National Technical Laboratories. With the advent of World War II, the demand for
scientific instrumentation grew, and Beckman saw that there was a great need for new spectroscopic
instrumentation. In the 1940s, he invented the first quartz spectrophotometer, the commercial infrared
spectrophotometer, the precision helical potentiometer, the analytical ultracentrifuge, the direct-writing
oscillographic recorder, and the automatic amino acid analyzer. These revolutionary products
propelled the continued growth of National Technical Laboratories, which was renamed Beckman Instruments, Inc. in 1950.  

By the early 1950s, Beckman’s matured enterprise needed a new home. The company’s factories, laboratories, and offices were scattered around Pasadena and South Pasadena, and Beckman made the decision to expand the company while unifying all its units into one complex. For his new $2.5 million headquarters and plant, Beckman selected a 38-acre site on the outskirts of Fullerton at a time when the city was just beginning to industrialize. Beckman oversaw the construction of his new facility, with its modern design becoming a reflection of Beckman himself. The corporation’s continued meteoric rise paralleled the economic boom for the still mostly rural city. The new Fullerton plant represented a second phase for both Arnold O. Beckman and Beckman Instruments. The corporation would grow from scattered locations into a unified, cohesive multinational corporation, and in the next thirty years, would become one of the most recognizable firms in the world. New inventions would be developed and patented; company stock would be taken public in November 1955; smaller high technology companies would be acquired; and new divisions and departments would be added as the company continued to grow in size and in the range of devices, while also developing innovative tests and medical procedures. Initially, Beckman continued to produce new medical devices, including the Peptide Sequencer and the Glucose Analyzer, but in the 1960s, he began to also develop products for industrial uses. New industrial products included a broad range of process control instruments, air and water pollution control instruments, and industrial research products. One of Beckman’s chromatographs would be used to analyze gas on Mars; another instrument would measure the brain waves of Gemini astronauts; and another contributed to pioneering smog studies in greater Los Angeles in the 1950s and 1960s. It was at the Fullerton location that the company made its foray into other countries, constructing its first overseas plant in 1953, and establishing itself as one of the world’s top multinational corporations, eventually servicing customers in 160 countries. When Beckman stepped down as president in 1965, at the age of 65, assuming the position of chairman of the board, his company was a world leader in the development and manufacture of precision products for scientific industries, medicine, education, space exploration, and defense, with its products benefitting people all over the world. It was estimated by the time Beckman had retired in 1981, every laboratory in the world had his instruments.

Beckman’s final years were spent as an active philanthropist. Through the Arnold and Mable Beckman Foundation, he was instrumental in establishing the Beckman Institute, Beckman Auditorium, Beckman Laboratory of Behavioral Science, and the Beckman Laboratory of Chemical Synthesis at the California Institute of Technology, along with institutes and laboratories in Orange, Irvine, and Stanford, California, and also sponsored the creation of the Arnold O. Beckman High School in Irvine. He donated millions to a variety of causes and organizations. Thousands of young scientists and K-6 students benefited from his philanthropy, and the five academic institutes that carry his name receive millions of dollars each year from his foundation. He spent his final decades accepting honorary degrees and awards, including the Public Welfare Medal from the National Academy of Sciences, the Life Achievement Award from the Instrument Society of America, the Vermilye Medal from The Franklin Institute, and was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 1987.  

In 1989, President George Herbert Walker Bush awarded him the National Medal of Science, the highest honor the President can bestow on a scientist or engineer. Beckman passed away on May 18, 2004, at the age
of 104, at Scripps Hospital in La Jolla. A memorial ceremony, open to the public, was held at the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace (18001 Yorba Linda Blvd.) in Yorba Linda on June 11, 2004, attended by many former Fullerton employees.23

Beckman brought international recognition and high-tech prominence to Fullerton when he moved his business from South Pasadena to a local orange grove. Beckman himself would spend untold hours working at the Fullerton facility (Figure 2), while also hosting numerous employee ceremonies, parties, and affairs, most of which were held at large local venues, including Plummer Auditorium and the Fox Fullerton Theatre24 (Figure 3). Good natured and personable, Beckman – known as “Dr. B” to his workers – left a legacy and personal imprint on hundreds of employees, who still remember his dictum: “Hire the best people, then get out of their way.” He often tried to imbue the firm with a personal touch, such as personally distributing paychecks to his employees.25 He was also an active presence in Fullerton, supporting local education, business, and civic causes and organizations. He served on local boards, attended important Fullerton events, and delighted in accepting local invitations to speak on the importance of science. He was a member of the lay advisory board of the new Orange State College, now California State University, Fullerton. He would often accept invitations to speak at building dedications, including the dedication of the new Fullerton College Library in 1954,26 and was the featured speaker at the opening of a new wing at St. Jude Hospital (101 E. Valencia Mesa Dr.) in 1962.

Criteria C: Architecture

An early example of Mid-Century Modernism in Fullerton, the administrative office building of Beckman Instruments, Inc. is the best example of this style of architecture applied to a non-residential building in the city. The Administration Building was the first large high-tech industrial “campus” to be developed in Fullerton, and one of the earliest in postwar Orange County. The entire appearance and layout of the administrative offices and plant was something entirely new to Fullerton. Its ultra-modern construction was the precursor to other large manufacturing companies locating in Fullerton in the 1950s and 1960s – Kimberly-Clark Corporation, Hughes Aircraft Company, Sylvania Electric Products, etc. – and it would become an architectural and planning model for later companies locating to the city. The facility’s distinctive style and unique building arrangement, developed by notable architect Lawrence Whitney Davidson27 and constructed by M. J. Brock & Sons, Inc.,28 set an early standard for high-tech complexes that were to follow.

Before relocating to Fullerton, Beckman Instruments occupied 16 scattered locations throughout Pasadena and South Pasadena, and space had become an issue. With the exception of a few postwar buildings, Beckman’s factories, laboratories, and offices were pre-World War II structures that did not provide the flexibility needed for a growing scientific company. The innovative design for the Fullerton facility, which provided expansion space spread out over 220,000-square-feet of buildings, reflected the company’s inventive approach to research and manufacturing and signaled the company’s move into a more modern era. Interior walls could be easily disassembled and moved to keep pace with expansion; glare-resistant windows provided working comfort for employees; an insulated steel deck ran throughout the factory to facilitate controlled temperatures; and a landscaped open air central walkway allowed visitors to move from the main foyer and administrative offices to individual product departments without passing through new areas. As historian Arnold Thackray noted: “The design
Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building
Orange, CA
Name of Property
County and State

was high modern, centered on the concept of flexibility for further expansion: Additional space could be easily constructed and integrated, and any interior spaces could be reconfigured quickly and efficiently. Such a flexible design befitted a firm dedicated to new instrumentation in a growing array of technologies.”\textsuperscript{29}

In 1955, the national magazine \textit{Factory Management & Maintenance} honored Beckman with its Significant Plant Award. From 500 plant-of-the-year candidates, the magazine chose the new Beckman facility as one of the nation’s top ten plants built in 1954. The magazine noted: “Faced with extraordinary requirements for flexibility and expandability, Beckman met both demands to a remarkable degree with a plant that is also a pacesetter in appearance and employee services.”\textsuperscript{30}

In the 1950s and 1960s, the administrative office building became a well-known architectural symbol of the company. Photographs and drawings of the building were used in advertisements, annual reports, and other promotional materials (Figure 4).

\textbf{Architect of the Building: Lawrence Whitney Davidson, AIA}

During the postwar era, hundreds of new industries were established in Fullerton. Most of the plants and factories constructed for these industries were nondescript box-like structures. A few companies used notable architects – Kimberly-Clark employed Skidmore, Owings and Merrill and the American Electronics Plant hired Eugene Choy – but few of the manufacturing buildings of this era reflect remarkable architectural design. Lawrence Whitney Davidson was an excellent choice to design the Beckman Instruments new facility. He had a strong background in both architecture and engineering and had designed other manufacturing plants before the Fullerton project. Over his 30 year career, Davidson moved fluidly from one project to another, designing golf clubhouses, industrial plants, movie studios, school classrooms, and municipal buildings. He moved easily between private, military, and public works projects. His early work was done in the Mid-Century Modern style, but over time he designed starker, more postmodern structures.

Davidson received his Bachelor of Science degree in architecture from the Illinois Institute of Technology in 1935, receiving a one-year scholarship for being high school valedictorian. He served as manager of engineering at the American Can Company from 1948 to 1951, where he patented a new device for stacking magnetizable items (Patent # 2635002A). From 1951 to 1953, Davidson worked as chief architect at the Donald R. Warren Company (930 West Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles), one of the southwest’s leading heavy engineering firms.\textsuperscript{31} An influential civil and structural engineer, Donald R. Warren (1897-1973) had joined architects Paul R. Williams and Adrian Wilson to form Allied Engineering, Inc., which worked on the Roosevelt Naval Base on Terminal Island during World War II, and Warren later became known for helping to build large infrastructure projects, including the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and the Los Angeles International Airport. By the time of the Beckman Instruments project, Warren’s company had completed over 200 industrial projects for producers of aircraft, petroleum, cement, paints, instruments, rubber, and metals. After Davidson left the Donald R. Warren Company, Warren would work with other architects, such as Jones and Emmons, on other Fullerton projects, including the Arcadia Metal Products Plant (801 North Acacia) and the American Meter Company plant (300 North Gilbert).\textsuperscript{32}
In 1952, Davidson designed new container factories in Wilmington and Stockton for the American Can Company. An article in the September issue of *Architect and Engineer* lauded the Wilmington plant (110 East Sepulveda, razed), noting that it represented “one of the most modern manufacturing plants in the world.” The Wilmington plant’s ultra-modern architectural features, especially the large “fin” rising over the center of the building used for an identification sign, were later reflected in the Beckman administration building, which refined the elements of the can plant.

In 1954, Davidson established his own architectural firm, L. W. Davidson and Associates, and in February 1956, moved into new headquarters with his affiliate company, North American Industrial Engineers, at 3142 Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles. In the 1950s and 1960s, Davidson designed a significant number of impressive and innovative commercial and industrial structures: the S. H. Kress Company Store (1954) in Los Angeles, one of three projects for businessman/art collector Samuel H. Kress, a warehouse and sales office for Coopers, Inc. (1955), manufacturers of men’s apparel, in Los Angeles; the Western Gear Corporation (later Westech Gear) Engineering Building (1956) in Lynwood; the Leeden Manufacturing Company plant (1956) in El Monte; a $500,000 modernization and new exterior for the W. I. Hollingworth Building (1958) on West Sixth Street in downtown Los Angeles; the Turco Products headquarters (1959) in Los Angeles; the Georgia-Pacific Corporation distribution warehouse (1961) in Pico Rivera; the National Cash Register Company plant (1967) in Hawthorne; and Statham Instruments in Oxnard (1967). In 1959, Julius Shulman, the great modernist photographer, took shots of the Turco Products, Inc. building, which are on file at the Getty Center. During this same period, Davidson did military work, designing buildings at George Air Force Base, Edwards Air Force Base, and the Marine Corps Electronic School at 29 Palms, while also patenting a hangar for swept-wing aircraft (Patent # 3543461A). He designed film studios, such as the Universal Pictures Studios in Los Angeles and Universal Pictures in Memphis, Tennessee, both in 1955, as well as a pipeline project in the Arctic Circle.

In the 1960s, Davidson began to move into the public building sector, designing the Community Clubhouse at Erwin Park (now Valley Glen Community Park) in Van Nuys, and in the 1970s, began school projects, including a new children’s center for Dayton Heights Elementary School, and a $1.32 million project for Bret Harte Junior High School, which called for a new main building, 20 classrooms, administrative unit, and library-media center. By the 1970s, L. W. Davidson and Associates had become one of the largest architectural firms in the San Fernando Valley, which was rapidly developing. In 1979, he was selected to design the $43.9-million dollar Plaza Technical Center (555 Ramirez Street), at the time the largest single construction project ever built by the Los Angeles Department of Public Works. Using a quadrant concept to link four separate structures, the Plaza Technical Center (now the C. Erwin Piper Technical Center) project was the largest single contract ever issued by a local governing body in California. Designed to serve multiple city services, the center also has the world’s largest rooftop airport. In addition to Beckman Instruments, Davidson’s other major Orange County commission appears to be the Lido Park Medical Center in Newport Beach (1965).
Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building  
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County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

1. Stephens, Harrison. *Golden Past, Golden Future: The First Fifty Years of Beckman Instruments, Inc.* Claremont, CA: Claremont University Center, 1985, p. 69. The original acreage that Arnold O. Beckman purchased was 38 acres. After dedications of land to Fullerton for streets (Harbor Boulevard and Lambert Road), plus railroad right-of-way, the property was reduced to 35 acres, as now indicated on the current Assessor Parcel Records.

2. “Dr. Beckman Tells Plans for L.H. Plant.” *Fullerton News Tribune* December 16, 1952. At the time of purchase, the property was an “island” of unincorporated land between the two cities.


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18 Bowden, Mary Ellen. “Beckman pH Meter, First and Last.” *Chemical Heritage* vol. 22, no. 3, 2004, p. 6-7. Beckman applied for his first patent in 1927, a buzzer for a car speedometer than would alert drivers when they had reached a certain speed.


20 The company’s original name, National Inking Appliance Company, was short-lived (November 1934 to April 1935), and it was quickly renamed National Technical Laboratories. Covell, Jeffrey C. “Beckman Instruments, Inc.” *International Directory of Company Histories*. Vol. 14. Ed. Tina Grant. Detroit: St. James Press, 1996, p. 52-54. While still a professor at CalTech, Beckman kept a strict separation between his educational responsibilities and his commercial enterprises and did not name his company after himself until he had separated from the university.


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43. Shulman, Julius. Turco Products (Los Angeles, Calif.). Five photographs. 1959. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California.


Additional References:


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Fullerton through the Years: A Survey of Architectural, Cultural and Environmental Heritage. Fullerton: Community Development Department, 2002.


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 #
___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

Primary location of additional data:

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

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Name of repository:
Local History Room, Fullerton Public Library
California State University, Fullerton Library
City of Fullerton Community Development Department
California Institute of Technology Archives, Pasadena, CA
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____________

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 35 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)
Datum if other than WGS84: ____________
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: 33° 55’ 21.38” N        Longitude: 117° 55’ 56.45” W
2. Latitude:
3. Latitude:
4. Latitude:

Or

UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927  or  ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:        Easting:                 Northing:
2. Zone:        Easting:                 Northing:
3. Zone:        Easting:                 Northing:
4. Zone:        Easting:                 Northing:
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is composed of 35 acres on the southeast corner of Harbor Boulevard and Lambert Road in the city of Fullerton. The property is nearly square in configuration with 1210.5 ft. fronting Lambert Road and 1258.7 ft. fronting Harbor Boulevard. The legal description is as follows: Sec 9 T 3 R 10 NW1/4 SE1/4 – Ex RR R/W & ST R/W.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary defines the current legal parcel of the 35 acres on which the building is located: Orange County Assessor Parcel # 296-411-01

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Debora Richey
organization: Fullerton Heritage
street & number: 1233 Luanne Avenue
city or town: Fullerton
state: CA
zip code: 92831
e-mail drichey@fullerton.edu
telephone: (714) 525-6411 (H)
date: August, 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- Maps: A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the
sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building

City or Vicinity: Fullerton

County: Orange State: CA

Photographer: Bob Linnell, Fullerton Heritage

Dates Photographed: January 2006; July 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0001
Overall view of building under construction, 1954; camera facing northeast
Source: Fullerton Public Library

2 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0002
Aerial view of building shortly after construction, 1954; camera facing north
Source: Beckman Coulter archives

3 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0003
Overall view of building, 1955; camera facing north
Source: Fullerton Public Library

4 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0004
Partial west and south elevation of building at night, late 1950s; camera facing northeast
Source: Fullerton Public Library

5 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0005
Partial west elevation of building, late 1950s; camera facing east
Source: Fullerton Public Library

6 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0006
Partial west and south elevation of building, late 1950s; camera facing northeast
Source: Fullerton Public Library

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7 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0007
Partial west elevation of building, 2006; camera facing northward from south end of property

8 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0008
Partial west elevation of building, 2006; camera facing northeastward

9 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0009
West elevation at main entrance, 2006; camera facing east

10 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0010
Partial west elevation of building, 2015; camera facing north

11 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0011
Partial west elevation of building, 2015; camera facing north

12 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0012
Partial west elevation of recessed area at north portion of building, 2015; camera facing east

13 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0013
Partial west elevation of south portion of building, 2006; camera facing south

14 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0014
Partial west and south elevation of south portion of building; 2015; camera facing north

15 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0015
South elevation of south wing of building, 2015; camera facing north

16 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0016
Partial east elevation of south portion of building; 2015; camera facing northwest

17 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0017
Partial east elevation of south portion of building, 2015; camera facing northwest

18 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0018
Partial east elevation of south portion of building, 2015; camera facing west

19 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0019
Partial east elevation of north portion of building, 2015; camera facing south

20 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0020
Courtyard at north end of building, 2015; camera facing northwest

21 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0021
Partial north elevation of building, 2015; camera facing southwest

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22 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0022
Partial north elevation of building, 2015; camera facing southeast

23 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0023
Carport structure north of courtyard at north end of building, 2015; camera facing southwest

24 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0024
North elevation of walled-in patio at north end of building, 2015; camera facing south

25 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0025
Interior space of mid-portion of building, 2015; camera facing west

26 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0026
Interior space of north portion of building, 2015; camera facing north

27 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0027
Interior space at north end of building, 2015; camera facing northeast

28 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0028
South elevation of mid-portion of building, 2015; camera facing northeast

29 of 29: CA_Orange County_Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building_0029
Window detail on south facing wall, 2015; camera facing north
Beckman Instruments, Inc. Administration Building
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Location Map 1: La Habra Topographic Map, 1955
Source: U.S.G.S.
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Location Map 2: Assessor Parcel Map, showing property of Beckman Instruments, Inc.
Source: County of Orange, CA

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Location Map 3: Annotated Aerial Photo of Beckman Instruments, Inc. property
Source: Google Earth, photo taken 4/23/2014; annotated by Bob Linnell

35-acre property boundary
Additional Information

Figure 1: Advertisement
Figure 2: Arnold O. Beckman
Source: *Arnold O. Beckman, One Hundred Years of Excellence*, p. 190.
(Beckman at Fullerton facility, early 1950s)
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Figure 3: Beckman Instruments, Inc.’s Christmas Party
Source: Stephens, Harrison, *Golden Past, Golden Future: The First Fifty Years of Beckman Instruments, Inc.*, p. 43. (Children of Beckman employees attending event at Plummer Auditorium, Fullerton in mid-1950s)

Figure 4: Advertisement
Source: *Fullerton News Tribune*, September 24, 1957
Sketch Site Plan and Photo Key

1 through 6 black numbers and arrows: Historical photographs
7 through 29 red numbers and arrows: Photographs of 2006 and 2015