

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

Architectural Inventory Form

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Date _____ Initials _____

- _____ Determined Eligible- NR
_____ Determined Not Eligible- NR
_____ Determined Eligible- SR
_____ Determined Not Eligible- SR
_____ Need Data
_____ Contributes to eligible NR District
_____ Noncontributing to eligible NR District



I. IDENTIFICATION

1. Resource number: 5LR.12761
2. Temporary resource number: City-6
3. County: Larimer
4. City: Fort Collins
5. Historic building name: Forney Industries
6. Current building name: Forney Industries
7. Building address: 1830 Laporte Avenue
8. Owner name: Forney Industries
Owner organization:
Owner address: 1830 Laporte Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80521

Parcel number: 97102-00-013

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: ☐ Individually eligible ☐ Not eligible ☒ Needs data ☐ Previously listed
State Register eligibility field assessment: ☐ Individually eligible ☐ Not eligible ☒ Needs data ☐ Previously listed
Local landmark eligibility field assessment: ☒ Individually eligible ☐ Not eligible ☐ Needs data ☐ Previously listed

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II. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

9. P.M.: **6th** Township: **7N** Range: **69W**
SW 1/4 SW 1/4 SE 1/4 NW 1/4 of section **10** Grid aligned on **northwest** corner of section.
10. UTM Reference Zone: **13**
Easting: **490699** Northing: **4493226**
11. USGS quad name: **Fort Collins** Scale: **7.5**
Year: **1984**
12. Lot(s): **Not applicable**
Addition: **Not Applicable** Year of addition: **Not Applicable**
13. Boundary description and justification: **The boundary, as described above, contains but does not exceed the land historically associated with the property.**
- ☐ Metes and bounds exist

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

14. Building Plan (footprint, shape): **L-Shaped Plan**
Other building plan descriptions:
15. Dimensions in feet: **42,091 square feet**
16. Number of stories: **Two**
17. Primary external wall material(s): **Concrete**
Wood/Horizontal Siding
Other wall materials:
18. Roof configuration: **Flat Roof**
Other roof configuration:
19. Primary external roof material: **Other Roof Material**
Other roof materials: **Built-up rock**
20. Special features: **None Applicable**
21. General architectural description:
Oriented to the south, this L-shaped building features both concrete block and horizontal siding. The two-story industrial facility has a flat roof covered in built-up rock. The recessed primary entry is centered on the façade. It is a glass door flanked by a two-pane fixed window. The east side of the façade features a decorative pattern of poured concrete, forming triangular projections from the front of the building. This concrete is painted light blue-gray and the name of the company, in large red plastic letters, is affixed to this portion of the building near the roofline. A sunscreen constructed of numerous wooden slats arranged horizontally dominates the west half of the façade. These slats also are painted blue-gray. There is an integrated planter of concrete block running from the southwest corner of the façade toward the entry door. The front portion of the west elevation is concrete block painted dark gray. There is a solid metal door on this side of the building. The rear of the west elevation appears to be an addition constructed of cream-colored weatherboard. At least three rectangular slider windows and a solid, (likely wood) door are visible. The east side of the original building is concrete block painted tan; there is a sliding patio door on this portion of the building. The remainder the addition is recessed from the façade, forming the L-shape of the building's footprint, but also faces south. This part of the building

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is faced in horizontal siding painted tan. There is a two story bay with a flat roof near the junction of the two portions of the building's "L." This part of the building also features two wooden doors, one facing south and the other facing east, painted rust-brown. There are also a number of fixed pane windows. There appears to be a secondary entry facing east and underneath a recessed patio. The one-story portion of the building facing south has at least seven slider windows and a concrete foundation. There appears to be a small screened in porch nearly centered on this portion of the addition. The north (rear) elevation was not visible from the public right of way. Character-defining features of Modern Movements architecture evident at 1830 Laporte Avenue include: the flat roof, decorative sun screen, molded concrete pattern on the façade, and the integrated planter. Only the original building exhibits characteristics of Modern Movements architecture.

22. Architectural style: **Modern Movements**

Other architectural style:

Building type:

23. Landscape or special setting features:

This building is located on an irregular-shaped lot along Laporte Avenue. There is a paved parking lot in front of the building and a few evergreen trees on the property. A chain link fence runs from the corner of the original façade and surrounds the addition, enclosing a sparse grass lawn. The elevation of the site is 5053 feet above mean sea level.

24. Associated building, features or objects:

None visible.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

25. Date of Construction: **1955** ☒ Actual ☐ Estimate

Source of Information: **Larimer County Assessors Records (online).**

26. Architect: **Unknown**

Source of Information:

27. Builder: **Unknown**

Source of Information:

28. Original Owner: **J. Donovan Forney**

Source of Information:

29. Construction history:

According to Larimer County assessor records, this building was constructed in 1955. An analysis of the style, building materials, and other historical records corroborate the date of construction. Historic images of this building indicate the large L-shaped addition on the facade was constructed sometime after 1977. City of Fort Collins online records include a letter of completion dated 17 August 1995 for "install(ation of a) roof section" and a building permit dated 26 September 2003 for furnace replacement.

30. Location: **Original Location** Date of move(s):

V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

31. Original use(s): **Industry/Processing/Extraction/Manufacturing Facility**

32. Intermediate uses(s): **Industry/Processing/Extraction/Manufacturing Facility**

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33. Current uses(s): **Industry/Processing/Extraction/Manufacturing Facility**

34. Site type(s): **Modern Movements factory**

35. Historical background:

The building at 1830 Laporte Avenue has been associated with Forney Industries for its entire fifty-six year history. This family operated company was established in 1932 when James Donovan (J.D.) Forney, an independent soul who left home at the age of eleven, borrowed \$50 to invent and build the Forney Instant Heat Soldering Iron in the basement of his house. Initially, he sold or bartered these soldering irons from farm to farm. By 1936 Forney also produced other small welders suitable for agricultural use. He spent a great deal of time on the road and, by 1944, started hiring salesmen and this sales force grew to nearly 800 by the end of World War II. However, Forney Industries was always a family business. His wife Rachel (Rae) worked for many years in the Fort Collins office as company secretary-treasurer and their only son Jack became Chairman of the Board in the mid-1960s.

Forney arc welders were even more popular in the postwar period once the Rural Electric Association (REA) extended electric service to farms nationwide. In 1949, Forney purchased the company's current location on Laporte Avenue in Fort Collins. During the 1950s and 1960s the company expanded, manufacturing a wide range of other products such as the Fornaire Aircoupe airplane, water skis, and furniture. The firm even had an educational film division which produced safety and informational movies for industry. At its peak, the company had distributors throughout North America, including operations in both Canada and Mexico, plus 500 employees in Fort Collins; at its height the company made \$10 million in annual sales.

In 1966, in recognition of his long career with Forney Industries, J.D. Foreney received the "American Success Story" award from the Free Enterprise Association. During their semi-retirement both J.D. and Rae Forney were active in the Forney Transportation Museum, a facility developed to exhibit Forney's extensive collection of classic cars; his first car was a 1921 Kissel yellow Tourister similar to the one in which he courted Rae. The museum was originally located in Fort Collins, but relocated to Denver, first at the Cinderella City Mall and later at the Denver Tramway Powerhouse. This museum is currently located north of LoDo. J.D. Forney passed away in 1986 and his wife died ten years later.

In 2006 Forney Industries shifted from manufacturing to distributing. Currently, the company sells over 4,500 products related to metal work, welding, abrasives, cutting wheels, air fittings, hoses, hydraulic fittings, wire wheels and brushes, steel and aluminum chains, and a wide range of safety equipment. The company currently services over 12,000 accounts across the nation, continuing to follow the Forney motto: "Quality You Expect, Service You Depend On."

36. Sources of information:

Larimer County tax assessor property records (online).

Fort Collins City Directory. Fort Collins: Mauer & Mauer; Omaha: R.L. Polk & Co.; Colorado Springs and Loveland: Rocky Mountain Directory Co.; Loveland: Johnson Publishing Co.; and others, consulted 1955.

Oral History- Ward H. Fischer – 2 February 1989 – interview with Karen Waddell.

Obituary: Rachel M. "Rae" Forney. Larimer County Genealogical Society. <http://www.lcgsc.org/obits/fornra96.jpg> [Accessed 1 April 2011].

Forney Industries: history - <http://www.forneyind.com/history.html> - [Accessed 1 April 2011].

Forney Industries: home - <http://www.forneyind.com/> - [Accessed 1 April 2011].

Forney Transportation Museum - http://forneymuseum.org/News_MuseumHistory1.html [Accessed 1 April 2011].

Ancestry.com Search: J.D. Forney.

Ahlbrandt, Arlene. *101 Memorable Men of Northern Colorado*. Fort Collins: published by the author, 2002.

VI. SIGNIFICANCE

37. Local landmark designation: ☐ Yes ☒ No

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Designation authority:

Date of designation:

38. Applicable National Register criteria:

- ☐ A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- ☐ Qualifies under Criteria Considerations A through G (see manual).
- ☐ Does not meet any of the above National Register criteria.

Applicable Colorado State Register criteria:

- ☐ A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to history.
- ☒ B. Connected with persons significant in history.
- ☒ C. Has distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or artisan.
- ☐ D. Is of geographic importance.
- ☐ E. Contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history.
- ☐ Does not meet any of the above Colorado State Register criteria.

Applicable City of Fort Collins landmark criteria:

- ☐ 1. The property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history; or
- ☒ 2. The property is associated with the lives of persons significant in history; or
- ☒ 3. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- ☐ 4. The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

39. Areas of significance: **Architecture**
Commerce

40. Period(s) of Significance: **1955; 1955-1966**

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41. Level of Significance: ☐ National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐ Not Applicable

42. Statement of Significance:

Historically, this building is important for its association with local industry. James Donovan (J.D.) Forney invented the Forney Instant Heat Soldering Iron in 1932. Prior to the development of Forney Industries, Fort Collins's economy relied almost exclusively upon agriculture and Colorado A&M. In the postwar period Forney Industries took advantage of the availability of Rural Electric Association power to farmers nationwide, selling them arc welders and other types of specialized equipment. Forney moved the Forney Industries corporate headquarters to this location in 1949, with this building constructed in 1955. Architecturally, this industrial facility is a good example of a Modern Movements building. Character-defining features include: the flat roof, decorative sun screen, molded concrete pattern on the façade, and the integrated planter. According to the Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, this level of historical and architectural significance is sufficient for this property to qualify for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places or the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties. The building also qualifies for listing as a Fort Collins Landmark (also important under local criterion 2 for association with J.D. Forney).

43. Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance:

Constructed in 1955, this building exhibits a relatively low level of physical integrity relative to the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service and the Colorado Historical Society: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling. The large post-1977 addition, located on the facade, adversely impacts the materials, design, workmanship, and feeling for this site. According to the Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, this resource Needs Data regarding the 1977 alteration before a determination of National and State Register eligibility can be made. However, it retains sufficient physical integrity to convey its significance for listing as a Fort Collins Landmark.

VII. NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: ☐ Individually eligible ☐ Not eligible ☒ Needs data ☐ Previously listed
 State Register eligibility field assessment: ☐ Individually eligible ☐ Not eligible ☒ Needs data ☐ Previously listed
 Local landmark eligibility field assessment: ☒ Individually eligible ☐ Not eligible ☐ Needs data ☐ Previously listed

45. Is there National Register district potential: ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Needs Data

Discuss: **This inventory was conducted as an intensive-level selective survey and, therefore, lacks the continuity of resource data necessary to recommend the creation of an historic district.**

If there is National Register district potential, is this building contributing: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

46. If the building is in existing National Register district, is it contributing: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

VIII. RECORDING INFORMATION

47. Digital photograph file name(s): **laporteave1830 - 1.tif through laporteave1830 - 5.tif**
 Digital photographs filed at: **Historic Preservation Program, City of Fort Collins**
281 N. College Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80522

48. Report title: **Fort Collins Post-War Survey**

49. Date(s): **03/21/2011**

50. Recorder(s): **Mary Therese Anstey**

51. Organization: **Historitecture, LLC**

52. Address: **PO Box 181095**
Denver, CO 80212-8822

53. Phone number(s): **(303) 390-1638**

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SKETCH MAP



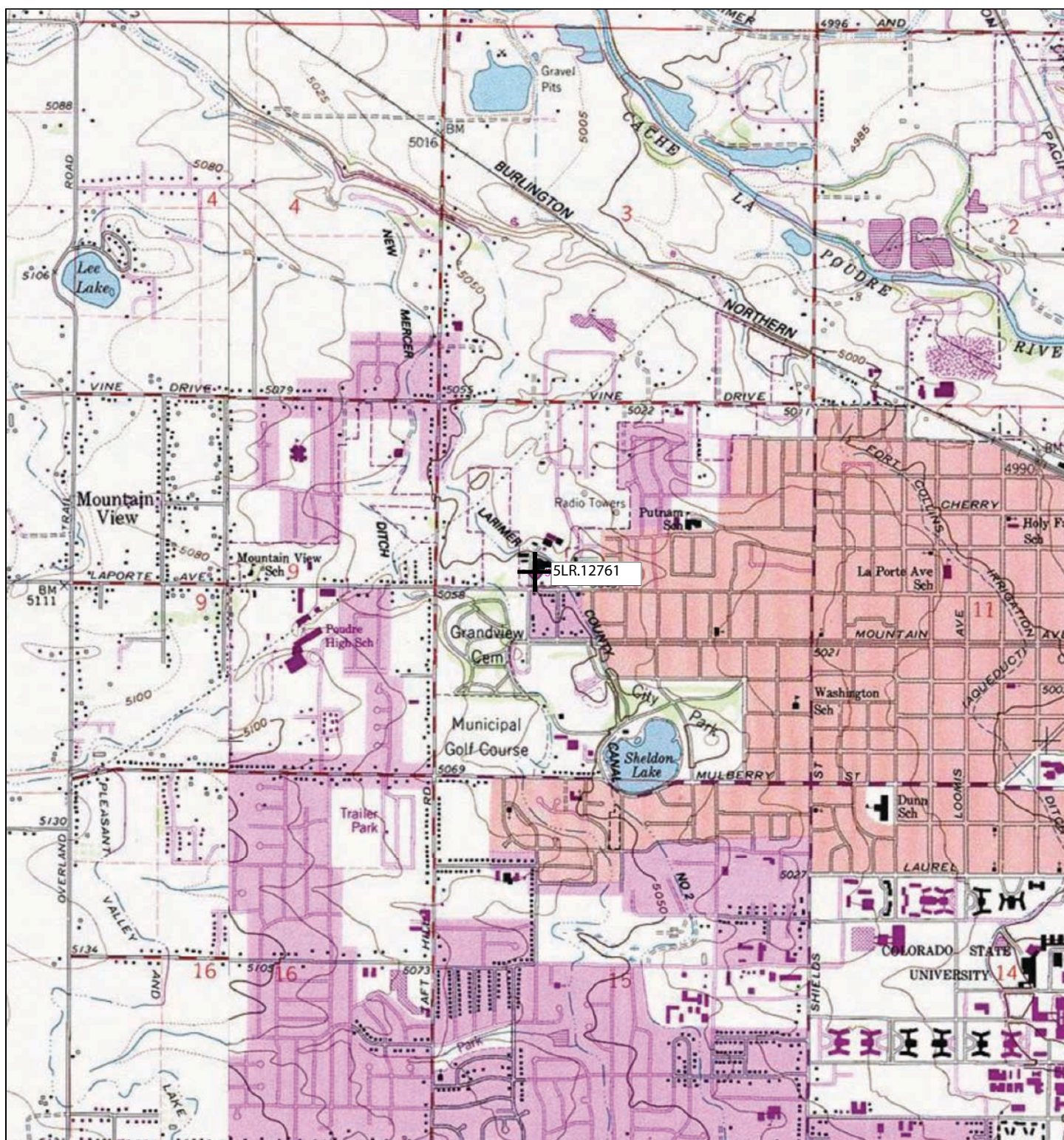
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LOCATION MAP



Source: U.S. Geological Survey 7.5' Fort Collins - 1984

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