



CENTINELA VALLEY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL (1968)

Centinela Valley Community Hospital was established in 1924 as the Centinela Valley Medical Center. The earlier name still is prominent on the cornice.

In 1960 the hospital commissioned Welton Becket and Associates to create a 60-bed addition. The firm was known for innovative design. A medical and design discussion centered on whether patient privacy could promote faster recovery and diminish hospital-acquired infections. At the time hospitals typically had shared rooms. State health codes were written to reflect this standard. Part of the discussion was that single-patient rooms increased hospital and patient costs.

The hospital administrators and architects decided to explore creating a hospital with only single rooms, so state regulations had to be appealed and revised. Centinela Valley Medical Center became the first hospital to use only private rooms, a cutting edge model only now becoming the accepted practice.

Other signature Welton Becket features incorporated into the building are the vertical elements acting as both sunscreens and bay windows wrapping the facade, a variation on the horizontal ones circling Welton Becket's Capitol Records Building.

Architect

Welton Becket & Associates

555 East Hardy Street
Inglewood, California



Welton Becket

Welton Becket was born in Seattle, Washington in 1902. He studied architecture at the University of Washington and a year at the École des Beaux Arts / Fontainebleu in Paris. Becket returned to the States to form his practice in Los Angeles in 1933.

The firm was noted for its embrace of total control of the design process from master planning to interiors, its technological innovation and use of unusual facade materials; it grew to become one of the most celebrated firms in the city.

Their noted buildings include Capitol Records Tower (1956) which was the world's first circular office building capped with a spire beaming Hollywood in Morse Code and the Santa Monica Civic Center (1958) with its raked floor that could be mechanically flattened for other uses. Their Los Angeles buildings are the Cinerama Dome (1962) the first concrete geodesic dome built in the world which housed which was then the world's largest movie screen, followed by the Music Center (1967). Becket, working with Charles Luckman and Paul Williams, also designed the Theme Building at LAX (1962).

Welton Becket died in 1969. His practice became one of the country's largest architectural firms. The company name changed over time from Wurdeman & Becket then Ellerbe Becket. Today it is a unit of AECOM, the architecture and engineering giant.