



Staff Report and Recommendations Agenda of October 10, 2022, Item 6c

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency

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I. APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER:

Applicant:

Jane Collette
Rasmussen and Associates
21 S. California Street, 4th floor
Ventura, CA 93001

Property Owner:

Daniel Sooferan
351 Cortez Circle
Camarillo, CA 93012

II. REQUEST:

A request for a Certificate of Review (COR) (Cultural Heritage Ordinance (CHO) §1372) for the rehabilitation of existing warehouse facilities for commercial storage uses. As part of the scope of work, five existing buildings will be combined into four warehouse tenant spaces and two small buildings will be demolished. Six truck loading docks and two freight elevators will be added to the exterior of the buildings, in addition to interior remodeling. (Case No. CH22-0029).

III. LOCATION AND PROPERTY INFORMATION:

245 E Colonia Road, Oxnard, CA 93030
Assessor's Parcel Number (APN): 201-0-021-160
Common Name: Sunkist/Ventura Pacific Co. Facility
Historic Designation: Undesignated, but appears potentially eligible as a Cultural Heritage Site.

The 6.53-acre property has historically been used for lemon processing and contains the following seven existing buildings:

- South Warehouse - 46,890 square feet (sq. ft.), 1 story
- Lemon Packing House - 103,872 sq. ft., three stories
- Office - 1,694 sq. ft., one store
- Metal Warehouse - 41,706 sq. ft., one story
- Office/Warehouse - 9,068 sq. ft., two stories
- Metal Shed - 930 sq. ft., one story
- Lemon Cull Bin - 1,878 sq. ft., two stories

Refer to Figure 1 for the property's regional location and Figure 2 for a site view. In addition, refer to Figure 3 for a current view of the subject property.

Figure 1 – Regional View

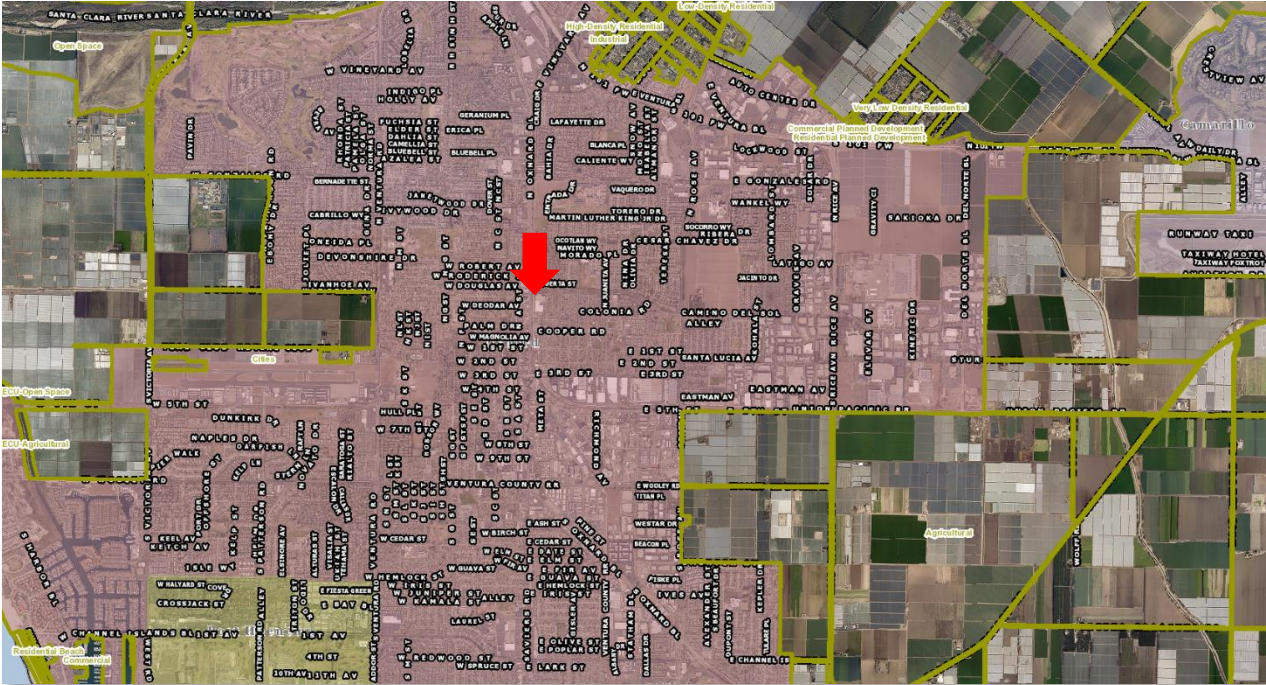


Figure 2 – Site View



Source: Google Maps

Figure 3 – View of Property from Oxnard Boulevard, looking Northeast



Source: Google Maps

IV. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The property could not be located in any previous historical survey at the time of this report. However, the Sunkist/Ventura Pacific Co. Facility is known to date at least until 1936, when it was operated by Seaboard Lemon Association. Refer to Figure 4 for a historical photo of the subject property.

Figure 4 – Historical View of Property



Source: Ventura Pacific Co.

In addition, the *Eastern Oxnard Plain Historic Context and Reconnaissance Survey*, prepared by San Buenaventura Research Associates in December 2014 (“Historic

Survey”¹, contains information on the broad historical themes of agriculture and citrus production on the Oxnard Plain and appears relevant to the subject property. The Historic Survey identifies the historic contextual period of “Beans, Beets and Industry (1898–1945)” as an important theme in this portion of County history. More specifically, the context theme of Agriculture identified in the Historic Survey is intended to assist in the subsequent historic property identification processes by providing a method by which the historical significance of individual properties can readily be established within this historical context theme.

The Historic Survey notes that, during this period, row crops, particularly sugar beets and lima beans, continued to dominate the landscape, but citrus and truck farming also became important, particularly during the 1930s and 1940s.² The Historic Survey goes on to state the following:

“Lemon trees were new to the Oxnard Plain when they were first planted on the Patterson ranch in 1912, although they had been widely grown in the Santa Clara Valley for two decades. Later that same year, James Leonard also planted lemons on his Oxnard property as a trial of its citrus raising potential. By 1918 growers in the area had cultivated lemons successfully enough to organize the Oxnard Citrus Association. Other portions of the Oxnard Plain, such as the Ocean View area, were later explored for their potential for profitable lemon growing. The Utt Development Company acquired over 600 acres in the area, which they intended to plant with citrus. Subsequently, James Culbertson, a former manager at Limoneira who was seen as an expert in citrus, purchased property in 1930 near the intersection of Dempsey Road and the new coast highway (modern day Channel Islands Boulevard and Pacific Coast Highway) to plant twenty acres of lemons.”³

Packing houses processed crops such as lemons, oranges and avocados after they left the fields. The packing houses employed large numbers of workers to clean, sort and pack the crop in preparation for shipping to markets. Packing houses have at times also held the responsibility for hiring field workers and managing harvesting activity...The land planted with citrus and avocados was located mainly in the center of the plain from Del Norte Avenue through the El Rio area and just south of State Route 101, on the eastern side of the city of Oxnard, and between Rose and Wood roads south to Hueneme Road (an additional area of citrus production was found north of Camarillo).”⁴

¹ Eastern Oxnard Plain Historic Context and Reconnaissance Survey, San Buenaventura Research Associates, December 2014.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

V. PROJECT SCOPE:

The applicant proposes to rehabilitate the existing warehouse facilities at the subject property for commercial storage uses. As part of the scope of work, five existing buildings will be combined into four warehouse tenant spaces and two small buildings will be demolished. The buildings proposed for demolition consist of the Metal Shed and the Lemon Cull Bin, along with an exterior stairway. Six truck loading docks and two freight elevators will be added to the exterior of the buildings, in addition to interior remodeling, along with exterior alterations such as new windows, ramps, doors, and stairs at the rear. Refer to Exhibit 1 for the full architectural plan set and existing photos for the structures proposed for demolition.

VI. CHO ANALYSIS:

Pursuant to Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance (CHO) Section 1372, a Certificate of Review (COR) is required prior to issuance of a permit at a Potential Cultural Heritage Site. Using the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (“Secretary’s Standards”) as a guide, the CHB shall review and comment upon the permit application as it relates to a Potential Cultural Heritage Site and advise the applicant and/or all public agencies concerning the effects of the proposed action(s). CHB Staff determined the standards for rehabilitation are appropriate for this request and evaluated the proposed scope of work against the standards. Each one of the applicable Secretary’s Standards is outlined in the table below with corresponding comments from CHB Staff.

Standards	Staff Comments
#1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.	The facility has historically been used for lemon processing. The applicant proposes the rehabilitation of existing warehouse facilities for commercial storage uses, with proposed alterations mostly limited to interior remodel. Some exterior alterations necessary to accommodate the proposed use would be located at the rear of the facility and away from primary elevations, such as the addition of six truck loading docks and two freight elevators. Staff determined this Standard has been met.
#2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The	The Secretary’s Standards ⁵ encourage the retention of historic features that contribute to the

⁵ Weeks, Kay D., *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, revised 2017, pg. 140.

Standards	Staff Comments
<p>removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.</p>	<p>interpretation of the significance of a historic property and, when appropriate, repair of materials and limited replacement of deteriorated or missing parts rather than full replacement.</p> <p>As part of the scope of work, the applicant proposes to demolish the Metal Shed and the Lemon Cull Bin. The 6.53-acre property has historically been used for lemon processing; therefore, the Lemon Cull Bin appears substantially associated with the important historical uses of the property. It is recommended that historic features that contribute to the interpretation of the significance of the property be retained.</p> <p>Therefore, Staff determined the scope of work is inconsistent with this Standard.</p>
<p>#3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.</p>	<p>It does not appear that conjectural design features from other historic properties or inappropriate time periods are proposed to be added to the property with the intent of creating a false sense of historical development.</p> <p>Staff determined this Standard has been met.</p>
<p>#4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.</p>	<p>There do not appear to be changes to the property that have acquired historic significance in their own right. One known later alteration is the addition of a stairway at the rear of the property.</p> <p>Staff determined this Standard has been met.</p>
<p>#5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.</p>	<p>As part of the scope of work, the applicant proposes to demolish the Metal Shed and the Lemon Cull Bin. The 6.53-acre property has historically been used for lemon processing; therefore, the Lemon Cull Bin appears substantially associated with the important historical uses of the property. It is recommended that historic features that contribute to the interpretation of the significance of the property be retained.</p> <p>Therefore, Staff determined the scope of work is inconsistent with this Standard.</p>

Standards	Staff Comments
<p>#6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.</p>	<p>The applicant does not propose the replacement of deteriorated historic features.</p> <p>Therefore, Staff determined this Standard is not applicable.</p>
<p>#7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.</p>	<p>Staff determined this Standard is not applicable.</p>
<p>#8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.</p>	<p>Staff determined this Standard is not applicable.</p>
<p>#9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.</p>	<p>As mentioned, some exterior alterations necessary to accommodate the proposed use would be located at the rear of the facility and away from primary elevations to the extent feasibly, such as the addition of six truck loading docks and two freight elevators. The core form and primary elevations of the facility would be maintained.</p> <p>Therefore, Staff determined the scope of work is consistent with this Standard.</p>
<p>#10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p>	<p>The proposed exterior alterations are limited in scope and would not appear to preclude the ability to remove them in the future.</p> <p>Staff determined this Standard has been met.</p>

VII. STAFF CONCLUSIONS:

Based on the above considerations, the proposed scope of work appears partially inconsistent with the Secretary’s Standards. With implementation of the project, the applicant proposes to demolish the Metal Shed and the Lemon Cull Bin. The 6.53-acre property has historically been used for lemon processing; therefore, the Lemon Cull Bin appears substantially associated with the important historical uses of the property. Based on the above, Staff recommends the CHB adopt the following

recommendation related to the scope of work in order to better conform to the Secretary's Standards:

Recommendation #1: Lemon Cull Bin. The applicant should retain features that contribute to the historic interpretation of the significance of the property to the greatest extent feasible such as the Lemon Cull Bin.

With adoption and adherence to the above recommendation, Staff determined the project would conform to the Secretary's Standards.

VIII. OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW HARDSHIP:

At the CHB public hearing on this matter, if desired, the property owner is provided the opportunity to present facts and evidence demonstrating a failure to grant the requested COA would cause an economic hardship as provided by CHO Section 1371-4(d).

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comment regarding this item has been received to date.

X. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Pursuant to CHO Section 1372, the CHB may identify project modifications for the applicant's review and consideration. Staff is recommending the CHB take the following actions regarding the request:

1. **CONDUCT** public hearing, **RECEIVE** oral and written testimony, and **CONSIDER** the Planning Division Staff report and all exhibits and attachments hereto;
2. **REVIEW** and **COMMENT** on the proposed project in accordance with CHO §1372 based on the preceding evidence and analysis.

Prepared by:



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Reviewed by:



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Exhibits:

Exhibit 1: Plans, Elevations, and Photos