



**AGENDA**  
**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 6:00 P. M.**  
**SAN DIMAS COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**245 E. BONITA AVE.**

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**CITY COUNCIL:**

Mayor Curtis W. Morris  
Mayor Pro Tem John Ebiner  
Councilmember Emmett Badar  
Councilmember Denis Bertone  
Councilmember Jeff Templeman

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

(For anyone wishing to address the City Council on an item on this agenda. Under the provisions of the Brown Act, the legislative body is prohibited from taking or engaging in discussion on any item not appearing on the posted agenda.)

a. Members of the Audience

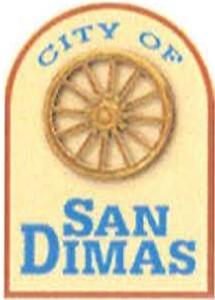
**3. Preliminary consideration regarding the status of existing historic building (former San Dimas Lemon Association Packinghouse site) at 115 N. Cataract (now M & E) and its retention/inclusion in future development proposals**

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

To the regular City Council meeting June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

**AGENDA STAFF REPORTS:** COPIES OF STAFF REPORTS AND/OR OTHER WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION PERTAINING TO THE ITEMS ON THE AGENDA ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK AND ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION DURING THE HOURS OF 8:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M. MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY. INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED BY CALLING (909) 394-6216. CITY COUNCIL MINUTES AND AGENDAS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ON THE CITY'S HOME PAGE ON THE INTERNET:  
<http://cityofsandimas.com/minutes.cfm>.

**POSTING STATEMENT:** On June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014, A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY OF THIS AGENDA WAS POSTED ON THE BULLETIN BOARDS AT 245 EAST BONITA AVENUE (SAN DIMAS CITY HALL;) 145 NORTH WALNUT AVENUE (LOS ANGELES COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY, SAN DIMAS BRANCH); AND 300 EAST BONITA AVENUE (UNITED STATES POST OFFICE).



## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 24, 2014

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Community Development Department

**SUBJECT:** Preliminary consideration regarding the status of existing historic building (former San Dimas Lemon Association Packinghouse site) at 115 N. Cataract (now M & E) and its retention/inclusion in future development proposals.

### BACKGROUND

Staff has been approached regarding the desire to demolish the historic building to make way for a new development on the subject property. No plans or application have been submitted but the development proponent has indicated that demolition of the buildings is essential to any development. Staff advised that it could not be supportive of any proposal which included demolition of the remaining building on the historic site. The project proponent has now requested City Council guidance on the matter and does not desire to proceed if the Staff determination prevails.

It should be understood that any Council consideration can only be preliminary and non-binding since any demolition consideration will require a CEQA review and a General Plan amendment.

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Size: 2.79 acres

General Plan: Industrial  
*Plan Proposal K (p. 11-48):* Designate the historic San Dimas Lemon Packing House for historic adaptive reuse by revitalizing the existing packing house for either office or a combination of commercial and retail (mixed use). Integrate a light rail transit station stop as part of the development.

Zoning: SP-22

Use: Outside storage of machinery and related equipment. [NOTE: Existing use was approved subject to conditions per attached November 22, 1965 Council minutes. Under current regulations the use is nonconforming since a CUP is required for outside storage.]

Historic Status: See attached Historic Resources Inventory

### **BUILDING/SITE HISTORY**

The San Dimas Lemon Association constructed the packing house buildings starting in 1908. The citrus industry was the primary industry in San Dimas at that time. The Lemon Packing House was the largest in the world and included many innovations the first moving packing belt, the first refrigerated curing rooms, the first to print "Sunkist" on lemons, and the first to pay growers upon delivery (rather than at time of sale).

The main packing house building was demolished in 1966. The larger of the currently remaining buildings was used for "sweat rooms" and cold storage prior to shipping. Other smaller buildings also exist on the site.

### **DISCUSSION**

The City has previously evaluated possible adaptive reuse opportunities for the buildings/site including commercial/restaurant use in conjunction with a future light rail station (1992 General Plan) and a performing arts center (2004 Specific Plan charrettes). Over the years the City has considered acquisition of the site with the most recent offers made in 2002. At that time the City undertook an updated (original feasibility study in 1991) seismic/structural evaluation and a site environmental study.

The study concluded that it would be difficult and costly, at least more than the cost to demolish, to endeavor to reuse the building due to then current building codes including seismic, fire, ADA and energy. Our subsequent experience with the Walker House would substantiate such a conclusion. Several minor environmental remediation issues were identified.

The Lemon Association Packing House, or at least the remaining vestiges of that site, is important to the early history of the City and there is little remaining buildings specifically related to the early citrus history. That important past needs to be evaluated against possible future development of the site as it seems the past and future are not as likely to co-exist – especially facing the growing push for medium to higher density residential sites in the City. Other uses which could consider adaptive reuse (as suggested in the City General Plan) may be possible. The existing use can continue but it is nonconforming and could certainly be upgraded to present less of an eyesore at the entrance to the Downtown.

Any potential loss of significant historic resources must be evaluated under CEQA and, while demolition is possible under CEQA, significant mitigation is likely.

Among the available alternatives are:

1. Retain the existing Plan Proposal K and encourage any development to consider adaptive reuse.
2. Initiate a CEQA analysis of the impacts of losing the historic resource independent of any potential development application and amend the City General Plan accordingly.
3. Allow submittal of a development application which may propose loss of the resource, evaluate that loss pursuant to CEQA and determine the status of the resource as part of the development review process.

Staff supports preservation of the historic resource and land use options which consider adaptive reuse.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Aerial photo of site
2. Historic Resources Inventory Fact Sheet
3. General Plan Proposal K (p. II-48)
4. Council Minutes of November 22, 1965
5. Original Site Plans (2)
6. Other Historical Background



State of California - The Resources Agency  
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
 OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

HISTORIC RESOURCES  
 INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION

1. Historic name San Dimas Lemon Association Packing House

\*2. Common or current name Machinery and Equipment Company, Inc.

\*3. Number & Street 115 North Cataract Avenue Cross-corridor \_\_\_\_\_  
 City San Dimas Vicinity only \_\_\_\_\_ Zip 91773 County Los Angeles

4. UTM zone 11 A 425225/3774040 B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_

5. Quad map No. 1094 Parcel No. 8386-16-02 Other \_\_\_\_\_

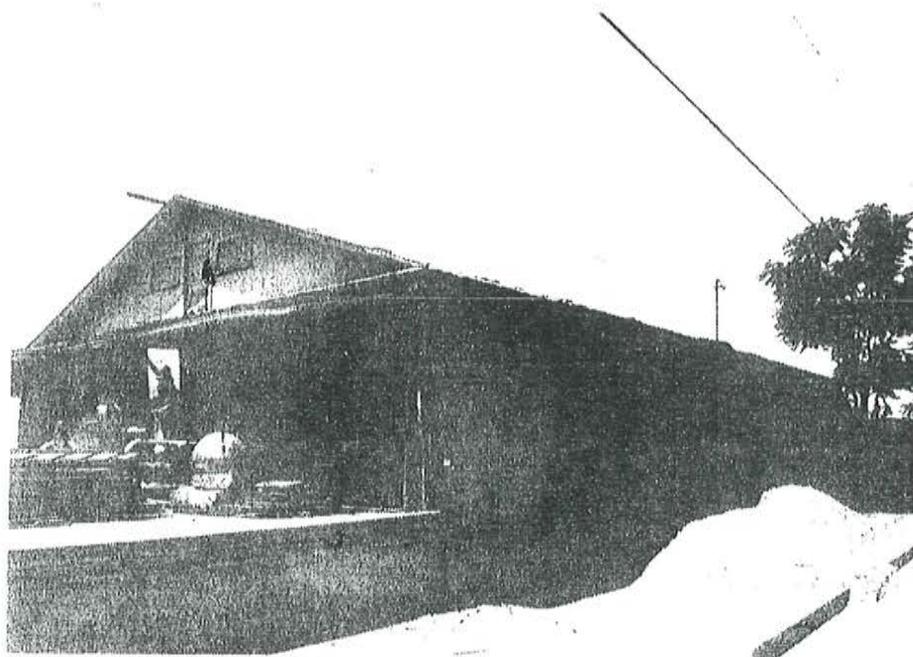
Ser. No. \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 National Register status 3D  
 Local designation \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION

6. Property category District If district, number of documented resources 2

\*7. Briefly describe the present physical appearance of the property, including condition, boundaries, related features, surroundings, and (if appropriate) architectural style.

This long rectangular shaped 1 1/2 story building has a medium pitched gable roof. The building is constructed of reinforced concrete and is raised with a basement underneath. The basement is divided into small rooms. There are several windows and doors on all sides of the building. A second floor entrance is found under the peak of the front gable. There have been modifications to the windows and doors. The stairway to the upstairs entrance has been removed. The building is in fair condition.



8. Planning Agency San Dimas Planning Department

9. Owner & address Machinery and Equipment Co., Inc.  
P.O. Box 7632  
San Francisco, CA

10. Type of Ownership Private

11. Present Use Commercial

12. Zoning M-1

13. Threats None

Send a copy of this form to: State Office of Historic Preservation, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

\* Complete these items for historic preservation compliance projects under Section 106 (36 CFR 800). All Item must be completed for historical resources survey information.

**HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

- \*14. Construction date(s) 1911-F Original location same Date moved \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. Alterations & date \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. Architect Mayberry and Parker Builder M. N. Yeaberg
- 17. Historic attributes (with number from list) 08- Industrial building

**SIGNIFICANCE AND EVALUATION**

- 18. Context for evaluation: Theme Citrus Industry Area San Dimas  
 Period 1887-1940 Property Type Packing house Context formally developed? no

\*19. Briefly discuss the property's importance within the context. Use historical and architectural analysis as appropriate. Compare with similar properties.

This building was constructed in 1911 as part of the Lemon Association's Packing House operation. The Sanborn Map describes the building's use as "sweat rooms." The building's basement was used to store the fruit until it was shipped out by rail. Surrounding the building are various platforms and tracks that were once a part of the citrus packing operation. This building is significant for the role it played in the processing of lemons before they were shipped out by rail.

20. Sources

- Assessor's Map Book, #113, 1902-10
- Sanborn Maps, 1910-1925
- The Los Angeles Builder and Contractor, 9/7/11

21. Applicable National Register criteria A

22. Other recognition \_\_\_\_\_

State Landmark No. (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

23. Evaluator Judith P. Triem

Date of evaluation 7/12/91

24. Survey type Comprehensive

25. Survey name San Dimas Historic Resources Survey

\*26. Year form prepared 1991

By (name) Judith P. Triem

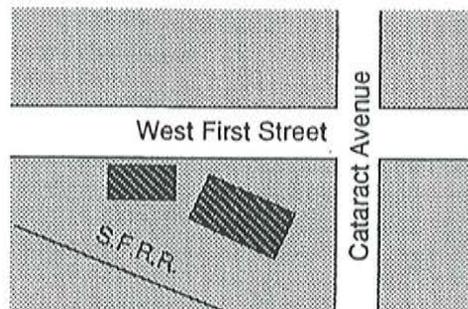
Organization City of San Dimas

Address 245 E. Bonita Avenue

City & Zip San Dimas 91773

Phone (714) 599-6713

\* Sketch map. Show location and boundaries of property in relation to nearby streets, railways, natural landmarks, etc. Name each feature.



- E: Designate Foothill Boulevard as a professional office corridor.
- F: The Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College area is recommended to remain an open space land use category.
- G: The SP-5 is a "major entry window" to the community. Include the AP zone area north of Calle Rosa into Specific Plan 5; this would visually leave the north face of the hill visible going southbound on San Dimas Avenue towards Via Verde Drive in open space.
- H: Designate the parcel at Foothill Blvd. and Amelia Avenue (Southeast corner) medium density residential.
- I: Designate the Way Hill area (SP-3) as Single Family Estate Very Low with 1 acre minimum lot size.
- J: Retain the area north of Gladstone Street as equestrian/residential with a minimum 16,000 square foot lots.
- K: Designate the historic San Dimas Lemon Packing House for historic adaptive reuse by revitalizing the existing packing house for either office or combination of commercial and retail (mixed use). Integrate a light rail transit station stop as part of the development.
- L: Town Core Residential: Designate this area as single family low density residential.
- M: Designate the Pioneer Park neighborhood as single family residential.

### Historical Preservation

The Historical Society has been actively documenting historic resources within the City. The Historical Society has identified a number of structures within the City that have both State and local significance.

The City has contracted with a historic consultant to develop a historical element of the general plan. The historic element will identify and document the significant resources within the City. These resources will include buildings and sites. The historic element will develop a set of goals, objectives, policies, and implementation plan to retain and preserve the City's historic resources. Agricultural heritage opportunities include the preservation of the packing house, farm structures, and a citrus grove.

### Community Services

The City and other governmental agencies offer the citizens of San Dimas community services. These services are summarized in the paragraphs below, they include:

- Child Care
- Law Enforcement, Fire Protection
- Utilities, yards and substations
- Senior Citizens Services/Housing
- Hospitals
- Schools

RIDING ACADEMY  
PRECISE PLAN

The City Manager presented the precise plan for a riding academy at 734 West Arrow Highway, which was held over from the meeting of November 8 at the request of the applicant. Although the City had requested additional maps and plans, the only supplementary material which was submitted was a letter from the applicant, which the City Manager read in full.

Councilman Harbin pointed out that although the applicants emphasize that the precise plan is for a temporary use only until the freeway is constructed, it is possible that the freeway could be realigned or delayed and anything that goes in on a temporary basis could stay for years. The City Manager also advised that activity has been observed on the property in violation of instructions from the City, and that on November 9 a stern warning was issued that no construction or move-in of lumber, etc., may take place while the matter of the precise plan is pending before the City Council. Mayor Plummer stressed that if the requested use is to be permitted, it should be a very high class operation which would be a credit to one of the leading entrances to the City.

Following the discussion, it was moved by Councilman Harbin, seconded by Councilman Rouse, that the precise plan be returned to the applicant along with a list of the suggestions for upgrading the plan which has been prepared by the City staff; and that the applicant bring before the City Council a revised precise plan for its consideration. Motion carried unanimously.

MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT CO.  
PRECISE PLAN  
APPROVED

Mayor Plummer requested a review of all the points covered in the precise plan for the property located at 115 N. Cataract. The City Manager presented the map and the letter submitted by the Machinery & Equipment Company. He reported that only the outside area and building No. 7 will be used now, as clearances have not been received from the Fire and Building Departments to use the other buildings. Mr. Stanley Levin, Area Sales Manager for Machinery & Equipment Company, concurred in the City Manager's presentation.

The type of fence to be constructed was discussed at length. Mr. Levin advised that Mr. Firstenberg had given further thought to the agreement he had made at the Adjourned City Council meeting of November 15 to erect a solid wood fence 8 feet high on all sides of the property. He stated that such a fence would probably be written and drawn on extensively, and that some other type of fence would, in his opinion, be more attractive and more desirable.

Mayor Plummer stressed the fact that this prime industrial property should be used to the best advantage for the City of San Dimas, rather than being a liability. In checking

PRECISE PLAN (CONTINUED)

with the State Board of Equalization, he has been advised that in order for San Dimas to receive sales tax from sales generated in this area, it will be necessary for the invoicing to be done from this office.

Councilman Clauthier moved to approve the precise plan application with the conditions suggested by the Planning Commission, with the following added conditions:

1. That a suitable fence 7 feet high be erected around the property.
2. No storage will be permitted on the triangular corner at the front.
3. That landscaping acceptable to the Planning Commission be planted between the street and fence on all sides, and continually maintained.
4. That the buildings be painted as indicated in Mr. Firstenberg's letter.
5. That appropriate treatment for dust control be applied.

The motion was also made with the understanding that while inappropriate to attach it as a condition of precise plan approval, appropriate application for retaining the local sales tax would be made by the applicant. Councilman Adams seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by record vote.

ZONE CASE NO. 42  
SE CORNER BASELINE ROAD  
& SAN DIMAS AVENUE

It was moved by Councilman Harbin, seconded by Councilman Rouse, to set a public hearing date of December 13, 1965, 7:30 P.M., for Zone Case No. 42. This is an application by Mrs. Vera Dunning for a change of zone from R-3 to C-2 for property at the southeast corner of Baseline Road and San Dimas Avenue. Motion carried unanimously.

TRACT NO. 23717  
APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE  
TRACT MAP

At its meeting of September 13, 1965, the City Council approved the tentative map for Tract No. 23717, with the condition that such approval was contingent upon receipt of a favorable geology report from the County Geologist. The City Manager advised that such a report has been received.

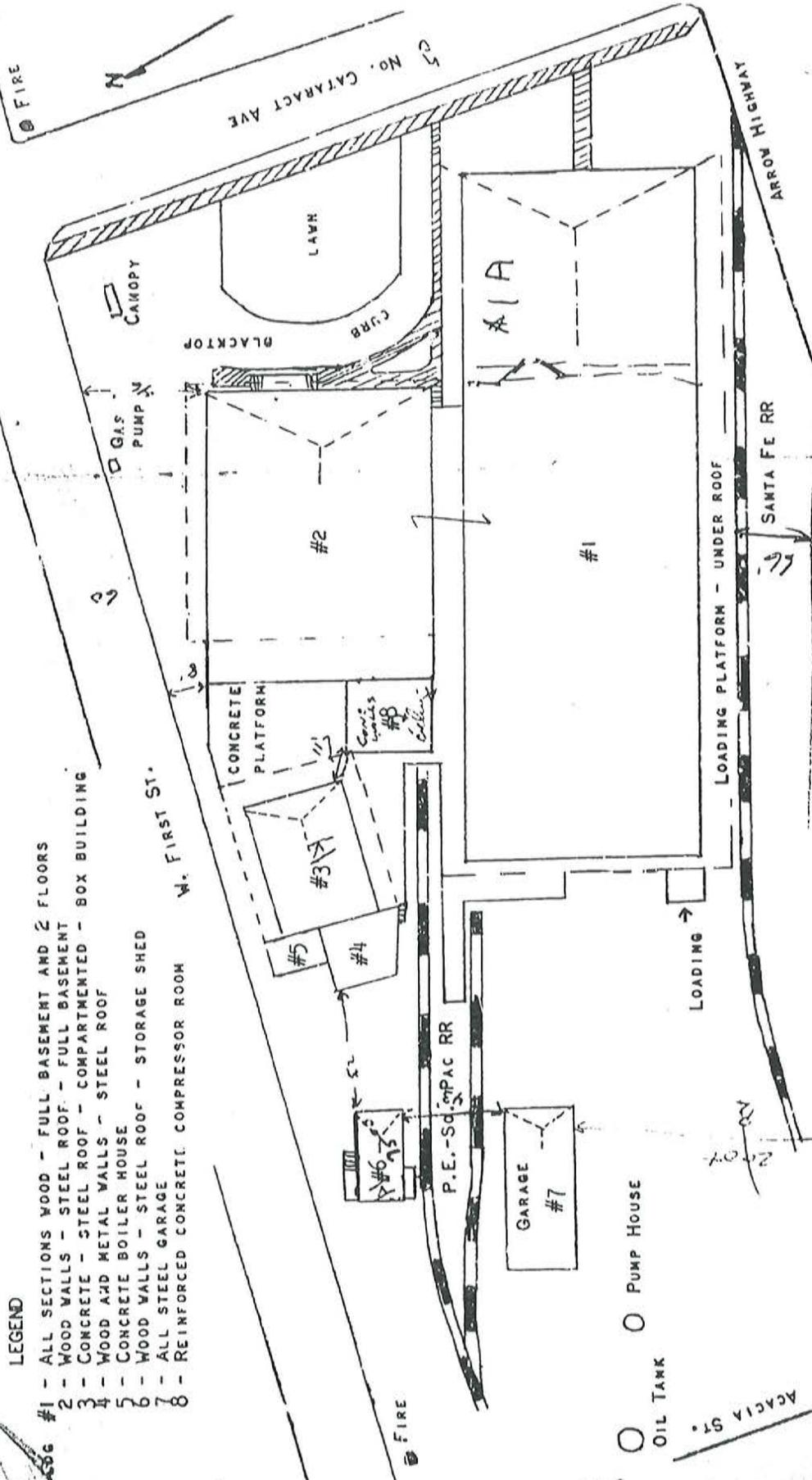
It was moved by Councilman Rouse, seconded by Councilman Harbin, to approve the tentative map for Tract No. 23717, subject to all of the conditions which have previously been attached, and subject to the findings of the County Geologist in his report dated October 8, 1965. Motion carried unanimously by record vote.

RECESS

Mayor Plummer recessed the meeting from 9:40 to 9:50 P.M. When the meeting was reconvened, all members of the City Council were present.

ZONE EXCEPTION CASE  
NO. 40  
TIME EXTENSION

It was moved by Councilman Adams, seconded by Councilman Harbin, to approve a one-year time extension for two subdivision signs advertising the Eaglecliff tract, as recommended by the Planning Commission at its meeting of November 16, 1965. Motion carried unanimously.



**LEGEND**

- #1 - ALL SECTIONS WOOD - FULL BASEMENT AND 2 FLOORS
- #2 - WOOD WALLS - STEEL ROOF - FULL BASEMENT
- #3 - CONCRETE - STEEL ROOF - COMPARTMENTED - BOX BUILDING
- #4 - WOOD AND METAL WALLS - STEEL ROOF
- #5 - CONCRETE BOILER HOUSE
- #6 - WOOD WALLS - STEEL ROOF - STORAGE SHED
- #7 - ALL STEEL GARAGE
- #8 - REINFORCED CONCRETE COMPRESSOR ROOM

**IMPROVEMENTS: SEE MAP.....**

LARGEST BUILDING IS 300 FEET X 100 FEET, TWO FLOORS PLUS FULL BASEMENT. TOTAL FLOOR AREA 90,000 SQUARE FEET. ADJOINING BUILDING 125 FEET X 100 FEET, MAIN FLOOR AND FULL BASEMENT. TOTAL FLOOR AREA 25,000 SQUARE FEET. THE MAIN FLOOR AND BASEMENT OF THESE TWO BUILDINGS ARE UNDER ONE ROOF AND ARE CONNECTED. 72,000 SQUARE FEET OF THEIR AREA IS INSULATED AND UNDER MODIFIED REFRIGERATION AND HUMIDITY CONTROL REFRIGERATION IS COMPLETELY AUTOMATIC, AIR WASHER AND FORCED AIR DESIGN. HEAT EXCHANGERS AND COMPRESSOR UNITS IN FIREPROOF BUILDING REFRIGERATED STORAGE SPACE CAN BE SUBLET.

**OFFICE:**

1,600 SQUARE FEET INCLUDING A LARGE, TWO STORY FIRE-PROOF VAULT WITH BUILT IN SHELVES, FILE CABINETS AND DRAWERS SOME WITH SEPARATE LOCKS. SIX HOUR FIRE-PROOF DOOR.

**OUTBUILDINGS:**

GARAGE - 70 FEET X 30 FEET - ALL STEEL WITH CONCRETE FLOOR AND FULL WIDTH AMPLE HEIGHT DOORS AT EACH END  
 STORAGE SHED - 40 FEET X 20 FEET - RAIL AND TRUCK LOADING PLATFORMS - STEEL ROOF. HEAVY FLOOR.

**BOILER:**

FIFTEEN HORSE-POWER CLEAVER BROOKS, AUTOMATIC CONTROL BURNS EITHER GAS OR OIL.

**ELEVATORS:**

TWO, OTIS HYDRAULIC, EACH OF 2,000 POUNDS CAPACITY.

**SHIPPING FACILITIES:**

TWO TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROADS SERVE THE PROPERTY. P.E.-SOUTHERN PACIFIC, AND SANTA FE. TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY FEET (250 FEET) OF DOOR FOR EACH RAILROAD WITH SEPARATE SIDINGS. ALL BUILDINGS EXCEPT GARAGE HAVE AMPLE RAIL AND TRUCK DOCKING AREAS. 11/11/60

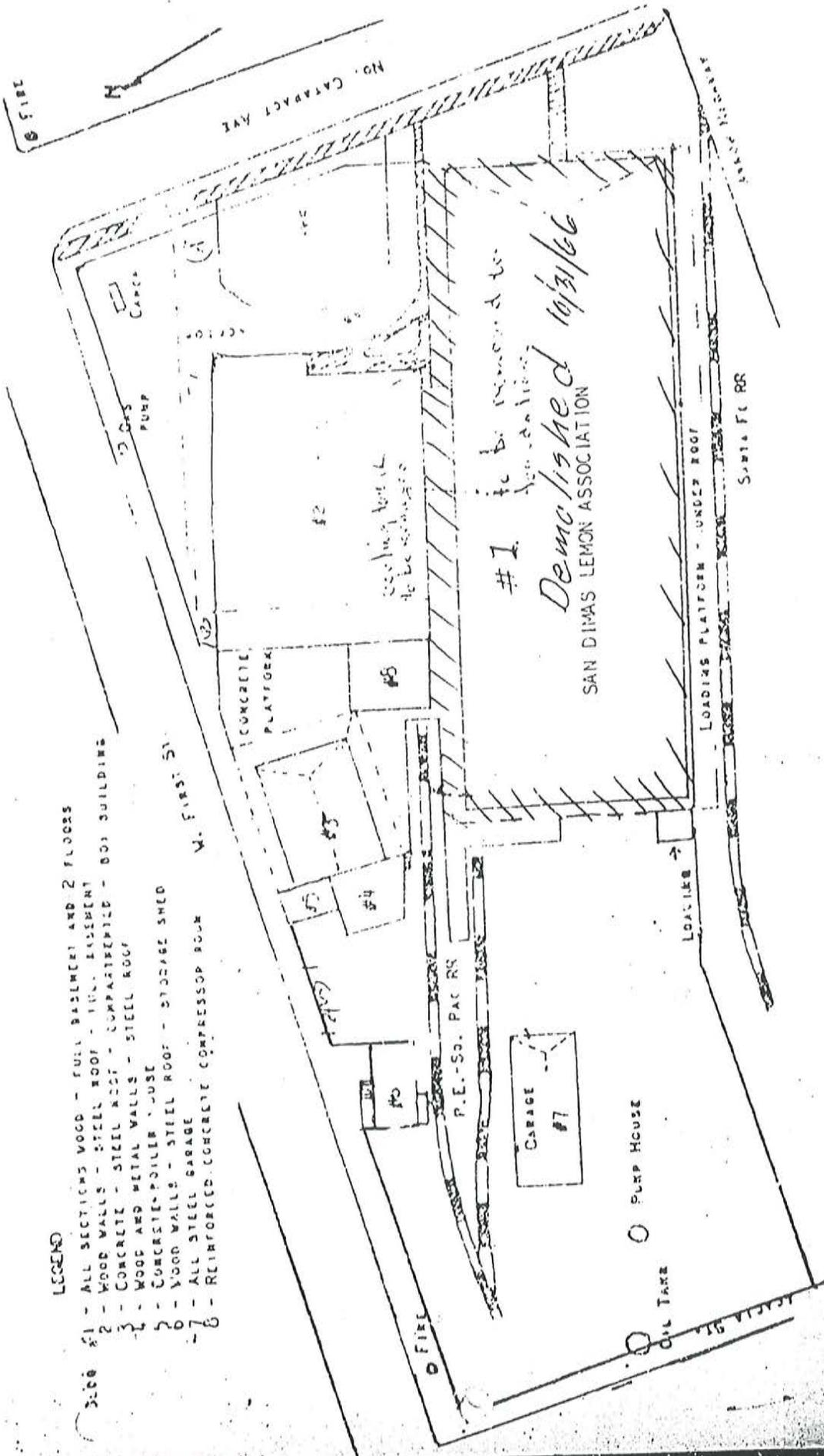
East of Monroe-Love Ave  
 Arrow Hwy  
 Charter Oak, Calif

ED. 5-4403 - ED. 5-9515 - LY. 9-1594 - Res ED. 2-1216

POST OFFICE BOX 507  
 Charter Oak, Calif.

LEGEND

- 1 - ALL SECTIONS WOOD - FULL BASEMENT AND 2 FLOORS
- 2 - WOOD WALLS - STEEL ROOF - FULL BASEMENT
- 3 - CONCRETE - STEEL ROOF - COMPARTMENTED - BOSS BUILDING
- 4 - WOOD AND METAL WALLS - STEEL ROOF
- 5 - CONCRETE-POILER - JOSE
- 6 - WOOD WALLS - STEEL ROOF - STORAGE SHED
- 7 - ALL STEEL GARAGE
- 8 - REINFORCED CONCRETE COMPRESSOR ROOM



# San Dimas History

## 1. Introduction/Project Description

The purpose of this report is to determine if adverse impacts on historic resources may result from the demolition of two masonry buildings located at 201-203 West Bonita Avenue and 205-209 West Bonita Avenue in the City of San Dimas and their replacement with a building utilizing similar materials and scale. (Figure 1)

This report, prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will discuss the general historical context of the area, relevant historical themes, the significance of the resources, and analyze what adverse impacts on historic resources, if any, will occur as a result of the project. This report was prepared in June 1995 by San Buenaventura Research Associates of Santa Paula, California. The Principal Investigator was Judith Triem; the principal author and field investigator was Mitch Stone, Preservation Planner. Assistance in the preparation of this report was provided by the San Dimas Historical Society, City of San Dimas staff and John Sorcinelli, RIBA, architect.

## 2. Summary of Findings

Of the two buildings evaluated, one (201-203 West Bonita Avenue) was listed as historically significant on the San Dimas Historic Resources Survey, conducted in 1991. The second building (205-209 West Bonita Avenue) has been considerably altered from its historical appearance and was not included in this survey. Because one of the buildings proposed for demolition is considered to be an historical resource, as defined by CEQA, this project should be regarded as having a potentially adverse impact on the environment. This impact can be reduced to levels of insignificance through the application of the mitigation measures described in Section 10 of this report.

## 3. General Historical Context

The original townsite of San Dimas was surveyed and recorded in 1887 by the San Jose Ranch Company, a group of investors headed by M. L. Wicks. The town was laid out adjacent to the Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way, which entered the valley in 1886-87. The townsite, platted in a typical frontier gridiron pattern, was bounded by Gladstone Street on the north; Cienega Avenue on the south; Walnut Avenue on the east and Eucalyptus (Eucla) Street on the west. The blocks are roughly equal in size, with 24 lots on each block, 12 lots on each street, with lots measuring 50 by 140 feet separated by alleys. Near the top of the hill to the north, between Gladstone Avenue and Fifth Street, 200 by 760 foot lots were platted. Outside the town proper, lots were divided into five acre parcels, and beyond this the lots were divided into twenty acre parcels. The commercial district along Bonita Avenue was platted to take advantage of the railroad, the lifeblood of the boomtowns of the 1880s.

The layout of the townsite suggests that the investors conceived of a central residential area with the railroad bisecting the center of town, and hillside lots envisioned for larger homes. The five and twenty acre parcels anticipated the expansion of agriculture activities, which had already begun in the 1870s with grain farming and some small scale citrus orchards. Citrus began to be planted in ten, fifteen and twenty-acre orchards around San Dimas in 1888. D.C. Teague set out the first orchard in San Dimas in 1888 at the northwest corner of Walnut and Cienega Avenue. Others quickly followed.

A prolonged controversy over water rights to San Dimas Canyon and the ensuing legal battles, coupled with several dry years, slowed the sale of lots in the newly formed town. Subsequent to the construction of the Santa Fe Depot and the San Dimas Hotel in 1887-88, only a handful of buildings were constructed in the new town. By 1894, fewer than twelve buildings were located in the townsite, including a few houses moved in from the failed townsite of La Verne. A planing mill was established in the late 1880s by the San Jose Ranch Company to cut the lumber brought by rail from Northern California and Oregon. The decade of the 1890s saw continuous squabbles over water rights coupled

with exploration for other water sources. Wells were developed that eventually resulted in dependable supplies.

The Teague Family shipped the first citrus from San Dimas in 1892. The arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1895 provided an additional outlet for ranchers. In 1900, San Dimas orange and lemon growers formed the San Dimas Citrus Union and constructed a packing house north of the railroad tracks west of San Dimas Avenue. The growth of the citrus industry in San Dimas resulted in the construction of what has been called the "World's Largest Lemon Packing House," built in 1908 on First Street and Cataract Avenue.

R.M. Teague's San Dimas citrus nursery operation was said to be the largest of its kind in the world. He set out the first ten-thousand trees in 1889, and by 1911 shipped about eighty-thousand orange trees and fifty-thousand lemon trees annually to all parts of the world. The company employed over one hundred men and the business amounted to over one-hundred thousand dollars annually in 1911. The San Dimas Exchange was formed in 1912 to handle the large volume of citrus. The business office was located in the San Dimas Bank building on Bonita Avenue. The adjacent alley became known as Exchange Place.

The first decade of the 1900s had seen dramatic growth for the small community of San Dimas, and by 1911 the population of San Dimas and the surrounding area stood at 2,500. This growth was reflected in the large number of houses, churches and businesses constructed to meet the demands of the growing citrus industry and population. Despite the slowdown from the freeze of 1913, the town continued to grow with many new houses being constructed between 1912 and 1914. During the war years, building slowed, but picked up again in the mid-1920s. The Pacific Electric Railway came to San Dimas in 1910, bringing easy and quick passenger service to Los Angeles and other communities.

The San Dimas population growth rates followed the pattern set by the balance of Southern California, with a population boom during the 1920s, a slackening off during the Depression and World War II, then a return to a more rapid growth following World War II. In 1963 the San Dimas Lemon Association, the last packing house to remain in business, closed its doors. The orchards had been replaced by housing tracts, shopping centers and industrial parks. The construction of the freeway systems removed a large amount of citrus acreage including farm houses and outbuildings. By 1991, the last vestiges of the citrus orchards were removed when the historic Johnstone Ranch on San Dimas Avenue was demolished.

Today the original townsite retains a large number of significant resources representing the historic community that became one of the most important citrus communities in Southern California. The Santa Fe Depot, the San Dimas Hotel, the lemon packing house and numerous residences and businesses still remain. This historic town core represents a microcosm of the once flourishing citrus industry.

#### 4. Site-Specific Developmental History

##### *201-203 West Bonita Avenue*

The building historically known as the Sipple Block is located on a 140 by 50 foot lot the northwestern corner of West Bonita Avenue and North Monte Vista Street. This building's primary historical association is as the location of the San Dimas Post Office, as well as the home of a wide variety of other commercial uses.

County of Los Angeles Assessor's records suggest a small improvement was present on the parcel as early as 1902, when it was owned by John Crane (either J.N. Crane or his son, J. Wesley Crane) of San Dimas. This improvement probably represented the tiny, 15 by 18 foot, one-story wood frame

People swarmed into Southern California from all over the United States and Europe with the opening of the transcontinental rail lines. The great ranchos and Spanish-Mexican pastoral economy were gradually replaced by a vine and citrus culture. Fortunes were made and lost; some newcomers were sold desert lots by unscrupulous "Escrow Indians" who tied oranges on Joshua trees.

The first settlers attempted to grow the crops they were familiar with (wheat, barley, hay) with mixed results due to the erratic rainfall. Seventeen wells were dug around Mud Springs and several more at the mouth of San Dimas Canyon. When citrus proved to be successful in Southern California, San Dimas and many other communities along the rail lines began to prosper. For many years, San Dimas boasted a 'frost-free' climate, and R.M. Teague established the world's largest citrus nursery, shipping seedling trees to all parts of the world.

In 1908, San Dimas also boasted the largest packing plant in the world, and the San Dimas Lemon Association was responsible for many innovations. These innovations included the first moving packing belt and the first refrigerated curing rooms. The San Dimas Lemon Association was also the first to print "Sunkist" on lemons and

the first to pay the growers as the fruit was brought to the packing house instead of as it was sold.

In 1894, the town had already reached a population of 150, about half of them teenage children or younger. This figure was recorded by an early historian, Mrs. Genevieve Walker, upon her arrival in San Dimas with her husband Harry. Mrs. Walker also recorded the building stock of 1894 San Dimas: 32 two-story houses and cottages, two 'shacks,' a school, a planing mill (vacant), the Santa Fe station, and four business buildings.

The present 'Mansion at San Dimas' is on the National Register of Historic Places, and is the last remaining hotel built on the Santa Fe line between Pasadena and San Bernardino. It was preserved because it was purchased by the J. W. Walker family in 1889, and has since been home to six generations of that family. It is still in descendants' possession and is a beloved landmark.

Since the early years of this century, there have been several attempts made to incorporate. But the Board of Trade, later the Chamber of Commerce, did so well at liaison with the LA County Board of Supervisors (the governing body) that incorporation was not felt to be necessary. However, in the late 1950s, as surrounding cities began annexing areas felt to be in San Dimas'

"sphere of influence," our citizens became sufficiently alarmed to vote for incorporation. This went into effect August 4, 1960.

The present character of San Dimas' historic downtown was determined to a large extent by the introduction of the "Frontier Village" concept in the early 1970s. Frederic Blitstein, then a student at Claremont Graduate School, was instrumental in planning the "Western Village" concept for the downtown core area along Bonita Avenue, from San Dimas Avenue westward to the Santa Fe tracks. This was an attempt to preserve the past for the future, and has kept the downtown core attractive and alive.

Our growth has been steady and orderly. We have been fortunate in our councilmen, city managers, and citizens. Our Civic Center, recreational facilities, comfortable homes, and commercial growth attest to this.

Martha Glauthier  
Secretary and past president of  
the San Dimas Historical Society

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## THE LEMON HOUSE

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### *San Dimas Historical Society*

A lemon packer was an extremely skilled worker. Most of them were women, who had learned their craft as their daughters were learning - by stopping in the packing house after school and helping their mothers. The packer had to know by look and feel whether the lemon went in a box that would contain 638 lemons, or 490, or any of the 9 sizes, up to a box containing only 210 large lemons. The lemon was taken out of a field box, or off a conveyor belt, wrapped in yellow tissue paper (which had the Sunkist logo and a recipe for lemon pie printed on it) and placed in the correct box.

The San Dimas Lemon Association was incorporated in 1900 by James A. Johnstone and E. M. Wheeler of San Dimas, L. C. Meredith of Lordsburg, C. B. Sumner of Claremont, and E. J. Fleming of Pomona. It first operated on San Dimas Avenue just north of the Santa Fe track. In 1908 a new packing house was built at Bonita and Cataract, where the Machinery & Equipment Co. is now located.



The packing house was cooperatively owned by the growers and did everything. It supplied labor to harvest the fruit, processed the fruit, shipped it, and sold it. The Lemon House owned the trucks, and supplies — fertilizer, pest-control materials, orchard heating oil.

The packing house was financed by charging a fixed amount to pack each box. Records were kept of the lot number, how much fruit was good, medium, or poor quality. At the end of the year, since it was a cooperative, rebates were sent to members if there was any profit. There were only four managers during the 63 years of the Lemon House's operation: Frank Harwood, George W. Hosford, T. Roe Hobbs, and William Temple.

The pickers were varied. A group of about 15 Japanese men riding bicycles, each with a ladder over his shoulder, were the first pickers that Mr. Temple remembers coming to his father's grove in Covina. There were 2 Filipino camps in San Dimas, containing about 140 workers.

Each camp was operated by a "Boss", and the Filipinos were considered to be hard workers and honest. One of the camp managers was a well-known gentleman, Mr. E. J. Amplayo. Mr. Amplayo graduated from Bonita High School, and had perfected the most elegant style of handwriting in town.

There were Mexican nationals who worked as pickers, and brought their families. For them, the Lemon and Orange Houses jointly built in 1922, what was known as the Mexican Colony — 36 small homes at the southwest corner of Bonita and



Amelia. There were Hindus from India and Jamaican pickers. During World War II, German and Italian prisoners housed at the County Fairgrounds in Pomona helped pick the fruit.

In its heyday of the 1920's, the San Dimas Lemon Association was the largest packing house in the world, picking 525,000 boxes of fruit in a peak year. It had many firsts - for many years, it had the tallest Flag Pole in Los Angeles County - 60 feet tall. It had a very large "SAN DIMAS" sign on the roof for the guidance of the early airmail pilots. Ours was the first lemon packing house to have full refrigerated storage. The first building was built over a wash, so that the large doors at each end could be opened at night to let the cool air flow through. Later, big blocks of ice were used with fans to cool the fruit. Then a compressor was developed which used ammonia as a refrigerant. San Dimas made "tons" of money the first couple of years after this was put into use, until other packing houses could copy the compressor. Incentive wages were introduced here, both in the packing house and in the field, and were most effective. However, this later had to be changed, and productivity went down to that of the slowest worker.

The San Dimas Lemon House was the first to have automatic box-making machines, the second to have a moving conveyor belt. We started the stamping of lemons with the word "Sunkist." It was first said that lemons were too small for this, but after it was pointed out that "Diamond" could be stamped on walnuts, "Sunkist" was stamped on our lemons!

Because of these innovations, and the last manager, Bill Temple's excellent leadership, ours was the last packing house in the area to close. Most of the building was dismantled and sold to someone in Mexico. Fortunately, the San Dimas Historical Society has acquired many of the old account books and records.

## Historic Packing Houses and Other Industrial Structures in Southern California

### Virtual Tour of Los Angeles County: San Dimas

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#### San Dimas (ATSF, PE)

San Dimas is located on the Santa Fe's Second District line serving Los Angeles to San Bernardino along the foothills. The San Jose Land Co. created San Dimas in 1887 when the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley Railroad (later the Santa Fe) laid its tracks through the area. As in other communities lemon and orange citrus groves soon covered the area.

The San Dimas Lemon Association was incorporated in 1900 and built a packing house at the SW corner of Bonita and San Dimas Avenue north of the Santa Fe tracks. In 1908 it was renamed the San Dimas Orange Growers Ass'n packing house when a new lemon packing house was built on the NW corner of Bonita and Cataract Ave., also north of the Santa Fe mainline. An image and story of this lemon packing house can be found on the [San Dimas history website](#) along with a story of the [San Dimas Citrus Industry](#).

Several parts of this packing house remain in use today as a mechanical repair facility. The packing house consisted of three structures, including a 100' by 300' packing building located next to the ATSF siding. This structure has been torn down and a smaller building erected for the repair company. The other two buildings are from the original packing house. One was for sorting and grading lemons and the other box making and storage of processed fruit. The first of these two is shown in the photo below.



William Messecar Photo

The other building is shown in two views ([Photo-WM](#)) ([Photo-WM](#)). All were taken from W. First Street on the north side of the property.

The Pacific Electric arrived in the early 1920s and the Randolph Marketing Co. packing house was built on the PE mainline west of Cataract Ave. The PE depot itself was located on the SW corner of N. San Dimas Ave. and W. Fourth St.

By 1925 a new and larger orange PH had been built on the NW corner of W. Bonita and Acacia on the south side of the ATSF mainline. The former orange packing house in San Dimas had been sold and renamed the Exchange Orange Products Co. producing marmalade. A new packing house - the Stewart Fruit Co. - was built across from the ATSF depot at W. Bonita and N. Depot. This packing house burned to the ground in 1933 and consumed the depot in the process (see the [San Dimas history website](#)).

A new stucco [depot](#) was built in 1934 and remained in use until closed in 1967. The depot has been preserved as a railroad and local history museum.

By 1930 only two packing houses remained in operation as the San Dimas Lemon Ass'n and San Dimas Orange Growers Ass'n. A good overall view looking west down Bonita Ave. can be seen in an [aerial view](#) taken in the 1920s.

The Santa Fe reported their packing houses shipped 481 cars of citrus in 1943 from San Dimas and 438 cars in 1944.

The last packing house was closed and dismantled in 1963, brought on by declining citrus quality and urban development.

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