

Historic Resources Report 335 S. Briggs Road, Santa Paula

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Executive Summary

This report was prepared for the purpose of assisting the County of Ventura in their compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as it relates to historic resources, in connection on a 13.0 acre property located at 335 S. Briggs Road, in an unincorporated section of Ventura County (APNs 096-0-030-135 and -145). The property is the location of a seed production facility owned by the Ball Horticultural Company of West Chicago, IL, and operated by their PanAmerican Seed Company subsidiary. [Figure 1]

This report assesses the historical and architectural significance of potentially significant historic properties in accordance with the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) Criteria for Evaluation, and County of Ventura criteria.

This report was prepared by San Buenaventura Research Associates of Santa Paula, California, Judy Triem, Historian; and Mitch Stone, Preservation Planner, for Harris Architecture, and is based on a field investigation and research conducted in April and May 2019.

San Buenaventura Research Associates provides qualified Historian and Architectural Historian services, in accordance with *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications* (36 CFR 61). The conclusions contained herein represent the professional opinions of San Buenaventura Research Associates, and are based on the factual data available at the time of its preparation, the application of the appropriate local, state and federal regulations, and best professional practices.

Summary of Findings

This property does not appear to be eligible for listing on the NRHP or the CRHR. Two buildings were found to be potentially eligible for designation as County of Ventura Landmarks.

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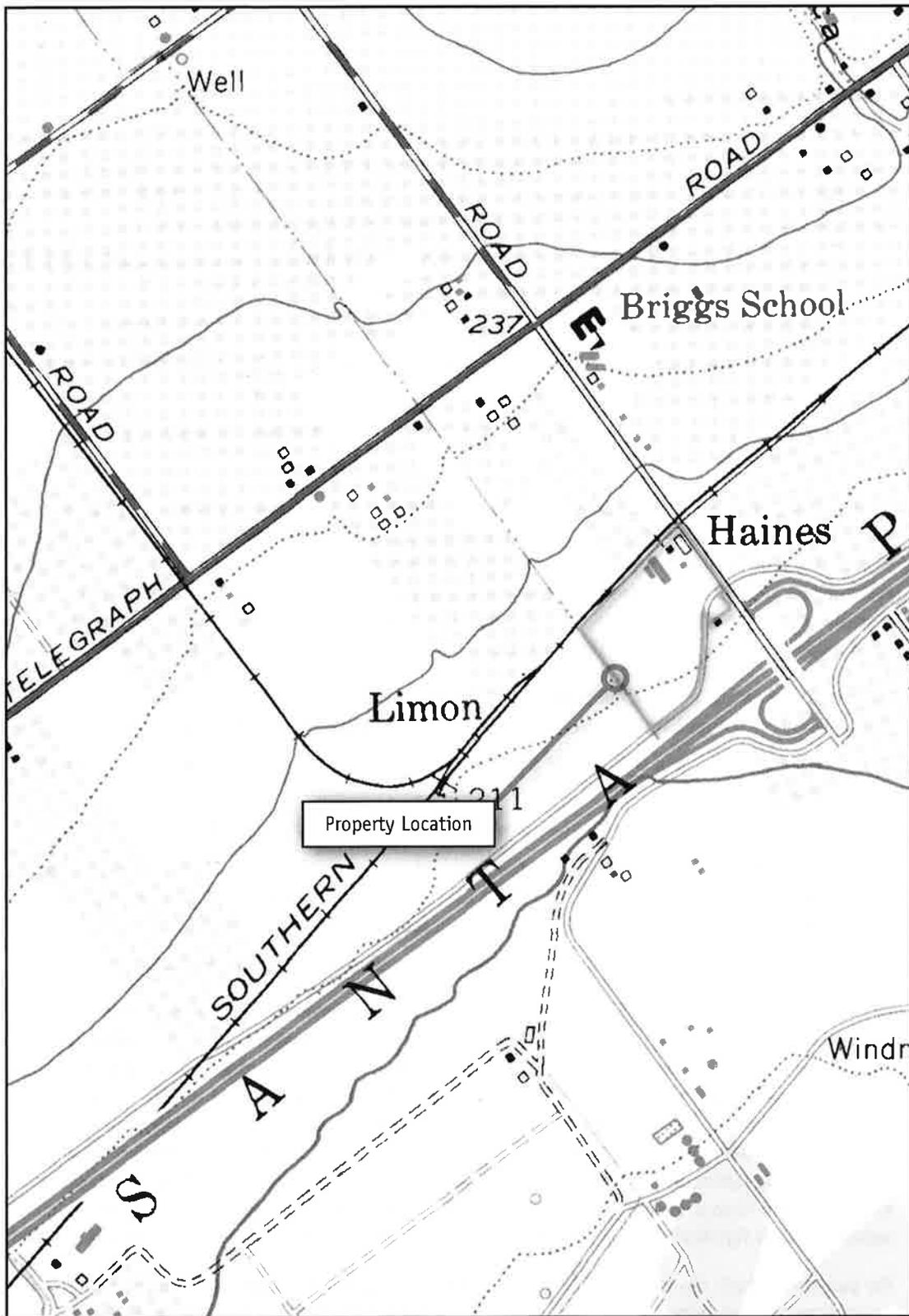


Figure 1. Property Location [Source: USGS 7.5' Quadrangle, Santa Paula CA, 1951, rev. 1967]

1. Administrative Setting

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires evaluation of project impacts on historic resources, including properties “listed in, or determined eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources [or] included in a local register of historical resources.” A resource is eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources if it meets any of the criteria for listing, which are:

1. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;
2. Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (PRC §5024.1(c))

By definition, the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) also includes all “properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register of Historic Places,” and certain specified State Historical Landmarks. The majority of formal determinations of NRHP eligibility occur when properties are evaluated by the Office of Historic Preservation in connection with federal environmental review procedures (Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966). Formal determinations of eligibility also occur when properties are nominated to the NRHP, but are not listed due to a lack of owner consent.

The criteria for determining eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) have been developed by the National Park Service. Eligible properties include districts, sites, buildings and structures,

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody 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; or
- D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

According to the NRHP standards, in order for a property that is found to be significant under one or more of the criteria to be considered eligible for listing, the “essential physical features” that define the property’s significance must be present. The standard for determining if a property’s essential physical features exist is known as *integrity*, which is defined for the NRHP as “the ability of a property to convey its significance.” The CRHR defines integrity as “the authenticity of a historical resource’s physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance. Historical resources eligible for listing in the California Register must meet one of the criteria of significance described above and retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance.” (National Register Bulletin 15; California OHP Technical Assistance Bulletin 6)

For purposes of both the NRHP and CRHR, an integrity evaluation is broken down into seven “aspects.” The seven aspects of integrity are: *Location* (the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred); *Design* (the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property); *Setting* (the physical environment of a historic property); *Materials* (the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular

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pattern or configuration to form a historic property); *Workmanship* (the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period of history or prehistory); *Feeling* (a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time), and; *Association* (the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property).

It is not required that significant property possess all aspects of integrity to be eligible; depending upon the NRHP and CRHR criteria under which the property derives its significance, some aspects of integrity might be more relevant than others. For example, a property nominated under NRHP Criterion A and CRHR Criterion 1 (events), would be likely to convey its significance primarily through integrity of location, setting and association. A property nominated solely under NRHP Criterion C and CRHR Criterion 3 (design), would usually rely primarily upon integrity of design, materials and workmanship.

While the NRHP guidelines and the CRHR regulations include similar language with respect to the aspects of integrity, the latter guidelines also state "it is possible that historical resources may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but they may still be eligible for listing in the California Register." Further, according to the NRHP guidelines, the integrity of a property must be evaluated at the time the evaluation of eligibility is conducted. Integrity assessments cannot be based on speculation with respect to historic fabric and architectural elements that may exist but are not visible to the evaluator, or on restorations that are theoretically possible but which have not occurred. (National Register Bulletin 15; CCR §4852 (c); California OHP Technical Assistance Bulletin 6)

The minimum age criterion for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) is 50 years. Properties less than 50 years old may be eligible for listing on the NRHP if they can be regarded as "exceptional," as defined by the NRHP procedures, or in terms of the CRHR, "if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance" (Chapter 11, Title 14, §4842(d)(2))

Historic resources as defined by CEQA also includes properties listed in "local registers" of historic properties. A "local register of historic resources" is broadly defined in §5020.1 (k) of the Public Resources Code, as "a list of properties officially designated or recognized as historically significant by a local government pursuant to a local ordinance or resolution." Local registers of historic properties come essentially in two forms: (1) surveys of historic resources conducted by a local agency in accordance with Office of Historic Preservation procedures and standards, adopted by the local agency and maintained as current, and (2) landmarks designated under local ordinances or resolutions. These properties are "presumed to be historically or culturally significant... unless the preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that the resource is not historically or culturally significant." (PRC §§ 5024.1, 21804.1, 15064.5)

Ventura County Landmark Criteria

An improvement, natural feature, or site may become a designated landmark if it meets one the following criteria:

1. It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the County's social, aesthetic, engineering, architectural or natural history;
2. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Ventura County or its cities, regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;

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3. It is associated with the lives of persons important to Ventura County or its cities, California, or national history;
4. It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of Ventura County or its cities, California or the nation;
5. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values;
6. Integrity: Establish the authenticity of the resource's physical identity by evidence of lack of deterioration and significant survival of the characteristics that existed during its period of importance. This shall be evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship.

Ventura County Site of Merit Criteria

Sites of Merit satisfy the following criteria:

1. Sites of historical, architectural, community or aesthetic merit which have not been designated as landmarks or points of interest, but which are deserving of special recognition; and
2. County approved surveyed sites with a National Register status code of 5 or above.

2. Impact Thresholds and Mitigation

According to the Public Resources Code, "a project that may cause a substantial change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment." The Public Resources Code broadly defines a threshold for determining if the impacts of a project on an historic property will be significant and adverse. By definition, a substantial adverse change means, "demolition, destruction, relocation, or alterations," such that the significance of an historical resource would be impaired. For purposes of NRHP eligibility, reductions in a property's integrity (the ability of the property to convey its significance) should be regarded as potentially adverse impacts. (PRC §21084.1, §5020.1(6))

Further, according to the CEQA Guidelines, "an historical resource is materially impaired when a project... [d]emolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources [or] that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or its identification in an historical resources survey meeting the requirements of section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant."

The lead agency is responsible for the identification of "potentially feasible measures to mitigate significant adverse changes in the significance of an historical resource." The specified methodology for determining if impacts are mitigated to less than significant levels are the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (1995), publications of the National Park Service. (CCR §15064.5(b)(3))

3. Historical Setting

W. Atlee Burpee Company

The W. Atlee Burpee Seed Company was founded by its namesake in 1876. Born in 1858 to an established Philadelphia family, both his father and grandfather were physicians, but the younger Burpee from an early age showed far more interest in the new sciences of selective breeding and the hybridization of plants and animals, likely inspired by the recently-published works of Charles Darwin and George Mendel. By his teenage years, Burpee had already published well-received papers on his breeding experiments.¹

Despite being recognized as a youth in the field of selective breeding, particularly in England, his father insisted on him pursuing the family business of medicine, a direction the young man resisted. After dropping out of medical school, Burpee's mother staked his start in a poultry breeding business. He expanded into the breeding of dogs, hogs, sheep, goats, and calves, and quickly branched out to meet the burgeoning demand for farm seed. By the 1880s he was operating a rapidly-growing mail order business in both seed and livestock.

In order to continue expanding his catalog, Burpee collected seeds on annual trips to Europe, many of which he found did not perform well in North American growing conditions. Faced with the problem of adapting these varieties to the needs of his customers, he purchased a farm in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, which was dedicated to the business of plant breeding. As a result of Burpee's singular talent for hybridization, by the 1890s he was operating the world's largest seed company.

Burpee continued to log an extraordinary amount of mileage annually in search of new plant varieties, but he also discovered important cultivars virtually in his own backyard. Among these was the bush lima bean, which was found in a garden in Pennsylvania in 1890. With continued development it was marketed as the Fordhook lima in 1907, a variety still sold today. In 1902 he began selling the first yellow sweet corn, developed from seeds found in Massachusetts.

Initially, farmers buying seed for vegetables were Burpee's primary customers, but the company also catered to home gardeners growing flowers, especially the highly-popular sweet pea. It was the latter in particular that led Burpee to explore locations in coastal Southern California where this variety could be further perfected. In 1909 the company chose Lompoc in Santa Barbara County as their first location in the West, which they called Floradale Farms. While in California, W. Atlee Burpee visited with his cousin, famed plant-breeder Luther Burbank, at his home in Santa Rosa. After Burbank's death in 1926, the rights to his seeds and experiments were purchased by the Burpee company, further deepening their catalog of offerings. By that time the company was being run by David Burpee, son of W. Atlee Burpee, who died in 1915.

Home gardening received an unexpected boost with the U.S. entry into the European war in 1917 when the government encouraged the growing of "war gardens," and the war itself reduced the importing of competing seed from Europe. The Burpee company was perfectly positioned to take advantage of the market opportunity. Under the direction of the second generation, the company also moved more heavily into flower development, especially nasturtiums and marigolds. The latter variety was of special interest to David Burpee, in particular

¹ The W. Atlee Burpee Company history in this report is derived primarily from the company website, found at: <https://www.burpee.com/gardenadvicecenter/get-to-know/the-legacy-of-w.-atlee-burpee/legacy.html>

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the pursuit of an odorless marigold. The long search for this elusive variety finally paid off in 1937. The company had introduced the world's first double nasturtium a few years earlier.

Hybridization methods advanced during the 1940s even as the second wave of wartime gardening swept across the country, with the planting of "Victory Gardens" once again encouraged by the government to support the home front war effort. Unlike the period immediately following World War I, the expected fall-off in home gardening did not occur with the end of the second war, and instead set up the huge growth in home gardening that accompanied suburbanization in the postwar period. The Burpee company, with its deep catalog, solid reputation, and commitment to originating new cultivars was once again well-positioned to take advantage of these developments.

Under the direction of David Burpee, the company aggressively pursued the hybridization of both flowers and vegetables, finding that hybridization could result both in superior plants and novelty, both salable characteristics. One notable product of this period was the Big Boy tomato, the result of the work of vegetable breeder Ovid Shifriss. The variety remains popular today and also served as the antecedent to many other current tomato varieties.

By the end of the war, the W. Atlee Burpee company had become perhaps the world's most recognized name in the home gardening seed market. The seed industry in general was shifting westwards in pursuit of more favorable growing conditions and to better serve their rapidly-expanding Western markets. During this period the company added to their first California operation in Lompoc. The company's growing activities in the Santa Paula area apparently began during the 1930s on contracted land. In 1938 a more permanent presence was established on approximately 60 acres, but the products would need to be shipped elsewhere for processing until the establishment their second research facility at Santa Paula in 1947.²

Throughout this time period Burpee's analog in the agricultural seed market was the George J. Ball Company of Chicago. Serving substantially different customers bases allowed the two companies to establish a close and cooperative relationship from the 1950s onwards. When the W. Atlee Burpee Company was merged into the George J. Ball Company in 1991 it could be seen as the natural evolution of their relationship, particularly in a market that was consolidating from many smaller producers into fewer, larger companies. The pairing would last only a few years before Burpee was spun off again into an independent company. The split left some of Burpee's assets, including the Santa Paula facility, under the ownership of the Ball company, and also resulted in the closure of their original California facility in Lompoc.

Property Specific Context

The first documented visit to Ventura County by officials of the W. Atlee Burpee Seed Company occurred in the summer of 1946, when company president David Burpee, vice-president Joseph F. Simpson, and seed geneticists Oved Shifriss and Howard Peto arrived in Santa Paula in the company airplane as a part of an annual inspection tour of their nationwide operations. The impromptu visit was in response to an invitation from the Santa Paula Chamber of Commerce, which was hoping to persuade the company to establish a facility in Santa Paula.³

² *Santa Paula Chronicle*, 8-6-1953.

³ *Santa Paula Chronicle*, 7-8-1946.

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W. Atlee Burpee III, who at the time was completing his enlistment in the Navy, was also instrumental in orchestrating the visit. The grandson of company founder W. Atlee Burpee and nephew of company president David Burpee had two prior connections to the Central Coast: he had worked at Burpee's flower and vegetable seed research facility, Floradale Farms, in Lompoc prior to the war, and by the summer of 1946 was engaged to a local woman, Charlotte Bates. The couple were married in Ventura less than a month after the company visit.⁴

By that time the Burpee company was already leasing approximately 800 acres in Ventura County for growing seed and to aid in experimentation with the hybridization of cucumbers, eggplant, and tomatoes. A noted feature of this operation was the hiring of Santa Paula High School girls to work in the hand pollination of plants and the removal of flowers. It is likely this effort took place at least partly on land leased from the Outland and Ayers families, ranch owners on Telegraph Road west of Briggs Road and descendants of pioneering rancher George Washington Faulkner. Both families were guests at the Burpee-Bates wedding that summer.⁵

The local campaign, presumably aided immeasurably by insider W. Atlee Burpee III, was successful, resulting in an announcement in early 1947 of the company's decision to establish a new research headquarters in the Santa Paula area. A five-year lease on 85 acres of Outland and Ayers ranch lands to grow flowers and vegetables was also announced, presumably an extension of the previous lease. Management of the operation was placed in the hands of plant breeder Dr. Howard B. Peto. Three more specialists in the field were to join him in their temporary quarters, housed in buildings on the Outland ranch. With Santa Paula now on the official annual tour schedule, company president David Burpee visited to inspect the operation in May 1947.⁶

In early 1948 the company announced their intentions to construct a new, permanent headquarters in Santa Paula in a 40 by 140 foot Quonset building on 15 acres near the Southern Pacific Railroad crossing at Briggs Road leased from Seymour Faulkner. The new building would house the entire local operation, including seed cleaning, offices, warehouse, and photography for seed catalogs. At a cost of \$10,000, it was the largest building to be issued a building permit by the county in that week of February 1948. The steel-framed building was erected by Rice Brothers contractors of Oxnard. By this time W. Atlee Burpee III had joined the operation as assistant manager.⁷

During World War II Quonset huts were manufactured for the military by the tens of thousands in numerous configurations, designed to be deployed for a wide variety of uses, including barracks, hospitals, and general warehousing. They were designed for easy shipping and rapid assembly on military bases both in the United States and in the war theaters. With demobilization at the end of the war in 1945, thousands of surplus stateside Quonset huts were made available for civilian purchase. The most likely origin of this building was the Seabee Base at Port Hueneme, the presumed source of a great many Quonset huts repurposed for commercial, industrial, agricultural, and even residential uses, throughout Ventura County after the war.

⁴ *Santa Paula Chronicle*, 8-9-1946; *Los Angeles Times*, 8-7-1946.

⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, 6-22-1946.

⁶ *Santa Paula Chronicle*: 1-27-1947, 2-4-1947, 5-31-1947.

⁷ *Santa Paula Chronicle*, 2-25-1948; *Oxnard Press-Courier*, 3-2-1948.

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The example constructed for the Burpee Seed Company is likely to have been an extended 40 by 100 foot Quonset, a style sometimes called an "elephant hut," presumably because it was the largest of the configurations made during the war. Manufactured by the Stran-Steel Division of the Great Lakes Steel Corporation of Detroit, they were constructed of steel ribs sheathed on the exterior with corrugated steel panels. Many Quonsets were windowless, but huts built for non-warehouse purposes featured windows, either in openings imposed directly on the curved wall/roof surface or in small dormers. Doors, porches, windows, mezzanines, and other features could be added in the field, as needs dictated.

By the end of 1948 the Burpee Seed Company was engaged in the development of new varieties of onions, beets, and tomatoes through painstaking and labor-intensive cross-breeding. Their new seed cleaning machines, including one reputedly invented by Santa Paula resident Abraham Moreno, were expected to produce 40-50,000 sacks of seed for shipment back to the corporate offices in Pennsylvania in the first full year of operation. The practice of hiring local high school girls during the spring months to assist in the pollination process continued. Annual employment at the plant averaged 200 by the early 1950s, including 30 full-time employees, 100-120 women and 30-35 men seasonally. As many as 120 high school girls were hired for some projects.⁸

In 1950 Howard Peto left Burpee to start his own seed development company, called Petoseed, with partner Vic Hollar. The company was first headquartered in Ventura and later in Saticoy. The partners split their interests in the company in 1953, with Peto retaining the local operations. Howard Broadhurst Peto was born in Manitoba, Canada in 1909 and received his undergraduate degree from the University of Alberta in 1939. After serving in the Canadian Air Force during the war he completed his Ph.D. in agronomy at the University of Minnesota in 1946, after which he joined the Burpee company. It appears he remained in Ventura County until shortly before his death in Bakersfield in 1985. After leaving Burpee in 1950 one source has his former position as production supervisor at Burpee being covered temporarily by Margueretta Warren. No further information was located about her.⁹

Grandson and namesake to company founder W. Atlee Burpee, Washington Atlee "Bill" Burpee III was born in Philadelphia in 1917. He was educated at Cornell University with a presumed future with the company founded by his grandfather, which began in 1938 with his assignment to Floradale Farms in Lompoc. After completing his service in the Navy, Burpee settled in Santa Paula. In addition to his position as assistant manager of the seed plant, he dabbled in real estate, and in 1950 ran (unsuccessfully) for City Council. He returned to Lompoc as manager of Floradale Farms in 1950, then from 1953 to 1956 managed the company's wholesale mail order operations in Riverside. In 1956 he returned to Philadelphia with his appointment as assistant manager of the W. Atlee Burpee Seed Company.¹⁰

The period of the late 1960s through the 1990s was one of reorganization, acquisition, consolidation, and divestment within the seed production industry. Petoseed, Howard Peto's highly successful Burpee spin-off, was acquired by the George J. Ball company of Chicago in 1967, and in 1970, the W. Atlee Burpee Company was sold by president David Burpee to the General Foods Corporation. They sold it to the ITT Corporation in 1979. This large conglomerate, focused mainly on telecommunications, divested the company to private

⁸ *Santa Paula Chronicle*, 9-9-1948, 12-4-1948, 8-6-1953; *Los Angeles Times*, 12-18-1948.

⁹ *Oxnard Press-Courier*, 9-16-1954; *Portland (ME) Press Herald*, 10-25-1950.

¹⁰ *Doylestown (PA) Daily Intelligencer*, 8-20-1958.

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equity investors in 1987, who in turn sold it to the George J. Ball company in 1991. The following year, Burpee's operations in Santa Paula and Lompoc were consolidated in Santa Paula under Ball's PanAmerican Seed Company subsidiary. Thus the various parts of the W. Atlee Burpee Company that were begun in Santa Paula in 1947, including the Petoseed offshoot, were brought together again, if only briefly.¹¹

In 1995 a major corporate reorganization of the venerable George J. Ball Company led to spinning off the W. Atlee Burpee Seed Company as a freestanding company under the ownership of George Ball Jr., the son of the company founder, the divestiture of Petoseed (now owned by Monsanto), and the renaming of the refocused George J. Ball Company as Ball Horticultural. The Santa Paula facility continues to be operated today as part of Ball's PanAmerican Seed subsidiary.

4. Potential Historic Resources

The property consists of a dense cluster of buildings, including offices, sheds, warehouses, laboratory, greenhouses, open fields, and other support buildings on the eastern end of the site associated with the production and development of seeds. According to the Ventura County Assessor, only two of the improvements on the property could be definitely determined to be constructed more than 50 years ago. These earlier buildings will be described in detail below; the more recently-constructed improvements will be listed by name. The numbers preceding the descriptions are keyed to Figure 2.

1. Quonset Hut (1948). This building is rectangular in plan, 40 feet in width, and 140 feet in length on a roughly north-south axis, and features the semicircular wall/roof construction supported by steel ribs clad in corrugated metal that characterizes the type. According to historic plans for this size Quonset, the building height at the top of the arch is 20 feet. Wood-framed bulkhead walls clad with corrugated metal enclose the northern and southern ends of the building. The southern elevation features a centered entry porch above a low concrete stoop covered by a shed roof supported by two wood posts. Two single entry doors are located on the porch, one featuring a single light of glass and the other solid. The porch is flanked by metal sash windows. Two, centered metal sash windows are located above the porch at the interior mezzanine level. A roll-up garage door slightly off-centered is located on the northern elevation. Windows along the eastern and western elevation are a mixture of multi-pane steel sash and aluminum sash imposed on the wall/roof surface. The steel sash windows are likely to be original to the construction and the aluminum either replacements for original windows, or additions. A loading entry on the middle of the western elevation is covered by a shallow shed roof. A single entry door with a single fixed light is located on the eastern elevation. The building appears to be essentially unaltered except for the window changes noted. [Photos 1-5]
2. Warehouse and Office (1982).
3. Research & Development Office and Lab (1974).
4. Shop (1964). This small, single-story utilitarian building features a rectangular plan, a very low-pitched gable roof, and ribbed steel cladding and roof, and awning garage doors on the eastern elevation. It appears to be unaltered. [Photo 6]

¹¹ *Santa Paula Chronicle*, 3-5-1992; *Los Angeles Times*, 12-15-1992; *New York Times*, 3-22-1979; *Chicago Tribune*, 2-27-1991.

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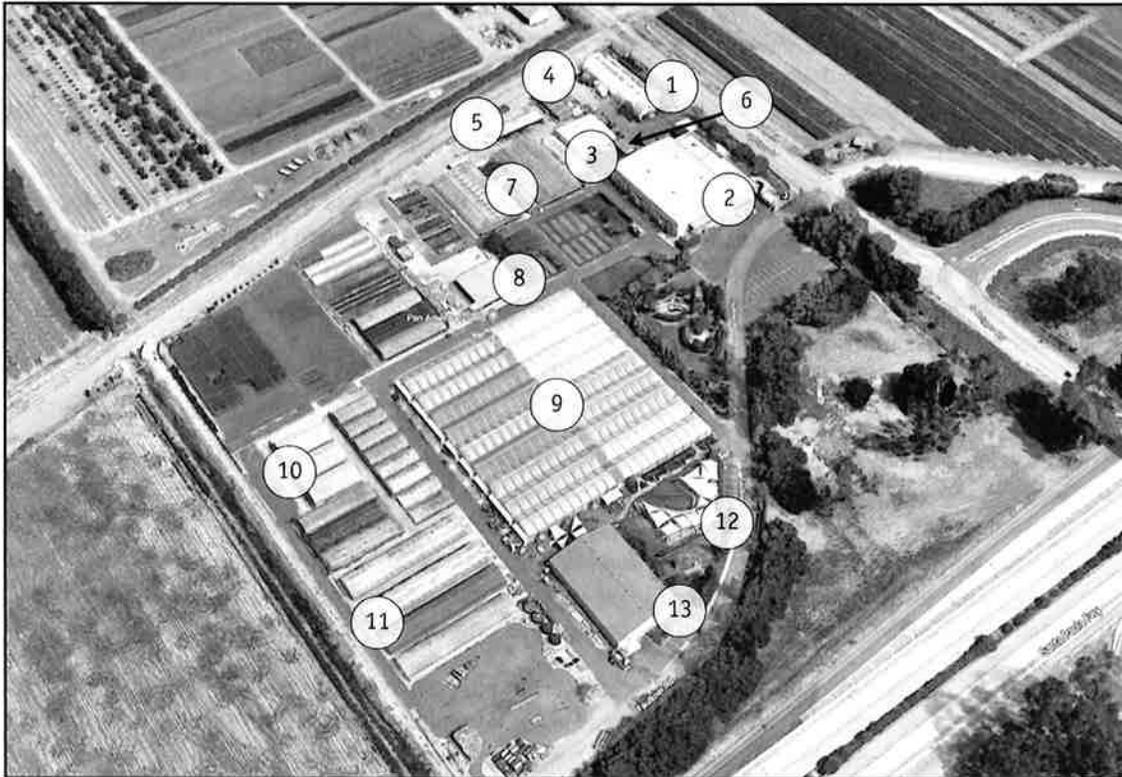


Figure 2. Oblique aerial view, from south. [Source: Google Maps, 2019; annotations by SBRA.]

5. Tractor Shed (1985).
6. Block House (unknown, probably c.1975).
7. Greenhouses (1970s).
8. Wet Seed Building' (1977).
9. Greenhouses (1991-1994).
10. Hoop/Shade Structures (2012).
11. Greenhouses (1998-2005).
12. Shade Pavilions (c. 2010).
13. Head House (1995).

5. Eligibility of Historic Resources

National and California Registers: Significance and Eligibility

NRHP Criterion A and CRHR Criterion 1. This property is closely associated with the theme of agricultural development in Ventura County during the postwar period. The location of the W. Atlee Burpee Seed Company, a national leader in the development of flower and vegetable seeds to the area was pursued vigorously by local interests in 1946. With the successful outcome, the company became a substantial contributor to the local economy through employment, and the Santa Paula area became an active participant in this period of advancement in the seed development industry. The property is also the only known remaining example of the Burpee company's extensive seed research and productions operations in California that began in 1909.

NRHP Criterion B and CRHR Criterion 2. This property does not appear to be associated with any individuals who made significant contributions to the historical development of the area, state or nation. The property is associated with Dr. Howard Peto, a seed geneticist who appears to have made notable contributions to his field. However, his association with the property was brief, ending after two years, when he left Burpee to start a highly successful seed development company of his own. Consequently, it is likely that other properties would be more representative of his productive life and illustrative of his contributions to his field. The property is also associated with W. Atlee Burpee III, the grandson of the company founder, who was instrumental in establishing the new company research facility in Santa Paula, then worked somewhat briefly as its assistant manager before being reassigned elsewhere in the company. His contributions to his field appear to be limited to his role in the establishment of the Santa Paula facility and his later work at the company headquarters in Pennsylvania.

NRHP Criterion C and CRHR Criterion 3. One building on the property may be seen to embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction. The large Quonset hut constructed in 1948 to serve as the Burpee company headquarters, housing its offices, research facility, warehouse and seed cleaning operation for several decades, is an example of the largest building of its type manufactured during World War II. Quonset huts were constructed in massive quantities during the World War II mobilization, however, and were sold off after the war in similarly large numbers for a wide variety of civilian uses, complicating any effort to establish the significance of an individual example. Quonset huts are the product of industrial design for mass production, and do not represent the work of a master or possesses high artistic values. Additional survey and research efforts would be required to substantiate significance under these criteria.

Summary Conclusion. This property is significant under NRHP Criterion A and CRHR 1 for its association with Ventura County agricultural development during the postwar era. An appropriate period of significance for the property would begin with its construction in 1948 and end in 1970, with the sale of the W. Atlee Burpee Company to General Foods.

Integrity Discussion

1. **Location:** The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.

The property retains integrity of location; it has not been moved.

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2. **Design:** The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.

Three buildings on the property from the historic period remain (Quonset hut, shop, and tractor shed) of which the last is substantially altered. The majority of the improvements on the property, including many buildings of substantial scale, bulk and ground coverage were constructed after the period of significance with the associated events. Consequently, integrity of design for the property is substantially reduced. Design integrity is a relatively more important aspect of integrity for properties that are significant under NRHP Criterion C and CRHR Criterion 3.

3. **Setting:** The physical environment of a historic property.

The agricultural setting for the property is largely intact, although the construction of large numbers of new buildings on the property replaced the open fields that would have characterized the property during the period of significance.

4. **Materials:** The physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

The historical pattern and configuration of the property has been reduced due to the introduction of many buildings constructed after the period of significance.

5. **Workmanship:** The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period of history or prehistory.

The property does not represent a particular craft or culture.

6. **Feeling:** A property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

The property's expression of its original use and period is only somewhat intact, due again to the introduction of a large number of buildings on the property after the period of significance.

7. **Association:** The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

Association is a relatively more important aspect of integrity for properties that derive their significance from historic events, and is said to be retained if the property is "the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer." This property conveys much of its integrity of association, as the property continues to be used for its historic purpose.

Summary Conclusion. Due to reduced integrity of design, setting, materials, and feeling, the property does not retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance and historic associations. Consequently, it appears to be ineligible for listing on the NRHP and CRHR under Criterion A and 1.

Ventura County Eligibility

As discussed above, this property exemplifies and reflects the theme of postwar agricultural development in Ventura County (criteria 1 and 2). Also, as above, the property is not associated with the lives of historically significant individuals (criterion 3). The Quonset hut may represent a type, period, or method of construction (criterion 5). The language of the Ventura County Code describes the integrity requirements of a County Landmark in a somewhat different fashion than the NRHP and CRHR. If the buildings on the property that

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were constructed outside the period of significance are excluded from consideration (a methodology not generally accepted for the NRHP or CRHR), then the remaining two (the Quonset hut and shop building) could be regarded as a grouping with sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship to "establish the authenticity of the resource's physical identity" (criterion 6). Criterion 4 refers to archeological resources and consequently is not addressed in this report.

Summary Conclusion. Two buildings on the property (the Quonset hut and Shop building) constructed before 1970 appear to be eligible for designation as a County of Ventura Landmark under criteria 1, 2 and 5.



Photo 1. Quonset hut, southern and western elevations. [4-25-2019]



Photo 2. Quonset hut, western elevations. [4-25-2019]



Photo 3. Quonset hut, western and northern elevations. [4-25-2019]



Photo 4. Quonset hut, northern and eastern elevations. [4-25-2019].



Photo 5. Quonset hut, interior. [4-25-2019]



Photo 6. Shop building, southern and eastern elevations. [5-8-2019]