



C Street Industrial

Historic District Plan

Physical Description & Boundaries

The C Street Industrial Historic District is located along the northern edge of Sacramento's original 1848 street grid and is roughly bounded by 16th Street and Muir Park to the west, the railroad tracks to the north, 19th Street to the east, and C Street to the south. The district incorporates a collection of industrial buildings that were constructed for the California Almond Growers Exchange (now Blue Diamond Growers) and California Packing Company from the early to mid-twentieth century.



Figure 87. The former Calpak No. 11 cannery is now part of the Blue Diamond Growers' complex on C Street.



Figure 88. Industrial and administrative buildings built for the California Almond Growers Exchange (now Blue Diamond Growers) are still in operation along C Street.

Brief Historic Context

The C Street Industrial Historic District preserves a concentration of buildings that have formed the epicenter of an industrial hub located at the intersection of C and 16th streets since the early twentieth century. The intersection attracted industrial development after the turn of the century because of its proximity to several of Sacramento's principal transportation corridors. The railroad tracks of the Southern Pacific Railroad ran along a levee at B Street. Sixteenth Street to the west was the halfway point in the city's original street grid and developed into one of the city's busiest transportation corridors in 1915, when it became part of the Lincoln Highway, the first coast-to-coast road in the country, and later the U.S. Route 40 and SR 160 freeways.¹ In 1907, the Sacramento Northern Railway, an electric interurban railroad, began operation along C Street. The Sacramento Northern carried freight in addition to passengers and traveled through Sacramento's industrial areas along an "industrial belt line" that ran around the edges of the city. A section of this belt line ran down C Street from 18th to 31st streets.² The confluence of key transportation networks created an attractive setting for Sacramento's growing agricultural industries.

Industrial development along C Street to the east of 16th Street began in the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1914, the California Almond Growers Exchange (CAGE), a corporation of small almond growers founded in 1910, constructed its first almond hulling and shelling plant in Sacramento along a spur of

1 Historic Environment Consultants, "River District Architectural and Historical Property Survey Update" (update to historical property survey, City of Sacramento, 2009), 9-10.

2 William Burg, *Sacramento's Streetcars* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 85-86.



Figure 89. California Almond Growers Exchange nut shelling plant served by a spur track of the Southern Pacific Railroad (ca. 1914). Source: Center for Sacramento History, 1981/06/6212.

the Southern Pacific railroad tracks at the intersection of C and 18th streets.³ Parcels to the immediate north, east, and west remained largely undeveloped, while those to the south were primarily filled with the modest single-family houses and multi-family flats of a working-class residential neighborhood where employees of the area's major industries settled.⁴

Industrial development along C Street accelerated during the economic boom period of the 1920s and continued into 1930s. Between 1922 and 1929, CAGE expanded its facilities considerably. The company built additional facilities for processing and canning almonds at its C Street location, and in 1938, added

3 "General Plan Technical Background Report," (report, City of Sacramento), 6.3-21.

4 Sanborn Map Company, Sacramento, California [map], vol. 1, 1915; Shawn Scarborough, "Boulevard Park Corridor: C Through I Streets," in *Sacramento's Streetcars*, 29.

new corporate offices adjacent to the main factory.⁵

Additional agricultural industries emerged on the blocks immediately to the west and east of the CAGE facilities during the same period. The Golden State Milk Products Company was established along the railroad tracks at 19th Street in the 1920s.⁶ In 1925, the California Packing Company (Calpak) constructed a cannery for its Del Monte brand of products on the blocks along C Street between 16th and 18th streets. The complex, named Calpak Plant No. 11, employed approximately 2,500 workers during the busiest seasons and was one of the largest fruit canneries in the world. In the 1930s, Calpak constructed an additional canning facility on the north side of the railroad tracks. Tunnels under the B Street levee connected the operations within this new building to those within Calpak Plant No. 11.⁷ Of the four Del Monte canneries that Calpak built in Sacramento, only Plant No. 11 survives today.⁸

As the popularity of the automobile increased in the middle of the twentieth century and residents of the central city began to move to new residential suburbs outside the city center, the demand for other forms of transportation decreased. The Sacramento Northern ended its operations in 1941, and local streetcar service throughout the city ended in January 1947.⁹ Industrial businesses, including CAGE, responded to

5 "General Plan Technical Background Report", 6.3-21.

6 Sanborn Map Company, Sacramento, California [map], vol. 1, 1915-Jan. 1951; State of California Department of Agriculture, "Report of Stallion Registration for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1926" (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1926), 45.

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8 General Plan Technical Background Report, 6.3-21; Paula Boghosian, "Calpak Plant No. 11" (National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, California Office of Historic Places, 1984), 8-1.

9 Burg, 100.

the changes and reoriented their operations around truck shipping rather than railroad transportation. In 1957, CAGE constructed an expansive storage complex on the north side of the railroad tracks.

While 50 percent of California's almonds were still produced in the Sacramento Valley in 1950, by 1970 the major areas of almond production had shifted to the San Joaquin Valley.¹⁰ CAGE constructed additional distribution and warehouse facilities on the north side of the B Street levee in 1971; however, this appears to have been the last major new building that CAGE constructed as part of its industrial facilities in Sacramento.¹¹

CAGE continued to evolve over the subsequent decades. In 1980, the corporation was renamed Blue Diamond Growers.¹² Looking to expand its facilities further, Blue Diamond purchased Plant No. 11 from the California Packing Company in 1982 and used it to add more office space, manufacturing facilities, a gift shop, and visitor center.¹³

Blue Diamond continues to operate as an active almond processing plant at its original location along C Street, making it the oldest agricultural cooperative in California and one of the state's most successful agricultural businesses.¹⁴ The facilities occupy about 11 city blocks north of Sacramento's midtown area



Figure 90. An aerial view of the California Packing Company's plant in 1932, looking north from C Street with 16th Street on the left and the Southern Pacific tracks on the B Street levee behind (1932). Source: Special Collections of the Sacramento Public Library.

and are continually upgraded and renovated to meet the company's evolving needs.¹⁵

¹⁰ Daniel Geisseler and William R. Horwath, "Almond Production in California," 2016, accessed October 10, 2018, https://apps1.cdffa.ca.gov/FertilizerResearch/docs/Almond_Production_CA.pdf.

¹¹ "General Plan Technical Background Report", 6.3-21.

¹² Blue Diamond Growers, "Our History," accessed 7 August 2018, from <https://www.bluediamond.com/history>.

¹³ "General Plan Technical Background Report", 6.3-21.

¹⁴ Sacramento Archives and Museum Collection Center and the Historic Old Sacramento Foundation, *Sacramento's Midtown* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 31.

¹⁵ Mark Anderson, "Blue Diamond renovating historic Sacramento almond roasting plant," *Sacramento Business Journal* (June 4, 2015), <https://www.bizjournals.com/sacramento/news/2015/06/04/blue-diamond-renovating-historicsacramento-almond.html>.

Significance

The C Street Industrial Historic District was designated for listing on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources by the City Preservation Commission in 1985 in Ordinance #85-076.

The following table provides a current evaluation of significance under the requirements and considers the factors based on the above historic district context and the 2018 historic district survey. Additionally, this historic district relates to the Railroad Context Statement, Agricultural Context Statement, and the World War II, Transportation, and Redevelopment Context Statements of the city’s General Plan Technical Background Report.

(B) Listing on the Sacramento Register – Historic districts	
(1) Requirements	
(a)	The C Street Industrial Historic District meets requirement (a) for listing on the Sacramento Register, because it is a geographically definable area.
(b)(i)	<p>The C Street Industrial Historic District meets requirement (b)(i) for listing on the Sacramento Register as an area that possesses “a significant concentration or continuity of buildings unified by: (A) past events or (B) aesthetically by plan or physical development.”</p> <p>The buildings in the district form a strong and cohesive grouping due to their shared development as part of the major industrial operations of the California Almond Growers Association and California Packing Company’s Del Monte cannery. This shared history is visually reflected in the buildings’ orientation, style, materials, and design. The buildings were strategically located along spurs of the Southern Pacific Railroad and Sacramento Northern interurban electric railway to efficiently transport goods to market. Reflecting their industrial use, they were constructed with fireproof materials, such as brick, and exhibit regular, rectilinear plans and minimal ornamentation. The buildings remain in use as part of Blue Diamond Growers’ Sacramento headquarters and active food processing plant. Despite decades of use and renovations to meet evolving industry demands, the buildings continue to reflect their historic character.</p>

Period of Significance: 1914-1971

The period of significance for the C Street Industrial Historic District begins with construction of the first industrial facility of the California Almond Grower’s Exchange in 1914 and concludes with the construction of additional warehouse and distribution facilities on the north side of the levee in 1971, the last new, large-scale buildings constructed as part of CAGE’s industrial development in Sacramento as almond production shifted away from the Sacramento Valley. CAGE and the California Packing Company constructed industrial buildings on both sides of the railroad tracks during this period, and several buildings include tunnels or bridges across the levee that connected the operations in facilities on one side of the tracks to those on the other.

Property Types from the Period of Significance

- Industrial
- Commercial

Architectural Styles from the Period of Significance

- Vernacular Industrial
- Streamline Moderne

(B) Listing on the Sacramento Register – Historic districts	
(1) Requirements	
(b)(ii)	<p>The C Street Industrial Historic District meets requirement (b)(ii) for listing on the Sacramento Register as an area “associated with an event, person, or period significant or important to city history.”</p> <p>The historic district is significant for its association with Sacramento’s emergence as a powerful center for the agricultural industries of the Sacramento Valley and the state of California. From the early- to mid-twentieth century, the blocks along C Street between 16th and 19th streets were a hotbed of industrial activity where facilities for some of the city’s largest and most successful agricultural industries were constructed, including the Blue Diamond Growers (founded in the same location in 1910 as the California Almond Grower’s Exchange) and the California Packing Company’s Del Monte brand. Major industrial facilities for these industries were constructed on C Street where they had easy access to the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks on the B Street levee. Both the Blue Diamond Growers and Del Monte brands remain in use today, with Blue Diamond Growers continuing to operate out of its historic facilities at C Street. At the time of its construction, the California Packing Company’s Calpak Plant No. 11, purchased by Blue Diamond in 1982, was one of the largest fruit canneries in the world. As the last operating cannery in Sacramento’s original central grid, it represents a significant survivor of one of the city’s most important employers and industries.</p>
(c)	<p>The C Street Industrial Historic District meets requirement (c) for listing on the Sacramento Register as it aligns with the goals and purposes of historic preservation in Sacramento, as well as the city’s other goals and policies. Per the Sacramento City Code, the preservation of the district enhances the “city’s economic, cultural and aesthetic standing, its identity and its livability, marketability, and urban character.”</p>
(B) Listing on the Sacramento Register – Historic districts	
(2) Factors to be considered	
(a)	<p>Factor (2)(a) states that “a historic district should have integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship and association.” The C Street Industrial Historic District retains sufficient integrity to meet this factor for consideration as a historic district.</p>
(b)	<p>Factor (2)(b) states that “the collective historic value of the buildings and structures in a historic district taken together may be greater than the historic value of each individual building or structure.” The C Street Industrial Historic District meets this factor because its buildings and structures represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose collective historic value is greater when taken as a whole.</p>

Character-Defining Features

Element	Character of Historic District
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large grouping of industrial and administrative buildings constructed for the almond and fruit canning industries
Mass & Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings generally two stories tall, although a few are three- to five- stories high • Simple, utilitarian architectural design with regular, rectangular plans
Cladding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominately brick, reinforced concrete, corrugated metal, or other fire-proof material • Concrete foundations
Roofs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat roofs • Stepped parapets
Entries & Doors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central, first-story entrances • Covered metal bridges spanning the railroad tracks to connect with associated industrial facilities on the north side of the levee
Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projecting or picture windows with steel frames • Strips of glass block windows
Ornamentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilitarian design Facades contain series of regular bays with recessed rectangular panels and minimal ornamentation with occasional Classical Revival or Streamline Moderne elements • Features associated with transportation such as garage doors, driveways, and/or vehicular shipping docks and bays, often with rolling metal doors facing the street or alley and concrete tire guards at entrances • Wide metal awnings over loading areas
Property Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black, wrought-iron fences at entrances from city streets
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal or no setback from sidewalk • Buildings concentrated along the railroad tracks on the B Street levee • Spacing between primary buildings follows original width and orientation of C Street • Rows of street trees—most often sycamore and palm trees—and hedges around perimeter of Blue Diamond Growers property and lining principal roads

Boundaries & Location

The following map shows the boundaries and location of the C Street Industrial Historic District.

To view the statuses of individual properties as contributing or non-contributing resources to the historic district, refer to the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources.

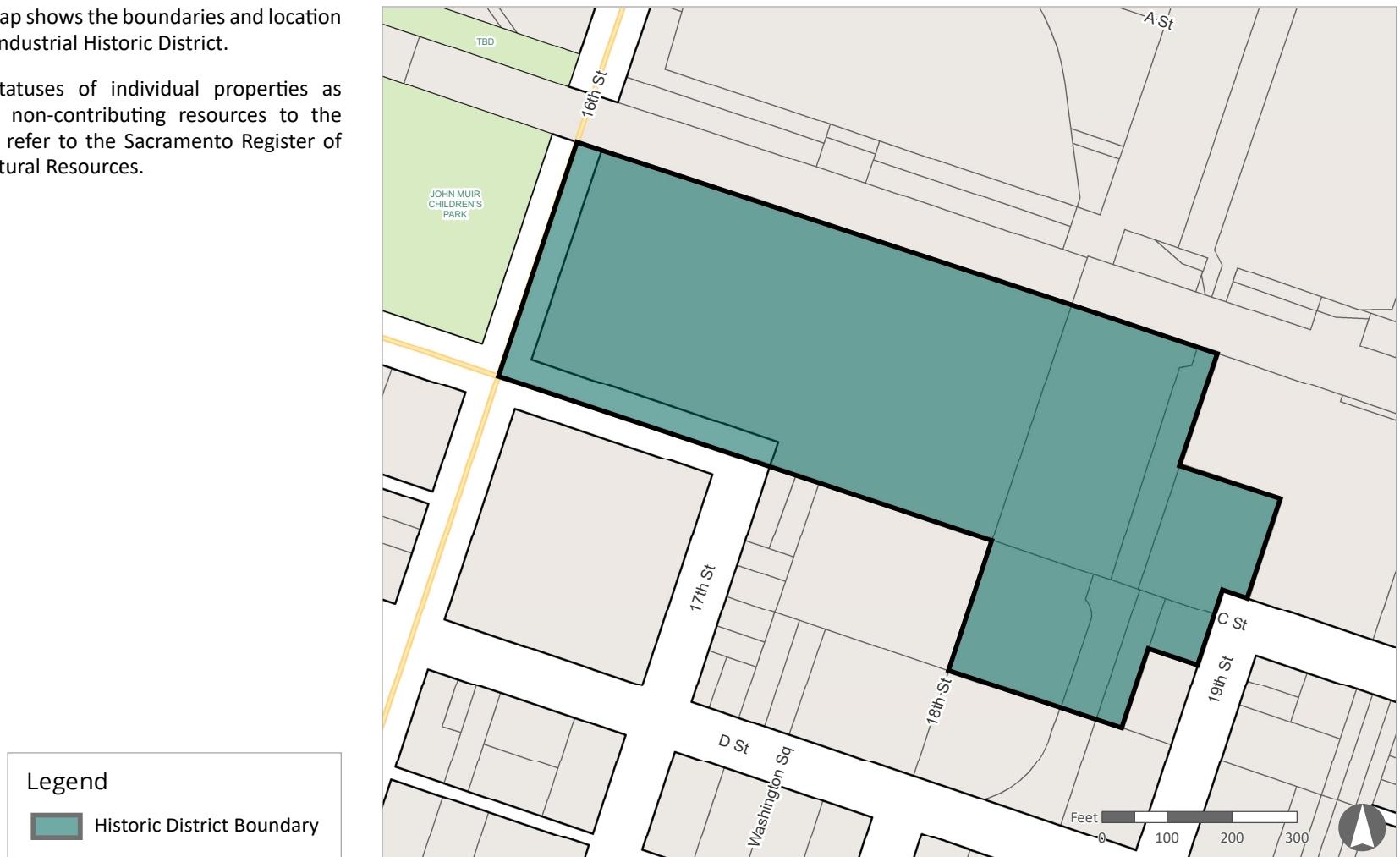


Figure 91. Map of the C Street Industrial Historic District. Source: City of Sacramento and Page & Turnbull, 2019.

District-Specific Standards & Criteria

Design Principle

Balance efforts to preserve and rehabilitate the historic district's contributing buildings in a manner that will ensure their continued use as a major center for agricultural food processing in the region.

Rationale

The C Street Industrial Historic District contains a significant concentration of industrial buildings related to Sacramento's railroad and agricultural historic contexts, most of which have been continuously owned and operated by the California Almond Growers Exchange (now Blue Diamond Growers) since their construction in the early twentieth century. Due to the concentration of historic industrial buildings, the district has the potential to maintain its historic significance as a working example of Sacramento's industrial heritage.

In addition to the Standards & Criteria Common to Sacramento's Historic Districts in Section 1, the following district-specific standards and criteria apply when planning a project in the C Street Industrial Historic District.

1. Rehabilitation of Contributing Resources

- 1.1 Preserve and enhance the historic street-facing orientation of primary building facades and entrances.
- 1.2 Make every effort to preserve, repair, and maintain any surviving steel frame windows, which significantly contribute to the industrial character of the district.
 - Replace removed historic street-facing windows where feasible, if there is adequate documentation to inform design.
- 1.3 Avoid painting or applying new finishes on historically unpainted exterior masonry, particularly where historic painted signs (ghost signs) are present.
- 1.4 Restore window and door openings that have been covered or filled in, where appropriate, particularly to enhance safety along 16th Street.
- 1.5 Maintain and preserve existing historic loading platforms, particularly near the intersection of C and 16th streets.
- 1.6 Retain existing historic awnings where possible, particularly near the intersection of C and 16th streets.
- 1.7 Retain existing historic signage where possible, particularly along C and 16th streets and mid-block at the historic California Almost Growers Exchange building.

- 1.8 Retain existing tunnels and bridges under and over railroad tracks, wherever possible.



Figure 92. Historic multi-lite steel frame windows contribute to the character of the historic district.



Figure 93. Historic signage survives on several buildings in the district.

2. Additions & Accessory Structures for Contributing Resources

- 2.1 Design additions with proportions that are compatible with the primarily horizontal massing of contributing buildings in the district.
 - Place additions on secondary rear and side elevations, when possible.
- 2.2 Respect historic open areas that are part of historic configuration or building siting, such as open areas at loading or service zones, to the extent feasible.

3. New (Infill) Construction & Alterations to Non-Contributing Resources

- 3.1 Preserve the historic pattern of siting new buildings with a zero-lot-line setback from the street.
- 3.2 Maintain the visibility of varying building profiles, shapes and forms in the historic district.
 - Avoid designs that result in rows of identical new buildings.
- 3.3 Use materials that are compatible with the industrial or commercial character of adjacent contributing buildings.

- Introduce brick, corrugated metal, steel casement windows and other utilitarian materials that are visible on adjacent contributing buildings.

- 3.4 Design roofs to maintain the visual profile of roof lines exhibited by contributing buildings, including clerestory, sawtooth, or flat roofs with square, stepped, or rounded parapets.
- 3.5 Follow patterns of punched openings and regularly spaced architectural bays.
- 3.6 Incorporate awnings that reference the form, scale, and materials of historic awnings.



Figure 94. Shed awnings and loading platforms are common in the district.



Figure 95. Contributing buildings in the historic district exhibit a variety of heights and sizes

4. Site Features, Streetscape, & Landscaping

- 4.1 Pursue a “complete street” approach that enhances pedestrian safety while preserving the historic district’s minimally landscaped industrial character.
- 4.2 Consider a street furnishing and lighting palette that is industrial in character, scale, and material.
- 4.3 Preserve and enhance the visibility of surviving physical elements that are associated with the railroad spurs that historically serviced the area (i.e. tracks, siding, end-of-track bumpers).
- 4.4 Remove chain link fences and barbed wire where possible.
 - Replace chain link fences with fences that are of a compatible material and height to historic or compatible new fences throughout the historic district