NPS Form 10-900
OMB No. 1024-0018

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Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association Warehouse
Other names/site number: Farmers' Alliance Building
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 525 Riverside Avenue
City or town: Paso Robles State: California County: San Luis Obispo
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___**national** ___**statewide** X **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X **A** ___**B** ___**C** ___**D**

2/3/16

Jenan Saunders, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer **Date**

California State Office of Historic Preservation

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action: 3/22/2016

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	X
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	X
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: processing

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: CONCRETE, WOOD, CLAY TILE, GLASS (windows, doors), METAL (window frames, doors, interior pillars, framing for north elevation addition)

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association Warehouse, a 12,840 square foot building, is located on Block 98 in the City of El Paso de Robles (Paso Robles). It is on the west side of Riverside Avenue between U.S. Route 101 on the east and the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks on the west. The closest streets to the north and south are 6th and 5th Streets, located west of, and not intersecting the subject property. The immediate vicinity is characterized by warehouses, storage buildings, rail-related facilities, and Robbin's Field, a City recreation facility. The Almond Growers' Association Warehouse was constructed in 1922 with reinforced concrete and features a distinctive tower and decorative elements such as quoins and medallions. Although it sustained alterations during its history, the building has been rehabilitated pursuant to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Rehabilitation) and is in good condition. As part of the 2010-2014 rehabilitation project, a small addition that is clearly distinct from the original building has been made to the north elevation. The building retains integrity of location, design, materials, feeling, and association and to a lesser extent integrity of setting and workmanship.

Narrative Description

The Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association Warehouse is located on the west side of Riverside Avenue and sits on a raised foundation on a north-south axis. The building is rectangular in plan and constructed with reinforced concrete. The exterior walls are clad with smooth cement stucco and quoins are located at the corners of the building. The building has a

combination flat roof with a stepped parapet and low-pitched side-gabled roof and features a central, square tower topped with a small, square cupola with a barrel-tile clad hipped-roof.

All four sides of the tower and cupola are identical. The cupola, which had been structurally altered to allow for a conveyor to distribute grain to each of the compartments in the tower, has been rehabilitated. Although no building permits were found, the earlier alteration was probably completed by the Farmers' Alliance Business Association sometime after it purchased the building in 1936. Each exterior elevation has a ribbon of three small, metal-framed windows. Each side of the tower includes corner pilasters and three, nine-light, metal-framed fixed windows resting between the roofline and a horizontal concrete coping. On each elevation, there are four concrete medallions alternating between the three windows. Metal lettering, spelling "Derby" and "Wine Estates" separated by a diamond-shaped relief with a metal D in the middle, is on the wall below the horizontal concrete coping. The original Blue Diamond borders on each side of the tower are the original borders from the Blue Diamond sign. The letter "D" was placed in the center along with the name of the winery above and below as part of the 2010-2014 rehabilitation. The original building label on the lower-level parapet is the original letter type over the original outline. The original Blue Diamond borders and the restored parapet signage were color coated to match the building.

The primary façade (west elevation facing east) includes a narrow horizontal concrete coping; four metal-framed, horizontal-rectangular, multi-paned windows; three vertical-rectangular windows (one smaller than the others); two roll-up doors; and a partially glazed single door sheltered by a pent roof. The stepped parapet at the façade's center has cement letters that read "PASO ROBLES ALMOND GROWERS ASSOCIATION / MEMBER OF / CALIFORNIA ALMOND GROWERS EXCHANGE." A concrete ramp and walkway spans the length of the façade where, based on a circa 1922 rendering of the proposed building, there were originally only concrete steps and a stoop accessing the door. Based on a 1922 photograph, the small vertical-rectangular window at the north end of the elevation may have been a pivot window and the other two vertical-rectangular windows appear to have had fixed panes surrounding a center pivot window.

The east elevation is similar to the primary façade. It includes a narrow, horizontal concrete coping; five metal-framed, multi-paned fixed windows; two metal roll-up doors (originally there were three); and a raised concrete walkway that spans the length of the elevation.

The north elevation features a non-original triangular-shaped parapet; horizontal concrete coping; a metal-framed, horizontal-rectangular, multi-paned window; a metal-framed, multi-paned square window; a non-original door opening; and a modern addition. The east half of the elevation is dominated by a flat-roofed, steel-framed addition and a raised concrete patio, both added during the 2010-2014 rehabilitation (City of El Paso de Robles 2014). The addition has a slightly irregular floor plan and glass walls on the east and partially on the north elevation; the rest of the addition is clad with corrugated metal siding. Steel beams extend out the north elevation to create a patio area. Entrance into the building is through a set of glass double doors on the east elevation of the new addition. Based on historic photographs, the north elevation was

originally symmetrical and included four metal-framed, multi-paned windows in two different sizes. The smaller ones appear to have been pivot windows. A free-standing, side-gabled, corrugated metal building was constructed adjacent to the north elevation. Based on historic maps, the building was likely constructed between 1948 and 1952. A door opening was cut into the concrete wall of the warehouse to allow access to the metal building; as part of the 2010-2014 rehabilitation this doorway is now used to provide public access to the tasting room. Based on building permits, the metal building was removed in July 2012 (City of El Paso Robles 2012, issued 22 November 2010, completed 24 July 2012).

The south elevation includes four, metal-framed, horizontal-rectangular, multi-paned fixed windows, a narrow horizontal concrete coping, and a non-original stepped parapet that matches the ones on the east and west elevations. Adjacent to the south elevation, a metal-framed canopy has been erected over a new concrete slab to provide shade for the crush pad area where grapes are stored before being put into the machines. A one-story, flat-roofed, corrugated metal addition of undetermined age was adjacent to the south elevation, but was demolished as part of the 2010-2014 rehabilitation.

The original interior of the building was completely unobstructed, except for the centrally located elevator sustained by 16 steel and concrete pillars, to allow for maximum space for work and storage. Stairs on the north end of the building led down to an alcove where almonds were bleached in sulfur fumes. In 1978, a permit was issued to Crown Building Materials to build an office inside the warehouse (City of El Paso de Robles 1978). In 1987-89, permits were issued for a re-roof, two meter changes, and 950 lineal feet of 8-inch water main and two fire hydrants (City of El Paso de Robles 1987, 1989). Other alterations that occurred prior to the 2010-2014 rehabilitation include: alterations to the framing of the cupola to allow for a conveyor to distribute grain to each of the compartments in the tower; removal of a significant amount of the original almond processing machinery when the building's use change to grain processing; and, in 2001, installation of antennae for cellular service on the exterior of the tower and related electronic equipment in the sulphur chamber (City of El Paso de Robles 2001).

Between 2010 and 2014, the warehouse was rehabilitated and converted to a winery. All rehabilitation work performed was done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. In May 2012, while the rehabilitation was ongoing, the property owner submitted a Historic Preservation Certification Application Part 1 (Part 1) to the State of California (State). The Part 1 has since been revised and resubmitted twice pursuant to comments provided by the State and the process is ongoing. When the National Register nomination and Part 1 are approved, the related Part 2 and Part 3 applications will be submitted concurrently.

As part of the 2010-2014 rehabilitation, the steel-framed addition at the north end of the original building was constructed, the windows and roll-up doors were rehabilitated, and the cupola was reconstructed (City of El Paso de Robles 2014). The interior of the building was reconfigured and reconstructed to accommodate wine processing equipment and tasting room with non-original flooring, walls, and other architectural features such as wainscoting and wood paneling (City of El Paso de Robles 2014). The elevator was replaced and the topmost floor of the tower

was rehabilitated as a VIP sitting room. In addition, the concrete ramp and walkway on the east elevation was extended to connect with the new patio and a free-standing canopy was installed at the south end of the building to shade the grapes waiting for processing (City of El Paso de Robles 2014).

Integrity Analysis

The former Paso Robles Almond Growers' Warehouse retains a high degree of integrity from its period of significance 1922 to 1936.

Location: The building has not been moved. It retains integrity of location.

Design: The building retains integrity of design. Although some alterations have been made to the building, most notably the addition to the north elevation, the building retains numerous character-defining features including the distinctive square tower with its fenestration, corner pilasters, horizontal concrete coping, concrete medallions, and diamond-shaped reliefs; the square cupola and its fenestration; the raised lettering on the west façade parapet; stepped parapets on the east and west elevations; quoins; horizontal concrete coping and multi-paned windows on the east, west, and south elevations; and the roll-up doors in the east and west elevations. Because of these features, the building is able to convey a strong sense of its original design, architectural aesthetic, and use.

Setting: The setting from the 1922-1936 period of significance has been somewhat compromised by the intrusion of more recent development including the freeway, resulting in fewer trees and open areas. Photographs taken during construction indicate the surrounding area once included many trees and open fields, as well as the railroad tracks on the west side of the building. The railroad tracks remain.

Materials: The physical elements that make up the historic period portion of the building were preserved, repaired, or replaced in-kind. Therefore, the building retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship: Although the building continues to reflect the aesthetic principles of the period in which it was built, the workmanship that went into the related machinery and warehousing practices has been removed.

Feeling: Integrity of feeling is high. Even with the alterations, the building is able to evoke the aesthetic and historic sense of a bygone period. This feeling is particularly enhanced by the distinctive tower, the diamond-shaped reliefs, the cupola, the raised lettering on the parapet, the roll-up doors, and the railroad tracks.

Association: Because the building retains integrity of location, design, materials, and feeling. it is able to convey its association with its period of significance when it was the Paso Robles Almond Growers' Warehouse.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [x] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [ ] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
COMMERCE

Period of Significance
1922-1936

Significant Dates
1922
1936

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Bailey, Sr., David R.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association Warehouse is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its association with the economic success of the almond industry in the City of Paso Robles during the 1920s and the resulting economic development and population associated with this industry. Its period of significance is 1922 to 1936, the years it was owned and operated by the Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Rise of the Almond Industry

Initially wheat was the premier crop in the region. Between 1870 and 1910, California agriculture underwent a momentous transition in which specialty crops (primarily fruits, nuts, raisins, and wine grapes) completely eclipsed grain production. The world market price for wheat declined during the last three decades of the nineteenth century making fruit more profitable. As the commercial orchard infrastructure grew, the almond began to emerge as one of the most successful orchard products for Paso Robles. The loamy soils for drainage and the average rainfall of the area created the ideal climate for non-irrigated almond orchards. Michael Gerst, a prominent Paso Robles pioneer, established several acres of fruit and nut orchards. The almond grew so successfully for him that in 1906 at the World's Fair his almonds took the top prize. Four years later, in 1910, the almond economy had grown to the point that farmers began the formation of the Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association. This Association was formed with six members owning less than a total of 60 acres of almond orchards. Commercial planting of orchards began in 1912 and by 1918 the district held the leading place in the world in the number of acres planted (*Paso Robles Press* 1928:15-25).

During the late teens and into the late 1920s, the city used the almond as its identity icon in numerous marketing materials, including a tag line describing the area as the almond capital of the world. The *Paso Robles Press* dedicated the lead, front-page article of every issue to the Almond Growers' Association. The Chamber of Commerce named its newsletter *The Nutcracker* with promotional text claiming that the area was California's wealthiest non-irrigated section and the largest almond-growing district in the world. The *Los Angeles Times* reported in August 1920 that the San Luis Obispo County Supervisors appropriated $1,500 (about $18,500 in 2014 terms) to the Paso Robles Fair and Almond Show (*Los Angeles Times* 1920a:II6). In 1921, the *Times* affirmed the importance of the almond industry in Paso Robles, "The almond has assumed tremendous importance in the Paso Robles district... So successful has the almond been in the Paso Robles section that the city of Paso Robles has taken the slogan, "Paso Robles, the home of the almond," and this year in September held a Paso Robles District Fair and Almond Show,

which gave an idea of the scope the industry is assuming there" (*Los Angeles Times* 1921a:V24). It was clear that the almond business was extremely important to the city.

The number of acres of almond orchards and the number of almonds produced grew exponentially after the 1920s. The *Pacific Rural Press* reported the receipt of 12,000 almond trees per day in the month of February 1920 in Paso Robles that would add to the 18,000 acres of almond trees already planted; conservative estimates predicted the number of acres to grow to 25,000 by year's end (*Pacific Rural Press* 1920). One year later, the Associated Almond Growers of Paso Robles received 171,000 trees for a total of 3,000 acres of planted almonds, prunes, and pears (*Pacific Rural Press* 1921a). The 1920s crop produced 150 tons of almonds; 400 tons were estimated for the 1921 season with a profit of $150,000 as reported by J.M. Goulding, secretary of the Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association (*Pacific Rural Press* 1921b). The number of tons grew by 1922 with the *Pacific Rural Press* reporting 250 tons of almonds processed and estimating 700 tons for the following year (*Pacific Rural Press* 1922a).

So popular and profitable was the almond that companies planted and sold tracts of land to those interested in the almond producing business. Julius Scheider and William A. Ryon of Paso Robles created the DeLuxe Almond Orchard in which 2,500 acres of land had about

400,000 almond, plum and pear trees planted to then be subdivided and sold to a small colony of settlers to take over and develop into fruit orchards (*Los Angeles Times* 1920b:V2). A colonization company, the Associated Almond Growers of Paso Robles, planted 13,000 acres of almonds for people interested in coming to California to become almond growers (*Pacific Rural Press* 1922b). Scandal erupted following this venture when those that purchased land claimed to have been duped by the Almond Growers' Association into buying land that was not profitable. They were promised orchards that produced $250 to $300 in profit per acre, per year and that the orchards were located above the frost-belt and therefore invulnerable to the dangers of frost. Lawsuits were filed where plaintiffs sought reimbursement for the investments made (*Los Angeles Times* 1923:II2).

The Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association realized it needed its own facility to handle its abundant crops. In a letter addressed to the membership of the Association dated February 15, 1922, Secretary James M. Goulding outlined the reason to proceed with the building of a warehouse in Paso Robles. In the letter, he states that Paso Robles is the only almond district not having its own warehouse and that having one would mean an immediate savings of $12.25 per ton considering the cost to store and process elsewhere (Goulding 1924).

California Almond Growers' Exchange

As the almond business grew in California, the importance of collective marketing became more apparent. Collective marketing and associations had proven successful for the Farmers' Alliance Association in California, obtaining a better market share of profits through buyers and reducing the control of the SP. During the early part of the twentieth century, local associations organized in almond-growing communities from Banning to Paso Robles. In 1909, a speech by J.P. Dargitz

at a grower conference in Watsonville triggered the movement that led to the formation of the California Almond Growers' Exchange. Nine local associations were the original foundation for the statewide organization. Other associations formed in 1910, the Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association being one of them, joined the Exchange shortly thereafter. The principal function of the central organization was to carry out the activities of the local associations on a larger scale and to meet the market demands more ably. To the growers, the local associations were the realization of the cooperative function and, realizing the benefits of united action, they worked to expand these local units of the Exchange (Riley 1948). The association worked to improve the income of growers and expand the market for California almonds (Allen 2010). The local associations had a significant position in the agricultural communities of the state and adopted the name "Blue Diamond" as the name of their product.

The Blue Diamond label appeared on the product packaging, and was featured prominently on all of its warehouses as a symbol of its success. Working through this newly formed organization, they set out to make the California almond and Blue Diamond label the standard of quality for the world (Tucker 1930). The headquarters for the newly formed organization was in Sacramento and David R. Bailey, Sr., an architect, engineer, and an early employee of the Exchange, designed the first building as its cornerstone of operations.

The California Almond Growers' Exchange was characterized by an extremely optimistic outlook until the end of the 1919 crop. The Exchange had expanded its activities, advertising, and fixed assets during a period of high prices. However, in the latter part of 1919, a business decline began that reached a serious point in 1920. Meanwhile, European agriculture was making a comeback putting Europe in a position to resume its pre-World War I position as the chief supplier of American nuts (Riley 1948). By the 1920s, a stubborn agricultural depression, the product of war and technology change, caused almond wholesale values to fall. To deal with this, the Exchange had to increase its membership. It did this by creating five-year contracts for the local associations, which gave them the ability to forecast crop production more accurately and give needed security for loans. The organization also decentralized and gave more control to the local associations. This created the climate in which the Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association Warehouse was built.

Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association Warehouse

On February 22, 1922, the *San Luis Obispo Tribune* ran a photograph-captioned article called "Faith in California." This article was the first public glimpse of the proposed Paso Robles Almond Growers' warehouse and it included an architectural rendering of the building. According to the article, the 12,000-square foot (160 feet by 75 feet) building was anticipated to cost $60,000 and would include $10,000 of modern machinery and a 72-foot high tower for bins. The article indicated that the hard-hit farmers of California had faith in their cooperative, the California Almond Growers' Exchange, and the future of almond growing and the building appeared to be a symbol of hope for the almond industry.

The Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association Board of Directors had begun discussions regarding the construction of a new warehouse months prior to the February 1922 announcement (Historic Resources Group n.d.:12). By November of 1921, the Board's minutes indicated it was ready to meet with the architect so it could obtain sufficient data to apply for a construction loan (Goulding 1924). That same month, the deed was recorded for the purchase of property and the December 19, 1921, minutes indicate that D.R. Bailey, the architect of the Exchange, had appeared with the plans and information for the warehouse construction. In the 1922 edition of *Southwest Builder and Contractor* a small article states "Archt. D. R. Bailey, Sacramento, is preparing plans for a fireproof warehouse to cost $60,000 for the Paso Robles Almond Growers' Assoc." (*Southwest Builder and Contractor* 1922:35). In March 1922, contractor Jas L. McLaughlin won the bid to construct the warehouse. Construction began by April 1922 and by July of that same year the warehouse was three-quarters of the way complete. *The Minute Book*, a newsletter of the California Almond Growers' Exchange, informs the Exchange members of the construction progress including several pictures and outlining the specifics of the building's architectural details including the BLUE DIAMOND BRAND trademark on all four sides of the tower complete with searchlights playing on it nightly so all those passing would know how proud the Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association was of its product (California Almond Growers' Exchange 1922).

Although there is no specific date given on the completion of the warehouse, it appears operations began August of 1922 according to the Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce newsletter, *The Nutcracker*, dated August 20, 1922. This same article also gives a detailed description of the building, the workings of the almond processing equipment and the significance of the building to the city at that time. The article describes the building as one "of massive reinforced concrete, 75 × 150 feet with an elevator tower rising to a height of 82 feet. The exterior is handsomely finished with cement stucco of warm red tint… The elevator portion of the building rests on sixteen columns of steel and concrete, these columns being the only obstruction of the main floor so that the whole floor is available for work and storage" (*Paso Robles Nutcracker* 1922).

The equipment for processing almonds was described in detail in the second paragraph of this article. "Movable sacking spouts run down from the eight bins overhead, each bin having a capacity of twenty tons of almonds. The almonds are received on the scales at the door, then poured into a hopper; thence on they are handled entirely by conveyors until they are drawn from the sacking spouts into the large Blue Diamond shipping sacks for loading into cars for direct shipment to market. A device enables the operator on the floor to run the almonds into whatever bin he desires from any pin, at any time, the nuts may be run upon a conveyor which carries them into a revolving cylinder filled with live steam; in passing through its cylinder shells are slightly moistened and softened; thence they pass into a long room where dense fumes of sulphur are maintained; twenty minutes in these fumes thoroughly disinfects the shells and tinges them with perfectly even rich shade of color familiar to all consumers of almonds in the shell."

The article further discusses the confidence of conservative bankers in the almond industry as an economic engine of Paso Robles. These bankers were quick to loan $60,000 for the construction

of the warehouse with the stipulation that part of the loan be secured by the first 100 willing members to purchase a $450 note; many of these members were not almond growers and many were recent arrivals to town. The article concludes that the warehouse was not only a warehouse or a representation of cost savings, but also a symbol of the success of the almond industry in Paso Robles. The youngest almond-growing community in the state constructed the warehouse and, except for the main Exchange warehouse in Sacramento, it was the "largest and most perfect plant of its kind."

The October 14, 1922, issue of the *Pacific Rural Press* noted the completion of the warehouse and praised its technology. "Its modern equipment by which the almonds are handled almost entirely by machinery from the time they are dumped at the door until they have been graded, processed, and sacked, is said to be able to save the growers twelve dollars per ton over former methods. The Paso Robles crop of about 500 tons can be readily handled by four men; and the plant can handle the 1,000 tons which that district will ere long be producing" (*Pacific Rural Press* 1922c).

The predicted success of the almond industry held true as evidenced in the 1926 article by the *Los Angeles Times* where author Edith M. Berry discusses the prosperity that Paso Robles enjoys on behalf of the almond. In her article, Ms. Berry says that Paso Robles is made up of a 40-mile radius of the "largest almond groves in the world. The business prosperity of this town is linked very closely with the region's almond production." There are 33,000 acres of almond plantings in Paso Robles and it is believed to be the largest acreage in crop in the world" (*Los Angeles Times* 1926a*:*J3). The article professes that California produces 99 percent of all almonds in the United States with an estimated 100,000 acres planted; one-third of that alone is in San Luis Obispo County. The *Los Angeles Times* article further discusses the demand for shelled almonds. Although the largest almond cracking plant was in Sacramento, it acknowledges that the Paso Robles Almond Growers' warehouse had the capacity to shell 100,000 tons. The hulls discarded were mixed with other ingredients and used to make feed for horse and pigs. Shelled almonds were used in a variety of ways, such as almond waffles in roadside cafes and small gift packages to be transported and sold to other parts of the country (*Los Angeles Times* 1926a:J3). A 1931 *Los Angeles Times* article continued to claim that Paso Robles was the largest almond-growing district in the world (*Los Angeles Times* 1926b:H26) and in 1934, the *Times* still called Paso Robles one of the leading almond centers of California (*Los Angeles Times* 1934a:E24).

The popularity in the almond industry in Paso Robles continued through 1927 in the annual almond and harvest festival. In 1927, the *Los Angeles Times* said that Paso Robles, "The Almond City," had every right to celebrate the almond as it was believed over 1,000 tons of almonds would pass through the Paso Robles warehouse in that fall. The Almond Growers' Association presented a display that "thoroughly covered the field of almond culture" (*Los Angeles Times* 1926c: J7). The management team was pleased with attendance during the five-day festival and called it the best almond show ever staged in the district (*Los Angeles* Times 1926c:J7). Reasons to celebrate continued through the years as the *Los Angeles Times* reported that in 1932, the Paso Robles almond crop was recorded at 2,387 tons (*Los Angeles Times* 1933:G3).

Almond growing was so popular even the famous were lured into the industry. Ignacy Paderewski, former prime minister of Poland and famed pianist, first came to Paso Robles to enjoy the mineral springs in the area and later decided to invest in a ranch he named San Ignacio where he had over 12,000 almond trees (*Los Angeles Times* 1921b:II1). Paso Robles was not his permanent residence, and he came to visit time to time to check in on his property (*Los Angeles Times* 1921b:II1). Other famous almond ranchers included Harold Lloyd, American actor, comedian, film director, producer and screen writer; Charles Comiskey, founding owner of the Chicago White Sox; and railroad officials of the Santa Fe and Rock Island Systems (*Los Angeles Times* 1926a:J3).

Foreign imports of almonds were a danger to Paso Robles. In the years after the Depression of 1929, the California Almond Growers' Exchange fought for a fair duty on all almond imports and the Exchange tried to generate sales by pursuing all possible avenues (Allen 2010). Crops began to suffer in 1934 when an usually light crop of almonds was forecast for that year. It was unclear what caused the shortage. Horticulturists thought it could be the trees blossomed too early or the rain caused mold on the blossoms preventing pollination (*Los Angeles Times* 1934b:J2).

In 1935, the Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association began renting its warehouse to other agricultural interests and, by July of that year, placed the warehouse up for sale. The Farmers' Alliance Business Association (FABA) in Paso Robles expanded its warehouse operations in 1936 by purchasing the Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association warehouse located at 525 Riverside Avenue. The FABA bought the warehouse for $16,000 on August 13, 1936 (Iverson 1936). Not until 1975 did the FABA finally close its doors after 85 years of service.

Developmental history/additional historic context information

The almond industry's success in Paso Robles and its consequent influence on the city had its roots in the region's successful wheat farming dating to the late 1800s. The influx of farm families into San Luis Obispo and the county's resultant rise as a wheat producer were both generated by the great real estate boom of the 1880s, which in turn was a consequence of the surge in railroad construction. Between 1880 and 1890, the number of farms in California increased from 36,000 to 53,000 while the state's total population grew over forty percent (Magliari 1992). San Luis Obispo County's growth was unique in that it remained unconnected to either of the new transcontinental rail routes, but was instead related to the Pacific Coast Railway and the Southern Pacific Railroad's coastal route running south from San Francisco (Magliari 1992:48). When the Southern Pacific arrived in San Luis Obispo in the mid-1880s, it provided a direct link to San Francisco on the east slope of the San Lucia Mountains and opened the vast resources of the region to large-scale settlements (Magliari 1992:63).

Twenty-eight miles north of the city of San Luis Obispo was the city of El Paso de Robles. When the Southern Pacific opened in Paso Robles in 1886, thousands of settlers poured into the town and Paso Robles emerged as the premier city in the booming upper Salinas Valley. Soon it became the commercial capital of a vibrant regional economy based on the export of wheat

(Magliari 1992:75-76). However, the goal for many farmers was to slowly increase the size of their orchards and eventually replace them altogether. By 1906, at least one farmer in the area had found success with the almond (Fisher 1999) and in 1912 the first commercial almond orchard in the area was planted (*Paso Robles Press* 1928:15-25). In the meantime, however, the area had to deal with a monopoly that had a stranglehold on the local grain industry.

The same railroad that opened the Salinas Valley to farm settlement established a four-way monopoly that controlled commercial transportation, as well as grain milling, grain warehousing, and the local lumber supply. In the Salinas Valley, the Southern Pacific brought along a trio of companion corporations that included the Central Milling Company, the Salinas Valley Lumber Company, and the Southern Pacific Milling Company. Although formally separate, the three firms, along with the railroad, operated largely as a single entity. The Southern Pacific enjoyed absolute control over transcontinental shipping to and from northern California that enabled it to fix rates in a completely unilateral fashion (Magliari 1992:169-170). In reaction, merchant organizations joined the newly formed Grange and California Workingmen's Party and demanded state regulation of Southern Pacific rates. This led to the 1879 drafting of a new state constitution that created the State Board of Equalization and the California Railroad Commission (Magliari 1992:171).

The Farmers' Alliance organization was an economic movement among United States farmers that blossomed in the 1880s. Originally formed in 1876 in Lampasas, Texas, the organization was designed to promote higher commodity prices through collective efforts by individual farmers. The movement was affiliated with the Grange movement, which formed social organizations among farmers (Gastelum & Lanning 2005). The Farmers' Alliance moved to the forefront of the agrarian economy in the 1880s as farmers in the south and west found it increasingly difficult to survive economically. Post-Civil War deflation and rising debt produced two principal groups: the National Farmers' Alliance in the plains states and the National Farmers' Alliance & Industrial Union (Southern Alliance).

Sub-alliances supported a network of cooperatives, traveling lectures, and newspapers all promoting a powerful sense of group solidarity. By 1888, the Alliance had 250,000 members and its list of demands included government control of transportation and communication and a "subtreasury" scheme for agricultural credit, reforms, currency, land ownership, and income tax policies (Historic Resources Group n.d.:7).

As it became clear that the cooperative could not succeed without legislative changes, the Alliance took the lead in creating a new farm-labor party, the People's (Populists) party in 1892. The Populist platform that year repeated nearly all the Alliance demands and although the defeat of the Populists in 1896 finished both the party and the Alliance, many of the reforms they had advocated were adopted over the next half century (Gastelum & Lanning 2005).

In 1891, when the San Luis Obispo County Alliance was only a year old, members from San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties gathered to lay the foundation for a new cooperative flouring mill. Representatives from five Salinas Valley sub-alliances met at Paso Robles to take

direct actions toward the Southern Pacific Milling Company. They voted to unite and go into the grain warehousing business, founding the Farmers' Alliance Business Association (FABA) that was formally incorporated on June 20, 1891 (Gastelum & Lanning 2005). Expecting a good harvest, the Alliance began plans for an independent storage business in Paso Robles. FABA purchased land from Daniel Blackburn and developed the site that fronted the Southern Pacific sidetrack that served the competitor Southern Pacific Milling's local facilities. Richard Shackelford of the Southern Pacific declared that the sidetrack facing the warehouse was not permitted for use by the association as it was paid for the by the Southern Pacific Milling Company and any movement across the property would be treated as trespassing. The FABA retaliated by filing a grievance with the newly formed California State Railroad Commission. On August 31, the Commission voted that the Alliance was entitled to the same rights as those of the Southern Pacific Milling Company in use of the track. This ruling helped save the FABA while establishing a tradition of supportive agricultural cooperation in California (Gastelum & Lanning 2005:8).

With this foundation, the FABA continued to influence economic agricultural practices. Although the Populist movement died out in 1896, the Alliance cooperatives left behind an enduring legacy that influenced the local economy of the upper Salinas Valley long into the twentieth century. The endurance of the FABA as a private company preserved the vital competition established by the Alliance against Southern Pacific Milling Company. The FABA's battle for access to Southern Pacific tracks and services paved the way for other competitors to enter the field and the first two decades of the twentieth century represented a reversal of fortune from the struggles of the 1880s and 90s. These cooperative efforts banished hard times until the 1920s when another farm crisis struck the nation (Magliari 1992).

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

_X__ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
_X__ Local government
____ University
_X__ Other
Name of repository: _Center for Sacramento History, California Almond Growers' Exchange Collection; Los Angeles Public Library, *Los Angeles Times* archives_____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ___1.18 acres_____

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 35.620449 Longitude: -120.686412

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Assessor's Parcel Number 009-268-009. The property address is 525 Riverside Avenue, in Block 98 in Paso Robles. It is on the west side of Riverside Avenue between U.S. Route 101 on the east and the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks on the west. The closest streets to the north and south are 6th and 5th Streets, located west of, but not intersecting the subject property.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries selected are substantially the same as the historic boundaries. There was no public right-of-way when the original building was constructed and it was not until, approximately 1945-1950, that the street and public-right-of-ways were originated in Paso Robles. Furthermore, the actual street improvements on Riverside Drive were progressively modified over the years due to increased traffic use and related improvements with wider street widths and sidewalks. The original easterly property line is unknown. For these reasons, the current parcel boundaries are being used to define the historic property.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Laura Carias, M.A. and Casey Tibbet, M.A. / Architectural Historians
organization: LSA Associates, Inc.
street & number: 1500 Iowa Avenue, Suite 200
city or town: Riverside state: CA zip code: 92507
e-mail casey-tibbet@lsa-assoc.com
telephone: (951) 781-9310
date: September 2014; Revised March 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association Warehouse
City or Vicinity: Paso Robles
County: San Luis Obispo County
State: California
Photographer: Amber Long and Matthew Anderson Photography
Date Photographed: 1-6: July 24, 2014 (Long); 7-8: June 19, 2014 (Anderson)
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 8 East elevation, camera facing northwest (July 2014)

2 of 8 West elevation, camera facing east-southeast (July 2014)

3 of 8 West elevation, camera facing northeast (July 2014)

4 of 8 South elevation, camera facing northwest (July 2014)

5 of 8 North elevation, camera facing southwest (July 2014)

6 of 8 North elevation, camera facing southeast (July 2014)

7 of 8 North and east elevations, camera facing southwest (June 2014)

8 of 8 East elevation detail of tower and lettering, camera facing west (June 2014)

USGS Equivalent Map

LSA

Historic Property Boundary

Latitude: 35.620449 N
Longitude: -120.686412 W

Paso Robles Almond Growers Association Warehouse

0 40 80
FEET

Note: Historic Property Boundary is Assessor's Parcel Number: 009-268-009

SOURCE: Google Earth, 2013; San Luis Obispo County, 2010.

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Sketch Map/Photo Key

LSA

N

0 25 50
FEET

Historic Property Boundary
Photo Location

Paso Robles Almond Growers Association Warehouse

SOURCE: Google Earth, 2013; San Luis Obispo County, 2010.

Sketch Map - Photograph Point Map

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Figure 1. Circa 1922. Rendering of the proposed Paso Robles Almond Growers' Association Warehouse. Artist: David R. Bailey, Sr. Source: Center for Sacramento History and Images of America: Paso Robles (page 76).

Figure 2. Early stages of construction (May 1922). Source: Center for Sacramento History.

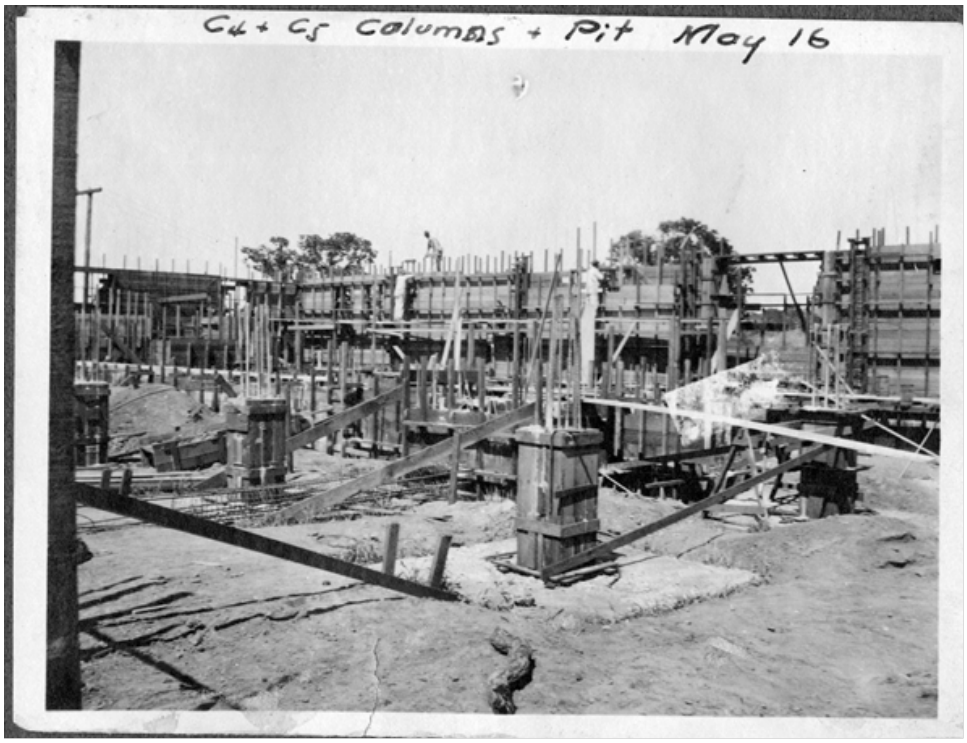

Figure 3. East and north elevations, view to the southeast (May 26, 1922). Source: Center for Sacramento History.

Figure 4. West elevation, view to the east (June 1922). Source: Center for Sacramento History.

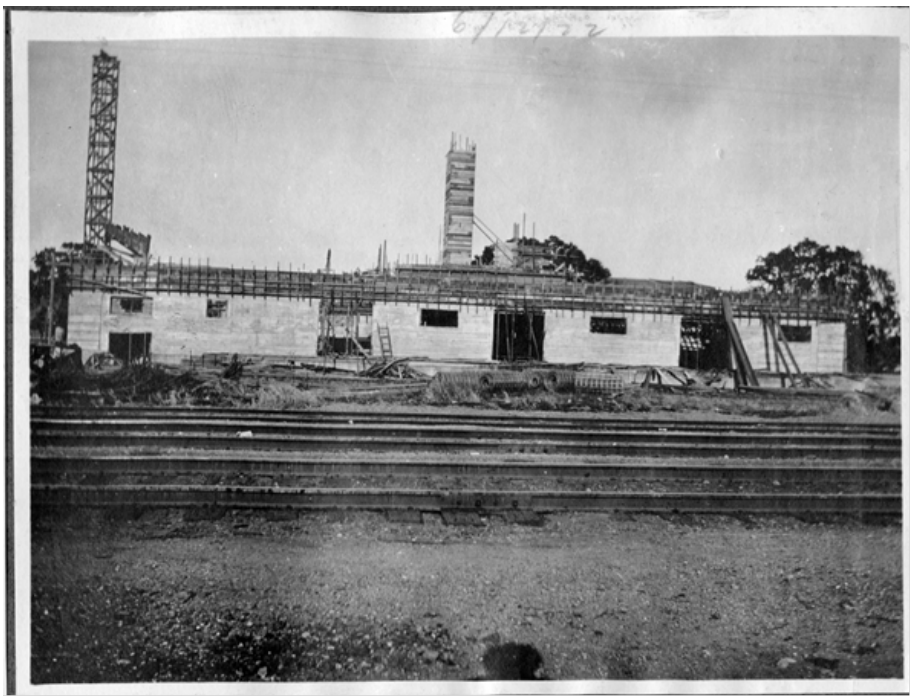

Figure 5. East and south elevations, view to the northwest (June 1922). Source: Center for Sacramento History.

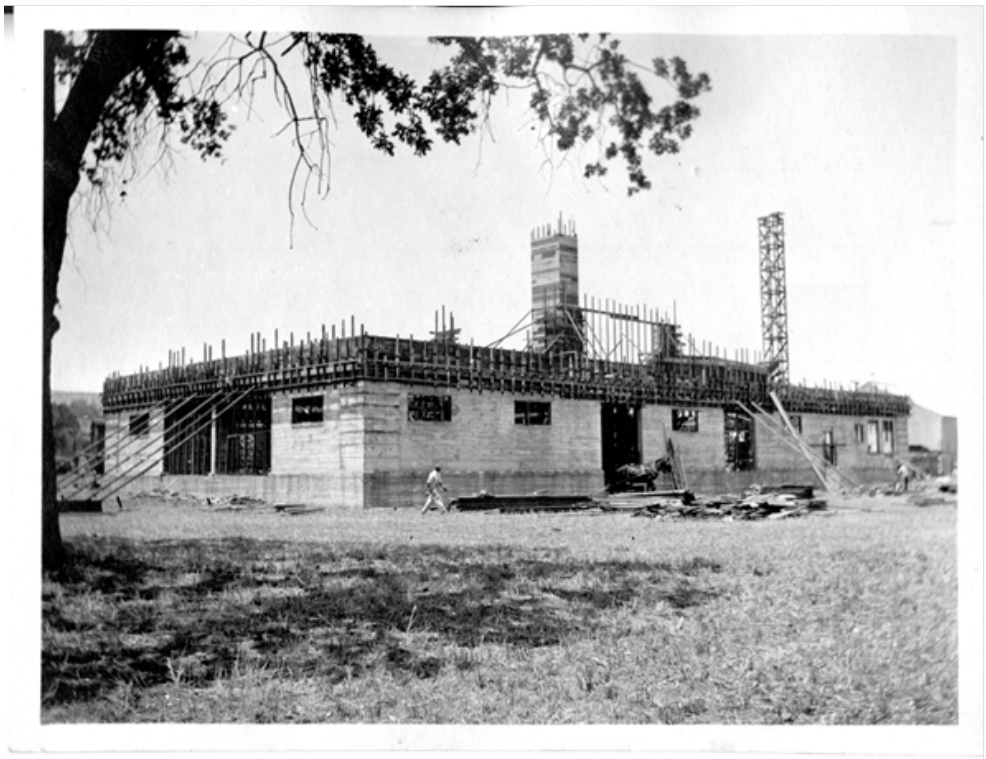

Figure 6. Tower under construction, view to the northwest (June 1922). Source: Center for Sacramento History.

Figure 7. East and north elevations, view to the southeast (August 1922). Source: Center for Sacramento History.

Figure 8. North and west elevations, view to the southeast (1922). Source: Center for Sacramento History.

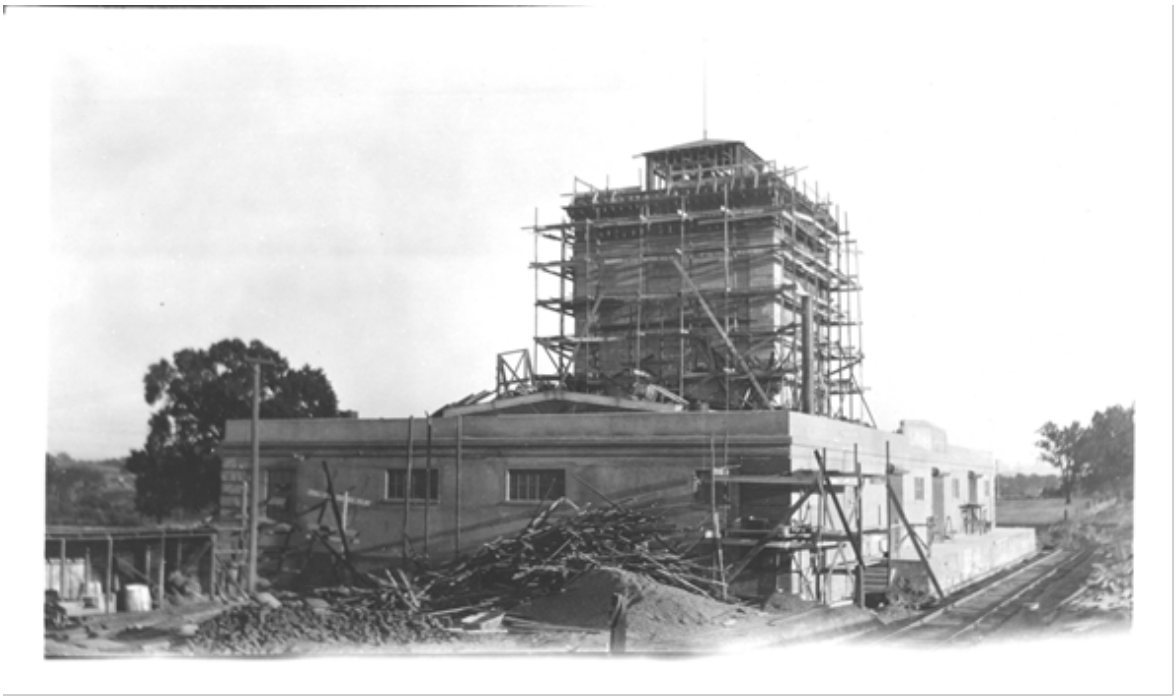

Figure 9. West elevation, view to the northeast (August 1922). Source: Center for Sacramento History.

Figure 10. West and south elevations, view to the northeast (October1922). Source: Center for Sacramento History.

Figure 11. East elevation, view to the west. (Google, March 2012)

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CALIFORNIA ALMOND GROWERS EXCHANGE