

Theme: Industrial Development

The citrus industry thrived through the end of World War II; however, after the war the combination of suburbanization and disease resulted in a significant decline in citrus production in Southern California. Many groves were eventually sold to make way for land development and the city's growing population. In turn, Pomona began to diversify its industries. In the years immediately following the war, the Pomona Chamber of Commerce launched a campaign to bring new industries to the city. In 1948 alone, 41 new businesses settled in the area.⁴⁵⁵ The city's location near several major national truck lines, proximity to rail lines, and within 45 miles of a major port made it attractive to companies who were developing a pattern of plant decentralization.⁴⁵⁶

In November 1946, construction started on a new \$300,000 factory building for Fernstrom Paper Mills, Inc. (1450 W. Holt Avenue, not extant). The steel and transite building was designed to be fireproof and allowed the company to expand their manufacturing equipment. The expansion was expected to double the company's production of fruit and vegetable wrapping papers. By 1952, when advances in technology made it no longer necessary to wrap each piece of individual fruit in paper, Fernstrom sold the mill to the Potlach Corporation.

The most significant industrial development in the history of Pomona was the announcement by Convair that it would build a new manufacturing facility just west of the Pomona city limits.⁴⁵⁷ Founded as Consolidated Aircraft Corporation by Ruben H. Fleet in the early 1920s, Convair was a manufacturer of airplanes originally based out of Buffalo, New York. In the fall of 1935, the company moved to San Diego where it merged with Downey-based Vultee Aircraft, Inc. The company emerged from the new partnership as Convair. After World War II, with the Cold War on the horizon, Convair's guided missile-defense business was in transition from the research and development stage to the manufacturing stage. Initially handled out of the San Diego facility, the company realized it needed to expand its manufacturing capabilities. Several large parcels adjacent to the railroad tracks were acquired, creating a 140-acre site in Pomona.⁴⁵⁸ The \$50 million facility was owned by the Navy's Bureau of Ordinance but operated by Convair. It was known as the Convair Aircraft Corporation Guided Missile Division.

The Convair buildings were built using tilt-slab concrete construction.⁴⁵⁹ The specific process was called Panelcrete, developed by Buttress & McClellan. Each concrete wall weighed approximately 20 tons and was raised into place with large cranes and ultimately secured with steel beams. The facility included five large buildings, including a warehouse and manufacturing building, and several small ones, such as the training and engineering buildings.⁴⁶⁰ The plant opened in 1952.

⁴⁵⁵ Ricci Lothrop, 95.

⁴⁵⁶ Ricci Lothrop, 96.

⁴⁵⁷ In 1951, the area where American Brake Shoe Company, Convair, Fernstrom Paper Mill and the V.P. Hunt Transportation Co. was officially annexed into the city.

⁴⁵⁸ Prior to constructing the new facility, in 1951, Convair leased the old Southern California Edison building at 585 W. 2nd Street as an engineering laboratory, along with 305 E. 2nd Street. In 1952, Convair also leased three buildings at the county fairgrounds as temporary office space for engineers and other personnel.

⁴⁵⁹ The Convair plant is not extant.

⁴⁶⁰ "Convair Plant's Buildings Here Rise Magically," *Pomona Progress Bulletin*, November 14, 1951, 13.

While the new plant was underway, Convair began recruiting workers to relocate from San Diego to Pomona. Classified ads in the *Pomona Progress Bulletin* indicate that the company hired design engineers, production design engineers, electronics system engineers, circuit designers, aircraft electrical designers, and draftsmen. Convair would provide jobs for 5,000 people, creating a great demand for new housing in proximity to the new plant.

Convair was purchased by General Dynamics in 1954. Over the years, the facility produced a variety of missiles and shipboard gun systems, including the Terrier surface-to-air missile, the Redeye weapon system, the Stinger, the Phalanx, the Mauler radar-guided rocket, and Tartar rockets, originally conceived as weapons for carrying nuclear warheads, but known famously to the public as the launch rockets for the Mercury and Apollo programs.

The 1950s brought several labor relations issues for Convair. Strikes and picketing occurred frequently in multiple departments, from tool and dye makers to engineers. By 1961, Convair's Pomona facility had a work force of 6,274 people.⁴⁶¹ By the early 1960s, three of the big five aerospace manufacturers, including Convair, were losing money and laying off workers.⁴⁶² By 1978, General Dynamics suffered a \$156 million quarterly loss. The facility was closed during the 1990s and the property sold off to various buyers.



Convair employees picket outside of Pomona facility, 1958. *Los Angeles Examiner Negatives Collection, 1950-1961. USC Digital Library.*

Another large industrial employer in postwar Pomona was the American Brake Shoe Company (215 Roselawn Avenue, not extant). In 1952, the company opened a foundry for the production of brake shoes for railways. The building was constructed of steel, masonry, and glass to accommodate approximately 80 workers. The Pomona plant was needed to replace an existing plant near the Los Angeles River that was slated for demolition due to freeway construction.

⁴⁶¹ "Convair Officials Optimistic Despite Financial Setbacks," *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 1961, B1.

⁴⁶² (Convair, Douglas, Lockheed, North American and Northrup).

One of the more architecturally significant industrial facilities was the Southern Counties Gas Co. facility (1540 W. 2nd Street) in 1955. The expressive design by B. H. Anderson featured fluted steel siding, a glass entry portal and a short tower topped with an abstract flame housed the company's distribution, construction, and customer service departments. Three other buildings (warehouse, locker building and garage) rounded out the 29,000 square feet of space.⁴⁶³ The fifth and final building was an administrative building.

In addition to the industry in west Pomona, another pocket of industrial development was located east of Reservoir Street and south of Phillips Boulevard. The Wayne Manufacturing Co. moved from Los Angeles to Pomona in 1948 and expanded operations as the company grew nationally and internationally. The company manufactured street sweepers, water trucks, and power vacuums. In 1956, the company embarked on a \$20,000 plant expansion to its 1201 E. Lexington Street facility (status unknown) with a new one-story, frame and stucco building by architect Theodore Criley Jr. In addition to more office space, the addition included a patio with a redwood and cement floor with redwood louvers along the west side for shade. In 1962, the company opened a new Product Development Center across Lexington Street from the manufacturing plant. By 1972, the Wayne Manufacturing Co. the largest locally headquartered corporation in Pomona.⁴⁶⁴

Another longtime Pomona business, Pascoe Steel (1301 E. Lexington) started in the area in 1947. In 1951, it erected a factory and office building.⁴⁶⁵ In February 1953, the Betsy Ross Ice Cream Company opened a new manufacturing plant and retail store (969 E. Holt Avenue, not extant).⁴⁶⁶ The company was established in Pomona in 1927 by David Zaepfel and Thor Hanson to serve both wholesale and retail customers in the Pomona Valley. The factory and retail outlet were designed in American Colonial Revival-style by architect B. H. Anderson to reflect the American name of the brand. Betsy Ross ice cream was supplied to schools, restaurants, soda fountains and drug stores throughout the area.



Pascoe Steel, 2022. HRG.

⁴⁶³ "Gas Company Occupies New Pomona Facility," *Los Angeles Times*, July 17, 1955, E23.

⁴⁶⁴ "Big Sweeper Orders Give Wayne Manufacturing Co. Record Sales," *Pomona Progress Bulletin*, April 30, 1972, 15.

⁴⁶⁵ Additional permit research required to determine the architect.

⁴⁶⁶ Another retail store at 225 N. Garey Avenue has also been demolished.

Several other industries were established in Pomona in the postwar years. In 1959, the Burlington Hosiery Co. (2300 W. Valley Boulevard) constructed a tilt-slab concrete building for hosiery manufacturing. The 85,000 square foot building was designed and constructed by Austin Co. of Los Angeles. In 1967, Industrial Brush Corporation (IBC) moved to Pomona. The firm, with roots as far back as 1896, had developed a partnership with Wayne Manufacturing Company in 1963 to market street sweeper brooms. Four years later, IBC constructed a new headquarters (1250 E. Philadelphia Street) which was designed by architects Reiss and Brown.⁴⁶⁷

ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

Summary Statement of Significance

The post-war era saw the diversification of industry in Pomona, which increasingly turned towards manufacturing, specifically for the aerospace industry. Resources that are eligible under this theme may be significant as an excellent example of industrial development in the City, such as those industries that introduced new industries to the City, as the site of a significant industrial event, such as workers strike, or for an association with an ethnic or cultural group or a person important in local, state, or national history. Properties may also be significant as an example of a style or type; architectural styles in Pomona are discussed in the Architecture and Design Section.

Period of Significance	1946-1980
Period of Significance Justification	Covers the diversification of industrial development in Pomona following World War II.
Geographic Location	Citywide.
Associated Property Types	Manufacturing Facility; Transportation and Shipping-related Facility; Light Industrial Building; Quonset Hut; Infrastructure Improvement; Historic District.
Property Type Description	Industrial buildings identified under this theme may represent a range of industrial building types and uses. They are often utilitarian in design but may represent architectural styles prevalent during the period of construction.

Criterion A/1/1,9 (Events/Patterns of Development)

Individual industrial properties that are eligible under this criterion may be significant:

- As the site of an event important in history; or

⁴⁶⁷ Additional Permit research required to determine architect.

- For exemplifying an important trend or pattern in industrial development, such as the diversification of industry in Pomona during the postwar years; or
- As the site of a significant industrial corporation headquartered in Pomona.

Integrity Considerations:

In order to be eligible for designation under this criterion, a property must retain sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance.

- Industrial properties from this period should retain integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling, and association, at a minimum, in order to convey their significance.
- An individual property that is eligible for a historic association must retain the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association with an event or historical pattern.
- Note that some properties that may not retain sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register may remain eligible for listing at the state and local levels.

Registration Requirements:

To be eligible under this criterion, an individual property must:

- Date from the period of significance; and
- Have a proven association with an event important in history; or
- Represent an important catalyst for a pattern or trend in industrial development; or
- Display most of the character-defining features of the property type or style; and
- Retain the essential aspects of historic integrity.

Criterion C/3/3,5,7 (Architecture and Design)

Individual industrial properties that are eligible under this criterion may be significant as:

- A good/excellent or rare example of an architectural style, property type, or method of construction; or
- A distinctive work by a noted architect, landscape architect, builder, or designer.

Integrity Considerations:

In order to be eligible for designation under this criterion, a property must retain sufficient integrity from the period of significance to convey its architecture.

- Industrial properties significant under this criterion should retain integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling, at a minimum.

- A property that is eligible for designation as a good/excellent or rare example of its style or type retains most - though not necessarily all - of the character-defining features of the style.
- A property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or construction technique must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique. A property can be eligible if it has lost some historic materials or details but retains the majority of the essential features from the period of significance. These features illustrate the style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation.
- A property is not eligible if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style.
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses).

Registration Requirements:

To be eligible under this criterion a property must:

- Date from the period of significance; and
- Represent a good/excellent or rare example of a style or type; and
- Display most of the character-defining features of the style or type; and
- Retain the essential aspects of integrity.