

State of California X The Resources Agency  
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #  
 HRI #  
 Trinomial  
**NRHP Status Code**

Other  
 Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Listings

Page \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ \*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) \_\_\_\_\_

P1. Other Identifier: \_\_\_\_\_

\*P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

\*a. County Fresno (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Fresno South Date 2021 T 14S; R 20E;  of  of Sec 09; Mount Diablo B.M.

c. Address 914 F Street City Fresno Zip 93706

d. UTM: Zone \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ mE/ \_\_\_\_\_ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, decimal degrees, etc., as appropriate)

Assessor's Parcel Number: 467-071-11

\*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The property at 914 F Street (Assessor Parcel Number: 467-071-11), is in the Chinatown district of the city of Fresno. Set on the north side of F Street and Kern Steet, the property is an interior divided one-half of the single-story commercial building.

The single-story commercial structure has a rectangular footprint with parapet roof. The front façade is flat and modestly adorned, with symmetrical arrangement of elements. It includes a central entrance flanked by large windows. The structure is brick with stucco applied to the façade. The base of the building, just below the windows, features a strip of black tiles, which contrasts with the lighter-colored upper portion. The exterior of the building appears to be in fair condition, with no significant signs of wear or damage.

The building was formally evaluated in the City's 2006 Chinatown Historic Property Survey and found eligible to Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resource under Criteria I due to its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the early commercial development of Chinatown. The north portion with the address of 920 F Street was designated as historic resource in 2012 under criteria i due to its association with the lake moon company which contributed to the broad pattern of our history.

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP2 (Single Family Residence) HP4 (Detached garage/apartment)

\*P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5b. Description of Photo: 8/7/2024, Street View, Camera pointing to South east

\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:

Historic  Prehistoric  Both

\*P7. Owner and Address:

Steve Ikeda 6305 N. Dewey Ave, Fresno, CA 93711

\*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)

Lisha Chen, Historic Preservation Specialist, City of Fresno

\*P9. Date Recorded: 8/15/2024

\*P10. Survey Type: (Describe) Intensive

\*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

The Fresno Bee. "History Erased Historic Chinatown café sign is painted over by mistake," October 24, 2014.

The Fresno Bee. "Fresno Japanese



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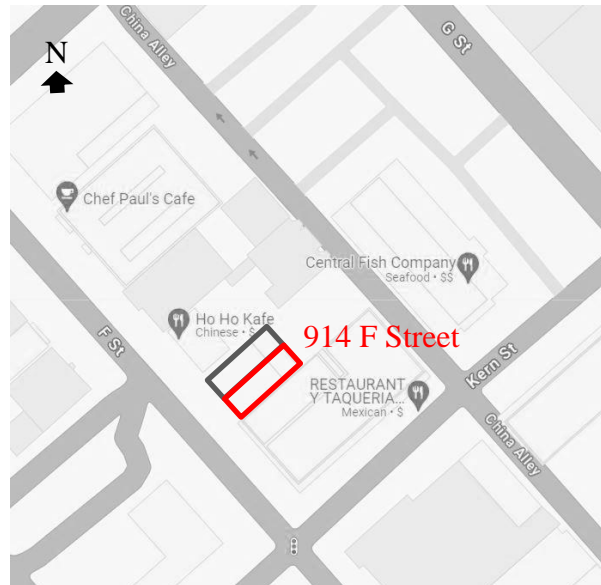
Listings

Page \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ \*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) \_\_\_\_\_

P1. Other Identifier: \_\_\_\_\_

American Soldiers are Killed in War", Dec 4, 1944.  
Architectural Resource Group. 2006. *Chinatown Historic Resource Survey*.

\*Attachments:  NONE  Location Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List): \_\_\_\_\_



Location Map of the Property located at 914 F Street

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B1. Historic Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 B2. Common Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 B3. Original Use: Commercial B4. Present Use: Commercial  
 \*B5. Architectural Style: Mid twentieth century commercial  
 \*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

See B10. Significance

\*B7. Moved?  No  Yes  Unknown Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Original Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\*B8. Related Features: Garage

B9a. Architect: Unknown b. Builder: Unknown

\*B10. Significance: Theme Economic and Social Development of Chinatown; Japanese American Heritage and Immigration; World War II and Japanese American Internment Area Fresno

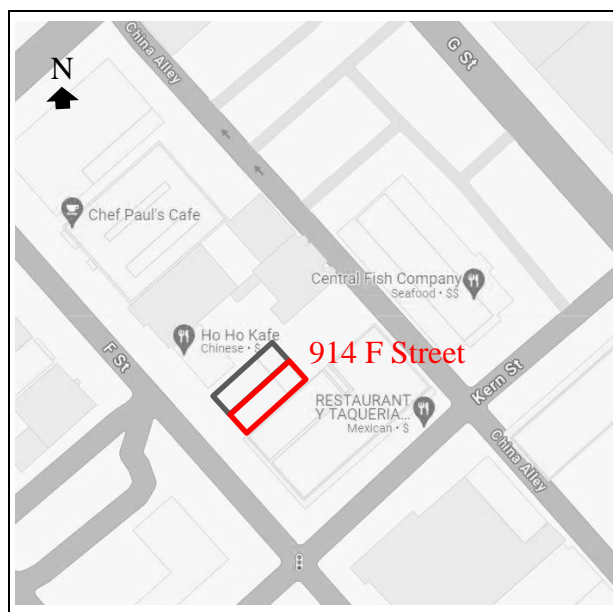
Period of Significance 1872-1942 Property Type commercial

Applicable Criteria (i) (iv) (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

**Historic Context**

In the 1890s, Fresno's Chinatown saw the beginnings of Japanese immigration. Initially small, these new residents were directed to settle in Chinatown due to limited options available to them. The early 20th century was marked by increasing Japanese immigration to the United States. The formation of the Asiatic Exclusion League in May 1905 highlighted growing anti-Asian sentiment, as the group sought to stop both Japanese and Chinese immigration. Despite this, the U.S. economy, recovering from a late 19th-century depression, faced a significant labor shortage in California, especially in agriculture. The Chinese Exclusion Act had worsened the labor crisis on the West Coast, prompting some farmers to call for its revision. Japanese immigrants, including women and children, were welcomed by these farmers to fill the labor gap. Unlike industries like mining and railroads that required male labor, farming benefited from the involvement of women and children. By 1900, Northern California had the largest concentration of Japanese in the U.S., with 598 living in Fresno County. As Japanese immigration increased, so did the backlash. Labor unions and politicians, fearing economic competition and cultural differences, pressured President Roosevelt to limit Japanese immigration. However, unlike the Chinese, the Japanese had the support of a strong home government, which was keen to protect its citizens abroad. Following Japan's military successes over China in 1895 and Russia in 1905, the U.S. began to view Japan as a

(This space reserved for official comments.)



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formidable power. To avoid escalating tensions, President Roosevelt and Japanese officials negotiated the "Gentlemen's Agreement" in 1907. Under this informal arrangement, Japan agreed not to issue passports to laborers or prostitutes, while Japanese immigrants already in the U.S. could bring their families, leading to the rise of "picture brides" – women who married Japanese men in the U.S. by proxy. Despite ongoing anti-Japanese sentiment, particularly in California where anti-Japanese bills were introduced annually from 1909 until World War II, U.S. immigration policies allowed the Japanese American population to grow. Over the next two decades, the Japanese community in Fresno expanded, both through new immigration and natural population growth.

The Economic Role of Japanese Immigrants in the 1920s and 1930s By the 1920s, Japanese immigrants played a significant role in Fresno's Chinatown economy. While fewer Chinese residents worked as farm laborers, Japanese families and single male laborers filled various economic roles, including farm labor, management of pool halls, restaurants, grocery stores, and other businesses. By the 1930s, the Japanese community in Chinatown had nearly equaled the size of the Chinese population, contributing to the economic diversity of the neighborhood.

The 1940s brought severe challenges for Japanese Americans in Fresno. With Japan's involvement in World War II, their loyalty to the U.S. came under suspicion. Initially subjected to curfews, the situation worsened with the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942. This order authorized the internment of Japanese Americans without any evidence of disloyalty. Temporary assembly centers, such as the one at the Fresno Fairgrounds, were established before more permanent camps were constructed in remote areas of the West. Japanese Americans from Fresno were eventually sent to internment camps in Arizona and Arkansas. Although the camps were closed after the Ex Parte Endo decision in December 1944, many Japanese Americans did not return to their former homes.

**914-920 F Street Commercial Building History**

The commercial building at 914-920 F Street was constructed around 1900. Initially, it was a large space that housed a pool hall. By 1906, the building was divided into two separate commercial spaces, with "Japanese Female Boarding," likely prostitution cribs, flanking the building. In 1910, repairs were made, and the building continued to be rented out to various tenants. The primary owner during this early period was the Lake Moon Company.

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)

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914 F Street

- 1918: the space at 914 F Street functioned as a shop.
- 1928-1942: The café at 914 F St. opened in 1928 as the Sunrise Café. It was owned until Pearl Harbor by the Nakamoto family, who were interned along with other Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor and the outbreak of the war. The café was operated by Moritaro Nakamoto, a Japanese American, until 1942, the same year of the internment of Japanese Americans.
- 1951-1993: Owned by W. Lee Chinn, the building housed the Victory café, a common handle theme for many businesses as patriotism swelled and GIs went off to war in Europe and the South Pacific.
- 2002-Present: The building has been owned by Steven Ikeda.

920 F Street

- 1918: The space at 920 F Street operated as a restaurant.
- 1926-Present: The Kogetsu-do Confectionary, also known as The Lake Moon Company, occupied the space. The Kogetsu-do Confectionary has operated continuously in this space for over 100 years.
- 2012, the portion of the building located at 920 F Street was designated a local historic resource under Criterion i for its association with the social history of the Japanese community in Chinatown.

**Integrity and Eligibility**

The building was constructed around 1900, making it over 120 years old, which meets the requirement of being more than 50 years old. Although the building has had numerous alterations. It still maintains sufficient integrity in its location, setting, and association to convey its historic significance. This integrity ensures that the building continues to serve as a meaningful link to the past, capable of telling the story of the Japanese American experience in Fresno's Chinatown and their broader contribution to the city's history.

Criteria (i) Association with Significant Events

The building is associated with significant historical events, particularly related to the Japanese American community in Fresno. The history of Japanese immigration, their economic contributions to Chinatown development, and the

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impact of World War II internment on the Japanese community, including the Nakamoto family who owned and operated the Sunrise Café (later Victory Café), align with significant events in American history. The transformation of the café from the Sunrise Café to the Victory Café during World War II represents a broader pattern of American history, especially the internment of Japanese Americans and the subsequent adaptation of businesses during wartime.

Criteria (iv) Potential to Yield Important Historical Information

The building has the potential to yield information important to the history of the Japanese American community in Fresno, especially regarding the impact of World War II and the internment experience on local businesses.

**Conclusion**

Given these points, the property at 914 F Street meets the criteria (i) and (iv) for historic designation under the Fresno Municipal Code Sec. 12-1607.

Besides, the other half of the building located at 920 F Street has already been designated as a local historic resource in 2012, it further strengthens the case for designating 914 F Street as well as it will reinforce the integrity and significance of the whole building located at 914-920 F Street.

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) \_\_\_\_\_

**\*B12. References:**

*The Fresno Bee*. "History Erased Historic Chinatown café sign is painted over by mistake," October 24, 2014.  
*The Fresno Bee*. "Fresno Japanese American Soldiers are Killed in War", Dec 4, 1944.  
 Architectural Resource Group. 2006. *Chinatown Historic Resource Survey*.

B13. Remarks:

\*B14. Evaluator: Lisha Chen, Historic Preservation Specialist, City of Fresno  
 \*Date of Evaluation: 8/15/2024

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)

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