

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

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____

Reviewer _____

Date _____

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P1. *Resource Name or #: Site of 1962 National Farm Workers Association Founding Meeting (NFWA)

Other Identifier: Site of Edison Social Club

***P2. Location:** ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted

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

***b. USGS 7.5' Quad** Fresno South, 1963 revised 1981

c. Address 1405 E. California Avenue, Fresno, CA 93706, 1413 E. California Ave, Fresno, CA 93706

d. Assessor's Parcel Number: 46730206, 46730207

***P3a. Description:** This former site of the Edison Social Club is a split parcel containing 2 single family residential homes located at 1405 and 1413 East California Avenue. The buildings are located at the northwest corner of California Avenue and California Avenue cul-de-sac in West Fresno with one facing California Avenue and the other facing the California Avenue cul-de-sac. The building on the 1405 East California Avenue address. Both residences contain a nominal rectangular shape, is stucco clad and is set back from the street on a raised concrete foundation. A 2 car garage side light and door are visible from the street.

***P3b. Resource Attributes:** HP2, Single Family Property, HP13 (Social Hall), HP36 (Latino)

***P4. Resources Present:** Residential Home

P5a.



P5b. Description of Photo: Front View of 1405 E. California Ave, Fresno, CA
Date of Photo: March 2023

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:** 1936, Fresno Bee Archives, Fresno, CA

☒ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both

***P7. Owner and Address:**

Jose Acevedo
1405 E California Ave. Fresno, CA 93706

***P8. Recorded by:** James W. Sponsler, PMP, CAPM
Historic Preservation Commission.

***P9. Date Recorded:** 23 August 2023

***P10. Survey Type:** Intensive

***P11. Report Citation:** Historic Review of 1405 E. California Avenue, California for Fresno's Local Register of Historic

***Attachments:** ☒ Location Map ☒ Continuation Sheet
☒ Building, Structure, and Object Record

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # Site of 1962 National Farm Workers Association Founding Meeting (NFWA)

*NRHP Status Code 3S

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B1. Historic Name: Edison Social Club National Farm Worker Association Inaugural Convention
B2. Common Name: 1405 E. California Ave
B3. Original Use: Social Gathering, Meeting place B4. Present Use: Residential
*B5. Architectural Style: N/A
*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
12 September 1936 – Groundbreaking Ceremony at 1405 E. California Ave.
02 October 1936 – Building Permit Issued for 1405 E. California Ave
13 August 1973 – Demolition as part of a Fresno Redevelopment Agency project

*B7. Moved? ☐ No ☒ Yes ☐ Unknown Date: Demo'd Original Location: 1405 E. California Ave
*B8. Related Features: This site is located in a neighborhood historically known as Old Germantown prior to World War II. The neighborhood was made of farming families and saw an influx in farm related workers into the area post World War II.

B9a. Architect: Unknown b. Builder: Carl Demler
*B10. Significance: Theme civil rights, organized labor, and Chicano movements Area Old Germantown, Fresno
Period of Significance September 30, 1962 Property Type N/A Applicable
Criteria (i) local (i, ii) CA POHI (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

(continued)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)
*B12. References: Bee Staff Reporters "Club Rejects All Building Plans" The Fresno Bee 24 January 1923; "Edison Social Club to Fix Age Limit to 18 Years" The Fresno Bee 03 February 1923; "Bodies Merge to Aid Boy Scouts" The Fresno Bee 07 February 1923; "Club Plans Moving to New Quarters" The Fresno Bee 07 March 1923; Bee Staff "Ceremony Marks Hall Project" The Fresno Bee, 12 September 1936; "Building Active in West Fresno" The Fresno Bee 02 October 1936; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1906, 1918-1919, 1948-1950, 1963, 1968-1970; "NFWA--Organizational Meeting, Sep 30-Oct 1962; Agenda, Minutes, Credentials. Election of Officers and Delegates, Box: 5, Folder: 11-18. National Farm Workers Association Records, LR000221_NFW. Walter P. Reuther Library. https://archives.wayne.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/713377 Accessed August 25, 2023; Edison Social Club history submitted by Club President Joseph Potthast March 2022; 1958-1963 Assessor's Parcel Photos, Fresno County Library. "Instructions for Recording Historical Resources" Office of Historic Preservation, March 1995 personal communications and correspondence with Gilbert Padilla, Eddie Varela, Joseph Potthast, Dr. Paul A Garcia Ed. D

B13. Remarks
The site of the NFWA founding meeting and the Edison Social Club is now the site of the East California Ave. cul-de-sac and four homes located at 1405, 1413, 1421, and 1477 E. California Ave. The location of the marker is in the parking median between 1405 and 1413 E. California Ave.

*B14. Evaluator: James W. Sponsler PMP, CAPM
330 N. Park Avenue, Fresno, CA 93701
*Date of Evaluation: 23 August 2023

(This space reserved for official comments.)



State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
LOCATION MAP

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*Recorded by: James W. Sponsler, PMP, CAPM *Date: 23 August 2023 ☒ Location Map

*Map Name: Jan 1950 Sanborn Fire Map *Scale: Unknown *Date of map: 1918-1950 Sanborn map



CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Site of 1962 National Farm Workers Association Founding Meeting (NFWA)

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*Recorded by: James W. Sponsler, PMP, CAPM *Date: 23 August 2023 ☒ Continuation

The former site of the Edison Social Club in Germantown was founded by both German and Volga German families founded with a focus of coming together as a community center for socializing. Temporarily called the West Fresno Social Club, the Edison Social Club was organized on December 23, 1922 according to club records.

The initial goal of the club was the construction of a clubhouse and to grow membership in the neighborhood. This goal was furthered by the financing from the First Ward Rate and Taxpayer Association. The club received the donation of Eisner's Hall, located at 335 C Street (present address 358 B Street), where the West Fresno Social Club and the First Ward Rate and Taxpayer Association merged and completely formed the Edison Social Club. The Edison Social Club began to hold social and family gatherings for their members as well as the local community. Some of the prominent families associated with this club from its founding were primarily in the farming industry which include the Fries, Bitters, Nilmeier, and Gleim families.

The Edison Social Club would raise funds to build four different buildings. Previous Meeting Locations have been at 335 C Street, D and San Benito St., 1216 Monterey St. (both which today is the center divider of 99 South and Ventura), 1405 E. California Ave, and finally at 3325 W. Clinton Ave. The Edison Social Club rented out their hall to various entities to provide a social gathering and meeting location for groups, parties, and individuals. The 1405 E. California Ave location mentioned in this application was issued permits on October 2, 1936, according to an article published in The Fresno Bee and city of Fresno building permits. The Edison Social Club was demolished by the Fresno Redevelopment Agency in 1973 as part of an urban renewal project as indicated by The Fresno Bee on August 13, 1973.

It was this use of the hall that on September 30, 1962, Cesar Chavez, Gilbert Padilla, and Dolores Huerta gathered about 250 farmworkers in Fresno for the inaugural convention of the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), now the United Farm Workers (UFW). It was a daunting struggle to organize laborers who lived in small isolated rural communities, most spoke only Spanish, many were migrant workers, and some lived in labor camps. Prior to the meeting, Chavez sent invitations to selected farm workers that authorized their participation as delegates. In a personal letter inviting workers to the convention, Chavez proposed the farmworkers' burden and his vision.

At the foundation meeting, Delores Huerta worked to make sure attendees signed in to determine community representation and the delegates in attendance. Examination of the sign-in sheet and printed convention roster suggests there were 42 delegates representing 21 communities. Invited guests included individuals who had already joined Chavez as supporters and who would later make their mark with the union; Chris Hartmire and John Ralph Duggan. Huerta played a pivotal role alongside Chavez in establishing and maintaining décor at the meeting.

Chavez opened the meeting with an explanation that it would be conducted under Robert's Rules of Order and parliamentary procedures. In such fashion, delegates made motions that were approved for dues to be set at \$3.50 a month, the benefit of a group insurance plan, and the establishment of a credit union. Confident the Union would eventually secure labor contracts, motions were made to create hiring

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halls and seek to win legislation that would cover farmworkers with unemployment insurance. Most of these benefits were codified just four years later with the first ever labor contract directed by farmworkers, signed by Schenley Incorporated. At the convention, the elected president was not Chavez, but a farmworker as were most of the officers. Jesus Martinez of Pinedale was elected the first President of the NFWA, Cesar Chavez was elected as general director, while vice presidents were elected to represent each of the counties in attendance.

In conclusion, the location of the Edison Social Club and the site of the NFWA founding meeting appears eligible to Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources under Criterion (i) for its significance to the civil rights movement, organized labor movement, and the Chicano movement. Furthermore, this site appears eligible as a point of historic interest under criteria i of the State Historic Resources code as this site is the first, last, only or most significant of its type within the local geographic region given this was the first and only founding meeting of the NFWA. This site also qualifies under Criterion ii of the State Historic Resources code as being associated with an individual or group having profound influence on the history of the local area.

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Edison Social Club Exterior. 1958-1963 Fresno County Assessors Parcel Images; Accessed from Fresno County Library



Image 232. National Farm Workers Association, Founding Convention, 1962, Fresno, California. From left to right Unknown, Dolores Huerta, Unknown, Cesar Chavez. Accessed from Walter P Reuther Library Archives, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

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Image 238. National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) Convention, Dolores Huerta, 1962, Taken September 30, 1962. Accessed from Walter P Reuther Library Archives, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.



Delegates to the 1962 NFWA Founding Convention. Accessed from Gilbert Padilla