

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

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code

Other
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Listings

Page 1 of 6 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Herndon Substation Control Building

P1. Other Identifier: _____

*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 Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☐ Unrestricted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 Herndon, CA Date 1964 T 12S; R 19E; ☐ of ☐ of Sec 32; _____ B.M.
c. Address 7430 N Weber Avenue City Fresno Zip 93722
d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone _____, _____ mE/ _____ mN
e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, decimal degrees, etc., as appropriate)
APN 504-130-25U

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)
Herndon Substation, located on a large tract of land located between the San Joaquin River to the north and the community of Herndon to the south, was originally constructed in 1931 and included its only extant building – the two-story Art Deco-style Control Building. It rests on a 40 x 40 foot concrete foundation within the southwest portion of the Herndon Substation site. The building has a square plan and a flat roof with parapet. The steel and concrete walls are 40 feet high. The west (primary), north (side), and south (side) elevations each consist of three bays separated by stepped pilasters that create vertical projections along the roofline. Fenestration consists of paired metal casement crank windows with 8 divided lights each, topped by fixed transoms with 4 divided lights each, within each bay on each story– except for the central bay of the first story on the west (primary) elevation which consists of the main entry and the first story on the south (side) elevation within and along which equipment was housed. (See Continuation Sheet)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP9 Public Utility Building

P5a. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



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

P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #) May 4, 2018

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ☒ Historic ☐ Prehistoric
☐ Both

1931, PG&E General Maintenance Orders (GMOs) 41256 and 41257

*P7. Owner and Address:

Pacific Gas and Electric Co.
1455 E Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA 93710

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address) Laura Groves van Onna
Historic Preservation Specialist
City of Fresno

*P9. Date Recorded: May 4, 2018

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
Intensive

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

Evaluation of Herndon Substation Control Building located at 7430 N Weber Avenue for the City of Fresno Local Register of Historic Resources, derived from "Historical Resource Evaluation of the Herndon Substation, Fresno County, California," prepared by Aubrie Morlet of Applied EarthWorks, Inc. for Pacific Gas and Electric Company in April 2010.

*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): _____

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Herndon Substation Control Building *NRHP Status Code 5S2
Page 2 of 6

B1. Historic Name: Herndon Substation, San Joaquin Light and Power Corporation, Control Building

B2. Common Name: Herndon Substation, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Control Building

B3. Original Use: Public Utility Building B4. Present Use: Vacant

*B5. Architectural Style: Art Deco

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

The substation, including the control building, was constructed in 1931 by GMO 41256 and 41257. General Maintenance Orders (GMO) from PG&E also detail changes made to the substation, but not the control building, in 1943, 1944, and 1956. In 1963 under GMO 153148, new transformers, condensers, and a new bus were installed at the substation to replace the older equipment; subsequently, the crane, oil tanks, water tank, and their related housing structures were removed from the control building in addition to interior controls in order to make the substation unmanned.

*B7. Moved? ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features: Electric Transformers

B9a. Architect: J.P. Jollyman, Engineer of Electrical Construction b. Builder: Harold K. Fox, General Construction Engineer

*B10. Significance: Theme Corporate Electric Development Area San Joaquin Division
Period of Significance 1931-1963 Property Type Public Utility Building Applicable Criteria Local Register Criteria i and iii (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The Herndon Substation was built and completed in June 1931 specifically to interconnect the two electrical systems of the San Joaquin Light and Power Corporation and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. The substation was completed one year after the merger of the two organizations and signifies the end of the regional electric company and the beginning of PG&E's dominance in Northern and Central California. The expenditure of \$723,177.00 to build the substation during the Depression years, when all other construction projects not deemed essential were cancelled or delayed, is an indicator of the site's importance to PG&E and to the region in general. During this period, the only other areas of growth for PG&E were in the development of natural gas lines.

The substation's importance can be seen in the choice of equipment installed on the site. When construction began, it was to be the biggest substation in Fresno County and boasted the largest transformers on the Pacific Coast. (See Continuation Sheet)

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

*B12. References:

This determination of eligibility derives from information presented in "Historical Resource Evaluation of the Herndon Substation, Fresno County, California," prepared by Aubrie Morlet of Applied EarthWorks, Inc. for Pacific Gas and Electric Company in April 2010, thus this evaluation largely draws from and, in some cases, is extracted from the research conducted and presented therein.

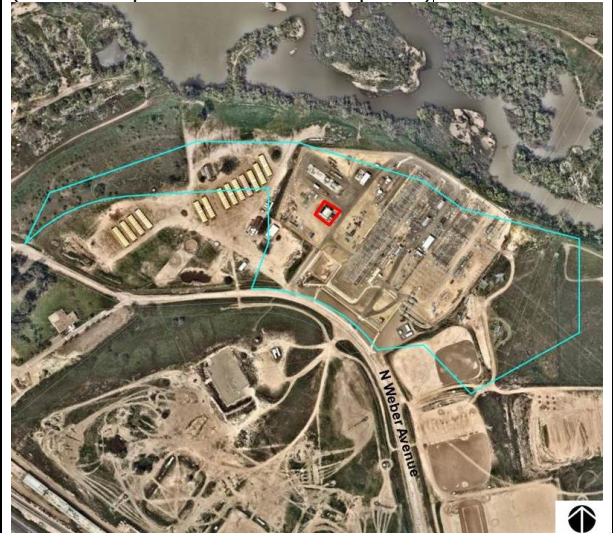
B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: Laura Groves van Onna
Historic Preservation Specialist, City of Fresno

*Date of Evaluation: May 7, 2018

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)



CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Herndon Substation Control Building

Page 3 of 6

***P3a. Description Continued:** The main entry on the west (primary) elevation consists of a metal paneled door with 4 divided lights on top and a fixed transom with 6 divided lights. The main entry is accessed by three concrete steps framed by low concrete walls. Signage for the PG&E Herndon Substation is located above the main entry. The rear (east) elevation consists of horizontal wood panel cladding with no fenestration.

The interior of the Control Building contains a battery room, equipment room, control panel room, and operator's room with en suite bathroom (enclosed by thin vertical wood paneling). The Control Building was converted to an unmanned station in 1963 and the working parts inside the Control Building have been gradually removed. Inside today are the metal framework remains and freestanding support structures that at one time housed the machinery that controlled the movement of the currents on the Herndon Substation site.

***B10. Significance Continued:** The Fresno Bee reported that "the transformers required specially constructed railroad cars to bring them to Fresno from the eastern factory where they were built to order." Furthermore, "A special steel and concrete building had to be erected to house the seventy-five ton crane, installed merely to handle the transformers during repairs and installation." In addition to the crane house and transformers, a two-story control building, a large water tower, and an oil-storage house with special oil tanks were constructed on the site.

At the time of its construction, this new electrical technology was critical to support the growing population and continued growth of agriculture in Fresno County and the rest of the San Joaquin Valley. The larger transformers installed at the site enabled electrical current to travel greater distances and bring energy to outlying communities as these areas developed in response to the booming agricultural industry. The same transmission lines that brought electricity to the cities and towns also provided energy for agricultural irrigation pumps, allowing Fresno County and the San Joaquin Valley to become the most productive agricultural area in California.

Following World War II, the increased population of California required further upgrades to existing substations plus the construction of new substations. Between 1941 and 1956, 11 new substations were built in Fresno County, where the population had doubled. In 1956, three new powerhouses were under construction on the Kings River to increase power production for the Central Valley. Once in operation, the mass of electric power coming into the Fresno area was stepped down at the newer substations located on the southeast side of Fresno County. The Herndon Substation Control Building was converted to an unmanned station in 1963.

Since 1941 the Herndon Substation equipment has been repeatedly upgraded and moved around on the site to address increase demands. New transformers, condensers, and a new bus were installed to replace the older equipment. With the removal of the older equipment and installation of the newer technology, the crane, oil tanks, water tank, and their related housing structures were no longer needed and were subsequently removed. Those actions caused the layout of the substation to change over time. All that remains of the 1931 Herndon Substation is the Control Building. Because of its role in the growth of the PG&E system and its critical importance to the growth of the regional agricultural economy and the cities and towns that supported that economy, the Herndon Substation Control Building is eligible under Criterion i.

The only individuals associated with the substation are PG&E engineers, construction supervisors, and various maintenance workers, all of whom had only a limited connection with the facility. While many of these individuals had long careers with PG&E, none were prominent locally or made substantial contributions to the development of PG&E's system.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Herndon Substation Control Building

Page 4 of 6

***B10. Significance Continued:** None of the individuals appear to be historically significant and therefore the Herndon Substation Control Building does not appear to be eligible under Criterion ii.

While the Control Building is minimal in decoration, it embodies distinctive characteristics of the Art Deco architectural style with elements that include smooth walls surfaces and vertical projections above the roofline that give a vertical emphasis as well as fixed sash and casement metal windows. It was also constructed at the height of the Art Deco movement, is the only Art Deco substation remnant in Fresno County, and is one of the few examples of the Art Deco style remaining in the City of Fresno. Therefore, the Herndon Substation Control Building is eligible under Criterion iii.

Due to the development history of the site, it is not likely to yield archaeological resources important to prehistory or prehistory and therefore does not appear to be significant under Criterion iv.

Eligibility

The Herndon Substation Control Building located at 7430 N Weber Avenue is eligible for listing in the City of Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources.

The property is greater than 50 years of age and possesses integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association (FMC 12-1607). Although integrity of setting, feeling, and association have diminished due to the replacement of structures and equipment on the Herndon Substation site and due to the removal of some equipment and controls from the Control Building, the result is not a loss of integrity. The site that surrounds the Control Building retains its historic use, and equipment from the Control Building has not been completely removed. Although the Control Building was converted to an unmanned station in 1963, it was still transitioning from use to vacancy in the early 2000s.

Additionally, the Herndon Substation Control Building is significant under Local Register Criterion i because it is associated with the merger of Pacific Gas and Electric Company and San Joaquin Light and Power Corporation and with the role of the substation in the economic and social growth of the region and Criterion iii because it embodies distinctive characteristics of the Art Deco architectural style.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Herndon Substation Control Building

Page 5 of 6



CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Herndon Substation Control Building

Page 6 of 6

